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The Celestial Progress of a Deathless Soul: Donne's *Second Anniuersarie*

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The *Anniversaries* are among the most widely quoted works of Donne's literary output, while being, at the same time, among the most difficult to interpret.[1] The poems vividly represent the emotional confusion and turmoil accompanying any experience of loss. Many readers have interpreted this anxiety as registering the early modern response to the revolutions and philosophies that destabilized medieval certainties. Thomas Kuhn quoted the *First Anniuersary* in his *Copernican Revolution* to represent the social impact of the heliocentric hypothesis, and history of science textbooks published after Kuhn have followed suit.[2] As a consequence, the *Anniversaries* have attracted possibly the most diverse readership of any of Donne's writings, being of interest not only to literary enthusiasts but historians of science and social historians. Even though repeatedly cited to document a social response, the poems were in fact created to address a private concern. Donne dedicated these poems to honor the life and untimely death of his patron's young daughter, Elizabeth Drury. The *First Anniuersary*'s refrain "shee is dead; shee's dead" is a reminder that the poems emerge from the economy of patronage and were at least ostensibly intended to console a select readership.

Thus a fundamental tension appears at the heart of the poems, as they seem to lament both the loss of a cherished daughter and the erosion of cultural certainties. The scholarship of the *Anniversaries* reflects this

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[1]Quotations of the *Anniversaries* are taken from John Donne, *The Variorum Edition of the Poetry of John Donne*, ed. Gary A. Stringer, vol. 6, *The Anniversaries and the Epicedes and Obsequies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995).

[2]*The Copernican Revolution*, 7th ed. (New York: MJF Books, 1985), p. 194.

duality. Louis Martz and Barbara Lewalski interpret the poems as elegies, thus assuming their primary intent to be one of consolation.[3] More recently, Edward Tayler and Catherine Gimelli Martin have drawn attention to the epistemological framing and philosophical content of the *Anniversaries*, demonstrating how the poems engage the changing currents of scientific thought. Tayler argues that the *Anniversaries* affirm Donne's commitment to Platonic epistemology.[4] Martin detects within the *First Anniuersary*'s structure a subtle polemic directed against the new philosophy and, more specifically, Francis Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*.[5] By juxtaposing the branches of knowledge outlined in the *Advancement of Learning* with the sequence of images in the *First Anniuersary*, Martin establishes thematic correspondences between the two works and shows that the disproportionate universe of the *First Anniuersary* offers a grotesque parody of Bacon's program in which the poem's motif of fragmentation parodies Bacon's belief in progress by illustrating dysfunctional anti-types of his ideals.

If the *First Anniuersary*'s subtitle, *An Anatomie of the World*, signals the poem's prevailing theme of fragmentation, its poetic catalogue of

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[3]Martz shows that the *Anniversary* poems participated in Ignatian devotional practices and offered a meditation upon human mortality as consolation and response to Elizabeth Drury's death (*The Poetry of Meditation* [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1954], pp. 211–248). Lewalski interprets the poems as hymns of praise which transform Elizabeth Drury into a Calvinist *imago dei* restoring the true image in fallen humanity (*Donne's Anniversaries and the Poetry of Praise: The Creation of a Symbolic Mode* [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1973]).

[4]Tayler provides a thorough criticism of Lewalski's interpretation and demonstrates that her reading owed more to a twentieth-century understanding of poetic symbolism than to seventeenth-century Calvinism. Setting a more historically secure course, Tayler begins from Donne's own description of the poem as praise for the "Idea of Woman." In an archaeological investigation of Platonic and scholastic usages of the term, he presents the full range of intonations contained in the seventeenth-century "idea" (*Donne's Idea of a Woman: Structure and Meaning in the "Anniversaries"* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1991]).

[5]"*The Advancement of Learning* and the Decay of the World: A New Reading of Donne's *First Anniversary*," *John Donne Journal* 19 (2000): 163–205.

universal collapse and deconstructing satire, then the *Second Anniuersarie* and its subtitle, *Of the Progres of the Soule*, suggests a redirection of thematic interests toward growth and integration.[6] "Progress" is a key term within the poem's title. The Latin stem *gradus* found within the term's Latin derivative *progredior* recalls late ancient descriptions of education as a journey undertaken through a sequence of steps.[7] Thus the "progress" within the title signals that the *Second Anniuersarie* will offer a more optimistic statement than its satirical and despairing counterpart. If the *First Anniuersary* parodies Bacon's branches of knowledge by illustrating the deficits of his epistemology and method, then the *Second Anniuersarie* offers a model of "progress" that both represents Donne's exploration of the interior self and offers an alternative narrative of "advancement" to counter Bacon's project.

Tayler demonstrates the ways in which the *Second Anniuersarie* is informed by Platonic theories of epistemology. The poem is also informed by a literary tradition of Neoplatonic epics which represent the acquisition of knowledge in terms of a heroic journey.[8] Alan of Lille's *Anticlaudianus* and Dante's *Paradiso* provide two noteworthy examples of this genre. Each transforms the Neoplatonic myth of the soul's return into a philosophical epic that probes the pressing questions of medieval thought, such as the powers and limitations of reason, the mystery of true wisdom, and the soul's yearning for immortality. In a similar fashion, Donne crafts his own literary account of the soul's progress to consider the epistemological and scientific debates of his day. The *Second Anniuersarie* represents Donne's exploration of the nature of the soul, as well as the conjecture that such explorations of human creativity might repair the pieces of a fragmented universe.

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[6] *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 1989 ed., s.v. "progress."

[7] Seth Lerer, *Boethius and Dialogue: Literary Method in the Consolation of Philosophy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985), p. 98.

[8] For further description of philosophical allegories, see Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. Willard R. Trask, Bollingen Series 36 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1953), p. 119, and Giuseppe Mazzotta, *Dante's Vision and the Circle of Knowledge* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 27–29.

Before investigating the ways in which Donne invokes the literary conventions of Neoplatonism in the *Second Anniuersarie*, it is helpful to consider the epistemological interests of Bacon and Donne in turn, so as to clarify their differences and identify the sources of Donne's distrust. In the *Advancement*, Bacon expresses his belief in scientific progress, insisting that the quality of knowledge is improving and not deteriorating into confusion.[9] He criticized scholasticism for privileging textual authority over experiential knowledge and for its rhetorical excess. Scholastic thought assumes that the mental faculties are structured and operate hierarchically, so that an object perceived by the senses is comprehended with reference to an abstraction, accessible to a higher level of intellect. For some scholastics, the process of knowledge acquisition implies a contemplative aspect, since the images perceived in time point toward eternal, transcendent principles. Bacon distrusted this contemplative and transcendent dimension and criticized scholastics for adoring "the deceiuing and deformed Images" of their own invention.[10] He sought to create an epistemology in which the observed particular, not an ethereal archetype, would set the seal of "truth." Uniting the rational and empirical faculties, he created an operative science, which would exist for the practical "vse and benefite of mans life"[11] and not simply as a contemplative exercise. Bacon's theory of knowledge receives intermittent attention in his *Advancement* and is more crisply articulated in his *Novum Organum* (1620), where he defines induction and explains its operation as a scientific procedure that constructs knowledge from the

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[9]The popularity of the decay theory and apocalypticism testifies to the pessimistic intellectual climate in early modern England: see Victor Harris, *All Coherence Gone* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949); for apocalypticism see, Ernest Lee Tuveson, *Millennium and Utopia: A Study in the Background of the Idea of Progress* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), chap. 2; for Donne's reaction to decay theory, see Achsah Guibbory, *The Map of Time: Seventeenth-Century English Literature and Ideas of Pattern in History* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1986), pp. 71–75, and Martin, "*The Advancement of Learning*," pp. 164–165.

