“There Goes Marvell, The Cambridge Platonist!”: On Marvell and Religion

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Abstract

My thesis seeks to offer a literary comparison of Andrew Marvell’s poems *A Dialogue, between the Resolved Soul and Created Pleasure*, *A Dialogue Between the Soul and the Body*, and *On a Drop of Dew* and the works of the seventeenth century English theologians the Cambridge Platonists—namely Benjamin Whichcote (1609-1683), Peter Sterry (1621-1678), Henry More (1614-1687), and John Sherman (?-1671). The question at its heart is not simply to assess the extent of their congeniality, but to determine how effectively the work of the Cambridge Platonists functions as a framework for the interpretation of Marvell’s poems. The thesis, therefore, hopes to validate two claims. The first, made by Pierre Legouis in 1928 but never fully substantiated, is that Marvell’s Platonist tendencies stem from his seven years at Cambridge, which are ascribed to the preaching of Whichcote and Sherman. The second, is Harold E. Toliver’s suggestion in 1965 that Marvell, like the Cambridge group, rejects lower links in the great chain for the autonomy of the soul. As proving that the Cambridge Platonists influenced Marvell is very difficult, this central contention is tested using both an ‘analogical’ and ‘genealogical’ method. Part I explores aspects of Marvell’s life where he may have been exposed to both Neoplatonist and Christian Neoplatonists writers, as well as direct interactions he shared with members of the Cambridge Platonists. Part I will predominantly focus on three aspects of Marvell’s life. First, the influence Marvell’s father, Reverend Marvell had on his son. Second, Marvell’s education at Hull Grammar. Third, Marvell’s sociable interactions at Cambridge and as Latin Secretary to Oliver Cromwell. Part I will use Foucault’s work *What is an Author?* and *The Archaeology of Knowledge* as a literary framework to ‘suspend typical’ questions, which are largely ignored in Marvell scholarship. Part II presents a sustained interpretation of two key theological themes in Marvell’s poetry– the function of the soul, and the structure of nature and the corporeal world– using Peter Sterry’s *Sermons* and Henry More’s *Philosophical Poems*. I will suggest that a close comparative reading of Marvell and these two members of the Cambridge Platonists reveals three similarities. First, Marvell like More, rejects nominalism, and instead seeks a doctrine of moral realism. Second, similarly to Sterry, Marvell represents the soul as functioning as a conduit of divine knowledge, which must distance itself from materiality. Third, much like Sherman, More, and Sterry, Marvell describes the soul as having to awaken from its bodily unconsciousness of the corporeal world via knowledge and reason to achieve its cycle back to God.
Acknowledgments

In the words of Contemporary philosopher and theologian Mark C. Taylor “If authorship is never original but is always a play that is an interplay then clearly” ‘I’ did not write this thesis. Or at least ‘I’ alone did not write it. “To name the people along the way that have guided me is to attempt to bind a fabric that is boundless. One is, however, forever inscribed within a bound of framework(s) that he or she struggles to subvert. And so, we continue to sign and to acknowledge— even when such naming no longer rings true. Though here listed hors d’oeuvre, the people who are always already ‘within’ the tangled lines of this thesis”¹ including (among others) Blair, without whose constant guidance and ability to function as a conduit of inspiration this work would not have come to fruition … Verae amicitiae sempiternae sunt.² My Mother Elizabeth and Father Peter, who have supported me in every step I have taken during this arduous year of research. Professor Iain Gardner of the University of Sydney Studies in Religion Department, who has inspired me in a multitude of ways since my undergraduate days, as well as acting as a pillar of support in my academic decisions. Associate Professor Mark Byron of the University of Sydney English Department, who has encouraged me to pursue the intersection between religion, philosophy, and literature, and who also sparked my interest in the work of Samuel Beckett. Without the tangled web of help and guidance I have received from you all this work would be nothing more than an idea locked away in the limbic system.

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² True friendship is eternal
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In quoting from early modern printed books and manuscripts, mainly the works of the Cambridge Platonists and Reverend Marvell, I have retained original spelling and punctuation, except in the case of long ‘s’ and ‘vv’, which are silently modernised.
For the activity of sense-perception is that of the soul asleep; for it is the part of the soul that is in the body that sleeps; but the true wakening is a true getting up from the body, not with the body.

- Plotinus, *Enneads*, III.vi.6

O, who shall from this dungeon raise
A soul, enslaved so many ways,
With bolts of bones, that fettered stands
In feet and manacled in hands.

- Andrew Marvell, *A Dialogue between the Soul and Body* (Lines 1-5)

Nor is that radiant force in humane kind
Extinguished quiet, he that did them create
Can those dull rusty chains of sleep unbind,
And rear the soul unto her pristin state:
He can them so inlarge and elevate
And spreaden out, that they can compasse all,
When they no longer be incarcerate
In this dark dungeon, this foul fleshly wall,
Nor be no longer wedg’d in things corporeall.


Men’s understandings commonly lead them to as readily to believe that their souls are immortal, as that they have any existence at all. And though they be not all so wise and logical, as to distinguish aright between their souls and their bodies, or tell what kind of thing that is that they commonly call their souls; yet they are strongly inclined to believe that some part of them shall survive another, and that soul, which it may be they conceive by a gross phantasm, shall live, when the other more visible part of them shall moulder into dust.

- John Smith, *A Discourse Demonstrating the Immortality of the Soul* (II, I)
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Andrew Marvell’s (1621-1678) influence on the English Literary Canon may not be as significant as that of his contemporaries John Milton (1608-1674) or John Dryden (1631-1700), who was appointed first Poet Laureate of England in 1668. Certainly, Marvell’s literary influence has never reached the heights of his predecessors, John Donne (1572-1631), George Herbert (1593-1633), and Edmund Spenser (1552-1599), who are commonly referred to as the Metaphysical Poets. Or even his successors Samuel Coleridge (1722-1834), William Blake (1757-1827) or Lord Byron (1786-1824), known as the Romantic poets who all feature in The Oxford Handbook of English Literature and Theology (2007). Marvell’s omission from the Oxford Handbook may suggest two things. Either, the religious and theological tenets of Marvell’s poetry have not been analysed as thoroughly as his other themes. Or, Marvell’s poetry has unfortunately never experienced the same academic attention as his fellow Englishmen. Despite Marvell’s omission from The Oxford Handbook, The Cambridge Companion to English Poetry, Donne to Marvell (1993) does include a brief chapter on Marvell provided by Donald M. Friedman. Friedman’s eighteen-page chapter, opposed to the twenty-five pages dedicated to Donne, focuses on Marvell’s Cromwellian Poetry,3 and Upon Appleton House, but makes no commentary on the religious or theological dimensions of the works.

The Cambridge Companion to Marvell (2011) features a brief chapter provided by John Spurr entitled ‘The Poet’s Religion’, which draws heavily upon biographical and

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3 What I mean by Cromwellian poetry are the poems Marvell wrote in direct response to his support of Cromwell and his political administration. These poems are An Horatian Ode upon Cromwell’s Return from Ireland, The First Anniversary of the Government under His Highness the Lord Protector 1655, A Poem upon the Death of his late Highness the Lord Protector.
historical contexts to shape Marvell’s religious sensibilities. However, Spurr scarcely relies on literary analysis or textual criticism to inform his religious reading of Marvell’s poetry. Furthermore, I believe that Marvell Scholarship, thus far has only focused attention on a selected number of Marvell’s Miscellaneous Poems (1681) and has significantly disregarded a proportionate number of other poems. While there is an abundance of Marvell scholarship which lays emphasis on contextual and historical methodologies, I believe there is a certain scholarly gap in literary criticism regarding Marvell’s poetry. Despite this gap in scholarship, there are nonetheless, a handful of scholars who have been committed to reading Marvell’s poetry through literary methodologies rather than historical ones—namely, Rosalie Colie. In Colie’s book, My Echoing Song (1970) she seems to offer what I believe to be one of the most comprehensive criticisms of Marvell’s literary themes, genres, stylistics and devices. Similarly, Friedman dedicates an entire chapter to a close reading of Upon Appleton House and Joan Faust provides and entire chapter dedicated to Marvell’s ‘Dialogue Poems’ in her work Andrew Marvell’s Liminal Lyrics: The Space Between (2012). In this chapter, Faust examines passages from Marvell’s dialogue poems in great detail to suggest that these poems are intrinsically Neoplatonist in their language, structure and themes.\(^4\) Furthermore, Ann E. Berthoff, in her work Resolved Soul: A Study of Marvell’s Major Poems (1970) offers a trenchant and rigorous literary analysis of Marvell’s poetic oeuvre. In her work, Berthoff attempts to synthesise two critical issues within Marvell’s poetry: “one is to define the thematic unity of Marvell’s poetry; the other is to define the limits by which interpretations of his metaphors should be guided.”\(^5\) Berthoff concludes by suggesting that these “poems are unified by the master theme of the soul’s response to temporality, therefore a philosophical


definition of the unity of the poems will be, inescapably, stylistic as well.”⁶ On the contrary, Friedman’s chapter entitled ‘Rude Heaps and Decent Order’ in Warren Chernaik and Martin Dzelzainis’ Marvell and Liberty (1999) offers an analysis of Marvell’s poetry solely through his political career. Friedman, who distances himself from literary approaches, argues that the scholar “must turn to Marvell’s fundamental political principles,” and “connect the historical dots of Marvell’s political career in hope of revealing a recognisable pattern in his poetry.”⁷ Additionally, David Ormerod and Christopher Wortham in their work Andrew Marvell: Pastoral and Lyrical Poetry (2000) offer a two-page annotation of Marvell’s Dialogue⁸ poems, which is both strikingly nebulous and undeveloped. However, whilst their introduction to the Dialogue as a poetic genre is helpful, it nonetheless, barely touches on the theological and philosophical sensibilities of the poems. On this point, Faust sheds light on why this may be the case: “Marvell is not particularly thought of as a religious poet,”⁹ and “if people want to read English religious verse they turn to other poets, such as George Herbert, Thomas Traherne, and John Donne.”¹⁰ In a similar vein, Spurr posits that:

Marvell’s poetry is only ‘religious’ in the sense that almost all of the imaginative writing produced within the Christian culture of seventeenth-century England was religious: it is charged with biblical language, images, and allusions; it gestures towards Christian presumptions about the structure of human personality or human history.¹¹

In opposition to Spurr and Faust’s reading of Marvell’s poetry, Barbara Lewalski offers a reading which is definitively religious, albeit theological. Lewalski, in her article

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⁶ Berthoff, Resolved Soul: A Study of Marvell’s Major Poems, xi.
⁸ I have attributed the term Marvell’s “Dialogue Poems” to Ormerod and Wortham, a term which has previously been categorised by Joan Faust. Faust concludes that Marvell’s Dialogue Poems consists of a Dialogue, between the Resolved Soul and Created Pleasure, A Dialogue between the Soul and Body, Clorinda and Damon, and Ametas and Thestylos making Hay-ropes. See Faust, Andrew Marvell’s Liminal Lyrics, 185.
⁹ Faust, Andrew Marvell’s Liminal Lyrics, 183.
¹⁰ Ibid.,183.
Marvell as a Religious Poet (1978), argues that “Marvell treats religion and the relationship between the divine and humankind as a central theme in his poetry.”12 I believe that Lewalski’s work marks a watershed moment in Marvell scholarship because her work challenges the normative narrative perpetuated in Marvell scholarship. Lewalski shifts Marvell scholarship away from the political and towards the religious— an interpretation that has received minimal attention. On this point, Gary Kuchar’s work The Poetry of Religious Sorrow in Early Modern England (2011) extends Lewalski’s interpretation of Marvell as a religious poet and reads Marvell’s Eyes and Tears through an intrinsically theological framework. In his work, Kuchar argues that the poem discusses ideas such as the relation between eternal and temporal orders, between God and humanity, and explores the form of identity pertaining to the human and divine structure of nature.13 Both Lewalski and Kuchar’s approaches to Marvell’s poetry are notable insofar as they address theological and religious themes, which are present in Marvell’s poetry. However, there is room to further Kuchar and Lewalski’s work by broadening the number of Marvell’s poems which have not been examined through a religious or theological framework.

