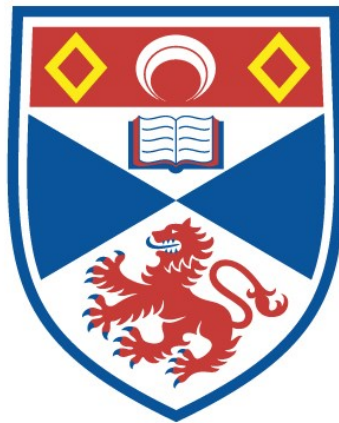# 'The ghostlie eye of thy soule': literary souls & ghosts in the early modern period

Trefor Abraham Davies

A thesis submitted for the degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews

2019

ABSTRACT

' "The Ghostlie Eye of Thy Soule": Literary Souls & Ghosts in the Early Modern Period' comprises four case-studies of the early modern soul in different literary contexts. Each focuses upon how literature thinks through and represents the difficult relationship of this immaterial entity with the entire person of which it is a part and with the material field it must transcend.

For the soul and body dialogue tradition it is axiomatic that its two interlocutors are separate, yet it also seems eager to interrogate that assumption; in chapter 1 we examine two instances of the genre, one Anglo-Saxon and one early modern, that do so in especially literary ways. Chapter 2 reads side-by-side John Donne's *Anniversary* poems and René Descartes' *Discourse on Method*. In both texts a soul that transcends matter rescues a fatally undermined material scene, and here there emerges a rather more optimistic impression of the soul's capacities. But by contrast once more, chapter 3 turns to a soul conceived in terms not of transcendence but of abjection. It works first to locate the apparently devotional inner moment in which an author addresses their own soul within the burgeoning early modern literature of discipline; subsequently, it argues that when this moment occurs specifically in the lyric mode it makes demands upon the reader that locate it in more transhistorical disciplinary traditions as well. The final chapter considers *Hamlet*. Central to the play is a ghostly soul that transcends the material body and rescues the self from death. Yet *Hamlet* also fixates upon the relations of that soul to the material world of Elsinore, and returns repeatedly by way of an interest in atomistic natural philosophy to the possibility that in being immaterial the soul might in fact not exist at all.

Candidate's declaration

I, Trefor Abraham Davies, do hereby certify that this thesis, submitted for the degree of PhD, which is approximately 80,000 words in length, has been written by me, and that it is the record of work carried out by me, or principally by myself in collaboration with others as acknowledged, and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for any degree.

I was admitted as a research student at the University of St Andrews in September 2015.

I received funding from an organisation or institution and have acknowledged the funder(s) in the full text of my thesis.

Date   Signature of candidate

Supervisor's declaration

I hereby certify that the candidate has fulfilled the conditions of the Resolution and Regulations appropriate for the degree of PhD in the University of St Andrews and that the candidate is qualified to submit this thesis in application for that degree.

Date   Signature of supervisor

Permission for publication

In submitting this thesis to the University of St Andrews we understand that we are giving permission for it to be made available for use in accordance with the regulations of the University Library for the time being in force, subject to any copyright vested in the work not being affected thereby. We also understand, unless exempt by an award of an embargo as requested below, that the title and the abstract will be published, and that a copy of the work may be made and supplied to any bona fide library or research worker, that this thesis will be electronically accessible for personal or research use and that the library has the right to migrate this thesis into new electronic forms as required to ensure continued access to the thesis.

I, Trefor Abraham Davies, confirm that my thesis does not contain any third-party material that requires copyright clearance.

The following is an agreed request by candidate and supervisor regarding the publication of this thesis:

Printed copy

No embargo on print copy.

Electronic copy

Embargo on all of electronic copy for a period of 5 years on the following ground(s):

- Publication would preclude future publication

Supporting statement for electronic embargo request

I am in discussions with a publisher about a book based on this thesis.

Title and Abstract

- I agree to the title and abstract being published.

Date   Signature of candidate

Date   Signature of supervisor

Underpinning Research Data or Digital Outputs

Candidate's declaration

I, Trefor Abraham Davies, hereby certify that no requirements to deposit original research data or digital outputs apply to this thesis and that, where appropriate, secondary data used have been referenced in the full text of my thesis.

Date   Signature of candidate

For my parents, with love and the greatest affection

&

for Maddy Rose

Contents

Figures 1-3 appear following page 30, 4-7 page 47, 8-13 page 58, and 14-16 page 121.

Note on Conventions

To the modernisation or otherwise of Renaissance spelling and grammar the approach adopted here is varied, not to say inconsistent. For very familiar texts and those engaged with at length – Shakespeare, most obviously – I quote modern editions, on the grounds that since we are not concerned primarily with textual issues to do otherwise would represent an unmerited distraction. Early modern texts attended to more briefly, on the other hand, and those for which no edited edition is available, are quoted unmodified except for the silent emendation of the long *s* and the consonantal *i* and *u*. Though this loses something in consistency, and may risk setting canonical authors off from their more obscure peers, it has the benefit of retaining some background sense of the difference and strangeness of early modern language. In matters of style MHRA guidelines are followed throughout. Finally, and as has already become clear, I treat 'Renaissance' and 'early modern' as synonymous. The former is a term freighted with implications that should not be accepted without debate or qualification – indeed, they both are – but since we here maintain a consistently wary attitude to traditional periodizations we are at little risk of doing so.

Introduction

> Our good Lord opened my Ghostly eye, and shewed me my Soul in the midst of my heart[.][1]
>
> – Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love*

> Behoulde here with the ghostlie Eye of thy Soule Christs piteous paynful Passion.[2]
>
> – Anonymous, *A Breefe collection concerning the love of God towards mankind*

We begin with a disorientation. For although the two epigraphs draw upon a similar vocabulary of Christian devotion, the typographical variances between Julian's 'Ghostly eye' and the anonymous collection's 'ghostlie Eye' in fact decorate a more fundamental difference. In Julian's conception this eye is a special sort of optical organ that is able to perceive divine things like the soul, and this sense of the phrase obtains in the medieval and early modern periods alike.[3] Yet also conventional across those centuries is for 'ghostly' to mean 'of the soul', so that the word may seem to suggest that the eye belongs to the soul; indeed, as Phillip Cary points out, one 'thread of continuity' tying together conceptions of the soul from Plato to Locke is that it is figured as an optical observer.[4] This is the sense we find confirmed in the anonymous *A Breefe collection*: a soul that *is* a ghostly eye. Such an entity, which can be both a thing to be seen within the body and somehow the nebulous entity that sees it, which can be both a part and apart, must be either very protean or chronically contradictory – or both.

The oblique shifts these texts adumbrate are addressed more explicitly in Giovanni Battista Gelli's *The fearfull fansies of the Florentine couper*. Published in English in 1568 and in a second edition in 1599, the text depicts the eponymous tradesman Just in conversation with his own soul on a range of matters

---

[1] Julian of Norwich, *XVI revelations of divine love* (London: 1670), sig. N1ᵛ.

[2] Anonymous, *A Breefe collection concerning the love of God towards mankind* (Doway: 1603), sig. C2ᵛ. Though the collection itself is anonymous these words are attributed to the medieval mystic Richard Rolle (sig. B12ʳ); it is worth noting that the conflation of soul and ghostly eye may be an addition here, since another, earlier volume containing the passage omits it (*Rycharde Rolle hermyte of Hampull in his contemplacyons of the drede of god* [1506], sig. f.i.ʳ).

[3] The fourteenth-century divine Walter Hilton uses it in a similar sense on more than twenty occasions in his *Scala perfeccionis* (London: 1494), for example.

[4] Phillip Cary, *Augustine's Invention of the Inner Self: The Legacy of a Christian Platonist* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 5. As Norman T. Burns notes, for Tertullian 'the soul of the soul is perception' (*Christian Mortalism from Tyndale to Milton* [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972], p. 23). Some examples of 'ghostly' meaning 'of the soul': Jacques Legrand thinks about 'maladyes bodily & ghoostly' ([*Here begynneth the table of a book entitled the book of good maners*] [London: 1487], sig. bviiʳ); Richard Harvey invokes the 'Lord of Lords both ghostly and bodily' (*A theologicall discourse of the Lamb of God and his enemies* [London: 1590], sig. T3ᵛ); Alexander Barclay's English version of Sebastian Brant's *The shyppe of fools* distinguishes 'solace bodily & goostly' ([London: 1509], sig. Mivʳ).

anthropological and soteriological. (There seems to be little behind the *fearfull* of the title beyond canny marketing: after some initial alarm the exchanges are quite salutary and congenial, and the text itself gives the less sensational alternative title *The Reasoning of Just the Florentine Couper and his SOULE*.) As the text opens Just wakes and decides to rise. But his soul is annoyed at this, having anticipated some contemplative time to itself while he slept, and complains audibly. Just is alarmed: 'What voice doe I heare, who is there?'[5] There follows a mildly comical exchange – Just fears he is being possessed or haunted, the soul responds with riddling hints as to its true identity – before the truth is revealed. 'Know thou Just', the soul says, 'that I am thy soule' (Aiijʳ). Just now struggles to get to grips with his odd new situation, and as he does so two issues are raised regarding the soul that will preoccupy much of our attention in the chapters that follow.

One is the soul's status in the material world. Although during their initial exchange the soul remains within Just (it 'is in my heade', he says [Aijʳ]), when it returns the next day it has separated itself from him so that the pair can 'beholde one an others face' (Aviiiᵛ). But the soul cautions that it can only be seen in a compromised sort of way, 'because I am without a body, & I have neither figure nor color […] wherby I am invisible'.[6] In response to Just's incredulity the soul cites the resurrected Christ's statement to the disciples that 'spirits have no bones', and slightly later it becomes clear that such bodiless and boneless immateriality is what underwrites the soul's very immortality: it is 'one of the substances without body', it says, 'and immortal' (C.viiiʳ).[7] Yet the text's interest in the material status of this immaterial thing is marked. At one point in a fit of gratitude Just is moved to embrace it, and when he cannot a discussion ensues that, through two jokes, identifies itself as a natural philosophical one about the soul's physical substance. 'What is the *matter*, I feele nothing, yet I see thee', Just says (C.iiʳ, emphasis mine), and he subsequently suggests cheekily that if it has no material body the soul must simply be empty physical space. The soul denies the possibility, yet it too strikes disturbing notes as it attempts to explain how it can be understood in terms of materials. For by its own account to show itself will require that its crucial immateriality is compromised: the soul will 'take a body' by

---

[5] Giovanni Battista Gelli, *The fearfull fansies of the Florentine couper*, trans. by William Barker (London: 1568), sig. Ajʳ. Further references appear parenthetically in the main text. We return to this text in chapter 4 below, but it is worth noting now that, though the arguments Gelli puts in the mouth of Just's soul here are quite conventional, he himself is far from an orthodox figure. For more on Gelli see: Neil Rhodes, *Common: The Development of Literary Culture in Sixteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), pp. 214-23; Jonathan Woolfson, 'Thomas Hoby, William Thomas, and Mid-Tudor Travel to Italy', in Mike Pincombe and Cathy Shrank, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Literature, 1485-1603* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 404-17 (pp. 407-08).
[6] The soul here cites Dante as a precedent, which becomes a pattern. For more see: Jackson Campbell Boswell, *Dante's Fame in England: References in Printed British Books 1477-1640* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1999), pp. 31-37.
[7] Medieval and early modern terminologies of 'substance' and 'material' can become indistinct, but in *The fearfull fansies* the soul also specifically claims that it is 'not materiall' (C.iij). For more see chapter 4 below.

'giving [air] thicknesse, and after colour, even as the Sunne makes the Aire grosse & vaporous, wherof comes the raine bow' (Aviii^v-Bj^v). Ultimately, *The fearfull fansies* reassures us, the soul is immaterial and immortal. Yet as the text thinks through that immateriality it seems to taint it, even if only temporarily, with intimations of either sheer emptiness or grossness and vaporousness.

We will be interested in the soul's difficult relationship with matter and space throughout these pages, and chapter 4's discussion of *Hamlet* is prompted specifically by the resemblance of the soul's immateriality to straightforward material emptiness. But the opening business of *The fearfull fansies* raises another issue central to our concerns here, which is the oblique relationship between the soul and the self; indeed, as we shall shortly see this is an association that to a large degree invests the soul's transcendence of matter with the seismic importance that it has. When the soul identifies itself Just at first finds it an odd proposition:

> Just. My soule how?
>
> Soule. Yea thy soule, by whome thou art a man.
>
> Just. Oh howe can that be, am not I my soule my selfe?
>
> Soule. No. For thou art one thing, and thy soule an other[.] (sig. Aiij^r)

A few lines later the soul clarifies its anthropological stance. It is 'the soule of Just', and the entity questioning it is 'the body of Just'; 'the man' is neither of these things 'but that compound thing coms of them both. And mark, that when the soule is separate from the body, it is called man no more' (Aiiij^v). All very well, and in fact quite orthodox. Yet the soul also voices difficulties inherent in the orthodoxy. Since the questioner is 'the body of Just', is Just's consciousness identified with the body here or with the compound of body and soul that the soul says is 'the man'? Both positions seem to be endorsed in a single sentence. And it is to a third possibility – that 'I am my soule my selfe' – that Just himself seems most attached, and the soul's denial of it initially causes him to fly into a rage at what he perceives as an attack on the very foundations of his existence. 'If I am not Just the Couper, then I am made an other', he objects shrilly (anticipating Rimbaud's '*je est une autre*'), '& therefore I sayde well, that thou wert some evill thing' (Aiij^r).[8] If Just is not his soul, he senses, then he is somehow not himself at all, and we know how he feels about this because the soul has to talk him down: 'be

---

[8] Jean Nicholas Arthur Rimbaud, *Complete Works, Selected Letters, a Bilingual Edition*, trans. and ed. by Wallace Fowlie, rev. by Seth Whidden (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2005), p. 374.

content Just, and move not thy self: for there is nothing that doth more hurt reason, and the understanding of man, than anger' (Aiij^r–Aiiij^v). But in fact the soul too seems to acknowledge the identification of soul and self. Earlier, Just complains that the sound of the soul in his head 'haste made me almoste beside my selfe', and the soul cannot resist a pun. 'Thou haste well sayde', it agrees archly, 'not knowing how that thou art halfe beside thy selfe' (Aiij^v).

Even while staking out the claims conventionally made on the soul's behalf – its transcendence of matter, its identification with the self – these exchanges between Just and his soul register the vexing problems that inhere in them. Though they are not always explicitly our subject, these are claims and problems that everywhere underpin and inform the chapters that follow. Each of these examines a different species of literary soul and its capacities and problems; each thinks especially about the relationship of those capacities and problems to literary effect and form. Indeed, that our interests here are specifically literary bears emphasis. Guided by the creative writer's maxim that more value consists in the shown than in the told, we here largely abjure texts that are essentially philosophical or theological treatises in only literary *guise* (Sir John Davies' *Nosce Teipsum*, for instance, or Henry More's *Psychothanasia*, both of which are long poems dedicated to developing psychological definitions) in favour of works that represent the soul *in situ*: which do not tell us about the soul, that is, but rather show it at work and put on dynamic display its variousness, its tensions and contradictions, and its potentials and failures.[9] For if in the history of Christian thought the soul is absolutely central yet seems ultimately evasive and ill-defined (as we shall shortly see is the case), in early modern literature this powerful heft and shifting vagueness manifest in combination as a protean capacity for transformation and adaptation in strikingly diverse literary settings.

~~~

But the literary character of our interests notwithstanding, to consider the literary soul of the Renaissance requires first a more detailed picture of the traditions whose claims and tensions that soul plays out. This requires in turn that we recognize two countervailing demands made upon the Christian soul in general. The first is that it represent a self – what Klaus Corcilius and Dominik Perler call 'the phenomena of our mental life'

---

[9] Though both these poems are touched upon below. For a recent and comprehensive account of *Nosce Teipsum* see: Richard Sugg, *The Smoke of the Soul: Medicine, Physiology and Religion in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2013), pp. 133-63. For a briefer introduction to More's poem see: Fernando Vidal, *The Sciences of the Soul: The Early Modern Origins of Psychology* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2011), p. 27. For a full discussion of the possibly anachronistic notion of early modern 'psychology' see: ibid., pp. 21-57.

– that is separable from the body and its death.[10] 'For as long as there has been such a thing as human anxiety', R. J. Hankinson writes, 'human beings have worried about the fate of the individual at and after physical death. The prospect of post-mortem survival in some form or another has been an animating principle of most religious traditions'.[11] Freud roots this cultural process in the individual unconscious:

> we cannot, indeed, imagine our own death; whenever we try to do so we find that we survive ourselves as spectators. The school of psychoanalysis could thus assert that at bottom no one believes in his own death, which amounts to saying: in the unconscious every one of us is convinced of his immortality.[12]

Freud thinks of a conviction of deathlessness here, but the flipside of that unconscious conviction is very conscious anxiety about the matter: as Just asks plaintively, 'and what certaintie have I, not to lose my being utterly, when I shall die?' (Rvii^r) It is this anxiety to which, in the Western tradition derived from the philosophical vocabulary of ancient Greece, the soul is the principal response: an entity whose immateriality rescues the self from the failures of matter.[13] But on the other hand, as Julian of Norwich and Just's soul have already suggested, a second demand is made upon the soul throughout this tradition, which is that it be something rarefied that the conscious human self only observes. As we begin, then, we ask what are the traditions to which early modern thought has recourse in formulating its refractory vision of the entity that it places front and centre not only eschatologically but ontologically as well.

The documents that together constitute Christian Scripture present a fraught encounter between Hebrew and Hellenistic anthropological and eschatological models.[14] Hebrew thought is notoriously vague about the individual's post-mortem status, and tends to think rather of the continuity of the godhead. As Jan N. Bremmer points out, the closest word in Hebrew to 'soul' is *nepeš*, but this does not seem to have any post-mortem existence whatsoever; such an existence is reserved for the *ruach* or *neshamah*, a phenomenon

---

[10] Klaus Corcilius and Dominik Perler, 'Introduction', in Corcilius and Perler, eds., *Partitioning the Soul: Debates from Plato to Leibniz* (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2014), pp. 1-14 (p. 1).

[11] R. J. Hankinson, 'Survival and the Self: Materialism and Metempsychosis – Ancient Attitudes, Modern Perspectives', in Richard Seaford *et al*, eds., *Selfhood and the Soul: Essays on Ancient Thought and Literature in Honour of Christopher Gill* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 67-88 (p. 67).

[12] Sigmund Freud, *Reflections on War and Death*, trans. by A. A. Brill and Alfred B. Kuttner (New York: Moffat, Yard & Co., 1918), p. 41. Cf. Fernando Vidal, 'Brains, Bodies, Selves, and Science: Anthropologies of Identity and the Resurrection of the Body', *Critical Inquiry*, 28 (2002), 930-74 (p. 933).

[13] As Bruno Snell writes, 'it was Greece which produced those concepts of man as an intellectual being which decisively influence the subsequent evolution of human thought' (*The Discovery of the Mind: the Greek Origins of European Thought* [Oxford: Blackwell, 1953], p. 1).

[14] A range of texts from the vast literature exploring this topic are cited below, but for a concise account see: Richard Sugg, *The Secret History of the Soul: Physiology, Magic and Spirit Forces from Homer to St Paul* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), pp. 90-121.

something like the breath of God that animates but does not attach permanently to the individual.[15] The Hebrew place of the dead, Sheol, is an indeterminate locale that seems devoid of phenomena, activity or identity.[16] In the New Testament, written in Koine Greek for a Hellenistic audience accustomed to the immortal Platonic soul, ψυχή (*psyche*) does seem to point in a more familiar direction, as some examples from Matthew attest.[17] It is the privileged thing opposed to wordliness: Matthew 16:26 runs 'for what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?' Likewise it can seem to tend towards immortality: Matthew 10:28 has 'and fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell'. Indeed, *psyche* can appear something like the inner essence of the person: 'thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind', Matthew 22:37 admonishes. Yet at the epicentre of New Testament eschatology, St Paul's Corinthian letters, we find not an intrinsically immortal soul but a physical body resurrected and changed by God. The corruptible physical body, *soma psychikon*, is 'sown' at death and 'raised' as a spiritual body, *soma pneumatikon* (I Corinthians 15:40-44), and this is quite specifically the only hope for salvation: 'for if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain' (I Corinthians 15:16-17). Indeed, it is not only that the Resurrection Body entirely occludes an immortal soul. It is rather that here *psyche* in fact connotes mortality, an association confirmed in Matthew 16:45: 'and so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam [Christ] was made a quickening spirit'. Soul here is not the immortal part of the person; on the contrary, it looks rather more like the body that dies.

'In spite of the absence of the idea of the immortality of the soul in the documents that made up the New Testament', Philip C. Almond writes, '[…] by the late second century this doctrine had been happily absorbed from the Greek Platonic tradition into the Christian understanding of man'.[18] But negotiations over this profoundly unsettled anthropology and eschatology also continue in the exegesis and theology of the late

---

[15] Jan N. Bremmer, *The Rise and Fall of the Afterlife* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 8. For a brief account of *ruach* and *neshamah* see: James L. Wright, 'The Mortal Soul in Ancient Israel and Pauline Christianity: Ramifications for Modern Medicine', *Journal of Religion and Health*, 50 (2011), 447-51, p. 448.

[16] There are moments at which the Old Testament can seem more dualistic, but even here the matter remains very inconclusive. See: Joel B. Green, 'Body and Soul, Mind and Brain: Critical Issues', in Green and Stuart L. Palmer, eds., *In Search of the Soul: Four View of the Mind-Body Problem* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2005), pp. 7-32 (esp. pp. 20-21).

[17] Jeroslav Pelikan calls the fact that the New Testament was written in Greek 'one of the most momentous linguistic convergences in the entire history of the human mind' in the complexities it created by requiring Christian doctrine to be articulated through the conceptually-freighted terminology of Socrates and Plato (*Christianity and Classical Culture: The Metamorphosis of Natural Theology in the Christian Encounter with Hellenism* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993], p. 3).

[18] Philip C. Almond, *Afterlife: A History of Life After Death* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2016), p. 3. Though Almond may seem to ignore moments such as Matthew 10:28 here, in fact since the apostle refers originally not to Sheol but Gehenna, which the KJV translates as 'hell' but can also name a supposedly cursed valley in the environs of Jerusalem, the meaning of the verse is far from clear. For more on Gehenna see: Lloyd R. Bailey, 'Enigmatic Bible Passages: Gehenna: The Topography of Hell', *The Biblical Archaeologist*, 49 (1986), 187-91.

antique and medieval periods. In *De Principiis*, for instance, Origen tentatively defines soul partly in terms of its perceiving capacities and argues that in some form it pre-exists and survives the body.[19] Justinian goes so far as to insist that souls can see and recognize one another in the afterlife, and that 'they are conscious of and remember' their lives; Irenaeus imagines a post-mortem soul that has the 'form' of the physical person and remembers its previous existence.[20] Similar notions are found in Augustine's *Soliloquies*, where the soul emerges as immortal by virtue of its separability from the body and as closely linked with 'consciousness' and 'mind'.[21] Indeed, the developing doctrine of Purgatory, in its requirement for an ethic of punishment and reward that comes into operation before the eschaton, relies upon and consolidates the idea of a soul that represents the continuity of human identity independent of the body.[22] But equally strong is the intellectual current that distances the soul from both immortality and identity. Augustine himself increasingly emphasises the role of the body in human hopes for life after death, for instance in Sermon 242's ruminations on Corinthians.[23] And in what is usually recognized as the first work of Christian anthropology, *De resurrectione mortuorum*, Athenagoras insists that 'the man as such cannot be said to exist when the body has undergone dissolution', and emphasises that the soul is entirely above all the kinds of emotional and psychological experiences that we might think of as essential to conscious identity.[24] In his own commentary on Corinthians centuries later Aquinas is unequivocal: '*Anima mea non est ego*' (I am not my soul).[25]

Neither should we juxtapose these vacillations against a monolithic Greek tradition: in fact Greek thought is equally equivocal as to the character of the soul. On the one hand, in the *Phaedo* Plato seminally defines *psyche* as the thinking part of the human, and that which is immortal: 'then when death comes to a man, his mortal part, it seems, dies, but the immortal part goes away unharmed and undestroyed,

---

[19] Origen, *On First Principles*, 2 vols., trans. and ed. by John Behr (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), II, pp. 225, 229. Origen in fact seems to think of the soul as a kind of degraded Platonic intellect (p. 233). On Origen's Platonism and Christianity see: Ilaria L. E. Ramelli, 'Origen, Patristic Philosophy, and Christian Platonism: Re-Thinking the Christianisation of Hellenism', *Vililiae Christianae*, 63 (2009), 217-63.

[20] On Justinian and Irenaeus see: Nicholas Constas, ' "To Sleep, Perchance to Dream": the Middle State of Souls in Patristic and Byzantine Literature', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 55 (2001), 91-124, pp. 94-5.

[21] Augustine, *The Soliloquies of St. Augustine*, trans. and ed. by Rose Elizabeth Cleveland (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1910), pp. 89, 64, 88. On the difficult textual history of the *Soliloquies* and their early modern profile see: Julia D. Staykova, 'The Augustinian Soliloquies of an Early Modern Reader: a Stylistic Relation of Shakespeare's Hamlet?', *Literature and Theology*, 23 (2009), 121-41. But King Alfred's translation of the *Soliloquies* maintains all these senses of 'soul' as 'mind'. On Augustine cf. Brian Stock, *Augustine's Inner Dialogue: the Philosophical Soliloquy in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

[22] As Francois Bovon points out, putative versions of Purgatory are common in patristic writings ('The Soul's Comeback: Immortality and the Resurrection in Early Christianity', *The Harvard Theological Review*, 103 [2010], 387-406, p. 393).

[23] Augustine, 'Sermon 242', in *Augustine in His Own Words*, ed. by William Harmless, S. J. (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2010), p. 367. For an account of Augustinian intellectual development see: Cary, *Augustine's Invention*, passim but esp. pp. 118-19.

[24] Athenagoras, *De Resurrectione*, in *Legatio and De Resurrectione*, ed. and trans. by William R. Schoedel (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), pp. 147, 139.

[25] For a summary and assessment of the debates over how distinct the Thomist person in fact is from the soul see: Patrick Toner, 'Personhood and Death in St. Thomas Aquinas', *History of Philosophy Quarterly,* 26 (2009), 121-38.

withdrawing from death'.[26] But on the other hand for the ancient Greeks *psyche* can seem tenuous and shifting. Homeric *psyche* is what is lost at death, but is nothing like consciousness.[27] For the Epicureans *psyche* is closely linked to the conscious self, but is a material thing that dies with the body.[28] Neither can the Platonic soul, which remembers nothing of its previous lives, properly rescue the individual from abolition. Rather, Platonism with its universalising instincts claims for the soul a pure intellective existence that is, as Hankinson puts it, entirely 'disjunct from precisely those concerns […] which give an ordinary human life the structure that it has'.[29] The case is similar with Aristotle. In *De Anima*, *psyche* is that which comprises cognition, perception and belief-states' and 'appetite, wishing and the desire-states in general'.[30] But it is not so simple. 'Perhaps indeed it would be better,' the Stagirite muses, 'not to say that the soul pities or learns or thinks but that the man does *in virtue of his soul*'.[31] Similarly, though 'the mind' may be immortal and synonymous with the soul, 'when the possessor decays the mind no longer remembers or loves, these never having been affections of itself but of the body in general which has perished'.[32] Behind this reluctance to conflate immortal soul and personhood may lie, as Corcilius and Perler suggest, the fact that mental life can seem too complex to be accounted for by a single entity.[33] Yet it also seems to evince the sense that a too-close relationship with personhood would sully the soul: that identity is part of the material scene that *psyche* should transcend.

It is from this crucible of traditions that the late medieval and early modern soul emerges, and having done so it continues to be riven by uncertainties. The soul's soteriological position is without doubt central by and in the Renaissance. As Sir John Davies writes in *Nosce Teipsum*:

---

[26] Plato, *Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Phaedo, Phaedrus*, trans. and ed. by Harold North Fowler (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2014), p. 369.
[27] As David B. Claus puts it, 'in life [the Homeric *psyche*] seems to do nothing, and the experiential capacities later associated with soul are allocated across a range of entities attached to bodily organs' (*Toward the Soul: An Inquiry into the Meaning of ψυχή before Plato* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981], p. 1). Snell makes the point that in Homer there is no word for mind or unitary consciousness (*Discovery*, pp. 1-23). Cf. A. W. H. Adkins, *From the Many to the One* (London: Constable, 1970). Richard Seaford ties the development of Greek selfhood specifically to the invention of coinage, and related socioeconomic developments, between the seventh and fifth centuries BCE ('The Psyche from Homer to Plato: A Historical Sketch', in Seaford *et al*, eds., *Selfhood*, pp. 11-32).
[28] The most famous articulation is Lucretius' in *De Rerum Natura*, to which we return in chapter 4 below.
[29] Hankinson, 'Survival', p. 74. In the *Phaedo* Plato thinks of the soul as 'divine and immortal and intellectual and uniform and indissoluble' while the body is 'human' in its imperfections (p. 279).
[30] Aristotle, *De Anima (On the Soul)*, ed. and trans. by Hugh Lawson-Tancred (London: Penguin, 1986), p. 152. For an account of the soul and its parts in Aristotle see Vidal, *Sciences*, pp. 32-33.
[31] Ibid., p. 146.
[32] Ibid. According to Raymond Martin and John Barressi, although Aristotelianism and atomism do supersede the Platonic soul briefly, in the Hellenistic period the latter returns: *The Rise and Fall of Soul and Self: An Intellectual History of Personal Identity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), p. 293. For the possibility that Aristotle's ideas of soul are bastardised by the neoplatonists to include immortality claims see: Sorabji, 'Soul and Self in Ancient Philosophy', in M. James C. Crabbe, ed., *From Soul to Self* (New York, Routledge, 1999), pp. 8-32 (p. 10).
[33] Corcilius and Perler, *Partitioning*, p. 1.

None that acknowledge God or providence,

Their Soules eternitie did ever doubt;

For all religion takes her roote from hence,

Which no poore naked nation lives without. [*Nosce Teipsum*, 1837-40][34]

Though patently untrue, Davies' claim is entirely conventional. Purgatory's rise to the position of what Eamon

Duffy calls 'the defining doctrine of late medieval Catholicism' decisively establishes the soul rather than a

resurrected body as the focus of soteriological hope and anxiety, and as Norman T. Burns notes this is

something the Reformation does little to change: 'Calvin's attacks on the soul sleepers ensured that not even

the English Puritans would discard the doctrine of the continuous, conscious immortality of the soul'.[35] (Burns

here refers to the fierce sixteenth- and seventeenth-century controversies over psychopannychy, the theory

that the soul sleeps between death and resurrection, and its more extreme version mortalism.)[36] Yet that

Calvin deemed such attacks worth rebutting testifies in negative to the potency of the troubling questions in

circulation around the soul, and as Robert N. Watson notes such 'multiplying cross-accusations of heresy

within Christianity' cannot but have had a profoundly unsettling effect.[37] To add to the uncertainty, early

modern developments in natural philosophy and particularly physiology expose the soul to increasing scrutiny

as well, as Timothy Bright senses in 1585 when he complains that the 'notable fruit and successe' of new

treatments for psychological ailments such as melancholy 'hath caused some to judge more basely of the

soule, then agreeth with pietie or nature'.[38] 'The buried inconsistencies of the Christian soul', as Richard Sugg

puts it, are in the Renaissance 'increasingly laid bare by the relentless probings of early science'.[39]

~~~

So the Christian soul is riven time out of mind by countervailing demands and intractable problems. But to

note this perennial fact is also to raise the question of what lies behind the specifically early modern focus of

---

[34] Sir John Davies, *Nosce Teipsum*, in *The Poems of Sir John Davies*, ed. by Robert Krueger (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975).
[35] Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, c. 1400-c.1580* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 341; Burns, *Christian Mortalism*, p. 19.
[36] For more on these theories both in England and on the continent see: Bryan W. Ball, *The Soul Sleepers: Christian Mortalism from Wycliffe to Priestley* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co, 2008). As he points out, the Westminster Confession of Faith 1643 particularly states that the soul neither dies nor sleeps (p. 10).
[37] Robert N. Watson, *The Rest is Silence: Death as Annihilation in the English Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), p. 34.
[38] Timothy Bright, *A treatise of melancholie* (London: 1586), sig. *iij[r]. Cf. John Henry, 'The Matter of Souls: Medical Theory and Theology in Seventeenth-Century England', in Roger French and Andrew Wear, eds., *The Medical Revolution of the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 87-113.
[39] Sugg, *Smoke*, p. 4.

these chapters. One answer might argue straightforwardly from absence. Despite the considerable body of scholarship on soul-doctrine in this profoundly religious period, and notwithstanding that the gap has begun to be filled by some recent volumes from scholars including Sugg, Ramie Targoff, Stephen Greenblatt and Donovan Sherman, no study such as the present one exists that explores the Renaissance soul in terms of literary form and effect.[40] But that something does not exist need not imply that it should, and it remains worthwhile to ask why the Renaissance soul in particular merits the attention expended upon it here.

One answer would turn to the conventional Burckhardtian understanding of the Renaissance as inaugurating a modernity with the newly rational and materialist human subject at its centre. As Katharine Park and Lorraine Daston remind us, quite necessarily the Renaissance conceives of itself in terms of achieved newness rather than of incipient but not-yet-reached modernity; nevertheless, the changes that constitute this newness have at least since Burckhardt conventionally been understood to anticipate, underpin and even constitute in nascent form the contemporary.[41] 'Something happened in the Renaissance', Greenblatt writes in a book whose US subtitle is *How the World Became Modern*, 'something that surged up against the constraints that centuries had constructed around curiosity, desire, individuality, sustained attention to the material world, the claims of the body'.[42] Attending and entwined with this new focus on the material world and upon the embodied individual are the processes, described by Sugg and others, by which early modern intellectual innovations attack the immaterial soul; as Burckhardt himself puts it, indeed, 'the decline in the belief of immortality stands in the closest connection […] with the whole development of the modern spirit'.[43] By these lights, early modern literature of the soul treats of an entity – and by implication an anthropology and even an ontology as well – rapidly becoming extinct as it is supplanted by an altogether more rational, materialist and humane successor, and merits our attention principally as the locus of a decisive handover between pre-modern Christian soul and (early) modern secular subject.

---

[40] Sugg, *Smoke*; Ramie Targoff, *John Donne, Body and Soul* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2008); Stephen Greenblatt, *Hamlet in Purgatory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Donovan Sherman, *Second Death: Theatricalities of the Soul in Shakespeare's Drama* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016). Of these, however, none takes the literary soul as its specific focus: Targoff's and Greenblatt's are principally single-author studies with quite particular axes to grind, Sugg's literary interests are decidedly secondary to his theological ones (as Targoff points out in her review of the book: *Common Knowledge*, 22 [2016], single page, p. 309), and Sherman takes a rather more theoretical approach than my own to exclusively dramatic texts.

[41] Katharine Park and Lorraine Daston, 'Introduction: The Age of the New', in Park and Daston, eds., *The Cambridge History of Science*, 7 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), III, pp. 1-18 (p. 1).

[42] Stephen Greenblatt, *The Swerve: How the Renaissance Began* (London: Bodley Head, 2011), pp. 9-10.

[43] Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, ed. by Peter Burke (London: Penguin, 1990), p. 344.

This explanation does indeed go some way to accounting for the interests and directions of the chapters that follow, which are consistently drawn to the difficulties that surround their literary souls and think often about various sorts of early modern innovation. But it is also possible to overstate the uniqueness of the challenges raised to the soul in the Renaissance, as we have seen, and indeed the extent to which any resulting changes take hold in the period. We can address the latter point first. Greenblatt's Burckhardtian picture of the early modern era may be entirely conventional. Yet as Ann Thompson points out the orthodox view of the Enlightenment is strikingly similar. That later period too is conventionally 'characterized by the investigation of physical nature, rehabilitation of the body, and celebration of sensuality', she writes, and sees 'a new view of human nature […] emerging, inextricably linked to thinking about the soul' and its immateriality and immortality.[44] This is by no means fatally damaging to arguments for the Renaissance as a site of change. But that the changes understood to define it do not seem remotely achieved a century or more later – indeed that they continue, look nearly identical, and remain definitive – may raise doubts as to how decisive we can consider them to be in the Renaissance. To approach from a different chronological angle, moreover, neither is the newness of any of this clear. As Thompson notes, even as regards the Enlightenment 'an analysis of debates on the soul demonstrates that materialism was not necessarily fuelled by atheism or even deism, but was also an unintended consequence of certain, admittedly unorthodox, Christian beliefs'; and as has already become clear, in fact Christian beliefs did not have to be unorthodox or newfangled to contain latent problems for the soul.[45] It is not only, that is, that the Renaissance can seem a very early step in the progress towards materialist 'modernity'. It is also that pre-modern ages can seem far from innocent themselves of the sorts of scepticism we tend to think of as constituting that step.[46]

It is by way of this brace of observations – that the Renaissance is the site of dramatic change; that it is also a decidedly intermediate stage in much larger processes spanning antiquity, the Enlightenment and beyond; that questions of the soul's immateriality are central to these changes and processes – that we arrive at the real rationale behind our predominantly early modern interests here. Accounts such as Greenblatt's or Sugg's, in emphasising the period's newness, cannot help but downplay to the point of occlusion the presence

---

[44] Ann Thomson, *Bodies of Thought: Science, Religion, and the Soul in the Early Enlightenment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 1.
[45] Ibid., p. 2.
[46] For a comprehensive debunking of the idea that the Renaissance brings a decisive break, especially in the area of subjectivity, see: David Aers, 'A Whisper in the Ear of Early Modernists; or, Reflections on Literary Critics Writing the 'History of the Subject', in Aers, ed., *Culture and History 1350-1600: Essays on English Communities, Identities and Writing* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1992), pp. 177-202.

of the old. But here I suggest it is precisely the extent to which the period accommodates and takes seriously old and new ontologies simultaneously, and the way in which it therefore brings them into both proximity and collision, that makes such a fascinating and vexing phenomenon of its soul.[47] Here we find a Christian soul at the peak of its ontological powers, its heft having been bolstered by centuries of Purgatorial doctrine, and one whose transcendence of materiality continues to be considered with deadly seriousness by theologian and natural philosopher alike. Yet it is also one exposed as never before to intellectual inquiry of an increasingly materialist character, inquiry that takes the form of a range of new intellectual technologies: sciences of the body (touched upon in chapter 1), new cosmologies (the subject of chapter 2), new ways of thinking about and disciplining the subject, such as conduct books (chapter 3), and experimentalist and atomist new philosophy (chapter 4). So we might say that Renaissance literature of the soul merits our particular attention not because 'something happened' during the period, comprehensively demolishing immaterial relics like the soul and moving decisively forward into materialist modernity. Rather, the soul of the period is especially interesting owing to the degree to which it is in flux. Something is happening in the Renaissance, certainly, and the soul's immateriality or otherwise is crucial to that something. But the issue is as yet unclear.

~~~

Already it should be clear that these chapters will be interested in issues of materiality and divided subjecthood: in the ability of the early modern soul to represent a coherent human self transcendent of matter, and in the ways in which that ability is compromised. With the benefit of hindsight these compromises can – and often will below – look like failures. Yet for the Renaissance the soul and its immateriality are decidedly not inevitable failures: rather, entity and property alike are the objects of earnest consideration and investigation. Here we endeavour to think of them with similar seriousness. That is, throughout these pages' frequently damning examinations of the immaterial soul we also take it seriously as a representation of an immaterial and unified self – or at least as an *attempt* at such. In this regard a few words will be necessary to set out the attitude of this thesis to the late-twentieth-century (and to a significant degree continuing) materialist and poststructuralist turn in scholarship of the early modern period.

---

[47] In a recent discussion of Giotto, whom he calls 'the Shakespeare of painting', T. J. Clark puts the matter rather nicely. In this period there coexists the modern-tending urge towards materialism ('the drive to match more and more of the detail and substance of the material world'), he writes, and 'that great palimpsest of popular and elite understandings' that is the Middle Ages (*Heaven on Earth: Painting and the Life to Come* [London: Thames & Hudson, 2018], p. 48).

Both New Historicism and Cultural Materialism are characterised by the impulse to historicize in materially-inflected ways, insistently re-embedding fictive literary productions into the socioeconomic milieux of their original production. Their approaches to the self, exemplified by Stephen Greenblatt's *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* and Catherine Belsey's *The Subject of Tragedy*, posit an early modern subject whose interiority is in different ways constructed by, within and against its socioeconomic and discursive contexts.[48] Another trend, one that has mirrored and drawn upon the efflorescence of material culture studies as a discipline since the 1990s, has been more explicitly materialist in its conception of early modern subjectivity. 'In our haste to find a modern subject' in the Renaissance, as Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass put it, we have assumed that '[…] subjects are prior to objects, wearers to what is worn'.[49] This is wrong, argue Stallybrass and the other editors of the seminal collection *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture*, and has 'slighted' objecthood: the subject should not be 'assumed to be prior to and independent of objects' so that 'criticism can attend to a dialectic in which subjects and objects reciprocally take and make each other over'.[50] In all these accounts the embrace of historical difference and material context manifests as a refusal to project backwards modern, post-Cartesian notions of the subject as 'untrammelled by the objects that surround [it]' and to think of it rather as the product of its material contexts.[51] To various degrees all these materialisms and historicisms, and their approaches to subjecthood, endorse a poststructuralist sense, derived particularly from Foucault, of an illusory unified subject structured by and fundamentally divided against itself by processes of discourse that seek to subjugate it.[52]

Another important strand of commentary in which early modern selfhood has recently been reconceived as a material phenomenon thinks in terms of biological experience. Here the focus is upon humoral physiology, which in Nancy Siraisi's view 'is probably the single most striking example of the habitual preference in ancient, medieval, and Renaissance medicine for materialist explanations of mental and emotional states'.[53] Among the most influential scholars to have taken up this contention are Gail Kern Paster

---

[48] Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980); Catherine Belsey, *The Subject of Tragedy: Identity and Difference in Renaissance Drama* (London: Methuen, 1985).

[49] Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 3, 2.

[50] Margreta de Grazia, Maureen Quilligan and Peter Stallybrass, eds., *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 2, 8.

[51] Jones and Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing*, p. 3.

[52] We return to Foucault in chapter 3.

[53] Nancy G. Siraisi, *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine: an Introduction to Knowledge and Practice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), p. 106.

and Michael C. Schoenfeldt. In the words of the latter, both understand 'bodily condition, subjective state, and psychological character [to be] in this earlier regime fully imbricated' in ways that post-Cartesian modernity struggles to understand; 'in this discourse [of humoralism]', Paster writes, 'the purportedly immaterial subject is constituted as a profoundly material substance'.[54] Ultimately what these critics want to challenge, like Stallybrass and Belsey *et al*, is the projection of a disembodied Cartesian subject back onto an age to which they insist it is an anachronism, and to dislodge false essentialist assumptions about the nature of human experience as a whole. As Peter Brown puts it, for these approaches humoral physiology generates bodies 'totally unlike those of modern persons'.[55]

Our understanding of the Renaissance and its literature have been greatly enriched by these approaches, and there is much in what follows that chimes with them resoundingly. Yet their strident sense of pervasive materiality and embarrassment at the prospect of anything that is not an object have also had deleterious effects. These have been registered by a number of scholars. The tendency of outright materialisms to subsume personhood in general has been well noted by, among others, Katharine Eisaman Maus and David Hawkes. As Maus points out, it is one thing to argue for 'a connection between property and person' but quite another to shade, as materialisms frequently do, into the sense 'that they are identical, or that the latter may simply be reduced to the former'.[56] Hawkes critiques what he sees as the contradiction between materialism's tendency to think of individuals as materials and the progressive politics with which it tends to align itself: 'it is wrong', he writes, 'to treat people as things and evil to treat objects as if they were alive'.[57] Watson criticizes more generally the subtending wish to posit unbridgeable gaps in individual experience from era to era. Whether or not past conceptions of the body and the subject have differed from contemporary ones, he insists, ' "humanity" is a legitimate experiential category apart from local cultural configurations'.[58] While opening up views onto historical difference and distinction, he suggests, Foucault-

---

54 Michael C. Schoenfeldt, *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England: Physiology and Inwardness in Spenser, Shakespeare, Herbert, and Milton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 1; Gail Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), p. 20.

55 Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), p. 17. He writes here of an earlier age, but as every scholar of humoralism notes the system remains virtually unchanged from Galen through to the mid-seventeenth century. For the early modern ubiquity of Galen's works see: Andrew Wear, 'Medicine in Early Modern Europe, 1500-1700', in *The Western Medical Tradition 800 BC to AD 1800*, ed. by Lawrence I. Conrad *et al* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 215-341 (p. 253).

56 Katharine Eisaman Maus, *Being and Having in Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 5.

57 David Hawkes, 'Materialism and Reification in Renaissance Studies', *Journal of Early Modern Cultural Studies*, 4 (2004), 114-29, p. 116.

58 Watson, *Rest*, p. 20.

indebted critical approaches also close others down in their relentless assumption of the past's essential otherness.[59]

Concerned here as we are with the immaterial personhood of the Christian soul, it is particularly important that such critical approaches as the above have struggled to account for religion's claims to offer transcendence of the material scene. As Julia Reinhard Lupton writes, in materialist and historicist approaches the religious experience is 'occluded, reduced, or secularized'.[60] Their tendency to 'elide the numinous', Kristen Poole argues, has led to a 'profoundly lopsided analysis' of a period to which divinity is central.[61] As Ken Jackson and Arthur F. Marotti point out,

> historians and literary scholars who have discussed religious material in political analyses of early modern texts and
> history […] approach religion *and* politics as religion *as* politics. They adopt the stance of analytic observers who
> know how to decode religious language and ideas as mystifications of economic, political, and social conditions and
> relationships, usually assuming that religion itself is a form of "false consciousness".

They go on to detect a latent hypocrisy in critical positions that insist upon historical difference yet also evince a presentism that refuses to take seriously the religious beliefs that are in fact so central to the 'large and alien cultural landscape of early modern England'.[62] The trend merits illustration by a couple of examples. Take Greenblatt, for one, who attends closely to religious doctrine and experience. Yet it is telling that when doing so he thinks of religion as a form of fiction and gravitates not towards immateriality but to its failures: the wafer-material that is left behind after the miracle of the Eucharist, for instance, is what interests him more than transubstantiation itself.[63] Indeed, it is noteworthy that the religion considered by New Historicism in general is always in the process of being lost or replaced by something newer and more modern.[64] Alternatively, we might turn back to Siraisi's suggestion that humoralism is evidence of the materialism of medieval and early modern self-conception. To bolster the force of that evidence she immediately afterwards writes that critics of all religious and philosophical stripes 'took Galen to task for psychological materialism; they believed that the theory of temperament or complexion implied that material causes (the elements)

---

[59] Ibid.
[60] Julia Reinhard Lupton, 'The Religious Turn (To Theory) in Shakespeare Studies', *English Language Notes*, 44 (2006), 145-149, p. 146.
[61] Kristen Poole, *Supernatural Environments in Shakespeare's England: Spaces of Demonism, Divinity, and Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 198-99.
[62] Ken Jackson and Arthur F. Marotti, 'The Turn to Religion in Early Modern English Studies', *Criticism*, 46 (2004), 167-90, p. 168.
[63] He returns to the subject at various points, but for example see: Greenblatt, 'Remnants of the Sacred in Early Modern England', in de Grazia *et al*, eds., *Subject and Object*, pp. 337-48.
[64] For example see Greenblatt, *Hamlet*.

determined the nature of the human soul and moral qualities, and they objected on philosophical or religious grounds'.[65] Here we are expected to take centuries of religious claims to the transcendence of materiality – claims that to some large degree interpret, inform and structure the lived experience of millions – not as a sign of the powerful weight of such claims but only as evidence of the materialisms that countervail them.

To be sure, these chapters consider how early modern literature of the soul thinks critically about the capacities of its supposedly immaterial subject, and in doing so they come into frequent alignment with recent historicisms and materialisms. Yet they are also cognizant that in its emphasis upon the soul's elusiveness and potential materiality such commentary in fact only reproduces and heavily foregrounds perplexities that haunt the Renaissance as well, and that it can fail to take into account the deeply-held religious convictions in the context of which those perplexities obtain. This last in particular is a failure of vision these chapters seek to avoid. Throughout, they share Jackson and Marotti's conviction that religion is 'a deep psychological and emotional experience, a core moral commitment, a personally and socially crucial way of transvaluing human experience and desire, a reality both within and beyond the phenomenal world'.[66] The soul of the early modern period is just such a reality, contested and fraught as it may be, and even as we explore its potential failures and contradictions we here endeavour to credit as well its realness.

Each of the chapters below is a case-study of a different early modern soul in a different literary context, and in each of them we find negotiated in different ways the problematic separation of the immaterial soul from the material field with which it is involved yet which it must transcend. The first examines the tradition of soul and body dialogues that runs from the tenth century to the seventeenth, culminating in Andrew Marvell's gruesome 'A Dialogue of the Soul and Body'. The genre's premise is starkly dualistic. Yet throughout the centuries that dualistic scenario seems to represent as much an opportunity for the dissection of the assumptions that subtend it as for their confirmation, and here we examine in depth two poems that do so in especially literary ways. Chapter 2 reads side-by-side John Donne's *Anniversary* poems and René Descartes' *Discourse on Method*. The soul's transcendence of the material world is of the utmost significance for both: indeed, for both a particularly literary soul is what reframes, in numerous senses, a material scene that has become fatally suspect, and seems to do so through spatial movement. Yet for all its transcendence of

---

[65] Siraisi, *Medieval*, p. 106.

[66] Jackson and Marotti, 'Turn', p. 169.

material these souls still seem stubbornly involved with the material world, and such involvement preoccupies chapter 3 as well. Here we turn to a soul generated in discourse not of transcendence but of abjection. From the psalms onwards Christian authors address their wayward souls, and the chapter's first half works to locate this apparently devotional inner moment within the burgeoning early modern literature of discipline; the second maps the rhetorical structures that moment generates as they occur within lyric poetry, arguing that in this particular mode it makes peculiar demands upon the reader that allow us to read the form in more transhistorical narratives of disciplinarity. In a final chapter we turn to *Hamlet*. Central to the play is a ghostly soul that transcends the body and that rescues the self from death. Yet it also fixates upon the relations of that soul to the material world of Elsinore, and returns repeatedly – and ultimately – by way of its interest in atomistic natural philosophy to the possibility that in being immaterial the soul might in fact not exist at all.

Chapter 1

Dualism & Its Discontents: The Poetics of Soul & Body from Anglo-Saxon to Early Modern England

I

In her 1653 collection *Poems, and Fancies* Margaret Cavendish thinks about a divided soul and body on two

principal occasions. One is an optimistic vignette of eight lines entitled 'Soule, and Body'. Here the '*Soule*' is

'cloath[ed]' in the body's '*Fleshly Garment*', and when 'these *Garments* are growne old [...] *Death* takes them

off with care', laying them within the '*Earthly Chest*' of the grave where it 'scoures them, and makes them

sweet, and cleane' so that the soul can wear them again, presumably at the Resurrection.[1] But this congenial

relationship between material and psychic human components is not the one usually depicted in Christian

literature, and nor is the brief descriptive poem the form that such depictions typically take. With that

tradition another poem from the collection is more of a piece, where Cavendish imagines a contrastingly

acrimonious dynamic and renders it at considerably more length in the form of a debate.[2] As 'A Dialogue

betwixt the Body, and the Mind' opens, the body complains of its companion's restiveness (it '*Ebbs*, and

flowes, with full, and falling *Tide*' of dejection and pride [3-4]) and of the '*Showers* of *doubts*' and 'deepe vast

Studies' in which as a result the body's '*Barque* of *flesh* is drown'd' (13-14). In response the mind extends the

seafaring theme to argue that since 'in the *World* [the body's] *Barque* is bound to swim' the body has the mind

to thank for steering it clear of 'hard *Rocks*' (17-19). But the body rebuts this claim on the grounds that the

mind saves it from the '*Watry Maine*' only to lead it in the name of '*Ambition*' and '*Fame*' into '*Battels*' and

eventually 'a *Grave*' (25-30). Some further argument leads to no definitive conclusion, though overall the body

seems to prevail.

---

[1] Margaret Cavendish, *Poems, and Fancies* (London: 1653), sig. S4ʳ.
[2] The poem begins at sig. I3ᵛ. It bears noting that here the dualism is between body and mind rather than soul, but Cavendish does seem to assume the general conflation of the two. For more on Cavendish and the soul, see: Holly Faith Nelson, ' "A Good Christian, and a Good Natural Philosopher": Margaret Cavendish's Theory of the Soul(s) in the Early Enlightenment', *Studies in Philology*, 113 (2016), 947-68; Jay Stevenson, 'The Mechanist-Vitalist Soul of Margaret Cavendish', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 36 (1996), 527-43. It is also noteworthy that elsewhere Cavendish takes a less straightforwardly dualist approach: in 'The Animall Parliament', for instance, 'the Soul call[s] a Parliament in his Animal Kingdom, which Parliament consisteth of three parts, the Soul, the Body, and the Thoughts; which are Will, Imaginations, and Passions' (sig. Iiʳ).

Cavendish here adapts the longstanding soul and body debate tradition, and it is of this tradition, one of Christian literature's most sustained and extensive considerations of the issue of anthropological dualism, that the chapter at hand provides an alternative account.[3] Indeed, that the form represents particularly a *sustained* tradition across the medieval and early modern periods is one plank of the argument these pages advance, reversing the usual scholarly emphasis on the shifts the form undergoes between those eras. Though the genre undoubtedly reaches the apogee of its popularity in the high and late Middle Ages – Thomas L. Reed, Jr. calls it 'an inexhaustibly popular medieval subgenre' – as the case of Cavendish suggests it also retains its basic form as well as its power to compel well into the second half of the seventeenth century.[4] Yet Rosalie Osmond, in the only substantial survey of the entire tradition, endorses a general if tacit emphasis upon difference, writing that the early modern form is 'indebted to the medieval debate [… but] can in no sense be termed a revival'.[5] That there are considerable shifts between the two eras is certain, and these the first section of this chapter explores in detail. Nevertheless, it is my suggestion that the form's concerns remain more consistent than is usually supposed, and that attentiveness to that consistency reveals significant things about the genre as a whole and the anthropology it represents. To that end we approach the tradition here from its most extreme historical margins, by way of two poems usually though in opposite ways understood to stand apart from it and which have as a result never been considered together. These are the tenth-century Old English poem *Soul & Body*, the earliest and most apparently rudimentary English example of the trope extant, and Andrew Marvell's playful and sophisticated mid-seventeenth-century 'A Dialogue Between the Soul and the Body'.

To think in more detail about why the two works have not previously been considered together is itself suggestive. *Soul & Body*, which leaves the body apparently voiceless and does not stage a debate as such at all, is regarded for the most part as an underdeveloped precursor devoid of subtlety or literary interest. C. L. Wrenn considers it 'a simple homily', for example, and S. A. J. Bradley dismisses it as 'prosaic and uninventive'.[6] It is the poem's perceived simplemindedness, usually understood as of a piece with and the

---

[3] Cavendish's approach is idiosyncratic, as her work tends to be, and its particular concerns – unhappy introspection, physical danger, ambition – are quite different to those of the texts that will be our focus here; nevertheless, in its form and tone alike the poem does evoke those texts.

[4] Thomas L. Reed, Jr., *Middle English Debate Poetry and the Aesthetics of Irresolution* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1990), p. 1.

[5] Rosalie Osmond, *Mutual Accusation: Seventeenth-Century Body and Soul Dialogues in Their Literary and Theological Context* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), p. 100.

[6] C. L. Wrenn, *A Study of Old English Literature* (London: Harrap, 1967), p. 156; S. A. J. Bradley, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Poetry* (London: Dent, 1995), p. 359.

result of its monologic form, that has led to what Moffat calls the general 'sparseness' of commentary upon the poem in contrast with that upon later medieval dialogues.[7] Marvell's dialogue, on the other hand, where we do find a proper exchange of views, is considered marginal for reasons that are exactly converse. In its elaborateness and sophistication, and in particular in its sense of the difficulty and irresolution of the soul and body relationship, it is typically seen as pushing the form to extremes that in fact exceed it: that is, the poem is not part of the medieval tradition but rather an early modern subversion of or comment upon it. As Rosalie L. Colie puts it, 'A Dialogue' is a work in which Marvell 'exhausts' a genre, 'his inspection of the psychological meanings of the form lead[ing] him to question the simple Manicheism underlying its structure'.[8] Here, then, are two poems that sit more than six centuries apart, at two extremes of a literary form with which they are usually supposed to exist in only compromised relation; certainly they seem not to have between them anything more than the most general kinship. One seems entirely and simplistically invested in the dualistic anthropology upon which it is premised; the other to be motivated principally by scepticism about that premise.

Yet I suggest that the two poems are more resonant than they might seem, and are so in ways that are revealing about the literary tradition at hand and about the apparently straightforward dualism it seems to endorse. Jacob Riyeff may write that 'the Christian understanding of the human person in the [medieval] period and reflected in the body-and-soul theme *was* dualistic' (original emphasis) since in general 'the Christian understanding of the human person's destiny […] necessitates' such a view.[9] Yet as the introduction above has sketched, that Christian dualism is far from straightforward, and any sense of the soul and body tradition's anthropology as simplistic has very little basis in reality. Rather, we shall see that the genre adopts a markedly sceptical stance towards the dualism upon which it is apparently based, with the separated soul and body dwelling upon the difficulty of the ethical divisions involved and even on the basic physical problems that arise in distinguishing the two entities. What follows that survey are close readings of both *Soul & Body* and 'A

---

[7] Douglas Moffat, *The Old English Soul and Body* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 1990) pp. 36-38. We think in more depth about the monologic character of *Soul & Body* below, but the scholarly assumptions to which it has given rise are beyond doubt. In 1890 J. D. Bruce makes the categorical distinction between works 'in which the soul addresses the body', of which *Soul & Body* is the prime example, and 'those in which the body replies and to which alone the title of dialogue is properly applicable' ('A Contribution to the Study of "The Body and the Soul": Poems in English', *Modern Language Notes*, 5 [1890], 193-201, p. 193); note that he selects not a neutral term such as 'categories' but the hierarchical 'classes', thus attaching 'properness' only to the dialogues. The hierarchy has largely held, as John W. Conlee demonstrates when he refers to *Soul & Body* as merely 'rather [a] brief monologue' (*Middle English Debate Poetry: A Critical Anthology* [East Lansing, 1991], p. XXV).

[8] Rosalie L. Colie, *My Ecchoing Song: Andrew Marvell's Poetry of Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), p. 57.

[9] Jacob Riyeff, 'Dualism in Old English Literature: the Body-and-Soul Theme and Vercelli Homily IV', *Studies in Philology*, 112 (2015), 453-68, pp. 455-57.

Dialogue' that highlight their especial focus upon those physical difficulties. That Marvell's poem evinces a difficult sense of its premise is a commonplace: indeed, it can seem the poem's entire point.[10] But the argument this chapter advances is that *Soul & Body*, despite its reputation for simplemindedness, expresses the same ambivalences as its medieval and early modern successors. Indeed, I suggest that what links it with 'A Dialogue' in particular is a specifically *poetic* rendering of those ambivalences that is not general to the form as a whole. Elsewhere in the tradition the difficulties and contradictions of the division of soul and body are explicitly discussed. But in these two poems we find the problems worked through by way rather of an intense focus upon the metaphors by which the physical division of soul and body is conventionally figured. In their quite different ways, and with apparently quite different intents, from this standard figurative vocabulary each poem develops a poetics that blurs and problematizes the division that the vocabulary ostensibly describes.

The originality of the chapter's approach is twofold. First, it incorporates two outlier texts that are usually treated as exceptional into a unified account of the entire genre's representation of anthropological dualism. Accounts of the form that think across the medieval and Renaissance divide do exist. Osmond's study is one example, and Michael J. West and others have sought at least briefly to place particular early modern works in the context of their medieval heritage.[11] But hitherto no account of the whole has devoted serious attention to both *Soul & Body* and 'A Dialogue' as examples that in their marginality might have meaningful things to reveal about the tradition to which they are marginal. The second, linked originality lies in attending closely to the particularly literary characteristics of the form. Scholarship on the medieval tradition nearly always approaches the poems more as doctrinal artefacts than works of literary art. Though occasional scholars, including Michel-André Bossy, have argued for its literary interest, even there the emphasis tends to skew doctrinal, and the consensus remains that (as Osmond writes) the 'most significant aspect' of the form as a whole is 'the intense [doctrinal] interest that underlays' it.[12] This may be true, indeed, in the vast majority of cases, where anthropological issues are explicitly debated without generating much in the way of literary effect. But by placing *Soul & Body* and 'A Dialogue' side by side this chapter argues that the soul and body form can reward more purely literary attention as well.

---

[10] This is frequently noted. Christopher Ricks emphasises such difficulty, for example: 'Its own resemblance', in C. A. Patrides, ed., *Approaches to Marvell: The York Tercentenary Lectures* (London: Routledge, 1978), pp. 108-37 (esp. pp. 113-15).
[11] Michael J. West, 'The Internal Dialogue of Shakespeare's Sonnet 146', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 25 (1974), 109-22.
[12] Michel-André Bossy, 'Medieval Debates of Body and Soul', *Comparative Literature*, 28 (1976), 144-63. Osmond, *Mutual*, p. 51.

The soul and body trope itself is ancient and ubiquitous. Reed suggests Egyptian origins, and Sebastian P. Brock traces it to Mesopotamia in or before the fifth century BCE.[13] But within the Christian tradition the scenario of a post-mortem encounter between a soul and its erstwhile body seems to derive from two late antique texts, the *Homily of Macarius* and, principally, the *Visio Pauli* or *Apocalypse of Paul*.[14] In the former, St Macarius is walking with two angels when they come upon a corpse whose putrefaction prompts the angels to explain to him the link between sin and physical decay; later medieval versions of this narrative incorporate addresses from both a saved and a damned soul to their bodies.[15] In the latter, a piece of New Testament apocrypha whose considerable profile throughout the Middle Ages is attested by condemnations from both Augustine and Aelfric, St Paul is given a tour of the universe. Among the spectacles he observes over the course of it are virtuous and sinful souls departing their bodies before progressing to the gates of Heaven, there to be welcomed or soundly rebuked.[16]

The orthodox association of the literary form that descends from these texts with the medieval period is in many respects well-founded. 'A preoccupation with the interaction of opposites is perhaps nowhere more evident than during the Middle Ages', as John W. Conlee puts it, and according to Robert W. Ackerman the soul and body theme is 'the most popular and widespread of all' among the multifarious debate topics and scenarios generated by this preoccupation.[17] But reasons for the trope's particular medieval appeal go beyond its fundamental dialectical structure. The literature of the Middle Ages has a general propensity for various kinds of personification (we need only think of *The Owl and the Nightingale* or Henryson's *Aige and Yowth*),

---

[13] Reed, *Middle English,* p. 1. Sebastian P. Brock, 'The Dispute Between Soul and Body: An Example of a Long-Lived Mesopotamian Literary Genre', *Aram*, 1 (1989), 53-64. See also: Claudia Di Sciacca, 'The "Ubi Sunt" Motif and the Soul-and-Body Legend in Old English Homilies: Sources and Relationships', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 105 (2006), 365-87, p. 366.

[14] Though some scholars adjust this lineage somewhat. See: Rosemary Woolf, *The English Religious Lyric in the Middle* Ages (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 90-91.

[15] For more on the homily see: Osmond, *Mutual*, p. 57.

[16] The *Visio Pauli* is available in translation in: Philip Schaffe, ed. and trans., *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, electronic reprint ed., 10 vols. (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 2001), IX. For more detail on the transmission of such apocryphal texts in the Middle Ages see: Malcolm Godden, 'Aelfric & the Vernacular Prose Tradition', in Paul E. Szarmach and Bernard Felix Huppe, eds., *Old English Homily and Its Background* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1978), pp. 99-118 (p. 101); Frederick M. Biggs, ed., *Sources of Anglo-Saxon Culture: The Apocrypha* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2007).

[17] Conlee, *Middle English*, p. xi. Robert W. Ackerman, 'The Debate of the Body and the Soul and Parochial Christianity', *Speculum*, 37 (1962), 541-65, pp. 542-3.

and the entities of soul and body, each not a person yet each something quite like one, are in obvious ways especially amenable to such representation.[18] Further, as J. D. Bruce puts it, 'there are few more characteristic embodiments of the religious spirit of the Middle Ages than that found in [this] large class of poems'.[19] That is, the division of and struggle between soul and body figures vividly the opposition of piety and worldliness that structures much medieval religious thought, and thus provides a convenient fictive frame for conventionally homiletic materials; in particular, its post-mortem setting offers unique scope for gory illustration of the corruption to which worldliness leads. A telling marker of the prominence that springs from all this, indeed, is that the soul and body trope is not only peerlessly popular itself but provides inspiration and even materials for other similar works, including the Old English text *The Grave* and the Middle English *A Disputacioun Betwyx þe Body and Wormes* (Fig. 1).[20]

This medieval tradition is not in the least uniform. As we have noted, the Old English *Soul and Body* is usually considered an address rather than a debate since in it only the soul speaks.[21] Neither do we find there the narrative frames that adorn the texts of later centuries. But by the late eleventh- or early twelfth-century developments have occurred in both regards. In the Latin text found in British Museum MS Royal 7 A III, a text known as the *Royal Debate* or by its incipit '*Nuper huiuscemodi visionem somnii*', the dialogue-form has established itself, and though the relation between the texts is uncertain the very widely circulated thirteenth-century Latin poem known as the *Visio Philiberti* takes that form as well.[22] In both cases there is also increased narrative detail, as we shall shortly see. Yet even amongst these later texts there is significant variation. The *Royal Debate* describes the moment of death and a specifically childlike soul, for example, whereas the *Visio* texts and the Middle English versions derived from them open shortly after death or feature a soul that is returning to its body after a period away from it. (The latter have this chronological setting in common with *Soul & Body*, where we are told specifically that the soul returns to the body every seventh night.) Formally as well the tradition varies. Even discounting for the moment the monologic *Soul & Body*, at one extreme there

---

[18] Though she does not make precisely this point, for Osmond the ability to imagine abstract things as vividly personified underwrites the medieval appeal of the soul and body genre: 'Body and Soul Dialogues in the Seventeenth Century', *English Literary Renaissance*, 4 (1974), 364-403, p. 371.
[19] Bruce, 'A Contribution', p. 193.
[20] On *The Grave* see: Louise Dudley, 'The Grave', *Modern Philology*, 11 (1914), 429-442. Jenny Rebecca Rytting translates and comments upon 'A Disputacioun' in: 'A Disputacioun Betwyx þe Body and Wormes: A Translation', *Comitatus: A Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 31 (2000), 1-16.
[21] Though the dialogue form comes to dominate, Reed notes that *Soul & Body* spawns some imitators of its own (*Middle English*, p. 157).
[22] Eleanor Kellogg Heningham translates and analyses the *Royal Debate* in *An Early Latin Debate of the Body and Soul, Preserved in MS Royal 7 A III in the British Museum* (New York: published by the author, 1939). The *Visio* is examined in depth below.

Top, Fig. 2. The visibly malodorous body groans upright in the *Visio Philiberti* (Cambridge University Library MS Add 3093, fol. 3ʳ).

Left, Fig. 1. Illustration of a transi tomb accompanying *The Disputacione betwyx the Body and the Wormes* (British Library MS Add 37049, fol. 32ᵛ).

Bottom, Fig. 3. The soul is dragged towards Hell-Mouth by devils (Ibid., fol. 6ᵛ).

are the Royal Debate's lengthy passages – each entity speaks only once – and at the other the alternating four-line stanzas found in the Middle English 'In a thestri stude Y stod', a poem which culminates in a description by the soul of Judgement Day.[23]

From amidst this welter of variation the medieval debate we take as exemplar here is the Latin *Visio Philiberti*. Extant in slightly divergent versions in more than 131 manuscripts, and the basis for the Middle English 'Als y lay in a winteris nyt' and related works, it is among the most widely circulated of all medieval poems and represents something like the apotheosis of the medieval soul and body tradition.[24] Set on the winter solstice, it relates a dream vision granted to a hermit named Philibert or Fulbert – in other versions the visionary is St Bernard, in others still an unnamed individual – of a recently-departed soul remonstrating with its body for the latter's worldly failings.[25] It opens:

> Long ago there was a certain man, a recluse, Fulbert, born a Frenchman, whose fair life, while he lived in the world, was thus spent apart; and verily the words he spake were words of wisdom. He was, indeed, a king's son, who for the whole space of his earthly life withdrew himself from the evils of the world. And this was the vision which appeared to him.[26]

The recluse now assumes the role of narrator and relates the unusual exchange that he witnesses 'in the stillness of a winter's night, while little devoted to sleep': 'a body bereft of the breath of life' being harangued by its soul, 'lately come out of the body I have spoken of, weighed down by sins'. In its upbraiding the soul focuses with particular intensity on worldly transience, and *ubi sunt* rhetoric gives its oratory a strongly homiletic flavour:

---

[23] This poem can be found alongside a translation in: Susanna Greer Fein *et al*, ed. and trans., *The Complete Harley 2253 Manuscript*, 3 vols. (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2014), II.

[24] On the prominence of the *Visio* in the manuscript record see: Neil Cartlidge, 'In the Silence of a Midwinter Night: A Re-Evaluation of the *Visio Philiberti*', *Medium Aevum*, 75 (2006), 24-45, pp. 24-25. The poem is most readily available in Thomas Wright's 1841 edition *The Latin Poems Commonly Attributed to Walter Mapes* (London: The Camden Society, 1841), which prints a 312-line version based on the thirteenth-century BL MS Harley 978, as Cartlidge agrees 'certainly one of the oldest extant manuscripts containing the poem' (p. 27).

[25] As Cartlidge points out, in fact, the poem has been 'equally unreliably attributed to Robert Grosseteste and St Bernard as well as to Mapes' (p. 27), and indeed the Harley manuscript does not include either the Philibert or Bernard incipits. Wright titles the poem 'Dialogus inter Corpus et Animam' and gives the 'Philiberti' tag only by way of a note quoting T. G. von Karajan's 1839 edition *Frühlingsgabe für Freunde älterer Literatur*, which includes a Viennese manuscript's version of the work that does feature Philibert (the *Visio Philiberti* appellation is Karajan's taxonomic invention).

[26] I quote Clark Sutherland Northup's prose translation of the *Visio*: 'Dialogus Inter Corpus et Animam: A Fragment and a Translation', *PMLA*, 16 (1901), 503-25, p. 516. (Northup translates a slightly different version than that printed by Wright, but does so with constant reference to Wright's.) Further references to the translation are given parenthetically in the main text.

> Oh, wretched Flesh, who hath brought thee thus low – thee, whom the world enriched with so many estates? But
>
> yesterday did not the world lie beneath thy feet? Did not the whole province stand in awe of thee? Where now is
>
> the troop of slaves that followed at thy heels?

The soul goes on to regret its decline from a nobility 'in the likeness of the Lord' to being 'sore disfigured by [the body's] crimes', accuses the body of consigning them both to hell, expresses the desirability of non-existence if not death – 'Would that I had been borne at once to the grave!' – and attests to the inexpressibility of its torment: 'not a tongue in all the world could describe the least single one of the torments which unhappy I endure' (516-17).

This long initial attack from the soul fills approximately 90 lines. But in a response of around half that length the groaning corpse sits up (Fig. 2) and argues that it cannot properly be held responsible for what not only the soul but Philibert himself has referred to as its 'vile deeds' (516): 'not wholly true are the things thou chatterest; for I shall prove more fully, with clear arguments, that though some things may be true, on many points thou speakest nonsense' (518). These arguments hinge upon the fact that the soul was in charge all along and is thus culpable for the bodily impulses that in life went unrestrained:

> as thou has just said, God created thee both good and noble, endowed thee with sense, and at the same time
>
> formed thee in his own likeness, and gave me to be thy maidservant. Therefore, if thou wast created mistress, and
>
> wast endowed with reason, by which thou shouldst rule us in the world, why didst thou smile upon my unlawful
>
> pleasures and not protest? Not the body, but the soul, doth justice condemn. [519]

The body will go on to be more explicit on this point, arguing not only from responsibility but ability itself: 'when the soul has left the body', it asks, 'what is the body? Does is it move itself afterward either forthwith or seldom? Does it see, or does it speak?' (521). Indeed, the body has already answered its own questions: 'the body can do nothing without the soul', it has earlier pointed out, 'by whose aid it is kept alive'; without the soul the body merely 'sleeps the sleep of death' (519), and so confident is the body in this argument that its locution ends on a triumphant 'Yield thee, Soul!' But that confidence notwithstanding, and despite concessions on both sides, the argument between the two continues inconclusively in the same vein, before moving on briefly to an account of the soul's post-mortem torments and the impossibility of its redemption. Eventually devils appear to transport the soul back to its place of punishment, and here the inexpressibility topos re-emerges. Just as the soul's torments exceed expression earlier in the poem so are these fiends indescribable,

32

'whom all the writers in the world could not describe fully nor all the painters clearly paint' – though that does not prevent some manuscripts from including illustrations (Fig. 3) nor Philibert from invoking 'mouths belching sulphurous fire', 'teeth like grub-axes', 'nostrils [from which] snakes seemed to dart', 'huge ears flowing with gore' and many horrors besides (522). He then awakens, suitably shaken, with a reinvigorated determination to abjure worldly things in favour of spiritual virtue. 'I put away the world with its empty trifles', he relates, 'I renounced all transitory things; and I commended myself wholly to the hands of Christ' (523).[27]