[10]*The Advancement of Learning*, ed. Michael Kiernan (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), p. 25.

[11]Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning*, p. 25; for an overview of Bacon's episteme, see Markku Peltonen, introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to Bacon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 14–21.

observation of individual particulars. Bacon's epistemology, based on the "natural particular" would be seminal for emerging paradigms in scientific practice and the development of statistical information.[12]

Donne objected to Bacon's new philosophy, in part because it denigrated the tradition represented in Augustine and Aquinas, and in part because Bacon's curriculum had made theology a subdivision of natural philosophy.[13] Arguably, Donne also disagreed with the fundamental premise of Bacon's theory of knowledge and its claim that the world ought to be examined as a collection of material particulars. In the *First Anniuersary*, Donne represents a universe disintegrating into fragments and thereby illustrates the operation of induction when exercised in its extreme form. The poem transforms the vitality of the world into a cadaver of anatomized, fragmented pieces and, in so doing, signals the intellectual violence that is performed when the life-principle within nature is disregarded and the world is rendered a catalogue of unrelated facts.[14] Thus, the decay motif of the *First Anniuersary* not only operates as the vehicle of Donne's satire, the motif also signals Donne's objection to Bacon's epistemology and displays the dissected world-body that such an epistemology threatens to create.[15]

Donne's epistemological presuppositions are the opposite of Bacon's own, who established his episteme upon the observation of visible things so as to avoid creating fictitious categories based on an imagined resemblance with an abstracted archetype. He regarded analogical thought sceptically, criticizing those who would speak of the macrocosm-microcosm relationship and "pretend to discouer that correspondence or

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[12]For Bacon's role in this history, see Mary Poovey, *A History of the Modern Fact* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), pp. 97–104.

[13]Martin, "*The Advancement of Learning*," pp. 170, 179.

[14]Devon L. Hodges considers the violence performed in the anatomist's quest for truth. He observes that "the procedure creates and discovers the world that Donne describes in his 'Anatomy' as 'corrupt and mortal' in its 'purest part'" (*Renaissance Fictions of Anatomy* [Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1985], p. 15).

[15]Bacon himself uses the vocabulary of dissection, claiming that Nature should be "investigated and brought to the light" and that "it is better to dissect nature than to abstract" (*Novum Organum*, ed. and trans. Lisa Jardine and Michael Silverthorne [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000], p. 168).

concatenation, which is between the superiour Globe and the inferiour."[16] In contrast, Donne seeks unexpected associations and poetically conjoins objects with no seeming commonalities.[17] The metaphysical conceit, Donne's poetic trademark, yokes together the most disparate concepts into poetic fusion. In this respect Donne's intellectual temper more closely resembles the syncretistic philosophies of Renaissance Neoplatonism. Like these earlier thinkers, Donne draws upon a textual tradition to articulate hidden "sympathies" binding disparate parts of the universe. Throughout the course of the Renaissance, the medieval Book of Nature was refitted with more elaborate ornamentation. Ficino's translation of the *Corpus Hermeticum* and Platonic dialogues, as well as Pico's interest in the Cabala, participated in an intellectual archaeological project that furnished the period with mystical number systems, hidden languages, and hieroglyphs. These codes were interpreted as revealing ancient insights into the invisible patterns binding the world-system. Succeeding generations—Paracelsus, Cornelius Agrippa, John Dee, Robert Fludd—drew upon this vocabulary of symbolic terms to elaborate upon the correspondences binding the soul-body relationship, the parts of the universe, and the members of the Trinity. Donne's own poetic trademarks suggest a compatibility with this syncretistic mentality, in so far as his poetry also invokes a universe of correspondences.

The *Second Anniuersarie* offers an example of Donne's own attempt to construct a universe of correspondences, as the poem invokes the conventional analogies of Neoplatonic cosmology and, in the fashion of Renaissance syncretism, seeks to construct more intricate analogies within the macrocosm-microcosm structure. It likens the planetary spheres to beads threaded upon on an imaginary string extending towards the firmament (207–210). The imagery of this beaded sequence is subsequently transformed into a metaphor for the vertebrae along the human spine (211–212). The invisible pith becomes the string

[16]Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning*, p. 27.

[17]Quoting from Donne's *Essays in Divinity*, Martin in "*The Advancement of Learning*" notes that "Donne favors a hermeneutics in which words would not be 'broken, but taken intirely'"(p. 172). Donne refers here to a biblical hermeneutics which interprets individual verses as expressing the meaning of the whole. On the philosophical import of Donne's analogical thought, see Ralph M. McInerny, *Aquinas and Analogy* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1996).

concatenating the little bones of the neck and back into its structural sequence. More than an aesthetic flourish, this elegant refashioning of the macrocosm-microcosm analogy signals the poem's own preoccupation with the activity of connecting parts. Seemingly discrete pieces, whether they be celestial bodies in the heavens, or vertebrae along the skeletal frame, are imperceptibly unified to form the composite whole. In describing the frame of body and universe as pieced together upon a common "string" (213), Donne subtly alludes to the Neoplatonic theory of world harmony, which assigned to each of the planetary spheres its own musical tone and claimed that their revolutions generated celestial music, as fingers brushed against strings form cadences.[18] Joining its own music with the unity expressed in this idea, the poem strings together the disparate pieces of an anatomized universe and, in so doing, draws attention to its own interest in the process of progress and integration. In contrast to the "anatomy" of the first poem, with its catalogue of fragmentation and its autopsy of universal decay, the concatenating preoccupation of the *Progres of the Soule* poetically generates its own subtle structure, stringing together the vertebrae of the poem.

At the same time, the poem demonstrates a suggestive continuity with certain medieval allegories that reinterpret the Neoplatonic myth of the soul's return as signifying a journey through knowledge or spiritual progress. Of particular importance here is Macrobius's *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio* (*Commentarii in Somnium Scipionis*) (*c.* 430), as a source for Neoplatonic thought and for the development of medieval allegory,[19]

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[18]John Dee likens the harmony of the universe to a lyre in his *Propaedeumata aphoristica* (LXXV), cited in Nicholas H. Clulee, *John Dee's Natural Philosophy: Between Science and Religion* (London: Routledge, 1988), p. 43. For medieval sources describing the distance between planets in terms of musical ratios, see Stephen Gersh, *Concord in Discourse: Harmonics and Semiotics in Late Classical and Early Medieval Platonism* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1996), pp. 255–265. For Renaissance explorations of world harmony, see S. K. Heninger, Jr., *Touches of Sweet Harmony: Pythagorean Cosmology and Renaissance Poetics* (San Marino, CA: The Huntington Library, 1974), and *The Cosmographical Glass: Renaissance Diagrams of the Universe* (San Marino, CA: The Huntington Library, 1977).

[19]For the role which the commentary tradition played in the development of allegory as a genre, see A. J. Minnis and A. B. Scott, ed. *Medieval Literary*

which sets Cicero's narrative within an encyclopaedic and Neoplatonic framework.[20] In Cicero's text, Scipio the younger dreams that he has been transported to the outer circle of the heavens, where his venerable ancestor instructs him on matters of the commonwealth, the order of the planets, as well as humanity's destiny and nature. Macrobius elaborates upon these topics, including additional material on Pythagorean number theory, geography, cosmology, the classification of dreams, and Neoplatonic theories of the soul. Alan of Lille's *Anticlaudianus* (*c.* 1181) is also significant in its reinterpretation of Scipio's voyage as an encyclopaedic epic and narrative of education.[21] The *Anticlaudianus*

Theory and Criticism, c.1100–c.1375 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 1–11, 314–328.