Takashi Yoshinaka “offers a synthetic examination of the relation of Marvell’s ambivalence to the philosophical, political, and religious controversies of his time,”14 and attempts to “contextualise the poems of Marvell via the unnoticed connection with the liberal, rational thinkers associated with the Great Tew Circle.”15 What is most striking, and to some

15 Yoshinaka, Marvell’s Ambivalence, 1. The Tew Circle existed alongside the Cambridge Platonists, and served as an intellectual tributary of the Latitudinarians, was the “convivium theologicum” of Lucius Cary, Second Viscount of Falkland. The group met at Cary’s Estate at Great Tew in Oxfordshire. This group was composed of faculty members at Oxford University and some who lived in London. See Martin Griffin, Latitudinarianism in the Seventeenth-Century Church of England: Volume 32 in Brill Studies in Intellectual History Series, ed. Lila Freedman (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992), 89. For a thorough historical account of the Great Tew and their
extent ironical about Yoshinaka’s suggestion regarding the Tew Circle’s influence on Marvell is that the Tew Circle, and the Tew Estate, was located in Oxfordshire, which had strong ties to Oxford University, and was known to be ardently royalist during the English Civil War. Oxfordshire during the Civil War became the royalist headquarters and home to Charles I, and more importantly, it is well documented that Marvell was a supporter of Oliver Cromwell, serving as Latin Secretary, as well as author of several dedication poems in support of Cromwell’s political position as Lord Protector. Furthermore, Cromwell like Marvell was a graduate of Cambridge University, which at the time of the English Civil war was staunchly pro-parliamentarian. Therefore, considering Marvell’s public support for Cromwell, Yoshinaka’s suggestion to read Marvell’s poetry through the work of the Tew Circle is unsustainable because not only was Marvell anti-royalist and a political figure of the Cromwell government, there is no historical or biographical evidence to support that Marvell was influenced by the Tew Circle, or that he ever visited the Tew estate. Furthermore, this brings us to the crux of this study. I will suggest that if Marvell is to be categorised into any intellectualist movement of the seventeenth century that it is more appropriate to situate Marvell within the context of Cambridge Platonism. The Cambridge Platonists flourished before, during, and after Marvell’s time at Cambridge, under the teachings of Benjamin Whichcote (1609-1683), who is considered the founder of the movement, and who began his

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17 Ibid., 21.
18 Ibid., 22.
19 The Cambridge Platonists are commonly divided into two waves by historians. The first wave consisted of Henry More (1614-87), Ralph Cudworth (1617-88), John Smith (1618-52), and Benjamin Whichcote (1609-83), who was the founder of the movement. The second wave consisted of, John Sherman (d. 1666), John Worthington (1618-80), Peter Sterry (1613-72), Nathaniel Culverwell (1618-51), and John Sadler (1615-74), who is said to be the first member of Cambridge University to make a career in the study of Platonism. See John Tulloch, Rational Theology and Christian Philosophy in England in the Seventeenth Century: The Cambridge Platonists, Volume II (Cambridge, M.A.: W. Blackwood), 1-10.
career as a preacher and tutor in Cambridge.\textsuperscript{20} Despite Yoshinaka’s attempt to situate Marvell’s poetry within the context of the Tew Circle, he makes no attempt to draw attention to Marvell’s student years at Cambridge University, his relationship with Oliver Cromwell and John Milton, or the interactions he may have had with the Cambridge Platonists, which is more consistent with Marvell’s influences at the time. However, Yoshinaka’s work is not to be completely discounted in aiding this study as it does, nonetheless, focuses on the latent theological and religious themes in Marvell’s poetry.

Whichcote and Marvell, much like Cromwell advocated what they thought to be an inclusive and tolerant approach to religious difference. Whichcote pleaded for the liberty of faith and prophesying,\textsuperscript{21} and urged parties who differed on religious matters to confine themselves to the use of the scriptural words and expressions they did agree upon, rather than disagree.\textsuperscript{22} Similarly, although through the medium of poetry, Marvell sought to reconcile Christian liberty from a philosophical standpoint. In \textit{Upon Appleton House}, Marvell suggests that God has created the natural world for all human beings: “But Nature here hath been so free / As if he said leave this to me’’ (lines 75-7). In \textit{On a Drop of Dew}, Marvell suggests that everyone’s soul is immutable and eternal: ‘congealed on earth: but does, dissolving, run / Into the glories of the almighty sun’ (lines 38-40). For Marvell, the soul of all human beings is cherished without indifference, and with the correct meditation upon life will enter heaven.

Both examples reinforce the pluralistic approach Marvell has regarding the position of human beings in the natural world and their soul. For Marvell, all souls can ascend to the heavenly realm. The proliferation of religious variances and the quest for religious toleration during

seventeenth century England was supported by Oliver Cromwell, “which saw his personal commitment in willingness to allow Jewish resettlements in England,” a subject and a decision about which he sought the advice of Whichcote. Consequently, what is hopefully emerging here are the distinct and subtle political and religious similarities shared between Whichcote, Marvell, and Cromwell.

The paucity of Marvell’s literary attention may stem from the fact that Marvell was not chiefly regarded as a poet during his life, but rather, a politician and a tutor who wrote poetry for himself and close friends. In one sense, Marvell was not recognised as a career poet, but first, a career tutor, then a career politician where he served as Latin Secretary to Oliver Cromwell, and later sat for Hull in three successive Parliaments as a member of the Whig Party. As Nigel Smith correctly explains “what the world has thought about Andrew Marvell and why it has thought so has much to do with the political situation in England during Marvell’s lifetime.” Ultimately, these events posthumously establish Marvell as a career politician, and a member of the Whig Party who published political satires and pamphlets against the ecclesiastical dogmas of the Catholic Church and monarchy. Such pamphlets and treatise are The Rehearsal Transposed and An Account of the Growth of Popery and Arbitrary Government. Evidently, it is Marvell’s political career and politically


25 Andrew Marvell was tutor to Mary Fairfax, the daughter of Thomas Fairfax who served as the Parliamentary Commander-in-Chief during the English Civil War. Marvell scholars such as Nigel Smith, David Ormerod, and Christopher Wortham suggest that Marvell most likely wrote the poems Upon the Hill and Grove at Bilbrough and Upon Appleton House during his time spent at Nun Appleton tutoring Mary Fairfax. Marvell was also private tutor to Oliver Cromwell’s ward, William Dutton who he travelled with to the Protestant Academy of Saumur. See Nicholas von Maltzahn, An Andrew Marvell Chronology (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), 42-4. For a detailed analysis of Marvell’s time as a tutor see Timothy Raylor, “Andrew Marvell: The Travelling Tutor,” Andrew Marvell Society 2, no.1 (2017): 1-12.

26 Nigel Smith, Andrew Marvell the Chameleon (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 1.
inspired literature that dominates Marvell scholarship, and as a result situates his political odes to Oliver Cromwell, and his political pamphlets at the forefront of literary attention. It is fair to state that critical perspectives of Marvell over the last twenty years have been dominated by re-establishing context as the crucial factor in understanding his poetry. However, for the most part, what Marvell scholarship has largely failed to acknowledge, is that Marvell’s poetry is not only concerned with the politically tumultuous time in English history. Marvell’s poetry is also concerned with engaging in philosophical and theological questions, and polemics of the Early Modern period. Marvell’s poems encourage a meditation on the soul as a sign that reveals the knowledge of vanitas mundi, rather than attaining knowledge of the soul and God through Imitatio Christi. Further, Marvell affirms the paradoxical conflict of incarnation theology by asserting that the breach separating material and immaterial orders constitutes the axis by which the two are conjoined. This as a concept in itself, has a distinct hue of Christian Neoplatonist thought. In more detail, Marvell explores the conflict between corporeal and incorporeal forms that pertain to the

28 By this I mean the English Civil War, which took place between the years 1642-1651; the regicide of Charles I of England in 1649; the death of Oliver Cromwell in 1658; and the English Restoration in 1660. Under King Charles II the triple Monarchy of England, Ireland, and Scotland was restored. See Robert Bucholz and Newton Key, Early Modern England 1485-1714: A Narrative History (London: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 147.
29 One of the most prominent theological and philosophical polemics of the seventeenth century was the mind body dualism argument spurred by the publication of René Descartes Meditations on First Philosophy (1641). See Henry More and René Descartes, La Correspondencia Descartes-More, ed. José Luis Gonzáles Recio (Madrid: Ediciones Antígona, 2011).
30 Vanitas mundi, is a traditional Christian view and is best described as the fleeting and unsatisfactory nature of earthly life compared to Heaven. A direct translation reads ‘vanity world,’ but is better translated and understood as ‘empty world.’ See George Thomas Kurian and James D. Smith III, The Encyclopedia of Christian Literature (Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2010), 543.
32 Incarnation theology generally holds that the goal of the incarnation was the transformation of the human into a nature compatible with the divine. See William A. Beardslee, “Incarnation,” in The Oxford Companion to the Bible, ed. Bruce M. Metzger et al (Oxford: Oxford University, 1993), 301.
human and the divine, thus in one way accepting a Neoplatonist ontology within his poetry.\footnote{Here Neoplatonist ontology is used in its most traditional interpretation. That is, the ontological hierarchy starting with The One, followed by the emanation of \textit{nous}, which can be understood as either “intellect” or “consciousness,” and ending with the soul. This ontology is also referred to by Plotinus as the Hypostasis (\textit{ὑπόστασις}). For a primary source description of The One see Plotinus Enn. VI.9[9].1.1–4; for a more detailed analysis of what Plotinus means by The One see Eugene F. Bales, “Plotinus’ Theory of The One,” in \textit{The Structure of Being: A Neoplatonic Approach} (New York: SUNY Press, 1982), 41; for a thorough description of Neoplatonist ontology and metaphysics see Jens Halfwassen, “The Metaphysics of The One,” in \textit{The Routledge Handbook of Neoplatonism} (London: Routledge, 2014).} For Marvell, there is a disjunct between the sensual appearance of the natural world and the divine senses of the metaphysical world, which humans beings must endure.