~~~

This generic model does not entirely disappear in the Renaissance. The 'St Bernard's Vision' ballad that appears in the mid-seventeenth century (Fig. 4) reproduces the *Visio Philiberti* in abbreviated form, apparently from William Crashaw's translation that itself goes into four editions between 1613 and 1632.[28] But the few versions that are of genuine early modern provenance look very different indeed.[29] Though no similarly period-exemplary case as the *Visio* exists, the most obvious general departure, as the case of Cavendish suggests, is that the encounter has moved from a post- to a pre-mortem setting. This is consistent across Marvell's 'A Dialogue', James Howell's *The Vision, Or, A Dialog Between the Soul and the Bodie*, Cavendish's debate, and an anonymous example included in Francis Davison's 1602 anthology *A Poetical Rapsody*; it is also the case in works more tangentially related to the tradition, such as Shakespeare's sonnet 146 and mid-century works by Humphrey Mill and William Prynne.[30] Osmond's suggestion that this development is a sign of the 'life-directed' energies of the Renaissance seems rather doubtful; more plausible is that, post-Reformation, the prospect of a returning soul becomes a more difficult one, but that the increasing early modern identification of soul with mind mean that the separation of soul and body can be effected by other imaginative means than death.[31] But

---

[27] The manuscript Northup translates continues with a final section, as he notes almost certainly an extraneous later addition, mourning the decline of the world as a whole.

[28] *Saint BERNARD'S Vision. (A brief Discourse Dialogue-wise) between the Soul and body of a Damned Man newly Deceased, laying the faults one upon other: With a Speech of the Devils in Hell* (London: 1640); William Crashaw, *The Complaint or Dialogue, Betwixt The Soule and the Bodie of a Damned Man. Each Laying the Fault Upon the Other* (London: 1622). (Crashaw's full title in fact attributes it as *'Supposed to be written by S. Bernard from a nightly vision of his, and now published out of an ancient Manuscript Copie'*.)

[29] For a fuller account of the genre in the seventeenth century see Osmond, *Mutual*, pp. 84-107.

[30] James Howell, *The Vision, Or, A Dialog Between the Soul and the Bodie. Fancied in a Morning-Dream* (London: 1651); Francis Davison, *A Poetical Rapsody* (London: 1602), sig. I12ʳ; Humphrey Mill, *Poems occasioned by a melancholy vision* (London: 1639), sig. I5ᵛ⁻ʳ; William Prynne, *Mount-Orgueil: or Divine and profitable meditations* (London: 1641), sig. Z4ʳ-Aa4ᵛ. There are other examples: Gelli's *The fearfull fansies* is in obvious ways closely akin to the tradition if not entirely aligned with it (the subtitle of a 1605 Italian edition, indeed, states that the conversation is between 'il corpo, & l'anima'), and there too the encounter takes place during life. Further, although it is usually assumed that the genre disappears in the sixteenth century (see Osmond, *Mutual*, pp. 70, 83), Cathy Shrank has been kind enough to point me towards an anonymous and untitled early-sixteenth-century text opening 'Here begynneth a lytell treatyse of the dyenge creature' (London: 1507) that does contain a conversation between the eponymous dyenge creature and its soul.

[31] Osmond, *Mutual*, p. 69. For the increasing early modern interest in the mind and its relationship to the soul see: Vidal, *Sciences*, pp. 21-57.

whatever the reasons behind the shift, in the new pre-mortem scenario the medieval debates' fixation upon the body's putrefaction and the soul's gruesome hell-torments is gone, along with the scene-setting material that attends it. The exceptional case of Howell's *A Vision* in this last regard only confirms the rule: it does give a narrative frame but does so to quite opposite effect, the soul appearing in the bucolic atmosphere of a 'Summer solstice' dawn with the appearance of 'a veild Nunn with a flaming cross on the left side of her breast' (sinister this is decidedly not).[32] Of a piece with these other shifts is that in the Renaissance the medieval focus upon sin is largely supplanted by a new focus simply upon the suffering inflicted upon both parties by their union, as we see with Cavendish above and most dramatically in the case of Marvell below.

Yet amidst cosmetic variation and change the tradition survives nevertheless, and it is upon the deeper continuities it evinces as it does so that we focus here: for just as striking as the departures is that the early modern form shares its precursor's conspicuous sense of irresolution in the dualistic division upon which it is predicated.[33] In the *Visio Philiberti* we traced the way this irresolution manifests in a persistent interest in the linked problems of the soul's apparent agency and of the body's essential inertness, and these concerns continue and become if anything more specific in the Renaissance. The soul of Marvell's 'A Dialogue' notes the irony that as a spiritual entity it should not be able to feel pain and only does so through the body: 'I feel, that cannot feel, the pain'.[34] Similarly, the body notes in reply that it should not be able to experience anything at all without the soul's mental presence: the soul 'warms and moves this needless frame' (15), the body says, and goes on to attribute to the soul all cognitive activity. The *Poetical Rapsody* debate, which maintains a stronger focus upon sinfulness, makes the point more plainly:

> Soule: Thou art the meanes, by which I fall to sin,
>
> Body: Thou art the cause that let'st this means awork[.][35]

Neither do either of these poems arrive at any kind of stable conclusion, with both leaving judgement apparently suspended. Howell's *A Vision* departs in several ways here, and may in the end seem to find the division less troublesome. The soul develops a much more detailed tripartite conception of itself than we find

---

[32] Howell, *A Vision*, sig. A5ᵛ-A6ᵛ. Further references to this work appear parenthetically in the main text.

[33] It is worth noting that the early modern appetite for literary debate is nearly as great as the medieval: see Joan Faust, *Andrew Marvell's Liminal Lyrics: The Space Between* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2012), p. 191. Cf. J. K. Wilson, *Incomplete Fictions: the Formation of English Renaissance Dialogue* (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1985).

[34] Andrew Marvell, 'A Dialogue Between the Soul and the Body' (l. 24), in *The Poems of Andrew Marvell*, ed. by Hugh MacDonald (London: Routledge, 1952), pp. 15-16. All further references to the poem are given parenthetically in the main text.

[35] Davison, *Poetical*, sig. I12ʳ.

in the medieval debates (it is divided into 'vegetal, sensitive, rational' parts), and is more specific as well as to its physical location.[36] Despite being 'diffused' throughout the body, it says,

> yet I let you know that I have some closets in that Fabrick of yours, more choice than others, I am *radically* in the
> *heart*, where the vital spirits have their residence, where the arterial and most illustrious bloud doth run in the left
> ventricle; But I am *principally* in the *brain*, where the *animal* Spirits inhabit, and whereon I cast my intellectual
> influences for Discourse and Reason. [B10ᵛ]

Indeed, in contrast to the rest of the early modern tradition, before too long this body will be convinced of the rectitude of the soul's position: 'I thank you', it says, 'that you make me know my self better by displaying unto me my own condition, and that magazin of infirmities which are stored up in this little tabernacle of yours' (C7ʳ-C8ᵛ). Yet even here the underlying resonances remain. The soul expresses the same conventional semi-suicidal urges in similar ways, for instance: 'What cause have I to repent that ever I was thrown into that dungeon,' the soul asks, 'that corrupt mass of flesh?' (Bʳ) But even more apposite to our interests than this negative vision of the soul and body relationship is specifically that the old doubts re-emerge as to how the two are to be imagined as separate at all. Accused by the soul of being a 'sluggie and frail vessel', Howell's body responds with a familiar argument from the soul's agency: 'a frail vessel indeed, yet, under favour, you sit at the helm of it' (B5ᵛ⁻ʳ). Correspondingly the body raises the issue of its own inertness, claiming that it is

> but an unwieldie lump of earth, a meer passive thing of my self. It is you that actuats and animats me, otherwise I
> could neither think, speak, or do any thing, nay without your impulss I could have no motion at all ... you are the
> intelligence that governs and enlightens this dark orb of mine[.] [B2ᵛ]

The text's soul may indeed marshal more effective arguments than in the medieval and even other Renaissance examples. Nevertheless, even here it is obliged to do so in response to the same persistent and apparently commonsense doubts that trouble its predecessors and contemporaries: doubts which may be made ultimately subordinate as the text progresses, yet doubts which are clearly still sufficiently compelling to demand rehearsal at significant length.

It is the soul and body tradition's consistently fraught and unresolved sense of the division upon which it is founded that we bear in mind now as we progress to the two marginal examples that are the

---

[36] For an account of the conventional Aristotelian divisions of the soul see: Vidal, *Sciences*, pp. 32-33.

principal interest of this chapter. The form's continuous sense of irresolution has not gone unrecognized: accounts of the medieval poems' shifty doctrinal positions are numerous, and as Osmond has it there runs throughout all the debates 'an espousal of dualism coupled with an uncertainty about exactly what attributes belonged to soul and what to body'.[37] But the close readings of *Soul & Body* and 'A Dialogue' that follow take the picture of irresolution developed thus far and make a further suggestion. On the face of it the poems display the tradition at its most divergent, to the degree that both are usually considered hardly part of it at all. But it is my suggestion that the poems are not as disparate as they might seem. Rather, they are united with one another and distinguished from the rest of the tradition by their particular interest in the physical difficulties of the soul and body division, and each manifests that interest in a poetics of spatial irresolution that exposes the difficulties that inhere in dualism's conventional figurative resources themselves.

<center><u>III</u></center>

To suggest that the Old English *Soul & Body* exhibits an unresolved sense of its protagonists' division, and that it expresses this irresolution in subtle poetic ways, may from a précis of the poem seem implausible. Indeed, on the face of it the scholarly consensus that the text is in doctrinal terms rather simpleminded and without significant literary interest may seem entirely justified.[38]

Though the lion's share of the poem is taken up with an address by the damned '*sawle*' or '*gæst*' (soul) to its '*lic*' or '*lichoman*' (body), it opens in a baldly homiletic mode:

---

[37] Osmond, *Mutual*, p. 69. Nor is the irresolution absolutely constant: 'In a thestri' and Cavendish's dialogue, for instance, appear to detect nothing problematic in the soul-body division at all, merely running through their respective arguments vis-à-vis which is responsible for their mutual unhappiness.

[38] Even where the poem's literary value is not explicitly denigrated it is broadly neglected in favour of interest in its difficult doctrinal stance. Allen J. Frantzen's account maintains such a focus: 'The Body in "Soul and Body I"', *The Chaucer Review*, 17 (1982), 76-88; Mary Heyward Ferguson too, despite stating her intention to rehabilitate *Soul & Body* as a work of literature, in the end focusses upon its doctrinal stance ('The Structure of the "Soul's Address to the Body" in Old English', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 69 [1970], 72-80). There are partial exceptions. T. A. Shippey briefly pays the poem the kind of literary attention it has rarely received, yet in the end downplays its poetic interest: *Poems of Wisdom and Learning in Old English* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1976), pp. 29-31. Michelle Hoek does think about the poem's problematic dualism with close attention to its language, but draws on Derrida and Foucault to read the poem primarily in terms of ideological theory: 'Violence and Ideological Inversion in the Old English Soul's Address to the Body', *Exemplaria*, 10 (1998), 271-285. In *Cognitive Approaches to Old English Poetry* (D. S. Brewer: Cambridge, 2012), Antonina Harbus analyses the poem's figurative language, but does so not in terms of their poetic effect but as part of a broader interest in Anglo-Saxon anthropology. The tendency to focus upon doctrinal problems or hortatory efficacy has continued in the two other recent contributions: Danielle Yardy, 'Tonal Complexity and Formal Conflicts in the Old English *Soul and Body* Poems', *STET*, 2 (2012), 1-14; Riyeff, 'Dualism'.

<center></center>

Huru ðæs behofaþ   hæleþa æghwylc

þæt he his sawle sið   sylfa bewitige

hu þæt bið deoplic   þonne se deað cymeð [*Soul & Body*, lines 1-3]

[Indeed, it behooves each man that he himself should examine his soul's journey (fate), how it is grave

when death comes].[39]

This reminder issued that the contemplation of mortality is in general a salutary habit, the poet moves into a

more narrative register:

Sceal se gæst cuman   gehþum hremig

Symle ymb seofon niht;   sawle findan

þone lichoman   þe heo ær longe wæg [9-11]

[The soul must come crying out with sorrow; always on every seventh night, the soul must seek out the

body, which it formerly wore for a long time].

The poem now shifts into monologue, the soul unleashing a fulminating tirade that riffs on *contemptus mundi*

and *ubi sunt* motifs and insists that the body is entirely responsible for sin:

...   *Hwæt, þu huru wyrma gifl,*

lyt geþohtes,   þa þu lust gryrum

eallum fuleodest,   hu þu in eorðan scealt

wyrmum to wiste.

[Lo, meal for worms, you indeed little thought, when you the desire for all terrors fulfilled, how you in the earth

should become a banquet for worms.]

This invective runs for 90 lines, following which the poet takes over once more to describe the devastation of

the body by putrefaction and worms:

Biþ þæt heafod tohliden,   honda toleoþode,

geaflas toginene,   goman toslitene,

seonwe beoð asogene,   sweora bicowen. [108-110]

---

[39] The poem exists in two slightly divergent versions in the *Vercelli* and *Exeter* manuscripts. For details of the differences and for why the latter text, known as *Soul & Body II*, is considered marginally superior to the *Vercelli*'s *Soul & Body I*, see: Moffat, *Soul and Body*, p. 10. Throughout unless otherwise noted I refer to Moffat's rendering of *II* (edited with reference to *I*) and to his English translation. I omit his in-text editorial marks except when they have implications for the sense of the poem.

[The head is burst open, the hands split apart, the jaws are yawning, the gums torn asunder, the sinews are sucked away, the neck is chewed thoroughly.]

The tone then begins to shade back towards the homiletic mode of the frame, and the poem ends abruptly with a final reminder that the reader who knows what is good for them will bear in mind the dire lessons the poet has had to impart:

> …   Þonne biþ þæt werge
> lic acolad   þæt he longe ær
> werede mid wædum,   bið þonne wyrma giefl,
> æt on eorþan.   Þaet mæg æghwylcum
> men to gemyndum   modsnotterra. [122-26]

[When that weary body has cooled, which he (?the soul) formerly clothed with garments, then it will be a meal for worms, food in the earth. That may each man among the prudent of mind remember.][40]

On this note of minatory piousness the poem ends.[41]

The complex effects that I want to suggest are at work in these lines may not be obvious, and indeed there is little in the foregoing account to suggest that *Soul & Body* is anything more than the doctrinally and poetically simpleminded relic most accounts understand it to be. The impression that in content it is really a kind of poeticised homily is reinforced by the overtly didactic notes by which it is bookended, by its hectoring mode throughout, and by its fixation (as Wrenn puts it) 'on the results in the after-life of good or bad deeds'.[42] Moreover, unlike most later versions of the trope, the poem does not evince any obvious sense that to distinguish soul and body in the way that it does, and then to assign moral responsibility for sin so definitively to the latter, might be problematic. But a closer look at the poem in fact reveals a work consistently expressive of the problems that inhere in its dualism, which is all the more remarkable when we note the diminished opportunities for such expression offered by the monologue form. Animating the verse throughout is an interest in, and a desire to fix in place, the soul-body boundary: yet this is a desire that counterproductively generates points and surfaces for that contact that resist definition. This we can see at several key moments in

---

[40] The parenthetical query is Moffat's; I return to it below. Ferguson, I should note, would argue against any sense of abruptness: a cornerstone of her argument is the structural completeness of the poem ('The Structure', pp. 73-4, 78).
[41] At least, *Soul & Body II* ends here. *Soul & Body I* includes a fragment of an address from a virtuous soul to its body, of which Moffat includes a translation.
[42] Wrenn, *A Study*, p. 156.

which the poem fixates upon the liminal and contested spaces in which soul and body meet and at which they are separated.

The first verb that figures the soul-body relationship is '*wæg*' ('wore', 11): in life the soul wore the body. The image is commonplace enough and need not have any especially notable effect, elsewhere simply suggesting the dispensability of the body or the soul's capacity for renewal (Cavendish provides a particularly obvious example of a general trend).[43] However, in light of later developments in *Soul & Body* it is noteworthy that the body-as-garment figure, however conventional, makes the tacit demand that we imagine the physical relations of the eponymous entities in a way that is vividly tactile yet hard to make out: our attention is drawn to a surface that is at once the outside of the skin and the inside of a garment, an oddly reversible and claustrophobic location. Elsewhere, it is true, that demand remains tacit and need generate no lasting indistinction. But here it is reinforced by a series of further conventional figures that in aggregate give an impression of diametric and repeated inversions of polarity. Over the course of lines 31-5, the soul that earlier actively wore the body becomes first the object of close containment ('*gebunde*' ['bound'] and '*gehæftnadest*' ['imprisoned']) and subsequently of a similar but subtly different sort of enclosure, being '*bifongen*' ('encircled' or 'surrounded') and '*gebrungon*' ('thronged' about) by '*flæsce*' ('body'). The first development recalibrates the pair figuratively so that that which was worn now binds and imprisons; the second modulates the poem's sense of the boundary-space in which any such relationship might occur. Whereas we first see the physical soul and body relationship as a (perhaps oppressively) close meeting that occurs at a reversible surface, the second inflates that surface into a contested and expanded *area* fraught with threatening activity. In isolation neither effect is necessarily difficult: though each asks that we develop a vague conception of the spatial relationship of soul and body, neither requires that we think in any detail about it. But to shift between them in the way that *Soul & Body* does draws our attention to that spatial relationship even while it says subtly contradictory things about it, so that no stable or resolved image can be arrived at.

These shifting figurations that early on imagine soul and body meeting at the surface of the human are not the only moments at which the poem generates an uncertain spatial sense of its premise. Lines 108-110, glanced at above, describe the ravages that have been visited upon the body: 'the head is burst open, the

---

[43] For more on the image of the soul dressed in the body, which goes back at least to the *Phaedo*, see: Rosalie Osmond, *Imagining the Soul: A History* (Thrupp: Sutton Publishing, 2003)*,* pp. 146-47.

hands split apart, the jaws are yawning, the gums torn asunder, the sinews are sucked away, the neck is chewed thoroughly'. The obvious thing that has happened to the corpse is that it has decayed. But when we consider the specific character of this process we find that it is a very particular kind of spatial event. The body has burst open, split apart, yawned and been torn asunder, which is not the language of passive decay (this one imagines might emphasise processes of caving-in and collapse) but of violent exposure and stripping back. This is to say that poem here enacts a kind of anatomy, enlisting its fascination with putrefaction and the violation of bodily surface in the pursuit of its other compulsion, the scrutiny of the human interior.[44] (That fixation upon the violation of the body's surface is given further emphasis with the appearance of the worm Gifer, who leads the attack on the flesh and whose function is drawn as a specifically penetrative one as he attacks the liminal elements and zones – teeth, eyes, mouth – at the surface of the body.)[45] In an obvious way the focus here has moved from the soul and body division to the body alone. Yet the poem continues to fixate upon unstable bodily boundaries, precisely those areas which are earlier imagined as the problematic sites of that division, so that it continues to demand that even as we accept the separation of soul and body we also scrutinise the places where it must yet apparently cannot quite occur.

The work of these vexed and indeterminate spaces does not end here. In *Soul & Body*, rather, they also express the ethical uncertainty that in texts such as the *Visio* is explicitly articulated. Important in this regard is that the sequence of penetrations in lines 116-22, notably horrifying in itself, also announces a recurrence of the clothing theme at line 124. This merits particular attention since that theme figures not only in the poem's spatial working-out of its foundational divide but in the ethical problems posed by that divide. The question of clothing could hardly help but signify in an ethical regard. Issues of garb are heavily marked by associations of postlapsarian shame, associations with a double character anyway since in Genesis clothing functions as both a method for avoiding shame *and* as a sign of shame; moreover, clothing's potential to be a vehicle for worldliness, and the vanity that attaches to it, is a staple of the *ubi sunt* tropes which are a mainstay

---

[44] 'Anatomy', of course, is an anachronism here. Nevertheless, that post-mortem mutilation of criminals was almost certainly an Anglo-Saxon practice is interesting given that the body is referred to in this poem as '*werga*', or 'criminal'. See: Sam Lucy, *The Anglo-Saxon Way of Death* (Thrupp: Sutton Publishing, 2000), p. 75. Hoek's 'Ideological Inversion' provides a Foucauldian reading of the body's criminalisation in *Soul & Body*.

[45] Benjamin Putnam Kurtz *et al.* give a comprehensive account of the figure of Gifer: *Gifer the Worm: An Essay Toward the History of an Idea*, 2 Vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1929). The capitalisation of the name is not universal across different texts (though it is capitalised in *Exeter*'s *Soul & Body*), and so the degree to which Gifer is a properly allegorical figure is by no means clear.

of the soul and body tradition.[46] For *Soul & Body* to give us a soul that wears a body is quite conventional, that

is, yet the conventional figure also complicates our sense of the poem's confidence in the soul's purity. Indeed,

upon its later reappearance the sartorial trope goes on to announce ethical uncertainty in a more specific way,

asking implicitly the questions about the soul and the body's agency that we have encountered in explicit form

elsewhere in the tradition.

The reappearance takes place in lines 123-4:

> *lic acolad   þaet he longe ær*
>
> *werede mid wædum*

[the body has cooled which he [?the soul] formerly clothed with garments].

At a glance, the sense of the line is simply that during life the soul takes care of the body by clothing it.[47] But

this suggestion in fact constitutes a reversal, since it implies that that which earlier in the poem was clothed by

the body (the soul) now dresses it. This new sense of clothing is very different to that of line 11, since rather

than describing the soul and body relationship it refers to the literal acts of dressing to which the body was

subject in life. Nevertheless, its echo of the earlier figuration is of a disorienting character. Who dresses and

who is worn, exactly, in this figurative relationship? Where does agency – and therefore responsibility – lie?

Further, though the line syntactically implies a simple causal link between deathly cooling and the fact that the

soul no longer clothes the body, it is a causality that seems oddly bilateral. Either the cooling could result from

nakedness *or* the nakedness could result from the fact that souls are no longer present to clothe their bodies

after death. In a multiplicity of ways, then, throughout the poem the discourse of clothing draws attention to

the physical dimensions of embodiment and announces ethical ambiguity.

This sense of ethical difficulty expressed by way of spatial indistinctness obtains more generally. Line

33 has the soul address the body: '*Eardode ic þe in innan* […] *no ic þe of meahte'* ('I dwelt within you, by no

means might I go out from you'). The phrase links two entirely conventional statements about the soul and

body relationship as if one simply reiterated the other, yet they are in fact subtly opposite: on the one hand

---

[46] For one example see some early lines in Crashaw's translation of the *Visio* in which the body is reminded of its erstwhile 'change[s] of rayment' and 'many coloured vesture' (*The Complaint*, sig. A9ʳ).

[47] As Moffat notes, it is not quite certain that 'he' refers to the soul in these lines; Shippey gives 'man', for instance. This ambiguity may or may not be the result of peculiarities of Anglo-Saxon anthropology, for which see: Malcolm Godden, 'Anglo-Saxons on the Mind', in R. M. Luizza, ed., *Old English Literature* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), pp. 284-314.

we have a grammatically active soul that dwells, on the other a soul that is imprisoned and totally deprived of its freedom and agency. Thus again, by making convoluted the conventional language it adapts, *Soul & Body* seems to resist the establishment of a stable motive dynamic. This resistance is also displayed in the poem's doctrinal semantics themselves. As we have seen, at lines 31-5 the soul complains of the state of siege in which it is kept by the '*flaesce*': it understands itself to be hemmed in and that this hemming-in is accomplished by way of things experienced by the soul as painful, specifically '*heardan hungre*' ('hard hunger') and '*hellewitum*' ('hell punishments'). At the same time, however, the soul is thronged about not by tortures but by the body's '*firenlustas*' ('sinful desires'). Such an inversion is entirely in keeping with the general Christian sense that anything the body wants is likely bad news for the soul, and suggestive of various traditional ideas about the dynamic of influence between soul and body. Yet performed here in verse the commonplace inversion becomes a demand that the reader consider a single thing as simultaneously a desire and a torture, which is to say two diametrically opposite things at once. Moreover, even these polarities refuse quite to settle, in that it seems possible for the soul *itself* to experience the temptations of the world simultaneously as tortures and as desires, so that the two seem indistinguishable and the soul's relationship to them ethically obscure. This difficulty is reinforced a handful of lines later when the soul remarks in passing that the body was '*strong gestyred*' ('strongly forced') by its '*firenlustas*' and that it should have been '*gestaþelad*' ('stabilised') by the soul (44-5): despite the soul's clear urge to assign blame elsewhere, the language available to it cannot seem to help implying its complicity.

We can begin to see, then, that the poem is rather less straightforward than it seems. *Soul & Body* may seem to manifest and endorse a straightforwardly dualistic vision of the human, and a conventional division of ethical responsibility within that dualism, not even as elsewhere giving the body the opportunity to voice its objections to that division of responsibility. But close attention to the poem's figurative procedures shows the case to be more complex. Although the figurative vocabulary of *Soul & Body* is entirely conventional, the poem's combination and compression of those figures generates a very fraught sense of the spaces at which the soul and body divide occurs, and these spaces in turn generate unresolvable ethical unclarities. Beginning with a body-as-clothing formulation, the poem complicates it with different dimensional figurations of the relationship (binding, housing, besieging and so on), elaborations that in concert work to emphasise the incompleteness of both union and division. To circle, surround, clothe, bind or imprison, or to

live within or wear, are activities of various degrees of varying physical closeness that approach interpenetration while at the same time conspicuously refusing it, and indeed each draws attention to the irresolution of the others. The result is a distinctive mimesis that represents the difficulties of the ontology to which the poem seems to give unquestioning endorsement: just as much as the later dialogues, though more subtly and perhaps not deliberately, in its representation of embodied space *Soul & Body* is both describing and questioning the possibility of its own foundational divide.

As a last point we might think a bit more about the body's silence. To detect complexity in this aspect of the poem is not unprecedented. Mary Heyward Ferguson defends the poem from the usual charges of simplemindedness on the grounds that the body's silence pointedly reflects an orthodox Augustinian sense of it as an inanimate husk, utterly inert and insensate once the soul has departed. The poem *is* in fact a dialogue, she claims, due to the doctrinal 'eloquence' of the body's silence.[48] But in fact this also gets it subtly wrong. As the soul's tirade draws to a close, the poet begins once more to narrate the encounter. Notably, however, there is nothing more to relate:

> *… Ligeð dust þær hit wæs*
>
> *ne mæg him ondsware   ænige secgan*
>
> *ne þær edringe   ænge gehatan*
>
> *gæste geomrum   geoce oþþe frofre.* [104-7]

[The dust lies where it was nor may it to [the soul] any answer speak nor any easing promise there to the sorrowing ghost, support or peace.]

There follows the litany of gruesome decays discussed above, where the body is opened up both literally and to poetic scrutiny, but thereafter the poet continues to think about the body's silence:

> *Bið seo tunge totogen   on tyn healfe*
>
> *hungregum to hroþor;   forþon heo ne mæg horsclice*
>
> *wordum wrixlan   wið þone wergan gæst.* [113-15]

[The tongue is ripped into ten pieces as a solace for the hungry ones; therefore it cannot briskly trade words with the wretched soul.]

---

[48] Ferguson, 'The Structure', p. 79.

The body, clearly, does not respond. But this is not because it is a husk in which there inheres no agency or volition. Instead, as the '*forþon*' ('therefore') in line 114 puts beyond doubt, the body is silent quite specifically because the processes of physical decay have irreparably damaged its tongue.[49] As if to emphasize this further, the poem assigns a very specific adverb ('briskly', with Shippey giving 'bandy scornful words') to a speech-act which never actually happens: the words of this silent body, though it cannot speak them, nevertheless somehow take on weight and character. But finally we might also ask whether it truly cannot speak them. In this connection we can turn back to an earlier moment whose interest has been remarked only, and I think mistakenly, by Shippey. Line 22 runs '*Hweat, wite du me, werga*', which Moffat renders as 'Indeed, can you blame me, accursed one?' (Translations do differ, but all here attach to the body an active verb such as 'blame' or 'reproach'.)[50] This is not necessarily as Shippey judges 'a rhetorical question aimed at the body's silence'.[51] Instead it seems to contain the sense that there *has* been an interjection but that we have not heard it. And not only that. If it is intimated that the corpse has spoken, or at least that perhaps in a fit of guilty paranoia the soul has anticipated what the corpse would say were it not so extensively decomposed, the soul also implies with its choice of verb – reproach, blame – that the effect of the body's words is or would have been to raise exactly the kind of doubts voiced by its generic descendants in the full debates of later centuries.

<div align="center">

IV

</div>

As one might expect given the six or more centuries that divide them, Marvell's poem appears very different to its Anglo-Saxon precursor. There we see a one-sided diatribe whose complexities require considerable teasing out. Here the impression of irresolvable back and forth is beyond ignoring, as the most cursory survey of the poem amply testifies.

---

[49] Though the word can also be translated as 'forthwith', no translation I have seen chooses that sense, and in any case the temporal crux would not change the implication materially.

[50] Christopher A. Jones gives 'reproach' in his *Old English Shorter Poems* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2012); Shippey as well as Moffat give 'blame'.

[51] Shippey, *Poems of Wisdom*, p. 139.

The soul, which speaks first, shares its ancestor's conventional regret at being confined in the body's prison: 'O who shall, from this Dungeon, raise | A soul inslav'd so many wayes?' (1-2) Indeed, the way in which the first stanza elaborates that conventional figuration will occupy most of our attention. But here the body is anything but silent, and in the second stanza counters the soul's complaint simply by reversing it. 'O, who shall me deliver whole', it demands, 'From bonds of this Tyrannic Soul?' (11-12) For the body this incarceration equates with animation itself, the soul's victimisation of it consisting in the way it 'warms and moves this needless Frame' (15). To this the soul responds by continuing to think about imprisonment ('What Magick could me thus confine | Within anothers Grief to pine?' [21-22]), noting the irony that it, 'that cannot feel', is forced to experience pain through the body. With medicine of no avail the soul expresses a longing for death: though the diseases to which embodiment exposes it are unpleasant, 'what's worse, [is] the Cure' as the soul is 'shipwrackt into Health' (27-30). To these new claims the body responds in the final stanza by at last leaving the penitentiary metaphor behind. The soul may complain of medicine prolonging its trials, the body says, but 'physic yet could never reach | The maladies [the soul] me dost teach' (31-32). These afflictions are emotions – 'the cramp of hope', 'the palsy shakes of fear', 'the pestilence of love', 'hatred's hidden ulcer', the respectively 'cheerful' and 'other' madnesses of joy and sorrow (33-38) – and cognition itself: 'knowledge forces [the body] to know' these experiences that 'memory will not forego' (39-40). The effect of this is to refuse the central plank of the soul's earlier argument that it feels only through the body; according to the body, on the contrary, it is only through being ensouled that it itself is exposed to the more truly painful experiences that are emotions. It is only in the final four lines here that the body turns to the issue of responsibility for sin that exercises *Soul & Body* and the rest of the medieval tradition, complaining that it is not itself sinful but 'buil[t] up' into that state by the soul (41-42).[52]

In contrast to most accounts of the poem, which focus upon its broad dialectical and doctrinal movements and the rhetoric in which they are couched, here we focus instead upon the literary effects of the opening stanza, where the physical division upon which the rest of the poem relies is established – or, rather,

---

[52] It has been suggested that the final couplet in fact belongs to the soul, but the possibility seems remote given the grammar. It is also worth pointing out the textual issues that make any final judgement about the final lines especially difficult. As Faust indicates (*Liminal*, p. 198), despite attempts over the years to assign a 'win' in the poem to the body on the grounds that it speaks last and is given four extra lines to do so, the oddity of the stanzaic departure alongside annotations on some early copies of Marvell's works have suggested to some scholars that the exchange should continue at indeterminate length in lines that either were never written or have been lost. Here, that is, textual history has intervened to impose a further level of inconclusiveness upon the fundamentally inconclusive soul and body tradition.

fails to be.[53] These lines are themselves much remarked-upon, but principally for their strikingly gruesome effects rather than quite the aspect of them that I want to emphasise. This is the manner in which, like *Soul & Body*, they develop by way of a relentlessly close focus upon conventional ways of imagining the soul-body division an impossibly problematic vision of it. The stanza runs in full:

> O who shall, from this Dungeon, raise
>
> A Soul inslav'd so many ways?
>
> With bolts of Bones, that fetter'd stands
>
> In Feet; and manacled in Hands.
>
> Here blinded with an Eye, and there
>
> Deaf with the drumming of an Ear.
>
> A Soul hung up, as 'twere, in Chains
>
> Of Nerves, and Arteries, and Veins.
>
> Tortur'd, besides each other part,
>
> In a vain Head, and double Heart?

What dominates here is an insistent elaboration of the idea of the imprisoned soul, a figure in which we have noted already that there is tacit spatial difficulty. Like *Soul & Body,* 'A Dialogue' senses that difficulty. But whereas there confounding effects are generated by the collision of this conventional metaphor with others, here such effects arise from an intense focus upon it in isolation.

We can proceed on a line-by-line basis from the opening couplet, where the reader is asked to imagine the body as a room and the soul as a humanoid within its space. In itself this poses no unavoidable difficulties, since the figure distinguishes and spatially parses its two components sufficiently that the dualistic image is untroubled. For context, similarly straightforward are illustrations depicting the soul as a homunculus confined in the ribcage (Fig. 7), or Howell's description of a soul 'diffused' throughout a body: these conventional versions of the figure leave the soul sufficiently small as to fit easily inside the body or as a kind of vague immaterial nebula that raises no spatial questions at all.[54] But as the soul in Marvell's second couplet thinks through the 'so many ways' in which it is imprisoned – bolted in bones, fettered in feet, manacled in hands – an oddly irresolvable sense of space begins to arise at the limits of the human entity. Marvell demands

---

[53] For two recent examples see: Faust, *Liminal,* pp. 183-204 (esp. pp. 191-98), where the focus is upon the poem as informed by Marvell's Cambridge education in rhetoric and debate; and A. D. Cousins, *Andrew Marvell: Loss and Aspiration, Home and Homeland in Miscellaneous Poems* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), pp. 128-31. We return to these accounts below.

[54] Howell, *Vision,* sig. B3r.

of us not only that we consider a soul that is within the figurised space of the body, but one that closely interpenetrates with the body in all its physiological detail. Indeed, here the soul is so close to the body in size that it stands in its feet, so that while the soul must be smaller than the body it also seems to share its outer limits and thus to be dimensionally identical with it. The lines have an air of clever vividness: the prison metaphor is elaborated to effects both apposite and gruesome. But despite these effects the lines simultaneously compel our attention to impossible points of meeting and division that render those effects inconclusive. If the soul is standing in the body's feet, one is led to wonder, where does one end and the other begin? The division between the two begins to close up, so that what we get from the lines is a stupefying figurative space that closes even as it opens.

To lines five and six, which work in a slightly different way, we return below. But in lines seven and eight we find a return to the imprisonment trope and to the physiological detail of the relationship it describes – as well as an increased viciousness. Further elaborating the ways in which it is constrained within the body, the soul claims to be suspended in chains 'of Nerves, and Arteries, and Veins'. There is a subtle yet marked contrast between earlier, where physical horror is intimated yet the principal effect is spatial irresolution, and here, where the effect is not only consternation but torture. Even as they describe how the soul exists within the body these lines perform a flaying, stripping away dermal layers as they investigate by the invasive means of the anatomist the relationship described in vaguer terms earlier. But in this cruel effect the lines also develop the confusing effects that precede them, for if this is an investigation it is one that only leaves the division into which it enquires more muddled. Although the soul is here complaining about its own condition, in fact the vicarious pain we experience in the course of its complaint is that of both parties: the frisson of the visceral anatomical system of metaphors derives not only from the admittedly grotesque idea of being constrained by body parts, after all, but from the bodily agony evoked by the suggestion that nerves, arteries and veins must have been separated and splayed to achieve the constraint. Resonances with *Soul & Body* could be overstated here. Yet we remember nevertheless that in its pullings-apart of sinew and flesh that poem comes to resemble a kind of anatomy, and indeed that 'nerve' is in medieval and early modern medical terminologies alike synonymous with 'sinew'.[55] We have here, then, a soul whose torture is achieved by the mutilation of the body at exactly the kinds of liminal region to which the earlier poem has seemed drawn:

---

[55] The sense is common, but for an example we can turn once more to Sir John Davies, who in *Nosce Teipsum* refers to the 'sinews' as 'a net all ore the bodie spred' that gives it its '*Feeling* power' (1057-60).

(*Clockwise from top left*) Fig. 4. The 'Saint Bernard's Vision' ballad (London: 1640). Fig. 5. Cover-page of James Howell's *The Vision* (London: 1651). Fig. 6. A suspended cadaver in Andreas Vesalius, *De Humani Corporis Fabrica* (Basel: 1543), sig. Q6ᵛ. Fig. 7. A child-like soul in a cage in Francis Quarles, *Emblemes* (London: 1635), sig. T3ᵛ.

those physiological features which are interior yet also at the exterior limit, and which are often the blurred points at which soul and body meet and are divided.

These grotesque moments of flaying and radical physiological reflexiveness are not the only ones in which the liminal zones of the body become the site of paradox and fraught self-contradiction. Returning to the third couplet, where the soul complains that it is 'blinded by an eye, | And deaf with the drumming of an Ear', we find another figuration of notable claustrophobia and oppressiveness, and one that again generates confounding reflexive effects at the limits of the body. For the bodily senses do not only limit the ability of the soul to perceive correctly here. Rather, they are fundamentally antithetical to that ability. For contrast, though in Davies' *Nosce Teipsum* the soul is likewise in the 'Bodies prison', there the eyes are 'windowes' and thus are mitigating rather than antithetical (317-18). Similarly, in *The Second Anniversary* Donne thinks about the soul relative to bodily eyes and ears – 'Thou shalt not peep through lattices of eyes, | Nor hear through labyrinths of ears' (296-97) – but sees them only as limiting rather than fundamentally contrary.[56] (In *Purchas his Pilgrim* Samuel Purchas deploys the same 'Labyrinth' figure, and as Datta notes the image goes back to Origen.)[57] In Howell, we find something not dissimilar in the soul's complaint that whereas

> those *eyes* of yours should be as crystal casements, through which I might behold the glorious firmament, and
> studie my Creator in the Volumes of Nature, you have made them to intromit, and let out beams of vanity and
> lightness[.] [B4ᵛ]

But though the oppositional 'intromit' makes the process an active one here, nevertheless for Howell's soul this is not an inevitable property of eyes but the result of the body's sinfulness. Moreover, immediately afterwards the eyes are once again limited themselves rather than congenitally opposed to sight: they are 'soyl'd so thick with earth, that [the soul] can scarce discern Heaven through them'. Here, in the end, the eye seeks to penetrate the impediments to sight that are placed upon it by the world. But in 'A Dialogue' the eye is in itself and apparently by its very nature blinding. Similarly, though the ears of Howell's body are unhelpfully inclined ('they have delighted more to hear Carrolls and Catches than Hymns and Anthems') they are not by nature antithetical to hearing as are Marvell's. Again in 'A Dialogue', that is, even though the relationship between soul and body continues to be figured in an entirely conventional way, those conventional figures are

---

[56] Unless otherwise noted I refer throughout to *John Donne: The Major Works,* ed. by John Carey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).
[57] Samuel Purchas, *Purchas his Pilgrim* (London: 1619), sig. H3ʳ; Kitty Scoular Datta, 'New Light on Marvell's "A Dialogue Between the Soul and Body" ', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 22 (1969), 242-55, p. 243.

pushed to extremes that draw our close attention to the outer limits of the body as the site of contradictory and reflexive indistinction.

So the stanza seems determined to render the relationship of soul and body in ways that make it difficult to imagine them as separate at all. This is a project that culminates in the final line's description of the soul tortured 'In a vain Head, and double Heart'.[58] On one level the soul refers here simply to the empty worldliness and perceived duplicity of the body, but the effect is also more complex. The adjectives 'vain' and 'double' are themselves fundamentally reflexive, 'vanity' signifying self-regard and 'doubling' describing what must happen for such regard to be possible: both thus hint at refractions of the self. But also central to this refractory effect are the nouns 'head' and 'heart'. The soul is so closely associated with the head as to be nearly synonymous with it ('you are the intelligence,' Howell's body tells the soul, 'that governs and enlightens this dark orb of mine' [B2ᵛ]), and in addition what makes the two difficult to distinguish is that each also conventionally stands for the entire individual, particularly in an ethical sense. Both 'head' and 'soul' are terms that enumerate individuals in groups, and like the soul the head suggests agency and responsibility, as in I Kings 2:33's 'their blood shall therefore return upon the head of Joab, and upon the head of his seed for ever'. When the soul complains about the bodily head, that is, it draws our attention to a part of the body with which it itself is very closely aligned. And the case of the heart is yet more fraught. In *A Treatise on Melancholie*, for example, Timothy Bright declares his hope that the result of his project will be 'some light given to the soule' of his gloomy friend, but without missing a beat he also hopes it will have a 'refreshing' effect upon his friend's 'comforteles hearte.'[59] Or for a yet more telling instance we can turn to another work included in Davison's *A Poetical Rapsody*, 'Ode XII – To his Heart'. The content here is markedly similar to the complaint of Marvell's soul. Yet the poem does not think about a soul: instead it imagines a 'Hart' suffering from the 'smart' of being 'debased' in a body, one that would 'seeke a nobler brest' were it not 'in fetters [...] bound', 'falne [...] with paine' and unable to 'rise againe' (1-6); as the poem ends the speaker urges the heart to 'mount againe' since the 'wished place | Bee worth thy paine'.[60] When Marvell's soul makes its complaint about the head and heart, that is, and does so specifically in terms of their reflexivity and refraction, in a figurative sense it might

---

[58] The image of the double heart is an early modern commonplace for deceitfulness, following Psalm 12:2: 'they speak vanity every one with his neighbour; with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak'.

[59] Timothy Bright, *A Treatise on Melancholie* (London: 1586), sig. *iiiiiiijᵛ.

[60] Davison, *Poetical*, sig. I1ᵛ⁻ʳ.

as well be thinking of itself. Its intent is to assign blame to the body. But the effect is to suggest its own complicity, and indeed once more to blur the very distinction between soul and body.

After this the poem seems to move on. The body does briefly recall these fraught effects in the second stanza, in lines 13 and 14 making the vertiginous claim that the soul 'stretcht upright, impales me so | That mine own Precipice I go': the lines pick up the thread of particularly physical reflexiveness with their striking evocation of a self that is both itself and something it can fall over, and indeed of a soul that is itself painfully stretched, perhaps on a rack, in the process of inflicting torture on the body. But otherwise the rest of the poem shifts its focus to the more abstract problems of dualism – agency, the capacity of sensation and cognition, emotions, responsibility for sin – that we find raised in the majority of other soul and body debates. Nevertheless, it is in this opening salvo that 'A Dialogue' renders its most striking poetic effects and establishes the impossible terms upon which its dialectic will proceed. Here the central effect and concern are not only the ethical difficulties with which the form is so often concerned but, as in *Soul & Body*, the way those difficulties are the result of the physical problems involved in the separation of soul and body in the first place.

Since I have been arguing that *Soul & Body* and 'A Dialogue' are linked by the closeness of their focus upon the figurative vocabulary of Christian dualism, one final point is worth making before we draw to a close with the latter. As we have seen, 'A Dialogue' and its effects are usually read as Marvell the boldly early modern poet exploding a naively credulous medieval genre. But another observation helps to reinforce the sense that Marvell's effects are in fact firmly rooted in the figurative vocabulary they develop. It is true that, as Donald J. Millus was the first to observe, the terms of the intense physicality of 'A Dialogue' are suggestive of early modern innovations in anatomy. Millus calls the sequence 'a striking example of the impact of Renaissance science upon the poetic imagination', and argues that it is 'not in literary or theological works [...] but in the scientific publications of the sixteenth century [that] are to be found the most likely visual sources of the fantastic images of this debate'.[61] One moment Millus highlights is the image of the double heart, linking it to Harvey's discovery of the circulatory system and the structures of its central organ. But for Marvell's image of constricting 'Nerves, and Arteries, and Veins', and for the body's corresponding one of a soul 'stretcht upright' in conjunction with the soul's earlier 'hung up', Millus finds a more specific source in the famous

---

[61] Donald J. Millus, 'Andrew Marvell, Andreas Vesalius, and a Medieval Tradition', *Yale University Library Gazette*, 47 (1973), 216-23, p. 216.

plates for Vesalius' *De Humani Corporis Fabrica*.[62] The resonances of 'A Dialogue' are indeed striking with that

volume's illustrations of flayed human bodies with their circulatory and nervous systems unfurled, and in one

case stretched upright on a rope (Fig. 6), and those resonances can indeed give the impression of 'A Dialogue'

as Marvell's collision of an antiquated literary form with the innovations of early modern scientific culture.

But if Marvell is making these allusions he is also making literary ones, and these suggest that 'A

Dialogue' need not necessarily be a creature only of secular early modernity. That Marvell's imagery recalls

two illustrations from the Jesuit Hermann Hugo's phenomenally popular emblem book *Pia Desideria*, of one

soul trapped in a cage and another in the ribs of a skeleton (Fig. 7), has been noted by scholars including Ruth

Wallerstein.[63] These kinships with such a traditionalist source immediately cast 'A Dialogue' in a rather less

innovative light than the association with Vesalius. But even more striking for our purposes is that, as Kitty

Scoular Datta noted first, the opening stanza of 'A Dialogue' draws extensively upon a poem from Hugo's

volume in which an imprisoned soul elaborates the physical terms of its incarceration. 'Pes compes,

manicaeque manus, nervique catenae, | Ossaque cancellis', runs in the original Latin, which Datta translates as

'Feet fetters, hands manacles, nerves chains, bones a cage'.[64] It is usual to read these correspondences as

antagonistic: calling Marvell's re-working a 'grimly flamboyant parody of Hugo', Cousins has recently seen in 'A

Dialogue' a portrait of 'unmediated, static self-division' that parodies the salutary devotional purposes of *Pia

Desideria*.[65] Datta draws the broadly similar conclusion that Marvell here 'plays havoc with a Jesuit poet'.[66] But

that Marvell derives what seem to be his distinctively early modern effects from such a highly traditionalist

source as Hugo also suggests the extent to which Marvell is engaging with patterns and trends latent in the

literary tradition that his dialogue is usually supposed to transcend or exceed. The paradoxical effects of 'A

Dialogue', that is, are not only a manifestation of early modernity. Rather, they are a sign as well of the

problematic potential always latent in conventional ways of figuring the soul and body relationship.

---

[62] Andreas Vesalius, *De Humani Corporis Fabrica* (Basel: 1543), for example sig. Q4ʳ, Q6ᵛ.
[63] Ruth Wallerstein, *Studies in Seventeenth-Century Poetic* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1950), p. 162.
[64] Datta, 'New Light', p. 243.
[65] Cousins, *Loss,* p. 130.
[66] Data, 'New Light', p. 246.