[20]Cicero concludes his *De republica* with the narrative of Scipio's dream. While the *De republica* itself was lost, the dream narrative was preserved in Macrobius's commentary. The commentary is sixteen times longer than Cicero's text and, consequently, the commentary assumes a life of its own, endowing the narrative with a new meaning and identity: see William Harris Stahl, *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952), pp. 3–65, and Stephen Gersh, *Middle Platonism and Neo-Platonism,* vol. 2, *The Latin Tradition* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986), pp. 493–495. For the medieval reception of Macrobius, see Albrect Hüttig, *Macrobius im Mittelalter: Ein Beitrag zur Rezeptionsgeschichte der Commentarii in Somnium Scipionis* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1990). For Macrobian influence during the Renaissance, see C. R. Ligota, "L'influence de Macrobe pendant la Renaissance," *Le Soleil à la Renaissance: colloque international tenu en avril 1963 sous les auspices de la Fédération Internationale des Instituts et Sociétés pour l'Etude de la Renaissance et du Ministère de l'Education nationale et de la Culture de Belgique* (Brussels: Presses Universitaires de Bruxelles, 1965), pp. 463–482.

[21]For the encyclopaedic character of allegory as a journey through knowledge or a curriculum, see Ann W. Astell, *Chaucer and the Universe of Learning* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), pp. 11–26. For an introduction to the *Anticlaudianus*, see James J. Sheridan, *Anticlaudianus or The Good and Perfect Man* (Toronto, ON: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1973), pp. 7–38; Richard Hamilton Green, "Alan of Lille's *Anticlaudianus*: Ascensus mentis ad Deum," *Annuale Medievale* 8 (1967): 3–16; Winthrop Wetherbee, *Platonism and Poetry in the Twelfth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972), pp. 211–219; and James Simpson, *Sciences and the Self in Medieval Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 22–133. For the

relates how its allegorical heroine Prudence ascends on a heavenward journey, assisted by the liberal arts and her sister Reason. As their chariot passes the courses of planets, Reason instructs Prudence concerning their order and rotations, while Faith guides Prudence through an understanding of the Christian mysteries and leads her to God's palace, where Prudence obtains the goal of her quest: the form of the perfect human soul. Dante draws upon this literary tradition in his *Paradiso*, creating a narrative of spiritual progress within an encyclopaedic structure,[22] in which the Neoplatonic myth of the soul's return becomes a poetic conceit accenting the innate nobility of the soul and its heavenly destiny.[23] In the final canto of the *Paradiso*, for example, Dante's understanding of his journey and the world-system are synthesized in the Universal book, which gathers the disparate parts of the universe, and his journey, into legible order.

In these philosophical epics, the soul's journey toward the heavenly firmament charts the mind's advancement through learning or the soul's pilgrimage toward its afterlife in order to dramatize an interior process of discovery that discloses both a universe of knowledge and a deeper understanding of self. The individual quest for understanding moves towards a comprehensive perspective of a rationally organized universe as the microcosm reflects upon the macrocosm.[24]

Macrobian influence in the *Anticlaudianus*, see Simpson, *Sciences and the Self*, pp. 102–116.

[22]For Dante's literary debts to Alan of Lille and twelfth-century Neoplatonism, see Peter Dronke, *Dante and Medieval Latin Traditions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 8–14, and Mazzotta, *Dante's Vision and the Circle of Knowledge*, pp. 27–33.

[23]For Dante's poetic recasting of the Neoplatonic return, see John Freccero, *Dante: The Poetics of Conversion*, ed. Rachel Jacoff (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), pp. 223–230, 251–257; and Dronke, pp. 20–31.

[24]The correspondence between inward and outward progressions characterizes much of Neoplatonic thought. As Andrew Louth explains, "the higher is not the more remote; the higher is the more inward: one climbs up by climbing in, as it were. Augustine's *tu autem eras interior intimo meo et superior summo meo,* with its suggested identification of the inward and the higher, strikes an authentically Plotinian note" (*The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition: From Plato to Denys* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981], p. 40).

The fusion of cosmology and personal narrative in these allegories provides a suggestive model for understanding Donne's *Second Anniuersarie*, which itself has been interpreted alternatively as a personal meditation or as a response to cosmographic and philosophical theories.[25] In Macrobius's *Commentary* Scipio's encounter with his venerable ancestor and his consequent discovery of the soul's destiny is framed by theories of cosmology and geography; just as in Alan of Lille's *Anticlaudianus* the quest to restore fallen humanity is figured as an enterprise of utmost concern to both the universe and human intelligence, and as in Dante's *Paradiso*, in which cosmic process mirrors the highest aspirations of the human will: the pilgrim returns to the divine origin of his being, just as the universe itself will return to God at the end of time.[26] Cosmographic material and personal meditation complement each other in creative dialogue, just as they do in the *Second Anniuersarie*. Donne uses the narrative of spiritual progress to unfold a subtly fashioned universe of poetic correspondences. The order of his meditation mirrors the world structure, and so the progress reconnects the pieces of an anatomized universe.

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The *Second Anniuersarie* adapts this model of an allegorical *via mentis* to narrate its own account of the soul's progress. Much as medieval allegories represent the soul's return, Donne's *Progres of the Soule* is framed as a narrative progress through the heavenly spheres to represent a journey through knowledge and self-understanding. Like Dante's *Paradiso,* the thematic structuring of the poem follows the sequence of the planets. In Donne's poem, each celestial circuit is cued by literary motifs, which direct the progress of themes. The *Second Anniuersarie* announces the course of its planetary itinerary midway through the poem:

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[25]See notes 3 and 4 above. For a consideration of the *Anniversarie* poems within a medieval Neoplatonic context, see Richard Douglas Jordan, *The Quiet Hero: Figures of Temperance in Spenser, Donne, Milton and Joyce* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1989), pp. 111–116.

[26]Dronke, p. 21.

Shee baits not at the Moone, nor cares to trie,
Whether in that new world, men liue, and die.
Venus retards her not, to'enquire, how shee
Can, (being one Star) Hesper, and Vesper bee,
Hee that charm'd Argus' eies, sweet Mercury,
Workes not on her, who now is grown all Ey;
Who, if shee meete the body of the Sunne,
Goes through, not staying till his course be runne;
Who finds in Mars his Campe, no corps of Guard;
Nor is by Ioue, nor by his father bard;
But ere shee can consider how shee went,
At once is at, and through the Firmament.
(195–206)

The passage anticipates the structure of the poem's advancement, signalling that each planetary circuit will form a degree within the sequence. The centrality of these verses is reinforced by fact that the title is reintroduced to announce the commencement of this progress: "This must, my soule, thy long-short Progresse bee; / To'aduance these thoughts" (219–220). Similarly, the theme of rebirth dominates these verses, and so the poem self-consciously signals that a new movement is about to burst forth from its own structure. The various metaphors for bodily containment—the prison, the cell, the Inn, the province (169–178)—recede, and the poetic optic redirects its focus from the body to the infinite expanse of the heavens, a backdrop forming a dramatic contrast with the confines of the flesh. After considering how the poor province of the soul is cramped into a mere few yards of skin, the poem reconfigures "death" as an "enfranchisement," arguing that death liberates the soul from body and allows it to reclaim its freedom (180). Not only is the soul free to unfold and fill its true metaphysical volume, it enjoys a greater freedom of movement: the rapid ascent from earth to heaven that the disembodied spirit traverses in a minute is conspicuously contrasted with the movement of the embodied souls that crawl upon the earth at a snail's pace of thirty miles a day (185–187). The soul's upward flight is likened to a "shell" fired from a piece—an evocative term combining the association of propulsion, as when a shell is shot from a fire arm, with the association of release and birth, as when an egg shell releases a new being from confining incubation into life (181–184). The soul cracks the shell of its sublunary encasing and, shooting towards the stars, realizes its

"third birth" (214) into the celestial sphere, following its natural birth in body and its baptismal birth into grace.