1.2 Structure

Structurally, this study will be set out in two sections. In section I will apply a genealogical method to the life of Andrew Marvell and situate him within his seventeenth-century context to explore three facets of his life, which I believe have received minimal scholarly attention, if any. First, his father’s ambivalent Puritan view, which I suggest shares similarities to members of the Cambridge Platonists. Second, Marvell’s education at Hull Grammar school, with a focus on the influence of Erasmus and other Neoplatonist literature. Third, that he had direct interactions with members of the Cambridge Platonists, both during his time at Cambridge, and during his political career. In Part II, I use an analogical method to examine the theological, philosophical, and thematic similarities between the works of the Cambridge Platonists and Marvell—namely, focusing on their metaphysical and ontological frameworks of the natural world and their treatment of the soul. Moreover, I suggest that the application of Michel Foucault’s essay \textit{What is an Author?} (1969) and his genealogical methodology set out in \textit{The Archaeology of Knowledge} (1969) to Marvell’s poetry shifts the focus from Marvell the politician, to Marvell the religious poet. Essentially, my aim is not to necessarily make it new or effectively anticipate creating original avenues of interpretation, which have thus far been ignored in Marvell scholarship. But rather, what I hope to achieve
in this study is to build from the work of Lewalski and Kuchar with the aim of shedding light on a latent field of Marvell scholarship. The omissions of Marvell from *The Oxford Handbook* and the paucity of scholarship regarding Marvell’s religious and theological verse points to the fact that there is a lacuna in scholarship regarding the religious importance of Marvell’s poetry. I will argue that Marvell’s poetry does not only arouse the spiritual and sensuous aspects of humanity, but it also contains some of the most sensitive reflections on the relationships between humanity, the natural world, and the divine in seventeenth century poetry. In final, this study aims to critique and challenge the stability of Marvell scholarship, and recognise the Cambridge Platonists as some of the most important and influential philosophers of religion. Furthermore, the Cambridge Platonists are acknowledged as the first English speaking philosophers and theologians to publish work in the English language, and who functioned as conduits for Platonist and Neoplatonist thought in the West. While scholars examine the historical trajectory of Neoplatonists tenets in the work of Spenser, Wordsworth, Shelly, Blake, Coleridge, and Yeats, no scholarly work thus far includes Marvell in the oeuvre of such studies, or traces the Neoplatonists characteristics of these authors to the influence of the Cambridge Platonists. Therefore, this study will firmly establish Marvell and the Cambridge Platonists continued historical, literary, philosophical, and theological significance in the oeuvre of both religious studies and literary studies. The primary reason for this is that the Cambridge Platonists rarely feature in histories of the English Revolution, and they receive brief, if any mention in work that is dedicated to the

36 I exclude Douglas Hedley in this comment, who has rigorously examined the continuities and influences the Cambridge Platonists have had on English poets. See Douglas Hedley, *Coleridge, Philosophy and Religion: Reflection and the Mirror of the Spirit* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). I also exclude the work of current Doctoral student of Oxford Faculty of Theology and Religion, Edward Youansamouth, who is currently undertaking his thesis entitled “Two Congenial Beings of Another Sphere: Peter Sterry as a Theological precursor to William Blake.”
Therefore, this study intends to restore the Cambridge Platonists to their important place in the history of philosophy, which not only belongs to them in the genesis of our modern culture, but also to clear the way for more comprehensive thinking about Marvell’s sustained use of the Cambridge Platonists, and his emulation of their textual and thematic strategies.

CHAPTER TWO
ANDREW WHO?

C'était une belle âme, comme on ne fait plus à Londres.38

Andrew Marvell’s life was certainly veiled in a shroud of ambiguity, from theories of espionage,39 to governmental rewards for any information on the authorship of An Account of the Growth of Popery and Arbitrary Government in England (1677), to his mysterious death (poisoned—it was rumoured—by the Jesuits).40 Mystery also surrounds the publication of the Miscellaneous Poems in 1681 ‘by Andrew Marvel, Esq; late Member of the Honourable House of Commons,’ wherein, the note to the reader suggests that Marvell was married to a Mary Palmer. However, Palmer’s claim to have been married to Marvell is not generally believed.41 Despite, the various accounts of Marvell’s life, this has not stopped historians and biographers from remaining committed to the recovery of Marvell’s life, notwithstanding the incompleteness of life records, and the secretiveness surrounding the poet. While scholars can draw upon a significant number of biographies concerning Marvell’s life, arguably there are only three, which scholars rely upon authoritatively, namely—Pierre Legouis’ André Marvell, Poète, Puritain, Patriote, 1621-1678 (1965),42 Nicholas von Maltzahn’s An Andrew Marvell Chronology (2005), and the most recent publication by Nigel Smith, Andrew Marvell the Chameleon (2010), which is the first comprehensive biography on Marvell in more than

39 The theory that Marvell was a spy or intelligence officer for the Dutch Government is trivially discussed in the fictitious novel by Christopher Peach, The Green and the Gold: An Historical Novel (London: Picador, 2003). The suggestion that Marvell worked as a government agent is also explored by Marvell scholars Derek Hirst and Steven Zwicker in Andrew Marvell, Orphan of the Hurricane (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); also, Smith, Andrew Marvell the Chameleon, 279; and Maltzahn, An Andrew Marvell Chronology, 153.
41 Marvell, Andrew Marvell, ed. Frank Kermode and Keith Walker, xii.
fifty years. However, for most of the twentieth century Legouis’ *André Marvell*, was the most significant despite its early publication, which gives minimal attention to biographical accounts of Marvell’s life, but rather dedicates the majority of the work to literary criticism of Marvell’s poetry. The reason Legouis’ work marks a watershed moment in Marvell scholarship is because it shifted scholarly attention away from Marvell the politician, and offered an interpretation of Marvell the poet, which as a result spurred a renewed interest in Marvell studies.43 Legouis’ biography on Marvell offers an account of Marvell’s life and works within their historical, institutional, and political contexts. Legouis’ work also provides Marvell scholars with the earliest detailed account of Marvell’s poetic form, lyrical poetry, Cromwellian poetry, and his position as a political satirist, and controversialist in prose, as well as heavily drawing on literary criticism and close readings of Marvell’s poetry. While Herbert J.C. Grierson’s *Metaphysical Lyrics & Poems of the Seventeenth-century: Donne to Butler* (1921) and T.S. Eliot’s essay ‘Andrew Marvell’ (1921) mark some of the earliest accounts of literary criticism attributed to Marvell’s poetry the spectrum of poems analysed, and the thoroughness of both Grierson and Eliot’s criticism does not surpass Legouis’ work.44 Despite Grierson and Eliot’s minimal criticism, it nonetheless, significantly contributed to the trajectory of Marvell’s critical reputation. While Legouis’ early contribution to Marvell studies, both in providing biographical and literary iterations has significantly aided Marvell

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44 T.S. Eliot’s knowledge of Marvell’s corpus would have been relatively limited. In his four-page essay Eliot only mentions five of Marvell’s poems—namely, *Horatian Ode, To His Coy Mistress, Upon Appleton House, The Nymph and the Fawn*, and *Clorinda and Damon*. Although Eliot’s breadth of analysis and commentary on these poems is somewhat minimal, historians have established that he was in the possession of the Muses’ Library volumes of Vaughn, Campion, Drummond, Crashaw, Donne, and Marvell. For a more detailed explanation of Marvell’s exposure and knowledge of Marvell’s poetry see Steven Matthews, *T.S. Eliot and Early Modern Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 29.; Paul Davis, “Marvell and the Literary Past,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Andrew Marvell*, ed. Derek Hirst and Steven N. Zwicker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 26-7.
scholars, it is Nigel Smith’s *Andrew Marvell the Chameleon* that is currently considered the authoritative biography on Marvell, and it is also considered the seminal text for any graduate student undertaking work on Marvell.\(^{45}\) Smith’s work locates the poet and politician within the significant religious and political upheavals of the middle six decades of the seventeenth-century, with a meticulous focus on tracing the shift and movements of Marvell’s life, which no previous Marvell biographer had previously considered.\(^{46}\) Yet, despite Smith’s significant contribution to Marvell studies, his work would not have been possible without the arduous research undertaken by Nicholas Maltzahn in *An Andrew Marvell Chronology*, which compiles a wide range of references to print, and manuscript sources, which are discussed for the first time. As a result, von Maltzahn’s *Chronology* becomes a profoundly important text for anyone attempting to track the movements of Marvell’s life.

Despite the varying discontinuities of Marvell’s life, the aim of this chapter is not to offer a tedious recount of the work conducted by Legouis, Smith, and Maltzahn. Rather, this chapter will draw upon all three sources to explore what can be considered some of the most important and significant accounts in Marvell’s life, which may have shaped his literary influences. The objective here, is to suggest that an examination of certain biographical accounts of Marvell’s life will provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors, people, and literary sources that contributed to Marvell’s poetic themes, and thought. Throughout this chapter I will adopt a Foucauldian position. What I mean by this, is that I claim a synthesis between undertaking an architectonic analysis of Marvell’s poetry, and in delineating biographical references. Essentially, this chapter looks to “suspend typical questions and proceed to view the subject as stripped of its mythologised role and analysed as a complex


variable function of discourse.”

It is important to note that while I agree with Foucault in his suggestion to strip the subject of its mythologised role, I am not supporting a Barthian death of the author approach, there is a subtle but certain difference between the two notions. Foucault’s approach to literary and historical discourse is pertinent to Marvell’s various titles and elusiveness—because for the academic study of Marvell, his “name remains at the contours of the text,” and by “separating one from the other, defining their form, and characterising their mode of existence.” This approach can provide a possibility to extract new interpretations. Furthermore, Foucault’s literary framework is useful to read the work of Marvell, the ‘chameleon:’

The stories of heroes give way to an author’s biography; the conditions that fostered the formulation of the fundamental critical category of the person and their work.

What I am suggesting here, much like Foucault is that there is an inherit problem present in such historical analysis of Marvell’s life, which has led to the mythologisation of various titles ascribed to Marvell. Here, the critic must overcome the conflict or opposition between structure and historical development, and shift the focus towards the work of Marvell, not the historical names of Marvell, which are constricted by preconceived ideas of who the critic thinks Marvell is. Hopefully by doing this it will result in an emergence of a whole new field of questions when reading Marvell’s versatile and complex poetry. Again, Foucault

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49 Almost every piece of work published on Andrew Marvell discusses his vague and elusive life. Marvell has been referred to as a poet, a Puritan, a royalist and a supporter of the monarchy in his early life, later, a Parliamentarian and supporter of Oliver Cromwell, a spy, a turncoat, and then a staunch member of the Whig Party. Here, Foucault’s approach is helpful, in that, it asks the critic to disregard the ‘name’ or ‘names’ that are given to authors, and to detach from the mythology surrounding the author and primarily focus on the authors work.
50 Michel Foucault, *What is an Author?*, 10.
51 Ibid., 11.
52 Ibid., 14.
54 Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 17.
55 Ibid., 6.
provides a useful explanation on how best to name an author, which in some instances complicates and obstructs the reader’s understanding of the author’s work:

We could also examine the function and meaning of such statements as ‘Bourbaki is this or that person,’ and ‘Victor Ermita, Climacus Anticlimacus, Frater Taciturnus, Constantin Constantius, all of which are Kierkegaard.’

In the above-mentioned example, Foucault uses the various pseudonyms for the Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard, to reiterate the complications that can arise when focusing too heavily upon the names and biographical accounts of an author. Moreover, Foucault’s example is even more significant when applied to Marvell, who not only published pseudonymously An Account of the Growth of Popery, but also wrote the pamphlet entitled Mr. Smirke (1676) under the name ‘Andreas Rivetus, Junior.’ As well as Marvell’s name varying in spelling from document to document: Marvell, Marvel, Mervaille, Merville, and ‘Mr. George.’ Here, Marvell’s name is “not simply an element of speech, it’s presence is functional in that it serves as a means of classification and establishes different forms of relationships.” Marvell’s name carries numerous connotations, as well as shifting perspectives of who the reader thinks the subject is. These perspectives are purely dependent on the themes of the subject’s work. This classification is evident in almost every essay or book published on Marvell. To name a few: Andrew McRae titles his essay ‘The Green Marvell’, Joad Raymond ‘A Cromwellian Centre’, Nicholas Maltzahn ‘Adversarial Marvell’.