Even setting aside the gulf between Old and early modern English, *Soul & Body* and 'A Dialogue Between the Soul and the Body' are vastly different works. One evinces an intensely single-minded moralistic focus upon sinfulness and its post-mortem consequences: spiritual damnation, the collapse of the body into putrid decay. The division of soul and body is here a *fait accompli*, having been effected by death, and with the body silent there is no overt sense on display that there may be difficulties inherent in the division. Marvell's poem presents an opposite profile. Nearly entirely uninterested in sin or morality, and concerned only with the closed ethics that consists in the relationship between its antagonists, it spends its four stanzas hinting that the kinds of ethical assumptions held by *Soul & Body* are untenable. Indeed, by virtue of its pre-mortem setting the poem's emphasis falls on the ways in which soul are body are connected rather than upon their division. Two more or less tacit scholarly assumptions have resulted from these differences. One is that *Soul & Body* is a relic of credulous medieval religiosity, while 'A Dialogue' is the sign of an increasingly sceptical early modernity; this broad scholarly view extends onto the tradition as a whole, seeing a movement from a dualism so conclusive that *Soul & Body* apparently feels no need to voice or answer any potential questions about it, through a later medieval tradition that remains decisively dualistic yet that clearly finds the implied ethical problems compelling, to a Marvellian performance that in effect constitutes a challenge to its own dualistic premise. The second scholarly assumption is that the medieval tradition is of negligible literary interest, *Soul & Body* in particular, while 'A Dialogue' is something like a purely literary exercise.

This chapter has worked to provide a rather different account of the form. In general, it has sought to think across the medieval and early modern divide, emphasising continuity over change in a way that previous approaches have tended not to and thereby adumbrating a Renaissance whose thinking about the soul is by no means as 'early modern' as is sometimes assumed. A survey of the tradition as a whole foregrounded its consistently sceptical sense of the ethics of the division of soul and body: how these debates across the centuries in different ways challenge the apparently straightforward division upon which their scenario is predicated. But more particularly this chapter has sought to rethink the tradition's margins in terms of this scepticism, turning to two apparently disparate examples to delineate the particularly literary ways the form

can manifest the impossibility of the soul-and-body division. *Pace* the usual perception of the two poems as virtually unrelated, close examination of the ways that they effect that division reveals that beneath the surface disparateness is a deep continuity that inheres in the figurative language available for thinking about the divided Christian person. The Old English poem's treatment of those difficulties may seem unconscious and require teasing out at considerable length, which is in contrast to the playful and overt 'A Dialogue'. Yet in the verbal fabric of each work the sense of a problematic figurative inheritance is tangible, and what reading them side by side gives us is a sense of the deep and sustained scepticism that runs through the anthropological tradition of which the soul and body genre is both an expression and, explicitly or otherwise, a critique.

'Thy Long-Short Progress': The Spatial Turn, the Literary Soul & Travel in Donne & Descartes

I

Early in *The Discarded Image*, his survey of the medieval world-picture lost in the transition to early modernity, C. S. Lewis reflects that 'a man concerned about the state of his soul will not usually be much helped by thinking about the spheres'; later he concludes that 'geometry, naturally, has little impact on literature'.[1] This chapter makes the contrary suggestion that in the literature of early modernity the apparently incongruous issues to which Lewis refers – the soul and the literary on the one hand, cosmology and geometric form on the other – can be not only proximate but mutually infusive.[2] It does so through two apparently quite disparate examples: the *Anniversary* poems, John Donne's diptych eulogising in exorbitant terms a teenage girl he had never met, and René Descartes' *Discourse on Method*, the philosophical treatise-cum-travelogue with which the philosopher first frames his *cogito ergo sum* proposition for public consumption. What unites the texts, I suggest, is that in both we find souls – though souls that look very different to one another – conceived with reference to physical space and geometrical shape and positioned as a rehabilitating response to new and potentially damaging ways of thinking about the cosmos and its ontological structures. Thus far we have observed souls only difficultly distinguished from their bodies and problematized by the literary effects of their production. Here we find souls whose transcendence of embodiment is beyond question and whose radical ontological capacities are not compromised but rather powered and even constituted by literary effects.

---

[1] C. S. Lewis, *The Discarded Image* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), pp. 18, 196.

[2] In itself such a suggestion is hardly original: early modern literary scholarship has in recent decades become increasingly attentive to the ways in which seemingly discrete discourses and registers inform one another (such a sensitivity seems as good a description as any of New Historicism, for example). Indeed, more than a decade before the publication of *The Discarded Image* there appeared Marjory Hope Nicolson's *The Breaking of the Circle: Studies in the Effect of the 'New Science' upon Seventeenth Century Poetry* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1950), a text that shares some of the central interests of this chapter, and which itself follows Charles Coffin's earlier *John Donne and the New Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1937). For the most recent example of this line of approach see: Ludmila Makuchowska, *Scientific Discourse in John Donne's Eschatological Poetry* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014).

Despite their very conspicuous differences in character, content and form, both the *Anniversaries* and the *Discourse* demand to be considered in the context of the seismic early modern intellectual upheavals that Donne in *The First Anniversary* assembles under the rubric of 'new philosophy' (line 205). The philosophy to which Donne refers is variegated: John Gillies calls it 'a compound of cartography, atomism, magnetism, Copernicanism, and Galileo's telescopic discoveries of 1610', and were Donne to have written in the mid- rather than early seventeenth century Cartesianism would be an inevitable addition to the list.[3] With some departures, that is, what Donne bemoans are the shifts in natural philosophical thinking now known to historians of thought as the spatial turn: the process by which the Ptolemaic cosmos of nested spheres, which is allied with and expresses an Aristotelian ontology of enclosed bodies, is replaced by the infinite space of modernity, whose model of embodiment is defined not by enclosure but extension.[4] The seismic nature of this shift, which for Edward Casey constitutes nothing less than 'the fateful transition from ancient to modern thinking in the West', would be hard to overstate, and the attitudes of Donne and Descartes towards it seem opposite.[5] Donne's plangent complaint about its effects has become a metonymy for early modern anxiety over philosophical innovation; conversely, Descartes and Cartesianism in general are an engine of such innovation (Descartes, as F. E. Sutcliffe puts it, 'ruins the very notion of the ancient cosmos').[6] Yet of more interest to us here is what the two have in common in this regard. Both the *Anniversaries* and the *Discourse*, one lamenting the spatial turn and the other involved in effecting it, nevertheless adopt markedly defensive stances specifically against the loss of enclosing boundary it involves. What is more, and of most concern here, is that both do so in markedly literary ways, and by way of a soul that does radical things to space by the expedient of travelling in it.

An enclosing boundary is a kind of frame – *The First Anniversary* describes the lost order it mourns as the world's 'form and frame' (37) – and here we can align Donne and Descartes' shared interest in space,

---

[3] John Gillies, 'Space and Place in "Paradise Lost" ', *ELH*, 74 (2007), 27-57, p. 28. For more on precisely what Donne refers to as new philosophy see: Marjorie Hope Nicolson, 'The "New Astronomy" and English Literary Imagination', *Studies in Philology*, 32 (1935), 428-62.
[4] The phrase 'spatial turn' refers to the process by which, as Gillies puts it, in the early modern period 'place [… is] supplanted from physics and metaphysics alike by space' ('Space and Place', p. 27). As Yair Mintzker points out, until the late sixteenth century 'space' is nearly exclusively a temporal term, but then comes to signify 'at first a gap or a distance between two or more physical objects' or 'an endless extension in all directions' that replaces the pre-modern bounded cosmos ('Between the Linguistic and Spatial Turns: A Reconsideration of the Concept of Space and Its Role in the Early Modern Period', *Historical Reflections / Reflexions Historiques*, 35 [2009], 37-51, p. 40). For an authoritative account see: Edward Casey, *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).
[5] Casey, *Fate*, p. 78. Historians of thought continue to debate when this supplanting occurs. Pierre Duhem and others argue that it begins with the intellectual controversies of the thirteenth century and 1277 in particular (see Casey, *Fate*, p. 107), whereas others suggest that the importance of these has been overstated: see for instance Sara L. Uckelman, 'Logic and the Condemnations of 1277', *Journal of Philosophical Logic*, 39 (2010), 201-27.
[6] This he writes in the introduction to: René Descartes, *Discourse on Method and The Meditations*, trans. and ed. by F. E. Sutcliffe (London: Penguin, 1968), p. 20.

boundary and literariness by thinking in terms of the multifarious and mutually-complicating senses of 'frame' that obtain in the seventeenth century. As Rayna Kalas has emphasised, the semantics of Renaissance framing include the dominant modern sense of literal or figurative boundaries around something but also others that are very active and dynamic.[7] Shakespeare makes clear in sonnet 118, where he 'frames' his habits of consumption towards 'bitter sauces' (line 6), that to frame could mean some combination of to characterise and to direct: not entirely dissimilar to the modern sense, then, but of a significantly more dynamic character.[8] However, in the period the verb also means 'to give structure to, shape or construct' as an A-frame does to a house or barn. Indeed, it is with reference to such an act of construction that Descartes describes the philosophical project of the *Discourse*, and as Philip Sidney demonstrates this markedly active sense can operate in a literary connection: 'the ancient [poet]', he writes, 'marked the quantity of each syllable, and according to that framed his verse'.[9] It is also possible for 'frame' to denote a structure in its entirety. Donne's reference to 'form and frame', for instance, suggests that the two nouns are distinct yet also that they are closely associated and perhaps even tautologous, and Hamlet calls the earth a 'goodly frame' – though to imagine him gesturing at the exposed architectural beams of the Globe is to see the lines between these last two senses blur once more. Finally a point which will come to be crucial here: in the Renaissance to frame can also mean to travel, particularly with the suggestion of pilgrimage. The sense is general, but Thomas Heywood makes it plain when he has a speaker declare, 'Pilgrimage I'l frame | Unto the blessed Maid of *Walsinghame*'.[10]

These complex semantics accommodate two apparently countervailing senses: one in which 'frame' describes a process by which something is aesthetically enclosed and set-off and another in which it is actively constructed and shaped. Yet we can think of the directions as not countervailing but complementary. To consider the early modern semantics of framing brings into relief an intellectual milieu in which acts of bounding and construction can be indistinguishable, and in which aesthetic bounding and ontological construction are meaningfully akin and can even shade into one another. Thus framing will help to structure our thinking about the *Anniversaries* and the *Discourse*. Responding defensively to the loss of ontological enclosure effected by the new philosophy, both texts seek to reframe it – re-enclosing it as well as and by re-

---

[7] Rayna Kalas, *Frame, Glass, Verse: the Technology of Poetic Invention in the English Renaissance* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007).
[8] Unless otherwise noted references to Shakespeare's sonnets are to *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, rev. ed., ed. by Stephen Booth (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000).
[9] Philip Sidney, *An Apology for Poetry, or The Defence of Poesy*, ed. by R. W. Maslen & Geoffrey Shepherd (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), p. 115.
[10] Thomas Heywood, *Pleasant dialogues and dramma's* (London: 1637), sig. B4ᵛ.

constructing it – by the expedient of the soul, and both seek to do so in ways that rely upon literary effects which the texts seem to believe may have the capacity to play an active role in the world. Indeed, it will be especially pertinent here that early modern framing reverberates with a further sense of travel in physical space, since I will suggest that the travelogue – both in general and in terms of its development in the period at hand – provides another illuminating context in which to understand our two texts.

The interests of this chapter coincide with some notable scholarship of recent years. Ramie Targoff devotes an entire chapter of *John Donne, Body and Soul* to the soul in *The Second Anniversary*, and in a 2016 paper James Jaehoon Lee thinks about how Donne conceives of souls in terms of textuality.[11] The literariness of the *Discourse on Method* has been frequently remarked – Steven B. Smith offers a recent example – and scholars including Joseph Almog have emphasised the conservatism that coexists alongside Descartes' apparent innovativeness, as we shall see.[12] More generally, the potential for slippage between the literary and aesthetic and the ontological and epistemological has been explored by Ayesha Ramachandran in her recent analysis of early modern worldmaking. During the period, she writes, worldmaking acquires 'its current, double-edged meaning [of both] the actual origin and order of the physical world as well as […] the theories that we invent to comprehend the vastness of that whole'; and in both senses, she suggests, it is 'the central intellectual task of the late Renaissance'.[13] Indeed, Kalas reminds us that as early as Jacob Burckhardt we find the Renaissance defined by its sense of art as active in the world, beginning to understand even the state as a kind of work of art.[14]

That the Renaissance is an era prone to understand the boundary between word and world to be a permeable one, then, is well established. But Ramachandran's conception of the era's 'poetic epistemology' nevertheless points to an emphasis that is adjusted in what follows. Though it evokes well the potential of the fictitious and aesthetic to infect discourses of the factual, suggesting how in an epistemological sense what happens within the frames of a map has the power fundamentally to shape the understanding and conception

---

[11] Ramie Targoff, *John Donne, Body and Soul* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2008), pp. 79-105. James Jaehoon Lee, 'John Donne and the Textuality of the Two Souls', *Studies in Philology*, 113 (2016), 879-918.

[12] Smith writes that 'the *Discourse* is less a scientific work than a novel of self-discovery, part of the Renaissance literature of exemplarity that puts the creation of the self at the center of the text' (*Modernity and Its Discontents: Making and Unmaking the Bourgeois from Machiavelli to Bellow* ([New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016], p. 65). Cf. Joseph Almog, *Cogito?: Descartes and Thinking the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

[13] Ayesha Ramachandran, *The Worldmakers: Global Imagining in Early Modern Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), pp. 8-9 and pp. 5-6.

[14] Kalas, *Frame*, pp. 9-10. For more see: Burckhardt, *Civilization*, pp. 19-96.

of that which is mapped, I suggest that the *Anniversary* poems and the *Discourse* evince a slippage even more dramatic. Commentary in recent decades has become wary about the capacity of language to embody or to 'do'.[15] Yet the capacious semantics of early modern framing have begun to intimate for us the potentially blurred early modern line between acts of representation and those of active construction. And as both the *Anniversaries* and the *Discourse* approach their moments of transcendent literary soulfulness they do seem to strive for an aesthetics that is potent not merely epistemologically but ontologically as well: that can not only represent the world but effect change in it.

II

It is the argument of these pages that Donne and Descartes position the soul as a solution. For a vivid sense of the problem to which they imagine it responding we can turn to Figures 8, 9 and 10. The first two, one a plate from Peter Apian's *Cosmographia* of 1524 and the other a fifteenth-century French manuscript illustration, depict the Ptolemaic cosmos: a system of concentric spheres that centres upon the earth.[16] The third is a plate from Thomas Digges' 1576 edition of his father Leonard's *A prognostication euerlastinge of right good effecte*, entitled 'A perfit description of the Caelestiall Orbes', representing the heliocentric Copernican universe with 'the Sonne' at the centre and 'this globe of mortalitye' and the other planets circling it.[17]

Of the first two the *Cosmographia* image is much the most detailed. We see the planetary spheres progressing outwards from the Earth until they reach the *Firmamentum*, the ring in which all the stars are fixed, and eventually the *Primum Mobile*, the outermost ring and the source of motion in all the others. This is the absolute edge of material creation, and outside of it there is only the *Empireum*, an entirely other ontological realm beyond physical space and time that is the preserve and domain of the divine or

---

[15] For a recent attack on the idea, see: Terry Eagleton, *How to Read a Poem* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006). John Leonard defends it in: ' "Doing What He Describes": Enactment in Milton's Poetry', *Cithara*, 49 (2009), 7-25. The distinction between that which tells (diegesis) and that which shows (mimesis) goes back at least to Book III of Plato's *Republic: Volume I: Books 1-5,* ed. and trans. by Christopher Emlyn-Jones and William Preddy (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2013), esp. pp. 249-56.
[16] Peter Apian, *Cosmographia* (Antwerp: 1524), sig. Bʳ. The manuscript is held in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Mss. 143, fol. 20. This cosmological picture is elaborated in more depth below, but for a pithy account of its fundamentals see: Georges Dicker, *Descartes: An Analytic and Historical Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 5-6.
[17] Leonard Digges, *A prognostication euerlastinge of right good effecte* (London: 1576), f. 43.

Top left, Fig. 8. A fifteenth-century illustration of the Ptolemaic cosmos (Bibliothèque Nationale de France MS 143, fol. 20). Below, Figs. 11, 12 and 13. Three rosaries found aboard the *Mary Rose*, which sank in 1545.

Fig. 9. Peter Apian, *Cosmographia* (Antwerp: 1524), sig. B^r.
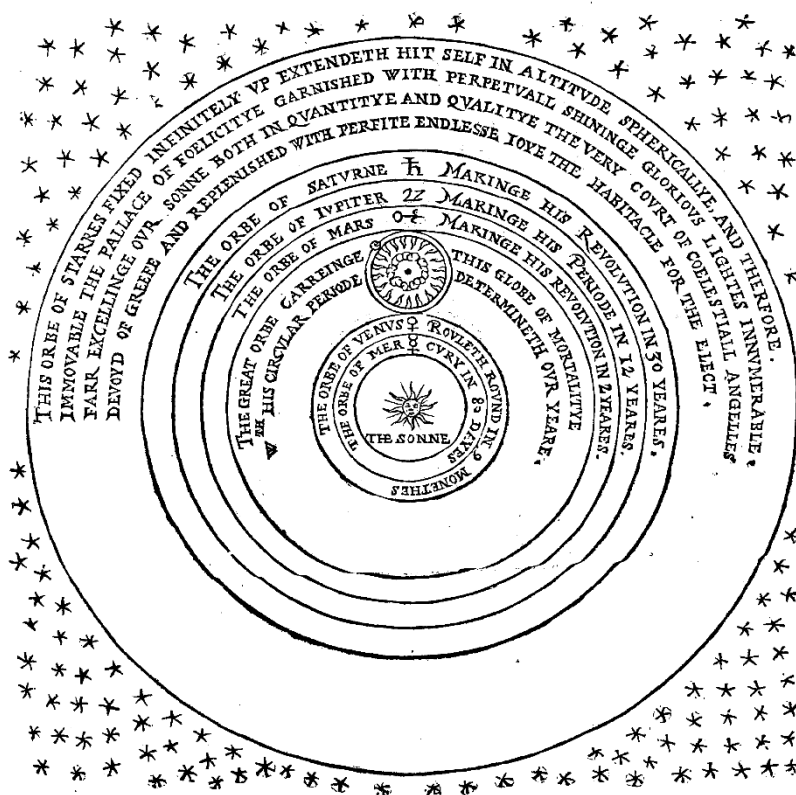
Fig. 10. Leonard Digges, *A prognostication euerlastinge of right good effecte* (London: 1576), f. 43.

Habitaculum Dei.[18] The less detailed manuscript image is included here for the vividness with which it depicts

the delimitation and enclosure of this ancient cosmos. The earth here could hardly be more ontologically or

meteorologically secure, the centre and focus of an absolutely stable material scene in which ultimate finitude

permits human life to be central and everything to be enclosed. Here the *Primum Mobile* and *Empireum* are

not depicted, with the final sphere apparently the *Firmamentum*. But at the periphery of the image the zodiac

bestiary effects a shift in representational mode that works to reinforce the same sense of enclosure. Indeed,

the entire image can be read as a shading of representational mode, from the cartographic centre through the

cosmological spheres and finally the mythological bestiary, a shading that ultimately short-circuits by

prestidigitation any difficult questions as to what might lie beyond the edges of the cosmos. Outside the

ultimately exterior thing here is a different sort of thing entirely.

Digges' image represents a comprehensive inversion. Most obvious is that the earth's central position

has been usurped by the sun. But close attention to the image and accompanying text reveals that the

inversion turns not only upon centrality or otherwise but upon containment and unboundedness. Where in the

earlier illustrations we find a cosmos whose contained finitude is effected by an ontological shift to the divine

or otherwise categorically other, here we find something quite different. 'THIS ORBE OF STARES', the text tells

us,

> FIXED INFINITELY UP EXTENDETH HIT SELF IN ALTITUDE SPHERICALLYE, AND THEREFORE. IMMOVABLE THE PALLACE
>
> OF FOELICITYE GARNISHED WITH PERPETUALL SHININGE GLORIOUS LIGHTES INNUMERABLE. FARR EXCELLINGE OUR
>
> SONNE BOTH IN QUANTITYE AND QUALITYE THE VERY COURT OF COELESTIALL ANGELLES DEVOYD OF GREEFE AND
>
> REPLENISHED WITH PERFITE ENDLESSE LOVE THE HABITACLE FOR THE ELECT.

So the obvious decentring of this globe of mortalitye is part and parcel of a larger abolishment of the kind of

spatial arrangement in which centres are possible at all. It is true that the sun is literally central to the image,

and is even personified in a perfunctory sort of way reminiscent of an older representational mode. It is also

true that the cosmos as the focus of the page is afforded a kind of centrality. Yet at the same time the image

flatly resists any such sense of symmetry. Digges pointedly deprioritises the sun itself, describing the stars as

'farr excelling our sonne both in quantitye and qualitye', so that centrality here does not signal any teleological

---

[18] For another depiction of the marked spatial otherness of this realm we can turn to Hieronymus Bosch's *Earthly Paradise: Ascent to the Empyrean*, in which angels lead souls up through clouds towards a heavenly destination that is a system of concentric rings leading *inwards*.

value but is a mere accident of representation. But more fundamental is that the kind of infinite space the text describes ('infinitely up extendeth', 'innumerable') denies the very possibility of centrality for the sun or anything else. (As Margaret Cavendish puts it in 'Of the Center': 'If the world has Limits, Center's made', with the converse implication that 'In Infinites no Center can be laid' given in the previous line.)[19] Digges' image reflects this shift in its visual arrangements as well, supplanting the *Primum Mobile* with a sphere of purely abstract information. Whereas in the other spheres the text is set into the circuit it names, this one contains only text describing what is endlessly exterior to it, so that visual correspondence between word and image seems to have been destabilised. What is exterior, moreover, is an undifferentiated material continuum, collapsing the ontological distinction between the sphere of stars and 'the very court of caelestiall angelles […] the habitacle for the elect'. Now the stars are themselves that caelestiall court, and all sense of enclosure by a bounding shift at the edge of material creation is decisively abolished.

If in the *Anniversaries* Donne is in obvious ways thinking about these cosmic developments, as we shall see that he is, with the *Discourse* the case is less obvious, since the text does not explicitly concern itself with cosmic matters. But the circular boundedness dismantled in Digges' image is not only a vision of the cosmos. Rather, that cosmic boundedness expresses and is predicated upon a fundamental principle of Aristotelian and scholastic natural philosophy: what Casey describes as the 'confining' model of embodiment in which bodies and places are defined by the inner edge of what contains or encloses them (Aristotle in the *Physics* uses the metaphor of wine in a cask).[20] By denying the possibility of ultimate cosmic enclosure Digges' image adumbrates the entirely different ontology that culminates in the seventeenth century in Cartesianism, an ontology in which bodies are understood not in terms of defined exterior boundary but in terms of their pure extension in space. The distinction is not only a remote cosmological one. As Casey writes, the move between the two represents the shift from a mediaeval vision that is inheritor of 'the ingrained wholism of Aristotle and Plato – their passionate desire for perfection, especially of a teleologically ordered sort', and in which (as A. Rupert Hall puts it) 'the nature of a thing is to be explained by its excellence in being what it is', to one in which any such teleological order is exploded.[21] Casey makes the visceral character of the shift palpable:

---

[19] Cavendish, *Poems*, sig. E3ʳ.

[20] Casey, *Fate*, p. 79. The Aristotelian theory of enclosed bodies runs into very complex difficulties at the supposed edge of the cosmos; for a discussion of these see the editors' introduction: Aristotle, *The Physics*, 2 vols., trans. and ed. by Philip H. Wicksteed and Francis M. Cornford (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2014), pp. 268-71.

[21] Casey, *Fate*, p. 80; A. Rupert Hall, *The Revolution in Science 1500-1750* (London: Longman, 1983), p. 3.

the appeal of the former, and what is lost in the transition to the latter, is 'the philosophical support it offers to human beings' longing for cozy quarters – not merely for adequate shelter but for boundaries that embrace'.[22]

What we should bear in mind as we turn to the *Anniversary* poems and the *Discourse*, then, is that jettisoned in the spatial turn is not simply an abstract conception of the cosmos as finite and framed. Rather, what is lost are cosmic boundaries that offer structure and security, and a way of thinking about everything within that cosmos as enclosed in a way that affords it meaning. It is a bereavement with profound and visceral implications for the status and situation of humanity within it. As Alexandre Koyré puts it, this is the 'process as the result of which man – as it is sometimes said – lost his place in the world, or, more correctly perhaps, lost the very world in which he was living'.[23] It is to this bereavement that both Donne and Descartes respond, as I read them below, by thinking about souls with the capacity to reframe the fatally unframed.

<div align="center">

III

</div>

Quite what the *Anniversary* poems are doing is not clear: despite their high scholarly profile the texts have since their first publication generated what Anne Cotterill calls 'an aura of extravagant, esoteric mystery'.[24] Ostensibly they commemorate the death of Elizabeth Drury, adolescent daughter of Donne's patron Sir Robert Drury, and indeed a shorter work published alongside them, 'A Funeral Elegy', does just that in a relatively straightforward way.[25] But the '*Anniversary*' prefix is attached to the longer works only when the sequel is published in 1612, and the poems' individual titles announce that Donne intends something rather more ambitious than conventional elegy.

The first, as given on the original 1611 frontispiece, runs *An anatomie of the world. Wherein, by occasion of the vntimely death of Mistris Elizabeth Drury, the frailtie and the decay of this whole world is represented*; the second, from the 1612 edition, *The second Anniversary. Of the progres of the soule. Wherein:*

---

[22] Ibid., p. 79.
[23] Alexandre Koyré, *From the Closed World to the Infinite Universe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1957), p. 2.
[24] Anne Cotterill, *Digressive Voices in Early Modern English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 51-52. Targoff out points out that the pair, in particular the first, are among 'the most critically debated works in early modern literature' (*John Donne,* p. 81).
[25] On 'A Funeral Elegy' see: W. M. Lebans, 'Donne's Anniversaries and the Tradition of Funeral Elegy', *ELH*, 39 (1972), 545-59.

by occasion of the religious death of Mistris Elizabeth Drury, the incommodities of the soule in this life and her

exaltation in the next, are contemplated. As these suggest, the poems mourn not only the deceased Elizabeth

but the death of the entire world, and go on to associate Elizabeth with the soteriological prospects of the

immortal soul itself. Indeed, the divinity attached to the girl becomes so great that Ben Jonson, *The First*

Anniversary's earliest extant critic, objected that it rendered the poem 'profane and full of Blasphemies' and

that only if the poem had been 'written of ye Virgin Mary' could it have 'been something'.[26] Since Jonson a

diverse and inconclusive body of scholarship has attempted to understand the excesses to which he objected

by way of various hermeneutic themes. For Louis L. Martz the poems reflect the Ignatian devotional tradition,

for instance, and Marius Bewley suggests that they tacitly discuss Donne's apostasy from the Catholic

Church.[27] Other readers identify in Elizabeth Drury a specific symbolic significance: Marjorie Hope Nicolson

suggests that Elizabeth stands principally for Elizabeth I, for instance, Barbara Kiefer Lewalski that she

represents 'the image of God', and Empson exemplifies such approaches when he writes that the 'only way to

make the poem[s] sensible is to accept Elizabeth Drury as the Logos'.[28] But whether or not such a

comprehensive reading is possible – for my part I suspect it is not – nothing of the sort is undertaken here. The

pages that follow ask not what the *Anniversary* poems are themselves about but rather what they have to tell

us about the capacities of the soul in early modern literature. In doing so, they disregard vast swathes of the

poems in favour of a focus specifically upon a call and response that takes place across the pair: the

dismantling of cosmic boundedness described by the famous 'new philosophy' sequence in *The First*

Anniversary and, in lines that specifically respond to that earlier sequence, the rehabilitation of the teleological

cosmos by the soul in *The Second*. In this call and response Donne posits a cosmic structure lost as a result of

ways of thinking about it and responds with a new and literary way of thinking, reframing the unframed

cosmos from within by way of a soul and the things it achieves by travelling in space.

---

[26] Quoted in Barbara Lewalski, *Donne's Anniversaries and the Poetry of Praise: The Creation of a Symbolic Mode* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), p. 3. Jonson's objection notwithstanding, we can note that Donne's hyperbolic conflation of a young woman with divinity is not necessarily unique: as Charles Nicholl has recently pointed out, Petrarch may in a similar way map his association with Laura onto the events of Christ's death and resurrection ('On the Sixth Day', *London Review of Books*, 41 (2019), 23-26).
[27] Louis L. Martz, *The Poetry of Meditation: a Study in English Religious Literature of the Seventeenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), pp. 211-48; Marius Bewley, 'Religious Cynicism in Donne's Poetry', *The Kenyon Review*, 14 (1952), 619-46.
[28] Nicolson, *The Breaking of the Circle*, pp. 81-122; Lewalski, *Anniversaries*, p. 113 and passim; William Empson, *English Pastoral Poetry* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1938), p. 84. For a comprehensive review of scholarship on the poems see the introduction to James D. Reed II's unpublished 2009 doctoral thesis ' "Whose This Peece Should Be": Elizabeth Drury's Role as Alchemical Model for Salvation in John Donne's *Anniversaries*', pp. 3-17, available online at: http://pqdtopen.proquest.com/doc/304968163.html?FMT=AI.

The First Anniversary's lengthy complaint about the new philosophy comes towards the beginning of the poem. Preceding it are some lines specifically mourning Drury's death and a sequence bemoaning the generally declined state of mankind; here Donne hits some predictable misogynistic notes on the Fall and mourns the reduced postlapsarian human lifespan and size, memorably lamenting the lost stature that would once have been sufficient to alarm elephants and whales (99-144). But it is as the famous excoriation of intellectual progress begins that Donne's fixation upon lost boundary appears: 'new philosophy calls all in doubt', he complains, and 'the element of fire is quite put out' (205-206). That this cosmic disorder is catalysed here not by physical change but by ways of thinking will be significant. For now, however, more important is that the disorder Donne perceives is synonymous with the loss of the sphere of rarefied fire that in Ptolemaic thought is understood to enclose the world, and which here indeed seems to function as a metonymy for the entire Ptolemaic system of enclosing spheres. As Donne elaborates the symptoms of decay, moreover, he continues to understand them as deriving fundamentally from a loss of circular order and completeness in what surrounds the earth:

> The sun is lost, and th' earth, and no man's wit
>
> Can well direct him, where to look for it. [207-08]

The loss of the wayward sun has numerous implications, but the emphasis is here upon its lostness as a direct contrast to the previous reliable circularity of the system to which it was central. And after a brief digression Donne returns to these problems at line 251:

> We think the heavens enjoy their spherical,
>
> Their round proportion embracing all.
>
> But yet their various and perplexed course,
>
> Observed in divers ages, doth enforce
>
> Men to find out so many eccentric parts,
>
> Such divers down-right lines, such overthwarts,
>
> As disproportion that pure form. It tears
>
> The firmament in eight and forty shares,
>
> And in these constellations there arise
>
> New stars, and old do vanish from our eyes. [251-60]

'Their round proportion embracing all': what has been lost is an enclosing sphericalness so profound as to generate enjoyment in the heavens themselves, and one so comprehensive as not simply to enclose but to deny the existence of anything that is not enclosed. The following lines then proceed comprehensively to challenge any sense of this circular enclosure by 'disproportioning' all heavenly orbits through 'eccentricity', a word that literally denotes the failure to be a circle, and eventually by dismantling the firmament itself into torn fragments. Following that Donne describes the zodiac's failure to keep the sun to an orderly course – its progress 'is not round; nor can the sun | perfect a circle' (268-9) – and after giving this non-circular pattern a decidedly Satanic inflection ('serpentine' [272]) moves on to a series of difficult questions about the earth itself that are prompted by the question of whether 'keeps the earth her round proportion still' (285).[29]

In the same sequence Donne worries about an issue whose implications for a bounded cosmos require a bit more parsing. One sign of this world's irretrievable decline, he says, is that people are thinking about the possibility of other ones:

> And freely men confess, that this world's spent,
>
> When in the planets, and the firmament
>
> They seek so many new[.] [209-211]

But what may not be immediately clear is that by thinking about the possibility of other worlds here Donne invokes another threat to the reassuring boundedness of creation.[30] It is not only that the appearance of extra planets would require that the Ptolemaic system of planetary spheres be emended if not abandoned. Rather, the notion of multiple worlds is fundamentally disruptive to a conception of the cosmos as bounded and centred upon the world. Partly this is because the descending circularity of Ptolemaic cosmic enclosure reduces inwards towards a single centre, so that to posit other worlds is to deprioritise the existing one by moving it from its central position. But it is also because, from at least the thirteenth century onwards, arguments about the possibility of extraterrestrial worlds hinge upon the way such a prospect seems to imply

---

[29] The concern with circularity in this regard is not unique: the disturbing character of phenomena such as meteors in the period derives at least in part from the lack they imply of circularity in the cosmos. For instance, Milton's description of Satan as a sun-spot in *Paradise Lost*, Book III (588-90) comes immediately after the issue of a non-geocentric cosmos has been raised by way of the word 'eccentric' (575) (John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, in *The Major Works*, rev. ed., ed. by Stephen Orgel and Jonathan Goldberg [Oxford: Oxford University Press 2008]). To take another example, Nicolson quotes a letter of 1610 from Sir Henry Wotton to the Earl of Salisbury, describing Galileo's telescopic discoveries, in which like Donne he notes particularly the unsphericalness of the moon ('The "New Astronomy" ', p. 440).

[30] Donne's interest in extraterrestrial worlds is a subject that much exercised William Empson, most notably in: 'Donne the Space Man', *The Kenyon Review*, 19 (1957), 337-99.

the possibility of infinite space and the emptiness of vacuum.[31] (We can turn once more to Cavendish here: if there are 'infinites of worlds', she writes, 'they must be plac'd | At such a distance, as between lies waste'.)[32] A world that is one of many others, that is, cannot be truly central and can even imply a totally unframed and boundless creation.[33]

What we can see is that the cosmic disorder Donne envisions is persistently understood to represent and result from the loss of particularly circular structures and bounds. With all this in mind we should consider again what is truly threatened by that disorder. The loss of boundedness it implies obtains in some obvious ways, as we have observed with Casey already, since one effect of the previous enclosure is a fundamental sense of safety and shelter. But the loss of enclosure represents not only the loss of physical boundedness. Also lost is the divine order with which that physical boundedness is associated. The first thing to note in this regard is that the Ptolemaic cosmic vision aligns with and reinforces a sense of humanity's particularly eschatological centrality. As John 3:16 makes clear – 'for God so loved the world' – the redeeming sacrifice of Christ is conventionally understood to have benefitted the world of men exclusively, which is in part why thinking about multiple worlds generates uncomfortable speculations about a deprioritised humanity.[34] As Ernst Cassirer puts it: 'the sacrifice of the oneness of the world seemed to imply sacrificing the idea of the unique value of man, and, furthermore, seemed to deprive the religious process of its proper and unitary centre'.[35] But it is not only the unique value of man that is at issue: divinity itself, which is in a sense that which encloses the pre-modern cosmos, is also at stake in the loss of cosmic boundedness. Sarah Powrie puts it evocatively: 'if the world system is made of undifferentiated infinite space', she writes, 'then divine immanence is extracted from creation and jettisoned into outer space, leaving a vacuum of infinite regress'.[36]

What is at stake here is divine enclosure, then, and neither is the particular geometrical character of that enclosure incidental. As Lisa Gorton writes, in medieval and early modern thought coloured by Neoplatonism 'spatial forms [are used] to imagine spiritual relationships [...] develop[ing] a symbolic geometry,

---

[31] See Casey, *Fate*, p. 108 for more on these arguments.

[32] Cavendish, 'If Infinite Worlds, Infinite Centers', in *Poems*, sig. E4ᵛ.

[33] In light of this Nicolson's suggestion that Donne is more troubled by the prospect of new worlds than by a change in the earth's position ('The "New Astronomy" ', p. 457) seems odd: the former leads ineluctably to the latter.

[34] As Nicolson points out (ibid., p. 459), one of the issues that sends Giordano Bruno to the stake is his belief in the possibility of infinite worlds, since 'such a conception struck at the roots of the Christian idea of the sacrifice of Christ, who died to save *this* world'.

[35] Ernst Cassirer, *The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy*, trans. by Mario Domandi (Mineola: Dover Publications, 2000), p. 189.

[36] Sarah Powrie, 'Transposing World Harmony: Donne's Creation Poetics in the Context of a Medieval Tradition', *Studies in Philology*, 107 (2010), 212-35, p. 213.

a spatial language of thought, which borrows nothing from physical space but its shapes'. And as Gorton

implies when she elaborates a list ('the center, the circle, and concentric spheres'), this interest in divine

geometry focuses overwhelmingly upon the circular.[37] Donne has form here that will be suggestive as we

progress to the poetics of the *Anniversaries*. God as a circle without centre or circumference is a commonplace

to which he has frequent recourse, for instance in the *Devotions* where he greets God with the salutation 'Oh

eternall, and most gracious God, who considered in thy selfe art a Circle, first and last altogether': time and

space are here bounded in a circular divinity.[38] Donne also has a telling interest in compasses, the technology

by which the circle's transcendent perfection becomes embodied in the world. The closing flourish of 'A

Valediction: forbidden Mourning', for instance, explains away the problem of its lovers' impending physical

separation by figuring the pair in terms of the extraordinary spatial properties of a compass, collapsing time

and space into a new dispensation structured by literary metaphor. But the instrument of the compass is itself

divinely charged, due in no small part to its central position in hexaemeric events: there God 'inscribe[s] a

circle on the surface of the waters as a *boundary* between light and darkness' (Job 26:10, emphasis mine), an

inscription achieved by 'set[ting] a compass upon the face of the depth' (Proverbs 8:27) and which becomes

not an inscription but the world itself. The *Anniversaries* themselves do not make explicit play with 'compass'

in this sense of geometrical instrument. But Drury's loss is specifically mourned as the loss of a compass

nevertheless:

> She whom wise nature had invented then
>
> When she observed that every sort of men
>
> Did in their voyage in this world's sea stray,
>
> And needed a new compass for their way[.] [223-26]

The sense of 'compass' here is of a mariner's rather than geometer's instrument. Yet when we consider that

this type of compass is a circular, rudimental cartographic representation of the world (each quarter-point on

the circumference marked with north, south, east or west), we find that again the effect is to invoke the loss of

---

[37] Lisa Gorton, 'The Paradox Topos', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 61 (2000), 343-46, p. 343.

[38] Donne, *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions* (London: 1624), sig. B9ᵛ. Lewis notes 'the old saying' that God is a circle without circumference (*Discarded*, p. 218). For more on Donne and circularity see: Michael L. Hall, 'Circles and Circumvention in Donne's Sermons', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 82 (1983), 201-14.

an ordered and bounded world of reliable orientation, and to suggest the close association of all non-straying courses, even straight ones, with stable circularity.[39]

~~~

So what has been lost as a result of Elizabeth Drury's death are framings that had surrounded, directed, structured, and even constituted and generated. Now they are lost: as *The First Anniversary* has it, echoing *Hamlet*, the 'world's whole frame' has been rendered 'out of joint' (191-2).[40] With that in mind we turn now to *The Second Anniversary*'s attempt to put right this out-of-jointness. Its precursor considers ontological dislocation to be the result of how things are thought about, as we shall shortly see, which is to say in a sense how they are framed. It itself responds to this confusion by attempting a confusion of its own, suggesting that such dislocations might be conclusively repaired by active literary reframing – reframing that hinges upon the soul and its capacity to transcend the limits and rules of time and space.

As we begin to consider this soul we can note first that not only God but the soul itself is conventionally associated with the divine circular. Henry More thinks of a soul that has itself assumed a godlike paradoxical circularity, 'a shifting centre with circumference'.[41] Kenelm Digby too thinks in this way: 'mans soul is a Circle, whose circumference is limited by the true center of it, which is onely God'.[42] If these are both rather quixotic sources, the early modern period can also point to the most orthodox of philosophical authorities for support in this way of thinking: as Stephen Batman has it in 1582, 'Aristotle lykeneth the reasonable soule is a circle because of perfection hereof'.[43] Donne does something akin yet slightly different in *The Second Anniversary*. He describes not a circular soul but one that is associated with and striving towards that state:

---

[39] We note in passing that Donne elsewhere as well associates the cartographic and the soteriological, in 'Hymn to God my God in My Sicknesse' claiming 'As west and east | In all flat maps (and I am one) are one, | So death doth touch the resurrection' (13-15).

[40] Though the echo need not be only of *Hamlet*. Thomas More as well remarks upon a matter being 'so farre out of ioynt that it should never bee brought in frame againe' (*The Pittifull Life of King Edward the fifth* [London: 1641], sig. D4ᵛ). If it is a Shakespearean echo, however, it may not be the only one in the *Anniversaries*: lines 67-70 of the second poem, which call the world a stage and allude to the Golden Time, are reminiscent of a looser pairing of references in *As You Like It* (I.1.115, II.7.139).

[41] Henry More, 'Psychathanasia' (Book 2, Canto 2, stanza 10, line 3), in *Psychodia platonica, or, A platonicall song of the soul* (Cambridge: 1642), sig. H2ᵛ. For more on More's very idiosyncratic thought about the soul see: John Henry, 'A Cambridge Platonist's Materialism: Henry More and the Concept of Soul', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 49 (1986), 172-195.

[42] Kenelm Digby, *Observations on the 22. stanza in the 9ᵗʰ. canto of the 2d. book of Spencers Faery Queen* (London: 1643), Sig. A6ʳ.

[43] Stephen Batman, *Batman upon Bartholome, his Booke De Proprietatibus Rerum* (London: 1582), sig. Bbbb.iii.ᵛ. Robert S. Westman points out that the association of the soul with geometric forms goes back at least as far as Proclus: 'Nature, art, and psyche: Jung, Pauli, and the Kepler-Fludd Polemic', in Brian Vickers, ed., *Occult and Scientific Mentalities in the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 177-230, p. 204.

> Know that all lines which circles do contain,
>
> For once that they the centre touch, do touch
>
> Twice the circumference; and be thou such,
>
> Double on heaven, thy thoughts on earth employed[.] [436-39]

The soul is a line of diameter, that is, starting at the divine circumference and passing through the earthly centre on its way to the opposite point on the circumference. With this figuration fresh in the reader's mind Donne returns to the prospect once more at line 508, stating that the arrival of Drury's soul in heaven has made perfection more perfect, 'piec[ing] a circle, and still keep[ing] it so'. The circumference's enclosing boundary emerges here as the rarefied, radically mobile site of the divine, a place that can move (as the circle is 'pieced', or increased, by the addition of Drury's soul) and simultaneously remain still ('be kept so'). What has rendered the material scene so irretrievably damaged is the loss of boundary. In response Donne imagines a soul moving towards a divine circular bounding that conspicuously defies the spatial laws of that scene.

But it is in the sequence that specifically depicts the soul's space-transcendent movement through physical space that *The Second Anniversary* most decisively responds to *The First*'s deconstruction of the cosmos. A full understanding of that sequence requires that we first give proper emphasis to the particularly epistemological character of the deconstruction to which it responds. We noted above that in *The First Anniversary* men testify to this world's decay by thinking about new ones. In fact, *The First Anniversary* very consistently gives the impression that the deplorable cosmic disorder it describes is somehow the result of ways of thinking. The lost sun of line 207, for instance, seems to exist in an inscrutable causal relationship with 'man's wit'. Line 206's 'element of fire' was invisible and conjectural anyway, and so perhaps more obviously vulnerable to changes in thinking. But since the sun presumably continued to rise and set throughout 1611 very similarly to how it had done in previous years, its 'lostness' in Donne's poem is a more unsettling development: though this is a shift not in the sun's behaviour but in mankind's understanding of that behaviour, nevertheless it does seem to have left that behaviour actually altered. And as the sequence progresses intellectual developments continue to effect real change in the world they apprehend. Astrological thinking has performed acts of violence upon the heavens by conceiving of them as a zodiac (it has 'torn' them), and the sun, before merely 'lost', seems as a result of losing the circularity of its orbit to be on the verge of leaving the heavenly realms and declining in status altogether: 'seeming weary with his reeling thus, |

He means to sleep, being now fall'n nearer us' (273-74). The sequence is marked by an inability to categorise

the changes it enumerates as physically real or matters of human interpretation, and in the end by the sense

that the latter might actually effect the former. Donne makes clear only a few lines later how anxious he feels

about the relationship this implies between man and the heavens:

> Man hath weaved out a net, and this net thrown
>
> Upon the heavens, and now they are his own. [279-80]

But this intellectual overreach is stated most plainly when the poem thinks about meteors, regretting that it

has become unclear 'Not only what they mean, but what they be' (387). It is not only 'meaning' that is at stake

in the regime of the new philosophy, that is, but 'being' itself: epistemology has impinged upon ontology,

reframing not just perception but what is perceived.

It has been essential to dwell at this point upon the capacity for slippage between meaning and being

in *The First Anniversary* because in *The Second*'s climactic moments that capacity is returned to and reversed,

with the soul and literary effect now replacing natural philosophical innovation as the active elements.[44] The

poem's crucial moment, in which prompted by Donne's lengthy *contemptus mundi* denigration of earthly

existence his soul makes a decisive leap towards the divine, is a sequence of reframing that specifically

corresponds to the terms of Donne's earlier complaint about the new philosophy.[45] That it specifically

responds to that sequence in its predecessor is flagged by the reappearance of 'th' element of fire' – which the

first poem tells us is 'quite put out' – in the course of Donne's soul's flight towards heaven:

> And think this slow-paced soul, which late did cleave
>
> To a body, and went but by the body's leave,
>
> Twenty, perchance, or thirty mile a day,
>
> Dispatches in a minute all the way
>
> 'Twixt heaven, and earth: she stays not in the air,
>
> To look what meteors there themselves prepare;
>
> She carries no desire to know, nor sense,
>
> Whether th' air's middle region be intense,

---

[44] Though his focus is quite different, A. E. Voss shares my interest in this aspect of *The Second Anniversary*: as he puts it, in the poem Donne intends for language not to 'mean, but be' ('The Structure of Donne's Anniversaries', *English Studies in Africa*, 12 [1969], 1-30, p. 10).

[45] The poem can seem confused as to whom its souls belong to (at one point souls themselves are implied to have souls, indeed [183-84]), but Targoff is unequivocal that here the soul is Donne's (*John Donne*, p. 88) and I am of her party.

For th' element of fire, she doth not know,

Whether she passed by such a place or no;

She baits not at the moon, nor cares to try

Whether in that new world, men live, and die.

Venus retards her not, to inquire, how she

Can, (being one star) Hesper, and Vesper be;

He that charmed Argus' eyes, sweet Mercury,

Works not on her, who now is grown all eye;

Who, if she meet the body of the sun,

Goes through, not staying till his course be run;

Who finds in Mars his camp, no corps of guard;

Nor is by Jove, nor by his father barred;

But ere she can consider how she went,

At once is at, and through the firmament. [185-206]

Here the cosmic problems inaugurated by the new philosophy are addressed point by point: the element of fire, the perplexing implications of meteors, the prospect of new worlds, the wayward course of the sun, mythological cosmological forces. But if to perceive or consider these phenomena is in *The First Anniversary* to inflict damage upon the world, here to ignore them is to repair that damage. Whereas before the sun's decline had unmistakeably pessimistic implications for the material world's spiritual health, now the sun goes unheeded by the immaterial soul to the extent that the latter passes straight through its body; speculation about other worlds, which previously testified to, actively confirmed and indeed contributed to the earth's spiritual fallenness, is now simply uninteresting.[46] If thinking about things can damage them, it seems, it is possible to neutralise the damage by ignoring it, specifically by way of the soul and its capacity for the kind of tremendous speed that can collapse entirely the material space in which the damage has occurred.[47] Having started with a world killed by how it is perceived and considered, then, we move in the later poem to a resurrection effected by the same means.

Or nearly the same, for here poetic language is brought into play in new ways. The sequence from *The First Anniversary* is for all its rhetorical excesses not by Donnean standards apparently much interested in

---

[46] Lewis points out that the 'element of fire' would presumably have been invisible anyway, since it was the most rarefied form of fire possible (*Discarded*, p. 107), but Donne seems to assume that if the will were there the soul could somehow perceive it.

[47] We might again be put in mind of *Paradise Lost* here, where in response to Adam's questions about the cosmos Raphael tells him simply not to think about it, and does so specifically with reference to apparent cosmic disorder and the issue of multiple worlds (Book VIII, lines 66-188).

literary affect: the mode remains by and large discursive. But as the sequence from *The Second Anniversary* progresses it seems to want to develop a more involved and even active poetics, and one that seeks energetically to effect rather than simply depict the collapse of space and time. To blur the distinction between literary language and real-world effect is characteristically Donnean, as it is to do so particularly by thinking about circular framing. We have already noted the example of the compass in 'Forbidding mourning', an embodied paradox that abolishes altogether the time and space of physical separation, and in a sermon delivered at the Earl of Bridgewater's house in 1627 we find the instrument again bridging the gap between metaphor and world:

> the Body of Man was the first point that the foot of Gods Compasse was upon: First, he created the body of Adam:
> and then he carries his Compasse round, and shuts up where he began, he ends with the Body of Man againe in the
> glorification thereof in the Resurrection.[48]

In these moments we find circular literary framing at its most potent. Not only does the compass generate material existence by marking it out (here as in Job and Proverbs), in the sermon it also becomes a literary technology that collapses that existence back into a single image that is beyond space and time.[49] And in *The Second Anniversary*'s soul-flight sequence the soul is at the centre of a similar process of literary effectiveness.

Note first how the sequence, which is a series of negatives continually reasserting its refusal to witness cosmic disintegration, gathers to itself a kind of incantatory power. Also more particularly literary than what has gone before is the breathlessness of Donne's evocation of the soul's journey, the problems previously recounted over many dozens of lines now listed and dismissed in a rush. The speed that lies behind that rush, moreover, is depicted in a way that reaches beyond straightforward depiction and towards enactment: lines of stumbling, delayed syntax give way to the precipitous 'Dispatches in a minute all the way | Twixt heaven and earth'. But in fact it is as the sequence continues from this point that Donnean literariness goes into overdrive. Having watched the soul reach and pass through the firmament, Donne now pauses to rethink both the way in which the soul is moving and the stars through which it does so:

---

[48] Quoted in Peter L. Rudnytsky, ' "The Sight of God": Donne's Poetics of Transcendence', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 24 (1982), 185-207, p. 192.
[49] As Gorton points out, a principal attraction of geometry to Neoplatonic thought is that it allows the world to be thought about as timeless ('Paradox', p. 343). As Richard E. Hughes illustrates Donne, who 'could find both Adams met in him, and think Christ's Cross and Adam's Tree stood in one place, beginnings and endings occurring in an identical space-time', is particularly amenable to this mode of thought (Richard E. Hughes, 'The Woman in Donne's Anniversaries, *ELH*, 34 [1967], 307-26, p. 309).

And as these stars were but so many beads

Strung on one string, speed undistinguished leads

Her through those spheres, as through the beads, a string,

Whose quick succession makes it still one thing:

As doth the pith, which, lest our bodies slack,

Strings fast the little bones of neck, and back;

So by the soul doth death string heaven and earth. [207-13]

Again the syntax here seeks to embody the soul's precipitous transcendence, becoming increasingly convoluted before giving way to a decisive and serene release in the final line. More noteworthy still is the way the complex system of metaphor and poetic effect generated in the lines seems to reach towards a supercharged mode of representation. That Donne will shortly think of the soul's journey as the paradox of a 'long-short progress' (219) is in itself telling. Paradox, an intellectual formulation that denies that the real world can work in the way it seems to, is a phenomenon that always tends to represent the intervention in things by ways of thinking about them.[50] So by reaching for one here Donne betrays a desire not only to describe the world in language but to act upon it by that means: specifically, a desire that his poem somehow embody the miraculous collapse of space that it depicts. But the specific terms of this metaliterary cosmic reorganisation are significant as well. As it travels, the soul does not just collapse space and time. Rather, it refashions it, resolving *The First Anniversary*'s confusing welter of stars into the beads of a rosary of which it itself is the string, a rosary which then becomes a spine by which heaven and earth are resolved back into a divinely reconstituted version of the cosmic body. The very agglomeration of image signifies here in itself, heaping effect upon effect as the poem attempts to reach the critical velocity necessary to lift it above the status of mere representation. But more specifically it is significant that the mediating figurative stage between the two opposite poles of disjointed world and reconstituted divine image is a rosary. As both a physical object and an emblem representational of the divine, the entity of the rosary hints at a general permeability of symbol and thing, so that it is apt to find it working here as the bridge between a world disjointed by ways of thinking and one reconfigured by divine soul and literary process.

---

[50] For more on early modern paradox see: Rosalie Colie, *Paradoxica Epidemica: the Renaissance Tradition of Paradox* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966).

In *The Second Anniversary*, then, by way of aesthetic effect the soul collapses space and time and reconfigures the cosmos as a sort of divine symbol, reframing it in the triple senses of rebounding and remaking it by travelling through it. It is a kind of poiesis-powered remaking to which Donne is generally attracted: in the sermon of 1627 we see God, who is a circle, framing creation by drawing his own shape with a compass, eschatology and soteriology accomplished by and embodied in an aesthetic bounding mark. And as we have been thinking about particularly circular boundings, as a final point it is noteworthy that what the soul accomplishes in *The Second Anniversary* may be precisely such a bounding. It is true that the soul's movement is not obviously circular. But souls are in general associated with divine circularity, and indeed the soul-spined rosary-body that results from the soul's transcendence of worldly space and time here may indeed be circular itself. Certainly, however we look at it a rosary is a system of holy spheres, which is not irrelevant. But it can also be specifically a ring of them (Figs. 11, 12 and 13), so that what the unframed cosmos is resolved into by the soul in *The Second Anniversary* may be not just a series of round beads but a piety-charged circle itself: a new round enclosure, this one centred upon not the world but the soul, that folds everything into an embrace that pointedly excludes all the vexed problems to which space and time are heir.

~~~

So for Donne the soul is an ontological last resort: an irreducible entity that can provide form and meaning when larger structures have failed. It does so, moreover, through literary effect, effect which invokes and draws upon the understanding of actual divine creation as an aesthetic process: a framing. But we have also noted that framing can describe travel as well as bounding and construction, and as we proceed to Descartes and the *Discourse on Method* we might note something else about the cosmos-collapsing sequence in *The Second Anniversary*. Its effect is founded upon and depicts a total ignorance of worldly phenomena: the text's poiesis collapses the world by way of a soul that transcends and disregards physical space. But at the same time the sequence itself does something quite opposite. The soul's journey is not instantaneous, after all, but takes specifically a minute, and while this is admittedly very fast it falls well short of a total collapse of dimension. As a result, the sequence that depicts the soul's wilful ignorance of the material scene becomes in effect a detailed rehearsal of that scene, a kind of travelogue-in-negative or apophatic journal that records not what was seen on a journey but what was disregarded. We think more about the genre of the travelogue in

due course. For now, however, we can note simply the extent to which Donne's project of world-transcendence is founded upon and energised by a vivid depiction of the world being transcended.

<center>**IV**</center>

Notwithstanding that I will be arguing for some fundamental kinships between the two texts, the *Discourse on Method* does not very much resemble the *Anniversary* poems, and in important regards seems virtually antithetical to them. Formally, Descartes' measured prose is entirely unlike Donne's copious lyricism, and equally acute are the texts' apparent differences in ideological character. Where Donne laments the emergence of natural philosophical modernity, the *Discourse* is a forceful moment in precisely that emergence, and this is so in ways beyond the obvious. Cartesianism is now largely synonymous with the *cogito ergo sum* moment and modern subjectivity, and indeed that moment will be of central importance below.[51] But pertinent here first is that Descartes' radical inward movement is in fact only the foundational manoeuvre in what Ramachandran calls his 'attempt to craft a complete physics for the heliocentric vision of the universe': Cartesianism's transformation of the human interior, that is, is part of a larger project that operates across the ontological scale, and one that specifically works to abolish the vision of the cosmos for which Donne is nostalgic.[52] It is the argument of what follows, in fact, that the attitude of the *Discourse* to the developments of which it is a part is far more conflicted than this would suggest, and that its project aligns in significant ways with the *Anniversaries*'. But since for good historical reason the *Discourse* itself does not exhibit much explicit interest in the outer reaches of the cosmos, to apprehend fully the ontology implied and endorsed by the text

---

[51] Anthony Grafton writes that 'no single thinker has had a more decisive influence on the course of modern philosophy' ('Descartes the Dreamer', *The Wilson Quarterly*, 20 [1996], 36-46, p. 40), and that influence is nearly always understood to flow from the philosopher's conception of the *cogito*. For a handful of examples from amongst a vast literature see: Dalia Judovitz, *Subjectivity and Representation in Descartes: The Origins of Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Hassan Melehy, *Writing Cogito: Montaigne, Descartes, and the Institution of the Modern Subject* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997); Timothy J. Reiss, *Mirages of the Selfe: Patterns of Personhood in Ancient and Early Modern Europe* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003). French analysis, on the other hand, has tended to be more alive than English to the natural philosophical aspects of Cartesian thought. See: Mihnea Dobre and Tammy Nyden (eds.), *Cartesian Empiricisms* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2013), pp. 1-2.

[52] Ramachandran, *Worldmakers*, p. 150.

– one that is in all its particulars opposed to the Ptolemaic vision of creation and to the Aristotelian ontology in which all bodies are defined by their enclosure – requires a look at the wider Cartesian corpus.[53]

There we find a natural philosophy that 'begins with [Descartes'] conception of body', as Daniel Garber puts it, and one in which bodies are defined not by enclosure from without but from within by extension.[54] Indeed, in *The Second Meditation* Descartes articulates the Aristotelian conception of embodiment specifically to refute it. 'By body,' he writes, outlining his previous erroneous suppositions, 'I understand all that can be terminated by some figure; that can be contained in some place and fill a space in such a way that any other body is excluded from it'.[55] But this notion he dismantles by way of the example of the ball of wax that when melted relinquishes all its physical properties other than basic mass (*DMM*, 108-9), on the basis of which Descartes concludes that the only essential property of bodies can be the bare fact of their extension in space; they are defined from within, that is, and only very contingently at that. Implicit here is the abolition of any meaningful sense of emplacement, and it is an implication which Descartes elsewhere makes explicit. In the second part of the *Principles of Philosophy* he rehearses and resolves some potential objections to his theory of extended bodies, coming to the following conclusion: 'the terms place and space do not signify something different from the body that is said to be in a place; they merely mean its size, shape, and position relative to other bodies'. Moreover, he decides, 'no object has a permanent place except by the determination of our thought'.[56] Place, that is, signifies only as a temporary accident, certainly does not constitute a position that is meaningful in any teleological way, and in any case is not a feature of the objective world but of subjectivity.

This is not the only direction from which Descartes attacks pre-modern boundedness. As we have observed, that boundedness is partly reinforced by the frame of a different register of existence understood to

---

[53] As Ramachandran relates, so alarmed is Descartes by Galileo's encounter with the Inquisition that he withholds his natural philosophical magnum opus *Le Monde* and publishes instead a series of shorter works, first among them the *Discourse*, that repackage the original text's theories in more cautious ways; accordingly, the *Discourse* touches upon cosmological issues only late-on, and not in much depth, during a precis of the contents of *Le Monde*. As Ramachandran writes: 'the specter of Galileo's fall haunts the Cartesian turn inward, away from the contested spaces of the external world and toward worlds within' (*Worldmakers*, p. 148). Cf. James Daniel Collins, *Descartes' Philosophy of Nature* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1971), pp. 7-8.

[54] Daniel Garber, 'Descartes' physics', in John Cottingham, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Descartes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 293.

[55] Descartes, *Discourse on Method and the Meditations*, p. 104. All future references to this edition appear in parenthesis ('*DMM*') in the main text.