The planetary sequence outlined in lines 195–206 announces the beginning of the soul's progress and the course for the poem's itinerary. The passage achieves a textual synopsis similar to Canto 22 of Dante's *Paradiso*, where Dante reaches the final sphere of Saturn, then turns and gazes at the passage of celestial orbits that he has just crossed:

> I saw Latona's daughter radiant,
> Without the shadow that had me once
> Believe that she contained both rare and dense
> And there, Hyperion, I could sustain
> The vision of your son, and saw Diöne
> And Maia as they circled nearby him.
> The temperate Jupiter appeared to me
> Between his father and his son; and I
> saw clearly how they vary their positions.
> (139–147)[27]

The passage not only serves as a narrative summary but, more substantially, offers a moment for the pilgrim Dante to reflect upon his journey and review his encounters with the souls at each circuit. The discursive instruction becomes visually and instantaneously synthesized in his retrospective view of the planetary courses.[28] Dante's textual synopsis bears an obvious literary likeness to the planetary sequence found in Donne's *Second Anniuersarie* (195–206). Both passages endow the planets with mythological attributes, and both articulate the narrative structure of the poems that they inhabit. In Dante's *Paradiso*, the passage offers a retrospective view and narrative summary. The parallel passage found in

[27]Dante, *Paradiso*, trans. Allen Mandelbaum (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), p. 198.

[28]Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis* is the principal intertext for this passage. For a further consideration of similarities between Cicero's *Somnium* and Dante's *Paradiso*, see Patrick Boyd, *Dante Philomythes and Philosopher: Man in the Cosmos* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 105–106.

the *Second Anniuersarie* presents a prospective view, setting the navigational course for the progress to come.[29]

Like medieval allegories of the mind's journey, Dante's and Donne's poetic journeys each transform the planetary sequence into the stages of a spiritual progress.[30] Dante's planetary progression is more obviously articulated. He announces the traversing of each planetary course in his function as narrator. He also signals the sequence more subtly through various semantic fields. Each celestial circuit is fitted with a distinct rhetoric and collection of images unique to itself. Likewise each of the communities in the nesting sequence of Paradise expresses a unique spiritual concern, which suggestively corresponds to the mythological attributes of the planet whose course they inhabit.[31] Donne's navigation of the same planetary course is conducted almost exclusively in subtler semantic modes. He allows the poem's rhetorical coloring and imagery to direct the progress, so that the structure of these planetary courses

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[29]While the planetary ascent recounted in these brief lines (195–206) of the *Second Anniuersarie* has provoked scholars to cast glances in Dante's direction, the poems' similarities have remained largely unexplored, and no study to date has juxtaposed the *Paradiso* and the *Second Anniversarie* as literary works which each engage and reshape Neoplatonic ideas to address their own questions concerning the soul's nature. See H. J. C. Grierson, ed., *The Poems of John Donne*, vol. 2 (London: Oxford University Press, 1912), p. 198. Charles Monroe Coffin corrects Grierson and shows that Donne does not refer to Dante's planetary sequence, but rather that of Tycho Brahe; see *John Donne and the New Philosophy* (Morningside Heights, NY: Columbia University Press, 1938), p. 193. John T. Shawcross provides the same correction; see *The Complete Poetry of John Donne* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967), p. 296. Raymond-Jean Frontain describes the *Second Anniuersarie* as a Protestant modification of the *Paradiso*; see "Donne's Protestant *Paradiso*: The Johannine Vision of the Second Anniversary," in *John Donne and the Protestant Reformation: New Perspectives*, ed. Mary Arshagouni Papazian (Detroit, MI: Wayne State Press, 2003), pp. 113–142.

[30]Donne follows Brahe's planetary system, in which Venus is more proximate to earth than Mercury. Dante and Macrobius both follow the planetary system outlined by Ptolemy in his *Tetrabiblos*, in which Mercury is more proximate (Shawcross, p. 296).

[31]Richard Kay demonstrates the degree to which Dante's *Paradiso* draws upon astrological imagery in *Dante's Christian Astrology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994).

remains encoded within the text. Likewise, the forms of the malleable archetype, "shee," also signal the direction of this planetary pilgrimage as "shee" assumes a variety of manifestations which complement and correspond to the sequence of planetary themes. Much like Dante's heavenly souls, whose spiritual virtues correspond suitably with the planetary circuit that they inhabit, her exemplary forms accompany the sequence of planets and chart the ascent of this spiritual progress.

The *Paradiso* is not, of course, the only possible template for the *Second Anniuersarie*. Dante is certainly one possible source, since Donne was acquainted with the latter's work.[32] However, between Dante and Donne there exists a vast archive of astrological treatises that have adjusted and reinterpreted the tradition. Donne might have been borrowing from Marsilio Ficino's astral conjectures,[33] Pico della Miradola's objections to prognostication,[34] Paracelsus's Hermetic medicine,[35] John Dee's occult philosophy,[36] Spenser's astrology in *The*

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[32]Donne's library included a copy of Dante's *Convivio* (Geoffrey Keynes, *A Bibliography of Dr. John Donne, Dean of Saint Paul's*, 4th ed. [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973], p. 267). In "Donne's Protestant *Paradiso*," Frontain draws attention to Donne's response as a reader of Dante's *Inferno* (p. 130).

[33]Ficino, *Three Books on Life*, ed. and trans. Carol V. Kaske and John R. Clark, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 57 (Binghamton: State University of New York, 1989). For discussions of Ficino's relationship to astrology, see Michael J. B. Allen, "Homo ad zodiacum: Marsilio Ficino and the Boethian Hercules," *Forma e parola: Studi in memoria di Fredi Chiappelli*, ed. Dennis J. Dutschke et al. (Rome: Bulzoni, 1992) reprinted in *Plato's Third Eye: Studies in Marsilio Ficino's Metaphysics and its Sources* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1995); Allen, *Nuptial Arithmetic* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); and Melissa Meriam Bullard, "The Inward Zodiac: A Development in Ficino's Thought on Astrology," *Renaissance Quarterly* 43 (1999): 687–708.

[34]Pico della Mirandola, *Disputationes adversus astrologiam divinatricem*, ed. and trans. Eugenio Garin, 2 vols. (Florence: Vallecchi, 1946–1952). For a discussion of the intellectual context to which Pico was responding, see Steven Vanden Broecke, *The Limits of Influence: Pico, Louvain, and the Crisis of Renaissance Astrology* (Leiden: Brill, 2003).

[35]Paracelsus believed that the stars govern the body; see J. R. R. Christie, "The Paracelsian Body," *Paracelsus: The Man and His Reputation, His Ideas and Their Transformation*, ed. Ole Peter Grell (Leiden: Brill, 1998), pp. 269–291.

Shepheardes Calender,[37] or from the works of any number of obscure cabbalists, hermetists, alchemists, poets or prognosticators. Given the remarkable interest in astrology during the early modern period, Donne likely extracted astrological material from numerous sources to ornament his poetic skies. Of the many possible sources for planetary imagery, Dante's *Paradiso* provides the closest analogue and most effectively illuminates the pattern of Donne's *Second Anniuersarie*. Both poets use the sky as a kind of tentative cartography for tracing hypotheses about the afterlife or metaphysics and they are less interested in applying astral science as a natural philosophy. Both poems create a spiritual pilgrimage and a world structure. Given these similarities, the *Paradiso* serves as a useful point of reference for illustrating the planetary progression charted in Donne's poem.