In other works, Marvell is identified as a cavalier poet, a political poet, a pastoral poet, and a satirist poet. Each author offering their own unique interpretive lens on Marvell’s poetry, which is singularly based on the themes of the poetry. This chapter will suggest that “the

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56 Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge, 11.
57 William Carr reported to Sir Joseph Williamson, the Secretary of State and Chief of Intelligence for the government, that someone who looked like Andrew Marvell travelled in January and February, during the Parliamentary session, to The Hague under the name of ‘Mr. George’ and spoke with the Prince of Orange. See Smith, Andrew Marvell the Chameleon, 279; and Maltzahn, An Andrew Marvell Chronology, 153.
58 Foucault, What is an Author?, 13.
danger is in the neatness of identifications. With this in mind, consider Samuel Beckett’s essay entitled *Dante... Bruno. Vico.. Joyce* (1929):

> There is the temptation to treat every concept like ‘a bass dropt neck fust in till a bung crate’ and make a really tidy job of it. Unfortunately, such an exactitude of application would imply distortion in one of two directions. Must we wring the neck of a certain system in order to stuff it into a contemporary pigeon-hole, or modify the dimensions of that pigeon-hole for the satisfaction of the analogymongers? Literary criticism is not book-keeping.

Here, Beckett, in a similar vain to Foucault suggests that the danger lies in interpretive constriction when the critic attempts to ‘wring the neck of a certain system.’ It is important to bear these difficulties in mind when discussing Marvell’s poetry, which is best understood as a mosaic of references, a multi-layered construction of different textual forms, subjects to process of contextual adaptation and transformation. To map Marvell’s emulation of the Cambridge Platonists is not merely to observe the influences of one writer upon another, or simply transfer textual authority. Marvell’s poetry is a highly complex and dynamic transaction and imitation, in which authority of themes and style is constantly re-interpreted and re-assigned. In a sense, Marvell’s poetry defies an attempt to define clear textual boundaries. Foucault’s description of intertextual exchange in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* provides a useful point of orientation here:

> The frontiers of the book are never clear-cut: beyond the title, the first lines and the last full stop, beyond its internal configuration and its autonomous form, it is caught up in a system of references to other books, other texts, other sentences: it is a node within a network. And this network of references is not the same in the case of a mathematic treatise, a textual commentary, a historical account[...]. The book is not simply the object that one holds in one’s hands [...] and its unity is variable and relative.

Marvell’s poetry is situated within such a network of references and, this chapter aims to reconstruct a range of synchronic and diachronic intertexts to gauge the influence of the

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63 Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 23.
Cambridge Platonists, and the impact of their work on Marvell. Furthermore, this study is conscious of the paradoxical and teleological conflict between the dangers of the neatness of identifications, and consequently arguing the categorisation and identification of Andrew Marvell as a possible de facto member of the Cambridge Platonists. However, the identification being explored here is not one that currently exists in the oeuvre of Marvell studies, which as a result is not restrained by already posited and preconceived accounts of who the critic thinks Marvell is.

This chapter will use both Foucault’s literary criticism from the essay *What is an Author?* As well as the *Archaeology of Knowledge* to address contextual issues, which are pertinent to the development of Marvell’s literary influences and acumen. Essentially, this chapter will suspend typical questions in Marvell scholarship, such as: was Marvell a Parliamentarian, did Marvell support the monarchy, was Marvell a spy, or was Marvell a turncoat? But rather, focus on answering questions, which have received minimal critical attention. Such as: what was the relationship between Marvell and his father Reverend Marvell? What texts was Marvell exposed to at Hull Grammar? And what interactions did Marvell have with specific people during his time studying at Cambridge? While Marvell’s literary conversations with ancients and moderns is hardly a recent discovery, what is, however, “is the linking of textual and human sociabilities, and the conjecture that alluding, imitating, borrowing—or rather taking—and adapting were second nature to this writer.”

One of the most neglected features of Marvell scholarship in the past decade has been the recovery of his social and sociable worlds. Therefore, attention will be given to Marvell’s first engagement with religion and theology, the extent Marvell’s father, Reverend Marvell, with his distinct Puritan character influenced Marvell, the structure of Marvell’s education at Hull Grammar, literary sources that were available to Marvell during his time, and the

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64 Hirst and Steven N. Zwicker, *Andrew Marvell, Orphan of the Hurricane*, 12.
sociable interactions Marvell encountered during his studies at Cambridge and later in his life. I believe that an examination of these aspects of Marvell’s life has received minimal, if any critical attention, and I propose that once these questions are addressed, it will provide clarity and awareness to better understand and reveal the philosophical and theological influences, which shaped Marvell’s thought, and in turn shaped his poetics. It is important to bear in mind that Foucault does not call for a comprehensive ‘death of the author,’ but rather, asks the critic to be aware of both the ‘genealogical’ (historical) and ‘analogical’ (architectonic) methods of literary studies. Thus, the aim of this chapter is not to dismiss biographical and historical accounts of Marvell’s life, but to avoid being a ‘book-keeper’, as Beckett suggests, and to suspend typical questions, which Marvell scholarship has continued to ask over the past fifty years. Furthermore, in applying Foucault literary approaches to Marvell studies, it hopes to reveal the influence that the Cambridge Platonists had on Marvell’s textual practices, which adhere to the intellectual milieu of Cambridge during the Seventeenth century. To this end, Marvell’s sensitivity to interpretation and openness of questions ensures to remind the reader to be aware of shifting perspectives. This chapter aims to explore a radically different interpretation of ‘the poet,’ and provide a unique insight into Marvell’s poetry, which will challenge the reader to adopt new ways to consider his poetry—a way that suggests that Marvell’s theological and philosophical thoughts were influenced by the Cambridge Platonists.
2.1 Reverend Marvell, Andrew Marvell, Mervaille, Merville, Andreas Rivetus, and Mr. George

Since a biography is considered complete if it merely accounts for six or seven selves, whereas a person may have a many thousand... and these selves of which are built up, one on top of the other, as plates are piled on a waiter’s hand.\textsuperscript{65}

To this day the ‘author’ remains an open question with respect to its general function within discourse.\textsuperscript{66} However, there are several consequential factors which take place in an individual’s life before they become an author, and this is no different in Andrew Marvell’s case. The focus of this chapter is to locate the rules that formed a certain number of concepts and theoretical relationships in Marvell’s approach to religion, theology, philosophy, and poetry. Beginning with the relationship between Marvell and his father, the Reverend Andrew Marvell whose Puritanism had exceedingly interesting features, which had a lasting influence on his son.\textsuperscript{67} Offering an examination of Marvell’s relationship with his father facilitates an expedite understanding of why religion was always a priority, and a marker of the horizon in his poetry.

Andrew Marvell Senior (1585-1640) was admitted in 1601 to Emmanuel College, Cambridge, and elected a scholar in 1604, graduating B.A. in 1605, M.A. in 1608.\textsuperscript{68} In 1609 Marvell Senior was ordained as a Priest, and by 1624 he was elected Master of the Hull Charterhouse and preacher at the Holy Trinity Church, Hull.\textsuperscript{69} Ironically, in 1633 Benjamin Whichcote who was the leading proponent and “father” of Cambridge Platonism would secure a permanent position lecturing and preaching at Holy Trinity Church, Cambridge, which would last almost twenty years before he moved on to his elected position as Provost.

\textsuperscript{66} Foucault, \textit{What is an Author?}, 1.
\textsuperscript{67} Smith, \textit{Andrew Marvell the Chameleon}, 17.
\textsuperscript{69} Maltzahn, \textit{An Andrew Marvell Chronology}, 17.
Undoubtedly, the twenty years Whichcote spent at Holy Trinity Church is where he developed and spread his philosophical and theological views. While there is no substantial primary evidence to suggest that Marvell Senior and Whichcote had direct interactions, it is highly plausible to suggest they were aware of each other, as they both were graduates of Emmanuel college—a college which had strong Puritan ties, and is considered the birth place of the Cambridge Platonists. Also, both men were theologians who lectured, preached and sermonised in their respective Holy Trinity Church for a period of seven years. Thus, it is hard to believe that two contemporary divines, one preaching at Hull, Holy Trinity Church and the other at Cambridge, Holy Trinity Church had no knowledge of one another, especially due to the immediate success of Whichcote’s preaching, which introduced a new style, a style, which surprisingly echoes that of Marvell senior. On this point, it is important to bear in mind that the seventeenth-century has been considered such a golden age of English vernacular Platonist philosophy, which can be traced back to the theologian Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466-1536), who brought Christian humanism, and the works of Plato and Plotinus to Cambridge by way of the Florentine Academy. Therefore, it is likely that Marvell senior was aware of, if not familiar with Platonist or Neoplatonist literature, which had surfaced in England more than a century before through Erasmus who is a Cambridge graduate and Thomas More who is an Oxford graduate.

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While the ambiguity generated by an absence of evidence makes it difficult to ascertain a determinate truth regarding the relationship between Marvell senior and Whichcote. I am, nonetheless, proposing that one can make a legitimate guess that it is possible that Marvell senior was aware of the teachings of Whichcote. This guess is made even more tangible on the grounds that Whichcote’s Sunday sermons had become considerably prominent during Marvell senior’s time, and perchance influenced Marvell senior’s sermons and theological standpoint. The Alternative to my suggestion is, that Marvell senior was a product of the Puritan—Platonic tradition, which had existed at Cambridge since Erasmus, and had no knowledge of Whichcote or his prominent sermons. Although, both suggestions are reasonable, they are nonetheless, not pretending to be definitive, but rather endeavouring to challenge and question the religious upbringing Marvell senior would have provided his son Andrew Marvell. Essentially, what is being proffered here, is that Marvell senior may have exposed Marvell to ideas of Neoplatonist philosophy and Latitudinarian Christian views, which at the time were regarded synonymous with Platonism. It is also important to remember that Marvell senior was a graduate of Emmanuel College, and surely would have been aware of later Emmanuel theologians, especially ones as prominent as Whichcote, since Emmanuel was considered the new home of Puritan Churchmanship.