[56] René Descartes, *Descartes: Philosophical Writings*, trans. and ed. by Elizabeth Anscombe and Peter Thomas Geach (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1972), pp. 203-04.

obtain at the edges of material existence. But Descartes refuses the sense of material finitude upon which this relies:

> we see, furthermore, that this world – the totality of corporeal substance – has no limits to its extension. Wherever we imagine the boundaries to be, there is always the possibility, not merely of imagining further space indefinitely extended, but also of seeing that this imagination is true to fact – that such space actually exists.[57]

This is not straightforward. As Ramachandran and others note, in fact Descartes tends to hedge on the issue of infinite space, and in any case it could be argued that he reproduces something like the pre-modern category-difference between heavenly and material in his hard distinction between *res extensae* and *res cogitans*.[58] Nevertheless, any boundary for the material world is here profoundly undermined, and the implications of this for the possibility of different registers of existence of the old sort are not left for the reader to infer. 'We can also readily derive,' he writes, 'the result that celestial and terrestrial matter do not differ; [even if there were] an infinity of worlds, they could not but consist of one and the same kind of matter'.[59] (We might turn back here to Digges' vision of the universe in Fig. 10, where the *Habitaculum Dei*, understood in the Ptolemaic cosmos to be ontologically other, has been reimagined and exists within the same infinite material expanse as everything else.) For Descartes the world and everything within it is unbounded, that is, and no provision is made for an ontological register-shift to mitigate this difficult fact.

These unbounding manoeuvres are intimately entwined with a sense of geometrical abstraction quite at odds with Donne's divine circles and spheres.[60] Shortly after the assertion of the thinking self in the *Discourse*, Descartes establishes the existence of geometrical forms as well, thinking specifically about triangles. But he finds that due to the unreliability of the senses he cannot be certain of such forms' existence in material reality. Such a form's 'three angles must be equal to two right angles', he allows, and 'the equality of the three angles of a triangle to two right angles is comprised in the idea of a triangle or, as in the idea of a sphere, the fact that all its parts are equidistant from its centre' (*DMM*, 57).[61] 'But I saw nothing,' he continues, 'for all that, which assured me that any such triangle existed in the world'. Specifically, then, Descartes denies

---

[57] Ibid., p. 207.
[58] Ramachandran, *Worldmakers*, p. 166.
[59] Descartes, *Philosophical Writings*, p. 208.
[60] For more on Cartesian geometry see: Matthew L. Jones, 'Descartes's Geometry as Spiritual Exercise', *Critical Inquiry*, 28 (2001), 40-71.
[61] In fact, as Brian S. Kirby notes, Descartes cannot escape the possibility that even mathematical truths (the sides of a triangle, the sum of two numbers) are unreliable: 'until Descartes proved that a benevolent God existed, mathematical truths were still open to doubt. An Evil Demon might have reigned and created mathematical relationships in way unlike the ways Descartes found he must think them' ('Descartes, Contradiction, and Time', *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, 10 [1993], 137-45, p. 137).

the potential of geometrical lines to perform actual boundings, focussing upon principles that structure

patterns from the inside – angle, the proportions of centre and circumference – rather than bounding lines

themselves. This sense of abstraction and the infinite replicatability and unlocatability of geometric form is

plainly hostile to the Aristotelian ontology in which things derive their excellence from being what and where

they are, and to Donne's envisaging of divine circles that encompass and structure everything within them. An

ontology in which geometry is associated with the divine we may still have. But it is a thoroughly demystified

one that has been abstracted entirely from the material, perceptible world.

A final point in this regard is that all these abolitions of emplacing boundary seem ultimately

reinforced by Descartes' privileging of the thinking self. 'No object has a permanent place', we have already

heard him announce, developing what Koyré calls a 'physics that is, at least in principle, nothing else than

applied mathematics […] in the uniform space of the infinite Universe'.[62] Since abstract mathematics is a

mental process, and since the Cartesian uniform space is effectively a mental one, the prioritisation of thought

in this physics is fairly obvious. But Descartes makes it unignorable when he writes that it is only by the

'determination of our thought' that place can become a permanent and therefore essential property of bodies.

As Koyré makes clear, indeed, to Descartes even in mathematics 'it is not the objects – numbers, lines – that

matter' but instead 'those acts, or, rather, *operations* of our mind that link the objects together'.[63] So in a

sense the radical inwardness and outwardness of Cartesian thought are in fact the same thing, with the

infinitely large universe of abstract principles generated entirely by and within the thinking self, and in light of

this we might understand Cartesianism's dual intervention to be more unified than it at first seems. The birth

of the Cartesian subject, which can have no 'place' but merely be confirmed to exist in an essential yet totally

attenuated way, is by these lights closely associated with the cosmological upheavals of the spatial turn. The

unframed, disembodied self – the Cartesian soul – is not a separate incident from but rather the site of the

unframing of the cosmos.

~~~

Beneath the iceberg's tip that is the *Discourse on Method*, then, there is a mass of new philosophy of precisely

the sort whose disruptive innovations Donne bemoans. Yet I want to suggest that in all of these apparent

---

[62] Alexandre Koyré, 'Introduction', in Descartes, *Philosophical Writings*, p. xxviii.
[63] Ibid., p. xxvii.

contrarieties the text aligns in meaningful ways with the *Anniversaries*. Fundamentally hostile to the ontology

and cosmic order mourned by Donne Descartes may be. But Cartesianism is itself characterized by deep

anxieties as to its own implications, even to the point that in its most radical features it can look strikingly

conservative, and the *Discourse* – in its literary strategies and in its treatment of the soul – represents a

particularly telling working-through of such concerns.

First to such Cartesian anxiety in general. 'One sees,' Descartes argues from architecture early in the

Discourse, 'that buildings undertaken and completed by a single architect are usually more beautiful and

better ordered than those that several architects have tried to put into shape, making use of old walls which

were built for other purposes' (*DMM*, 35). That is, even as he declares his project to be a wholesale

replacement of Aristotelian and scholastic natural philosophy, Descartes frames it as one of positive

construction – or, we might say, framing. This is expressive of an urge that inheres in the Cartesian project as a

whole, which Almog thinks about in similar architectural terms: as he writes, the end of Cartesian thought

should in fact be understood as precisely opposed to the thoroughgoing scepticism it can seem to resemble,

presenting 'us with a now secure and well justified system (really, *architecture*) of knowledge, with the all-

powerful sceptical virus finally contained.'[64] At the core of that architecture is the assertion of the thinking self

or soul in the *cogito ergo sum* moment, so that while in Cartesian thought the teleological structure of the

material world may be lost what is gained is a new and absolute teleology founded ultimately upon the self. In

Descartes, as Fredric Jameson puts it, 'the emergent subject is somehow generated out of the space of the

object world, and becomes describable (pure location) only when the space of the latter has been reorganized

into pure homogeneous extension'.[65] So what looks like utter unemplacement can, though it comes at a

considerable cost, be read instead as ultimate location. It is notable as well in this connection that the

Cartesian denial of the existence of anything but the self also virtually interpenetrates with the assertion of a

perfect God. For an imperfect entity such as himself to conceive of such a perfect one, Descartes reasons,

requires that the conception 'must have been put into me by a being […] which even had in itself all the

perfections of which I could have any idea […] which was God' (*DMM*, 55-57). The radical Cartesianism move

inward, then, even as it occurs seems to want to mitigate its solipsistic inwardness, and similar points can be

---

[64] Almog, *Cogito?,* p. 10. Original emphasis.
[65] Fredric Jameson, *A Singular Modernity* (London: Verso, 2012), p. 44. For a similar process of attenuated certainty established by radical reduction, as played out in *Paradise Lost* as Raphael describes the universe to Adam, see: Ramachandran, *Worldmakers*, p. 216.

made about other features of Cartesian thought. Though Descartes' disembodied geometric forms might seem to offer cold ontological comfort as compared to systems of divine circularity, looked at another way those forms are patterns whose only property is that they guarantee the fundamental distinction between something and what is exterior to it: rather than unemplacement, that is, this is emplacement pared back to its most stable state. Similarly, though Descartes may raise the troubling issue of infinite space, it is also the case that, by predicating unbounded material extension on the possibility of imagining it, he folds that unbounded space ultimately back into the enclosed space of the secure and stable thinking self.

So when Descartes early in the *Discourse* characterises his project as one of building rather than demolition it adumbrates a general tendency in his thought. In light of that tendency the *Discourse* and the *Anniversaries* may already begin to seem rather less strange bedfellows, if not yet likely ones. But that Descartes' argument takes the form of a metaphor, and that the metaphor is one of framing and enclosure, points us towards the more particular interest of what follows, which is how these broader tendencies and tensions are played out in especially instructive ways in the literary context of the *Discourse*. Again, this is a context about which the multiple early modern semantics of framing can help us to think. As we shall see, the *Discourse* is presented in a conspicuous literary frame that is reflective of and has things to tell us about its underlying projects. But the text's literary framing operates at deeper levels as well. Not only is this a text that seems drawn in its figurative habits to confusions of the worldly and the literary as categories – which it is to say that its literariness can frame actively as well as decoratively – but it is also one whose central moment relies for its force upon just such a confusion: a kind of poiesis of the soul, and one that like Donne's seeks to reconfigure the space of the world by way of the soul's progress through it.

'Good sense is the most evenly shared thing in the world, for each of us thinks he is so well endowed with it that even those who are the hardest to please in all other respects are not in the habit of wanting more than they have' (*DMM*, 27): from these opening, rather Austen-esque lines onwards Descartes flags his work as an endeavour of conspicuous literariness.[66] He has not simply developed a system of thought. Rather, he has 'found [him]self, from [his] early youth, on certain paths which led [him] to considerations and maxims out of which [he] has constructed a method', and he describes the resulting text as a 'historical account, or, if you

---

[66] The joke itself is a commonplace of which variants can be found in both Montaigne (*Essayes*, trans. by John Florio [London: 1603], sig. Kk5^{v-r}) and Hobbes (*Leviathan* [London: 1651], sig. I2^r).

prefer, a fable' (28). It is a fable of education, moreover, and accordingly the traditional reversals of the Bildungsroman are observed.[67] Our protagonist, 'brought up from childhood on letters' and 'led to believe that by [that] means one could acquire clear and positive knowledge of everything', learns on the brink of adulthood that what he had taken for education was in fact only a gradual revelation of his ignorance. 'I was assailed by so many doubts and errors', he confides, 'that the only profit I appeared to have drawn from trying to become educated, was progressively to have discovered my ignorance'. There are shades of prodigality here as he turns briefly from the straight and narrow path; indeed, that he does so towards an interest in 'the occult and rare sciences' (29) may put us in mind of the fatal intellectual restiveness of that other wayward early modern literary intellectual Dr Faustus. ('Divinity adieu!' exclaims Christopher Marlowe's version of the character in frustration, dismissing the corpus of conventional human learning, 'These metaphysics of magicians | And necromantic books are heavenly'.)[68] In contrast to his ill-fated fictitious precursor, Descartes is careful not long afterwards to dismiss 'the promises of an alchemist or the predictions of an astrologer, the impostures of a magician' as 'false sciences' and 'tricks or boasts of […] those who profess to know more than they do' (*DMM*, 32-3). Nevertheless, these notes of risk and waywardness contribute to the general build-up of particularly literary atmosphere.

But if the *Discourse* is very deliberate about framing its reframing of the world as a literary undertaking, we can be more specific about that literariness as well. Not simply a Bildungsroman, as Descartes himself puts it the *Discourse* is also a fable of paths and roads, which is to say a travelogue.[69] In the opening paragraphs Descartes specifically characterises his project of construction as one also of worldly travel – his method is fabricated from 'considerations and maxims' that are literally the destinations to which providence's paths have led him (28) – and indeed until its culminating moment of total inwardness the text is suffused with an insistent sense of space and rangy outwardness. Descartes relates how after realising the futility of his studies he spends

---

[67] To think of the *Discourse* as specifically a narrative of education is not new: two give just two examples, both Steven B. Smith ('An Exemplary Life: The Case of René Descartes', *The Review of Metaphysics*, 57 [2004], 571-97, p. 575) and Ralph Flores ('Cartesian Striptease', *SubStance*, 12 [1983], 75-88) make the observation.

[68] Christopher Marlowe, *Dr Faustus* (A-Text), I.1.1-65, in *Dr Faustus and Other Plays*, ed. by David Bevington and Eric Rasmussen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). Michael H. Keefer also notes the Marlovian echo, but stresses that Descartes would not have known the play: 'The Dreamer's Path: Descartes and the Sixteenth Century', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 49 (1996), 30-76, p. 69.

[69] Keefer notes the persistence of 'road' terminology in the *Discourse*: ibid., p. 33 and passim. For a discussion of Bakhtin's chronotope of road see: Nele Bemong and Pieter Borghart, 'Bakhtin's Theory of the Literary Chronotope: Reflections, Applications, Perspectives', in Nele Bemong *et al*, eds., *Bakhtin's Theory of the Literary Chronotope: Reflections, Applications, Perspectives* (Gent: Academia Press, 2010), pp. 3-16.

the rest of [his] youth in travelling, seeing courts and armies, mixing with people of different humours and ranks, in

gathering varied experience, in testing myself in the situations which chance offered me, and everywhere reflecting

upon whatever events I witnessed in such a way as to draw some profit from them. [33]

This sense of dynamic worldliness manifests at times in specific geographical references. 'I was, at that time, in

Germany, whither the wars' (35), Descartes writes, and not much later thinks specifically about differences

between French or German cultures and the more exotic example of the Chinese (39).[70] But the text's interest

in the exterior world is also general and systemic. Later, having completed his 'provisional moral code',

Descartes declares that he hopes 'to be able to complete [his enquiries] by frequenting other men rather than

by remaining any longer shut up in the stove-heated room in which [he] had had all these thoughts'; we even

find out about the meteorological conditions that obtain as he does so, with 'winter […] not yet fully over

before I took to travelling again' (49). He then proceeds to 'wander here and there in the world' until,

prompted by the fact that he perceives his own growing yet thus-far unearned reputation for intellectual

achievement, he retires for 'exactly eight years' from 'all those places where [he] had acquaintances' in favour

of

a country where the long duration of the war has established such discipline that the armies maintained there seem

to serve only to ensure that the fruits of peace are enjoyed with the maximum of security; and where, in the midst

of a great crowd of busy people, more concerned with their own business than curious about that of others,

without lacking any of the conveniences offered by the most populous cities, I have been able to live as solitary and

withdrawn as I would in the most remote of deserts.[71] [51-2]

In sum, then, the *Discourse* presents a vividly drawn exterior world of travel, population and place: an

elaborate fictive world in which solitude itself, the apparent prerequisite of the solitary *cogito*, is associated

with its crowded urban opposite.

So for a work that culminates in the birth of the solipsistic Cartesian subject, notoriously exceeding

conventional *contemptus mundi* to suggest that the world does not exist at all, the *Discourse* is oddly suffused

with literary worldliness. We might surmise that this is a superficial feature of the text: a strategy for the

---

[70] Descartes also touches upon cannibalism here, echoing Montaigne; indeed, Koyré goes so far as to suggest that the entire Cartesian project exists in relation to Montaigne and calls Descartes his earlier countryman's 'best pupil' ('Introduction', *Descartes: Philosophical Writings*, p. xiv).

[71] Kevin Dunn notes how Descartes here recalls the Erasmean tag 'a great city is a great solitude' and further of how the former's 'yoking together of the discourses of retirement and civic engagement […] stand very close to the center of his concerns in the *Discourse'* (' "A Great City is a Great Solitude": Descartes's Urban Pastoral', *Yale French Studies*, 80 [1991], 93-107, p. 94.)

disguise of Descartes' subversive arguments, or the result of the commercial reality that travel literature tends to sell better and circulate more widely than philosophy.[72] But in this connection it is telling that at a crucial moment in the *Discourse* mobility in the world becomes one of Descartes' fundamental principles, when imagining a traveller lost in the woods leads him to assert the essential superiority of movement to stasis (46-47). Indeed, we return to the question of the travelogue genre itself shortly, with the suggestion that its implications go well beyond the merely cosmetic and obtain in the *Anniversaries* as much as in the *Discourse*. First in this regard, however, we can attend to the general literariness of the *Discourse*, which is itself not ornamental. For one thing, it aligns with and expresses the general tendency in Cartesianism to mitigate and circumscribe its own subversiveness, which is not a rhetorical strategy but fundamental to the philosophical project. But if this is to suggest that the text's literary frame is not incidental because it reflects the text's philosophical content we can also go further. The literary strategies of the *Discourse* do not merely frame in the dominant modern sense of an extraneous thing at the margins. Rather, they are intrinsically involved in its endeavours to frame a new ontology from within.

Before turning to the *cogito* moment and what I suggest is its poiesis-effect, we can note first that it is not the only point at which the *Discourse* muddies the distinction between word and world. Rather, it emerges from a textual landscape subtly coloured throughout by such discursive indistinction. This is a text, after all, that seems somehow to be made of the paths it depicts, one that suggests that to read is virtually the same as to travel (30), and one in which Descartes resolves 'to study no other science than that which I could find within myself or else in the great book of the world' (33). These equations of book and world may seem accidents of figurative language, suggesting simply that the world represents a repository of experiential information. Indeed, they are generic: to take another famous example, Galileo states that 'philosophy is written in this grand book – I mean the universe – [… and] it is written in the language of mathematics'.[73] But what they in fact point to is the early modern potential for slippage between world and word. We have discerned this slippage at work in the *Anniversaries* above. But we might also remember that, in the account of John 1:1, the same God that in Job makes the world by inscribing a circle is also a word, another kind of written

---

[72] We have already noted with Ramachandran how the *Discourse* is shaped by Descartes' fear of the Inquisition. In his account of the text, Sutcliffe emphasises also Descartes' desire to reach the broadest possible reading public, a desire that lies behind both the fact that the *Discourse* is published not in Latin but French and its disinclination to engage with the more abstruse philosophical issues the philosopher addresses elsewhere (*DMM*, p. 12).
[73] Quoted in: Poole, *Supernatural Environments*, p. 169. Cf. Cassirer, *Individual*, p. 156.

sign, in whose image the world is wrought, and that Revelation 20:12 has God making his judgements with reference to 'the book of life'. That is, when early modern writers think of the world as a sort of literary object it is not a metaphor, or not only a metaphor. Rather, to think in such a way represents a return to a culturally foundational idea of what the world *is*.

But if early modern books and language can seem to exceed the category of representation in ways to which the *Discourse* is repeatedly attracted, at the epicentre of the text – indeed, of Cartesianism's world-reframing project as a whole – is a moment where this to-some-degree-figurative tendency of language crystallises around the soul into a moment of outright poiesis. '*I think, therefore I am*' (*DMM*, 34) is a moment of pure reasoning that establishes cognition as the stable centre upon which all else must be founded. But it is not only mentation but language as well that is established as the centre. Descartes' phrase is one whose insistence upon the conflation of thinking with being also implies the conflation of thinking with verbal pronouncing: it is the act of thinking, saying or writing 'I think', all of which are verbal processes, that affirms beyond dispute that Descartes is.[74] More: the verbal act does not only affirm but in fact constitutes him, which is to say that it frames him in the kind of dual way that is now becoming familiar. In this moment of radical contraction towards the single point of consciousness that is the Cartesian soul, the distinction between sign and signified also collapses entirely, so that the central Cartesian certainty upon which all else is founded is pointedly made of language. The stable centre of the *Discourse*'s reframed ontology, that is, and the culmination of its markedly literary procedures and patterns of thought, is a soul that is in a profound sense achieved by and made of literary language.

~~~

So the journeys depicted in both the *Anniversaries* and the *Discourse* culminate with moments in which through literary effect the soul reconfigures a material scene whose previous structures have been damaged or exposed as suspect. Nor do the affinities end there, in fact, and as a final point regarding the alignment of the two texts we can turn to a curious contradiction they seem to share. In both the effect of the soul is to collapse the material scene into itself, in the *Anniversaries* by ignoring that scene and in the *Discourse* by

---

[74] John Flores comes close to the sense I am getting at of the *cogito* as a verbal entity: 'even when he wishes to show how hyperbolic his doubt can become,' he writes, in Descartes 'all is doubted except the intelligibility of the words of doubting', so that 'in the Cartesian text, the Cogito is staged both as naked thought and as dressed in language' ('Cartesian Striptease', p. 80).

suggesting it may not exist at all. Yet Donne documents with great vividness the disordered cosmos he

bemoans, as we have noted, and for its part the *Discourse* makes no bones about adopting a literary format

whose purpose is precisely the documentation of the physical world the text apparently calls into question. It

is true that there are other possible explanations for these curiosities than those I offer here: it may be that

Donne describes the destabilised world in an effort to 'shock and disorientate before [he] reassures', as Gillies

argues, and as already suggested that Descartes simply sugars the philosophical pill by rendering the *Discourse*

as what he calls a fable of paths and roads.[75] (In Donne the issue can also be read simply as an accident of

representation, which in denying the importance of something is always to a degree apophatic: if it is to

dismiss it must first name.) But having noted that the *Anniversary* poems can look like a kind of travel

narrative, and the *Discourse*'s far more conspicuous adoption of the travelogue form, we can now consider

both in the context of that early modern genre. By doing so, I suggest, we can understand the texts' seemingly

contradictory stance towards worldly space as quite coherent with their projects as a whole, and indeed as

reinforcing their literary affinities.

As scholars including Justin Stagl and Judy A. Hayden register, in the mediaeval period travel and its

literature is closely associated with pilgrimage.[76] Earlier we noted the semantic association of framing and

pilgrimage, and it is suggestive in this regard that 'peregrinage', with its obvious sense of 'travel', also suggests

particularly religious travel: the OED notes the sense as predominantly medieval, but as late as 1573 Thomas

Cooper suggests the continued closeness of the two by apparently mixing them up by accident.[77] Though the

association of travel and its literature with piety can be overstated – Michael McKeon confirms it while noting

the contrary association of travel reports with untrustworthiness and tall-tales – we mark that even John

Mandeville's notoriously worldly *The Book of Marvels and Travels* begins with a prologue insisting that the

author's travels are directed by his ultimate desire to reach the Holy Land.[78] It is true that towards the end of

the Middle Ages and into the early modern period the matter begins to be rethought, with a change in

emphasis away from the devout processes of *pietas* towards a sense of worldly *curiositas* that leads, as Stagl,

Hayden and others suggest, to a new association of the travelogue genre with not religious devotion but

---

[75] John Gillies, *Shakespeare and the Geography of Difference* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 187.

[76] Justin Stagl, *A History of Curiosity: the Theory of Travel 1550-1800* (Chur: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1995), p. 47; Judy A. Hayden, *Travel Narratives, the New Science, and Literary Discourse, 1569-1750* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), p. 15.

[77] Thomas Cooper, *A briefe exposition of such chapters of the olde testament as usually are redde in the church at common praier on the Sondayes* (London: 1573), sig. Diiiiiiij^v.

[78] Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel 1600-1740* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), p. 100; Sir John Mandeville, *The Book of Marvels and Travels*, trans. and ed. by Anthony Bale (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 5-7.

natural philosophical enquiry. But in fact this periodical shift can be overstated. As Donald R. Howard puts it, pilgrimage remains 'a favoured *image* of travel' (original emphasis) even into the seventeenth century.[79] As Abigail Shinn has recently explored in her work on conversion narratives, moreover, in the later period it remains common to find spiritual process not only figured as but embodied in worldly travel: such narratives, she writes, frequently depict spiritual progress 'within the framework of recollected movement through the environment', so that 'physical movement through space proceeds at the same time as spiritual movement' in ways that are frequently 'indebted to the familiar rhythms of pilgrimage'.[80]

In pilgrimage, travel moves through the space and time of the material world yet at the same time overlays a divine structure upon it, so that the journey is bounded and defined by a destination whose signification exceeds and reconfigures the world with which it coincides: this is very close to what Donne's soul achieves, travelling across the physical space of the cosmos while simultaneously resolving it into a new timeless and spaceless image of divinity. One benefit of reading the poem in this way is to resolve the apparent incongruity we have registered: by these lights the poems' interest in the material scene does not exist in subversive tension with but ultimately in the service of their urge to transcend that scene by reframing it. Moreover, if noting the changes in medieval and early modern attitudes to travel may tempt us to map them onto the move we have been tracing from pre-modern ontological enclosure to modern unboundedness, and indeed onto the apparent differences between the *Anniversaries* and the *Discourse*, in fact beneath those shifts we can discern a further continuity. It is true that, in contrast to the *Anniversaries*, the *Discourse* seems to exemplify a secular vision of travel as a journey of worldly enquiry venturing outwards into an unbounded and provisional scene. Yet we have noted that even such travel and its literature, and the interest they embody in the material world, can well into the early modern period be understood as having a divine structure subtending them, and for all the *Discourse*'s worldly interests its spatial movements in the final reckoning lead only inwards towards world-abnegation and a divinity transcendent of material space. Despite Cartesianism's outspoken hostility to old teleologies, that is, and notwithstanding that the *Discourse*'s worldly *curiositas* might seem to manifest that hostility, in fact here too literary travel ends by resembling pilgrimage. Just as in the *Anniversaries*, movement through the world here ends with a collapse of time and space into a

---

[79] Donald R. Howard, *Writers and Pilgrims: Medieval Pilgrimage Narratives and Their Posterity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), p. 3.
[80] Abigail Shinn, *Conversion Narratives in Early Modern England: Tales of Turning* (Cham: Palgrave, 2018), p. 122-23.

single image of inviolable divinity. And just as in the *Anniversaries* that collapse is effected by the expedient of a soul transcendent of the material scene that very conspicuously surrounds it.

<u>V</u>

Both the *Anniversaries* and the *Discourse*, I have argued, respond to the disruptive new philosophy to which they seem to exist in such entirely opposite relation by reframing material creation in the multiple and linked senses we have been tracing: re-understanding it but also seeking to remake it, in both cases by way of literary language and under the sign of the travelling soul. *Pace* Lewis, with whom we opened, both find it very useful indeed to consider the soul alongside the spheres and geometrical form, and to do so in markedly literary ways. One thing this gives us is a very different picture of the soul and the literary effects that generate it from that developed in the preceding chapter. There we explored the poetics that is generated by and which expresses the uncertain division of soul and body, a poetics of fraught and contested spaces that decline to resolve in any satisfactory way: what emerged was a soul whose nature and status is by being considered in the context of physical space rendered rather uncertain. In the *Anniversaries* and the *Discourse*, by contrast, we find a soul that is very decisively distinguishable from the body and that collapses space entirely, indeed that resolves space *into* the inviolably stable point of itself, and one not subverted but bolstered by the poetic effects that generate it. Another benefit of the reading developed here is to prompt us to rethink some conventional periodizations. As we have noted at various points, the apparent opposition of the *Anniversaries* and the *Discourse* is so fundamental as to seem emblematic of epochal shifts: the obvious historiographical view of them would position one as a nostalgic pre-modern throwback and the other as the sign of emerging modernity. This is in many regards a sensible perspective. Yet the picture that has emerged here is a rather different one, emphasising continuities between the texts rather than their alignment with such shifts, and perhaps complicating our sense of the shifts themselves.

Even some conventional contrasts that may seem to remain in place, I suggest as we draw to a close, can be re-understood in similar ways. One such is between the texts' attitudes to the capacities and status of

86

language. On the face of it the absolute and categorical Cartesian break between immaterial mind and material world is hostile to the pre-modern semantics towards which Donne gestures in which, as Brian Vickers puts it, 'words are treated as if they are equivalent to things'.[81] (Though Donne does not explicitly endorse such a semantics, he unambiguously aligns himself with the worldview of which it is a part: in *The First Anniversary* he regrets the loss of the 'art' and 'correspondence' that in pre-modern thought understands 'the influence of […] stars' to be 'Imprisoned in an herb, or charm, or tree' [393-6].) Yet although again we seem to find our two texts on opposite sides of a familiar medieval/early modern intellectual shift, both in fact seem to exist not on opposed sides of the shift but in the blurred space of it. For Donne's poem very pointedly describes not an order that obtains but one that *once* did, and for its part the *Discourse* is as interested as the *Anniversaries* in the ways that language and world can seem to flow together. Neither text has full access to the fully collapsed sign and signified of earlier ages: such correspondence is, as Donne says, lost. But for both such slippage between representation and world becomes something to be performed – striven towards – by way of the literary. The capacity of words to be active in the world, understood by the old semantics to be general, has migrated in attenuated yet nevertheless still-potent form to the realm of poetic effect.

Not only to poetic effect, moreover, but specifically to poetic effects associated with the soul, that emblem of the human self's transcendence of matter. Given the centrality of the soul to this discussion, and given conventional readings of the Cartesian soul as perhaps *the* decisive moment in the development of modern selfhood, a good point on which to finish will be the relationship of these texts' souls with the self, another issue which I want to suggest is confounding of obvious periodizations. Descartes, as Richard Kennington has it, 'initiate[s] the modern interpretation of the soul' as the totally disembodied entity of the thinking self, which is to some degree the conventional view.[82] The *Anniversaries*' conception of the soul is very different and perhaps seemingly retrograde: they imagine it as a notably impersonal entity with the properties of an angel, and increasing this sense of impersonality is that Donne addresses his soul, something which by definition Descartes could never do to his since it is the speaking, conscious part of him. Yet *The Second Anniversary* is very clear that the soul must transcend material embodiment absolutely, and (as the introduction has shown at length above) far from being a Cartesian innovation the identification of soul and

[81] Brian Vickers, 'Analogy versus identity: the rejection of occult symbolism, 1580-1680', in Brian Vickers, ed., *Occult and Scientific Mentalities in the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 95-164, p. 95. Cf. Robin Horton, 'African Traditional Thought and Western Science', *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, 37 (1967), 155-87, pp. 159-60.
[82] Richard Kennington, 'The "Teaching of Nature" in Descartes' Soul Doctrine', *Review of Metaphysics*, 26 (1972), 86-117, p. 86.

consciousness is an ancient one and ubiquitous in the Renaissance. Shakespeare, for instance, can specifically associate the soul with the speaking part of the self: 'my tongue and soul in this be hypocrites', Hamlet says (*Hamlet*, III.2.399), and since it is only possible to have a hypocritical relationship with oneself tongue and soul here are, if not identical, then certainly imbricated and even somehow coextensive. In *Nosce Teipsum*, Sir John Davies similarly seems to treat 'mind' and 'soul' as interchangeable (line 105 offers one example). More apposite still is that Donne specifically could think of the soul in what we think of as the modern way: the starting assumption of Paradox 6 is that 'mind may be confounded with soul, without any violence or injustice to reason or philosophy'.[83] Despite some very real and important differences and indistinctions, that is, it is not too much to say that the soul by which both Donne and Descartes reframe the lost ontology of boundedness is an image of the transcendent self.

---

[83] Targoff argues that Donne's soul is by no means an orthodox one, emphasising its attachment to the body. Her argument is broadly that, by adopting the unorthodox traducianist position that the soul is produced in the body rather than placed there by God, Donne seeks to emphasise the kinship and attachment between the two. Indeed, she specifically suggests that this opposes Donne to the Cartesian *cogito*, with its insistence upon a categorical divide between soul and body (*John Donne*, p. 98). But while her view is in many regards convincing I suggest that it is far from the only way of reading these very multivalent texts.

Chapter 3

Divinity Disciplined: Early Modern Didactic Discourse & the Address to the Soul

I

The transcendent souls of Donne and Descartes are not outliers. As in the *Anniversaries,* the soul in Sir John Davies' *Nosce Teipsum* inflicts spectacular defeats upon the laws of space and time (whereas '*bodies* are confin'd within some place' the soul 'all place within her selfe confines' [513-14]); in Henry More's *Psychathanasia*, glanced at above in the connection of divine geometry, the soul is a thing of similarly fantastic properties that rises 'quite heedlesse of this earthie world' 'unto the azure skie' to tie 'a stretch'd line o'th'silver-bowed moon from horn to horn'.[1] These pictures chime with our intuitions, since to transcend material things is precisely what the soul would seem to be *for*, and previous chapters here have been broadly concerned with the poetics by which that transcendence is negotiated and imagined. But we have also seen that those negotiations are never without serious compromise, and indeed the constructions of the soul that have been our subject thus far exist alongside other quite antithetical ones. In these other visions of it, the soul that elsewhere exceeds the laws governing space-time itself can appear a notably untranscendent target for remonstration – remonstration and, centrally to the concerns of this chapter, vigorous discipline.

Sir John Hayward's *The Sanctuarie of a troubled soule* offers one example. 'O Soule, O wicked, O wretched soul, shake off [this] sloath, this sleepe, this deathe of sinne,' Hayward begins, continuing a few pages later: 'Enter againe into the closet of thy conscience, turne over the books of thy accountes, cast thy reckoninges, set downe thy summes'.[2] This soul looks less like an angel than a negligent clerk, which is by no means the worst analogue available. Anne Locke's 'sprite' is 'reprobate and foreordeined' to be a 'damned vessel of [God's] heavie wrath'.[3] Thomas More thinks of the sinful soul in terms of inebriation – 'O sow

---

[1] More, 'Psychathanasia' (Book 1, Canto 2, Stanza 42, lines 1-6), sig. F7ᵛ.

[2] John Hayward, *The Sanctuarie of a troubled soule* (London: 1601), sigs. C6ʳ, D3ᵛ.

[3] Anne Locke, 'A Meditation of a Penitent Sinner', ('the preface', stanza 3, ll.8-9), in *Sermons of John Calvin upon the Songe that Ezechias made after he had bene sicke,* trans. by [Anne Locke] (London: 1560), sig. A.iiiᵛ. The poem quoted here opens the first English sonnet sequence, which despite its attribution to Anne Locke/Lok is in fact anonymous: appending it to her translation of the sermons 'not as

dronken soule drownyd in […] an insensible slepe' – and is not unique in doing so, with Robert Rollock

declaring nearly a century later that 'the Christian souldiour' must 'have not a drunken soule'.[4] An example

more familiar today, and one to which we shall return, is Donne's Holy Sonnet 2, in which the poet castigates

his 'black soul' (1) both as 'a pilgrim, which abroad hath done | Treason' (3-4), and as a thief languishing in

prison and awaiting execution (5-8). Shakespeare's sonnet 146 figures the soul's situation in a longer series of

ways, thinking in terms of rebellious armies, of sinful femininity, and of reckless expenditure:

> Poor soul, the center of my sinful earth,
>
> My sinful earth these rebel pow'rs that thee array,
>
> Why dost thou pine within and suffer dearth,
>
> Painting thy outward walls so costly gay?
>
> Why so large cost, having so short a lease,
>
> Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend?
>
> Shall worms, inheritors of this excess,
>
> Eat up thy charge? Is this thy body's end?[5]

So telling are the sonnet's figurative choices, indeed, that they will provide a structure for the first part of what

follows. But for a final example here we turn to the colourfully exercised Roger Edwardes, who in *A boke of*

very Godly psalms and prayers commands his abject addressee: 'Up O sinfull soule. See thine owne state […]

how thou art deformed, an abominable filthie, and ouglye Monstar […] a caytife and a bond slave to Sathan'.[6]

We have shifted, then, from a transcendent soul to one whose degradation makes it a target for

discipline, and this shift tends to be attended by a parallel one: a grammatical and rhetorical move from

narrative description to direct second-person address. This is not universally the case. Rollock above describes

his sinful soul, as we have just seen. Moreover, the psalmist's 'anguished cries *de profundis*' and 'soaring *te*

---

parcel of maister Calvines worke, but for that it well agreeth with the same argument', Locke claims that it 'was delivered me by my frend with whom I knew I might be so bolde to use & publishe it as pleased me'. Although this has usually been assumed to be a modesty trope, other arguments have been advanced, for which see for example: Deirdre Serjeantson, 'Anne Lock's Anonymous Friend: "A Meditation of a Penitent Sinner' and the Problem of Ascription', in Helen Cooney and Mark S. Sweetnam, eds., *Enigma and Revelation in Renaissance English Literature* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2012), pp. 51-72; and Steven W. May, 'Anne Lock and Thomas Norton's Meditation of a Penitent Sinner', *Modern Philology*, 114 (2017), 793-819, which also gives a thorough account of the attribution history of the sequence. Cf. Thomas P. Roche, Jr., *Petrarch and the English Sonnet Sequences* (New York: AMS Press, 1989), pp. 155-57.

[4] Thomas More, *The supplycacyon of soulys* (London: 1529), sig. Kii[r]; Robert Rollock, *Lectures upon the first and second Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians* (Edinburgh: 1606), sig. S2[r].

[5] Line 2's repetition of 'my sinful earth', which adds an extra foot to the line, is considered a printer's error. Many speculative amendments have been proposed – 'Fenced by', 'Foiled by', 'Pressed with' – which alter the inflection but not the overall sense. Given the unresolvable nature of the problem, however, while I quote Stephen Booth's modernised version of the poem I retain the 1609 Quarto's original wording, which has at least the benefit of textual authenticity. For more detail see Booth's *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, pp. 503-04.

[6] Roger Edwardes, *A boke of very Godly psalms and prayers* (London: 1570), sig. B.ii[r].

deums of praise' provide a model for much early modern religious lyric, as Barbara Kiefer Lewalski notes, and soul-address occasionally follows the chiasmus of psalm 103, which urges simply 'praise the Lord, my soul' without specifying a degraded state as its prompt.[7] But overwhelmingly the address of the soul follows rather psalm 42, which does charge its injunction towards changed behaviour with an imagined negative state. 'Why art thou so cast down, O my soul?' it runs, 'And why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God'. Described here is disquietude as opposed to outright sinfulness. But in early modern soul-address the latter is more common, and in any case the two are very closely linked. Beside the examples offered above we might place Barnabe Barnes', whose sonnet LVIII urges:

> Comfort thy selfe (poore soule) whom griefe of sinne
>
> Downe presseth to the mouth of the lowest hell[.][8]

Or Christopher Sutton's *Godly meditations*: 'Arise O my soule', it pleads, 'and depart thy selfe forthwith out of this dark vallie'.[9] The virtuous soul that is functioning as it should tends to prompt descriptions full of wonderment. The one touched by sinfulness, in the main, attracts disciplinary imperatives. Indeed, in *The Second Anniversary* we find the contrast played out in a single work. At line 185 the soul takes cosmos-collapsing flight, a moment that is described exultantly in the third-person. Yet that transcendence is in fact the result of Donne's lengthy second-person address of the soul, where he admonishes it to 'forget [the] rotten world' (49) with which it has become sinfully fascinated (45-184).

In prompting such disciplinary imperatives – in being told what to do – the soul is very much of its time. In Louis B. Wright's account the sixteenth century is a notably 'didactic age' that 'devoured instruction of all sorts', and for W. Lee Ustick it is even uniquely so, 'delight[ing] in books of instruction in conduct as [none] before it or perhaps since'.[10] This literature is not only prolific but multifarious. As Wright says, 'the treatise of instruction might take the form of a sermon by some contemporary preacher, a translation of some book of

---

[7] Barbara Kiefer Lewalski, *Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 4. John Gerson, for instance, follows this model: 'Oh my soule rejoyse the|and gyve thankynges unto thy god for his noble gyfte | and synguler comfort that it lyste hym here in thys vale of teres thus to comforte the' (John Gerson, *A full devoute and gostely treatyse of the imytacyon and folowynge the blessed lyfe of our moste mercyfull Savyour cryste*, trans. by William Atkinson [London: 1517], sig. Jvʳ). On the general influence of the psalms on English literature see: Douglas Gray, *Themes and Images in the Medieval English Religious Lyric* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), p. 10.

[8] Barnabe Barnes, 'Sonnet LVIII', *A divine centurie of spirituall sonnets* (London: 1595), sig. E3ᵛ.

[9] Christopher Sutton, *Godly meditations upon the most holy sacrament of the Lordes Supper* (London: 1601), sig. D5ᵛ.

[10] Louise B. Wright, ed., *Advice to a Son: Precepts of Lord Burghley, Sir Walter Raleigh, and Francis Osborne* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962), pp. x-xi; W. Lee Ustick, 'Advice to a Son: A Type of Seventeenth-Century Conduct Book', *Studies in Philology*, 29 (1932), 409-41, p. 421.

wisdom from the ancients, a courtesy book taken from the Italians, an original work designed to guide the education of the prince, or a few pious and practical admonitions of a parent to a son or a daughter'.[11] Indeed, Sidney's *An Apology for Poetry* makes clear that to a degree all literature in the period is assumed (or claims) to be of an instructional character: 'the end of Poesy', we are told, is 'delightful teaching'.[12] It is true that these writers speak of instruction rather than specifically discipline and are not obviously thinking about punishment. But the three are always proximal, with teaching and punitive correction the twin poles of the semantic range of the disciplinary. In anthropological discourse, as Noel Dyck puts it, discipline can refer to 'the application of particular forms of punishment' but also 'may comprise programs of training, especially pertaining to mind and character, which aim to reproduce preferred forms of conduct'.[13] It is a semantic range that certainly obtains in the Renaissance. In Aneau Barthelemy's *Alektor* we find 'men who are fellowlike creatures, and easie to be disciplined', for instance, and in Sidney's *Arcadia* a defeated force 'disciplined for their dronken riots'.[14] A particularly apt example is a chapter-title from Juan Luis Vives' *The office and duetie of an husband*, 'Of the discipline and instruction of women', which may seem to distinguish between discipline and instruction but could also just as well be a hendiadys.[15]

This chapter's discussion of the soul and its discipline falls into two halves. As Norbert Elias establishes at length, the profusion of didactic literary materials described above is symptomatic of a general increase in the Renaissance in 'the coercion exerted by people on one another'.[16] In the first part of what follows we seek to read against this backdrop – indeed, to embed within it – a tradition of texts that do not seek to coerce another but rather depict the coercion of the self: the address to the soul. With Shakespeare's sonnet 146 as our structuring prompt, we focus upon three disciplinary subjects – rebel soldiers, painted women, and prodigal young men – that are of threefold appositeness: not only is each among the most common targets of early modern literary instruction, but each is also among the most common analogies by which the wayward soul is imagined when *it* is being instructed. As we have just seen, early modern discipline need not be punitive, and indeed discourse that seeks to discipline soldiers, women and prodigals oscillates widely in its

---

[11] Wright, *Advice*, p. x.

[12] Sidney, *Apology*, p. 112.

[13] Noel Dyck, 'Anthropological Perspectives on Discipline', in Dyck, ed., *Exploring Regimes of Discipline: The Dynamics of Restraint* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2008), p. 2.

[14] Barthelemy Aneau, *Alektor* (London: 1590), sig. N2ᵛ.

[15] Juan Luis Vives, *The office and duetie of an husband*, trans. by Thomas Paynell (London: 1555), sig. Dviᵛ.

[16] Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: the History of Manners and State Formation and Civilization*, trans. by Edmund Jephcott (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), p. 63. Cf. Sheilagh Ogilvie, ' "So that Every Subject Knows How to Behave": Social Disciplining in Early Modern Bohemia', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 48 (2006), 38-78.

tone and attitudes. Nevertheless, each is an analogue that while confirming the privileged status of the soul

also imagines it has having strayed calamitously, and thus each emphasises the soul's requirement not simply

for benign instruction but for particularly corrective discipline.

The second part thinks about how these corrective disciplinary processes play out in verse. How

fundamental to it is the soul's abjection, I want to ask, and to what degree can we consider poetic soul-address

itself to be disciplinary *as a form*? Notwithstanding that the soul tends to be figured by it in debasing ways,

and the basically didactic inflection Helen Vendler identifies when she characterises the form as 'a homily to

the soul', the soul-address trope itself hardly seems structurally of a piece with the literature of things telling

other things what to do.[17] Rather, it presents a speaker giving advice to themselves, and structures a

devotional moment of inwardness without implications for anything outside of the speaker or text. It is

noteworthy that the case of the psalms may be different because of their liturgical context: there the address

to the soul provides a script for congregants to recite and has an obviously disciplinary character. But early

modern poetry, even of a religious stripe, does not seem to share it. Lewalski exemplifies the usual way of

reading the mode: though it can have didactic inflections, she writes, devotional poetry is nevertheless

essentially 'a private mode, concerned to discover and express the various and vacillating spiritual conditions

and emotions the soul experiences in meditation, prayer, and praise'.[18] Or we can turn to John Kerrigan, who

describes Shakespeare's sonnet 146 as 'a Donne-like cry from the heart of corruption', likely thinking of

Donne's soul-address in Holy Sonnet 2 as he draws the comparison.[19] Such a cry, an apparently unmediated

burst of self-expression, would be a locution without apparent purpose or rhetorical direction, and could

certainly not be considered coercive of anything else. Rather, it would seem to align much more readily with

what we conventionally identify as lyric: an intimate poetic utterance that records or represents inner

experiences and processes.[20]

The question will be whether this appearance of undirected inwardness is as antithetical as it would

seem to a fundamentally disciplinary character. As the example of the psalms suggests, I will argue, it is not.

The address to the soul may in important ways be the very apotheosis of lyric interiority. But the lyric interior

---

[17] Helen Vendler, *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press, 1997), p. 611.
[18] Lewalski, *Protestant Poetics*, p. 4.
[19] William Shakespeare, *The Sonnets and A Lover's Complaint*, ed. by John Kerrigan (London: Penguin, 1986), p. 61
[20] 'Lyric' is a very vexed term to whose definition we return in depth below.

is a location of shifting and vexed deictics that can make unexpected demands upon the reader, and it is precisely in the way that soul-address turns the lyric mode to covert *self*-disciplinary effects that we will be interested. If this seems a long way from Elias's explicitly coercive milieu then that is partly the point. There are other disciplinary traditions and contexts in which to view the form, ones in which the self-directedness of soul-address looks not like *un*directedness but like a disciplinary strategy. The address to the soul at its surface makes the soul look like something, in extreme cases, that should by rights be in prison. But its subtending dynamics resemble the process described by Michel Foucault by which the soul, through processes of internalised discourse, 'becomes the prison of the body': an instrument of discipline itself.[21]

<center>

II

</center>

1. – 'Rebell-soule'

<div align="right">

My sinful earth these rebel pow'rs that thee array

</div>

On October 18 1638 'the Captaines and Souldiers exercising Armes in the Artillery Garden' gathered in Saint Andrew's Undershaft church to hear Obadiah Sedgwick preach a sermon.[22] We can assume it was something of a spectacle: Sedgwick, who would go on to become one of the principal preachers of the Westminster Assembly, was known to 'unbutton his doublet in the pulpit, that his breath might be longer, and his voice more audible to rail against the king's party'.[23] On this occasion the divine eschewed the political and ecclesiastical controversies of the Bishops' Wars – perhaps inevitably, as the Honourable Artillery Company

---

[21] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1995), p. 16.
[22] Obadiah Sedgwick, *Military Discipline for the Christian Souldier. Drawne out in a Sermon Preached to the Captaines and Souldiers exercising Armes in the Artillery Garden, at their Generall meeting* (London: 1639), frontispiece. Hereafter this work is referenced parenthetically in the main text.
[23] Quoted in: James Reid, *Memoirs of the Lives and Writings of Those Eminent Divines, Who Convened in the Famous Assembly at Westminster, in the Seventeenth Century* (Paisley: Stephen and Andrew Young, 1811), p. 142.

had been incorporated by Royal Charter and was in the period something of an establishment club.[24] Instead he took the military character of the audience as his cue for a lengthy working-through of the familiar trope that figures the religious person as a soldier and the struggle against sin as the plight of a besieged castle or city. The sermon was published early in 1639 with the title *Military Discipline for the Christian Souldier*.

On the face of it the text's attitude to things martial appears positive. Sedgwick begins, in the 'Epistle Dedicatory', by making his admiration for the military profession clear. It would be redundant for him to 'speake something for the Honour of Armes', he says, since 'the Scriptures and Fathers, and all sorts of Writers, and judicious men have all plaid the just Heralds, and blazon'd the Profession, as lawfull, as usefull, and as Honourable' (sig. A4ʳ); there follows an exhaustive list of classical and biblical precedents. The sermon proper constitutes an elaborate parsing out of the conventional analogical system that maps the martial onto the ethical. From the starting-point of the dedication that the distinctive 'works' that the Christian soldier must secure is the soul (A5ʳ), the sermon rehearses the correspondences between the parts of consciousness and various defensive architectural features that occur at the edges of cities. It groups these architectural features into three categories – 'the Royall Bullwarks', the common Ports', and 'the adjacent out-works' – with the first category comprising 'The Understanding', 'The Will', 'The Affections' and 'The Conscience' (C6ᵛ⁻ʳ), the second 'the outward senses' (Eʳ), and the third our worldly actions or 'conversations' (E3ʳ). Later he describes in even more detail the system of defences required for the latter: 'Let the Foundation of this outwork be Piety, the Rampart of this worke, be Justice, the Parapet of this worke, be Wisedome, the Moate of it, be Charity, the foot of it, be Humility, the Sentinell, Tendernesse, the Commanders, Love of God, and uprightnesse' (E5ʳ). The project as a whole is clear: to deploy the martial vocabulary Sedgwick's congregation would understand and find appealing in instructing them in how to remain morally forthright in the face of attacks from 'that Grand Generall of all mischief, the Divell' (B2ᵛ).

Sedgwick's allegorical theme is conventional and prolific. It can be found everywhere from Erasmus's *Enchiridion Militis Christiani* to *The Faerie Queene* and has firm scriptural foundations: II Timothy 2:3 refers to soldiers of Christ, for example, and Ephesians 6:11 to the armour of God. But in addition to this allegorical tradition *Military Discipline* exists as well in one of the most vigorous didactic traditions of the period. Barnabe

---

[24] Anthony Highmore, *The History of the Honourable Artillery Company of the City of London* (London: 1804), p. 64. According to Highmore 'very few citizens of eminence […] were not members of [the company]'.

Rich's *Allarme to England*, whose full title declares its concern with 'warlike discipline', appears in 1578; Leonard Digges' *An arithmeticall militare treatise, named Stratioticos* is first published the following year; published in 1581 is the first edition of Thomas Styward's *The pathway to martiall discipline deuided into two books, verie necessarie for young souldiers*; and the trend persists well past the Spanish crisis, with texts such as Gervase Markham's *The souldiers accidence. Or an introduction into military discipline* continuing to appear throughout the early and mid-seventeenth century.[25] The primary focus of such texts is often upon military technique rather than moral comportment, but as we shall see there is always an ethical component; indeed, Paul A. Jorgensen suspects that 'probably no occupational group benefited from more earnest instruction in moral and spiritual betterment' than the military.[26] On the face of it, Sedgwick's densely figurative sermon is rather different to these other texts, which tend to be quite literal. Yet its disciplinary project is energised by the same anxious sense of soldiers and of the martial.

It is a general Renaissance anxiety. As Rory Rapple writes: 'while there was always a place for patriotic appreciation of soldiers' service to the commonwealth during times of war […] during periods where England was not formally at war […] anxiety about the place of the martial man in society resurfaced'.[27] Jorgensen describes as typical the attitude to war of *The French Academie*, published in 1594: it worries about 'souldiours' turned 'barbarous, mutinous, and cruell' by war and identifies them as the 'sworne enimies' of civil harmony.[28] As Rapple makes clear at length, the social category of soldier is by no means static over the course of the early modern period, and at various times – or even simultaneously – could be considered laudable or deeply threatening; but in sum, despite reversals and rehabilitations, it is never without ambiguity. Moreover, it is not only the prospect of the unruly soldier – that is, an aberration to the proper course of soldierly procedure – that provokes unease. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as Frank Tallet points out, 'warfare had a more substantial impact upon civilian society […] than at any previous period', and the result of this increased impact was widespread anti-militaristic feeling.[29] Moreover, there is a prominent

---

[25] Barnabe Rich, *Allarme to England* (London: 1578); Leonard Digges, *An arithmeticall militare treatise, named Stratioticos* (London: 1579) (the work is 'augmented, digested and lately finished by Thomas Digges, his sonne'); Thomas Styward, *The pathway to martiall discipline deuided into two books, verie necessarie for young souldiers* (London: 1581); Gervase Markham, *The souldiers accidence. Or an introduction into military discipline* (London: 1625).

[26] Paul Jorgensen, 'Moral Guidance and Religious Encouragement for the Elizabethan Soldier', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 13 (1950), 241-59, p. 241.

[27] Rory Rapple, 'Military Culture', in Andrew Hadfield *et al*, eds., *The Ashgate Research Companion to Popular Culture in Early Modern England* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), pp. 337-56 (p. 344).

[28] Jorgensen, 'Moral Guidance', p. 241.

[29] Frank Tallet, *War and Society in Early Modern Europe* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 232.

pacifist Humanist faction – it includes Erasmus, More, Vives and Baldassare Castiglione – which argues that warfare is fundamentally 'irreligious, immoral and impractical'.[30] Warfare itself, that is, even when not in a state of malfunction, is in the period increasingly considered threatening and disruptive. It is also worth noting that Rapple refers above to an Elizabethan England threatened from without. By contrast, Sedgwick preaches his sermon in an England in the throes of the violent ecclesiastical controversies that will lead to outright civil war. The risk represented in this period by specifically the *English* soldier – something that is supposed to be defensive but could turn threatening – is especially clear.

That Sedgwick opens with a justification of the soldier's claim to virtue betrays this defensive uneasiness from the outset. By opening in such a way he both denies the negative potential of the soldier and invokes it: repeating the accusation against which it defends, the manoeuvre is a kind of inverted apophasis. This is common. Rich, whose text is essentially a bellicose call to arms in the face of the threat from Spain, nevertheless also feels compelled to think through the soldier's negative potential: he notes that 'warre' is perceived to be a pursuit of 'ruffians, roysters, blasphemers, and people of the vilest condicion, rather than an exercise for honest men', quoting Cornelius Agrippa to the effect that 'souldier' is synonymous with tyrant, blasphemer, 'murtherer', robber, 'spoyler', 'deflower', and oppressor.[31] Commending his father's treatise to Robert Dudley in the dedication, Thomas Digges thinks positively of the martial, noting that throughout history '*Kingdomes* have flourished in all felicitie, whereas this Arte [of war] hath bene embraced, and duelie practised'. But this 'Arte' has its negative potential, potential that is imagined in terms of a loss of soldierly discipline: 'contrarywise […] most happie Empires after warlike Discipline have bin corrupted, have fallen to ruine and miserable servitude'.[32] Compared to these examples, in fact, Sedgwick's misgivings as I have quoted them might seem rather veiled. But elsewhere he quite explicitly alludes to the potential in his audience for diametric ethical reversal. 'There are foure sorts of persons who are intolerable and vily infamous', he says. 'One is a false wife, the second a treacherous friend, the third a disloyall subject, and the fourth is a revolting Souldier' (F7v).

Military Discipline, then, has an uneasy, doubled sense of soldiers and the martial that is entirely of a piece with its literary tradition and with early modern English culture as a whole. Indeed, the departures it

---

[30] Steven Marx, 'Shakespeare's Pacifism', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 45 (1992), 49-95, p. 49.
[31] Rich, *Allarme*, sig. Air-Aiiv.
[32] Digges, *Stratioticos*, sig. Aijr.

does make – the ways in which it not only states its sense of the soldier's double capacity but plays that sense out figuratively – emphasise that doubleness. This can be seen if we return to a sequence glanced at above. Comparing the parts of consciousness to the outer or liminal areas of a walled city, Sedgwick suggests that the defensive features or 'Royall Bullwarks' 'are four': '1. The Understanding. 2. The Will. 3. The Affections. 4. The conscience' (C6ʳ). The first 'bullwark' – a bulwark being a wall built specifically for defensive purposes – Sedgwick seems to imagine as both an active defence and as something characterised by its vulnerability: it is 'a commander in the soule' (C7ᵛ⁻ʳ) yet it must be 'watch[ed] over' (C8ʳ). The second, the will, is also imagined as a site of vulnerability: 'that great Faculty, which will either be the chaire of lust, or throne of grace' (D2ᵛ⁻ʳ). Bulwarks should be there to protect things like thrones, but here the two categories seem somehow fungible. The third bulwark, the affections, 'are to the soule, as the souldiers to the *Centurion*' (D4ʳ). But they can also be very opposite to that indeed: 'how vile, how irregular, how dangerous are affections […] [when] routed and disordered' (D6ʳ). Finally, the conscience too has double potential. Is it 'God's vice-gerent [sic] in man? The Spie upon us? Our great Counsellor? Our best friend or worst enemy? Our Heaven of peace, or Hell of torment? Our wall of brasse, or prison of iron?' (D7ʳ) This sounds more like a turncoat agent or soldier than a bulwark, and more like a prison than a stronghold. In its doubleness, that is, Sedgwick's soldier is also divided: divided against that which it is supposed to defend, which is itself.

It is on this dangerous potential that figurative imaginings of the soul as a soldier draw. Not always: as we have seen, it is entirely possible to gesture towards an idealised soldier in this context. (The allegorical *Psychomachia* tradition does so, as does Spenser and even the avowedly pacifistic Erasmus.) But other texts invoke the ambiguous, double soldier. Henry Lok's sonnet XXXIII, for example, imagines soldiers not defending but rebelling: 'my sinnes behold (o Lord) are manifold, | Which do incamp my soule each houre about […] Their fleshly champion is a soldiar stout […] and foule affections readie are in rout'.[33] At least here the rebel soldier is understood as the adversary of the soul rather than its analogue. But other texts go further. In a poem entitled 'On Gods Ubiquitary Presence', for instance, Christopher Wyvill exhorts his potential sinner not to 'let-loose thy rebell-soule'.[34] In *Automachia, or the self-conflict of a Christian*, George Goodwin does not refer to the soul by name, but when he describes himself as divided 'in divers Factions', a 'seditious Common-

---

[33] Henry Lok, *Sundry Christian passions contained in two hundred sonnets* (London: 1593), sig. Bijᵛ.
[34] Christopher Wyvill, *Certaine serious thoughts which at severall times & upon sundry occasions have stolen themselves into verse and now into the publike view from the author* (London: 1647), sig. C4ʳ.

Weale, | Within my brest I feele my best rebell' the adjective 'best' can only gesture in one direction, so that again we have a rebell-soul.[35] The soul can be threatened by rebel soldiers – but it can also be one.

In sonnet 146 this discipline-attracting doubleness becomes one of the poem's structuring patterns. At first glance the poem seems simply to imagine a soul surrounded on all sides by enemy forces:

> Poor soul, the center of my sinful earth,
>
> My sinful earth these rebel pow'rs that thee array[.]

This is familiar. Barnes imagines his soul 'in combat with the dust | Of sinfull flesh', and we find another variant in a 1495 edition, attributing itself to St Jerome, that 'lykens' a human being to a 'castell' that 'hath four gates all open' and leaves open to 'assault' the 'poore soule'.[36] But in these examples the distinction between the soul and that which threatens it is assumed to be straightforward. Shakespeare's sonnet, by contrast, presents a more complex picture. Line one suggests that the sinful earth oppresses the soul at its centre. But that the soul *is* rather than is *at* the centre is difficult: the centre of something is a part of it and not absolved of complicity in its actions and character. And in fact the difficulties are greater than that. In the early modern period 'centre' tends to signify distilled essence, and indeed in planetary terms is considered a possible location of Hell, so that a soul that is the centre of a sinful earth might be the essence of sinfulness and possibly even sin's ultimate locus.[37] Moreover, we should remember what kind of attacking forces these are. Pointedly not foreign, as Jerome's are, these are rebels, and since rebellions are by definition internal the soul that is under threat here is imagined somehow also to constitute that threat. This is a deeply complicit soul, that is, one that attracts not only punishment or protection but disciplinary discourse that seeks to shape its behaviours and impulses.[38]

---

[35] George Goodwin, *Automachia, or the self-conflict of a Christian* (London: 1607), sig. B3ᵛ-C2ʳ.

[36] Barnes, 'Sonnet XLIX', *A divine centurie,* sig. D4ʳ; St Jerome, *Vitas Patrum* (1495), sig. nnijʳ.

[37] For more on 'centre' in this context see Booth's edition of the *Sonnets*, p. 502. He cites Castiglione's *Courtier*: 'beautie commeth of God, and is like a circle, the goodnesse whereof is the Centre' (p. 305). The OED gives 'the most essential part; the heart, the core' (10c). In *The First Anniversary* Donne worries that 'If under all, a vault infernal be' (295) then the 'solidness' (299) of the earth is brought into question.

[38] Textual contingencies notwithstanding, it is worth noting that as printed the lines are structured around rhetorical effects – either an anadiplosis, the repetition of a phrase, or an antanaclasis, a repetition of a phrase that changes its initial meaning – that emphasise the shift that has taken place between ways of imagining the soul and thereby also emphasise the soul's complicity.