Dante's pilgrim meets two women on the first stage of his journey within the sphere of the moon. Piccarda and Constanza initially took religious vows as Poor Claire Sisters, but later left their community to enter married life. The characteristics dominating these women's biographies—their chastity in religious life and their inconsistency in turning from their vows—are accented by the backdrop of the moon.[38] In the circuit of Mercury, Dante the pilgrim meets the Emperor Justinian, whose verbal command and dexterity is well suited to this sphere. Named in honor of the Roman messenger god, the planet Mercury was associated with alacrity, cleverness, eloquence, as well as an aptitude for the liberal and mathematic arts. Justinian's ostentatious and elaborate rhetoric parades his cleverness and training in the seven liberal arts. The Emperor boasts of his mastery over the written word, pointing to the

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[36]"*Propaedumata aphoristica*," in *John Dee on Astronomy*, ed. and trans. Wayne Schumaker (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978). For the context of Dee's astrology, see Clulee, *John Dee's Natural Philosophy*, pp. 39–73; Deborah E. Harkness, *John Dee's Conversations with Angels: Cabala, Alchemy and the End of Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 71–77; and György E. Szónyi, *John Dee's Occultism: Magical Exaltation Through Powerful Signs* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), pp. 157–161.

[37]J. Michael Richardson, *Astrological Symbolism in Spenser's "The Shepheardes Calender": The Cultural Background of a Literary Text* (Lewiston, NY: Mellen Press, 1989).

[38]The moon, femininity, and chastity are linked through a shared association with the goddess Diana.

codifying achievement of his *Corpus Iustinianum*, the first document to compile and systematize Roman law. When the pilgrim crosses into the course of Venus, he meets the troubadour Folco of Marseilles and Cunizza da Romano, a woman celebrated in troubadour lyrics for her love affairs. Cunizza expresses regret for the flaws of her mortal life, explaining that her will was overpowered by the influence of the same Venusian star whose circuit she now inhabits (*Paradiso*, 9.32–35). Folco, also penitent, turned from the illicit affairs of his youth and entered a Cistercian monastery in later life. The follies of *fins amour*, luxury, and the indolence of courtly life are all considered here, appropriately, in this Venusian circuit.

The circuit of the sun stages the most intellectual cantos of the *Paradiso*. As the dominating body in the sky, the sun is associated with the ruling parts of the human body: the heart and the head. As the source of heat and light, it is associated with Apollo and his dominion over science, truth, reason, and wisdom. Thus, Dante the poet places scholastics and philosophers within the sphere of the sun, while Dante the journeying pilgrim receives instruction in the solar sphere from Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure. The subsequent planet Mars presented a challenge to Dante's construction of Paradise, given the difficulty of reconciling the peace of beatitude with the Martian attributes of warfare and destruction. However, as Richard Kay argues, Dante solved this problem by highlighting the heroic virtues of courage and strength and by suggesting their likeness to the Thomistic explanation of fortitude. Thus, the pilgrim meets souls who are "heroes of the faith" distinguished by their courageous deeds and leadership.[39] A similar adjustment is found in Dante's rendering of the prosperity and abundance associated with Jupiter. While astrologers linked the material bounty promised by Jupiter's influence with happiness, Dante's Jovian cantos reflect upon the gifts of grace in the virtues of justice, piety, and mercy. The souls inhabiting the course of Jupiter are models of equanimity and justice, and their ranks trace in the sky the phrase: "Diligite Iustitiam" (*Paradiso*, 18.91).[40]

Like the *Paradiso*, Donne's *Second Anniuersarie* represents the progress of the soul through a sequence of encounters, each of which discloses an

[39]Kay, pp. 142–153.
[40]Kay, pp. 191–215.

aspect of the interior life. The order of the poem's meditations is comparable to the sequence of spiritual virtues extolled in the *Paradiso*, suggesting that, like Dante, Donne has traced the Neoplatonic return of the soul and its pilgrimage through the planetary circuits. The progress of the *Second Anniuersarie* begins with a consideration of the body that once housed the idealized "Shee" (221). The body is the logical point to begin a narrative of the soul's departure from the world. According to Macrobius, the body is the last attribute which the Neoplatonic soul acquires in its descent from the firmament towards its earthly life.[41] Unlike Macrobius and Dante, Donne does not begin the narrative of the soul's ascent with the moon or Mercury. Venus is the first planet in Donne's skies.[42] As the planet most directly associated with physical nature and closest to earth, it forms a fitting starting point for launching this poetic progression through the planetary circuits.

While considerable poetic energy is invested in extolling her beauty, the description avoids direct reference to her physical attributes. The closest approach Donne's rhetoric makes to the nature of her body occurs as he describes how "her pure and eloquent blood / Spoke in her cheekes" (244–245), at which point the rhetoric retreats from the physical nature, transforming the matter of body into form of the soul: "her bodie thought" (246). Mindful that the poem is written to honor the teenage

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[41]Macrobius explains how the soul falls from its celestial existence just before it is to be born in the body. As the soul descends from the firmament and passes through each of the planetary spheres, it appropriates at each planetary course an attribute of its worldly life: "In the sphere of Saturn it obtains reason and understanding, called *logistikon* and *theoretikon*; in Jupiter's sphere, the power to act, called *praktikon*; in Mars's sphere, a bold spirit or *thymikon*; in the sun's sphere, sense-perception and imagination, *aisthetikon* and *phantastikon*; in Venus's sphere, the impulse of passion, *epithymetikon*; in Mercury's sphere, the ability to speak and interpret, *hermeneutikon*; and in the lunar sphere, the function of molding and increasing bodies, *phytikon*" (*Commentary*, 1.12.13, trans. William Harris Stahl [New York: Columbia University Press, 1952], p. 136).

[42]Donne skips over the moon and begins his extended meditation on the progress of the soul with the sphere of Venus. By placing Venus's orbit as more proximate to earth than that of Mercury, Donne is following the planetary system of Tycho Brahe. Dante and Macrobius both follow Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos* in positioning Mercury as more proximate. See Shawcross, p. 296.

daughter of his patron Sir Robert Drury, Donne avoided navigating the female body, as he does in *Elegy 13*, and circumnavigated it instead. Her beauty is praised obliquely, as metaphors of plenty and riches attire her body. Her beauty minted other lesser beauties within the world (223–224). Her loveliness was as ample as "the Westerne treasure" and "Esterne spiceree" (228). Her soul was gold; her body, silver; their composite, the electrum (241–242). The spiritual beauty of her pure body was not a prison, but a richly furnished house and thus an appropriate earthly vessel for such a richly endowed soul (221–222, 247). This ornamentation of the body and the attention to luxury and worldly riches both suggest the properties of Venus, who, as the goddess of love, held dominion over the pleasures of beauty, luxury, and leisure.[43] Donne does not invoke the sensuality so commonly associated with the planet,[44] but rather draws upon the Scriptural metaphor of the body as a temple to ornament and highlight the dignity of her body, which was joined with her exemplary soul. The reflection on the dignity of the body represents the first step of the soul's progress and the poem's narrative.[45]

After this consideration of the soul's physical encasement, a thematic transition is signalled with the question, "Poore soule in this thy flesh what do'st thou know" (254), and the poem turns to consider the nature of language and knowledge. The self-directed question invokes the riddle of the Delphic oracle, as well as the title of Sir John Davies's poem, *Nosce*

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[43]"Every kind of luxury belongs to Venus," observes Kay, p. 84; Richardson cites several astrologers who associate Venus with female adornments, such as perfumes, fine clothes, precious metals (pp. 272–273).

[44]In his *Paradoxes* and *Problems*, Donne is less reserved with his Venusian imagery. "*Venus markets*" and her "worke" become synonyms of sexual desire (*Paradoxes and Problems*, ed. Helen Peters [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980], p. 34). Other titles given to Venus include "*Supreme* Monarch of all *Love* at large (which is *lust*) . . . *Pollution, Fornication, Adultery, Lay-Incest, Church-Incest, Rape*" (p. 35).