Marvell senior was a great scholar, and reading was of significant importance to him. His education at Cambridge made him proficient in reading Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, which

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78 Smith, Andrew Marvell the Chameleon, 17.
enabled him to read broadly. This is most evident in his proposal as Master of Hull Charterhouse to build a library. During his time as Master, Marvell senior placed a significant emphasis on literary erudition and frequently encouraged people to read. Marvell senior saw himself as a scholar, and all his duties as a clergyman would be dependent upon the frequent use of the scholar’s tools: books. He viewed the library at Charterhouse as a ‘common well’ for scholars, and throughout his life continually urged well informed divines to engage in polemics and dialogues concerning religious matters. This sentiment was certainly taken up by the Cambridge Platonists, particularly Ralph Cudworth, whose *A Sermon Preached Before the House of Commons* (1647) proclaims that “if we are to overcome the thousands of controversies and infinite problems of God and religion, we must not deny and subordinate others.” One of the more well-known polemics regarding the Cambridge Platonists is the correspondence between Henry More and René Descartes, wherein, More commends and critiques the mechanical metaphysical framework of Descartes *Principia Philosophiae* (1646), which More refers to as Cartesianism. While starkly different to More and Descartes’ dialogue, Whichcote engaged in a theological polemic with his former tutor Anthony Tuckney, which caused much controversy. In a sermon preached in 1651, Whichcote surprised his audience with a divergence away from scriptural authority, suggesting that “all those things wherein, good men differ, may not be determined from Scripture.” Tuckney referred to Whichcote’s use of non-Puritan sources and his deviation from scriptural authority as “unsafe and unsound.” Similarities can be drawn between

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79 Smith, *Andrew Marvell the Chameleon*, 18.
80 Ibid., 21.
81 Ibid., 19.
85 Tuckney’s main concern regarding Whichcote’s sermon is that he believed Whichcote’s teaching was more aligned with the *credo ut intelligam* of Augustine then the neat division of *theologia naturalis* and *theologia
Marvell senior, Cudworth, More, and Whichcote’s outspokenness regarding religious polemics. The religious outspokenness present in the Cambridge Platonists and Marvell senior would later carry into the life of Marvell. This is particularly evident in the polemic between Marvell and Samuel Parker, Bishop of Oxford, which saw Marvell’s publication of *The Rehearsal Transpros’d* (1672) and *Mr. Smirke*. Both of Marvell’s texts critiqued the state of religious freedom in England, and challenged the dogmatic structure of the Catholic Church and the English monarchy.

There are two further significant pieces of information, which reinforce similarities between Marvell senior and Whichcote. First, the books that filled Charterhouse library. Second, the structure of Marvell senior’s sermons. Both aspects of Marvell senior’s life are integral to this study because they offer literary evidence of his influences and his latitudinarian Christian view. Marvell senior’s Puritanism was not at all what we might expect. This is because similar to Whichcote, it deviated from the traditional Puritan theological framework of *Sola Scriptura*. It had a distinctiveness, which was not...
particularly Puritan nor Laudian, but rather a fusion of biblical and classical learning, which at the time was in stark contrast to the taciturn disposition of traditional Puritan sermons, which focused solely on preaching the Scripture. Marvell senior’s sermons are poetic in structure, using simile to describe the Bible as a looking glass: ‘Gods’ sacred mirrour,’ and metaphor to describe God as an axeman, cutting off useless branches. Elegantly, Marvell senior writes: “the bounties of God are like a pair of spectacles or perspective glasses. Throughout his sermons Marvell senior weaves analogies, metaphors, and similes to talk about God and religion, each continually extending the imaginative scope of his preaching. Not only does Marvell senior unexpectedly incorporate poetic imagery and discourse into his sermons, he also draws heavily upon classical literature and literary figures, both Christian and Pagan. Notably, Marvell senior “exhorts his listeners to heed Origen in his homily to Jude.” This is significant because Origen holds a secure position within the Christian—Platonic tradition, and he is also heavily referenced by the Cambridge Platonists who agreed and supported Origen’s Trinitarian hypostases. Although, Marvell senior’s reference to

considered the principle framework by which a Christian should live their life. While the Protestant Reformers in principle supported the supremacy of Sola Scriptura, they did not dismiss the Church Fathers. However, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Hippolytus were favoured over the more Christian Platonists Fathers Clement, Origen, and Augustine. See Hanz Burger et al., Sola Scriptura: Biblical and Theological Perspectives on Scripture, Authority, and Hermeneutics (Leiden: Brill, 2017).

89 For the history of English Puritanism and the traditional structure of Puritan sermons see John Tulloch, English Puritanism and its Leaders: Cromwell, Milton, Baxter, Bunyan (Edinburgh: W. Blackwood, 1861), 8-17; and Leland Ryken, Worldly Saints: The Puritans as They Really Were (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 10.

90 Smith, Andrew Marvell the Chameleon, 20. Smith has taken the original sermons of Reverend Marvell from Hull City Library, folio 9r.

91 Ibid., 20.

92 Smith, Andrew Marvell the Chameleon, 20.


94 Origen was the first Christian to speak of three “hypostases” in the Trinity and to use the term homousios (though only by analogy) of the relation between the second of these hypostases and the first. The Father, or first person, is nevertheless the only one who is autotheos, God in the fullest sense, whereas the Son is his dunamis or power and the Spirit a dependent being, operative only in the elect. All three are eternal and incorporeal, the Son being known as Wisdom in relation to the Father and Logos (reason, word) in relation to the world. Scholars have drawn continuities between Origen’s hypostases and Plotinus’ three principles: The One, the Intellect, and the Soul. See Mark J. Edwards, “Origen,” Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Stanford University, March 10, 2014, https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/origen/. (accessed May 7, 2018).
Origen is fleeting, what it reveals however, is that to some extent he must have been familiar with the writings of Origen, and possibly had versions of Origen’s writing in his library collection. Interestingly, in another Sermon, Marvell senior does not open with a passage from the Bible, but instead Aristotle: “The Council of Aristotle to Callisthenes for discretion in Court Conference is not an unfit remembrance for him which is a spokesman as a festival solemnity… Either speak very little of things very pleasing[.] I propose to make use of both for the present.” In another, Marvell senior startlingly quotes Horace to exemplify false Gods: “by descent I am a block no better than my neighbours I was fayre to have been hewed into a bench or settle but being an unshapely piece for any such service at ye last he resolved to make a saint or a God of me.” In the same Sermon, he later describes himself as wishing he were like the musicians described by the Ancient Greek poet Timotheus of Miletus, who could change people’s moods by changing the tone of his play.

What is most striking regarding Marvell senior’s sermons is that they move away from the traditional Puritan division of the scriptural sense as a literal one. Instead, for Marvell senior, Scripture can also have a figurative, allegorical, and anagogical meaning. This style of sermonising becomes increasingly common with members of the Cambridge Platonists. Most notably, Ralph Cudworth, who in his Sermon entitled, A Sermon Preached Before the Honourable House of Commons, metaphorically describes sin as quick sand, which the soul can unknowingly sink into. Cudworth further goes on to describe religious controversies as a metaphorical ‘book shelf,’ and suggests that to embrace religion, and

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95 Smith, Andrew Marvell the Chameleon, 20. Originally taken from Hull City Library, folio 9r.
overcome indifferences, one must read from this ‘book shelf.’ For Cudworth, “a good
conscious is the best looking-glass, in which the soul may see God’s thoughts and purpose.”
Cudworth in a similar vein to Marvell senior uses the looking—glass as a metaphor. While
Marvell senior uses similar language to describe the Bible as a looking glass as “God’s sacred
mirror,” Cudworth uses the metaphor to describe consciousness as a mirror. Although, there
is a slight deviation in the theological understanding of Marvell senior and Cudworth, mainly
because Marvell senior emphasises the Bible as a source of God’s mirror and Cudworth
emphasises the conscious (reason), as a mirror to God. Cudworth’s use of metaphor is
conducive to one of the main theological doctrines of Cambridge Platonism. That is, that
reason and free will is intuitively imbedded in individuals, and reason should assist
individuals, both in their moral and philosophical understanding of God and the divine.
Alarmingly, for members of the Cambridge Platonists, is such a belief, which is in direct
opposition to Puritan ideas of predetermination of the soul, and scriptural authority. Nonetheless, Marvell senior and members of the Cambridge Platonists frequently rely on
poetic language to convey their respective theological sensibilities and opinions. Cudworth
like Marvell senior makes several allusions to ancient Greek literature. In particular, *The
Odyssey*. But where Marvell senior wishes he were like the musicians described in the
Ancient Greek poetry of Timotheus of Miletus: Cudworth compares religious toleration in
England to Odysseus. Here, Cudworth wishes that religious matters would not float aimlessly
around making no progress like Odysseus. Furthermore, of note in both authors is the
amalgamation of philosophical and ancient texts which coincide with Christian Scriptural

authority. The synthesis between Ancient Greek philosophy and Christianity is a definitive Cambridge Platonists’ characteristic. The Cambridge School combined ancient wisdom and modern modes of philosophy to defend their theological positions.\textsuperscript{102} and these are features which characterise Marvell senior and his inclusive religious views. Ultimately, the aim thus far has endeavoured to draw attention to three significant areas, which have not been stringently examined in contemporary Marvell Scholarship. First, that Marvell senior was most likely aware, and if not familiar of Benjamin Whichcote and his teachings. Second, that there is a distinct ambivalent hue to Marvell senior’s ‘not so Puritan’ characteristics of his reading habits and sermonising style, which share some similarities with Ralph Cudworth and Benjamin Whichcote. Third, much like the Cambridge Platonists, Marvell senior was involved in religious polemics and dialogues. The aim and purpose here is to draw attention to these conclusions, to clarify and trace Marvell’s theological, philosophical, poetic influences, and the early influence his father had on him. Marvell, much like his father, had a similar ambivalent Puritan view. A Puritan view, which has a strikingly similar view in some respects to his contemporaries at Cambridge, in particular Henry More, Peter Sterry, and John Sherman. In subsequent chapters close readings of Marvell’s poems will be offered to explore how Marvell’s theological and philosophical sensibilities directly adhere to and mimic the work of members of the Cambridge Platonists.

2.1.2 Marvell at Hull Grammar

Young bodies are like tender plants, which grow and become hardened into whatever shape you’ve trained them.\textsuperscript{103} There have been few monographs of substantial quality on the history of Grammar schools outside of the capital of England, and consequently, as far as the study of individual schools are concerned, information remains scarce.\textsuperscript{104} Even with the publication of John Lawson’s \textit{A History of Hull Grammar School} (1963), primary source evidence of the teachings at Hull are still tenuous. Despite the paucity of information regarding individual Grammar Schools, general studies of Grammar Schools’ curriculum in the context of seventeenth century England are substantial. General studies of Grammar Schools’ curriculum in seventeenth century England reveal the teaching of reading, writing, and speaking highly competent Latin. Reading and writing satisfactory Greek, and the learning of Hebrew. Importantly, students were also taught and engaged with biblical scholarship and theology.\textsuperscript{105} One of the main reasons for the emphasis placed on learning Latin, Greek, and Hebrew was because it provided students with correct language abilities to undertake the study Scriptures in its original language. This also reinforced the concept of \textit{Pietas literata}.\textsuperscript{106} The concept of \textit{Pietas literata} was inspired by Erasmus, whose teachings and writings served as the foundation of Grammar schools’ curriculum.\textsuperscript{107} The concept of the Grammar school was to advance a movement away from the medieval schoolmen, who were the first to construct an entire

\textsuperscript{104} Ian Green, \textit{Humanism and Protestantism in Modern English Education} (London: Routledge, 2009), 30.
\textsuperscript{105} Foster Watson, \textit{The English Grammar Schools to 1660: Their Curriculum and Practice} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1908), 11.
\textsuperscript{107} Erasmus’ \textit{de pueris instituendis, de ratione studii,} and \textit{Erasmi Colloquia selecta} all served as significant pieces of work, which influenced and shaped the curriculum of English grammar schools.
Christian theology and *speculum mundi* based on the seven Liberal Arts, and a direction towards the idea of a cultured devotion, compounded of the best in classical and Christian ideals and literature. As a result, the Grammar school was viewed as a great instrument in building a new English theocracy. This is pertinent to the study at hand because there was a significant change in English theocracy between the years 1600-1660. Andrew Marvell and the Cambridge Platonists have been viewed as heralding a new Latitudinarian English theocracy that was less dogmatically Catholic and monopolical, and more tolerant of religious freedom. Furthermore, literature was the medium by which Latin and Greek were taught: namely, the work of Hesiod, Aesop, Aristotle, Plato, Plutarch, Cicero, Virgil, Ovid, Horace, Terence, and Erasmus would have been on the reading list of most students. However, to what extent these texts would have been studied is very difficult to make comment.