2. – 'My poor Harlot soul'

Amidst the voluminous early modern literature directing the behaviour of women one text in particular stands out: Juan Luis Vives' *The Instruction of a Christian Woman*, published in 1523 as *De institutione feminae christianae* and translated into English in 1529 with the full title *A very frutfull and pleasant boke called the Instruction of a Christen woman*.[39] Vives is renowned for his didactic abilities ('For who instructs more clearly, more agreeably, or more successfully,' Thomas More asks in a letter to Erasmus, 'than Vives?'), and *The Instruction* is indeed one of the central instructional texts of its age, appearing in seven English editions over the course of the sixteenth century.[40]

In it Vives seeks to instruct in 'the information and bringing up of a Christian woman' (2). Motivated by the incomparable value the female represents – she 'hath with in her a treasure without comparison, that is the purenes both of body and mind' (D4ʳ) – the process Vives describes constitutes a series of processes of strict discipline, containment and regulation, moving chronologically from 'the bringing up of a Maide when she is a Babe' to later chapters dealing with the ideal comportment of widows. Within this chronological structure appear more thematised discussions of topics including 'which writers are to be read', 'how she will behave in public', dancing, and seeking a spouse. There are also outbreaks of extreme misogynistic violence: not disapprovingly, Vives relates a long series of quasi-historical anecdotes of male response to illegitimate pregnancy, including that of 'a great man of *Athenes*' who fed his 'defiled' daughter to a crazed wild horse, and that of two brothers who 'dissembled theyr anger' long enough for their illegitimately pregnant sister to give

---

[39] The edition to which I refer here is *A verie fruitful and pleasant booke, called the instruction of a Christian woman*, trans. by Richard Hyrde (London: 1585). References to this edition are given parenthetically in the main text; for the preface only page-numbers are available, but otherwise I give sigs. For more detail on this literature see: Mark Breitenberg, 'Anxious Masculinity: Sexual Jealousy in Early Modern England', *Feminist Studies*, 19 (1993), 377-98, p. 378 and passim. On chastity see: Joan Gibson, 'The Logic of Chastity: Women, Sex, and the History of Philosophy in the Early Modern Period', *Hypatia*, 21 (2006), 1-19. For an argument for Vives' relative progressiveness see: Charles Fantazzi, 'Vives and the *emarginati*', in Fantazzi, ed., *A Companion to Juan Luis Vives* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008), pp. 65-112 (p. 65). For an argument against see: Stephen Derek Kolsky, 'Making Examples of Women: Juan Luis Vives' *The Education of a Christian Woman*', *Early Modern Culture Online*, 3 (2012), 14-38, pp. 14-15. Although I do not discuss it here, Vives is in fact also the author of a widely circulated 1538 psychological work entitled *De anima et vita*; for more on this volume see: Lorenzo Casini, " 'Quid sit anima': Juan Luis Vives on the Soul and its Relation to the Body', *Renaissance Studies*, 24 (2010), 496-517.

[40] More's letter is quoted in the editor's introduction in: Juan Luis Vives, *Tudor School-boy Life: The Dialogues of Juan Luis Vives*, trans. and ed. by Foster Watson (London: J. M Dent, 1908), pp. xii-xiii. For the text's popularity in general see: Fantazzi, *A Companion,* p. 8. I have only been able to find seven editions but Ursula Potter gives eight: 'Elizabethan Drama and *The Instruction of a Christian Woman* by Juan Luis Vives', in Juanita Feros Ruys, ed., *What Nature Does Not Teach: Didactic Literature in the Medieval and Early Modern Periods* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), pp. 261-85 (p. 261).

birth before 'thrust[ing] swoordes into her bellie […] the mid-wyfe looking on' (E2^v-r). Horrifying enough. But it is particularly Vives' keen and disgusted interest in cosmetics – one that he shares with sonnet 146 and the early modern period in general – that will claim our attentions here.[41]

'Thou hast but one soule,' Vives advises as he raises the subject, 'and to please [Christ] with, make thy soule gaye with vertue' (F2^r). In Vives' starkly dualistic vision a zero-sum game is played: 'thou canst not be gold of both parties: chose which thou wilt have, thy body or thy soule golden' (F6^r). If the outer walls are painted costly gay, that is, the soul pines within. These broad statements may seem relatively neutral, but in fact the ethical construction of 'paynting' goes beyond the division of resources. Not only does the painted face imply the deprivation of the soul, but it is itself hideous. The 'tender skinne' of the painted face 'wil revyll the more soone, and all the favour of the face waxeth olde, and the breath stincketh, and the teeth ruste, and an evil ayre all the body over' (F3^v). These physical horrors are also closely associated with unchasteness and adultery. 'Though thou be not an adulterer towarde men', Vives warns the woman, 'yet when thou corruptest and marrest that, which is Gods doing, thou art a worse adulterer: and where thou thinkest thy self gay and well picked, that is a strife against gods worke and breaking of troth' (F5^v-r). But the link is also literal: because cosmetics encourage women to 'goe foorth amonge men to shewe themselves' they are 'the ship-wrack of chastitie' (G^v). Indeed, throughout the text the adjective 'gay' operates in the connection of 'paynting'. I have already quoted Vives as advising the woman to 'make thy soule gaye' with the divine cosmetic of 'vertue', but when he worries about her going 'foorth abroad' it is with the adjective 'gaily' attached (G2^v), and he exhorts a male authority figure not to allow the woman to 'paint nor anoint her face […] nor loke in a glasse to paint her, or trim her gayly' (G3^r).

Its popularity notwithstanding, one would not have had to be familiar with *The Instruction* to have associated cosmetic painting with sinfulness: the link is absolutely commonplace, and to imagine the soul in such a way is typical as well.[42] The soul-as-woman tradition goes back at least as far as the early church – Augustine writes 'Oh soul acknowledge thy bridegroom, imbrace thy long desired one' – and runs through

---

[41] Throughout Shakespeare cosmetic painting has unchaste and deathly connotations, to the extent that Edward A. Armstrong and others have been led to speculate that his aversion went even beyond the (itself pathological) norm. See: Edward A. Armstrong, *Shakespeare's Imagination* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1963), p. 67. For early modern anxieties about cosmetics, and the ancient traditions by which they were informed, see: Annette Drew-Bear, *Painted Faces on the Renaissance Stage: the Moral Significance of Face-Painting Conventions* (Lewisburgh: Bucknell University Press, 1994), pp. 13-22. Cf. Farah Karim-Cooper, *Cosmetics in Shakespearean and Renaissance Drama* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006).

[42] Drew-Bear, *Painted Faces,* pp. 13-22.

Thomas à Kempis, who begs Christ to come to his soul in strikingly erotic terms.[43] In 1592's *An epistle in the person of Christ to the faithfull soule,* Johannes Justus Lansperger has Christ tell a soul that 'if thou wilt bee a faithfull spouse, (O soule) thou oughtest to desire nothing so much as to please me'.[44] But it is also common for the bridal soul to be unfaithful. Donne could think of his soul as 'wanton', and in Holy Sonnet 10 ('Batter my heart, three-personed God') he imagines it in terms of infidelity and sexual error.[45] In *Heaven opened, or, A brief and plain discovery of the riches of Gods covenant of grace*, for Richard Alleine the soul is a 'wretched Adulteress, my poor Harlot soul'.[46] Joseph Fletcher's *Christes bloodie sweat, or the Sonne of God in his agonie* addresses the 'soule of man' and demands that it 'witnesse here this crimson sweat' and acknowledge that Christ dies for its 'whoredomes'.[47] To involve cosmetics in these figurations, and to associate make-up with promiscuity and adultery, is also common. In Thomas Nashe's *Christs Teares over Jerusalem* it is pointed out that 'how ever you disguise your bodies, you lay not on your colours so thick that they sinke into your soules'.[48] For Martyn Cognet in his *Politique Discourses upon Trueth and Lying* 'painting betoken[s] a diseased soule marked with adulterie'.[49] In Barnabe Barnes's *The Devil's Charter* Lucretia Borgia exclaims

> Who painted my faire face with these foule spots,
>
> You see them in my soule deformed blots[.] [IV.3.2107-8][50]

Indeed, for Joseph Hall the distinction is not between painted sinful face and plain virtuous soul, as it is for the examples above. Instead it is between a soul that *itself* is painted or unpainted: 'God shal smite thee thou whited wall, God shall smite thee. Doest thou thinke hee sees not how smoothly thou hast daubed on thine whorish complexion? […] I speake not of this carrion-flesh which thou wantonlie infectest with the false colours of thy pride […] [but of] thy painted soule'.[51]

Sonnet 146 does not rant about whorishness and wanton infection: its fourth line gives us only gaily painted outward walls. Yet with this context drawn we can see that it is also a gaily painted harlot soul that emerges from the image of the self-besieged city (Hall demonstrates how easily an image of architectural walls

[43] Augustine, *A little pamphlet entituled the ladder of paradise* (London: 1580), sig. D3ᵛ; Thomas a Kempis, *Soliloquium animae. The sole-talke of the soule*. (London: 1592), sig. C12ʳ-DIʳ.

[44] Johannes Justus Lansperger, *An epistle in the person of Christ to the faithfull soule* (Antwerp: 1595), sig. H3ʳ.

[45] John Donne, *LXXX sermons preached by that learned and reverend divine, John Donne* (London: 1640), sig. XXX5ʳ.

[46] R. A. [Richard Alleine], *Heaven opened, or, A brief and plain discovery of the riches of Gods covenant of grace* (London: 1665), sig. Z8ᵛ.

[47] Joseph Fletcher, *Christes bloodie sweat, or the Sonne of God in his agonie* (London: 1613), sig. G3ʳ.

[48] Thomas Nashe, *Christs Teares Over Jerusalem* (London: 1613), sig. T2ᵛ.

[49] Matthieu Coignet [Martyn Cognet], *Politique Discourses upon Trueth and Lying*, trans. by Edward Hoby (London: 1586), sig. M5iiᵛ.

[50] Barnabe Barnes, *The Devil's Charter*, ed. by R. B. McKerrow (London: 1904), sig. H2ʳ.

[51] Joseph Hall, *Pharisaisme and Christianity compared and set forth in a sermon at Pauls Crosse* (London: 1608), sig. Fʳ-F2ᵛ.

can shade into one of the soul), and that readers would have been quite ready to think in such a way about the soul. The conventional figure brings a powerful charge of misogynistic paranoia, and what is more aligns the poem with the disciplinary discourse in which that paranoia was embodied: the word 'painted', that is to say, announces at once a sinful soul and a disciplinary locution. But *exactly* what kind of disciplinary subject is implied? Clearly, the painted harlot is a potent and negative image. But it is not simply negative. More specifically, by asking us to think of the soul as a woman and by invoking with 'painting' the kinds of dangerous female urges Vives seeks to discipline, the sonnet asks us to think of the soul in a particular way: as something entrusted with 'a treasure beyond comparison' yet as something that cannot fully be trusted with that treasure, something that is complicit in that which threatens it. Tellingly, the sonnet again reflects this sense of the soul in its figurative procedures. We are told first to imagine the soul as helpless, something entirely passive and even inanimate (like a 'treasure'), surrounded by hostile forces. But that the 'pow'rs' surrounding the soul are 'rebel' implies the soul's complicity in their activities, as we have seen, and now the complicity grows. In line three the soul is still a thing threatened by activity at its outer 'walls' or bounds. But now that activity is even more explicitly the soul's: it is the subject of the verb 'paint', after all, and the painting is being done to '*thy* [i.e. the soul's] outward walls' (emphasis mine). Once again, what may seem a devotional cry wants us to think in terms of a quite different sort of text. What we see here is not a helpless wail or appeal for divine help. Rather, it is an attempt to impose discipline on a subject that is at once peerlessly valuable and notoriously wayward.

3. – 'Oh my prodigal Soul'

> *Why so large cost, having so short a lease*
> *Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend?*
> *Shall worms, inheritors of this excess,*
> *Eat up thy charge?*

But even as sonnet 146 adumbrates its vision of the painted soul it points as well towards a final figure that is customarily the subject of disciplinary discourse in the Renaissance. Over the course of the poem the soul is

accused not only of gaily painting its walls but of painting them so *costly* gay, and of spending inadvisable

amounts on an ostentatious 'mansion' for which it holds only a lease. In short, the soul is being fiscally reckless

and mismanaging a socioeconomic responsibility that (the poem suggests with the word 'charge') is not exactly

its own but has been entrusted to it.[52] In all of these things what the sonnet gestures towards is prodigality,

and the voluminous Renaissance literature that mobilises against it.

Prodigality is a ubiquitous shorthand throughout early modern culture for financial recklessness,

exorbitant largesse, and the misguided deployment of resources. In *Religio Medici*, for instance, for Thomas

Browne 'prodigall' signifies literally throwing money away: 'the Philosopher that threw his money into the Sea

to avoid avarice, was a notorious prodigall'.[53] In *The court of the most illustrious and most magnificent James* it

is equated with being 'profuse in [...] expences'.[54] For Thomas Adams 'a prodigall hand' is one that 'gives all

gratis'.[55] George Abbot thinks back to 'the dayes of superstition' when people 'could never be too prodigall, in

heaping much of their substance, on those who were no better then blind guides'.[56] But as well as being a

synonym for financial excess prodigality also in the period automatically invokes the prodigal son, the

unheedful young man who in Luke 15:11-32 travels abroad and 'devours' his father's 'living' with harlots. The

parable is ubiquitous, as Richard Helgerson makes clear, and the way in which Browne uses the word – the

philosopher is not notoriously prodigal but *a* notorious prodigal – points to the way its two senses are

simultaneously coexistent, the adjective able to shade unannounced into the noun without changing the

sense.[57] *The Merchant of Venice* furnishes another example of the potential for slippage. At II.4.17 Gratiano

exclaims 'How like the prodigal doth she return', referring specifically to the parable, but not long afterwards

Shylock shifts the emphasis towards general fiscal failure: 'there I have another bad match, a bankrupt, a

prodigal, who dare scarce show his head on the Rialto, a beggar' (III.2.41-3). Things of a fiscally prodigal

character in the period, then, are in fact prodigals, carrying associations of the wasteful and improvident young

man that is prodigality's emblem.

---

[52] The word 'charge' has an exceedingly complex effect here. As Booth notes (*Sonnets*, p. 506) it suggests 'what is entrusted to you, that over which you are guardian', which he says makes it 'emblematic' of the poem's 'problematic relationship between soul and body'. But what he does not note is that it is also literally emblematic, since a 'charge' can also refer to an escutcheon.
[53] Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici* (London: 1642), sig. G5ᵛ.
[54] A. D. B., *The court of the most illustrious and most magnificent James, the first King of Great-Britaine, France, and Ireland* (London: 1619), sig. N3ᵛ.
[55] Thomas Adams, *The devils banket described in foure sermons* (London: 1614), sig. O4ʳ.
[56] George Abbot, *An exposition upon the prophet Jonah Contained in certaine sermons* (London: 1600), sig. L8ʳ.
[57] Richard Helgerson, *The Elizabethan Prodigals* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), pp. 2-3.

It is a commonplace way of considering the sinful soul in early modern literature. Nicolas Caussin recounts the familiar parable with the soul as protagonist, 'expressing the ex-cursions of a prodigal soul'.[58] Edward Reynell does a similar thing when he exclaims: 'adieu then those charming warbles of a fleeting and deceitful world! O merciful Father! Behold my prodigal Soul, which returns unto thee'.[59] The prodigality of these souls is imagined to consist in their geographical wandering. But prodigal wandering is also effectively conflated with the fiscal waywardness with which it goes hand in hand. Giovanni Francesco Loredano offers one demonstration: 'the prodigal soul that hath long strayed, can never make up its losses nor mend its condition, unless it be by the inexhausted treasures of thy Grace'.[60] In the preamble to a textbook prodigality narrative Richard Brathwaite too seems to collapse fiscal and geographical straying, imagining an 'improvident Soule' 'menaced' by 'dangerous shelfes' that will 'ruine and shipwracke' it.[61] Anthony Palmer points directly towards the parable without any invocation of physical wandering, introducing the notion of prodigally misspent *time*: 'Oh, I added sin unto sin, saith a poor soul, spending the choise time of my youth in sin'.[62] John Yates renders the image of a prodigal-looking 'soule bankerupt of grace' that 'may not indure to heare of the accounts and reckonings that it must make with Gods law', which is not far from John Hayward's book-keeping soul glimpsed earlier.[63] Souls, that is, are quite conventionally thought of as prodigals or as prodigal, as straying geographically or financially or in some conflated more purely ethical form of the two.

And to think of something as prodigal in the period is to think of a thing customarily the target of disciplinary instruction. The form such instruction very often takes is the speech or missive of paternal advice. The example most familiar to the modern ear, predictably, comes from *Hamlet*, in whose opening act Polonius delivers to his departing son Laertes a series of advisory precepts culminating in the admonition 'to thine own self be true' (I.3.55-81). But such fictive speeches are generic in the period, and in particular they are integral to early modern narratives of wayward youthful masculinity.[64] Most seminal of these is John Lyly's *Euphues*, very much *the* early modern prodigality narrative, in which an elderly Neopolitan gentleman makes an

---

[58] Nicolas Caussin, *The holy court in five tomes* (1650), sig. Tt^v.

[59] Edward Reynell, *Celestial amities: or, A soul sighing for the love of her saviour* (London: 1660), sig. G2^v.

[60] Giovanni Francesco Loredano, *The ascents of the soul* (London: 1681), sig. E^r.

[61] Richard Brathwaite, *The English gentleman containing sundry excellent rules or exquisite observations* (London: 1630), sig. B2^v.

[62] Anthony Palmer, *The Gospel New-Creature; wherein the Work of the Spirit is opened, in awakening the Soul* (London: 1658), sig. B9^v.

[63] John Yates, *Gods arraignment of hypocrites with an inlargement concerning Gods decree in ordering sinne* (Cambridge: 1615), sig. X4^r.

[64] They seem to be derived from Isocrates' *Ad Demonicum*, as Josephine Waters Bennett points out: 'Characterization in Polonius' Advice to Laertes', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 4 (1953), 3-9, p. 4. How this should affect our view of Polonius is the subject of much debate. Waters Bennett dismisses him as entirely fatuous, as does Doris V. Falk: 'Proverbs and the Polonius Destiny', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 18 (1967), 23-36. But G. K. Hunter suggests that Polonius' selection of only a few of Isocrates' precepts might make him seem to the point rather than verbose ('Isocrates' Precepts and Polonius' Character', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 8 [1957], 501-06, p. 502), and N. B. Allen gives a more sympathetic account as well: 'Polonius's Advice to Laertes', *The Shakespeare Association Bulletin*, 18 (1943), 187-90.

admonitory speech that is markedly similar in content and tone to Polonius's.[65] But as Richard Helgerson makes clear, Lyly's is only one example of a general profusion of texts that preface their narratives of riotous youth with an episode of fatherly advice seeking to forestall that riotousness.[66] *Hamlet*, to be sure, is not categorically similar to these as a text: its youths may have disastrous agendas but are not especially decadent. Nevertheless, Polonius is clearly concerned that Laertes *may* be. It is also notable that what immediately precedes Polonius' speech is Ophelia's imagining of her brother as 'a puff'd and reckless libertine' on 'the primrose path of dalliance' (I.3.49-50), which describes Euphues and his ilk precisely, and that the play's two instances of 'prodigal' bookend the speech (36, 116). It is common in the early modern period to see fictional sons disciplined, then, and even when such sons are not in fact very prodigal they are thought of as such in the context of paternal instructive oratory.

Nor is it only fictional early modern fathers who are given to such exhortations. Some of the most prominent real fathers of the age are as well, and their advice too finds its way into print. The non-fiction early modern literature of paternal instruction is varied: Sir Thomas Elyot's *The Boke Named the Governor* (1531) and the *Basilikon Doron* (1599) of James I, which are concerned with the cultivation of political leaders, represent one prominent strand. But another, directly related to the speeches of Polonius and *Euphues*' old Neopolitan, and apparently descended from common sources, is concerned with civilian matters. It is this tradition that is pertinent here, two examples of which are definitive. One is Lord Cecil Burghley's *Ten Precepts*. Composed for Burghley's son Robert in the 1580s, the text circulated widely in manuscript and was eventually published in 1611 under the title *The counsell of a father to his sonne, in ten seuerall precepts left as a legacy at his death*. The other is *Sir Walter Raleigh's Instructions to His Son and to Posterity*, composed in the Tower of London in the early years of the seventeenth century and published in 1632. These texts were in their day so widely read – in the seventeenth century, Wright says, both are 'frequently quoted […] as the essence of practical wisdom' – that we can consider the scene played out in them, and in *Euphues* and *Hamlet*, one of

---

[65] John Lyly, *Euphues. The Anatomy of Wyt* (London: 1578), sigs. B.ii^r-B.v^v.
[66] Helgerson, *Prodigals*, p. 1. As regards the ubiquity of such narratives cf. *The Descent of Euphues: Three Elizabethan Romance Stories: Euphues, Pandosto, Piers Plainness*, ed. by James Winny (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957).

the totemic disciplinary motifs of the period; and this being the case, it is unsurprising to find that it is another one invoked by sonnet 146.[67]

What the advice of Burghley and Raleigh makes clear is the overwhelmingly fiscal bent of early modern paternal instruction: though Helgerson observes that the character of the genre is 'social rather than individual', in non-fiction its concerns in fact skew overwhelmingly economic.[68] Behind this lies the fact that, as noted by Fred B. Tromly, texts of paternal instruction virtually always address the eldest living son, he who by primogeniture would inherit the patrimonial estate and become that economic body's social representative.[69] It is everywhere in evidence in the texts themselves. *Ten Precepts*, whose 1617 subtitle specifies that it details '*oeconomicall discipline for the government of [the] house*', makes the nature of its concerns plain throughout.[70] The advice 'beware thou spend not about three of the 4-parts of thy revenue, nor above one third parte thereof in your house: for the other two partes wil but defray extraordinaries' is representative (A7ᵛ); at another moment Burghley offers counsel concerning the wisdom of buying when rates are cheap as against more obviously frugal procedures (A8ᵛ); elsewhere he frankly admits that '*Gentilitie is nothing but ancient Riches*' (A7ᵛ). Indeed, suggesting the degree to which the text thinks in fiscal terms, the frontispiece admonishes the reader

> Against good Counsell who will shutte his Eare,
>
> At easie Rate maye buye Repentance deare.

Raleigh's advice, less terse, is nevertheless similar in character. Like Burghley, he is concerned throughout with the son's 'estate', a word that for both seems to collapse the person and the economic body of their net worth.[71] Though he can seem less fixated – he points out the social truth that 'no man is esteemed for gay Garments, but by Fooles and women', for instance – he too is really always thinking about economics: unlike

---

[67] Wright, *Advice*, pp. xix-xx. Fred B. Tromly claims that in the seventeenth century *Ten Precepts* is easily the most frequently copied set of paternal instructions: 'Masks of Impersonality in Burghley's 'Ten Precepts' and Ralegh's *Instructions to his Son*', *The Review of English Studies*, 66 (2015), 480-500, p. 486.

[68] Richard Helgerson, *Elizabethan Prodigals*, p. 20.

[69] Tromly, 'Masks', p. 481. He notes that although Burghley's son Robert is an exception to this rule he was in any case his father's favourite, 'primogeniture notwithstanding', and as Wright points out his elder brother Thomas had been a disappointment (Wright, *Advice*, p. xvi).

[70] William Cecil, Baron Burghley, *Certaine precepts* (London: 1617). Further references are given parenthetically in the main text. I consult this text rather than the 1611 edition because it contains prefatory materials that are germane here.

[71] Walter Raleigh, *Sir Walter Raleighs Instructions to his Sonne, and to Posteritie* (London: 1632), sigs. B5ʳ, E7ᵛ and *passim*. Further references to this edition appear in-text. Indeed, throughout both men's advice the term 'estate' – whose semantic range in the period according to the *OED* encompasses 'means, ability, opportunity' (2.b), 'status' or 'degree of rank' (3.a), but also 'state or condition in general, whether material or moral, bodily or mental' (1.a) – works to conflate the son with his socioeconomic standing. Notably, Burghley writes 'trust no man with your Credite, or Estate', seeming to equate 'Credite' and 'Estate' as terms for secret knowledge about a person (sig. B2ʳ).

expensive clothes, 'money in thy purse will ever be in fashion' (F6ᵛ). Even when he seems piously humane –

'destroy no man for his wealth nor take anything from the poor, for the cry and complaint thereof will pierce

the heavens' (F6ʳ) – the piety is underpinned by distinctly commercial modes of thought: 'hee that hath mercy

on the poore, lendeth unto the Lord, and the Lord wil recompence him what he hath given' (F6ʳ-F8ᵛ). Both

texts, it is worth remarking, specifically oppose themselves to the excessive consumption of alcohol, again on

pragmatic and fiscally-informed grounds.[72]

It is to this frugally-minded and overwhelmingly economic discourse that sonnet 146 gestures as the

picture of its wayward soul develops. Here is a soul prioritising its appearance to the detriment of its finances;

one that is unwise in the allocation of the economic resources that constitute its 'estate'; and the poem shares

Burghley and Raleigh's specific anxiety over overindulgence in alcohol, its use of 'rich' ('without be rich no

more') carrying a pun on that word as denoting alcohol-derived redness of the face.[73] Indeed, the very fact

that it appears in a scene that seeks to discipline those qualities make this soul seem prodigal. It may seem too

static to be really prodigal in the way some of the other souls we have seen are: this is a poem without much

spatial movement. But in fact in this way as well the sonnet works to generate intimations of prodigality. In

'excess' it finds a word whose primary modern meaning, intemperance, is subtended by an archaic sense of

physical straying (the OED gives 'the action of going out or forth' [1.a]) as well as a general figurative

association of overstepping ('the overstepping of the limits of moderation'), so that the soul's fiscal prodigality

is subtly figured here as physical movement as well. In every sense but name, that is, this is a prodigal soul. The

sonnet has already invoked two conspicuous early modern disciplinary subjects defined by their doubleness,

by their value and the threat they themselves pose to it. When it then figures the waywardness of its soul in

terms of vain profligacy it points to a third.

---

[72] Burghley calls drinking 'a vice that impaires health, consumes wealth, and transforms man into a beast' (sig. A6ʳ). Raleigh devotes his entire ninth chapter to the matter, noting similarly that 'it transformeth a Man into a Beast' (sig. Gʳ).

[73] The OED gives one early modern sense of 'rich' as 'Of the nose or face: inflame or reddened, esp. as a result of drinking' (6.d). The word certainly has this connotation from the mid-sixteenth-century until the end of the eighteenth.

III

The yield thus far is a survey of early modern ways of figuring the soul in need of discipline. That the soul should sometimes resemble undivine things may be inevitable: as A. D. Nuttall warns, 'it is simply impossible to unfold the workings of the ulterior world (whether that world is a Platonic Heaven or a human mind) without raiding the public world for images and metaphors'.[74] Yet texts that address the soul do not simply select images and metaphors from the public world. Rather, they find analogues that insist unmistakably that the soul is abject, a risk to itself and properly the subject of discipline. So vigorous is the form's assertion of this disciplinary status that its intimate moment of silent inner congress can end up looking very like any of the other episodes of stern discipline that the early modern period generates in such abundance.

This survey has taken in soul-address as a broad field, and has not discriminated between types of text or between prose and verse. Now the focus narrows: as elsewhere in these pages, we are interested ultimately not simply in the soul but in the soul in literary contexts. Naturally, everything at which we have looked could be considered 'literary' in a broad sense. But the rest of this chapter considers soul-address as it manifests in the quintessentially literary form of verse, where at various levels – from the surface of individual poems to the larger canvas of the poetic sequence – the discipline of the soul plays out in particular and instructive ways. As the discussion progresses, indeed, we will think not only about poetry but specifically in terms of lyric. If the degree to which the soul resembles other disciplinary subjects in the early modern period is notable, and indeed if it is surprising to apprehend just how closely texts that address the soul correspond figuratively to literature that seeks to discipline readers, to think of lyric as a disciplinary mode might be even more so. As we shall see below, it is generally understood to be a mode that expresses the inwardness of its speaker and specifically does not address a reader; by these lights, if lyric were to evince any disciplinarian tendencies akin to those of a sermon or conduct manual they would be of a very superficial character. But in fact the mode's deictics are complex, and become exponentially more so when the utterance to which it gives voice originates with a speaker and ends with their soul.

---

[74] A. D. Nuttall, *Two Concepts of Allegory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), p. 20.

~~~

First we can consider how the soul and the process of its discipline tend to be represented in verse, beginning with an aspect of that representation that on the face of it seems optimistic about the soul's prospects and indeed to hark back to the transcendent poetics discussed in chapter 2.

Though poetic soul-address may figure its addressee in all kinds of debasing ways, it can appear that the soul eventually emerges from beneath these figurations; in fact that, restored by the text's salutary instruction, the soul seems to do so trailing clouds of glory. Virtually always the sequence of psalm 42 is followed ('why art thou so cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God'), beginning with a soul full of heaviness that by the end seems on the verge of casting off this weight. In the psalm the transcendence is merely implied by sequence, but in verse the effect can be more dramatic. The soul of Donne's second Holy Sonnet, as the poem opened black with sin, by the end is not only advised to turn towards God but seems transfigured:

> Oh make thyself with holy mourning black,
>
> And red with blushing, as thou art with sin;
>
> Or wash thee in Christ's blood, which hath this might
>
> That being red, it dyes red souls to white. [11-14]

Note the final couplet's shift into the simple present: here the prestidigitations of figurative language not only can invert but *are inverting* the semantics of colour, transmuting the soul's blackness from sinfulness to divinity.[75] The sestet of Shakespeare's sonnet 146 stages a similar verbal intervention:

> Then, soul, live thou upon thy servant's loss,
>
> And let that pine to aggravate thy store;
>
> Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross;
>
> Within be fed, without be rich no more.
>
> So shalt thou feed on death, that feeds on men,
>
> And death once dead, there's no more dying then.

---

[75] George T. Wright calls the tense 'priestlike' and 'ceremonial' ('The Lyric Present: Simple Present Verbs in English Poems', *PMLA*, 89, [1974], 563-79, pp. 568-69).

Here a forceful series of reversals culminates in the final line's Donnean pileup of self-cancelling deaths (Donne does something very similar in line 12 of Holy Sonnet 6 ('Death be not proud'): 'death thou shalt die'), moving again into the simple present so that there is, rather than will be, no more dying. The effect is a sort of *trompe l'oeil* of literary language that accesses the incantatory charge of liturgy and enacts salvation within the closed system of the poem. This, we should note, is not simply down to Donne and Shakespeare's characteristic interest in the enacting capacities of language. In Lok's collection *Sundry Christian passions*, the first sequence 'consist[s] chiefly of Meditations, Humiliations, and Praiers'. But as that sequence ends and we move into the second ('of Comfort, Ioy, and Thanksgiving') those humiliations seem to have taken effect:

> Mourne thou no more my soule, thy plaint is h[e]ard,
>
> The bill is canseld of the debt it owes,
>
> The vaile is rent, which thee before debard,
>
> And Christ his righteousnesse on thee bestowes.[76]

In all these examples there is a move of some sort towards incantatory transcendence. The disciplined soul, as the locution ends, appears to rise – to have risen – above its previous abased state. Exaltation has been achieved, and has been the achievement at least partly of poetic effects.

Yet folded into these apparently optimistic effects are processes of simultaneous re-abasement. We noted above how psalm 42 supersedes its vision of fallenness with redemptive instruction and by doing so seems to imply transcendence. But crucially it does so as a repeated refrain, as a result calling its own optimism into question: the transcendence achieved by the soul does not appear a terribly stable or secure state if a few lines later it requires the instruction to be repeated. *The Second Anniversarie* again furnishes a telling example. Despite the way in which the long *contemptus mundi* sequence glanced at in chapter 2 (lines 45-184) apparently produces a soul so emancipated from worldliness as to collapse the cosmos, in fact subsequent lines assume that the soul has been silently returned to square one: 'Poor soul, in this thy flesh what dost thou know?' (254) Moreover, as the example of Lok suggests, though we have thought here largely of single poems or texts in isolation it is important as well to consider the larger context of the poetic collection. Lok's sequence, structured as a diptych, may suggest that as the 'humiliations' of its first half end the soul's 'plaint is heard' and redemption achieved. Nevertheless, Sonnet III in the second part still urgently

---

[76] Lok, *Sundry*, sig. Diij^v. For more on the sequence and its structure see Roche, *Petrarch*, pp. 157-66.

endorses continued discipline, fixating anew on 'the sinnes which daily I commit'; sonnet LXX returns to the earthly fray, with sin, hell and death again arrayed against the person of virtue; and sonnet LXXIIII fears that the speaker's course 'amidst the troubled waves of worldly life' is not assured and develops a renewed sense of the 'soules perill'.[77] The *Holy Sonnets* of Donne work similarly. The second may end with transcendence. But the third ('This is my play's last scene') returns Donne's soul to its worldly state, pointedly picking up its predecessor's imagery of pilgrimage, and by the ninth ('What if this present were the world's last night?') the fallen soul is being instructed again.[78]

Shakespeare's sonnet presents such an involved example as to merit a bit more space, partly because it presents these broad movements in miniature and partly because the soul's exaltation here seems not only defeated but specifically self-defeating. After the explicit abasement of the octet, as we have seen, in the sestet we seem to observe the soul's transcendence effected in something like real time. Moreover, since this is the only religious sonnet in an overwhelmingly amatory sequence, we do not find its soul re-humiliated subsequently. But in fact we find that here re-humiliation is simultaneous with exaltation. The end towards which the speaker's instruction reaches is the soul's transcendence of material things, with the soul urged to exchange 'hours of dross' for 'terms divine'. But for a soul whose salvation is understood to consist in its transcendence of material concerns this one continues to look very materialistic. The language of commerce still obtains, the soul buying its salvation in what looks troublingly like a bartered deal with God, and the treatment of servants that the poem endorses is straightforwardly unchristian.[79] Perhaps the most sinister accent of all comes in the couplet itself. Rather than simply presenting the human triumph of the death of death as Donne does in Holy Sonnet 6, or performing a verbal miracle like that of Holy Sonnet 2, sonnet 146 elects to elaborate: the soul should not only vanquish death, which is a conventional Pauline formulation, but should feed on it. Since death is that 'which feeds on men' there is already a hint of cannibalism here: the human soul should eat something that sustains and indeed constitutes itself by eating human bodies. But there is autosarcophagy as well. The first hint comes at the end of the octet, where the speaker wonders

---

[77] Lok, *Sundry*, sigs. Diiij^r, Fiiiij^v, Fiiiiij^v.

[78] The ordering of Donne's poems is notoriously treacherous. I follow Carey's numbering of the *Holy Sonnets*, but to take just one example A. J. Smith's edition (*John Donne, The Complete English Poems* [London: Penguin, 1996]) orders them differently. The variations, however, do not raise any substantial problems for my argument here.

[79] This is a commonplace observation about the poem. B. C. Southam, for instance, bases his entire argument upon it: 'Shakespeare's Christian Sonnet? Number 146', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 11 (1960), 67-71. For all the apparent incongruousness of the poem's commercial rhetoric, however, it is worth remembering that as Katharine Eisaman Maus notes 'many of Jesus' parables […] represent the transactions between God and man in terms of property transfers' (*Being and Having*, p. 8).

rhetorically if worms will eat the body that properly belongs to the soul. Here the body is not the soul's rival consumer, as it has been so far, but a contested comestible itself. Moreover, the defeat of death in the poem is understood to be so closely linked to the defeat of the body as to make death and body effectively synonymous (it is a familiar Pauline verbal confusion: 'who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' asks Romans 7:24), so that again in eating death the soul seems to eat its own body. The poem, that is, might seem to enact the soul's transcendence of materiality. But that transcendence is figured by way of perhaps the most materially transgressive act available to the imagination.[80] The very words that enact the soul's exaltation also tarnish it, and the transcendence that seemed achieved in fact closely resembles the abasement it purports to replace.

~~~

So in early modern verse we find the soul's discipline played out in suggestive ways. Literary effects seem to move it towards transcendence, but literary effects also seem to impede that progress, and these are countervailing processes that we find writ large in the context of the sonnet sequence. No accident of figurative language, and no mere milestone on an ineluctable progression towards transcendence, the soul's abasement here seems fundamental to it. But so much for now for the disciplined soul. The next thing to consider is the degree to which we can think of the poetic text that recounts the soul's discipline as itself structurally disciplinarian. Directed only inwards at the speaker's own interiority, an address to the soul does not itself seem an overtly coercive text like a sermon or a conduct manual. Rather, in its inwards turn away from the reader it would seem to be entirely denuded of active disciplinary energy. Indeed, this may or may not be true of prose devotionals such as Hayward's *The Sanctuarie of a troubled soule*, which present the spiritual processes they relate as *exempla* rather than imperatives. But lyric verse makes much more active demands upon the reader than does devotional prose, and the lyric address to the soul in its representation of interiority turns those demands to quite active disciplinarian ends.[81]

To consider those demands and their ends requires that we think in more detail about lyric as a mode. Though it is the term of literary criticism that has come to be most closely associated with interiority, it

---

[80] It is common to register the suggestion of cannibalism (see Vendler, *Art*, p. 613, for instance) but as far as I am aware it has not previously been noted that the cannibalism also shades into autosarcophagy.

[81] From another angle it might seem strange to think of devotional poetry as lyric as such. But Gray points out not only that liturgy is the source for much of what he calls 'religious lyric' but that liturgy itself is powerfully 'lyric' (*Themes and Images,* pp. 4-5).

is also a notoriously indistinct and contested category. In the Renaissance it is one form of verse in a Polonius-esque litany of them (Sidney gives 'Heroic, Lyric, Tragic, Comic, Satiric, Iambic, Elegiac, Pastoral, and certain others') or simply lines intended to be sung, the term's original meaning: George Puttenham describes the 'Lirique poets' of antiquity as those who 'delighted to write songs or ballads […] to the harpe, lute, or citheron & other such musical instruments'.[82] But in subsequent centuries lyric comes to be virtually synonymous with 'poetic', as William Christie observes, and both with interiority.[83] John Stuart Mill makes the latter association explicit: 'all poetry is of the nature of soliloquy', he writes, and 'when [the poet] turns round and addresses himself to another person; when the act of utterance is not itself the end, but a means […] then it ceases to become poetry and becomes eloquence'.[84] The contingency of such senses of the term lyric is widely recognized: T. S. Eliot dismisses it as so ill-defined as to be essentially useless, and Daniel Albright defines lyric as precisely 'that which resists definition'.[85] Nevertheless, that it refers to literature that is essentially solitary and self-directed has come to be axiomatic. Helen Vendler argues that 'the ethics of lyric writing lies in the accuracy of its representation of inner life', and Paul Allen Miller defines the lyric as 'a short poem of personal revelation, confession or complaint, which projects the image of an individual and highly self-reflexive subjective consciousness'.[86] 'In effect,' Jonathan Culler writes, 'the dramatic monologue […] has been made the model for lyric', which is to say that lyric is in a fundamental sense modelled on soliloquy.[87] The two definitive characteristics of lyric as we have come to think of it, then, are that it in some sense represents interior life and that it specifically must not reach in the direction of a reader.

But if a poem in which a speaker addresses their soul should be the apotheosis of this interior and rhetorically undirected mode, then it is precisely by thinking about the mode's deeper complexities – about how its rhetorical undirectedness is in important ways illusory – that we can better understand the poetic moment of soul-address. The association of lyric and unmediated interiority has been complicated to the point

---

[82] Sidney, *Apology*, p. 87; George Puttenham, *Art of English Poesy* (London: 1589), sig. Eiijᵛ. For an account of lyric's evolution as a term in the early modern period see: Mark Jeffreys, 'Ideologies of Lyric', *PMLA*, 110 (1995), 196-205.

[83] William Christie, 'Lyric', in Christopher John Murray, ed., *Encyclopedia of the Romantic Era, 1760-1850* (Abingdon: Taylor and Francis, 2004). As Northrop Frye puts it 'there is a popular tendency to call anything in verse a lyric that is not actually divided into twelve books' ('Approaching the Lyric', in Chaviva Hosek and Patricia Parker, eds., *Lyric Poetry: Beyond New Criticism* [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985], p. 31).

[84] John Stuart Mill, 'What is Poetry?', in Thomas J. Collins *et al,* eds., *The Broadview Anthology of Victorian Poetry and Poetic Theory (Concise Edition)* (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 2000), p. 566.

[85] T. S. Eliot quoted in Stephen Burt, 'What Is This Thing Called Lyric?', *Modern Philology*, 113 (2016), 422-40, p. 432. Daniel Albright, *Lyricality in English Literature* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), p. viii.

[86] Vendler, *Art,* p. 17; Paul Allen Miller, *Lyric Texts and Lyric Consciousness: The Birth of a Genre from Archaic Greece to Augustan Rome* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 1.

[87] Jonathan Culler, *Theory of the Lyric* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2015), p. 2.

of debunking in recent years by scholars including Culler, Albright and Miller, and a central issue in these rethinkings has been the mode's complex deictics: who is speaking in lyric? who is being spoken to?[88] Central to these deictics, in turn, is the particular rhetorical mechanism by which lyric achieves its appearance of undirectedness. As Northrop Frye notes, 'the lyric poet normally pretends to be talking to himself or to someone else'.[89] Culler too puts this front and centre: lyric is, conventionally, 'the act of address (implicit or explicit) to an imagined addressee'.[90] Such an address must be achieved by way of apostrophe, the rhetorical figure that in Quintilian's definition effects a 'diversion of our words to address some person other than the judge'.[91] In fact, as Mill has insisted above, any text that does *not* structure itself by apostrophe, and which therefore 'turns around' toward the reader's 'another person', surrenders its claim to be lyric poetry at all. But if the lyric apostrophe must by definition never address itself directly to the reader, and therefore could never be considered a disciplinary act in the way of a conduct manual, the lyric apostrophe particularly to the soul presents a very peculiar example.

Note that at a structural level the other works we have considered derive much of their disciplinary force precisely from addressing the reader. They have their apostrophic moments, to be sure. But without exception they state that they turn also towards whichever reader is encountering the text in any given moment of reading. This is partly a basic fact of printed matter available for public consumption, of course, but the effect is also more specific. The full title of *Military Discipline* claims its audience as '*the Christian Souldier'*, or Everyman, and even as he continues to address his original soldierly congregation Sedgwick tacitly acknowledges the shift towards a less defined wider readership for his advice by asking 'what wife and humble Christian may not make use of it?' (A4ᵛ) *The Instruction* is also declaredly directed towards a wider readership. The title of the 1529 edition claims that '*whiche boke who so redeth diligently shall have knowledge of many thynges wherin he shal take great pleasure and specially women shal take great commodyte and frute'*. Both *Ten Precepts* and *Instructions to His Son* likewise in various ways identify themselves as general addresses. All editions of the former prior to 1636 attribute themselves to a generic eminent father rather than naming

[88] In *Theory of the Lyric*, for instance, the most recent major word on the subject, Culler specifically opposes the sense of lyric as constituting anything like a straightforward expression of subjectivity. Miller's thesis in *Lyric Texts* is that the lyric interiority-effect, which he sees as beginning with Catullus, is specifically generated at the level of the sequence rather than the individual poem.

[89] Cited by Culler in 'The Language of Lyric', *Thinking Verse*, 4 (2014), 160-76, p. 164.

[90] Ibid. Apostrophe, it should be noted, is nearly as contested a term as 'lyric'. See: Paul Alpers, 'Apostrophe and the Rhetoric of Renaissance Lyric', *Representations*, 122 (2013), 1-22. Cf. Heather Dubrow, *The Challenges of Orpheus: Lyric Poetry and Early Modern England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), p. 4.

[91] Quoted in Alpers, 'Apostrophe', p. 2.

Burghley specifically, and all printed editions without exception further anonymise themselves by replacing the original 'Sonne Robert' with either 'Sonne' or 'Beloved Sonne'.[92] Raleigh's instructions are even more obviously re-framed for a wider readership. They are published in 1632 under the full title, after all, of *Sir Walter Raleigh's Instructions to His Son and to Posterity*, and the 1634 edition opens with an anonymous introduction stating that 'Men may bequeath their Wealth to their children in particular, but their Wisedome was given them for general Good'. There we are also told specifically how the text should be approached: 'suppose (Reader) that thy Father might or should have given thee such Advice' (A2ʳ-A3ᵛ).

Structured and closed-off as it is by an apostrophe to the speaker's own soul, soul-address seems quite opposite. Here the reader remains outside the rhetorical dynamic of the text and merely witnesses a scene of discipline, discipline which the text's apostrophe declares to be directed back into the self of the speaker. But the matter is not so straightforward. Thinking about the structures of lyric above, we noted Culler's sense that the mode addresses an imagined addressee, but in fact his point is larger. 'I take the underlying structure of lyric to be one of triangulated address', he writes, 'where an audience of readers is addressed through the act of address (implicit or explicit) to an imagined addressee'.[93] Lyric's apparent turn away from the reader, then, is at least partly illusory. It is true that this is perforce true of any printed or otherwise publically circulated text, since a general reader must always be its audience. But it is especially apposite in the second-person, since the speaker's apostrophic pronouns ineluctably conflate addressee and reader. One could overstate the case. During Blake's 'The Tyger' or Shelley's 'Ode to the West Wind', for example, the reader presumably does not in any meaningful way identify with big cat or meteorological system. Yet here we begin to see how soul-address is such a unique trope as it manifests in a lyric context, since as an apostrophic addressee the soul is quite different to a tiger or the wind. First, it is an anonymous entity supposed common to all possible readers: every reader has a soul that this text might address. But more important is that 'soul' is very conventionally metonymic of the entire individual, often meaning simply 'person'. 'Poor souls, they perished', Miranda laments of the shipwrecked travellers in *The Tempest* at I.2.9, to which Prospero responds that 'no soul' was lost (29). Every reader has a soul that this poem might address, that is, but also *is* one. It is an impression reinforced by the poem's contents: as Vendler implies, the

---

[92] Tromly suggests that this is due to a lack of approval from the Cecil family ('Masks', p. 486). Cf. Wright, *Advice*, p. xviii.
[93] Culler, 'Language', p. 164.

contemptus mundi exhortation directed at the soul is exactly what early modern individuals would have been

accustomed to hear directed at them in homilies and sermons.

So even while the apostrophe to the soul seems to exclude the reader from the text's rhetorical

dynamic it compels the reader into the position of addressee. But it also does the opposite, since as well as

being subtly reader-directed the lyric utterance also issues *from* the reader. 'One is to utter [the lyric poem] as

one's own words', Vendler writes, 'not as the words of another'.[94] Culler agrees: 'though we do not necessarily

identify with the sentiments of the poem, the deictic center, the I here now, is also that of the reader'.[95] C. S.

Lewis makes the point particularly plain as regards the early modern sonnet sequence, with which we have

been much concerned, concluding that it 'is more like an erotic liturgy than a series of erotic confidences' and

that the ultimate test of it is whether 'the congregation can 'join' and make it their own'.[96] Indeed, at a

grammatical level it is a fact that as we read any text we assume its subject-position and intone its words as

ours. Like its opposite above, that fact can be effectively meaningless: to take an example immediately to

hand, the reader (whether early modern or contemporary) is unlikely instinctively to imagine themselves into

the position of a 1630s religious firebrand simply because they are reading a text that purports to issue from

such a figure. But the apostrophe to the soul is different in this regard as well. Each reader has a soul,

theoretically, that it would be possible and indeed conventional for them to address, and as a result it seems a

natural response for the reader of a soul-apostrophe to imagine themselves the speaker of it.

Far from an uninvolved audience to a scene of inner discipline, then, the reader of soul-address

becomes both spoken-to and speaker: both disciplined and disciplining. Which is to say that the effect of the

deictic contortions of lyric in combination with the inner scene structured by soul-address is an active

conflation of the text's represented self with the readerly self. Though its self-reflexiveness seems total, in fact

an apostrophe to the authorial soul demands that we as readers make that self-reflexiveness our own,

compelling us in the moment of reading into the performance of the scene of self-discipline that it scripts.

What this reveals in turn is that the lyric address to the soul, a form that seems the avatar of interiority and

undirectedness and structurally entirely unlike a conduct manual, in fact directs its discipline outwards

towards the reader in more oblique ways. It is a disciplinary project, admittedly, that will likely have little

---

[94] Vendler, *Art*, p. 18.
[95] Culler, 'Language', p. 166.
[96] C. S. Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954), p. 491.

purchase on the conscience of the modern reader. But in a final section I want to suggest that apprehending these covert structures allows us to see the early modern lyric of soul-address in some other historical and intellectual contexts than the early modern ones suggested thus far.

<center>**IV**</center>

In the texts examined here the divine soul that elsewhere prompts encomiums of praise has been supplanted by a thing whose waywardness renders it a target of censure and discipline (one imagines that the body of the high medieval dialogues would find this reversal rather agreeable). We have examined at some length the figurative resources frequently deployed to make the soul look like something customarily and properly the subject of disciplinary discourse. Those resources make it easy to see the soul, and the text that addresses it, as very much of a piece with the vigorous early modern disciplinary scene described by Elias and others in which people begin with new energy to tell other people, or categories of person, what to do. Yet on the face of it those resonances only go so far, since soul-address is an utterance directed into the interior of its author and thus one whose disciplinary energies do not seek to take effect on other people at all. But as we progressed to thinking of the deictic and rhetorical structures of poetic soul-address the picture changed somewhat. In that connection it was argued that to appreciate the disciplinary character of a poetic text that apostrophises the soul we must understand it not as one entity telling another what to do – this it fundamentally cannot do – but as a textual apparatus that prompts and scripts processes of self-discipline in the reader.

As we conclude we turn to some historical and intellectual contexts other than the early modern didactic welter described above: contexts where self-disciplinarity seems not a departure but the point. One such is conspicuous. To think as we have of a subject conscripted by discourse into a campaign of self-discipline is inevitably to think of the late-twentieth-century vision of subject-formation described by Michel Foucault in *Discipline and Punish*. Considering the eighteenth-century move away from public rituals of physical punishment, and the question of what penality 'lays hold of' if 'in its most severe forms [it] no longer

<center>118</center>

addresses itself to the body', Foucault reaches the obvious conclusion: the soul.[97] This is apposite here not

simply because the soul is envisaged as the subject of discipline, but also because the character of this laying-

hold perfectly encapsulates the twin instructive and punitive senses of the disciplinary in terms of which we

have been thinking. For the Foucauldian subject and its soul is the target not of punishment, exactly, but

rather of coercive instruction that seeks to shape it in such a way as to preclude the need for punishment in

the first place. That is, in Foucault's understanding the discursive disciplinary processes that act upon the

modern subject are 'intended not to punish the offence, but to supervise the individual, to neutralise his

dangerous state of mind, to alter his criminal tendencies, and to continue even when this change has been

achieved'.[98]

The end result, as Alan D. Schrift puts it, is 'a modern individual who, by internalizing the supervisory

gaze of the other, takes all the disciplinary tasks of society upon itself and forces itself to conform to social

norms without any external authority imposing those norms'.[99] But in fact these processes seek not only to

shape but to generate as well. In this Foucault echoes Althusser's theory of interpellation, which understands

human subjecthood to be not only disciplined by the discourse of power but particularly produced by it: 'all

ideology', as Althusser puts it, 'has the function (which defines it) of "constituting" concrete individuals as

subjects'.[100] Similarly, for Foucault the soul that is seized upon by the authority that generates the modern self

is not pre-existing but an '*additional* factor' (emphasis mine), and he specifies that authority acts not only on

the offence 'but on individuals […] what they do, but also on what they are, will be, may be.'[101] For Foucault,

that is, the forces of discourse do not only impose themselves upon the self but effect an intervention in and

extension of its very architecture.

Soul-address as I have described it is a kind of literary paradigm of such processes. Neither, *pace* the

influential Foucauldian chronology that sees this kind of self-disciplining modern subject appear only later,

must it be anachronistic to consider the Renaissance form in this intellectual context.[102] In fact, early modern

soul-address is very much of its own time in its self-disciplining character. Alongside many other scholars,

---

[97] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish,* p. 16.
[98] Ibid., p. 18.
[99] Alan D. Schrift, 'Discipline and Punish', in Christopher Falzon *et al*, eds., *A Companion to Foucault* (Oxford: Wiley, 2013), p. 146.
[100] Louis Althusser, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses', in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. by Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), 85-126.
[101] Ibid.
[102] In *Discipline and Punish* Foucault makes the distinction between the modern soul and that of Christian theology at p. 29.

Foucault himself later in his career attends to the new processes of Christian self-discipline that develop during and after the Reformation, and indeed as Margaret Aston has noted 'the forms of spiritual self-help were multiplying' even earlier, from the thirteenth century onwards.[103] Nicole R. Rice, advancing the same point, sees the late-medieval proliferation of books of hours and later 'guides to godliness' such as *The Prick of Conscience* as a significant development in lay piety that 'encourag[es] lay textual engagement as means to "self-correction" '.[104] In these accounts, then, discipline that would once have been administered through procedures of piety involving the clergy now begins increasingly to be widely self-administered as well through the private reading or recitation of pious texts. Indeed, such self-discipline is a keynote of scripture, and one that manifests influentially in the early Church Fathers' sense of life as 'a combat against oneself' (as Herbert Musurillo puts it).[105] Talal Asad gives a telling account of the monastic codes that develop out of that vision, codes which direct monastic life throughout the medieval period and which go on to yield many of the materials for the late medieval books of hours and guides to godliness to which Rice refers.[106] The processes of penance codified therein, Asad writes, are not endorsed simply for their 'corrective function but [their] techniques of *self*-correction', with the implication that it is 'perhaps not entirely accurate to describe [such penance] [...] in terms of "social control" '. Rather, it is 'a disciplinary technique for the self to create a desire for obedience to the law', an obedience that is very particularly 'intrinsic to what the self [is], not an instrument to be used by authority to keep an already-constituted self in order'.[107]

In *Discipline and Punish* Foucault tells us that the Christian soul is born in sin, the modern one in discipline.[108] But in fact the former is also very much born in discipline, and the lyric literary form that addresses it can be understood to prompt and enact such inner discursive disciplinary processes as Foucault reserves for the modern subject. Thus one thing we get from identifying the tacitly reader-disciplining character of lyric soul-address is a signal glimpse of continuity between the pre-modern Christian soul and the

---

[103] In *The History of Sexuality*, for instance, Foucault thinks about early Christian ascetics, chiefly John Cassian. See: Foucault, *Religion and Culture*, ed. by Jeremy R. Carrette (Manchester: Routledge/Manchester University Press, 1999), p. 46. Margaret Aston, *Faith and Fire: Popular and Unpopular Religion 1350-1600* (London: Hambledon Press, 1993), p. 9. It is worth noting in this connection the quite dramatic shifts in Foucault's thinking as it develops over the time, and that in the later works (as Schoenfeldt puts it) discipline 'becomes a discourse of liberation, not of suppression' (*Bodies and Selves*, pp. 12-13).
[104] Nicole R. Rice, *Lay Piety and religious discipline in Middle English literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 11.
[105] Herbert Musurillo, 'The Problem of Ascetical Fasting in the Greek Patristic Writers', *Traditio*, 12 (1956), 1-164, p. 51.
[106] The later texts' 'essential core was liturgical', Eamon Duffy writes, to the extent that even 'the visual conventions which governed their production were derived from liturgical books' (*The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England c.1400–c.1580*, rev. ed. [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005], p. 231).
[107] Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), p. 165.
[108] Foucault, *Discipline*, p. 29. Augustine, who in one attempt to demonstrate the soul's immortality posits it as the very location of discipline, would have been surprised by the distinction. Indeed, according to Phillip Cary, for Augustine it is 'the private inner self' rather than the soul that is 'born in sin' (*Augustine's*, pp. 100-02).

subject of poststructuralist modernity. But as we close a further resonance is noteworthy. For if Foucault emphasises how the processes he describes generate a soul that is an additional part of the self, such self-proliferation goes even further in the form we have been considering. What, we might ask, speaks the address to the soul? For obvious reasons it cannot be the soul. Yet neither is it the body, the other component of the dualistically-imagined human.[109] It is possible, certainly, that the speaker here is the third entity familiar from the scholastic writings touched upon in the introduction, where we saw it posited (memorably by Just the cooper's soul) that the person is neither body nor soul but a semi-distinct thing that is the union of the two. But this third entity now looks disconcertingly like yet another of Foucault's additional parts, and as such, appropriately, it is not permitted to transcend the disciplinary hierarchy of which it appears to be the apex. This we can see if we turn one final time to sonnet 146. There it is '*my* sinful earth' – the speaker's, not the soul's – that is the ultimate target of discipline: even as the speaker urges the debased soul to discipline the debased body it urges also the discipline of itself. The self-disciplining voice that here becomes the reader's own, that is, is only another proliferation in the hierarchy of self-discipline constructed by the text, a hierarchy of discipline which in the moment of reading comes to structure the reader themselves.

---

[109] This is partly general and intuitive, since the body is not usually imagined as able to speak and is anyway conventionally viewed as the source of sinfulness. But sonnet 146 makes it totally explicit by addressing the soul *on the subject of* the body.

(Clockwise from top) Fig. 14. Thomas Wright of Derby, *An Experiment on a Bird in the Air Pump* (1768). National Gallery, London. Fig. 15. Frontispiece of Robert Boyle, *Some Physico-Theological Considerations About the Possibility of the Resurrection* (London: 1675). Fig. 16. Jacques de Gheyn II, *Vanitas Still Life* (1603). Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
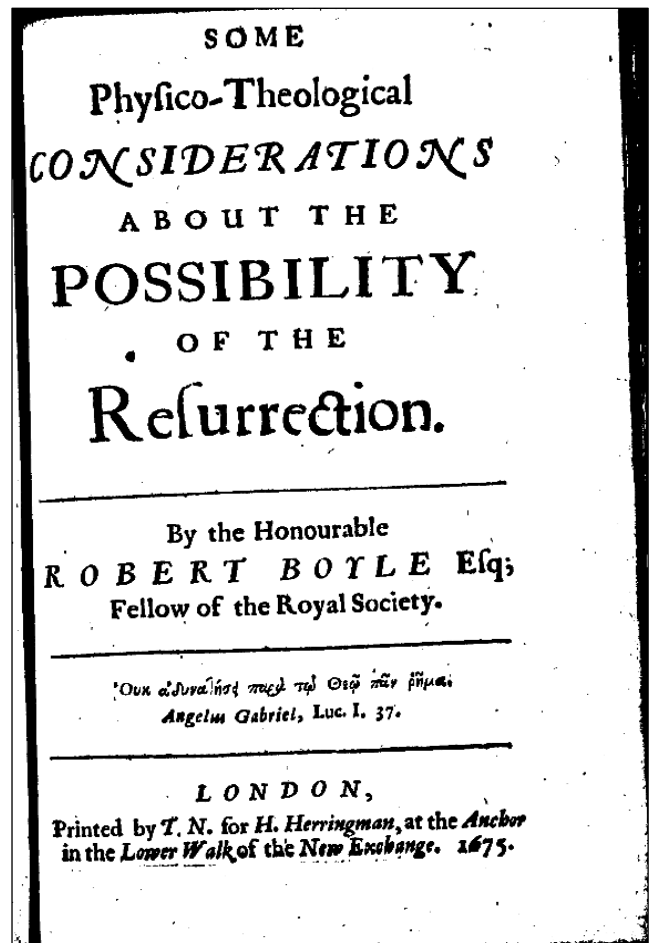
Chapter 4

'Nothing but Ourselves': *Hamlet*'s Ghostly Experiments & Early Modern Void Space

I

In Joseph Wright's 1768 painting *An Experiment on a Bird in the Air Pump* (Fig. 14) a family has gathered to witness a wonder of science: the perplexing nothingness of void space. The chiaroscuro atmosphere and the full moon in the sky suggest it is the very witching time of night, which is to say that the painting may be a sort of ghost story. If so, its 'ghost' is a hollow glass sphere from which the air has been pumped by a long-haired natural philosopher and inside of which a white bird is collapsing from suffocation. It is towards this spectacle that the attention of family and viewer alike is directed – with one exception. In the bottom right of the frame an elderly gentleman contemplates a second, slightly smaller glass container. This one contains what appears to be a decayed human skull.[1]

As *Hamlet* opens a group gathers in an eerie atmosphere to bear witness to an uncanny phenomenon that explodes physical norms yet that seems confirmably real – the ghost of the dead king – and notoriously it is also a play in which a person with morbid tendencies considers the dire implications of a human skull. These resonances between painting and play are suggestive of a number of directions this chapter will take: it will argue, indeed, that in the end the ghost of Old Hamlet is revealed to be a kind of void space itself, and that this revelation should inform our understanding of why it disappears when it does and of the skull that takes its place onstage. In the first place, however, Wright's painting is helpful simply in suggesting that *Hamlet* might at once be a ghost story and an enquiry into natural philosophical matters such as experimental practice and

---

[1] William Schupbach was the first to note the *vanitas* implication of the skull: 'A select iconography of animal experiment', in Nicolaas Rupke, ed., *Vivisection in Historical Perspective* (London: Croom Helm, 1990), pp. 340-60 (p. 346). My reading of the painting is indebted to his and to Laura Baudot's, who makes the observation that the painting reinforces the *vanitas* allusion by depicting not an air-pump of Wright's day, which look nothing like this and would not have generated the *vanitas* resonance at all, but anachronistically a seventeenth-century *machina Boyleana*: 'An Air of History: Joseph Wright's and Robert Boyle's Air Pump Narratives', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 46 (2012), 1-28, p. 3 and passim. In terms of the iconographic timeline it may be noteworthy that it is around the time of Wright's painting that illustrations begin to appear depicting Hamlet holding a skull. See: Alan R. Young, *Hamlet and the Visual Arts, 1709-1900* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2002), pp. 64, 245-48.

void space. This is perhaps incongruous: it would seem a reasonable assumption that vestigial pre-modern

superstition is precisely what the developing early modern sciences seek to supplant. Yet in fact in the

sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the two intellectual scenes exist not only sequentially, though there is an

element of that, but in superimposition. These large matters we can begin to apprehend by way of two

suggestive examples.