[45]While the relation between body and soul is of considerable importance to the poem, Rami Targoff's claim that "[t]he soul's attachment to the body is the real, if undeclared, subject of the *Second Anniversarie*" ("Traducing the Soul: Donne's *Second Anniversarie*," *PMLA* 121 [2006], p. 1498) overstates the dominance of a single theme and overlooks the fact that conflicting interpretations exist precisely because the poems are eclectic and lack a dominant subject.

Teipsum, published a little over a decade earlier in 1599. The poem puzzles over the problem of self-knowledge and juxtaposes the mind's capacities and limitations through a sequence of paradoxes and questions.[46] Developing the more sceptical of Davies's reflections, the *Second Anniuersarie* considers the compatibility of ignorance and erudition. Knowledge systems are represented in labyrinthine terms, with the suggested implication that their intricacy attempts to conceal their inability to address the most fundamental human questions. The initial question—"what do'st thou know"—generates a sequence of questions diagramming branches of human ignorance, not knowledge. The questions initially probe the mysteries of the body: how does a kidney stone develop? how does the heart operate? how does mucus accumulate in the lungs? how do toenails and hair grow? (264–278). While demonstrating the inquirer's ignorance, the questions also reveal his curiosity and suggest that he has searched for these elusive answers in vain. The poem relates how scholars spend entire lifetimes within the labyrinths of learned discourses: authors will not recant the most insignificant claims (281–282); academics take extraordinary pains to learn doctrines, languages, and histories (283–289). The sequence of rhetorical queries about abstracted or learned matters culminates with a personally directed one: "When wilt thou shake of this Pedantery?" (291).

The dialectical nature of this section, its volley of *questio* and *disputatio*, its concern with the branches of knowledge, all point to Mercurian themes. Mercury, as the god of communication, was associated with both eloquence and equivocation, and astrologers endowed the planet bearing his name with similar attributes.[47] Martianus

[46]"The use of interrogative figures for internal development reinforces the overall structure of the first elegy [of *Nosce Teipsum*] which is that of a riddle or question" (J. R. Brink, "The Rhetorical Structure of Sir John Davies's *Nosce Teipsum*," *The Yearbook of English Studies* 4 [1974]: 55).

[47]Robert Fludd indicates the beneficial and malicious influence of Mercury on the disposition of the microcosm. The planet causes people to be ingenious, crafty, knowledgeable, skilled in speaking, instable, mendacious, fraudulent, and loquacious (*Utriusque cosmi maioris* . . . [Oppenheim: Johann-Theodor de Bry, 1617], p. 667). Kay's survey of astrological sources indicates that liberal arts and stewardship are also under Mercury's rule (pp. 41–45). Richardson includes

Capella's allegory, *The Marriage of Mercury and Philology* (*De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*) reinforced Mercury's association with rhetoric and the liberal arts by dramatizing the union of Mercurian "eloquence" and philological "wisdom." This allegorical marriage argued a fundamental compatibility between the rhetorical arts and wisdom, suggesting that the trivium and quadrivium cultivated the mind's capacity for the demands of spiritual instruction. The *Second Anniuersarie* features a Mercurian Rhetoric divorced from Wisdom, which deploys its discursive powers to confuse and constrict the soul. Rather than offering an idealistic paradigm of rhetorical skill, the poem considers the ways in which language and knowledge cripple and infect the human spirit. The scholar who "starues, freeses and sweats" (283) suffers these physical effects not because of any disease of the body, but because he studies a barren curriculum. In this respect, knowledge systems are shown to constrict and pollute the soul more gravely than the allegedly contaminating body. The myriad of insoluble questions confuses and constricts the soul within the artifice of knowledge and language.[48] The body is not necessarily the only prison of the soul; language and knowledge construct their own prisons.

The ensnaring uses of language and dialectic are overturned in the following section, as the soul is exhorted to shake off its dependence upon sense and fantasy and to climb to the watchtower, so as to see the intellectual horizon with clarity (292–295). Donne extols an immediate form of knowledge, not contorted by the "Laberinths of eares" (297), the "lattices of eies" (296), or the circumlocutions of rhetoric (298), but one which enables the soul to "straight knows't all" (299). The attention to clarity, intuitive wisdom, and true knowledge suggests that the sphere of loquacious Mercury has been passed and that the progress has entered the solar sphere, with its attributes of light and wisdom.[49] The discarding of "sense" and "fantasy" in the soul's progress draws upon Macrobius's

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practicality, ingeniousness, erudition, eloquence, and intellectual versatility (pp. 343–345).

[48]In his *Problemes*, Donne also describes Mercury's "*Eloquence*" as a dominating and oppressive force: legal rhetoric bestows the "*yoake* of *Soveraignty*" (p. 33).

[49]Kay lists the solar attributes as light, heat, truth, and wisdom (pp. 101–115).

account of the soul's descent and return in his *Commentary*. Macrobius explains that when the soul descends from its spiritual home in the firmament to its earthly life in the body, it acquires attributes in crossing each planetary circuit. The faculties of sense and imagination are acquired as it traverses the circuit of the sun.[50] Thus, when Donne encourages the soul to shake off the constricting barriers of sense and imagination, he signals that the poem's progress reverses the Macrobian account of the soul's descent. In the *Second Anniuersarie* the soul is directed to cast off another attribute of its earthly life and so approach the unmediated understanding of its heavenly existence.

"Shee" returns in this solar sphere and becomes the model of unmediated knowledge, represented through the iconography of the book: her wisdom encompasses the knowledge of all libraries (303). Her knowledge, already ample in her earthly life, provided a foretaste of her afterlife, since "shee" simply rereads in heaven what "shee" already knew on earth (311–314). Her death has robbed earth of its fairest book (319–320). For the medieval imagination, the book represented the authority of the past, and, in the case of the Bible, authority par excellence. The natural world was also described as a text, which communicated in concert with Scriptures the intentions of its divine author. Dante evoked these associations in the *Paradiso*, in which the pilgrimage concludes with a vision of an encyclopaedic book that binds into one volume all that is scattered in the universe (33.85–87). Salvation history, the Book of Nature, and Dante's narrative become poetically fused into the single volume featured within the iconography of the text. For Donne likewise the book is an emblem of authority and knowledge.[51] Her image as the

[50]See note 41 above.

[51]The advent of the printing press did not significantly disrupt the authority and knowledge associated with the book. Publishing houses worked to secure the same authority for the printed word; see Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1998). Several scholars have suggested that the transition from manuscript to printed page was realized gradually, and that the printing press revolutionized production, not public perception; see Malcolm Parks, "The influence of the concepts of *ordinatio* and *compilatio* on the development of the book," in *Medieval Learning and Literature: Essays Presented to Richard William Hunt*, ed. J. J. G. Alexander and M. J. Gibson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), pp. 115–

world's "best, and worthiest booke" (321) is an encyclopaedic *summa*, similar to Dante's universal book, suggesting the fullness of heavenly wisdom and unity in the order of things.[52] The labyrinth formed from a discursive trail of Mercurian questions and subdivisions of knowledge has become comprehensibly synthesized in the Book of her intuitively grasped wisdom. The poetic fusion uniting her person with the printed word signals that the language of time has been translated into the immediacy of divine understanding, and thus knowledge has been freed from its dependence on the deceptive mediation of language. By representing her afterlife in terms of a textual entity, the poem not only fashions her into an archetype of knowledge, but also reflects metapoetically upon its own operation. The *Second Anniuersarie* itself forms a textual monument preserving the memory of her.[53] Much as the universal book in *Paradiso* functioned at once as an image within the text and a representation of the text itself, her afterlife as earth's "worthiest book" acknowledges her textual afterlife in the verses of the *Second Anniuersarie.*

After displaying the fullness of knowledge disclosed in heaven, the poetic progress directs its attention to the company of the blessed located there. The ensuing catalogue of prophets, patriarchs, apostles, martyrs, and virgins (339–354) signals a thematic shift from wisdom to fortitude,

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141, and David McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript, and the Search for Order (1450–1830)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

[52]The image of the book reaffirms the poem's interest in Platonic epistemology and a syncretist cosmology: "the Book itself is a sign of the mythologizing preoccupation with oneness, totality, and the presence of meaning as absolute" (Jesse M. Gellrich, *The Idea of the Book in the Middle Ages: Language, Theory, Mythology and Fiction* [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985], p. 41).