Hull Grammar did not begin to keep a register before 1635 and although there is no record of Marvell’s attendance, it is commonly accepted in the historiography of Marvell that he did. To reinforce Marvell’s attendance at Hull Grammar there are several vivid descriptions of Grammar school experiences in Marvell’s work. While Marvell would have studied a large corpus of ancient and medieval literature, there are two authors, which feature in the Grammar school curriculum of interest to this study—namely, Plato and Erasmus. This is specifically due to the influence these authors had on the Cambridge Platonists and Cambridge University *in toto* during the seventeenth century. While Platonist philosophy had certainly surfaced and was circulating in specific circles in England in the early seventeenth century, mainly in a University environment, it is difficult to pinpoint the specific texts of

Plato students at Hull Grammar may have read. In the seventeenth century, Plato’s work had not yet been translated into English. However, the earliest account of Plato’s work being translated into Latin, which was the lingua franca of Renaissance Europe was undertaken as early as 1492 by the Italian Humanist and Neoplatonist Marsilio Ficino.\textsuperscript{112} Despite Ficino’s Latin translations, the number of Plato’s works in circulation in England during the early seventeenth century were significantly limited, and were most likely kept for University students. So, while Plato may have been marginally read or taught at Hull Grammar, the evidence to suggest that the students had a comprehensive understanding of specific texts is exceedingly difficult to ascertain. However, since the seventeenth century has been considered a golden age of English vernacular Platonist philosophy, it is likely that Plato featured in the Grammar school curriculum\textsuperscript{113}

While it is difficult to draw definitive conclusions regarding Marvell’s study of Plato at Hull Grammar, definitive conclusions can certainly be made regarding his study of Erasmus. While Erasmus was a figure of great importance, and a transmitter of Plato and the Florentine Academy,\textsuperscript{114} he also dominated the English Grammar school curriculum with his conception of education. Not only did Erasmus lay down the principles of Grammar school

\textsuperscript{112} Roberts, From Puritanism to Platonism in Seventeenth Century England, 31.
\textsuperscript{113} Smith, Andrew Marvell the Chameleon, 33.
\textsuperscript{114} The Platonic Academy, or Italian Accademia Platonica, was a group of scholars in mid-15th-century Florence who met under the leadership of the translator and promulgator of Platonic philosophy Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499), to study and discuss philosophy and the classics. The influence of their modernised and Christianised Platonism on Italian Renaissance thought was profound and still survives in the popular concept of “Platonic love.” Although the group was never formally organised, its members considered themselves a re-creation of the Academy that had been formed by Plato in Athens. The most important members of the group, were connected to the courts of Cosimo and Lorenzo de’ Medici, Politian (or Poliziano), the poet and classical scholar of the Renaissance; the professor of poetry and oratory at the University of Florence, Cristoforo Landino; and the scholars and philosophers Giovanni Pico della Mirandola and Gentile de’ Becchi. See Thinley Kalsang Bhatia, “Platonic Academy,” Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica, inc, November 2, 2016, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Platonic-Academy (accessed May 22, 2018). For a detailed examination of the origins of the Platonic Academy in Florence see Arthur M. Field, The Origins of the Platonic Academy of Florence (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1988), 129-202.
education, he also provided the texts books for putting these principles into practice.\textsuperscript{115} The *Institutum Christiani Hominis* (*The Institution of Christian Man* 1514) and his *Colloquia Selecta* (*Selected Colloquies* 1536) were designed to teach Latin by means of dialogues on a variety of subjects. Other works, which featured prominently on the curriculum were *De Pueris Instituendis* (*On Education for Children* 1529) and *De Copia: De Ratione Studii* (*Upon the Right Method* 1518).\textsuperscript{116} The reason Erasmus is of interest here is not only because his work provides the framework in which the Grammar school curriculum could operate, but more importantly, Erasmus had strong ties to the Florentine Academy. The Florentine Academy is predominantly made up of the members Giovanni Pico della Mirandola and Marsilio Ficino, who advocated a Christianity inspired by the Platonism and Humanism of Renaissance Italy. During his life Erasmus was influenced by the works of Mirandola and Ficino, which resulted in him turning to a form of Platonising theology which encouraged the cultivation of a self-knowledge.\textsuperscript{117} Erasmus sought to prove that with the help of rationality the truth can be brought out and attained, that is, for Erasmus the truth “ignites the light of rationality.”\textsuperscript{118} Erasmus’ statement echoes the maxim of the Cambridge Platonists: “the Spirit of man is the candle of the Lord searching all the innermost parts of the belly” (Prov. 20:27).\textsuperscript{119} In a way, Erasmus’ exegetical philological method foreshadows one of the main doctrinal tenets of the Cambridge School—namely, the emphasis placed on rationality, and exercising the intuitive nature of rationality via free will and the soul, which is posited into us.


\textsuperscript{116} For detailed accounts and primary sources of Erasmus’ work mentioned see Desiderius Erasmus, *The Erasmus Reader*, ed. Erika Rummel (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1990).

\textsuperscript{117} Erasmus’ formation of Platonising theology is most evident in his embracing of the Platonic concept of man in his *Enchiridion*. See von-Wedel, *Erasmus of Rotterdam: Advocate of a New Christianity*, 1052.


through God. Erasmus states, “and to that soul which is like unto the nature of God, that is to say, unto reason, as unto a King, he appointed a place in the body, as in the chief tower of our city.” For Erasmus, “in man reason beareth the room of a King,” and must be positioned in the highest regard when attempting to understand God. The Cambridge Platonists, like Erasmus, understood reason as an imbedded faculty—a faculty whose natural, God-given function is tied to our individual and collective existence. Furthermore, Erasmus taught that by consistently appealing to piety a Neoplatonic difference between flesh and soul, that an individual can overcome the gap between the *Vita activa* and the *Vita contemplativa*. Thus, by attempting to reconcile the theological dilemma between the dualism of the body and soul, Erasmus creates a guide for a new form of religious living. Furthermore, Erasmus does not simply create a new a form of religious living, he also creates a new conception of education, one which combines virtue and learning and the synthesis of Greek and Roman philosophy together with Christian wisdom and conduct. It is this strand of education which essentially becomes the ideal structure for English Grammar schools.

Essentially, the suggestion being made here is that Andrew Marvell belongs to this heavily saturated context of *Erasmianist education*. There is also a legitimate claim in the

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120 The philosophical notion of intuitive knowledge is generally believed to be first cogently defined and examined by Aristotle. In *The Nicomachean Ethics*, specifically book VI, Aristotle examines the temporal distinction between *nous* (intuitive reason) and *dianoia* (discursive reason). Discursive reason takes time, since it is a process of reading a conclusion from a premise; whereas intuitive reason perceives at a moment of prior experience or knowledge (*a priori*). Christian authors such as Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Augustine, and Anselm, use Aristotle's framework of reason to argue that intuitive reason and knowledge of God is posited into the soul by God at the moment of birth. See John E. Hare, *God’s Command* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 269; and Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. David Ross (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).


123 This is a concept that Andrew Marvell incorporates in his poem *Upon Appleton House*. In it, the subject Lord Thomas Fairfax, is depicted as the perfect embodiment of both the *vita activa* and the *vita contemplativa*, a hero of the Civil War, and a man of religious virtuosity. See Smith, *The Poems of Andrew Marvell*, 213.


125 I write the word *Erasmianist education* as the notion of a cogent body of theological and philosophical teachings of Erasmus as a distinct theological, philosophical, and educational doctrine that is conceptualised in the work of Erasmus. I define this as a movement that is embodied in the profound influence Erasmus had on the Grammar school curriculum and education of England in the sixteenth century *in toto*.
suggestion that the work of Erasmus and the structure of the Grammar school curriculum would have had a lasting effect on Marvell’s religious and literary sensibilities. This is to say, that Marvell’s education at Hull Grammar would have certainly exposed him to the Neoplatonist theology of Erasmus, whose work served as the fundamental pillar of the Grammar school curriculum. Moreover, Marvell’s religious upbringing by his father Marvell senior, and his education at Hull Grammar begins to reveal Marvell as a young person who did not necessarily experience a traditional Puritan upbringing. While Marvell’s education is consistent with a Grammar school student, in that he was well versed in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. He was also familiar with traditional and contemporary theological and doctrinal polemics. Marvell had a strong understanding of the Scripture, a comprehensive understanding of Greek and Roman authors, and a tenacity for scholarship, which sought to engage with both the ancient authors and Christianity. Furthermore, Marvell senior’s distinct Puritanism was precociously open-minded in its theological tastes, and in its wide range and generous scholarly interests, which as we have seen, shares substantial similarities to certain members of the Cambridge Platonists. Thus far, what can be discerned about Marvell’s early childhood can be characterised by two influences. First, his father, Marvell senior would have had paramount influence on his son, and who more than likely provided extra tuition, since Marvell senior is known to have tutored other boys.\textsuperscript{126} It is also reasonable to suggest that Hull Grammar would have shaped his religious sensibilities, and adherence to the Latitudinarianism and ancient erudition, which was supported by his father and the Cambridge Platonists.

\textsuperscript{126} Maltzahn, \textit{An Andrew Marvell Chronology}, 22.
2.1.3 Marvell at Cambridge

Andrew Marvell entered Trinity College, Cambridge in 1634, which at the time was already home to a group of scholars who had begun to codify a body of divinity commensurate to the work of Plotinus and the Patristic Church Fathers – namely the Cambridge Platonists. Upon Marvell’s entrance to Cambridge, Benjamin Whichcote had already graduated B.A. and M.A., and was elected fellow of Emmanuel College in 1633, he then undertook a Bachelor of Divinity, which was conferred in 1640. Whichcote also went on to successfully secure Provostship of Kings College in 1644, and later served as Vice-Chancellor from 1650-1651. Whichcote had firmly established his Platonist, or more correctly his Plotinist theology and teachings before Marvell had entered Cambridge. Whichcote achieved this through the help of his student Ralph Cudworth who entered Emmanuel College in 1632, and proceeded in the degrees of B.A. and M.A. After his time as a student, Cudworth served as a fellow of Christ’s College, and later in 1645 was appointed to the position of Regius Professor of Hebrew. Nathaniel Culverwell also entered Emmanuel College in 1633 where he proceeded in the degrees of B.A. and M.A. and elected fellow of Emmanuel in 1642. Peter Sterry, entered Emmanuel College in 1629 and proceeded in the degrees of B.A. and M.A. and later elected fellow of Emmanuel in 1636. Sterry, in particular, is of great interest to this study, as he served as Chaplain to Oliver Cromwell during the same time that Marvell was Latin Secretary. However, the relationship between Sterry and Marvell will be examined in greater detail in subsequent chapters. John Smith the bearer of this common name is perhaps the most uncommon and ambiguous member of the Cambridge Platonists. Evidently, some scholars do not even equate him with the group.