In 1594, Sir Hugh Plat publishes *The Jewell House*. A compendious miscellany of 'divers rare and

profitable inventions' to help with problems such as the fertilisation of arid soil and baking without the usual

seasonings, the volume has in recent years come to be understood as a central text of early modern

experimental culture.[2] In the dedication Plat explains why he has chosen to publish the fruits of his researches:

> I hold my selfe partly bound by the law of nature, & partly by the necessity of the times, to disclose and manifest,
>
> even those secret and hidden magisteries, both of art and nature, which I had long since entered in a case of
>
> marble, and are now ... ready to breake out of their tombes, and pleade their owne tenures.[3]

'Let me not burst in ignorance', Prince Hamlet demands of his father's ghost, 'but tell

why the sepulchre

Wherein we saw thee quietly enurned

Hath oped his ponderous and marble jaws

To cast thee up again. [*Hamlet*, I.4.27-32]

It is a rhetorical coincidence that has instructive things to say about the culture in which it was possible.

Experimental and ghostly discourse are not at all as far apart here as one might expect, and in fact natural

philosophical knowledge and ghosts look markedly similar, both revenants bursting forth from marble tombs

to engage in urgent acts of communication. The second example dates from nearly a century later. In 1675

Robert Boyle publishes a volume entitled *Some Physico-Theological Considerations About the Possibility of the*

Resurrection (Fig. 15), the prefatory materials of which consider the resuscitation of Lazarus. This is another

miraculously revenant figure, synonymous with fatal dermatological conditions, and one that inflects the scene

from *Hamlet* quoted already, where the ghost describes his body 'barked about' by 'a tetter' and become

---

[2] Deborah E. Harkness, *The Jewel House: Elizabethan London and the Scientific Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), pp. 211-53.
[3] Hugh Plat, *The jewell house of art and nature* (London: 1594), sig. A2ʳ.

'lazar-like' (71-72). Boyle does not think of this Biblical return from the grave as uncanny or implausible; on the contrary, this miracle and the others related in 'the Old Testament and the New', writes the apotheosis of early modern experimentalism, are rather 'Experiments God has been pleased to give'.[4] Again we find experimental natural philosophy and apparently supernatural phenomena in surprising proximity, now quite literally and in ways that resonate with some specificity with *Hamlet*.

Both Plat and Boyle are pivotal figures in early modern experimentalism, and it is with this particular mode of thought in mind that we read *Hamlet* here. Specifically, I suggest that the play's thinking about and treatment of the ghost is inflected and even structured by two linked features of that strand of natural philosophy, namely experimental practice and a serious interest in void space. The first is essentially a procedural kinship having to do with methods of information-gathering and assessment: read from a certain perspective, the first three acts of *Hamlet* present a single continuum of experimental procedure that investigates the ghost. But also central to the play's thinking about the ghost is the prospect of nothingness, which I will demonstrate is not only a vague sense of absence but quite specifically the void space that inheres in the atomistic matter theory to which early modern experimentalism subscribes. The pairing, or bifurcation, of this epistemology and this ontology in early modern natural philosophy is in signal ways an uneasy one, as we shall see, and part of this chapter's argument is that *Hamlet* recreates both the pairing and the anxieties to which it gives rise. The play, that is, seems to share the experimentalists' sense that their emerging methods make reassuring promises about epistemological wholeness and integrity. Yet it also shares their sense that the atomist ontology upon which those methods are founded implies troubling things about the world they capture.

For *Hamlet* those troubling things pertain most insistently to the ghost, an immaterial thing that offers proof of the resilience of human being beyond corporeal death, and since *Hamlet* fixates throughout upon the prospect of such resilience or its lack it is not difficult to apprehend the seriousness of these questions for the play as a whole. As Catherine Belsey notes, 'mortality threads its way through the incidental moments of *Hamlet* with an intensity unique among Shakespeare's tragedies', and in one of English literature's

---

[4] Robert Boyle, *Some Physico-Theological Considerations About the Possibility of the Resurrection* (London: 1675), sig. C8^r. For more on this relatively unremarked text see: Alexander Wragge-Morley 'Robert Boyle and the Representation of Imperceptible Entities', *British Journal for the History of Science*, 51 (2018), 17-40; Salvatore Ricciardo, 'Robert Boyle on God's "experiments": Resurrection, Immortality and Mechanical Philosophy', *Intellectual History Review*, 25 (2015), 97-113.

totemic moments ('To be or not to be') our protagonist works his way to what he considers the central problem of existence: that we cannot know what happens to us when we die.[5] Yet it is Ophelia who gives the problem its most poignant articulation. 'I hope all will be well', she says, mourning her father. 'We must be patient. But I cannot choose but weep to think they should lay him i'th' cold ground' (IV.4.66-68). She here appears to pick up a thread from a little earlier in her grief-fractured discourse, where she says: 'Lord, we know what we are, but know not what we may be. God be at your table' (42-43). What troubles her so deeply, we might say, is the following. We have secure knowledge of ourselves: we know what we are, an experiencing identity composed of body and soul. But we cannot be certain of what will become of that composite identity once the body dies and is buried i'th' cold ground. Doctrine assures us that all will be well (she may here quote Julian of Norwich) and the proper response is Stoic patience bolstered by Christian faith.[6] But that response is stubbornly inadequate in the face of corporeal failure and decay. None of this is straightforward. It matters, for instance, that Hamlet's preferred posthumous scenario seems that of mortalism, or at least psychopannychy or 'soul sleep'.[7] But for the moment I identify the play's central existential anxiety about the self to the end of suggesting that, in a certain yet fundamental way, the ghost is the solution to it. This may seem an odd position to take given that hauntings are not customarily viewed as benign, and that scholarship nearly always reads this haunting in particular as an uncanny sign of loss, either personal and cultural or both.[8] But if *Hamlet* is fixated upon the question of 'what we may be', the answer offered by the ghost is that we will be recognizably the same as 'what we are'. We will look the same, we will retain the personality and sentimental attachments that we had in life, we will retain our agendas, and we will retain our memories. 'Is [the ghost] not like the King?' Marcellus asks Horatio, who gives a telling response: 'as thou art to thyself' (I.5.57-58).

---

[5] Catherine Belsey, 'Shakespeare's Sad Tale for Winter: *Hamlet* and the Tradition of Fireside Ghost Stories', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 61 (2010), 1-27, p. 25. Amir Khan suggests that '*Hamlet* is tragic because it charts out the terror of a world of contingency and half-knowledge' ('My Kingdom for a Ghost: Counterfactual Thinking and Hamlet', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 66 [2015], 29-46, p. 38), and the knowledge-lack as to 'what we may be' surely ranks high among its most terrifying. In ' "Things Standing Thus Unknown": The Epistemology of Ignorance In *Hamlet*', Eric P. Levy argues from quite another direction that in fact *Hamlet* is about how very *dangerous* it is to know things (*Studies in Philology*, 97 [2000], 192-209).

[6] Though the first printed edition of Julian's *Revelations of Divine Love* does not appear until 1670, versions of the text circulate in manuscript from at least the fifteenth century onwards. See: Alexandra Barratt, 'Julian of Norwich and Her Children Today: Editions, Translations, and Versions of Her Revelations', in Srarah Salih and Denise N. Baker, eds., *Julian of Norwich's Legacy: Medieval Mysticism and Post-Medieval Reception* (London: Palgrave, 2009), pp. 12-28 (esp. pp. 13-14).

[7] Mortalism and psychopannychy are touched upon in the introduction here. See also: Burns, *Christian Mortalism*; Ball, *Soul Sleepers*; Sugg, *Smoke*, pp. 206-33; Watson, *Rest*. Cf. *Measure for Measure* III.1.118-32, where Claudio gives a very similar speech on the fear of death, and notably seems far more in dread of oblivion than the visions of Hell he eventually touches on briefly. See Zachary Lesser, *Hamlet after Q1: an Uncanny History of the Shakespearean Text* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), pp. 157-59, on the textual background of the apparent inconsistencies in Hamlet's eschatological thinking.

[8] The most obvious example is Stephen Greenblatt's *Hamlet in Purgatory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), but it is a general trend.

This seems an obvious good: the central problem identified by both Hamlet and Ophelia later in the play has in fact been solved the minute the ghost first appears on the battlements. But as the play's continued worrying over the issue might suggest there are serious problems with the nature of this ghostly self and the guarantee it offers. This is a text by whose lights the self is inviolately inner and must be insulated from materiality. 'I have that within', Hamlet claims, 'that passeth show' (I.2.85), and he bridles at the suggestion that 'the heart of [his] mystery' (III.2.336) might be comparable to something material like a recorder. It is this inner, immaterial self that the ghost would seem to rescue from death. But since this is the case it should give us pause that to effect this rescue the play must take an inner self, Old Hamlet's, and by turning it inside-out embed it in the exterior world. As we shall observe, *Hamlet* sees in this embedding opportunities for reassuring experimentalist procedures, and indeed positive conclusions are adduced concerning the ghost by those methods. But the flipside of these opportunities is that they expose the soul, which is properly the subject of discourse of the inner and the immaterial, to the lens of natural philosophy, which thinks ultimately only of materials. More than that: to the lens of specifically atomist natural philosophy, which considers not only matter but the vacuum that haunts matter's absence. Indeed, it is the suggestion of what follows that running throughout *Hamlet*'s ghostly discourse is an attempt to negotiate the difference between immateriality and vacuum, and that to view the ghost not as a static ontological entity but as the developing product of these negotiations allows us to understand anew the inconsistencies it seems to exhibit over the course of the play.

A word on the scholarly scene in which the chapter seeks to intervene. *Hamlet*'s alignment with the new philosophy has been explored from various angles: the experimentalist connection in particular has been suggested by Richard Allen Shoaf, who goes to considerable lengths to read the play as a response to Lucretius; Peter D. Usher suggests that *Hamlet* constitutes a kind of allegorical representation of the broad sweep of early modern cosmological thought.[9] These accounts are idiosyncratic, but to observe that some of *Hamlet*'s procedures look experimental need not be. Michael Witmore observes that Claudius and Polonius conspicuously experiment upon Hamlet, for instance, and Carla Mazzio notes the resonance as well; indeed, perhaps the approach most akin to that taken here is Mazzio's, alert as it is to both *Hamlet*'s interest in

---

[9] Richard Allen Shoaf, *Lucretius and Shakespeare on the Nature of Things* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014); Peter D. Usher, *Shakespeare and the Dawn of Modern Science* (Amherst: Cambria Press, 2010). For a recent account of early modern natural philosophy in Shakespeare as a whole see: Dan Falk, *The Science of Shakespeare: A New Look at the Playwright's Universe* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2014).

experimental procedures and to its difficult and convoluted thinking through of material categories.[10]

Scholarship on the ghost itself is so voluminous as to defy summary, and has in recent years come to focus

particularly upon its materiality: Jones and Stallybrass's treatment is an obvious example, but in different ways

the accounts of Stephen Greenblatt and Margreta de Grazia share their sense of the ghost's ultimate

materialness.[11] Finally, *Hamlet*'s interest in nothingness has been noted by scholars including Amy Cook.[12]

Yet no account as yet has considered the natural philosophical character of *Hamlet*'s interest in the

nothingness of the ghost, and it is this void (as it were) that these pages seek to fill. To that end they give first a

broad outline of the development of atomist experimentalism in the early modern period, followed by a

section teasing out the broad ways in which *Hamlet* declares and displays its interest in these areas of natural

philosophy. We then progress to the heart of the matter: an account of *Hamlet* focussed on the play's

engagement with nothingness and its implications for the human self of which the ghost is sign. We conclude

with two shorter sections. The first makes the case that for *Hamlet* the natural philosophical conclusions

reached about the ghost extend to all claims to immateriality, specifically those made by political theology on

behalf of the king's second body and by Eucharistic theology on behalf of Christ. Finally we turn to Hamlet's

late turn towards providentialist piety and *Hamlet*'s interest in the *vanitas* tradition that seems to

emblematize that piety. By reflecting upon how *Hamlet* aligns two discourses of emptiness and dust, I argue,

we can see the play in its entirety as a continuous enquiry into the self's material constitution, its place in and

its prospects beyond the material world.

II

In the early modern period experiment emerges as the dominant paradigm for the production and assessment

of information about the natural world. Its practitioners explicitly oppose themselves to the Aristotelian

inheritance that dominates natural philosophical thought previously: to any sort of received knowledge at all,

---

[10] Michael Witmore, *Culture of Accidents: Unexpected Knowledges in Early Modern England* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), p. 100; Carla Mazzio, 'The History of Air: Hamlet and the Trouble with Instruments', *South Central Review*, 26 (2009), 153-96.

[11] Jones and Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing*, pp. 245-68; Margreta de Grazia, *Hamlet Without Hamlet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 41-43, 143; Greenblatt, *Hamlet*, pp. 242-43. Similarly, John Hunt writes that the ghost's discourse 'fills the linguistic fabric of [the] play with broken bodies' ('A Thing of Nothing: the Catastrophic Body in *Hamlet*', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 39 [1988], 27-44, p. 32).

[12] Amy Cook, 'Staging Nothing: *Hamlet* and Cognitive Science', *SubStance*, 35 (2006), 83-99.

indeed, with the motto of the Royal Society declaring *nullius in verba* ('on the word of no man'). To say the mode of thought is entirely new would be wrong, as we shall see. Nevertheless, the early modern sense of experiment as not merely a vague theoretical good but a systematised praxis is innovative. In particular, the period sees a concerted effort to resolve two linked issues: by which processes information should properly be assessed, and from what sources it can be gleaned in the first place.

In Peter Dear's account, experiment as it emerges in the Renaissance constitutes 'a historical account of a specific event that acts as a warrant for the truth of a universal knowledge claim'; sufficiently warranted, such a claim attains the status of 'fact'.[13] (The 'scientific fact', as Barbara J. Shapiro has shown, is in the period an emergent epistemic category deriving at least in part from developments in the legal sphere.)[14] Aristotelianism thinks about experiment as well, but in its Aristotelian sense the word means something subtly different. There, as Dear and others argue, it is interchangeable with 'experience' and signifies 'how things happen' in a general way rather than 'how something had happened on a particular occasion'.[15] According to Francis Bacon, though Aristotle sometimes seems to proceed by experimental procedures, in fact he 'bends experience to his opinion and drags it about in chains', forcing data to conform to pre-existing notions and then offering it without corroboration as properly established truth.[16] Bacon acknowledges that such 'opinions' – what we might think of as hypotheses – are necessary in the development of experiments. But they should be sedulously policed and made subordinate to the evidence yielded by the experiments they help to structure. Whereas the Aristotelian procedure is 'to fly from the senses and particulars to the most general axioms, and from these principles, the truth of which [is taken] for settled and immoveable, [to proceed] to judgment and to the discovery of middle axioms', a more deliberate experimental procedure would be preferable, rising in stages through 'middle axioms' which would be tested and confirmed en route towards more general ones.[17] In *Micrographia* Robert Hooke agrees, praising the Royal Society for rejecting any 'hypothesis not sufficiently grounded and confirm'd by Experiments'.[18] Thus regimented procedures are key to

---

[13] Peter Dear, *Discipline & Experience: The Mathematical Way in the Scientific Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 6.
[14] Barbara J. Shapiro, *A Culture of Fact: England, 1550-1720* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), p. 137 and passim.
[15] Dear, *Discipline*, pp. 3-4. Cf. Charles B. Schmitt, 'Experience and Experiment: A Comparison of Zabarella's View with Galileo's in De Motu', *Studies in the Renaissance*, 16 (1969), 80-138, p. 91; 'Experimental Evidence for and against a Void: The Sixteenth-Century Arguments', *Isis*, 58 (1967), 352-66, p. 358.
[16] Quoted in: Mary Thomas Crane, *Losing Touch with Nature: Literature and the New Science in 16th-Century England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), p. 168.
[17] Quoted in: Michel Malherbe, 'Bacon's Method of Science', in Markku Peltonen, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Bacon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 75-98 (p. 79).
[18] Quoted in Shapiro, *Culture*, p. 149.

the new experimentalism's move away from old confusions, and to these procedures corroboration is in turn

central. Matters of fact, Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer write,

> were the outcome of the process of having an empirical experience, warranting it to oneself, and assuring others
>
> that grounds for their belief were adequate. An experience, even of a rigidly controlled experimental performance,
>
> that one man alone witnessed, was not adequate to make a matter of fact. If the experience could be extended to
>
> many, and in principle to all men, then the result could be constituted as a matter of fact.[19]

A new corpus of facts established in these methodical ways, early modern experimentalism contends, will

supplant the inherited and unreliable body of Aristotelian natural philosophy.

In the main these intellectual developments are associated with the middle and later decades of the

seventeenth century, and in particular with the visually striking instruments and defined scientific community

of the Royal Society.[20] There are good reasons for this: for Dear, properly understood experiment only

becomes 'a part of a coordinated knowledge-enterprise during the course of the seventeenth century'.[21] But in

fact the issues and concerns that animate the culture of experiment in the later part of the seventeenth

century are operative much earlier. According to a long tradition it is with Bacon that early modern

experimentalism begins, and indeed the Royal Society itself declares Bacon its spiritual father.[22] Certainly,

Baconian experimentalism can be rather vague, and it is unclear how many experiments he in fact

undertook.[23] Nevertheless, as Carolyn Merchant demonstrates, Bacon is clearly drawn to the same issues to

which experimentalists will be later in the century, his scientific vision specifying 'an active inquisitor (scientist)

who posed a question, a subject-object that held the answer as a veiled secret, [and] witnesses who could

verify and if necessary replicate the experience'.[24] But if Bacon takes us back well beyond the Royal Society,

Deborah E. Harkness has recently insisted that we look still earlier for the roots of early modern

---

[19] Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air-Pump: Hobbes, Boyle and the Experimental Life,* rev. ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), p. 50.

[20] This impression is longstanding but has also been reinforced by the impact of *Leviathan and the Air-Pump*. As Rose-Mary Sargent suggests, it is partly due to the book's influence that Boyle has come to be considered the 'icon, or idealized representative' of early modern experimental culture (*The Diffident Naturalist: Robert Boyle and the Philosophy of Experiment* [Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995], p. 9). Shapiro, likewise, suggests that Boyle's prominence has led to a general overestimation of his role in the development of the 'culture of fact' she delineates (Shapiro, *A Culture,* p. 116). For the general early modern sense of the need for corroboration see: William Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature: Books of Secrets in Medieval and Early Modern Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 9.

[21] Dear, *Discipline*, p. 6.

[22] See for instance Eamon, *Science*, p. 7.

[23] According to Peter Pesic, Bacon is essential 'not so much because he himself performed significant experiments but because he envisioned the emergent character of experimentation' ('Wrestling with Proteus: Francis Bacon and the "Torture" of Nature', *Isis*, 90 [1999], 81-94, p. 81).

[24] Carolyn Merchant, ' "The Violence of Impediments": Francis Bacon and the Origins of Experimentation', *Isis*, 99 (2008), 731-60, p. 731.

experimentalism, pointing in particular towards Plat's *The Jewell House*. According to Harkness, far from championing modern science Bacon in fact is an impediment to the modernising impulses of Plat and his London contemporaries, and it is they who represent the true experimentalist spirit of the age: not in the early and mid-seventeenth century but towards the end of the sixteenth.[25]

Thus the roots of early modern experimental culture – methodical, empiricist, sceptical, collaborative – are to be found in the late Tudor London from which *Hamlet* also springs. Now we should ask towards what kinds of phenomena its attitudes and procedures are directed. Plat's figurative linking of experiments and revenants notwithstanding, and despite Boyle's view of the resurrection of Lazarus as one of 'God's experiments', ghostly phenomena may still seem antithetical to the culture's empirical values. But in fact experimentalism's interests throughout the period are as unresolved as its practices, and these two linked irresolutions allow it to consider a surprisingly broad phenomenological scene. The sense of 'experiment' not as an account of a corroborated event but as a description of a general and not-rigorously-confirmed rule survives well into the seventeenth century, and indeed the word can still refer to information that was little more than hearsay.[26] Boyle's conception of Biblical miracles as God's experiments speaks to this possibility, for example, and many Baconian 'experiments' are simply travel reports and other passed-on information: in *Sylva Sylvarum*, for instance, the 'ancient' observation is registered and at least partly credited that 'where a *Raine-Bow* seemeth to hang over […] there breatheth forth a sweet smell', and in the *History Naturall and Experimentall, Of Life and Death* some claims are made about ursine gestation periods that are quite wrong.[27] Despite the forceful way in which experimentalist thinkers oppose received wisdom, that is, their experiments often constitute precisely that, and what is especially important for our purposes is that this procedural laxness opens the door for and goes hand in hand with a receptiveness to what we would now consider supernatural phenomena.

---

[25] Harkness, *Jewel House*, p. 214 and passim.
[26] See for instance: Schmitt, 'Experience', p. 91. Cf. Dear, *Discipline*, p. 4.
[27] Francis Bacon, *Sylva Sylvarum* (London: 1627), sig. Ee4ʳ. For the claim that bears are in the womb for barely more than a month (oddly, he is much better on elephants) see: *The Historie of Life and Death* (London: 1638), sig. D7ᵛ. In *Sylva* Bacon stresses the care with which he vets his sources, claims to have rejected an 'infinit' number of 'experiments' on grounds of implausibility, and reminds the reader that others he 'delivers' as 'doubtfull' (B3ʳ), but examples such as those just given may leave us sceptical.

As is well known, but has recently been argued anew by scholars including William R. Newman, early modern experimentalism's alchemical inheritance is considerable.[28] For Boyle, indeed, the difference between the two is one of adjustment rather than replacement: he wants with his experimental practices to bring the alchemists' experiments out of 'their dark and smoky laboratories'.[29] But alchemy is not the only phenomenologically marginal discourse the period's natural philosophy takes seriously. As Lorraine Daston and Katherine Park demonstrate, generally throughout the medieval and early modern periods 'wonders' such as monstrous births or the comets that attend royal deaths are considered 'prime objects of investigation', and throughout the seventeenth century it remains rare to find a scientific career 'untouched by an encounter with the marvelous'.[30] Neither are the categories of the wonderful and the marvellous of only peripheral interest. While the question of the immortal soul is virtually always considered beyond the natural philosophical pale, nevertheless the soul can be approached obliquely by way of these other materially liminal phenomena: as Lawrence Principe points out, proof positive of 'incorporeal substances inducing changes in material substances' would 'silence those who doubted that an [...] immaterial human soul could actuate the human body'.[31] Though Principe is talking about alchemy here the attitude is general, and a letter from Joseph Glanvill to Robert Boyle illustrates the point with force:

> *Indeed*, as things are for the present, the LAND of SPIRITS is a kinde of *AMERICA*, and not well discover'd *Region*;
>
> yea, it stands in the *Map* of *humane Science* like *unknown Tracts*, fill'd up with *Mountains*, *Seas*, and *Monsters*: For
>
> we meet with little in the *Immaterial Hemisphere*, but *Doubts*, *Uncertainties*, and *Fables*[.][32]

Here the investigation of immaterial things is imagined as simply an extension of the exploration undertaken in previous centuries. But as he continues Glanvill is specific as to the mode of investigation that should be brought to bear on these new phenomenological regions:

---

[28] William R. Newman, *Atoms and Alchemy: Chymistry & the Experimental Origins of the Scientific Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

[29] Quoted in: Rose-Mary Sargent, 'Learning from Experience: Boyle's Construction of an Experimental Philosophy', in Michael Hunter, ed., *Robert Boyle Reconsidered* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 57-78, p. 62.

[30] Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature, 1150-1750* (New York: Zone Books, 1998), pp. 13, 216. As Daston argues elsewhere, in the early modern period 'preternatural phenomena swung from the almost-supernatural extreme of portents to the almost-natural extreme of Baconian facts' ('Marvelous Facts and Miraculous Evidence in Early Modern Europe', *Critical Inquiry*, 18 [1991], 93-124, p. 112).

[31] Lawrence M. Principe, 'Boyle's alchemical pursuits', in Hunter, *Reconsidered*, pp. 91-106 (p. 101). For more on the exclusion of the soul and some other theological matters from natural philosophical discourse see: Jan W. Wojcik, 'The Theological Context of *Things Above Reason*', in ibid., pp. 139-56 (p. 140).

[32] The letter and Boyle's response to it is discussed in Moody E. Prior, 'Joseph Glanvill, Witchcraft, and Seventeenth-Century Science', *Modern Philology*, 30 (1932), 167-93, p. 182.

> For we know not any thing of the world we live, but by *experiment* and the *Phœnomena*; and there is the same way
>
> of *speculating immaterial* nature, by *extraordinary Events* and *Apparitions*, which possibly might be improved to
>
> *notices* not *contemptible*, were there a *Cautious*, and *Faithful History* made of those *certain* and *uncommon*
>
> *appearances*.

In this way of thinking, to incorporate apparently supernatural phenomena like immaterial '*Apparitions*' into natural philosophical epistemology requires only a careful and methodical account of them. And as Glanvill makes clear, the point ultimately is to demonstrate the resilience of the human soul beyond the death of the body. Such a faithful history as he describes, he suggests, would represent 'a *sensible Argument* of our *Immortality*'.

~~~

The distance between ghostly matters and experimentalism, then, is not necessarily as great as might be assumed. But there is another aspect of early modern natural philosophy we should consider at this point. In Wright's depiction of the air-pump experiment, the uncanny spectacle produced by the natural philosopher is not in truth a phenomenon at all but the sheer nothingness of vacuum. We have noted that experiment is not an idea unique to the Renaissance, and neither is it an innovation to take seriously the prospect of such nothingness: notions of void and of infinite space (in Mary Thomas Crane's phrase 'the correlative' of vacuum) are classical commonplaces and are to be found at the root of seismic medieval controversies.[33] Neither should we suppose that the possibility is commonly accepted in the Renaissance, or thought through by its natural philosophy in a thoroughgoing or uncompromised way. Nevertheless, having been resolutely denied by Aristotelian and scholastic orthodoxy for centuries, nothingness assumes a new centrality from the sixteenth century onwards. According to Brian P. Copenhaver and Charles B. Schmitt, indeed, it is the reclamation of classical thinking about atoms and void that enables 'sixteenth- and seventeenth-century thinkers dissatisfied with Aristotle's physics' to begin to develop the 'coherent philosophy of nature' that in the end develops into what we know as modern science.[34]

---

[33] Crane, *Losing Touch,* p. 140. For an introduction to such medieval controversies see: Malcolm De Mowbray, '1277 and All That – Students and Disputations', *Traditio*, 57 (2002), 217-38.

[34] Brian P. Copenhaver and Charles B. Schmitt, *Renaissance Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 17. For more on such philosophy in the Renaissance see: Catherine Wilson, *Epicureanism at the Origins of Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Schmitt, 'Experimental', esp. p. 352. Respecting 'vacuum or "non-being" ' as a fundamental tenet of atomism see: Andrew Pyle, *Atomism and Its Critics* (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1995), p. xi.

Where Aristotelianism assumes that things can be understood from their appearances and outward behaviours, Renaissance experimentalism draws upon the ancient atomism to which Aristotle is resolutely opposed to consider invisible substrata beneath those appearances, and indeed understands appearances to be if not outright deceptive then certainly inconclusive. As Lucretius succinctly declares in *De Rerum Natura*, his compendious working-through of Epicurean atomism: 'nature works by means of bodies unseen' (1.328).[35] By 'bodies unseen' he means most fundamentally atoms, the indivisible and invisible building-blocks from which all material is constituted, and it is in terms of these that early modern natural philosophy begins to think. The usefulness of the conception is clear: as Boyle puts it in *Some Physico-Theological Considerations*, 'the small Particles of a resolved Body may retain their own Nature under various alterations and disguises, of which 'tis possible they may be afterwards stript' (sig. D[r]), so that what is offered is access to entirely new levels of material existence below what Boyle thinks of as a fickle and even deceptive veneer. Indeed, it is a marker of the promise of atomistic matter-theory that, as Alexander Wragge-Morley writes, 'Boyle regarded these particles as the most important objects of his experimental agenda'.[36]

But it is not without its attendant difficulties. The problem is not only that Epicureanism in the Renaissance is virtually synonymous with atheism and moral degradation (Calvin calls Lucretius a 'filthy dogge' on account of his mortalism), but that insults to Christian orthodoxy inhere in atomism's theory of matter at a fundamental level.[37] The very notion of eternal particles that have always existed and will always exist challenges God's creation of all matter *ex nihilo*, for instance, and as Philipp Caesar makes clear in 1578 the image of an atomist world 'made of moates' that swirl randomly seems entirely hostile to a vision of creation 'governed by the providence of God'.[38] But more troubling still, and what is more apposite here, is the empty space that in atomist thought separates those moates. As Wright's painting would suggest, such space comes to be a principal emblem of the new science. Yet as the controversies surrounding Boyle and his famous instrument illustrate it is also a battleground, and even for those not actively opposed to it vacuum is deeply problematic. One issue is the general challenge it poses to the plenist Aristotelian orthodoxy that underpins

---

[35] I quote here from the Loeb Classical Library Edition, trans. by W. H. D. Rouse and rev. by Martin F. Smith (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992). For more detail on specifically Lucretian physics see: S. I. Vavilov, 'Lucretius' Physics', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 9 (1948), 21-40.

[36] Wragge-Morley, 'Robert Boyle', p. 18.

[37] John Calvin, *The institution of Christian religion* (London: 1561), sig. Aviii[r]. For the orthodox response to atomist atheism see: Kenneth Sheppard, *Anti-Atheism in Early Modern England 1580–1720: The Atheist Answered and His Error Confuted* (Leiden: Brill, 2015). On the equation of Epicureanism and atheism see: William R. Elton, *King Lear and the Gods* (San Marino: The Huntington Library, 1966), pp. 9-33.

[38] Philipp Caesar, *A general discourse against the damnable sect of usurers grounded upon the worde of God* (London: 1578), sig. Iiiij[v].

medieval Christian cosmology: as Ludmila Makuchowska puts it, void space opposes 'the *de fide* structural

perfection of creation'.[39] But to hold that there is empty space is also to pose a specific challenge to God's

ubiquity, and indeed to his infallibility with the suggestion that He would be so wasteful as to create something

superfluous.[40] The threat may even be to His essence: we remember Sarah Powrie's suggestion that in the

infinite space that is void's correlative 'divine immanence is extracted from creation and jettisoned into outer

space, leaving a vacuum of infinite regress'.[41]

It is such troubling associations that Boyle has in mind when he concludes the preface of *Some*

Physico-Theological Considerations with the plainly defensive claim that 'Corpuscularian Principles may not

only be admitted without Epicurean Errors, but employ'd against them', and in general what comes of this

vexed urge to accept atomist principles while refusing their difficult implications is a great deal of hedging.[42] As

Andrew G. van Melson argues, most early modern thinkers compromise the fundamental properties of

classical atoms to the point that they come to resemble not atoms at all but Aristotelian *minima*, and similar

approaches are taken to the confounding problem of vacuum.[43] To avoid thinking about void space Bacon, for

instance, turns to a 'pneumatic matter' which in Graham Rees's description is both 'thoroughly corporeal' yet

'tenuous, weightless, invisible and incorrigibly restless'.[44] For Giordano Bruno as well vacuum as strictly empty

space is replaced with 'an enlivened and enlivening ether'.[45] Thinkers as diverse as Thomas Hobbes, Descartes

and Henry More develop similar liminal compromise-substances at various points, and their disagreements

over their respective types of such substance are lengthy and heated.[46] 'So palpable [is] the uneasiness with

the concept of absolute lack', as Christoph Meinel puts it, 'that virtually all early modern natural philosophers

replace classical vacuum with something subtly different that avoid[s] its troubling implications'.[47] Indeed, the

---

[39] Makuchowska, *Scientific Discourse*, pp. 72-73.

[40] See: Crane, *Losing Touch*, 132. It is worth registering the contrary point that it is also potentially heretical to deny the possibility of void space, since to do would deny God's ability to create it; the medieval intersections of theology and philosophy are very confounding, for which see: Mowbray, '1277'.

[41] Powrie, 'Transposing', p. 213.

[42] Boyle, *Some Physico-Theological Considerations,* sig. A3^{v-r}.

[43] Andrew G. van Melson, *From Atomos to Atom: the History of the Concept Atom* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960), passim. For more on the various early modern compromises made around the fundamentals of atomistic thought see: Christoph Meinel, 'Early Seventeenth-Century Atomism: Theory, Epistemology, and the Insufficiency of Experiment', *Isis*, 79 (1988), 68-103, esp. 88; Schmitt, 'Experimental'.

[44] Graham Rees, 'Atomism and 'subtlety' in Francis Bacon's philosophy', *Annals of Science*, 37 (1980), 549-71, p. 552. Cf. Silva Manzo, 'The Arguments on Void in the Seventeenth Century: The Case of Francis Bacon', *The British Journal for the History of Science*, 36 (2003), 43-61, p. 44.

[45] Christoph Lüthy, 'The Fourfold Democritus on the Stage of Early Modern Science', *Isis*, 91 (2000), 443-79, p. 453.

[46] On Cartesian ether, for instance, see Jacob, 'Enlightenment Critique', p. 271.

[47] Meinel, 'Early Seventeenth-Century Atomism', p. 71.

striking impression is that when called upon to consider nothingness early modern philosophy attempts to refashion it as something that looks rather like spirit.

Nevertheless, early modern philosophical innovation is to a significant degree enabled by the recently rediscovered texts of ancient atomism, and to engage with those texts, as Shakespeare to some degree certainly did, is to be obliged to consider not such compromises but rather the absolute ontological absence of void space.[48] Diogenes Laertius's account of atomism in *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers* is clear: for Democritus, he writes, 'the universe' is nothing but 'atoms and empty space'.[49] On void space Lucretius too is unequivocal, and far more detailed. 'Everything is not held close and packed everywhere in one solid mass', he writes, since if it were motion would be impossible. It follows from the fact that there is movement that between the constituent atoms of all material 'there is intangible space, void emptiness' (1.329-45). Both Laertius and Lucretius are emphatic on the point that the emptiness in which atoms exist is very specifically an emptiness and not air, which is itself composed of atoms.[50] And as *De Rerum Natura* makes especially clear, ancient atomism does not only stipulate void space in the material world. It also rules out the possibility of immaterial things that transcend that world, insisting that the swirling material scene of atoms and void constitutes the sum of all being.[51] The soul and the mind, Lucretius writes, which 'consist of very small seeds, being interlaced through veins, flesh, and sinews' (3.208-30), are no exceptions, and at death they simply disappear. There is no afterlife, which is a superstitious invention intended to control people's behaviour (1.62-79). Indeed, Lucretius thinks particularly about ghosts as *De Rerum Natura* opens. The purpose of his poem's investigation of the 'aspect and law of nature', he writes, is to dispel 'the terror of mind' generated by such superstitions as those that allow people 'to see and to hear in very presence those who have encountered death, whose bones rest in earth's embrace' (1.127-58). In the atomist ontology that is of such vexed fascination to the Renaissance, that is, all material has vacuum at its centre, and there is nothing that is not material. Not even the soul is exceptional, and there can certainly be no ghosts.

---

[48] For Shakespeare's familiarity with atomist materialism, see: Jonathan Gil Harris, 'Atomic Shakespeare', *Shakespeare Studies*, 30 (2002), 47-51, p. 48. Cf. Eric Langley, *Narcissism and Suicide in Shakespeare and His Contemporaries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 75.
[49] Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers, Volume II: Books 6-10*, trans. by R. D. Hicks (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1925), p. 453. Cf. Lüthy, 'Fourfold'.
[50] Laertius, *Lives*, p. 455.
[51] The atheism of *De Rerum Natura* is not in fact entirely thoroughgoing: Lucretius does not say that the gods are non-existent but that they are so remote as to be an irrelevance and do not care about human affairs (1.42-63). This concession, however, seems entirely at odds with everything else in the poem and to affect its ontology in no meaningful way.

Amongst the early modern discourses by which *Hamlet* is informed most obvious are the forensic and the theological. Yet *Hamlet* is 'anything but a unicursive text', as Rhodri Lewis puts it, with 'many paths both through and around it', and it is my suggestion here that amongst these others the play can also be read with profit against the natural philosophical backdrop sketched so far.[52] In due course our attention will alight specifically upon the impact of vacuum on *Hamlet*'s thinking about Old Hamlet's ghost. But first and more generally we can note that throughout its action, in small details and large brushstrokes alike and particularly in the connection of the ghost, *Hamlet* declares its interest in experimentalist early modern natural philosophy and the ontology it endorses.

In the experimentalist connection, and by way of scene-setting, we can note that the play's characters persistently approach the problem of the inscrutable human interior by way of experimentalist procedure. Claudius induces Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to experiment upon Hamlet (he envisages them 'gleaning' information about Hamlet's 'inward man' from 'occasions' that will be produced by them intervening in the course of the prince's usual behaviour [II.2.6-18]), Polonius on Laertes by way of Reynaldo, and the two collaborate in the experiment that brings together Hamlet and Ophelia in Act II. Much of this may seem equally or more reminiscent of legal than natural philosophical procedures, but a final example emphasises the latter connection. In Gertrude's closet in Act III Hamlet declares his intention to reveal the 'inmost part' of her, and specifies that to do so he will use a 'glass' (III.4.19-20). The word's primary sense here is 'mirror'. Yet 'glass' also suggests a scientific instrument, like a microscope or telescope, designed to make difficult-to-see things visible. Thus here the mirror that looks into the self, with its *memento mori* insinuations, is conflated with the glasses that facilitate natural philosophical examination of the world.[53]

---

[52] Rhodri Lewis, *Hamlet and the Vision of Darkness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 7. Lewis's book is a comprehensive re-reading of *Hamlet* and we return to it periodically throughout these pages. Yet as will become clear my reading of the ghost departs from Lewis's in significant ways. He suggests that the nature of the ghost is never established and that the play as a whole has no sense of a life beyond death (pp. 263-65), whereas I will argue that in the end it is precisely the nature of the ghost that leads the play to its negative conclusions about such a life.

[53] The seismic impact of such instruments in the age of Galileo and Hooke cannot be overestimated, and as Shapin and Schaffer note their function is twofold: 'the power of new scientific instruments, the microscope and telescope as well as the air-pump, resided in their capacity to enhance perception *and* to constitute new perceptual objects' (*Leviathan*, p. 57, emphasis mine).

But the object of *Hamlet*'s most conspicuous experimentalist activities is the ghost of Old Hamlet, and these merit tracing in more detail. The laymen to whom this startling new phenomenon first appears, recognizing that they themselves are ill-equipped to comprehend or investigate further, summon a figure of greater expertise. 'Thou art a scholar', Marcellus says to Horatio, 'Speak to it' (I.1.40). Though speak it will not, Horatio is able to consider some precedents, in this case the 'tenantless graves' and 'sheeted dead' that portended the fall of Caesar (106.5-106.18), and to form a hesitant hypothesis: 'this bodes some strange eruption to our state' (68). Hamlet, a yet more prestigious scholar, is now summoned to bear witness, and as the phenomenon is described to him both he and Horatio insist upon reportorial rigour. The ghost's properties and appearances are systematically worked through, and when at one point the new expert senses a weakness he raises an immediate objection – 'then you saw not his face' (I.2.225) – that obliges the witnesses to defend their account. (This they are able to do, in fact, since the armoured ghost 'wore his beaver up' [127-28].) Horatio is similarly painstaking. The appearance of the phenomenon, he says, lasted about as long as it would take to count to one hundred at a moderate pace, to which Barnardo and Marcellus respond with a joint 'Longer, longer' (237). But Horatio will not concede the point: though the appearance of the phenomena may as they suggest have lasted longer it did 'not when [*he*] saw't (238, emphasis mine) and so he will not attest to it. *Nullius in verba*, we might say, and indeed when Hamlet comes to witness the ghost himself he maintains a healthy scepticism not only as to what he has been told but as to his own perceptions. He dutifully insists on bearing in mind a range of possible explanations for what he is witnessing ('spirit of health or goblin damned' [I.4.21]), and though he announces that he will identify ('call' [25]) the phenomenon as a certain thing ('King, father, royal Dane' [26]), the word 'call' insists that the conclusion remains contingent, so that this is quite pointedly only a working assumption or hypothesis. He does, however, manage to glean considerably more data on the phenomenon than previous witnesses, and there is notable emphasis laid on the careful diligence with which he records that data before it can fade in his memory and become unreliable ('meet it is I set it down' [I.5.108]).

But the data has not yet been sufficiently tested to achieve the status of fact. Rather, Hamlet now takes Horatio's original hypothesis – that the ghost certainly signifies something strange going on – and replaces it with a new and more developed one. This is that the 'something strange' is in fact a rottenness flowing from undetected regicide, but since the particular type of data gathered thus far is notoriously

unreliable Hamlet insists that he will 'have grounds more relative' (II.2.580-81) than it alone. To this end he arrives at an experimental method for testing the new hypothesis in a control situation and in act III this experiment is conducted: the Mousetrap. The outcomes necessary for its hypothesis to be considered confirmed are specifically established in advance – a very specific reaction must be produced in Claudius – and the care with which the outcomes must be corroborated is insisted upon. Not only must Horatio give 'heedful note' (III.2.77), but Hamlet will observe with similarly close attention so that afterwards they can their 'judgements join' (78) to reach a properly reliable conclusion. The experiment conducted and the hypothesis amply confirmed in practice, Hamlet's dramatic theory is absorbed into the corpus of confirmed and actionable knowledge about the world. Information that was previously obscure has by way of a robustly sceptical epistemological stance, and by way of an experiment generated to answer that scepticism, been rendered a fact upon which (Hamlet jubilantly declares) one would confidently place a large wager (263-4).

We could cast Hamlet and Horatio as early detectives here, or lawyers or theologians. Yet a good Renaissance experimentalist too, one senses, would recognize their own praxis in the pair's assessment of the ghost. Hasty opinions and received wisdom do not here drag experience about in chains. Rather, experience is confirmed and reinforced by robust experimental procedures that resemble Bacon's piecemeal, ladder-like process. They also conform to the corroborating structures of the experimentalism of the Royal Society, and share the urge we have witnessed to expand the remit of natural philosophy to take in phenomena that test the limits of what is plausible in nature. It might be objected that Horatio's response to Hamlet's excited estimation of the Mousetrap's evidentiary value – it would not buy Hamlet 'a fellowship in a cry of players' but merely 'half a share' in one (III.2.255-56) – sounds a sceptical note; indeed, Lewis argues at length that the Mousetrap experiment is a failure, and the view goes back at least to W. W. Greg that if Claudius were truly disturbed by the play's revelation of his regicide he would exhibit it during the dumb-show.[54] Yet in fact *Hamlet* itself seems as convinced as its protagonist. Though we suspect that Claudius is guilty from the ghost's revelation onwards, and though he in fact hints of some unspecified but 'heavy' guilt in an aside at III.1.51-55, we have no more conclusive evidence of this than Hamlet does. But as soon as Hamlet asserts his satisfaction with the evidence offered by the Mousetrap we are given access to Claudius's guilty conscience as it is voiced

---

[54] Rhodri Lewis, 'Shakespeare's Clouds and the Image Made by Chance', *Essays in Criticism*, 62 (2012), 1-23, esp. pp. 13-16; W. W. Greg, 'Hamlet's Hallucination', *The Modern Language Review*, 12 (1917), 393-421. Mazzio too thinks the experiment is a failure (*History*, p. 161).

at prayer, where we find confirmed beyond doubt the efficacy and integrity of the prince's experimental

practices and the correctness of the conclusions to which they have led him.[55]

Hamlet the play, then, can appear to be of a rather experimentalist character. So can Hamlet the

character, and in quite culturally specific ways. One of the crucial processes in the development of early

modern natural philosophy is a shift in attitude towards curiosity (this we have encountered previously in the

brief discussion of *pietas* and *curiositas* in chapter 2). In the medieval period 'a grave vice that endangered the

soul', as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries progress curiosity about the natural world is repositioned as

a virtuous and productive quality.[56] It is a quality associated with a particular kind of person, moreover, which

by the later decades of the seventeenth century comes to be known by the appellation 'virtuoso'. The early

modern virtuoso's erudition is potentially general: the word can denote 'a learned person; a scholar; esp. a

scientist, a natural philosopher' as well as 'a person who has a special interest in, or taste for, the fine arts'. But

the experimentalist and natural philosophical connection is especially strong, and indeed the word can refer

specifically to a member of the Royal Society.[57] Another aspect of virtuosity is noteworthy. As William Eamon

makes clear, the seventeenth-century virtuoso is generally a noble figure. Partly this is due simply to the funds

and leisure required for such activities. But in Eamon's account early modern virtuosity is to a considerable

degree a symptom particularly 'of the ailing fortunes of the nobility' in the period, during which educated

young noblemen are increasingly unable to find employment at court; 'doomed to lives of boredom and

loneliness on their country estates', they turn to erudition and recondite expertise in an effort to ameliorate

the blow to their prestige.[58] But this does not only mean that virtuoso is largely a noble category. The

dissatisfaction and ennui to which such ailing fortunes give rise mean as well that the virtuoso is typically

associated with a quite particular kind of alienated character. As Walter E. Houghton, Jr. puts it, 'the rise of

virtuosity, its frame of mind and its actual studies, are clearly associated with Jacobean melancholy'.[59]

To consider the lineaments of the virtuoso is telling as regards Hamlet. Though the term itself has not

yet entered English at the time of the play's composition, the figure it comes to describe is recognizably

---

[55] Lewis thinks to the contrary that the gap between the Mousetrap and Claudius's confession is sufficiently long to disrupt any causal relationship between them. But given the business required of the play at this point to me the delay seems merely incidental.

[56] See Eamon, *Science*, p. 314.

[57] All these senses are offered by the OED (1a-b), and Robert Hooke confirms the latter association in a diary entry from 1676, identifying himself as one butt of Thomas Shadwell's humour in *The Virtuoso*: 'Damned dogs', he writes. 'Vindica me deus'. Quoted in: Stephen Gaukroger, *The Emergence of Scientific Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 37.

[58] Eamon, *Science*, p. 302.

[59] Walter E. Houghton, Jr., 'The English Virtuoso in the Seventeenth Century: Part I', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 3 (1942), 51-73, p. 64.

present from the 1590s onwards, and its alignments with Hamlet are marked.[60] The Danish prince is a noble

scholar, an aspiring natural philosopher, a kind of experimentalist, and (to judge by his strong views on

dramaturgy and his attempts at verse) a fine-arts enthusiast as well. Not only that, but like Eamon's virtuoso

he is a high-born young man whose anticipated course through the social firmament has been thwarted, in his

case not by an over-subscribed court but by Claudius having 'popped in between th'election and [Hamlet's]

hopes' (V.2.66). Relatedly, he is also a man prey to a mysterious and to some degree unmotivated ennui. In all

of this Hamlet stakes out cultural space resembling fairly closely that of the virtuoso, and in this connection

two moments in particular deserve attention.

The first follows Ophelia's description to her father of the deranged Hamlet's visit. Steven Shapin

argues that the phrase 'a scholar and a gentleman' does not exist, or 'certainly not as a commonplace', in the

late sixteenth or seventeenth century since 'what was understood of gentlemen and what was understood of

scholars set them in opposition'.[61] Nevertheless, 'a scholar and a gentleman' is precisely how Hamlet is

described by Ophelia as she mourns his 'o'erthrown' mind (III.1.149). She ascribes to him 'the courtier's,

soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword' and calls him 'the observed of all observers' (150-54): here nobility and

scholarship do not seem mutually exclusive but rather associated and complementary, to the extent that

Ophelia literally jumbles up the categories by mangling her list of corresponding nouns. Later, Horatio makes a

glancing remark with a similar implication. In response to an observation on Hamlet's part about the character

of physical existence – that 'the noble dust of Alexander' is literally the same thing as a stop for a bung-hole

(V.1.188-89) – Horatio demurs: ' 'Twere to consider too curiously to consider so' (190). Though the statement

is usually glossed as something like 'oversubtly', in fact Horatio's terminology also gestures towards the

particular intellectual context we have been considering, ascribing to Hamlet as it does the defining quality of

the experimentalist natural philosopher: as Eamon notes, as the seventeenth century wears on 'virtuoso' and

'curioso' come to be virtually synonymous.[62]

---

[60] On the earlier presence of the figure see: Ibid., passim. Indeed, if Rhodri Lewis is correct in his damning view of Hamlet as a personification of superficial erudition, the dilettante element of virtuoso resonates strongly as well, for which see: Phoebe S. Spinrad, 'The Dilettante's Lie in *Doctor Faustus*', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 24 (1982), 243-54.

[61] Steven Shapin, ' "A Scholar and a Gentleman": The Problematic Idea of the Scientific Practitioner in Early Modern England', *History of Science,* 29 (1991), 279–327, p. 280.

[62] Eamon, *Science*, p. 314. The phrase 'too curious' could have other, darker resonances, but these as well resonate with *Hamlet*'s natural philosophical interests. In *A sermon, preached at Paules Crosse* (London: 1571), John Bridges recounts the demise of Pliny the Elder: 'Plinie too curiously searching oute the causes of the fiery flames of the Hill Vesuvius, his vytall sprites were stopped […] and so he perished for his curiosity' (sig. F.iiiᵛ).

But if *Hamlet* is suffused in various ways with the spirit of early modern experimentalism, it is also apposite here that its discourse is often suggestive of the atomist ontology upon which that experimentalism draws. This is most conspicuously evident in its treatment of ghostly nothingness, as we shall see. But other signs include the play's nagging sense that all creation is part of a single material field. One example of this occurs during Hamlet's encounter with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in Act II. Immediately after describing a phenomenological scene that is nothing but an unstructured 'congregation of vapours' (a particularly troubling figure, since 'congregation' is nearly synonymous with 'church' in sixteenth-century Reformist language), Hamlet reduces all man's qualities and accomplishments to a 'quintessence of dust' (II.2.292-98) – 'moates' of dust, as we have seen, being a common Renaissance analogy for atoms. Ostensibly Hamlet is only addressing 'this goodly frame, the earth'. But 'quintessence' in the period refers specifically to an immaterial fifth element privileged above the four material ones, a possibility which atomism quite explicitly denies, and can even refer specifically to a divine afterlife ('in Quintessence', avers an anonymous poet of 1560, 'I hope to dwell').[63] Thus the line does not only denigrate the material world. Rather, it folds into that world the ostensibly immaterial realm that is conventionally supposed to transcend it. Another example occurs during Act I's second encounter with the ghost. 'There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio', Hamlet says, 'than are dreamt of in our philosophy' (I.5.168-69). Looked at one way, as David Bevington suggests, Hamlet seems to point here to heaven's transcendence of all philosophical discourse.[64] Yet in fact the line puts heaven and the material earth on a single continuum and specifically refuses such transcendence. All of existence is here a material continuum of which no part, though it might be as yet undreamt of and though it might appear immaterially transcendent, is in principle beyond the remit of natural philosophy. And it is all dust.

It may also be that Hamlet has the academic credentials of an atomist. Though the most obvious connotation of Wittenberg in the play is theological – the city is the epicentre of the Reformation, and its university is according to Dear 'the flagship of the newly Lutheran universities of mid-century' – we need not assume that this is the only association for which Shakespeare reaches in selecting this particular place of education.[65] From as early as 1540 the institution is identified with intellectual currents of an innovative natural historical character, as Dear also points out, with Rheticus's approving commentary upon Copernicus

---

[63] T. T., [*Some fine gloves devised for Newyeres gyftes to teche Yonge people*] (London: 1560), single sheet.
[64] David Bevington, *Shakespeare's Ideas: More Things in Heaven and Earth* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008), pp. 151-53.
[65] Dear, *Revolutionizing*, p. 42.

issuing from thence (the text in fact precedes *De Revolutionibus*) and the university itself becoming closely associated with Copernicanism in general.[66] Heliocentrism need not connote atomism, naturally. But it is certainly part of the same portfolio of spiritually disruptive natural philosophical interventions, as we can see in *The First Anniversary* when the world crumbles into 'atomies' (212) precisely because of the loss of Ptolemaic enclosure. Moreover, though the prominent Wittenberg atomist Daniel Sennert does not gain his reputation as such until the 1620s, it speaks to the picture of Wittenberg as the locus of all things new philosophical that over the course of the period it is associated with both Copernicanism and atomism.[67] Neither does it seem coincidental that Hamlet is not the only fictitious Wittenberg alumnus to intimate atomist tendencies. Both he and Marlowe's Dr Faustus raise questions very specifically associated with the new philosophy: Faustus asks Mephistopheles about the plurality of worlds (II.3.35), which we remember orthodox philosophy usually denies on the grounds that it implies void space, and Hamlet pointedly invokes infinite space, which has the identical connotation.[68] (Margaret Cavendish, we noted in chapter 2, recognizes that if there are 'infinites of worlds' between them 'lies waste'.) Both also seem to tend towards a sort of Lucretian mortalism linked to a material conception of the inner self. Though Hamlet speaks specifically of his 'too too solid *flesh*' (I.2.129; emphasis mine) when he pleads to melt away into liquid form he in fact seems to refer to his entire self, and in the 'To be or not to be' soliloquy seems to court oblivion of the soul. These moments echo Faustus's final speech, where we find first the wish that like an animal he had a mortal soul (V.2.102-05), second that his body would turn to air (108), and thirdly that his soul would change into 'little waterdrops' (110).[69]

These broad atomist connotations are finally reinforced by the specifically Democritean character Hamlet presents, and the resonances of that character. It is clear that from at least the late sixteenth century onwards Democritus is synonymous with atomism.[70] In *The Jewell House* Plat mentions that the principal benefit of one apparently impractical experiment is to 'put us in mind of' the theory of 'atomi', and he associates that theory not with Lucretius or Epicurus but with Democritus.[71] Above we noted Philipp Caesar's sense that a world 'made of moates' is fundamentally incompatible with the notion of divine providence, and

[66] Ibid., p. 34.
[67] Newman, *Atoms*, p. 81.
[68] Lewis flatly denies that Hamlet might refer to 'Brunian ideas of cosmic infinity' (*Hamlet*, p. 255), yet concedes that like Faustus Hamlet might refer to plural worlds, which is to make a distinction without much of a difference.
[69] Dr Faustus, as Stroup notes, seems to have 'a Lucretian concept of a material soul' ('Doctor Faustus', p. 244).
[70] On the re-emergence of the atomist Democritus see: Lüthy, 'Fourfold', p. 457 and passim.
[71] Plat, *Jewell House*, sig. G3ᵛ.

Democritus is the first name that comes to mind when Caesar thinks about such a world.[72] In the prefatory materials of a 1573 translation of Athenagorus we read that 'Democritus and Epicurus say, the worlde is composed *ex atomis temere* & *casu concurrentibus*, that is: of little motes flying together in the ayre'.[73] Henry More sees Cartesianism as an alternative to 'the lower Rode of Democritisme, amidst the thick dust of Atoms and flying particles of Matter'.[74]

The relevance of this to *Hamlet* may not be obvious. But the atomist Democritus over the course of the early modern period comes to be conflated with the construction of him as the 'laughing philosopher'.[75] Roger Pooley points to Samuel Rowlands' 1607 satire *Democritus, or Doctor Merry-Man his Medicines, against Melancholy Humours*, as well as possibly Hamlet's antic disposition, as evidence of Democritus's familiarity in this connection.[76] But that it is an early modern commonplace is demonstrated by the maniacally laughing Democritus figures that appear in *vanitas* pictures (Fig. 16) from at least the mid-sixteenth century onwards, and by Montaigne's endorsement of Democritean laughter in the *Essayes*.[77] There are the beginnings of a connection here: Hamlet too is a figure of philosophical inclinations whose response to a tragic scenario is caustic merriment. But the resonances are deeper. As the aforementioned *vanitas* tradition exemplifies, the laughing Democritus is traditionally presented in contrast to the melancholic response of his counterpart, the 'weeping philosopher' Heraclitus. But in the Renaissance the traditional opposition of Democritus and Heraclitus also blurs, so that the former could be the sign of not merely one pole but of the entire dialectic. It is mere accident that in the first edition of Erasmus's *Divi Ambrosii omnia opera* (Basel: 1527) a particularly elaborate illustrated initial gets the two mixed up, naming the laughing figure Heraclitus and the weeper Democritus. Yet it is a slip that betrays a trend. As Lüthy writes, as early as the late fifteenth century Marsilio Ficino 'reinterpret[s] […] Democritus's laughter as a […] melancholy response to the world', and the shift

---

[72] Caesar, *A general discourse,* sig. Iiiij^v.

[73] Athenagorus, *The most notable and excellent discourse of the Christian philosopher Athenagoras, as touching the resurrection of the dead*, trans. from Greek by Petter Nannius and from Latin by R. Porder (London: 1573), sig. A.i.^{r}.

[74] Quoted in: Wilson, *Epicureanism,* p. 24.

[75] As Lüthy illustrates, there were in fact four quite distinct early modern versions of Democritus: 'the atomist, the "laughing philosopher," the moralizing anatomist, and the alchemist' ('Fourfold', p. 443). As he writes: 'when, toward the end of the sixteenth century, the first Democritus and his matter theory slowly began to attract once more the curiosity of natural philosophers, the ensuing atomist reawakening occurred within the context of an already flourishing cult of the other Democriti', principally the laugher (p. 447).

[76] Roger Pooley, *English Prose of the Seventeenth Century 1590-1700* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 202.

[77] On the *vanitas* tradition see: Ingvar Bergstrom, 'De Gheyn as a "Vanitas" Painter', *Oud Holland*, 85 (1970), 143-57, p. 152. Montaigne writes: '*Democritus* and *Heraclitus* were two Philosophers, the first of which, finding and deeming humane condition to be vaine and ridiculous, did never walke abroad, but with a laughing, scornefull and mocking countenance: Whereas *Heraclitus* taking pittie and compassion of the very same condition of ours, was continuallie seene with a sadde, mournefull, and heavy cheere, and with teares trickling downe his blubbred eyes. […] I like the first humour best, not because it is more pleasing to laugh, then to weepe; but for it is more disdainefull, and doth more condemne us then the other. And me thinkes we can never bee sufficiently despised, according to our merite' (*Essayes*, trans. by John Florio [London: 1603], sig. P5^{v-r}).

becomes general if not universal.[78] Perhaps the foremost example is the pseudonym under which Robert Burton publishes his *Anatomy of Melancholy* in 1621: Democritus Junior.

The hybrid early modern Democritus, then, is a figure in whom intimations of the void meet hysterical melancholy, and one by which Hamlet is strongly inflected. That the prince's antic disposition and self-appointed role as sardonic court jester associates him to some degree with the Democritean tradition is obvious. But as we prepare to leave off the matter of Hamlet's atomistic character a few other more specific alignments can be discerned. Hamlet's question 'use every man after his desert and who should scape whipping?' (II.2.508-9) shares misanthropic DNA with Montaigne's endorsement of specifically Democritean self-scorn on the grounds that 'we can never bee sufficiently despised, according to our merite'.[79] He also endorses the kind of relativism embodied first by the Democritus-Heraclitus opposition, and later by Democritus alone, when he states that 'there is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so' (234-45): the quality of existence is here determined by our responses to it, whose potential divergence is as wide as the difference between laughter and tears.[80] Most notable, however, is a line of Hamlet's that seems to gesture specifically towards Democritean atomism. Explaining his melancholy condition, as we have just heard, he alludes to the possibility of an unbounded universe: 'I could be bounded in a nutshell', he says, 'and count myself a king of infinite space' (II.2.248-50). A throwaway rhetorical gesture, perhaps, and as we have seen a number of readings of the line are possible. Yet an infinite universe is an identifiably Democritean tenet that Hamlet links specifically with an unwonted inability to laugh ('I have of late – but wherefore I know not – lost all my mirth' [287-88]), and it is invoked here during a scene in which even quintessences are dusty nothings.[81]

IV

Hamlet, then, resonates with associations of the early modern natural philosophy that privileges experiment. Indeed, it is by experimentalist procedures that its characters approach the question of the interior self, and

---

[78] Lüthy, 'Fourfold', p. 456. He reproduces the relevant page from Erasmus
[79] See note 77 above.
[80] Ronald Knowles sees in Hamlet's declaration sceptical Pyrrhonism ('Hamlet and Counter-Humanism', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 52 [1999], 1046-69), but I take the point to be not that nothing can be securely known but that the meaning of what is agreed to be true is determined relativistically.
[81] Kristen Poole suggests that Hamlet generates a paradox by thinking of divine quintessence as dust (*Supernatural Environments*, pp. 1-2), so that the two possibilities remain in tension. But I suggest that the former actively contradicts and defeats the other.

even more emphatically that they work to establish the existence, character and veracity of the ghostly soul of Old Hamlet: this interior self that has survived the death of its material body. But the play is also alive with intimations of the atomism that goes hand in hand with that experimentalism, which may seem ominous when we remember the pessimistic things that Lucretius has to say about souls, ghosts and identity's capacity to survive material death. Indeed, I now want to argue that if for *Hamlet* experimentalism offers reassuring methods for establishing that the immaterial ghost is real, atomism's conviction that anything not material is vacuum makes some decidedly less reassuring suggestions about it. We can enter these murky waters by observing two correspondingly countervailing features of *Hamlet*'s treatment of the ghost: first the vigorous energy the play itself expends in demonstrating that the ghost is indeed both real and immaterial, and second how the ghost seems nevertheless to shade in its realness ineluctably towards materiality.[82]

'*Hic et ubique*?' Hamlet exclaims, shifting into a learned Latinate register to announce the ghost's stupefying transcendence of the laws of physics. Greenblatt, noting that the tag has never been adequately explained, offers two possible resonances.[83] The first is a 'disquieting' link between the ghost of Old Hamlet and God or Christ, who are also understood to be omnipresent, and the second a liturgical text in which *hic et ubique* refers to the location of Purgatory. De Grazia, taking a slightly different tack, reminds us that ubiquity is associated also with the devil.[84] Yet looked at a certain way the tag is not difficult at all. Rather than hinting at a *disquieting* link with divinity, or even with the diabolical, Hamlet's Latin exclamation is part of an in-earnest attempt to establish the immaterial ghost's transcendence of the laws that govern the material world. Indeed, *hic et ubique* is exactly the brand of confounding paradox conventionally employed by medieval theology to sequester its divine subjects beyond the reach of natural philosophy, in line with the familiar conception of God as a circle with no centre or circumference.[85] Nor is this the first time the play claims ubiquity for the ghost. Earlier, as the spectre slips through the sentries' clutches in I.1, Barnardo asserts ''Tis here.' This is Hamlet's *hic* in the vernacular, and Horatio supplies the implied *ubique*: ''Tis here', he says, so that the ghost seems to be in two places at once. If the sentries attempt to attack the ghost as they speak these lines – Marcellus asks 'Shall I strike at it with my partisan?' – it doubly emphasises the lack of tangible body the lines

---

[82] The latter tendency is of course widely recognised, but as will become clear my approach to it here is substantially different.

[83] Greenblatt, *Hamlet*, pp. 234-35. For the link's origins in Aquinas, who also associates ubiquity with transubstantiation and particularly with Christ, see: Katherine Eggert, 'Hamlet's Alchemy: Transubstantiation, Modernity, Belief', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 64 (2013), 45-57, pp. 56-57.

[84] de Grazia, *Hamlet*, pp. 41, 191.

[85] See: Lewis, *Discarded*, p. 218, and chapter 2 above.

imply. Finally, with the apparition gone, Marcellus comes to the pneumatologically resonant conclusion that

the ghost 'is as the air invulnerable' (121-26). That for Shakespeare 'invulnerable' is a term that specifically

connotes the immateriality of spirits is confirmed in *The Tempest*, where Ariel mocks his attackers with the fact

the material elements 'of whom [their] swords' are tempered, may as well | Wound the loud winds' as hurt

him, since he and his 'fellow-ministers | Are like invulnerable' (III.3.60-66).

So *Hamlet*'s first act is keen to announce the ghost's transcendence of materiality. If dramaturgical

energy expended is anything to go by, it seems of equal importance to the play that the *realness* of this

immaterial thing is put beyond doubt.[86] (This urge *Hamlet* seems to share with its experimentalist characters,

as we have seen.) Indeed, the play seeks to generate a kind of *trompe l'oeil* effect for the ghost. Other spectres

in early modern drama simply appear, and nearly always to solitary individuals, so that their existence is to

some degree questionable.[87] By contrast, in *Hamlet* the ghost's existence is established and attested by

various characters in a forceful dramaturgical escalation that insists upon its empirical reality.[88] It is also

significant that this escalation draws from across the social spectrum. Stage-ghosts are in late sixteenth-

century England clearly vulnerable to class-inflected mockery – see Thomas Lodge's characterisation of the Ur-

Hamlet's ghost as 'like anoisterwife' in its shrieking – but any association of the supernatural with lower-orders

superstition *Hamlet* neatly pre-empts by putting those doubts in the mouths of its lower-orders characters and

having first Horatio then Hamlet himself announce them groundless.[89] These enacted testaments constitute a

graded effort to insist on the ghost's realness by repeatedly anticipating and rebutting potential doubts.

Similarly, Act I's rehearsal of the controversies and uncertainties surrounding early modern ghosts is a mimetic

effect that works to reinforce the realness of the ghost, establishing a fictive world whose sceptical intellectual

approach to the supernatural serves to bolster the realness of the ghost that appears in it.[90] As readers of

Derrida will know, finally, the uncanny priority that the ghost derives from having appeared before *Hamlet*

---

[86] My account here is broadly congruent with others going back to J. Dover Wilson's (*What Happens in Hamlet* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935], pp. 52-60). For a more recent example see: Belsey, 'Shakespeare's Sad Tale'. Belsey suggests that the play's first audiences would have approached it particularly as a ghost story (p. 2).
[87] For a comprehensive review of early modern dramatic ghosts see: Greenblatt, *Hamlet*, pp. 152-95.
[88] Belsey writes that the effects by which *Hamlet*'s ghost is generated are 'new to the early modern stage' ('Shakespeare's Sad Tale', p. 1).
[89] Thomas Lodge, *Wit's Misery, and the worlds madnesse* (London: 1596), sig. Iᵛ.
[90] For another account of this process see: Greenblatt, *Hamlet*, pp. 237-49.

opens is far from insignificant: the ghost is not only as real as but even somehow more real than anything else in Elsinore.[91]

Centre-stage in *Hamlet*, then, we have an immaterial thing whose realness is insisted upon with great force and determination. Yet what can make the play seem hopelessly heterogeneous in this regard are crosscurrents that emphasise the ghost's very materialness. These have been exhaustively catalogued in recent materialist scholarship on the play, enumerated above, and to the most glaring examples we can simply gesture here. Even Hamlet's *hic et ubique* is bookended by the decidedly earthy appellations 'old mole' and 'worthy pioneer'; Hamlet and Horatio's blazon for two voices in I.2 draws our attention to the ghost's fleshly matter down to the level of facial hair and complexion (230-41); Hamlet's vision of the processes by which this supposedly ubiquitous spirit has had to reach the battlements are very kinetic (its cerements have had to tear, the 'ponderous and marble jaws' of its tomb have had to open); and in his reference to the ghost as a 'dead corpse' Hamlet seems to suggest that it is a revenant and not disembodied at all (I.4.29-33). But two things not usually remarked in this connection merit closer attention. Air, as Ariel knows, can seem immaterial, and *Hamlet* accesses this connotation. But the play's repeated use of the word 'waft' to describe the ghost's gestures does something quite different (I.4.42; 56). The word can mean simply 'to beckon'. But it can also denote *movement* in air, a phenomenon that feels material despite its sort-of intangibility.[92] Indeed, it can actively emphasise that materiality: as the OED notes, 'waft' can have a particular association of conveyance, so that what is stressed here is the way air, intangible though it may be, tends towards corporeal effect.[93] Water works similarly in the lines at hand. We note that 'waves', which appears in line 49, is another word that conflates a gesture and a forceful motion. But more important is the way in which through it the scene equates immateriality with liquidity. Hamlet has not long before, in a lengthy aside to the audience, imagined the dissolution of self into 'a dew'.[94] As it fades away into the 'matin' the ghost returns to the idea: 'Adieu, adieu' (I.5.91). These repeated *adieu*'s, extended into a conspicuous series by Hamlet's apparently superfluous repetition of the word as he registers what is essential to be remembered about the ghost's testimony (112), play on and emphasise the watery substance of the ghost's self. It is true that this chorus of dewy goodbyes

---

[91] Jacques Derrida, *Spectres of Marx*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 2.
[92] For more on air in *Hamlet* see: Mazzio, 'History of Air'.
[93] Specifically it can mean 'to carry (something) through the air or through space' (5b).
[94] Eggert notes that this has an alchemical connotation and that Hamlet might be imagining a purified state of being above the body's 'dross' ('Hamlet's Alchemy', p. 50).

from Hamlets *fils et pere* might seem to intimate divine immateriality: it is also a litany of *deus*'s. But if so it cannot help but reduce even the immateriality of the deity to a kind of liquidity.[95]

So the ghost whose real immateriality is insisted upon also seems to shade ineluctably towards the materiality it is supposed to transcend.[96] This is a mere commonplace of materialist commentary on the subject. But to read *Hamlet*'s materializing tendencies simply as evidence of a pervasive materialism, as such commentary tends to do, is to miss at least part of the point. Real and telling they may be, but they are also the result of the very seriousness with which the play attempts to establish the reality of an immaterial thing by embedding it in the empirically-verifiable material scene of Elsinore. If one effect of this embedding in *Hamlet* seems to be a problematically material sense of the ghost, that is, it is still very much immateriality for which the play is reaching. But what may be more serious for the immaterial here is not the ghost's materiality itself but the specific matter-theory that is brought to bear upon it. For though the ghost may start to look not very immaterial at all, and though this is a trend that has preoccupied modern close-readers suspicious of the immaterial as a plausible category, it does not prompt much reflection on the part of the play. What seems of greater concern to *Hamlet*, and what is essential as we proceed here, is specifically that this material embedding exposes the ghost to the gaze of *atomist* natural philosophy, to which its immateriality looks not like materiality, exactly, but rather like a lack of material – which would mean that the ghost is simply nothing.