[53]The poem also presents an unexpected transformation of Dante's "book of memory" from his *Vita Nuova.* For Dante, the book of memory signified a personal archive of life experience. The text of the *Vita Nouva* preserves in written record the content of these memories. The *Second Anniuersarie*, being empty of biographical content, does not preserve a "text of her memory," but nonetheless offers a textual memory of her. For further consideration of the significance of the book in Donne's literary imagination, see Thomas A. Festa, "Donne's *Anniversaries* and His Anatomy of the Book," *John Donne Journal* 17 (1998): 29–60.

as well as a corresponding progression from the solar to the Martian sphere. The exemplary lives of martyrs and apostles accent the courage associated with Martian influence and downplay its destructive aspects.[54] The Martian fortitude of the apostles is compared to the celestial movements of the planet Mars. The apostles, "who did brauely runne, / All the Sunnes course, with more light then the Sunne" (349–350), compares in verbal play the apostle's mission to that of Christ the Son, but the comparison also alludes to a Ptolemaic explanation of planetary motion: Mars is ruled by the sun and shares the solar properties of "dry" and "hot," but to a greater degree. Thus, like the apostles, Mars runs "All the Sunnes course" (350), being ruled by the sun, but it does so "with more light" (350) since its hot and dry qualities are more intense.[55] Among these models of steadfastness and strength, "shee" is represented as an archetype of courage. The poem constructs a saint's life with examples of her fortitude and deploys military imagery to illustrate how her strength of character equipped her to join heaven's "squadron" (356): "shee made wars, and triumph'd" (361); "shee" "[d]id not ouerthrow, but rectified her will" (362); "shee crucified / . . . rebellious pride" (365–366), and "shee" could not be conquered by the insurgencies of "Satans rude Officers" (372). "Shee" personifies the beneficent attributes of Mars and uses them to combat its prideful and destructive aspects.

The capacity of her courage to resist and quell Martian dissent is most striking when "shee" is transformed into the "soueraigne state" (374) and

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[54]Although Mars is more commonly associated with destructive, bellicose behavior, it can also signify the more positive qualities of courage and leadership. According to Ptolemy, "Mars alone, given domination of the soul in an honourable position makes his subjects noble, commanding, spirited, military, versatile, powerful . . . with qualities of leadership" (*Tetrabiblos*, trans. F. E. Robbins [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1940], p. 353). In *Astrological Symbolism*, Richardson notes that astrologers influenced by Neoplatonism claimed that Martian violence could be checked and governed by reason (p. 228). In *Dante's Christian Astrology*, Kay notes that Dante accents the positive aspects of Mars by placing "heroes of the faith" within in these cantos (p. 153).

[55]"The nature of Mars is chiefly to dry and to burn in conformity with his fiery color and by reason of his nearness to the sun, for the sun's sphere lies just below him" (Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, p. 37). Michael Scot, John of Seville, and Bonatti describe Mars's heat as more severe than that of the sun (Kay, p. 149).

"Church" (375) uniting the individual souls of heaven into a collective institutional body. Church and State must have represented supreme emblems of factionalism and strife within Donne's imagination, given the political and religious conflict characterizing early modern England, and given his own experience of religious persecution as a youth, having grown up in a Catholic family that resisted the English church. In *Pseudo-Martyr*, published shortly before the *Anniversaries*, Donne confesses that this early experience of persecution formed a persistent presence in his consciousness. In the same treatise he documents examples of other European states which refused to accept Papal authority within their borders and in so doing he recognizes England's political and religious turmoil as part of a wider European phenomenon.[56] The fortitude by which "shee" achieves victory over the widespread rebellion, treachery, and civil dissent arising from the struggle between Church and State also harmonizes these warring institutions in herself. Throughout the Martian verses, military traits are invoked to ornament her, but the imagery is adjusted to highlight the more positive Martian qualities of courage and fortitude, and to represent how "shee" combats its destructive qualities.

After reflecting upon fortitude, and her soul as the model of this virtue, the poem meditates upon joys of earth and heaven. The word "ioy" dominates these verses (twelve times in lines 470–497), signalling that the thematic progress has approached the "jovial" sphere of Jupiter. The planet Jupiter was believed to exert a beneficial influence over the human body by disposing it to a balanced mixture of "hot" and "moist" elements that were conducive to moderate behavior.[57] Astrologers elaborated upon Jupiter's moderating influence, extending its attributes to include equality, justice, and righteousness.[58] Given the planet's association with justice and right judgment, it is fitting that a "triall" (386) is set at this moment of the progress to weigh "casuall ioyes" against "essentiall ioyes."

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[56] *Pseudo-Martyr*, ed. Anthony Raspa (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), pp. 15–17.

[57] "Jupiter has a temperate active force. . . . He both heats and humidifies" (Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, p. 37).

[58] Kay, pp. 199–200; Fludd lists the occupations of those born under Jupiter: governors, prelates, bishops, jurors, judges, and lawyers (p. 647).

As a beneficent planet, Jupiter signalled wealth and plenty. Ptolemy explains that Jupiter "makes fame and prosperity, abundance, peaceful existence, the increase of the necessities of life, bodily and spiritual health, and furthermore, benefits and gifts from rulers, and furthermore, the increase, greatness, and magnanimity of these latter."[59] While the *Second Anniuersarie* adjudicates between the prosperity of worldly honor and that of true happiness, astrology did not distinguish these conditions, as Ptolemy's account suggests. Increase in worldly honors and material gain was conjoined with the "greatness and magnanimity" of personal happiness. Donne, however, distinguishes between the temporal—and temporary—happiness extending from courtly benefits, on the one hand, and the lasting happiness bestowed by grace, on the other.

To some extent this distinction between secular and sacred prosperity derives from Augustine's distinction between enjoying the gifts of eternity and those of time. He argued that only God alone can be truly "enjoyed," which is to say, loved for his own sake, since God is the source of goodness and everlasting. Human beings are to be loved as images and likenesses of God; however, they are not to be "enjoyed" for themselves.[60] They are to be "used with delight"[61] in a "transitory and casual way"[62] because they themselves are transitory and will pass away with time. To "enjoy" someone as the end of all joys leaves one vulnerable to pain[63] and open to disappointment. Human nature cannot find lasting satisfaction in any of earth's gifts: "This, indeed is the difference between temporal and eternal things, that something temporal is loved more before it is

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[59] *Tetrabiblos*, p. 183.

[60] *De Doctrina Christiana*, 1.20, ed. Joseph Martin, Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 32 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1982), pp. 16–17; *Teaching Christianity*, trans. Edmund Hill, vol. 1.11, *The Works of St. Augustine: A translation for the 21st Century* (Brooklyn: New York City Press, 1996), p. 114.

[61] "cum delectione uti" (*De Doctrina Christiana*, 1.37 [ed. Martin, p. 27; trans. Hill, p. 122]).

[62] "sed transitoria potius tamquam viae" (*De Doctrina Christiana*, 1.39 [ed. Martin, p. 29; trans. Hill, p. 123]).