127 Maltzahn, An Andrew Marvell Chronology, 21.
129 Ibid., 112
although I believe this to be an incorrect account of him, as it will be shown that Smith certainly deserves the recognition of his contribution to the Cambridge Platonists. Smith, like most of the Cambridge Platonists, entered Emmanuel College in 1636 and proceeded B.A. and M.A., and in 1644 he was elected fellow of Queen’s College. Like Cudworth, Smith was also elected to the position of Hebrew Lecturer and Censor Philosophicus, as well as Dean and catechist of Queen’s College in 1650. The only two members of the Cambridge Platonists who were not graduates of Emmanuel College are Henry More, who entered Christ’s College in 1635, and proceeded in the degrees of B.A. and M.A., and served as Fellow of his College. John Sherman, who the least is known about, and similarly to Smith is not usually considered to be a member of the Cambridge Platonists, served as fellow and Master of Trinity College during Marvell’s time, and was a close friend of Whichcote. Sherman authored an interesting Neoplatonic text entitled A Greek in the Temple, which will be examined in detail in subsequent chapters. Of interest here, is that every major figure of the Cambridge Platonist movement was writing, preaching, tutoring, lecturing, or studying during the entire time Marvell attended Cambridge University—a time, which is considered the most formative years of the Cambridge Platonists’ movement. Therefore, “it is difficult to believe that a man of Marvell’s intellectual attentiveness could have remained unaware of or unaffected by their activities,” which supports the argument that his poetry was most likely influenced by his tutors, masters, and preachers.

Trinity College during the early part of the seventeenth century was especially favoured by the poets. In particular, George Herbert, Fellow from 1614-1628, Abraham Cowley, scholar and subsequent Fellow 1637, and John Dryden later in 1650. This may

132 Powicke, The Cambridge Platonists, 89.
134 W.W. Rouse Ball, Trinity College, Cambridge (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2010), 71.
have been the driving force behind Marvell’s decision to divert from his father’s college, Emmanuel. If so, this would indicate that from an early age Marvell was disposed to involve himself with a college that had strong ties to poetry. It is important to keep in mind that Marvell’s earliest published poem to date, *Ad Regem Carolum Paodia* (*To King Charles Imitation*), though published in 1636 for the celebration of Charles I’s fifth child, Anne. Scholars believe the poem was most likely first written at an early age, during his first year at Cambridge.135 Such an early interest in poetry may suggest that Marvell intended on becoming a career poet, or Marvell may have simply entered Trinity College on the advice of his Masters at Hull grammar, James Burney and Anthony Stevenson, who were graduates of Trinity College. Nigel Smith proposes that Marvell’s serious attempt to study suggests that a clerical and indeed an academic career was intended.136 Smith further contends this is evident in Marvell’s admittance to Cambridge University at the age of thirteen, as well as Marvell’s strong academic ability, which eventuated in his acceptance of a scholarship in 1638.137 Marvell’s education at Hull Grammar would not have deviated too far from his college-based studies, which consisted of Latin, Greek, Hebrew, logic, mathematics, theology, and philosophy. Legouis states that Marvell “excelled in Hebrew, Arabic, Coptic, Samaritan, Syriac, Chaldee, Persian, Greek, and Latin, French, Spanish, and Italian, which he not only understood but spoke.”138 While it is expected that Marvell’s literary erudition would have significantly improved at Cambridge, what is not expected is the confluence of Marvell’s

135 Marvell’s first poem entitled *Ad Regem Carolum Paradia* is a reworking of the second ode in the first book of Horace’s odes to meet the occasion of the birth of a royal princess. It involves a strict and ancient use of ‘parody’, a counter-song or reply using nearly the same words and phrases of the original. Marvell kept the same shape of Horaces’ poem by choosing words with similar sounds and spellings to Horace’s original. This exercise of imitation was an exercise required in grammar school. The poem was first published in a collection of Greek and Latin poems by Cambridge students and academics celebrating the birth of, on 17 March 1637, of Charles I’s fifth child, Ann. Among the contributors where members of the Cambridge Platonists Henry More, John Sherman, and Nathaniel Culverwell See Smith, *Andrew Marvell the Chameleon*, 24; Smith, *The Poems of Andre Marvell*, 3.


137 Ibid., 25.

education and the Platonist movement at Cambridge, which Pierre Legouis suggests is safe to say accounts for the Neoplatonic themes in his poetry.\(^\text{139}\)

### 2.1.4 John Sherman and the Cambridge Platonists

John Sherman was a close friend and contemporary of Benjamin Whichcote. Sherman served as Fellow of Trinity College, and preacher at Trinity Chapel during Marvell’s time, and whose lectures and sermons Marvell would have been required to attend.\(^\text{140}\) Interestingly, Legouis attributes Marvell’s Platonist tendencies to his seven years at Cambridge, and ascribes them to the preaching of Whichcote and Sherman.\(^\text{141}\) Despite Legouis’ claim, critical attention is sparse regarding Sherman’s life and writing, and he rarely features in the main members of the Cambridge Platonists.\(^\text{142}\) Despite Sherman’s obscurity and lack of scholarly attention his sermons and writings certainly adhere to the Cambridge Platonists’ theological and philosophical sensibilities.\(^\text{143}\) In 1641 Sherman published a small book entitled *A Greek in the Temple*,\(^\text{144}\) which was a publication of his sermons and lectures delivered in Trinity College Chapel. Here, Sherman theorises a “cognoscibility of God by human understanding without any supernatural doctrine.”\(^\text{145}\)

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\(^{140}\) Smith, *Andrew Marvell the Chameleon*, 32.


\(^{142}\) John Sherman is not mentioned in the authoritative anthologies dedicated to the Cambridge Platonists by Campagnac, Patrides, or Powicke. He is somewhat of an obscure figure in the milieu of Cambridge during the mid-seventeenth century. His work was most likely overshadowed by the fame of Benjamin Whichcote and Henry More. In a more recent compilation of the Cambridge Platonists, *The Cambridge Platonists in Philosophical Context: Politics, Metaphysics and Religion*, no chapter mentions John Sherman, or includes him in the group of Cambridge Platonists. Despite Sherman’s exclusion from any of the essays published in *Cambridge Platonists in Philosophical Context*, and the work of Campagnac, Patrides, and Powicke, Frederick C. Beiser includes Sherman in his opening paragraph of members. See Beiser, *The Sovereignty of Reason: The Defence of Rationality in Early English Enlightenment*, 134.


\(^{144}\) A *Greek in the Temple* was originally delivered in the form of Sermons, which Sherman presented at Trinity Chappell, Cambridge, and was later compiled for publication. It is suggested that Sherman most likely presented the sermons that constitute *A Greek in the Temple* over a two-year period. See Levine, “Latitudinarians, Neoplatonists, and the Ancient Wisdom,” in *Philosophy, Science and Religion in England, 1640-1700*, 86-7.

wisdom and philosophy to show that Christianity should not distance itself from pagan
philosophy. Instead, he suggests that the autonomy of reason can be successfully achieved via
the synthesis of pagan and Christian philosophy. Interestingly, Sherman viewed poetry as a
perfect reconciliation between the human and the divine and he believed that poetry was the
most appropriate way to talk about God.\footnote{Sherman, A Greek in the Temple 2-3.} Sherman encouraged his students that “Christians
should not banish the Greek authors: Plato, Plutarch, and Plotinus.”\footnote{Ibid., 13.} Sherman also suggests
that his students should pursue the teachings of Augustine and Pseudo Dionysius, two
Christian authors with strong Neoplatonic tenets in their theology. During Marvell’s seven
years at Cambridge under the lectures and sermons of Sherman he was continuously
reminded by Sherman that “poets are the kings of faith, who worship God in the greatest
way,”\footnote{Ibid., 25.} and the most important facets of a Christian life consist of “poetry, civil duty, and
philosophy,”\footnote{Ibid., 40.} all of these facets are discernible in the mature Marvell. This is tangible
evidence to establish that Marvell was present during Sherman’s lectures and sermons, which
preached a strong Neoplatonist framework regarding God and the natural world. It is highly
unlikely that Marvell did not attend Chapel or lectures at Trinity due to the strict curriculum
and discipline implemented by the University. While it is difficult to argue the influence
Sherman’s lectures and sermons had on Marvell, he was certainly aware of Sherman’s
Neoplatonist theology. As a result of this, Marvell must have been aware of the prominent
and influential members of the Cambridge Platonists and the entire Cambridge Platonist
movement. Furthermore, Marvell’s time at Cambridge proved to be a fertile ground for the
growth of Latitudinarianism, which postulated a theology, which sought to minimise
doctrinal discord by emphasising the role of nature rather than revealed theology.\footnote{John Gascoigne, Cambridge in the Age of Enlightenment (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 55.} a theme
evident in Marvell’s poetry, which will be examined in subsequent chapters. Rather, the main aim here is to suggest that Marvell was aware of the Cambridge Platonists, and to explore the extent of his interactions with the members.

Three arguments have been offered, thus far. First, the impact and influence the Cambridge Platonists had on Cambridge University is too significant for a student not to have been aware of. Second, that there is concrete evidence to suggest that Marvell was taught by at least one member of the Cambridge Platonists (John Sherman), or possibly two. Since Marvell studied Hebrew, and Ralph Cudworth was elected to the position of Regius Professor of Hebrew in 1645 this suggests he was teaching Hebrew long before he was appointed to the position. Third, that Marvell continued his studies in the fields of Latin, Greek, Hebrew, mathematics, philosophy, and theology while the Cambridge Platonists held fellowships in these academic disciplines. Ultimately, the aim of this chapter has been to establish that Marvell’s education at Cambridge provided him with insight into the works and teachings of the Cambridge Platonists, which comes through in the emphasis he places on the soul and the natural world. For example, Marvell’s construction of the soul in A Dialogue Between the Soul and the Body clearly imitates that of More. More, vigorously maintains that the soul did not have extensions: “let us first consider the soul a while, what she is in her own Essence, without any reference to any Body at all, and we should find her a Substance extended and indiscernible… she hath as ample, if not more ample, Dimensions of her own, then are visible in the Body she has left.”151 Furthermore, Marvell’s A Dialogue, between the Resolved Soul and Created Pleasure mimics the metaphysical framework offered by Smith: “the proper object is the mind and soul, the mind should not incorporate itself with any of the gross, dreggy, sensual delights. The true objects for the mind and soul are Divine and immaterial

Much like Smith’s rejection of physical senses, the Soul in *A Dialogue, between the Resolved Soul and Created Pleasure* thwarts off the pleasures of the corporeal world with its ‘immortal shield’ and rejoices in its victory over the crated pleasure:

Triumph, triumph, victorious soul!
The world has not one pleasure more:
The rest does lie beyond the pole,
And is thine everlastings store (lines 70-80).

Here, the soul is represented as rejecting the *Created Pleasure* of the sensual world, including the human body, and embraces the incorporeality of the internal mind, which in effect reinforces the immortality of the soul. Further literary comparisons between Marvell and the Cambridge Platonists will be discussed in part II of this thesis.

### 2.2 Marvell and the Court of Oliver Cromwell

That Providence which had so long the care
Of Cromwell’s head, and numbred ev’ry haire,
Now in itself (the glasse where all appears)
Had seen the period of his golden yeares:
And thenceforth only did attend to trace
What death might least so faire a life deface.