~~~

The word 'nothing' signifies in a range of linked ways in *Hamlet*, virtually always identifying lack where there should be something.[97] But intimations of nothingness attach with particular force to the ghost, and what has not previously been remarked is that there it becomes unmistakably clear that the 'nothing' *Hamlet* has in

---

[95] The resonances of 'adieu' have been noted previously, but not to my knowledge in their implications for the ghost's material status. See for example: Marvin Rosenberg, *The Masks of Hamlet* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1992), p. 329. Julia Reinhard Lupton and Kenneth Reinhard connect the 'adieus' but only in a psychoanalytical sense, emphasising the homophonic conflation of 'morning' and 'mourning' (*After Oedipus: Shakespeare in Psychoanalysis* [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993], p. 115).

[96] T. J. Clark teases out congruent patterns in *Heaven on Earth*'s discussion of Giotto's painting *Joachim's Dream*, contrasting pre-modern belief in the supernatural with the 'inwardness' that is both 'modernity's great gift' and, among other things, 'empty' (pp. 72-73). 'The more luminous and fully materialized the vision of heaven, or of death defeated, in paintings of this kind', he writes, 'the more human and earthbound the vision becomes' (p. 12).

[97] As Amy Cook notes, 'nothing' appears nearly as often in *Hamlet* as in *King Lear* but is far less well-noted ('Staging Nothing', p. 83). Here we focus on the word chiefly as it pertains directly to the ghost, but some other instances bear noting. Horatio having reported to Gertrude that Ophelia's crazed 'speech is nothing' (IV.5.7), which is to say that it is empty of meaning, on the same subject Laertes reaches the inverted conclusion that 'this nothing's more than matter' (172). Claudius too uses the word in the context of the lack of meaning in antic or insane speech at III.2.87: 'I have nothing with this answer, Hamlet'. As an ocean of psychoanalytic readings of the play attest, moreover, when Hamlet makes puerile jokes about the 'nothing' that lies 'between maids' legs' he is identifying an absence ('no thing' he parses in explanation when Ophelia asks) where there should be a thing (106-09). For *Hamlet*, that is, nothingness is not neutral. Rather, it identifies a place where something important should be – meaning or signification, the sign of manhood – but where there is instead a total lack.

mind is natural philosophical void space. To begin to see how we can turn back to the moment in I.1 in which Barnardo and Horatio between them render a vernacular version of Hamlet's Latinate assertion of the ghost's ubiquity. But now, with *Hamlet*'s fixation upon nothingness in mind, we can see that another reading is possible. The pair's nearly simultaneous and contradictory claims as to the ghost's location do indeed suggest *hic et ubique*: the ghost is at once here and (a different) here. But the sequence ends very differently. What appeared to be ubiquity is revealed to be in fact a total absence: ' 'Tis gone', says Horatio. This miracle is not *hic et ubique*, that is, but *hic et nusquam*: here and nowhere, which is the same as *not* here and nowhere. This might seem close reading indeed. But in fact the two very first statements that are made about the ghost intimate that for all its ostensible thingness it might simply represent an absence of the same. Marcellus (or Horatio according to Q2) asserts that the ghost is a thing in his question to Barnardo: 'has this thing appeared again tonight?' But Barnardo's response incorporates a nihilistic subtext: 'I have seen nothing' (20). Superficially, this means simply that Barnardo has not seen the thing to which Marcellus refers. However, Marcellus's emphasis upon the ghost's thingness gives Barnardo the opportunity to hint at an actual nothingness, an absence in space.

So although Act I will not much later think of the ghost as immaterial, initially it seems to consider the possibility that the spectre is a nothing. 'Nothing' in these instances may seem a bit vague, but for conclusive evidence that by nothing *Hamlet* suggests void space we can turn to Act III. There the ghost reappears in Gertrude's closet, mysteriously now visible only to a spooked Hamlet, whose alarm in turn disquiets Gertrude.[98] She asks what he is looking at, and the following exchange ensues:

> Hamlet: Do you see nothing there?
>
> Gertrude: Nothing at all, yet all that is I see.
>
> Hamlet: Nor did you nothing hear?
>
> Gertrude: No, nothing but ourselves. [III.4.122-24]

Entwined with and subtending this debate over reality and hallucination is a deeper one over immateriality and vacuum. Noteworthy first is that it argues over an entity whose material status has already been established as indeterminate and open to question, and which has previously been attended by suggestions of

---

[98] I do not address here the textually fraught issue of the ghost's nightgown. For a discussion of this aspect of the ghost's apparel and what it might have meant to early audiences see: Lesser, *Hamlet After Q1*, pp. 114-56. Cf. Jones and Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing*, pp. 266-67.

nothingness. But even more conclusive is Gertrude's slightly earlier use of the word 'vacancy' in the connection of the ghost. When she says to Hamlet 'You do bend your eye on vacancy' (108) she intends only that Hamlet is seeing something that is not there. But as we can tell from a glance at *Anthony and Cleopatra*, the word vacancy quite explicitly equates the ghost with vacuum.[99] Enobarbus describes the crowds deserting the market to attend Cleopatra's arrival on her barge. Even the very air would have departed for the same reason, he says, but for one thing: were it to do so a 'vacancy' would be left behind, which is an impossible 'gap in nature' (II.2.219-24). So for Shakespeare the word points specifically to the airless absence that atomism suggests pervades everything in existence – and in *Hamlet* it describes a ghost. As if that were not enough, a few lines later Gertrude unwittingly returns to the issue of the ghost's matter. Her phrase 'bodiless creation' (III.4.128) is like 'vacancy' supposed only to highlight Hamlet's delusion. Yet like that word it also has natural philosophical resonance, describing something that seems to exist in the material scene of bodies ('creation') yet that is not embodied and therefore not truly there.

It is usually supposed that the ghost disappears at this point, not only from the stage but from the thoughts of *Hamlet*'s characters.[100] But I want to suggest now that thinking about the ghost in terms of natural philosophical void space allows us to see that in Act IV we find *Hamlet* still harping on ghosts, and that as the play delivers its conclusion on the matter of the ghost it thinks particularly of its troubling resemblance to vacuum. To see how this is so requires a bit of parsing. During the exchange in which Rosencrantz and Guildenstern demand the location of Polonius's corpse from a peak-manic Hamlet, Rosencrantz says that Hamlet 'must tell us where the body is, and go with us to the King'. This the prince takes as his cue for a chiastic riddle:

> Hamlet: The body is with the King, but the King is not with the body. The King is a thing –
>
> Guildenstern: A thing, my lord?
>
> Hamlet: Of nothing. [IV.2.4-27]

Samuel Johnson found Hamlet incomprehensible here, even suggesting a printer's error, and it has become customary for editors to admit the lines' ultimate inscrutability while suggesting two possible readings: as the

---

[99] The only other meaning it has for Shakespeare, on two occasions, is unoccupied time, but that is obviously not the sense here.
[100] The assumption has been reaffirmed most recently by Rhodri Lewis. Following the closet scene, he writes, 'at no point in the remaining nine scenes of the play does [Hamlet] or anyone else refer to the apparition around which the revenge plot, and so much of the early action, revolve' (*Hamlet*, p. 212). Nearly identical statements are to be found in: Jones and Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing*, p. 266; and Greenblatt, *Hamlet,* p. 226.

Norton Shakespeare's gloss has it, 'Hamlet may mean that Polonius is gone to the afterlife with King Hamlet but Claudius is still alive; or he may refer to the legal theory of the "king's two bodies" '.[101] But I suggest a third sense is at work, one that though suggested partially by Edward Dowden in 1899 has never been developed or explored in any depth.[102] Hamlet's onstage listeners may be equipped to hear in his syllogism about bodies and nothingness only a riff on political theology or a reminder that the real king is dead – at best. But the reader or audience of *Hamlet* has been prepared to detect a further level of signification. We are to understand that the kingly thing of nothing to which Hamlet refers is not only King Claudius but also, and I suggest principally, the ghost of the king that's dead.[103]

Consider several more or less obvious observations that can be adduced about *Hamlet*. It is a play motivated by a disembodied kingly soul that is nevertheless uncannily identical to the king in his embodied state, and indeed at points is closely associated with his corpse: a king apart from yet with his body. At the same time, this intermittently disembodied soul, as has been argued, is insistently attended by intimations of nothingness. These intimations, moreover, are at their most dense and pointed in the closet scene in Act III, not long before Hamlet comes to his conclusion about kings and nothingness in Act IV. In light of all these resonances it would be rather odd if one referent of Hamlet's conclusion that the king is a thing of nothing were not the ghost. But what makes the case certain is that the phrase 'thing of nothing' can in the Renaissance make the specific suggestion that a disembodied soul looks like a natural philosophical vacuum. In Gelli's *The fearfull fansies*, with which these chapters began, Just the cooper tries to embrace his immaterial interlocutor but finds that he cannot. 'But alas,' he cries, 'what is the matter, I feele nothing, yet I see thee: Am I not well in my wyttes?'[104] The soul explains that souls are 'as shadowes, and do only shewe oure selves to the

---

[101] Jerah Johnson summarises the pre-1960s readings, including Samuel Johnson's, in: 'The Concept of the "King's Two Bodies" in *Hamlet*', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 18 (1967), 430-34. Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor's two-volume edition of *Hamlet* (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2006), whose glosses are notably comprehensive, leads with the line's obscureness and offers approximately the same possibilities as the *Norton*. For more on political theology see: Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: a Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957).

[102] Dowden thinks that Hamlet intends 'the body lies in death with the King my father [… but] my father walks disembodied', but that by the time the prince arrives at 'thing of nothing' he is thinking of Claudius (*The Tragedy of Hamlet* [London: Methuen, 1899], p. 153.) Johnson notes Dowden's reading in 1967, but only in passing *en route* to his suggestion that 'probably the real meaning of [the] lines' lies in the context of political theology ('The Concept', p. 431). Hunt observes that 'the Ghost seems very much "a thing of nothing" ' in the closet-scene, but treats the phrase as a convenient coincidence and declines to elaborate upon it ('A Thing of Nothing', pp. 32, 34.) Jennifer Rust links Hamlet's 'thing of nothing' to Old Hamlet's ghost but interrogates the link no further: 'Wittenberg and Melancholic Allegory', in Dennis Taylor and David N. Beauregard, eds., *Shakespeare and the Culture of Christianity in Early Modern England* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2003), pp. 260-84 (pp. 267-68).

[103] If such simultaneous but opposed senses seem hard to credit, we might remember that this is not the only moment mid-play in which Claudius and Old Hamlet's ghost become hard to distinguish. During the closet scene, as Jones and Stallybrass have argued, Hamlet's exclamation 'a king of shreds and patches' (III.4.94) may refer to the ghost rather than or as well as to Claudius (*Renaissance Clothing*, p. 266).

[104] Gelli, *The fearfull fansies,* sig. C.ii^r. Further references again appear parenthetically in the main text.

sighte, but wee can not bee proprely touched, bycause that we be withoute bodyes'. All conventional enough

in theological terms, which are under normal circumstances the appropriate ones by which to consider things

like souls.[105] But Just's interrogation then skews natural philosophical. 'Then you be (as a man might say)', he

suggests in a sly dig alive with social and ethical derision, 'a thing of nothing'.[106] That this is a calumny is

unmistakeable, and the soul will eventually respond to it by way of a retreat into theology and metaphysics: it

is 'one of the substances without body', it says subsequently, 'and immortal' (C.viii^r). But in the first place it

responds in natural philosophical terms, and in doing so confirms the real direction of Just's insult: 'no emptye

called Vacuum', it says, 'can be in Nature' (C.iii^r).

In *The fearfull fansies* the Aristotelian soul and its plenism emerge easily triumphant. But *Hamlet*

seems to side rather with Just in his final pronouncement on the matter: the prince declares that the

disembodied soul of his father is in the end a thing of nothing, which is to say a vacuum, and the conclusion is

not challenged. That this is a somehow dire conclusion seems inevitable, but it will be worthwhile to ask just

why. That a move from immateriality to vacuum represents a demotion is clear, partly by way of idiomatic

prestidigitation: into the natural philosophical sense of the phrase 'thing of nothing' both Just and Hamlet

import the phrase's derogatory social and ethical connotations. But these connotations only accent a much

more profound insult. Above we touched upon the early modern orthodox hostility to the notion of vacuum

on the grounds that it raises challenges to divine prudence and generosity and to providential structure. More

specifically, however, vacuum also attends and constitutes threats to the immaterial soul and its resilience

beyond the grave. Lucretius is as we have seen explicit on the matter, positioning *De Rerum Natura* as an

attack on the kind of delusion that leads people to think they see ghosts. In its very different way Just's soul

testifies to this same threat, both in its staunchly plenist insistence that vacuum is impossible and in its

---

[105] As Henrik Lagerlund writes, Avicenna's 'distinction between the study of the soul in itself, which belongs to metaphysics, and the study of the soul as the principle of animation, which belongs to natural philosophy' was axiomatic in the Middle Ages ('John Buridan and the Problems of Dualism in the Early Fourteenth Century', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 42 (2004), 369-87, p. 369). He also notes that it is a medieval convention to assert, as William of Ockham does, that the question of the odd status of the soul in the material world is a matter of faith (p. 375). In a similar vein, Thomas Harding specifically points out that, though Aristotle's arguments about vacuum stand as they relate to earthly bodies, 'Glorious Bodies' are not subject to those limitations (*A detection of sundrie foule errours, lies, sclaunders, corruptions, and other false dealings, touching doctrine, and other matters uttered and practised by M. Iewel* [1568], sig. GGij^r-GGiij^v). On early modern psychology and its proper subjects cf. Vidal, *Sciences*, passim and esp. pp. 58-68.

[106] In Scripture the phrase describes inconsequence with an impious inflection: Amos 6:13, for instance, accuses those who claim credit for their own military victories, which rightfully attaches to God, of 'rejoic[ing] in a thing of nought'. This is broadly the sense in which Erasmus uses 'thyng of nothyng' as well, for instance in his *Paraphrases* (*The first tome or volume of the Paraphrase of Erasmus upon the Newe Testamente* [London: 1548], sig. Oo8^r). Alternatively it could signify a dearth of personal or social value as it does in Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Humorous Lieutenant*, where reference is made to 'that thing that honours thee [...] tho' a thing of nothing, thy thing ever' (*The Works of Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, Variorum Edition,* 3 Vols., A. H. Bullen, gen. ed., Vol. 2 [London: George Bell and Sons & A. H. Bullen, 1905], IV.6.17-19).

subsequent theological claim that its immortality (which is explicitly underwritten by its immateriality) in any case transcends the material scene. To be matter is to be mortal, in sum, and to be matter pervaded by nothingness is to be especially mortal. But the particular threat of vacuum to the soul is pinpointed most starkly in Anthony Copley's 1596 poem 'A fig for fortune', where we find the following minatory admonition:

> Thou canst not flit from his almightie doome
>
> *He* being th' Arbiter of all, and nothing:
>
> Who gave thee Essence out of *Vacuum*[.][107]

(In 'A Nocturnal upon S. Lucy's Day' Donne says something not dissimilar, opposing both 'quintessence' and 'life, soul, form, spirit' to 'nothingness' [15, 20].) Vacuum, that is, can be understood not only as the enemy of a providential or teleological construction of existence, but specifically as the existential opposite and even negation of the human essence represented by the soul.

So when Hamlet calls his father's soul a thing of nothing he would seem to accuse it of being the exact opposite of what it should be: a sign not of the transcendence of matter, and not merely of ultimate materiality either, but of the profound lack that sits at matter's centre. A drastic diminishment indeed. But if we are fully to apprehend the ghost's diminishment a final problem remains: the fact that in *Hamlet* the ghost is manifestly not a nothing. Copley emphasises that true vacuum stands for absolute negation and absence, which certainly can hold no charge of divinity. But the *presence* of what Barnardo, Gertrude and finally Hamlet call a vacuum is vigorously asserted across Act I, and its immateriality does seem to carry a divine charge. If *Hamlet*'s ghost is a nothing, then, 'nothing' would here seem to stand not for the absence of human essence but entirely conversely for the resilience of that essence beyond the threat of death. On the basis of all this it could be suggested that the result of Hamlet's enquiries into the resemblance of ghostly immateriality to vacuum is not damage to the former but the rehabilitation of the latter. None of which is exactly wrong – in Act I. But it is at this point that we must read *Hamlet*'s sense of ghostly nothingness not as a single statement but as a developing enquiry. It may be that by putting a ghostly nothing onstage *Hamlet* effects not an emptying out of ghostly value but a reconfiguration of vacuum as ghostly presence. But the spectral nothing that emerges in Gertrude's closet in Act III, and crucially that thereafter disappears from the stage altogether, is very changed from the one that haunts the battlements in Act I.

---

[107] Anthony Copley, *A fig for fortune* (London: 1596), sig. E4ᵛ.

In the closet scene Hamlet – and we – see a ghost, one whose real immateriality has previously been established. This ghost's associations with nothingness and absence, while troubling, have ultimately served only to charge its vitality and sheer presence. But now the ghost begins to collapse into those negative states. Gertrude cannot see it and calls it a vacancy, and vacancy is a possibility upon which the play seizes eagerly. The four-part litany of nothings for two voices follows, and after this Gertrude dismisses 'bodiless creation' as mere delusion and 'ecstasy' (III.2.128) – with ecstasy a word that specifically refers to the illusory separation of self and body. The intimations of nothingness that now surround the ghost have reached a crescendo quite unlike the scattered hints of earlier. None of this changes the fact that this 'nothing' is a presence onstage rather than an absence. Yet in fact the ghost's presence has in Act III been eroded. Once so conspicuously seen by all, the ghost is now visible to Hamlet alone, with the careful dramaturgical realness effects of Act I come unstuck and the ghost's status left in question. It is as if *Hamlet* itself is losing faith in the ghost's presence. As a result, when Gertrude repeats Barnardo's claim to have seen nothing, a claim which in his mouth made something out of nothing, since she has in fact not seen anything she refers to the true absence of vacancy. That this is a sorrow the play registers by way of her repeated 'alas': Gertrude thinks she mourns her son's sanity, but the deep cause of the sorrow *Hamlet* voices through her is that the ghost has started to look less like a charged presence and more like an actual absence. The fact persists that the ghost is still present, seen by Hamlet and by us, so that Gertrude remains incorrect to say that it is a vacancy. But she is incorrect neither entirely nor for long. For if the ghost's real presence has been seriously eroded in its invisibility to her, it now evaporates entirely as the ghost disappears once and for all from the stage. Old Hamlet's spirit is invoked only once more, and then only in the course of being finally dismissed as a nothing by its son. While onstage its very presence had refuted that charge. But now absence is exactly what it is.

V

Probably no-one would argue that *Hamlet* is an optimistic work. In it nearly everybody dies, and moreover dark things are intimated about the finality of their deaths. Against this it could be argued that in its apparent

conviction that ghosts are real the play does exhibit a fundamental optimism about the prospects of the self beyond corporeal death. But this optimism as well is ultimately refused by *Hamlet*. Experimental procedures are employed to establish the realness of the immaterial ghost, which seems reassuring. But this involves embedding the ghost in the material scene of Elsinore, where it begins to look rather material. This may be troubling in itself, but even more serious is that early modern experimentalism is predicated upon a theory of matter in which anything not material may be simply void space. This is to say that, all hedgings about ethereal substances aside, beneath its lens immateriality looks suspiciously like vacuum, and by this resemblance *Hamlet*'s ghost is fatally undermined. The returned king is real and immaterial, the play seems to decide at first; yet if so it is a nothing, and following Hamlet's remark to this effect the spirit disappears entirely. Nor indeed is the ghost the only immaterial thing disparaged in the dense nexus of signification that is Hamlet's conclusion about things of nothing. Hamlet does not say 'ghost' but 'king', and by declaring specifically the king to be a thing of nothing he gestures in two other directions as well, folding into his indictment of the ghost's immateriality any and all regal claims to transcend corporeal embodiment.

The second kingly body posited by political theology is an entity that transcends corporeal body and rises to an immaterial perfection associated with divinity. Indeed, squint at this ethereal entity, which Greenblatt describes as a 'fictive artifact' that effects a 'peculiarly human triumph over death', and it can look rather like a ghost.[108] This generates considerable prestige, and one thing Hamlet intends when he calls the king a thing of nothing is the denial to Claudius of that prestige. Far from being transcendent of material, he announces, Claudius is merely vacuous. But Hamlet is also thinking more broadly. The problem with the theory of the king's two bodies is that for the person of the king it is finally inadequate: the prestige and immortality of the immaterial body diverges from the king at death. So it is that Old Hamlet seems reduced by death to individuality. When Hamlet tells Horatio that he sees Old Hamlet in his mind's eye he refers to him only as father (I.2.184), to which Horatio responds that he deemed Old Hamlet 'a goodly king' (185). But Hamlet resists granting his father the continued prestige of kingship: 'A was a man' (186). It is true that upon the reappearance of his father as a ghost Hamlet reverses himself: 'I'll call thee Hamlet, | King, father, royal Dane' (I.4.25-6). The ghost's apparent transcendence of its material body has reactivated Old Hamlet's kingly claim to the transcendence of matter. But this mutually reinforcing association of ghostly and kingly immateriality turns

---

[108] Stephen Greenblatt, 'Introduction: Fifty Years of the *King's Two Bodies*', *Representations*, 106 (2009), 63-66, p. 64.

out to be invidious, enabling Hamlet to demolish them both at a stroke in Act IV. As Julia Reinhard Lupton suggests, *Hamlet* throughout 'takes sardonic pleasure in finding something rotten in the state of sovereignty'.[109] By being alert to the natural philosophical implications of the phrase 'thing of nothing', we can see that this political rottenness is a sign of, is tied to and constitutes an aspect of a deeper ontological problem: an emptiness in the state of everything, a void that denies and indeed seems to replace the possibility of matter-transcendence.

But as he equates immateriality with vacuum Hamlet's sights are set as well upon the immateriality claims of a kingship higher than that of secular sovereigns: those of Christ the King Himself. To parse this requires an understanding of the natural philosophical grounds upon which Reformers attack the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation, and in particular of how those attacks hinge upon void space. In the Eucharist, as Katherine Eggert explains, 'what the priest consecrates at the altar must transform from the substantial forms of bread and of wine to the substantial form of the body and blood of Jesus Christ'. But 'at the same time […] the accidents of bread and wine, their taste, smell, color, and texture […] remain'.[110] It is this that Thomas Cranmer dismisses as impossible in 1550. 'Yf ther remain no bread nor wine [in the sacrament]', he writes, then 'the place where they wer before […] remaineth vacuum'.[111] Cranmer anticipates the Catholic response that the void is filled with the body of Christ. But, since any uneaten consecrated materials were traditionally burned, in that case Catholics must 'bourne the body of Christ, and be called Christbourners'. Christbourning is not an edifying prospect, and the natural philosophical trap now tightens. To escape the charge, Cranmer writes, the Catholic must claim 'that accidents bourne alone without any substaunce', which is 'contrary to all the course of nature'. It is true that in this argument Cranmer comes to focus upon the impossibility of accidents existing independent of substance. Yet ultimately what such a substance-less accident would represent, as Cranmer intimates when he begins with an invocation of void space, is vacuum made visible: something that looks like a something but is in fact a total absence. In Cranmer's argument, that is, an apparently miraculous body is refigured as vacuum, and dismissed.

---

[109] Julia Reinhard Lupton, *Thinking with Shakespeare: Essays on Politics and Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), p. 92.
[110] Eggert, 'Hamlet's Alchemy', p. 48.
[111] Thomas Cranmer, *A defence of the true and catholike doctrine of the sacrament of the body and bloud of our sauiour Christ* (London: 1550), sig. f.i^r. It is worth registering that Catholics did not concede this point; it is reproduced here only to demonstrate the lines of Reformist attack and to illustrate how such attacks homed in on vacuum. For more detail on those attacks in general see: Catherine Gallagher and Stephen Greenblatt, *Practicing New Historicism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

Hamlet, which does the same thing, also quite specifically revisits Reformation debates over the Eucharist. It is in IV.3 that the most obvious reference occurs. Not long after Hamlet disappears from the stage ranting about kings and nothingness, we find Claudius himself in pursuit of the line of questioning initiated earlier on his behalf by Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Following an apparently nonsensical reply – the dead Polonius is 'at supper' – and a demand for clarification, Hamlet gives another oblique response:

> Not where he eats, but where a is eaten. A certain convocation of politic worms are e'en at him. Your worm is your only emperor for diet. We fat all creatures else to fat us, and we fat ourselves for maggots. Your fat king and your lean beggar is but variable service – two dishes, but to one table. That's the end. [IV.3.18-25]

It is frequently noted that Hamlet is here making an impious joke about the Eucharist: the meal which Christ attends not as a guest but as the comestibles, and one subject of debate at the Diet of Worms in 1521. Less obvious is that it is not an isolated instance but part of a pattern. Ophelia too thinks about the ritual. Having expressed her unease at our lack of knowledge of 'what we may be' after death, she exclaims: 'God be at your table!' (IV.5.43) Although editors usually gloss this remark only as part of Ophelia's reference to the folk-tale of the baker's daughter, whom Christ transformed into an owl for her ungenerousness, as Alison A. Chapman has recently noted it also alludes to the Eucharist, the ritual during which the divine entity involves itself in a human repast.[112] But what has not previously been noted is that a further allusion to the Eucharist occurs in Hamlet's diagnosis of the king as a thing of nothing.[113] The prince is indeed talking about a kingly ghost, and an illegitimate king. But regal ghosts can be holy as well as uncanny, and Hamlet's conception of a king that is both with and apart from his body describes what must happen to the body of the King of Heaven during the moment of transubstantiation. One way of thinking of the body of Christ, which can be present at an unlimited number of simultaneous Masses without leaving the side of God, is as ubiquitous. Thought about in that way Christ's body looks like a sign of divine plenitude and generosity. Yet in being in multiple places at once it can also look somehow divergent from itself, as Hamlet suggests, and to carry associations of vacuum, which is to

---

[112] Alison A. Chapman, 'Ophelia's "Old Lauds": Madness and Hagiography in *Hamlet*', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, 20 (2007), 115-35, pp. 115-16.

[113] Gallagher and Greenblatt do not note it in their chapter on *Hamlet* and the Eucharist in *Practicing New Historicism* (pp. 136-62). Mark S. Sweetnam's otherwise comprehensive 2007 analysis passes it over entirely: 'Hamlet and the Reformation of the Eucharist', *Literature and Theology* 21 (2007), 11-28. Neither is it remarked upon in Roberta Kwan, 'Of Bread and Wine, and Ghosts: Eucharistic Controversy and Hamlet's Epistemological Quest', *Journal of Language, Literature and Culture* 62 (2015), 3-18. It does not number among Courtney Bailey Parker's otherwise exhaustive list of Eucharistic moments in the play: ' "Remember Me": Hamlet's Corrupted Host and the Medieval Eucharistic Miracle', *ANQ: A Quarterly Journal of Short Articles, Notes and Reviews,* 28 (2015), 15-20. John E. Curran, Jr. notes Cranmer's 'thing of nothing' comment, yet lets the specific mention of vacuum pass unremarked, in the chapter on the Eucharist in *Hamlet, Protestantism, and the Mourning of Contingency: Not to Be* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p. 24.

say of utter negation or impossible absurdity. For Hamlet as for Cranmer, in the vacuum-haunted space of this divergence divine immateriality is reconfigured. What has appeared to be the mystical transcendence of matter has turned out to be vacuum, which is something that is not there at all.

VI

As we finish it will be instructive to consider from a different angle exactly what it means that the ghost disappears from the play when it does. For it is a conundrum that, while *Hamlet* seems to lose faith in immateriality to such a degree that it simply stops thinking about it, Hamlet himself displays nothing like the collapse in Christian morale we might expect as a result: in fact the opposite occurs. But in light of the arguments developed above an interpretation is possible of these developments that sees them not as incongruous but quite coherent. This reading suggests that the prospect of a human self that both is and disappears into nothing runs from the first moments of the play to the last: from a ghost that resembles nothingness to a prince disappearing into the nothingness of silence. The ghost here may not get the last word, as Watson notes many other early modern revenge tragedy spectres do.[114] But neither does it exactly disappear, even upon what I have argued is the last reference to it in Act IV. Rather, Old Hamlet's spirit returns to the stage in Act V translated into another uncanny emblem with things to say about the transcendence of worldly matter: the *vanitas* skull of Yorick the jester.

Act V opens onto a prince transformed by his abortive inter-act English sojourn. No longer prone to speculations about the possibility of self-negation, risqué antinatalist jokes about nunneries or oblique interrogations of the character of divine bodies, Hamlet has retreated into what appears to be a quite conventional piety.[115] Gone are the anxieties about his own decisions and revisions: 'there's a divinity that shapes our ends', he assures Horatio, 'Rough-hew them how we will' (V.2.10-11); heaven is now 'ordinant' in everything (49), with a 'special providence' guiding even the fall of a sparrow (157-58); a person's submission

---

[114] Watson, *Rest*, p. 98.

[115] In Lewis's account these pieties are obviously and fatally confused (*Hamlet*, pp. 290-99). Like Knowles ('Hamlet and Counter-Humanism', pp. 1062-63), Lewis sees Hamlet's Stoicism here compromising what might seem his new Christian reverence. For a comprehensive account of providential thought in the period see: Elton, *King Lear*, pp. 9-33. Elton does not remark upon Epicurean atomism, however. Also worth bearing in mind here is Jonathan Dollimore's comment that in certain regards the early modern revenger represents specifically 'a subversion of providentialist orthodoxy', with the avenger 'subversively arrogating its retributive function' (*Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries* [Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1984], p. 38).

to this divine order, their 'readiness', is all (160). This faith in providence and divine structure is specifically the antithesis of his previous reflections upon congregations of vapours and quintessences of dust, as we remember from Philipp Caesar's insistence that the world is not made of moates but governed by the providence of God. In another shift towards Christian orthodoxy the ghost is gone as well: the uncannily real yet oblique and even heretical stage-presence which previously offered *Hamlet*'s principal assurance of life beyond material death has been supplanted by the prince's new providentialist faith. It is appropriate, then, that as Act V opens *Hamlet* generates a *vanitas* tableau, accessing the force of a religious and artistic tradition that speaks to precisely the kind of ascetic faith the prince now endorses: profoundly negative about the value of the material world, convinced of the prospect of human integrity beyond it not by miraculous supernatural evidence but by unquestioning faith.

But even if we take Hamlet's piety at face value there are complications here. These we can begin to discern by noting that the appearance of Yorick's *vanitas* skull is in fact not a new development in *Hamlet*. It is obvious that in general the *memento mori* and *contemptus mundi* traditions to which that trope is closely related have reverberated throughout the play.[116] But we can also be more specific, since in the *vanitas* tradition the skull is often accompanied by other icons that are afforded prominence in *Hamlet* as well. One example are the arrases behind which characters conceal themselves on two occasions: Edith A. Standen has shown that these are furnishings of particular luxury, unmistakeably richer than tapestries, and as Holbein's *The Ambassadors* and any number of later examples attest they are a central *vanitas* item.[117] But musical instruments are *vanitas* mainstays as well (usually a lute, but as *The Ambassadors* shows also flutes), and these proliferate in *Hamlet*.[118] According to the stage-directions from Q1 the mad Ophelia enters playing upon a lute, and Hamlet on two occasions compares people to wind instruments. Horatio is 'not a pipe for Fortune's finger', he says, and when the players appear onstage with recorders Hamlet takes it as his cue to accuse Rosencrantz and Guildenstern of viewing him as just such an instrument: ''Sblood, do you think I am easier to be played on than a pipe?' Indeed, Hamlet may invoke the lute at the end of this speech with the word 'fret',

---

[116] The series of dusty deaths in I.ii, from Gertrude's scolding of Hamlet for seeking 'his noble father in the dust' (71) onwards, is very much of a piece with the tradition, for instance, and in Belsey's reading the entire drama resembles a *danse macabre* image: *Shakespeare and the Loss of Eden: The Construction of Family Values in Early Modern Culture* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1999), pp. 129-74. Cf. Indira Ghose, 'Jesting with Death: Hamlet in the Graveyard', *Textual Practice*, 24 (2010), 1003-18. For an account of the *danse macabre* tradition see: Michael Neill, *Issues of Death: Mortality and Identity in English Renaissance Tragedy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 51-81.

[117] Edith A. Standen, 'Rich Arras – Mean Tapestry', *Studies in the Decorative Arts*, 5 (1997-1998), 129-33.

[118] Mary Rasmussen, 'The Case of the Flutes in Holbein's "The Ambassadors" ', *Early Music*, 23 (1995), 114-23, p. 115 and passim.

moving on to an image of a stringed instrument rather than a 'stopped' one.[119] These resonances might seem

coincidental if it were not for the way in which they culminate so conspicuously in the form of Yorick's skull,

and indeed for one last interest shared by trope and play. Democritus is the melancholy, antic atomist often to

be found presiding over or insinuated into *vanitas* compositions, and in *Hamlet* the prince takes on the

philosopher's profile and role, denigrating caustically an Elsinore that as a whole is decorated to resemble just

such a composition.[120]

So the appearance of Yorick's skull, which may seem a new presence ancillary to and illustrative of the

prince's move towards absolute providentialist piety, is in fact only the culmination of the *vanitas* seam that

runs through the play as a whole. What that observation in turn suggests is that Hamlet's new piety itself may

not be the abrupt shift and straightforward disavowal of what has gone before that it is often assumed to be;

rather, despite the impression of a pivot it may represent some kind of continuity. To answer the question this

in turn raises – why and upon what fulcrum would such a continuity *seem* to pivot – we can note precisely

where it is that the *vanitas* mode begins to be foregrounded: immediately after Hamlet's 'thing of nothing'

remark, which as we can now see is not only an insult directed at Claudius but the prince's final declaration

that the ghost and in fact all immaterial entities are merely vacua. That is, it is with the ghost's promises of

immaterial transcendence debunked, and even apparently immaterial earthly things revealed to be vanities,

that *Hamlet* moves into the previously only foreshadowed mode of *vanitas*. 'We fat all creatures else to fat us',

he says, 'and we fat ourselves for maggots […] That's the end' (IV.3.21-25); shortly afterwards the skull of

Yorick becomes the focal point of the stage and the subject of Hamlet and Horatio's discourse, conspicuously

replacing the ghost as *Hamlet*'s emblem of the individual's prospects beyond the grave.[121]

But if this sign of uncompromising faith in the absolute priority of the next world appears, despite its

morbid aesthetics, a more stable source of reassurance than the shifting ghost, in fact the tradition it

emblematizes seems inadequate in similar ways to that debunked entity. For where, we might well ask, is the

transcendence of matter to be found in *vanitas*? The tradition is silent on the subject. Matter's worthlessness

finds vivid representation, but nothing at all is said about a world beyond it: *all*, we are specifically told, is

vanity, so that here too even quintessences may have been reduced to dust. And though this may seem

---

[119] de Grazia notes that even the name 'Lamord' may resonate as a *memento mori* utterance: *Hamlet,* p. 64.
[120] Bergstrom, 'De Gheyn', p. 152.
[121] Watson as well notes some continuities between ghost and skull: *Rest*, pp. 76, 93.

160

wilfully to misread a devout tradition as nihilistic, in fact it is not inappropriate to consider it in such terms. For despite the apparent opposition of Hamlet's new providential faith to his previous visions of vacuity and a world made of moates, the discourse of that faith can chime rather closely with the disenchanted ontology of atomism. The English 'vanity' and *vanitas* alike derive from the Latin *vanus* for 'empty', after all, and Genesis 3:9's 'for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return' is a keynote of Christian fatalism about earthly existence that could also be incorporated seamlessly into *De Rerum Natura*.[122] Along similar lines we remember the apparent peculiarity that Democritus is both the atheistic atomist whose moates deny Christian providence and the presiding genius of Christian *vanitas*.

It may be, that is, that as Hamlet turns to one dusty picture of the material world as a refuge from another he does not distinguish them but rather draws attention to their continuities: specifically, to the way in which both insist upon material emptiness while failing to offer any convincing account of an existence beyond it. The prince seems at points to sense this failure in his new faith. 'That's the end', he states baldly following his vision of humans fatting themselves for worms; later as he lies dying, despite his pious avowals elsewhere in Act V, he declares that 'the rest is silence' (V.2.300), playing on 'rest' as 'sleep' and 'death' but also as 'remainder', which leaves us with an impression of oblivion stretching off indefinitely. And if *Hamlet* as a whole in many respects resembles a *vanitas* painting, the play is faithful to the form in this regard as well, its thought towards the end continuing to stop at the limits of matter.[123] It is true that Horatio seems to imagine something different: 'flights of angels', archetypes of potent immateriality, swinging low to deliver Hamlet to the afterlife (303). Yet it may bode ill that the singing of these immaterial beings, which is imagined as capable of carrying Hamlet, takes on a material tincture rather like the ghost's wafting and waving. Horatio probably refers only to Hamlet's soul here, which mitigates the damage since it would have no material weight anyway. But we can note as well that as he names the deliverance to which angel-song will carry his departed friend Horatio merely echoes the gloomily resonant 'rest' that Hamlet has moments before declared to be the nothingness of silence.[124] Also worth marking is what kind of angels actually appear to transport Hamlet, and the exact nature of their cargo. Horatio has called upon immaterial beings. But in fact it is Fortinbras's troops

---

[122] For a comprehensive account of dust in *Hamlet* see: de Grazia, *Hamlet*, pp. 23-44.
[123] As Gallagher and Greenblatt note in a slightly different connection: 'when Hamlet follows the noble dust of Alexander until he finds it stopping a bung-hole … the progress he sketches is the progress of a world that is all matter' (*Practicing*, p. 162).
[124] Watson gives the more optimistic reading that Horatio refers to a musical 'rest' (*Rest*, p. 97).

who arrive to carry Hamlet away, and the Norwegian prince leaves us in no doubt as to what they bear aloft: 'take up the body' (345).

So while Hamlet's conspicuous turn in Act V may seem to be towards orthodox faith, reading it in a continuum with the play's previous natural philosophical thinking suggests that *Hamlet* itself voices that faith only to reaffirm the dire ontological conclusions reached in natural philosophical terms in Act IV. To note *Hamlet*'s soteriological pessimism is of course commonplace. What is new, however, is to understand the play's ultimate pessimism as the culmination of its natural philosophical thinking about the material status of immaterial things. The play begins with the promise of an afterlife – a ghost – that is investigated and confirmed to be real by the new natural philosophical methods of early modern experimentalism. But the vexingly converse effect of thinking about the ghost in these terms is to suggest that it is the thing of nothing – vacuum – at the heart of the dusty atomist ontology that underpins such new natural philosophy. Following that revelation and apparently in retreat from its implications, late-play Hamlet declares his faith in a providence that shapes our ends, and by implication in a soteriology that guarantees (in a way that the ghost has failed to) human integrity beyond the grave. But that *Hamlet* alights upon *vanitas* as the image of that faith suggests that the play itself continues to think as it has been, and sees a nothingness at the heart of this soteriology as well. In response to seeing the human essence of the soul as a thing of nothing, the play intimates, Hamlet has turned away only to be faced with another nothing.

Conclusion

A recurring focus of these chapters has been the ways in which early modern souls differ from one another. Yet in looking something like an immortal, immaterial version of the human person, the examples under examination have all been broadly of a piece, and as we conclude we might register some other more diverse possibilities. One such is to be found in a sermon of William Pembles, published in 1628, in which the author is much exercised by religious illiteracy. To illustrate the depth of the problem he recounts the dismaying example of 'an old man above sixty, who lived and died in a parish, where there had beene preaching almost all his time, & for the greatest part twice on the Lordes day, besides at extraordinarie times'.[1] (Though the case may be apocryphal, Pembles asserts that he heard it 'from a reverend man out of the pulpit, a place where none should dare to tell a lie'.) The problem is that, despite his lifelong exposure to pious discourse, the old man has apparently remained stoutly immune to instruction in even the most rudimental facts of Christian religion. Asked on his deathbed

> what he thought of God, he answeres that he was a good old man: & what of Christ, that he was a towardly young
>
> youth: & of his soule, that it was a great bone in his bodie, & what should become of his soule after he was dead,
>
> that if he had done wel he should bee put into a pleasant greene meddow.

For another example we can return to the passage from Julian of Norwich with which we opened. There we noted her sense of the 'Ghostly eye' as something that *perceives* the soul, in contrast with the sense of that eye as *being* the soul. But left unremarked was the appearance of the soul it perceives, and this is in fact rather surprising. 'Our good Lord opened my Ghostly eye', Julian writes, 'and shewed me my Soul in the midst of my heart: I saw the Soul so large as it were an endless World, and also as it were a blessed Kingdom'.[2]

A bone whose best hope is to be interred in a field, or an expansive space that resembles a kingdom: these conceptions of the soul are as unlike one another as they are unlike those that have dominated these pages, and issue a salutary reminder that our subject is a very strange, eclectic and protean entity indeed. On the other hand, however, these divergent visions are notable precisely because they are unusual, and it is also

---

[1] William Pemble, *Five godly, and profitable sermons* (Oxford: 1628), sig. C[r]-C2[v].
[2] Julian, *Revelations*, sig. N1[v].

the case that they may not be quite as divergent as they appear. The point of Pembles' story is obviously the haplessness of the old man in considering the soul a part of his body and in believing that he himself can expect no posthumous punishment or reward. But note that, although the old man claims to envisage the soul as merely one of his bones, by the very next clause he identifies his entire identity with that bone, speculating that if *he* has been good it is *he* that will be buried in the field in question. Neither is this end as final or material as it may seem. The meddow he imagines is pleasant, after all, so that there seems to be the assumption here that at least in some oblique way qualitative experience will continue after death. Indeed, that the meddow is particularly a greene one might suggest that from the old man's confusion there emits an echo of the green pastures of Psalm 23 (Falstaff, we remember, may babble the same allusion as he dies).[3] And for Julian's part, though she imagines the soul as a kingdom, she also stresses that this expansive thing exists within the human body, with 'in the midst' suggestive even of inextricableness. More instructive still is that she endorses the association of it with the heart, a conventional link that as we have seen is so close as to render the two synonymous with one another, as they both can be with the human self.

What we get from these surprising examples is a vivid sense of just how different the soul can look without surrendering its claims to the fundamental properties that make it what it is: of how oddly stable it remains in the midst of dramatic shifts. What we get, that is to say, is reconfirmation from quite a different direction of the picture of the soul – as essential yet refractory, as transcendent of material scenes yet inextricably involved in them – that was suggested in the introduction and that has emerged in various forms over the course of the intervening chapters. In the first the emphasis fell upon the inescapability of the soul's material involvements. In the soul and body dialogue the former may indeed be broadly assumed to be the matter-transcendent part of the human. But as we saw by paying particular attention to the continuities between *Soul & Body* and Marvell's 'A Dialogue', in fact the genre insistently focuses upon and problematizes the physical spaces where the soul's transcendent disembodiment must occur, and highlights the way in which the Christian tradition as a whole does the same thing. If as a result of these paradoxical spaces the soul's transcendence of material things is rendered chronically contingent, however, in the second chapter we encountered something quite different: a soul whose transcendence consists exactly in its ability to collapse

---

[3] Or he may not. For a full account of the textual problems relating to Mrs Quickly's account of Falstaff's passing see: George Walton Williams, 'Still Babbling of Green Fields: Mr Greenfields and the Twenty-third Psalm', in Lois Potter and Arthur F. Kinney, eds., *Shakespeare, Text and Theater: Essays in Honor of Jay L. Halio* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1999), pp. 45-61.

and to *de*problematize physical space. It may be that this soul remains inextricable from such space, since it is only in and upon it that the soul's stupefying capacities can operate; nevertheless, here the character of the relationship is quite opposite, and the deep seriousness with which the soul's transcendence of materiality is viewed provided a salutary counterweight to the sceptical tenor of chapter 1. Third we turned to a different sort of soul again, and a different kind of space. In the address to the soul it is true that the addressee is usually assumed to be distinguished from the body; yet the figurative vocabulary of such addresses can leave the soul looking like simply another early modern socioeconomic entity requiring discipline. Here the difficult spaces in which the soul exists are deictic and inner rather than physical, but their effect is nevertheless similar: to maintain the soul in a kind of double state of being transcendent yet never quite transcending. Finally we turned to *Hamlet*, which plays out in quite different ways both the soul's transcendence of materiality and its failure to do so. The text makes very considerable investments in the ghost's transcendence of material, which are by no means to be written off. Yet here again we found a text compelled to consider the soul in terms of space – the physical space of Elsinore, the empty space of atomism – and here again we found a soul whose *raison d'être* it is to transcend the material yet whose ability to do so is exposed to serious doubt.

To thematise our thinking about the soul spatially in this way is instructive. The transcendence of the material may be exactly what the soul is for, which is to say that its purpose is to provide a kind of bridge by which human identity can be safely removed from the calamitous failure of the flesh: yet such a bridge, even if it is imagined to end in the immaterial, begins in physical space and must account for it. But thematising in this way also provides a way of thinking about the formal aspect of the foregoing discussions. Despite excursions into doctrine and philosophy, it has been particularly literary souls with which we have been concerned, and throughout there has been a parallel and related interest in literary form and effect. Three of the chapters have thought about a particular mode or form – dialogue, travelogue, manual of instruction – whose basic structures reflect and are involved in generating the kind of soul they depict, and each of these forms has spatial implications. Dialogue opens up a space that encourages and accommodates debate, and therefore doubt and irresolution; the travelogue depicts worldly space even while in its medieval and early modern constructions it also wants to subordinate such space to the divine pattern of pilgrimage; and the manual of instruction constructs a deictic space in which it seeks to impose discipline upon its reader. Indeed, complementing these affinities of literary structure are others of literary effect, which in each case in

representing the soul is also fundamentally involved in dictating what kind of thing the soul can be and do. *Hamlet* may seem an exception in these regards, since revenge tragedy does not as a literary form seem interested in any particularly apposite ways in physical space or the mimesis thereof. Yet even as *Hamlet*'s characters seek to confirm the ghost within the material space of Elsinore, which is what exposes it to the natural philosophical speculations that in the end are so damaging, as a play the text's distinct challenge is to represent the soul in the real-world space of the stage – and it is the ghost's disappearance from that real-world space, a mimetic literary effect that perfectly represents the unrepresentable absence of vacuum, that ultimately confirms the natural philosophical damage.