[63] Augustine has been criticized for the seeming callousness of this distinction; however, arguably he is presenting a psychological mechanism for coping with the loss of a loved one. See Kevin Corrigan, "Love of God, Love of Self, and Love of Neighbour: Augustine's Critical Dialogue with Platonism," *Augustinian Studies* 34 (2003): 97–106.

possessed, but loses its appeal when it comes along; this is because it cannot satisfy the soul, whose true and certain abode is eternity. But anything eternal is loved more fervently when acquired than when just desired."[64] Augustine exhorts his reader to "enjoy" God alone by directing one's attention to the lasting joy of eternity and so avoiding the disappointments which are inevitable when one clings impossibly to the gifts of this life.

Donne characterizes "casuall ioyes" and "essentiall ioyes" in similar terms, drawing attention to the transitory and illusory nature of the former: "All casuall ioye doth loud and plainly say, / Onely by comming, that it can away" (485–486). The casual joys of courtly favor and worldly success receive particular attention.[65] The favors of court are shown to be at once volatile (410–411) and latently destructive (478–479). Even if such favors were consistent, they would fail to satisfy, because human desire is by nature unappeasable. As the example of the Tower of Babel illustrates, there is not enough material on earth to satisfy human aspirations (416–422). The same unappeasable desire is further considered in the example of the idol-worshippers, who transform their god of "precious Gold" (429) into "small copper coynes" (430) and thus create the illusion of abundance by creating more pieces of precious metal. Both examples illustrate not only the insatiability of human desire, but also the power of illusions in manipulating those desires. The Tower of Babel shows the economy of courtly honor to be, quite literally, a social construction that serves the self-aggrandizing purposes of its consenting participants; the idol turned to coins suggests that devotion to Mammon and material prosperity creates a counterfeit good. Both

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[64]"Inter temporalia quippe atque aeterna hoc interest, quod temporale aliquid plus diligitur, antequam habeatur, uilescit autem, cum aduenerit; non enim satiat animam, cui uera est et certa sedes aeternitas: aeternum autem ardentius diligitur adeptum quam desideratum" (*De Doctrina Christiana*, 1.42 [ed. Martin, p. 31; trans. Hill, p. 125]).

[65]Arthur Marotti claims that Donne's deprecating characterization of courtly honor speaks to the poet's own thwarted ambitions and his failure to secure a politically advantageous posting; see *John Donne, Coterie Poet* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986), p. 244. In contrast, Dennis Flynn argues that Donne was not as ambitious as modern biographers have claimed ("Donne's Politics, 'Desperate Ambition,' and Meeting Paolo Sarpi in Venice," *Journal of English and German Philology* 99 [2000]: 334–355).

examples illustrate that dependence on worldly prosperity creates a falsified happiness that cannot satisfy: "No Ioye enioyes that man, that many makes" (434).

In contrast to the empty claims of casual joys, the "essentiall ioye" (443) of heaven cannot "suffer Diminution" (444), and is, in fact, a well-spring of ever-increasing abundance: "This kind of ioy doth euery day admit / Degrees of grouth, but none of loosing it" (495–496). "Shee" is transformed into a model of piety—an attribute also associated with Jupiter[66]—and a paradigm of human devotion to heavenly joy. "Shee" resisted the attractions of casual joys, finding true happiness in her fervent spiritual life; thus, the happiness of her life on earth already anticipated her beatitude and her participation in the essential joys of heaven (449). The poem signals the authenticity of her spiritual devotion through her capacity to interpret images and so demonstrates her sensitivity to vestiges of the Word within the Book of Nature, as well as the "image and likeness" within her own humanity. "Shee" recognizes God's imprint in the natural world (452–454). Likewise, by keeping God's own image in her heart, her soul remains pure, blemished only by original sin (455–458). Even the images invented in her dreams are truer and "deuoutlier" (464) than most others' prayers. Her attentiveness to the eternal within the perishable contrasts with the constructed illusions of power and wealth figured in Babel's tower and Mammon, both of which offer instances of a material plenty and casual joy which occlude the image of the essential. Her attention to the divine image in the natural world and in humanity shows that "shee" recognizes the goods of earth as passing shadows and as means toward essential joys. In Augustinian terms, "shee" rejoices in God alone and uses the things of earth with delight, as a means to that divine end. While the examples of Babel and idolatry represent that manufactured happiness fails to satisfy, her happiness in the essential brings the abundance of ever-augmenting, inexpressible joy.

This meditation on essential joy concludes Donne's account of the soul's progress, and the poem briefly recapitulates its itinerary by touching allusively upon the traversed sequence of themes. The Venusian

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[66]Kay lists several sources which associate "piety" with Jupiter, by which term they mean "devoted" or "obedient" to God's will (pp. 205–206). Fludd also claims that Jupiter makes people "Religiousos et Reverendos" (p. 645).

concern for the body (501), the Mercurian theme of learning (501), the Solar *scientia* and *ratio*, found compiled in the "written Rols" of God's records (504–506) are each recounted in passing. The saints, whether "pseudo-martyrs" or spiritual heroes, point to one of many doctrinal contentions at stake between clashing beliefs (511–518); the poet's fractious tone and the mocking threat of conversion bespeak a Martian temperament. Finally, "this Coine" (521), paid to her tribute as his year's rent (520), is taken from the mintage of casual joys and is transformed by the poem's alchemy into the "patterne" (524) of her essential joy in heaven.

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The anatomy of the *First Anniuersary* chronicled the world's fragmentation and decay at the hands of Bacon's clinical induction. *The Progres of the Soule* reverses this decay and seeks to reconstruct, so to speak, the universe by suggesting that its parts are bound together in ways that cannot be accounted for in empirical observation. Donne has inserted this pattern of planetary allusions into the poem to describe and so reconstitute a traditional, geocentric world-model. He draws upon the Neoplatonic return of the soul, since it is a myth that affirms the integrity of knowledge in the cosmos and claims that the individual shares and reflects the greater laws of the universe, as is most fully figured in the last canto of Dante's *Paradiso*, when he beholds the universal book of knowledge and his will is united with the love that moves the heavens and the stars. Donne has not opened a way back to Paradise for himself; nor does he behold the privileged knowledge of the universe. Unlike Dante (and Cicero's Scipio), he does not enjoy the celestial vision or hear the celestial music, but stands apart and observes the *extasis*. Donne points to the image of "shee" as a model for the soul's progress, since "shee" has completed her pilgrimage on earth and gloriously returned to heaven.[67] Recurring images of her as wisdom,

[67]Frontain interprets Elizabeth Drury as a replacement for Dante's Virgin Mary and part of Donne's Protestant rewriting of the Catholic *Paradiso* (p. 123). Arguably, however, Elizabeth Drury more nearly resembles Beatrice. Both are ordinary women who become the object of focus in a poetic pilgrimage. The difference lies in the rapport between poet and woman in each case. Beatrice

fortitude, and piety chart the itinerary of her own progress toward spiritual perfection. Donne remains at a distance as one who admires or aspires but cannot fully follow. His poem does figure forth a complete universe, in which the secrets of nature and the planets could be interpreted, decoded, and understood, much like that of Dante and the medieval Neoplatonic tradition. However, Donne himself is excluded from the beatitude of Paradise and the completeness of knowledge that it promises. Although unable to hear the rapture of celestial music and to comprehend its operations, he remains an instrument summoning others toward it. As the poem's final lines aptly phrase it, "th'Authority is" God's; "shee" is "the Proclamation;" and Donne is "The Trumpet, at whose voice the people came" (526–528).[68]

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becomes Dante's spiritual director, and their dialogue draws him heavenward. Donne never met this new Beatrice, and so describes the spiritual progress from without.

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