These moments capture and reflect in literary form and effect a soul that exists to transcend materiality on the behalf of human identity, yet one whose relationship to matter and space (and, indeed, to the human self) is fraught and shifting in ways that can compromise and even confute that transcendence. This ontological tension obtains long before the Renaissance and continues after it, as the introduction and chapter 1 in particular have been at pains to demonstrate. But as was also suggested in the introduction, the early modern soul is of especial interest precisely because in this period we find the tension at its peak, the numinous coexisting as a compellingly viable category alongside the incipient materialisms that in the full bloom of later modernity will come to deny it. Chapter 4's discussion of *Hamlet* has provided perhaps these pages' most pointed and explicit illustration of such coexistence. This is a play that insists upon an immaterial entity that rescues from oblivion the identity of a dead person; simultaneously, or rather subsequently, it is one that considers, seems to endorse and perhaps even enacts the suggestion of the new natural philosophy that the category of the immaterial is in fact equivalent to absolute non-existence. The sequence of this – the ghost becomes less viable over the course of the play – might seem to leave *Hamlet* agreeing with recent scholarship that has argued for or implied its ultimate materialism. But in fact the seriousness with which the play treats the prospect of immateriality in the first place suggests a rather less straightforward effect. It is certainly the case that by having the ghost fade and then disappear the play seems to make its conclusions clear. Yet within *Hamlet*'s four-hour span the immaterial ghost *has been real* and in this sense persists, stubbornly, in existing, so that in effect the play credits two irreconcilable facts: that the ghost is present and that it is an absence. In giving serious credence to these two opposed facts, I suggest, *Hamlet* presents some of the most seismic shifts of its age in miniature, and it is a difficult attitude these chapters have striven to

emulate: giving full consideration to the ways in which the early modern numinous is beleaguered, yet treating early modern attempts to represent it as more than demonstrations of their own futility.

~~~

But having just now assumed that materialisms come in the end to deny entirely the prospect of immateriality, as we conclude we might consider the extent to which such an assumption is really justified. Stephen Pinker, declaring his intention to put the final nail in the immaterial soul's coffin, calls it 'an ethereal nothing' and asks dismissively how such a 'spook [could] interact with solid matter'.[4] Yet these accusations in their areas of focus – the resemblance of ethereal things to absence; spookiness; the difficult spaces where material and immaterial meet – only echo questions and doubts extending back centuries if not millennia, which may leave him looking mildly overconfident. Nor is the point of this that the immaterial soul has always been an untenable prospect. Pinker and Hamlet alike may conclude that immaterial spooks are mere nothings. But as we have seen now at some length, to a large degree what souls and ghosts are employed to imagine is consciousness and identity, and these are phenomena whose difficult material status contemporary thought is hardly closer than medieval or early modern to resolving.[5]

For the sense of human identity as a unified, outwards-looking interior presence, and one distinct from the material body, is not the preserve of centuries past. Clifford Geertz describes the experience of consciousness as 'a bounded, unique, more or less integrated motivational and cognitive universe, a dynamic center of awareness, emotion, judgment and action organized into a distinctive whole and set contrastively against other such wholes and against its social natural background'.[6] A more recent articulation comes from Galen Strawson, who writes that 'the sense that people have of themselves as being, specifically, a mental presence; a mental someone; a single mental thing that is a conscious subject of experience', and one that 'isn't the same thing as the whole human being' or the body, is a biological fact 'situated below any level of plausible cultural variation'.[7] Other thinkers disagree, notably including Daniel C. Dennett; indeed, the view

---

[4] Steven Pinker, *How the Mind Works* (London: Allen Lane, 1998), p. 64.

[5] What follows is necessarily selective. For a more comprehensive account of twentieth-century cognitive science in a literary context see: Skillman, *The Lyric*, pp. 6-11.

[6] Clifford Geertz, ' "From the native's point of view": on the nature of anthropological understanding', in Richard A. Shweder and Robert A Levine, eds., *Culture Theory: Essays on Mind, Self and Emotion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 126.

[7] Galen Strawson, *The Subject of Experience* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 18, 82, 18. The view is not idiosyncratic: cf. Susan Greenfield, 'Soul, Brain and Mind', in Crabbe, ed., *From Soul to Self*, pp. 108-25 (p. 110). This 'single mental thing', it is true, may be quite attenuated: along with others, Strawson endorses a 'thin subject' whose real duration may be as brief as the transit of a shooting star

that consciousness is fundamentally illusory goes back at least as far as William James, who in the early

twentieth century suggests that consciousness 'is the name of a nonentity […] a mere echo, the faint rumor

left behind by the disappearing "soul" '.[8] But for this Strawson has an irrefutable answer from lived

experience: consciousness cannot be an illusion, he points out, since 'any such illusion is already and

necessarily an actual instance […] of the thing said to be an illusion […], with the result that 'it's not possible

here to open up a gap between appearance and reality, between what *is* and what *seems*'.[9] The moment is

telling. Not only does Strawson assert with some convincingness a singular and immaterial self-presence, but

as he does so he essentially recapitulates Descartes.[10]

Strawson is at pains to deny that his 'sense of the mental self incorporates some sort of belief in an

immaterial soul, or in life after bodily death'.[11] Yet in fact if the Christian soul in certain regards looks not so

different from our continuing sense of the human subject, its contingent transcendence of the material too

enjoys a curious afterlife that we can observe in Antonio R. Damasio's *Descartes' Error*. To be sure, Damasio

denies the immateriality claims of Cartesian dualism: 'where [Descartes] specified a control achieved by a

nonphysical agent', he writes, 'I envision a biological operation structured with the human organism'.[12] But he

also senses that great value is at risk in the transition to materiality, and hastens to add that his biological

operation is 'not one bit less complex, admirable, or sublime' than the immaterial original. Note the gesture

with the loaded 'sublime' towards just the kind of exalted transcendence associated with the Christian soul, a

tic that reappears elsewhere.[13] With this vocabulary Damasio seems to want to migrate into his purely

material mind the matter-transcending values of those immaterial or divine conceptions of selfhood it seeks to

supersede. ('On hygh' offers Sir Thomas Elyot's dictionary for 'Sublime', and Luis de Granada writes of the 'high

---

('The Sense of the Self', in ibid., p. 135). Cf. G. E. M. Anscombe, 'The First Person', in S. Guttenplan, ed., *Mind and Language* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), pp. 21-36; E. J. Lowe, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 264-97.

[8] William James, 'Does Consciousness Exist?', *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods*, 1 (1904), 477-91, p. 477. Cf. Daniel C. Dennett, *Intuition Pumps and Other Tools for Thinking* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2013), p. 285.

[9] Galen Strawson, *Things That Bother Me: Death, Freedom, the Self, Etc* (New York: New York Review, 2018), p. 132. One wonders what Hamlet, who predicates his own claim to privileged interiority on precisely such a distinction, would think.

[10] Writing about literature of a later age, Skillman makes a similar point as I am suggesting here: 'as they reckon with the ubiquitous neuroscientism of their age, [late-twentieth-century poets] insist that the vocabulary of cognitive materialism is both seductive and intuitively reductive, that traditional, transcendental metaphors of mind are obsolescent and yet, also, somehow, true to subjective experience and therefore necessary as well' (*The Lyric*, p. 11).

[11] Strawson, *Subject*, p. 19.

[12] Antonio R. Damasio, *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1994), p. 124. Further references are given parenthetically in the main text.

[13] 'Realizing that there are biological mechanisms behind the most sublime human behaviour', Damasio argues, 'does not imply a simplistic reduction to the nuts and bolts of neurobiology' (125-6)

and sublime contemplation of GOD'.)[14] One could read too much into this: Damasio is sugaring the pill for a lay reader he presumes attached to the Christian or Cartesian inheritance of substance dualism. But his reluctance to reduce 'sublime' immaterial things to the merely physical also seems somehow more than rhetorical, and in the final paragraph of the main text things come into focus: 'the truly embodied mind I envision', Damasio writes, '[…] does not relinquish its most refined levels of operation, those constituting its soul and spirit' (252).

In unexpected quarters, that is, and sometimes by way of a surprisingly retrograde vocabulary, we continue to find hazarded the sense that in some way something about consciousness transcends its physical origins, and that this something makes it a soul. And just as in the Renaissance what can seem to be at stake is meaning and ethics themselves. If we were to accept the suggestion that consciousness is simply an illusion, Strawson writes in the *New York Review of Books*, as opposed to the real though somehow other-than-material thing he posits, we must conclude that 'no one has ever really suffered, in spite of agonizing diseases, mental illness, murder, rape, famine, slavery, bereavement, torture, and genocide. And no one has ever caused anyone else pain'.[15] That this is an ominous ethical prospect is very clear, and Damasio raises it at several points as well; indeed, it concludes the main text of *Descartes' Error*. Tying ethical human behaviour to the mind's 'soul and spirit', Damasio writes that if the abolition of dualist anthropologies were to mean the loss of those properties then 'we will be far better off leaving Descartes' Error uncorrected' (252). What Strawson and Damasio evince here is the anxiety, familiar from the Renaissance, that the meaning and order of human existence relies upon the possibility of in some sense transcending matter. Sir John Davies may refer to immortality rather than immateriality in the lines quoted in the introduction, and to religion rather than social ethics. But each pair is symbiotically linked, and his sense that 'no poore naked nation lives without' belief in a matter-transcending ghost survives, reconfigured but recognizable, to stalk the halls of twenty-first-century physicalism.

Though these chapters have looked sometimes sceptically at the early modern soul, then, the final word should not go to the sceptics. For when medieval and early modern literature considers and represents the soul, for all the strangeness and difference of its phenomenological toolbox it grapples with an intractable

---

[14] Thomas Elyot, *Bibliotheca Eliotae* (London: 1542), sig. Gkiiʳ; Luis de Granada, *Granados spirituall and heavenlie exercises*, trans. by Francis Meres (London: 1598), sig. C10ʳ.

[15] Galen Strawson, 'The Consciousness Deniers', *New York Review of Books*, <https://www.nybooks.com/daily/2018/03/13/the-consciousness-deniers/> [accessed 20 January 2019].

phenomenon whose constitution has by no means been finally resolved in contemporary thought. And in the end no such resolution may be possible at all. As Hannah Arendt puts it in her account of Kant: 'to think God and speculate about a hereafter is, according to Kant, inherent in human thought'; not only things 'given to experience' but 'thoughts also "are,", and certain thought-things […] though never given to experience and therefore unknowable, such as God, freedom, and immortality, are *for us* in the emphatic sense that reason cannot help thinking them and that they are of the greatest interest to men and the life of the mind'.[16] Among all such thought-things 'soul' is perhaps the most compelling and resilient, because it names a thing ultimately made of the thoughts that think it: something that is beyond all perception, physical contact, mensuration or confirmation yet which, as Descartes and Strawson alike insist, is somehow in the end also beyond doubt.

---

[16] Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind* (San Diego: Harcourt, 1971), pp. 40-41.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Abbot, George, *An exposition upon the prophet Jonah Contained in certaine sermons* (London: 1600)

Adams, Thomas, *The devils banket described in foure sermons* (London: 1614)

A. D. B., *The court of the most illustrious and most magnificent James, the first King of Great-Britaine, France, and Ireland* (London: 1619)

[Alleine, Richard], *Heaven opened, or, A brief and plain discovery of the riches of Gods covenant of grace* (London: 1665)

Aneau, Barthelemy, *Alektor* (London: 1590)

Apian, Peter, *Cosmographia* (Antwerp: 1524)

Athenagorus, *The most notable and excellent discourse of the Christian philosopher Athenagoras, as touching the resurrection of the dead*, trans. from Greek by Petter Nannius and from Latin by R. Porder (London: 1573)

Augustine, *A little pamphlet entituled the ladder of paradise* (London: 1580)

Bacon, Francis, *The Historie of Life and Death* (London: 1638)

——, *Sylva Sylvarum* (London: 1627)

Barnes, Barnabe, *A divine centurie of spirituall sonnets* (London: 1595)

Batman, Stephen, *Batman upon Bartholome, his Booke De Proprietatibus Rerum* (London: 1582)

Boyle, Robert, *Some Physico-Theological Considerations About the Possibility of the Resurrection* (London: 1675)

Brant, Sebastian, *The shyppe of fools*, trans. by Alexander Barclay (London: 1509)

Brathwaite, Richard, *The English gentleman containing sundry excellent rules or exquisite observations* (London: 1630)

A Breefe collection concerning the love of God towards mankind (Doway: 1603)

Bridges, John, *A sermon, preached at Paules Crosse* (London: 1571)

Bright, Timothy, *A Treatise on Melancholie* (London: 1586)

Browne, Thomas, *Religio Medici* (London: 1642)

Burghley, William, *Certaine precepts* (London: 1617)

Caesar, Philipp, *A general discourse against the damnable sect of usurers grounded upon the worde of God* (London: 1578)

Calvin, John, *The institution of Christian religion* (London: 1561)

——, *Sermons of John Calvin upon the Songe that Ezechias made after he had bene sicke,* trans. by [Anne Locke] (London: 1560)

Caussin, Nicolas, *The holy court in five tomes* (London: 1650)

Cavendish, Margaret, *Poems, and Fancies* (London: 1653)

Coignet, Matthieu [Martyn Cognet], *Politique Discourses upon Trueth and Lying*, trans. by Edward Hoby (London: 1586)

Copley, Anthony, *A fig for fortune* (London: 1596)

Cranmer, Thomas, *A defence of the true and catholike doctrine of the sacrament of the body and bloud of our sauiour Christ* (London: 1550)

Crashaw, William, *The Complaint or Dialogue, Betwixt The Soule and the Bodie of a Damned Man. Each Laying the Fault Upon the Other* (London: 1622)

Davison, Francis, *A Poetical Rapsody* (London: 1602)

de Granada, Luis, *Granados spirituall and heavenlie exercises*, trans. by Francis Meres (London: 1598)

Digby, Kenelm, *Observations on the 22. stanza in the 9th. canto of the 2d. book of Spencers Faery Queen* (London: 1643)

Digges, Leonard, *A prognostication euerlastinge of right good effecte* (London: 1576)

——, *An arithmeticall militare treatise, named Stratioticos* (London: 1579)

Donne, John, *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions* (London: 1624)

——, *LXXX sermons preached by that learned and reverend divine, John Donne* (London: 1640)

Edwardes, Roger, *A boke of very Godly psalms and prayers* (London: 1570)

Elyot, Thomas, *Bibliotheca Eliotae Eliotis librarie* (London: 1542)

Fletcher, Joseph, *Christes bloodie sweat, or the Sonne of God in his agonie* (London: 1613)

Gelli, Giovanni Battista, *The fearfull fansies of the Florentine couper*, trans. by William Barker (London: 1568)

Gerson, John, *A full devoute and gostely treatyse of the imytacyon and folowynge the blessed lyfe of our moste mercyfull Savyour cryste*, trans. by William Atkinson (London: 1517)

Goodwin, George, *Automachia, or the self-conflict of a Christian* (London: 1607)

Hall, Joseph, *Pharisaisme and Christianity compared and set forth in a sermon at Pauls Crosse* (London: 1608)

Harding, Thomas, *A detection of sundrie foule errours, lies, sclaunders, corruptions, and other false dealings, touching doctrine, and other matters uttered and practised by M. Iewel* (1568)

Hayward, John, *The Sanctuarie of a troubled soule* (London: 1601)

[*Here begynneth a lytell treatyse of the dyenge creature*] (London: 1507)

Heywood, Thomas, *Pleasant dialogues and dramma's* (London: 1637)

Hilton, Walter, *Scala perfeccionis* (London: 1494)

Hobbes, Thomas, *Leviathan, or, The Matter, Form, and Power of a Common-Wealth Ecclesiastical and Civil* (London: 1651)

Howell, James, *The Vision, Or, A Dialog Between the Soul and the Bodie. Fancied in a Morning-Dream* (London: 1651)

Jerome, *Vitas Patrum* (London: 1495)

Julian of Norwich, *XVI revelations of divine love* (London[?]: 1670)

Kempis, Thomas à, *Soliloquium animae. The sole-talke of the soule* (London: 1592)

Lansperger, Johannes Justus, *An epistle in the person of Christ to the faithfull soule* (Antwerp: 1595)

Legrand, Jacques, [*Here begynneth the table of a book entitled the book of good maners*] (London: 1487)

Lodge, Thomas, *Wit's Misery, and the worlds madnesse* (London: 1596)

Lok, Henry, *Sundry Christian passions contained in two hundred sonnets* (London: 1593)

Loredano, Giovanni Francesco, *The ascents of the soul* (London: 1681)

Lyly, John, *Euphues. The Anatomy of Wyt* (London: 1578)

Markham, Gervase, *The souldiers accidence. Or an introduction into military discipline* (London: 1625)

Mill, Humphrey, *Poems occasioned by a melancholy vision* (London: 1639)

Montaigne, Michel de, *Essayes*, trans. by John Florio (London: 1613)

More, Henry, *Psychodia platonica, or, A platonicall song of the soul* (Cambridge: 1642)

More, Thomas, *The Pittifull Life of King Edward the fifth* (London: 1641)

——, *The supplycacyon of soulys* (London: 1529)

Nashe, Thomas, *Christs Teares Over Jerusalem* (London: 1613)

Palmer, Anthony, *The Gospel New-Creature; wherein the Work of the Spirit is opened, in awakening the Soul* (London: 1658)

Pemble, William, *Five godly, and profitable sermons* (Oxford: 1628)

Plat, Hugh, *The jewell house of art and nature* (London: 1594)

The prouffytable boke for mannes soule (London: 1493)

Prynne, William, *Mount-Orgueil: or Divine and profitable meditations* (London: 1641)

Purchas, Samuel, *Purchas his Pilgrim* (London: 1619)

Raleigh, Walter, *Sir Walter Raleighs instruction to his sonne, and to posteritie* (London: 1632)

Reynell, Edward, *Celestial amities: or, A soul sighing for the love of her saviour* (London: 1660)

Rich, Barnabe, *Allarme to England* (London: 1578)

Rolle, Richard, *Rycharde Rolle hermyte of Hampull in his contemplacyons of the drede of god* (1506)

Rollock, Robert, *Lectures upon the first and second Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians* (Edinburgh: 1606)

Saint BERNARD'S Vision. (A brief Discourse Dialogue-wise) between the Soul and body of a Damned Man newly Deceased, laying the faults one upon other: With a Speech of the Devils in Hell (London: 1640)

Sedgwick, Obadiah, *Military Discipline for the Christian Souldier. Drawne out in a Sermon Preached to the Captaines and Souldiers exercising Armes in the Artillery Garden, at their Generall meeting* (London: 1639)

Styward, Thomas, *The pathway to martiall discipline deuided into two books, verie necessarie for young souldiers* (London: 1581)

Sutton, Christopher, *Godly meditations upon the most holy sacrament of the Lordes Supper* (London: 1601)

T. T., [*Some fine gloves devised for Newyeres gyftes to teche Yonge people*] (London: 1560)

Vesalius, Andreas, *Compenios a Totius Anatomie Delineatio* (London: 1553)

Vives, Juan Luis, *The office and duetie of an husband*, trans. by Thomas Paynell (London: 1555)

——, *A verie fruitfull and pleasant booke, called the instruction of a Christian woman*, trans. by Richard Hyrde (London: 1585)

Wyvill, Christopher, *Certaine serious thoughts which at severall times & upon sundry occasions have stolen themselves into verse and now into the publike view from the author* (London: 1647)

Yates, John, *Gods arraignment of hypocrites with an inlargement concerning Gods decree in ordering sinne* (Cambridge: 1615)

Secondary Sources

Ackerman, Robert W., 'The Debate of the Body and the Soul and Parochial Christianity', *Speculum*, 37 (1962), 541-65

Adkins, A. W. H., *From the Many to the One* (London: Constable, 1970)

Aers, David, 'A Whisper in the Ear of Early Modernists; or, Reflections on Literary Critics Writing the 'History of the Subject', in Aers, ed., *Culture and History 1350-1600: Essays on English Communities, Identities and Writing* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1992), pp. 177-202

Albright, Daniel, *Lyricality in English Literature* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985)

Allen, N. B., 'Polonius's Advice to Laertes', *The Shakespeare Association Bulletin*, 18 (1943), 187-90

Almog, Joseph, *Cogito?: Descartes and Thinking the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)

Almond, Philip C., *Afterlife: a History of Life After Death* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2016)

Alpers, Paul, 'Apostrophe and the Rhetoric of Renaissance Lyric', *Representations*, 122 (2013), 1-22

Althusser, Louis, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses', in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. by Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), pp. 85-126

Joel B. Altman, *The Improbability of Othello* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2010)

Anscombe, G. E. M., 'The First Person', in S. Guttenplan, ed., *Mind and Language* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 21-36

Arendt, Hannah, *The Life of the Mind* (San Diego: Harcourt, 1971)

Aristotle, Longinus, Demetrius, *Poetics, On the Sublime, On Style*, trans. by Stephen Halliwell *et al*. and revised by Donald A. Russell (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995)

Aristotle, *De Anima (On the Soul)*, ed. and trans. by Hugh Lawson-Tancred (London: Penguin, 1986)

──, *The Physics*, ed. and trans. by Philip H. Wicksteed and Francis M. Cornford (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2014)

Armstrong, Edward A., *Shakespeare's Imagination* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1963)

Asad, Talal, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993)

Aston, Margaret, *Faith and Fire: Popular and Unpopular Religion 1350-1600* (London: Hambledon Press, 1993)

Athenagoras, *Legatio and De Resurrectione*, trans. and ed. by William R. Schoedel (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972)

Augustine, *The Soliloquies of St. Augustine*, trans. and ed. by Rose Elizabeth Cleveland (Boston: Little, Brown, 1910)

—,*Augustine in His Own Words*, ed. by William Harmless, S. J. (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2010)

Bailey, Lloyd R., 'Enigmatic Bible Passages: Gehenna: The Topography of Hell', *The Biblical Archaeologist*, 49 (1986), 187-91

Ball, Bryan W., *The Soul Sleepers: Christian Mortalism from Wycliffe to Priestley* (Cambridge: James Clarke, 2008)

Barnes, Barnabe, *The Devil's Charter*, ed. by R. B. McKerrow (London: 1904)

Barratt, Alexandra, 'Julian of Norwich and Her Children Today: Editions, Translations, and Versions of Her Revelations', in Srarah Salih and Denise N. Baker, eds., *Julian of Norwich's Legacy: Medieval Mysticism and Post-Medieval Reception* (London: Palgrave, 2009), pp. 12-28

Baudot, Laura, 'An Air of History: Joseph Wright's and Robert Boyle's Air Pump Narratives', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 46 (2012), 1-28

Belsey, Catherine, *Shakespeare and the Loss of Eden: The Construction of Family Values in Early Modern Culture* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999)

──, 'Shakespeare's Sad Tale for Winter: *Hamlet* and the Tradition of Fireside Ghost Stories', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 61 (2010), 1-27

──, *The Subject of Tragedy: Identity and Difference in Renaissance Drama* (London: Methuen, 1985)

Bemong, Nele and Pieter Borghart, 'Bakhtin's Theory of the Literary Chronotope: Reflections, Applications, Perspectives', in Nele Bemong *et al*, eds., *Bakhtin's Theory of the Literary Chronotope: Reflections, Applications, Perspectives* (Gent: Academia Press, 2010), pp. 3-16

Bergstrom, Ingvar, 'De Gheyn as a "Vanitas" Painter', *Oud Holland*, 85 (1970), 143-57

Bevington, David, *Shakespeare's Ideas: More Things in Heaven and Earth* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008)

Bewley, Marius, 'Religious Cynicism in Donne's Poetry', *The Kenyon Review*, 14 (1952), 619-46

Biggs, Frederick M., ed., *Sources of Anglo-Saxon Culture: The Apocrypha* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2007)

Bossy, Michel-André, 'Medieval Debates of Body and Soul', *Comparative Literature*, 28 (1976), 144-63

Boswell, Jackson Campbell, *Dante's Fame in England: References in Printed British Books 1477-1640* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1999)

Bovon, Francois, 'The Soul's Comeback: Immortality and the Resurrection in Early Christianity', *The Harvard Theological Review*, 103 (2010), 387-406

Bradley, S. A. J., ed., *Anglo-Saxon Poetry* (London: Dent, 1995)

Breitenberg, Mark, 'Anxious Masculinity: Sexual Jealousy in Early Modern England', *Feminist Studies*, 19 (1993), 377-98

Bremmer, Jan. N., *The Rise and Fall of the Afterlife* (London: Routledge, 2002)

Brock, Sebastian P., 'The Dispute Between Soul and Body: An Example of a Long-Lived Mesopotamian Literary Genre', *Aram*, 1 (1989), 53-64

Brown, Peter, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988)

Bruce, J. D., 'A Contribution to the Study of "The Body and the Soul": Poems in English', *Modern Language Notes*, 5 (1890), 193-201

Burckhardt, Jacob, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, ed. by Peter Burke (London: Penguin, 1990)

Burns, Norman T., *Christian Mortalism from Tyndale to Milton* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972)

Burt, Stephen, 'What Is This Thing Called Lyric?', *Modern Philology*, 113 (2016), 422-40

Cary, Phillip, *Augustine's Invention of the Inner Self: the Legacy of a Christian Platonist* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000)

Cartlidge, Neil, 'In the Silence of a Midwinter Night: A Re-Evaluation of the *Visio Philiberti*', *Medium Aevum*, 75 (2006), 24-45

Casey, Edward, *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997)

Casini, Lorenzo, " 'Quid sit anima': Juan Luis Vives on the Soul and its Relation to the Body', *Renaissance Studies*, 24 (2010), 496-517

Cassirer, Ernst, *The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy*, trans. by Mario Domandi (Mineola: Dover Publications, 2000)

Chapman, Alison A., 'Ophelia's "Old Lauds": Madness and Hagiography in *Hamlet*', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, 20 (2007), 115-35

Christie, William, 'Lyric', in Christopher John Murray, ed., *Encyclopedia of the Romantic Era, 1760-1850* (Abingdon: Taylor and Francis, 2004)

Clark, T. J., *Heaven on Earth: Painting and the Life to Come* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2018)

Claus, David B., *Toward the Soul: An Inquiry into the Meaning of ψυχή before Plato* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981)

Coffin, Charles, *John Donne and the New Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1937)

Colie, Rosalie L., *My Ecchoing Song: Andrew Marvell's Poetry of Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970)

⸻, *Paradoxica Epidemica: the Renaissance Tradition of Paradox* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966)

Collins, James Daniel, *Descartes' Philosophy of Nature* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1971)

Conlee, John. W., ed., *Middle English Debate Poetry: A Critical Anthology* (East Lansing: Colleagues Press, 1991)

Constas, Nicholas, ' "To Sleep, Perchance to Dream": the Middle State of Souls in Patristic and Byzantine Literature', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 55 (2001), 91-124

Cook, Amy, 'Staging Nothing: *Hamlet* and Cognitive Science', *SubStance*, 35 (2006), 83-99

Copenhaver, Brian P. and Charles B. Schmitt, *Renaissance Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992)

Corcilius, Klaus and Dominik Perler, eds., *Partitioning the Soul: Debates from Plato to Leibniz* (Boston: De Gruyter, 2014)

Cousins, A. D., *Andrew Marvell: Loss and Aspiration, Home and Homeland in Miscellaneous Poems* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016)

Crane, Mary Thomas, *Losing Touch with Nature: Literature and the New Science in 16th-Century England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014)

Culler, Jonathan, *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature* (London: Routledge, 1975)

⸺, *Theory of the Lyric* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2015)

⸺, 'The Language of Lyric', *Thinking Verse*, 4 (2014), 160-76

Curran, John E. Jr., *Hamlet, Protestantism, and the Mourning of Contingency: Not to Be* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006)

Damasio, Antonio R., *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1994)

Daston, Lorraine, 'Marvelous Facts and Miraculous Evidence in Early Modern Europe', *Critical Inquiry*, 18 (1991), 93-124

Daston, Lorraine and Katharine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature, 1150-1750* (New York: Zone Books, 1998)

Datta, Kitty Scoular, 'New Light on Marvell's "A Dialogue Between the Soul and Body" ', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 22 (1969), 242-55

Davies, Sir John, *The Poems of Sir John Davies*, ed. by Robert Krueger (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975)

de Grazia, Margreta, *Hamlet Without Hamlet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007)

⸺, Maureen Quilligan and Peter Stallybrass, eds., *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996)

de Mowbray, Malcolm, '1277 and All That – Students and Disputations', *Traditio*, 57 (2002), 217-38

Derrida, Jacques, *Spectres of Marx*, trans. by Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 2006)

Dear, Peter, *Discipline & Experience: The Mathematical Way in the Scientific Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995)

Dennett, Daniel C., *Intuition Pumps and Other Tools for Thinking* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2013)

Descartes, René, *Discourse on Method and The Meditations*, ed. and trans. by F. E. Sutcliffe (London: Penguin, 1968)

——, *Descartes: Philosophical Writings*, ed. and trans. by Elizabeth Anscombe and Peter Thomas Geach (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1972)

Dicker, Georges, *Descartes: An Analytic and Historical Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013)

Di Sciacca, Claudia, 'The "Ubi Sunt" Motif and the Soul-and-Body Legend in Old English Homilies: Sources and Relationships', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 105 (2006), 365-387

Dobre, Mihnea and Tammy Nyden, eds., *Cartesian Empiricisms* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2013)

Dollimore, Jonathan, *Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1984)

Donne, John, *The Major Works,* ed. by John Carey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)

——, *The Complete English Poems*, ed. by A. J. Smith (London: Penguin, 1996)

Drew-Bear, Annette, *Painted Faces on the Renaissance Stage: the Moral Significance of Face-Painting Conventions* (Lewisburgh: Bucknell University Press, 1994)

Dubrow, Heather, *The Challenges of Orpheus: Lyric Poetry and Early Modern England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008)

Dudley, Louise, 'The Grave', *Modern Philology*, 11 (1914), 429-42

Duffy, Eamon, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, c. 1400-c.1580* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992)

Dunn, Kevin, ' "A Great City is a Great Solitude": Descartes's Urban Pastoral', *Yale French Studies*, 80 (1991), 93-107

Dyck, Noel, 'Anthropological Perspectives on Discipline', in Dyck, ed., *Exploring Regimes of Discipline: The Dynamics of Restraint* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2008), pp. 1-22

Eagleton, Terry, *How to Read a Poem* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006)

Eamon, William, *Science and the Secrets of Nature: Books of Secrets in Medieval and Early Modern Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994)

Eggert, Katherine, 'Hamlet's Alchemy: Transubstantiation, Modernity, Belief', *Shakespeare Quarterly,* 64 (2013), 45-57

Elias, Norbert, *The Civilizing Process: the History of Manners and State Formation and Civilization*, trans. by Edmund Jephcott (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994)

Elton, William R., *King Lear and the Gods* (San Marino: The Huntington Library, 1966)

Empson, William, 'Donne the Space Man', *The Kenyon Review*, 19 (1957), 337-99

Falk, Dan, *The Science of Shakespeare: A New Look at the Playwright's Universe* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2014)

Falk, Doris V., 'Proverbs and the Polonius Destiny', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 18 (1967), 23-36

Fantazzi, Charles, 'Vives and the *emarginati*', in Fantazzi, ed., *A Companion to Juan Luis Vives* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008), pp. 65-112

Faust, Joan, *Andrew Marvell's Liminal Lyrics: The Space Between* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2012)

Ferguson, Mary Heyward, 'The Structure of the "Soul's Address to the Body" in Old English', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 69 (1970), 72-80

Flores, Ralph, 'Cartesian Striptease', *SubStance*, 12 (1983), 75-88

Foucault, Michel, *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1995)

⸺, *Religion and Culture*, ed. by Jeremy R. Carrette (Manchester: Routledge/Manchester University Press, 1999)

Frantzen, Allen J., 'The Body in "Soul and Body I" ', *The Chaucer Review*, 17 (1982), 76-88

Freud, Sigmund, *Reflections on War and Death*, trans. by A. A. Brill and Alfred B. Kuttner (New York: Moffat, Yard & Co., 1918)

Frye, Northrop, 'Approaching the Lyric', in Chaviva Hosek and Patricia Parker, eds., *Lyric Poetry: Beyond New Criticism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985)

Gallagher, Catherine and Stephen Greenblatt, *Practicing New Historicism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000)

Garber, Daniel, 'Descartes' Physics', in John Cottingham, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Descartes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 286-334

Garrett, Brian, 'Anscombe and the First Person', *Critica: Revista Hispanoamericana de Filosofia*, 26 (1994), 97-113

Gaukroger, Stephen, *The Emergence of Scientific Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006)

Ghose, Indira, 'Jesting with Death: Hamlet in the Graveyard', *Textual Practice*, 24 (2010), 1003-18

Gibson, Joan, 'The Logic of Chastity: Women, Sex, and the History of Philosophy in the Early Modern Period', *Hypatia*, 21 (2006), 1-19

Gillies, John, 'Space and Place in "Paradise Lost" ', *ELH*, 74 (2007), 27-57

Godden, Malcolm, 'Aelfric & the Vernacular Prose Tradition', in *Old English Homily and Its Background*, ed. by Paul E. Szarmach and Bernard Felix Huppe (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1978), pp. 99-118

_____, 'Anglo-Saxons on the Mind', in *Old English Literature*, ed. by R. M. Luizza (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), pp. 284-314

Gorton, Lisa, 'The Paradox Topos', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 61 (2000), 343-46

Grafton, Anthony, 'Descartes the Dreamer', *The Wilson Quarterly*, 20 (1996), 36-46

Gray, Douglas, *Themes and Images in the Medieval English Religious Lyric* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972)

Green, Joel B., 'Body and Soul, Mind and Brain: Critical Issues', in Green and Stuart L. Palmer, eds., *In Search of the Soul: Four Views of the Mind-Body Problem* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2005), pp. 7-32

Greenblatt, Stephen, *Hamlet in Purgatory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001)

——, 'Introduction: Fifty Years of the *King's Two Bodies*', *Representations* 106 (2009), 63-66

——, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: from More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980)

——, 'Remnants of the Sacred in Early Modern England', in de Grazia *et al*, eds., *Subject and Object*, pp. 337-48

——, *The Swerve: How the Renaissance Began* (London: Bodley Head, 2011)

Susan Greenfield, 'Soul, Brain and Mind', in M. James C. Crabbe, ed., *From Soul to Self* (New York: Routledge, 1999), pp. 108-25

Greg, W. W., 'Hamlet's Hallucination', *The Modern Language Review*, 12 (1917), 393-421

Gyger, Alison, 'The OE Soul and Body as an Example of Oral Transmission', *Medium Aevum,* 38 (1969), 239-44

Hall, A. Rupert, *The Revolution in Science 1500-1750* (London: Longman, 1983)

Hall, Michael L., 'Circles and Circumvention in Donne's Sermons', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 82 (1983), 201-14

Hankinson, R. J., 'Survival and the Self: Materialism and Metempsychosis – Ancient Attitudes, Modern Perspectives', in Richard Seaford, John Wilkins, and Matthew Wright, eds., *Selfhood and the Soul: Essays on Ancient Thought and Literature in Honour of Christopher Gill* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 67-88

Harbus, Antonina, *Cognitive Approaches to Old English Poetry* (D. S. Brewer: Cambridge, 2012)

Harkness, Deborah E., *The Jewel House: Elizabethan London and the Scientific Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007)

Harris, Jonathan Gil, 'Atomic Shakespeare', *Shakespeare Studies*, 30 (2002), 47-51

Harrison, E. L., 'Notes on Homeric Psychology', *Phoenix*, 14 (1960), 63-80

Hawkes, David, 'Materialism and Reification in Renaissance Studies', *Journal of Early Modern Cultural Studies*, 4 (2004), 114-29

Hayden, Judy A., *Travel Narratives, the New Science, and Literary Discourse, 1569-1750* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012)

Helgerson, Richard, *The Elizabethan Prodigals* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976)

Heningham, Eleanor Kellogg, *An Early Latin Debate of the Body and Soul, Preserved in MS Royal 7 A III in the British Museum* (New York: published by the author, 1939)

Henry, John, 'A Cambridge Platonist's Materialism: Henry More and the Concept of Soul', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 49 (1986), 172-95

⸺, 'The Matter of Souls: Medical Theory and Theology in Seventeenth-Century England', in Roger French and Andrew Wear, eds., *The Medical Revolution of the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 87-113

Highmore, Anthony, *The History of the Honourable Artillery Company of the City of London* (London: 1804)

Hoek, Michelle, 'Violence and Ideological Inversion in the Old English Soul's Address to the Body', *Exemplaria*, 10 (1998), 271-85

Horton, Robin, 'African Traditional Thought and Western Science', *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, 37 (1967), 155-87

Houghton, Walter E. Jr., 'The English Virtuoso in the Seventeenth Century: Part I', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 3 (1942), 51-73

Howard, Donald R., *Writers and Pilgrims: Medieval Pilgrimage Narratives and Their Posterity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980)

Hughes, Richard E., 'The Woman in Donne's Anniversaries', *ELH*, 34 (1967), 307-26

Hunt, John, 'A Thing of Nothing: the Catastrophic Body in *Hamlet*', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 39 (1988), 27-44

Hunter, G. K., 'Isocrates' Precepts and Polonius' Character', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 8 (1957), 501-06

Hutson, Lorna, *The Invention of Suspicion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015)

Jackson, Ken and Arthur F. Marotti, 'The Turn to Religion in Early Modern English Studies', *Criticism*, 46 (2004), 167-90

Jacob, Margaret C., 'The Enlightenment Critique of Christianity', in S. Brown and T. Tackett, eds., *The Cambridge History of Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 265-82

James, William, 'Does Consciousness Exist?', in *The Essential Henry James*, ed. by John R. Shook (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 2011)

Jameson, Fredric, *A Singular Modernity* (London: Verso, 2012)

Jeffreys, Mark, 'Ideologies of Lyric', *PMLA*, 110 (1995), 196-205

Johnson, Jerah, 'The Concept of the "King's Two Bodies" in *Hamlet*', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 18 (1967), 430-34

Jones, Ann and Peter Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000)

Jones, Christopher A., ed., *Old English Shorter Poems* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2012)

Jones, Matthew L., 'Descartes's Geometry as Spiritual Exercise', *Critical Inquiry*, 28 (2001), 40-71

Jorgensen, Paul, 'Moral Guidance and Religious Encouragement for the Elizabethan Soldier', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 13 (1950), 241-59

Judovitz, Dalia, *Subjectivity and Representation in Descartes: The Origins of Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988)

Kalas, Rayna, *Frame, Glass, Verse: the Technology of Poetic Invention in the English Renaissance* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007)

Kantorowicz, Ernst H., *The King's Two Bodies: a Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957)

Karim-Cooper, Farah, *Cosmetics in Shakespearean and Renaissance Drama* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006)

Keefer, Michael H., 'The Dreamer's Path: Descartes and the Sixteenth Century', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 49 (1996), 30-76

Kennington, Richard, 'The "Teaching of Nature" in Descartes' Soul Doctrine', *Review of Metaphysics*, 26 (1972), 86-117

Khan, Amir, 'My Kingdom for a Ghost: Counterfactual Thinking and Hamlet', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 66 (2015), 29-46

Kirby, Brian S., 'Descartes, Contradiction, and Time', *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, 10 (1993), 137-45

Knowles, Ronald, 'Hamlet and Counter-Humanism', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 52 (1999), 1046-69

Kolsky, Stephen Derek, 'Making Examples of Women: Juan Luis Vives' *The Education of a Christian Woman*', *Early Modern Culture Online*, 3 (2012), 14-38

Koyré, Alexandre, *From the Closed World to the Infinite Universe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1957)

Kurtz, Benjamin Putnam *et al*, eds., *Gifer the Worm: An Essay Toward the History of an Idea*, 2 Vols (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1929)

Kwan, Roberta, 'Of Bread and Wine, and Ghosts: Eucharistic Controversy and Hamlet's Epistemological Quest', *Journal of Language, Literature and Culture*, 62 (2015), 3-18

Lacan, Jacques, 'The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience', in Vincent B. Leitch *et al*, eds., *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001), pp. 1285-89.

Laertius, Diogenes, *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers, Volume II: Books 6-10*, trans. by R. D. Hicks (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1925)

Lagerlund, Henrik, 'John Buridan and the Problems of Dualism in the Early Fourteenth Century', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 42 (2004), 369-87

Langley, Eric, *Narcissism and Suicide in Shakespeare and His Contemporaries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009)

Lebans, W. M., 'Donne's Anniveraries and the Tradition of Funeral Elegy', *ELH*, 39 (1972), 545-59

Lee, James Jaehoon, 'John Donne and the Textuality of the Two Souls', *Studies in Philology*, 113 (2016), 879-918

Leonard, John, ' "Doing What He Describes": Enactment in Milton's Poetry', *Cithara*, 49 (2009), 7-25

Lesser, Zachary, *Hamlet after Q1*: *an Uncanny History of the Shakespearean Text* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015)

Levy, Eric P., ' "Things Standing Thus Unknown": The Epistemology of Ignorance In *Hamlet*', *Studies in Philology*, 97 (2000), 192-209

Lewalski, Barbara, *Donne's Anniversaries and the Poetry of Praise: The Creation of a Symbolic Mode* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973)

——, *Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979)

Lewis, C. S., *The Discarded Image* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964)

——, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954)

Lewis, Rhodri, *Hamlet and the Vision of Darkness* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017)

——, 'Shakespeare's Clouds and the Image Made by Chance', *Essays in Criticism*, 62 (2012), 1-23

Lowe, E. J., *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000)

Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, trans. by W. H. D. Rouse and rev. by Martin F. Smith (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992)

Lucy, Sam, *The Anglo-Saxon Way of Death* (Thrupp: Sutton Publishing, 2000)

Lupton, Julia Reinhard, 'The Religious Turn (To Theory) in Shakespeare Studies', *English Language Notes*, 44 (2006), 145-49

⸻, *Thinking with Shakespeare: Essays on Politics and Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011)

Lupton, Julia Reinhard and Kenneth Reinhard, *After Oedipus: Shakespeare in Psychoanalysis* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993)

Lüthy, Christoph, 'The Fourfold Democritus on the Stage of Early Modern Science', *Isis*, 91 (2000), 443-479

Lynch, Richard A., 'The Alienating Mirror: Toward a Hegelian Critique of Lacan on Ego-Formation', *Human Studies*, 31 (2008), 209-21

Maddern, Philippa, 'Murdering Souls and Killing Bodies: Understanding Spiritual and Physical Sin in Late-Medieval English Devotional Works', in Danijela Kambaskovic, ed., *Conjunctions of Mind, Soul and Body from Plato to the Enlightenment* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2014), pp. 25-46

Makuchowska, Ludmila, *Scientific Discourse in John Donne's Eschatological Poetry* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014)

Malherbe, Michel, 'Bacon's Method of Science', in Markku Peltonen, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Bacon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 75-98

Mandeville, John, *The Book of Marvels and Travels*, trans. and ed. by Anthony Bale (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012)

Manning, Gideon, 'The History of "Hylomorphism" ', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 74 (2013), 173-87

Manzo, Silva, 'The Arguments on Void in the Seventeenth Century: The Case of Francis Bacon', *The British Journal for the History of Science*, 36 (2003), 43-61

Marlowe, Christopher, *Dr Faustus and Other Plays*, ed. by David Bevington and Eric Rasmussen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)

Martin, Raymond and John Barresi, *The Rise and Fall of Soul and Self: An Intellectual History of Personal Identity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008)

Martz, Louis L., *The Poetry of Meditation: a Study in English Religious Literature of the Seventeenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954)

Marvell, Andrew, *The Poems of Andrew Marvell*, ed. by Hugh MacDonald (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1952)

Marx, Steven, 'Shakespeare's Pacifism', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 45 (1992), 49-95

Maus, Katharine Eisaman, *Being and Having in Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013)

Mazzio, Carla, 'The History of Air: Hamlet and the Trouble with Instruments', *South Central Review*, 26 (2009), 153-96

McKeon, Michael, *The Origins of the English Novel 1600-1740* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987)

Meinel, Christoph, 'Early Seventeenth-Century Atomism: Theory, Epistemology, and the Insufficiency of Experiment', *Isis*, 79 (1988), 68-103

Melehy, Hassan, *Writing Cogito: Montaigne, Descartes, and the Institution of the Modern Subject* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997)

Merchant, Carolyn, ' "The Violence of Impediments": Francis Bacon and the Origins of Experimentation', *Isis*, 99 (2008), 731-60

Mill, John Stuart, 'What is Poetry?', in Thomas J. Collins *et al*, eds., *The Broadview Anthology of Victorian Poetry and Poetic Theory (Concise Edition)* (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 2000), pp. 78-84

Miller, Paul Allen, *Lyric Texts and Lyric Consciousness: The Birth of a Genre from Archaic Greece to Augustan Rome* (London: Routledge, 1994)

Millus, Donald J., 'Andrew Marvell, Andreas Vesalius, and a Medieval Tradition', *Yale University Library Gazette*, 47 (1973), 216-23

Milton, John, *The Major Works*, Revised ed., ed. by Stephen Orgel and Jonathan Goldberg (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2008)

Mintzker, Yair, 'Between the Linguistic and Spatial Turns: A Reconsideration of the Concept of Space and Its Role in the Early Modern Period', *Historical Reflections / Reflexions Historiques*, 35 (2009), 37-51

Moffat, Douglas, *The Old English Soul and Body* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 1990)

Musurillo, Herbert, 'The Problem of Ascetical Fasting in the Greek Patristic Writers', *Traditio*, 12 (1956), 1-164

Neill, Michael, *Issues of Death: Mortality and Identity in English Renaissance Tragedy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997)

Nelson, Holly Faith, ' "A Good Christian, and a Good Natural Philosopher": Margaret Cavendish's Theory of the Soul(s) in the Early Enlightenment', *Studies in Philology*, 113 (2016), 947-68

Neisser, Ulric, 'Five kinds of self-knowledge', *Philosophical Psychology*, 1 (1988), 35-59

Nevitt, Turner C., 'Survivalism, Corruptionism, and Intermittent Existence in Aquinas', *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, 31 (2014), 1-19

Newman, William R., *Atoms and Alchemy: Chymistry & the Experimental Origins of the Scientific Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006)

Nicolson, Marjory Hope, *The Breaking of the Circle: Studies in the Effect of the 'New Science' upon Seventeenth Century Poetry* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1950)

——, 'The "New Astronomy" and English Literary Imagination', *Studies in Philology*, 32 (1935), 428-62

Northup, Clark Sutherland, 'Dialogus Inter Corpus et Animam: A Fragment and a Translation', *PMLA*, 16 (1901), 503-25

Nuttall, A. D., *Two Concepts of Allegory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967)

Ogilvie, Sheilagh, ' "So that Every Subject Knows How to Behave": Social Disciplining in Early Modern Bohemia', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 48 (2006), 38-78

Origen, *On First Principles*, 2 vols., trans. and ed. by John Behr (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017)

Orton, Peter R., 'The OE Soul and Body: A Further Examination', *Medium Aevum,* 48 (1979), 173-97

Osmond, Rosalie, 'Body and Soul Dialogues in the Seventeenth Century', *English Literary Renaissance*, 4 (1974), 364-403

——, *Imagining the Soul: a History* (Thrupp: Sutton Publishing, 2003)

——, *Mutual Accusation: Seventeenth-Century Body and Soul Dialogues in Their Literary and Theological Context* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990)

Park, Katherine, 'Psychology: The Organic Soul', in Charles B. Schmitt *et al*, eds., *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 464-84

—— and Lorraine Daston, 'Introduction: The Age of the New', in Park and Daston, eds., *The Cambridge History of Science*, 7 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, ???), III, pp. 1-18

Parker, Charles H., 'Diseased Bodies, Defiled Souls: Corporality and Religious Difference in the Reformation', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 67 (2014), 1265-97

Parker, Courtney Bailey, ' "Remember Me": Hamlet's Corrupted Host and the Medieval Eucharistic Miracle', *ANQ: A Quarterly Journal of Short Articles, Notes and Reviews,* 28 (2015), 15-20

Paster, Gail Kern, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993)

——, *Humoring the Body: Emotions and the Shakespearean Stage* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2004)

Paul, *The Vision of Paul,* in Philip Schaffe, ed. and trans., *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 10 vols., electronic reprint ed. (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 2001), IX

Pelikan, Jeroslav, *Christianity and Classical Culture: The Metamorphosis of Natural Theology in the Christian Encounter with Hellenism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993)

Pesic, Peter, 'Wrestling with Proteus: Francis Bacon and the "Torture" of Nature', *Isis*, 90 (1999), 81-94

Pinker, Steven, *How the Mind Works* (London: Allen Lane, 1998)

Plato, *Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Phaedo, Phaedrus*, trans. and ed. by Harold North Fowler (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2014)

――, *Republic, Volume I: Books 1-5,* ed. and trans. by Christopher Emlyn-Jones and William Preddy (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2013)

Poole, Kristen, *Supernatural Environments in Shakespeare's England: Spaces of Demonism, Divinity, and Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011)

Pooley, Roger, *English Prose of the Seventeenth Century 1590-1700* (London: Routledge, 1992)

Potter, Ursula, 'Elizabethan Drama and *The Instruction of a Christian Woman* by Juan Luis Vives', in Juanita Feros Ruys, ed., *What Nature Does Not Teach: Didactic Literature in the Medieval and Early Modern Periods* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), pp. 261-85

Powrie, Sarah, 'Transposing World Harmony: Donne's Creation Poetics in the Context of a Medieval Tradition', *Studies in Philology*, 107 (2010), 212-35

Principe, Lawrence M., 'Boyle's alchemical pursuits', in Michael Hunter, ed., *Robert Boyle Reconsidered* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 91-106

Prior, Moody E., 'Joseph Glanvill, Witchcraft, and Seventeenth-Century Science', *Modern Philology*, 30 (1932), 167-93

Pyle, Andrew, *Atomism and Its Critics* (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1995)

Ramachandran, Ayesha, *The Worldmakers: Global Imagining in Early Modern Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015)

Ramelli, Ilaria L. E., 'Origen, Patristic Philosophy, and Christian Platonism: Re-Thinking the Christianisation of Hellenism', *Vililiae Christianae*, 63 (2009), 217-63

Rapple, Rory, 'Military Culture', in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Popular Culture in Early Modern England*, ed. by Andrew Hadfield *et al* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), pp. 337-56

Rasmussen, Mary, 'The Case of the Flutes in Holbein's "The Ambassadors" ', *Early Music*, 23 (1995), 114-23

Reed, James D. II, ' "Whose This Peece Should Be": Elizabeth Drury's Role as Alchemical Model for Salvation in John Donne's *Anniversaries*', unpublished doctoral thesis (2009), pp. 3-17

Reed, Thomas L., Jr., *Middle English Debate Poetry and the Aesthetics of Irresolution* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1990)

Rees, Graham, 'Atomism and 'subtlety' in Francis Bacon's philosophy', *Annals of Science*, 37 (1980), 549-71

Reid, James, *Memoirs of the Lives and Writings of Those Eminent Divines, Who Convened in the Famous Assembly at Westminster, in the Seventeenth Century* (Paisley: Stephen and Andrew Young, 1811)

Reiss, Timothy J., *Mirages of the Selfe: Patterns of Personhood in Ancient and Early Modern Europe* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003)

Ricciardo, Salvatore, 'Robert Boyle on God's "experiments": Resurrection, immortality and mechanical philosophy', *Intellectual History Review*, 25 (2015), 97-113

Rice, Nicole R., *Lay Piety and religious discipline in Middle English literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009)

Ricks, Christopher, 'Its own resemblance', in C. A. Patrides, ed., *Approaches to Marvell: The York Tercentenary Lectures* (London: Routledge, 1978)

Rhodes, Neil, *Common: the Development of Literary Culture in Sixteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018)

Rimbaud, Jean Nicholas Arthur, *Complete Works, Selected Letters, a Bilingual Edition*, trans. and ed. by Wallace Fowlie, rev. by Seth Whidden (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2005)

Riyeff, Jacob, 'Dualism in Old English Literature: the Body-and-Soul Theme and Vercelli Homily IV', *Studies in Philology*, 112 (2015), 453-68

Roche, Thomas P. Jr., *Petrarch and the English Sonnet Sequences* (New York: AMS Press, 1989)

Rosenberg, Marvin, *The Masks of Hamlet* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1992)

Rudnytsky, Peter L., '"The Sight of God": Donne's Poetics of Transcendence', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 24 (1982), 185-207

Rust, Jennifer, 'Wittenberg and Melancholic Allegory', in Dennis Taylor and David N. Beauregard, eds., *Shakespeare and the Culture of Christianity in Early Modern England* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2003), pp. 260-84

Rytting, Jenny Rebecca, 'A Disputacioun Betwyx þe Body and Wormes: A Translation', *Comitatus*: *A Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 31 (2000), 1-16

Sargent, Rose-Mary, *The Diffident Naturalist: Robert Boyle and the Philosophy of Experiment* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995)

——, 'Learning from Experience: Boyle's Construction of an Experimental Philosophy', in Michael Hunter, ed., *Robert Boyle Reconsidered* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 57-78

Charles B. Schmitt, 'Experience and Experiment: A Comparison of Zabarella's View with Galileo's in De Motu', *Studies in the Renaissance*, 16 (1969), 80-138

——, 'Experimental Evidence for and against a Void: The Sixteenth-Century Arguments', *Isis*, 58 (1967), 352-66

Schoenfeldt, Michael C., *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England: Physiology and Inwardness in Spenser, Shakespeare, Herbert, and Milton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)

Schrift, Alan D., 'Discipline and Punish', in Christopher Falzon *et al*, eds., *A Companion to Foucault* (Oxford: Wiley, 2013), pp. 137-53

Schupbach, William, 'A select iconography of animal experiment', in Nicolaas Rupke, ed., *Vivisection in Historical Perspective* (London: Croom Helm, 1990), pp. 340-60

Seaford, Richard, 'The Psyche from Homer to Plato: A Historical Sketch', in Richard Seaford, John Wilkins, and Matthew Wright, eds., *Selfhood and the Soul: Essays on Ancient Thought and Literature in Honour of Christopher Gill* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 11-32

Segal, Alan F*., Life After Death* (New York: Doubleday, 2004)

Serjeantson, Deirdre, 'Anne Lock's Anonymous Friend: "A Meditation of a Penitent Sinner' and the Problem of Ascription', in Helen Cooney and Mark S. Sweetnam, eds*., Enigma and Revelation in Renaissance English Literature* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2012), pp. 51-72

Shakespeare, William, *The Norton Shakespeare*, revised ed., ed. by Stephen Greenblatt *et al* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2008)

——, *Hamlet*, 2 Vols., ed. by Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2006)

——, *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, ed. by Stephen Booth (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000)

——,*The Sonnets and A Lover's Complaint*, ed. by John Kerrigan (London: Penguin, 1986)

——, *The Tragedy of Hamlet*, ed. by Edward Dowden (London: Methuen, 1899)

Shapin, Steven, ' "A Scholar and a Gentleman": The Problematic Idea of the Scientific Practitioner in Early Modern England', *History of Science,* 29 (1991), 279–27

—— and Simon Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air-Pump: Hobbes, Boyle and the Experimental Life*, rev. ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011)

Shapiro, Barbara J., *A Culture of Fact: England, 1550-1720* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000)

Sheppard, Kenneth, *Anti-Atheism in Early Modern England 1580–1720: The Atheist Answered and His Error Confuted* (Leiden: Brill, 2015)

Sherman, Donovan, *Second Death: Theatricalities of the Soul in Shakespeare's Drama* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016)

Shinn, Abigail, *Conversation Narratives in Early Modern England: Tales of Turning* (Cham: Palgrave, 2018)

Shippey, T. A., *Poems of Wisdom and Learning in Old English* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1976)

Shoaf, Richard Allen, *Lucretius and Shakespeare on the Nature of Things* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014)

Shweder, Richard A. and Robert A Levine, eds., *Culture Theory: Essays on Mind, Self and Emotion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984)

Sidney, Sir Philip, *An Apology for Poetry, or The Defence of Poesy*, ed. by R. W. Maslen & Geoffrey Shepherd (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002)

Siraisi, Nancy, *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine: an Introduction to Knowledge and Practice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990)

Skillman, Nikki, *The Lyric in the Age of the Brain* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2016)

Skinner, Quentin, *Forensic Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014)

Smith, Mark A., 'Descartes' Theory of Light and Refraction: A Discourse on Method', *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, 77 (1987), i-viii+1-92

Smith, Steven B., *Modernity and Its Discontents: Making and Unmaking the Bourgeois from Machiavelli to Bellow* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016)

——, 'An Exemplary Life: The Case of René Descartes', *The Review of Metaphysics*, 57 (2004), 571-97

Snell, Bruno, *The Discovery of the Mind: the Greek Origins of European Thought* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1953)

Sorabji, Richard, 'Soul and Self in Ancient Philosophy', in M. James C. Crabbe, ed., *From Soul to Self* (New York: Routledge, 1999), pp. 8-32

Southam, B. C., 'Shakespeare's Christian Sonnet? Number 146', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 11 (1960), 67-71

Spinrad, Phoebe S., 'The Dilettante's Lie in Doctor Faustus', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 24 (1982), 243-54

Spiro, Milford E., 'Is the Western Conception of the Self "Peculiar" within the Context of the World Cultures?', *Ethos*, 21 (1993), 107-53

Stagl, Justin, *A History of Curiosity: the Theory of Travel 1550-1800* (Chur: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1995)

Standen, Edith A., 'Rich Arras – Mean Tapestry', *Studies in the Decorative Arts*, 5 (1997-1998), 129-33

Staykova, Julia D., 'The Augustinian Soliloquies of an Early Modern Reader: a Stylistic Relation of Shakespeare's Hamlet?', *Literature and Theology*, 23 (2009), 121-41

Stevenson, Jay, 'The Mechanist-Vitalist Soul of Margaret Cavendish', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 36 (1996), 527-43

Stock, Brian, *Augustine's Inner Dialogue: the Philosophical Soliloquy in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010)

Strawson, Galen, *The Subject of Experience* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017)

⸺, 'The Sense of the Self', in M. James C. Crabbe, ed., *From Soul to Self* (New York: Routledge, 1999), pp. 126-52

Sugg, Richard, *The Secret History of the Soul: Physiology, Magic and Spirit Forces from Homer to St Paul* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013)

⸺, *The Smoke of the Soul*: Medicine, Physiology and Religion in Early Modern England (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2013)

Summers, Joseph, *Introduction to Andrew Marvell* (New York: Laurel Poetry Series, 1961)

Sweetnam, Mark S., 'Hamlet and the Reformation of the Eucharist', *Literature and Theology*, 21 (2007), 11-28

Tallet, Frank, *War and Society in Early Modern Europe* (London: Routledge, 1992)

Tallis, Raymond, *Not Saussure: A Critique of Post-Saussurean Literary Theory* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995)

Targoff, Rami, *John Donne, Body and Soul* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2008)

Thomson, Ann, *Bodies of Thought: Science, Religion, and the Soul in the Early Enlightenment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)

Toner, Patrick, 'Personhood and Death in St. Thomas Aquinas', *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, 26 (2009), 121-38

Tromly, Fred B., 'Masks of Impersonality in Burghley's 'Ten Precepts' and Ralegh's *Instructions to his Son*', *The Review of English Studies*, 66 (2015), 480-500

Uckelman, Sara L., 'Logic and the Condemnations of 1277', *Journal of Philosophical Logic*, 39 (2010), 201-27

Usher, Peter D., *Shakespeare and the Dawn of Modern Science* (Amherst: Cambria Press, 2010)

Ustick, W. Lee, 'Advice to a Son: A Type of Seventeenth-Century Conduct Book', *Studies in Philology*, 29 (1932), 409-41

Van Melson, Andrew G., *From Atomos to Atom: the History of the Concept Atom* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960)

Van Pelt, Tamise, 'Lacan in Context: An Introduction to Lacan for the English-Speaking Reader', *College Literature*, 24 (1997), 57-70

Vavilov, S. I., 'Lucretius' Physics', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 9 (1948), 21-40

Vendler, Helen, *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1997)

Vickers, Brian, 'Analogy versus identity: the rejection of occult symbolism, 1580-1680', in Brian Vickers (ed.), *Occult and Scientific Mentalities in the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 95-164

Vidal, Fernando, 'Brains, Bodies, Selves, and Science: Anthropologies of Identity and the Resurrection of the Body', *Critical Inquiry*, 28 (2002), 930-74

——, *The Sciences of the Soul: The Early Modern Origins of Psychology* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2011)

Vives, Juan Luis, *Tudor School-boy Life: The Dialogues of Juan Luis Vives*, trans. and ed. by Foster Watson (London: J. M Dent, 1908)

Voss, A. E., 'The Structure of Donne's Anniversaries', *English Studies in Africa*, 12 (1969), 1-30

Waters Bennett, Josephine, 'Characterization in Polonius' Advice to Laertes', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 4 (1953), 3-9

Watson, Robert N., *The Rest is Silence: Death as Annihilation in the English Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994)

Wear, Andrew, 'Medicine in Early Modern Europe, 1500-1700', in Lawrence I. Conrad *et al*, eds., *The Western Medical Tradition 800 BC to AD 1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 215-341

West, Michael J., 'The Internal Dialogue of Shakespeare's Sonnet 146', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 25 (1974), 109-22

Westman, Robert S., 'Nature, art, and psyche: Jung, Pauli, and the Kepler-Fludd Polemic', in Vickers, ed., *Occult and Scientific*, pp. 177-230

Williams, George Walton, 'Still Babbling of Green Fields: Mr Greenfields and the Twenty-third Psalm', in Lois Potter and Arthur F. Kinney, eds., *Shakespeare, Text and Theater: Essays in Honor of Jay L. Halio* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1999), pp. 45-61

Wilson, Catherine, *Epicureanism at the Origins of Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)

Wilson, J. Dover, *What Happens in Hamlet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935)

Wilson, J. K., *Incomplete Fictions: the Formation of English Renaissance Dialogue* (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1985)

Winny, James, ed., *The Descent of Euphues: Three Elizabethan Romance Stories: Euphues, Pandosto, Piers Plainness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957)

Witmore, Michael, *Culture of Accidents: Unexpected Knowledges in Early Modern England* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001)

Wojcik, Jan W., 'The Theological Context of *Things Above Reason*', in Michael Hunter, ed., *Robert Boyle Reconsidered* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 139-56

Woolf, Rosemary, *The English Religious Lyric in the Middle* Ages (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968)

Woolfson, Jonathan, 'Thomas Hoby, William Thomas, and Mid-Tudor Travel to Italy', in Mike Pincombe and Cathy Shrank, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Literature, 1485-1603* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 404-17

Wragge-Morley, Alexander, 'Robert Boyle and the representation of imperceptible entities', *British Journal for the History of Science*, 51 (2018), 17-40

Wrenn, C. L., *A Study of Old English Literature* (London: Harrap, 1967)

Wright, George T., 'The Lyric Present: Simple Present Verbs in English Poems', *PMLA*, 89 (1974), 563-79

Wright, James L., 'The Mortal Soul in Ancient Israel and Pauline Christianity: Ramifications for Modern Medicine', *Journal of Religion and Health*, 50 (2011), 447-51

Wright, Louise B., ed., *Advice to a Son: Precepts of Lord Burghley, Sir Walter Raleigh, and Francis Osborne* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962)

Wright, Thomas, *The Latin Poems Commonly Attributed to Walter Mapes* (London: The Camden Society, 1841)

Yardy, Danielle, 'Tonal Complexity and Formal Conflicts in the Old English *Soul and Body* Poems', *STET*, 2 (2012), 1-14

Young, Alan R., *Hamlet and the Visual Arts, 1709-1900* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2002)