*(A Poem Upon the Death of His late Highness the Lord Protector*, lines 1-5).

The years between 1642-1647 in which Marvell left England to travel to various countries is not of interest to this study. Nor is the duration of time in which Marvell spent at Nun Appleton from 1647-1652. Nigel Smith offers a rigorous account of Marvell’s life spent

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abroad, and as tutor to Mary Fairfax, daughter of Lord Thomas Fairfax, and leaves almost no room for further scholarly debate. On this point, it is also important to bear in mind that the aim of part I of this study is to ‘suspend typical questions’ and focus on exploring aspects of Marvell’s life which have not been significantly ‘book kept’ such as the years between 1642-1652. Therefore, focus will be given to the social interactions Marvell had with members of the Cambridge Platonists during his time serving in the court of Cromwell from 1652-58. Consideration will be predominantly given to two figures, which historians have largely neglected—namely Peter Sterry and John Sadler, who were both “observed to make a public profession of Platonism.” Sterry was a member of the Westminster Assembly of Divines until the regicide of King Charles I in 1649. He was later elected to the position of Chaplain and preacher to the Council of the State under Cromwell. When Cromwell assumed the office of Lord Protector, Sterry undertook the role of Cromwell’s personal chaplain, and was

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154 While this chapter will not focus on the years Marvell spent travelling abroad, this research is aware that during his time spent overseas Marvell came in contact with many different forms of literature and literary people as well as being exposed to varied forms of theatre and art. Nigel Smith offers a trenchant account of the possible literary influences Marvell may have had during his time spent abroad, as well as a literary comparison of Marvell and other poets. To name a few, Smith suggests that Marvell’s pastoral poetry is indebted to the Dutch poet Constantijn Huygens, especially his poem Hofwijck. Smith also suggests that Joost van den Vondel, who is considered the most prominent Dutch poet and playwright of the seventeenth-century, and Salvatore Rosa, an Italian painter and poet most likely influenced Marvell’s poetry. See Smith, Andrew Marvell The Chameleon, 45-64.

156 The Westminster Assembly (1643-52) was the assembly called by the English Long parliament to reform the Church of England. It wrote the Larger and Shorter Westminster catechisms, the Westminster Confession, and the Directory of Public Worship. The assembly was made up of 30 laymen (20 from the House of commons and 10 from the House of Lords), 121 English clergymen, and a delegation of Scottish Presbyterians. Although all were Calvinists in doctrine, the assembly represented four different opinions on church government: Episcopalian, Erastian, Independent, and Presbyterian. From July 1, 1643 until February 22, 1649, it held 1,163 sessions in Westminster Abbey, and it continued to meet occasionally until 1652. The works produced were generally accepted by the Presbyterians throughout the world, although Presbyterianism in England was suppressed when episcopacy was re-established in 1660. This definition has been taken from the Encyclopædia Britannica. See Darshana Das, “The Westminster Assembly,” Encyclopædia Britannica, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc. https://www.britannica.com/event/Westminster-Assembly, (assessed June 12, 2018); for a detailed account on the Westminster Assembly see Robert Letham, The Westminster Assembly: Reading its Theology in Historical Context (New Jersey: P & B, 2009).
elected a member of the “Commission of Triers,”¹⁵⁸ along with his good friend and fellow Cambridge Platonist John Sadler. Interestingly, Peter Sterry’s brother Nathaniel Sterry served as an assistant to both Milton and Marvell, which suggests that both brothers were well acquainted with the two poets.¹⁵⁹ Second, John Sadler, who together with Peter Sterry and Benjamin Whichcote was a leading proponent in advising Cromwell on the re-admission of the Jews into England. Sadler was a prominent common lawyer and academic who integrated his Platonic conception of reason into the practice of British Common Law. Sadler’s conception of reason was radically different from many Common lawyers of his time. He essentially diverted from the Aristotelian lines of Justice evident in Edward Coke’s “Artificial Reason,”¹⁶⁰ and unified a primarily Platonic conception of Justice into his jurisprudence.¹⁶¹ It can be established that Marvell would have had direct interactions with both Sterry and Sadler during his time as tutor to William Dutton, and during his time as Latin Secretary to Oliver Cromwell.

2.2.1 Peter Sterry and the Cambridge Platonists

Peter Sterry was an author of several works—namely, A Discourse of the Freedom of the Will (1675), which was printed three years after his death. However, his most interesting and extensive work is found in his Sermons entitled The Rise, Race and Royalty of the Kingdom

¹⁵⁸ The Commission of Triers was established by Oliver Cromwell in 1654 to balance religious matters. Members of the Triers would check the quality and qualification of proposed clergyman, with the intention of ejecting ministers and masters of schools whose teachings were not in line with the State. Historians usually view the commissions of Triers as an act of tyranny exercised against the papacy and the Episcopal. Members of the Triers also discussed theological discrepancies and assumed the role as public preachers. It is important to note, that not all members of the Trier were consistent in Cromwell’s dogmatic approach to religious intolerance— namely, Peter Sterry and John Sadler. See John Carwithen, The History of the Church of England, Volume 2 (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2008), 250-4.

¹⁵⁹ Pinto, Peter Sterry: Platonist and Puritan, 34.


of God in the Soul of Man. These sermons were originally delivered between 1645-1659, and later published posthumously in 1683. The Sermons were delivered in three locations; before the House of Commons at Westminster, the House of Lords at Covent Garden, and from 1654 onwards every fortnight on Thursday at the Chapel at Whitehall.162 Sterry’s sermons drew heavily upon Plato and Neoplatonic philosophy, such as the works of Plato, Plotinus, and Porphyry. Sterry also used the Renaissance philosophers Ficino and Campanella as touchstones, and of course his contemporaries Cudworth and More.163 More importantly, while Sterry was first and foremost a Puritan divine he was also a poet, who used prose as his main medium of expression (much like John Sherman). Sterry believed that poetry was divinely inspired and was the most appropriate medium to communicate God’s grace. For Sterry, “the poet is touched and warmed with a divine ray, through which the supreme wisdom is formed upon them.”164 This is evident in A Rose-tree where Sterry uses simile to explain that ‘Divine Truth’ is like ‘a rose tree’:

which as it hath its beautiful and
Perfumed rose, so it hath prickels to guard those Roses from
Rash and rude hands (lines 1-3).

Similarly, in The Waggon and the Horses Sterry uses simile, metaphor, and personification to compare the soul and body to a horse and wagon:

At our birth, which is the morning of this life, and our entrance Upon our journey through this weary world, our Souls and Bodies Are joined to this fleshy Image By the natural spirit, The Spirit of this world, as horses put into a wagon, to which they are fasted by their Harness, and Traces. The body is as the force-horse, but the soul as the filler, which draws most, and bears the chief weight. (lines 20-4)

Here, the most obvious quality of Sterry’s style is the variety of imagery. His writing employs metaphors and similes, which are not merely illustrations of his ideas, but “poetic

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162 Pinto, Peter Sterry: Platonist and Puritan, 66.
163 Ibid., 66.
images with an independent life of their own.” Sterry also heavily draws upon pastoral imagery, such as flowers, and the motif of light. He shows the reader in *A Rose Tree* that “the sweetest colours of a fair summer-morning in the sky… so made that they fade not, but go on chasing still, until they all vanish into pure light,” or rather the speaker meditates upon “two lilies or roses joined together upon one stalk in a fair morning or bright afternoon, to watch the *Mary-gold* open itself only to this sun.” Sterry speaks of “flowers of Divine light,” and “the summer with its Golden skies and Sunshine, with its Gardens of Roses, and Fields or Corn.” Sterry’s imagery echoes that of Marvell’s pastoral lyric especially in *The Garden*, where “sacred plants” and “luscious clusters of the vine” dominate the “happy garden-state.” Or rather in *Upon Appleton House*, where “tulips, pink and rose,” are “eternal and divine,” which “heaven planted us to please.” While literary comparisons between Marvell and the Cambridge Platonists will be the focus in part II, it is noteworthy to consider that Sterry was certainly an individual who not only held poetry in high regard but was indeed a poet himself. Essentially, in offering brief examples of Sterry’s Sermons it provides insight into a man who is profoundly eloquent and poetic in the delivery of his Sermons. Furthermore, while it can be established that Marvell and Sterry certainly had social interactions with one another, what is not known is the extent Sterry’s poetic Sermons may have influenced Marvell’s own poetry. While it is extremely difficult to postulate an exactitude of Sterry and Marvell’s relationship, what can be logically deduced is that Marvell entered Cromwell’s Court in 1652 as tutor to William Dutton, then later served as Latin Secretary during the time in which Sterry was actively preaching his Sermons and chaplain to Oliver Cromwell. Therefore, it is plausible to suggest that during the eight-year period in

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165 Pinto, *Peter Sterry: Platonist and Puritan*, 158.
which Sterry and Marvell were acquainted they most likely discussed poetry, and it is not unreasonable to suggest that Marvell would have attended at least some of Sterry’s Sermons.

2.3 Conclusion of Part I

Thus far, part I has examined aspects and events in Marvell’s life, which have received minimal scholarly attention, and it has explored a different interpretation of Marvell’s early life and adulthood. Marvell’s childhood and parentage under his father has been examined to suggest that Marvell senior’s unique Puritanism and sermonising, which incorporated an elegant poetic structure most likely influenced Marvell from a very young age. Besides Marvell senior’s deviation from the traditional Puritan sermon style, he also had an expansive library, to which Marvell had ready access. Furthermore, a comparative study of Benjamin Whichcote and Marvell senior’s sermons reveal distinct thematic and literary similarities. Both men, use ancient thinkers, Christian and Pagan, and the engagement of poetic devices such as metaphor, allusion, and simile to support their religious sensibilities. On this point, the suggestion has been made that both men, graduates of Emmanuel College and contemporary divines would have certainly been aware of one another, especially as both men preached in their respective Trinity Churches. Additionally, the pedagogical structure and curriculum at Hull Grammar would have provided the educational skills to develop and enhance Marvell’s proficiency in Latin, Greek and Hebrew, and the study of Neoplatonist authors such as Erasmus and Plutarch would have exposed him to Neoplatonist ideas and literature in the early stages of his education. Marvell’s education at Cambridge places him there when Benjamin Whichcote had already established a codified Christian Neoplatonist school of thought in reaction to the rigid Puritan predetermination of Calvin’s tyrannical
Deus absconditus.\textsuperscript{169} Besides Whichcote being the founder of the Cambridge Platonists, he was also a well-known preacher and divine at the time.\textsuperscript{170} More importantly, Marvell’s Master at Trinity, John Sherman, was a close friend of Whichcote, and while a periphery member of the Cambridge School, nonetheless, lectured Marvell over a seven-year period. Therefore, it is difficult to argue against the suggestion that Marvell had direct interactions with members of the Cambridge Platonists, especially Sherman, and possibly Cudworth who most likely lectured Marvell in Hebrew.

Besides Marvell’s early life, consideration has also been given to the years between 1652-1658, to suggest that Marvell had further sociable interactions with members of the Cambridge Platonists. Specifically, Peter Sterry, who served as Chaplain to Cromwell during Marvell’s position as Latin Secretary. Two other figures who Marvell may have encountered leading up to his elected position of Latin Secretary are John Sadler, and Benjamin Whichcote, that is, if he had not already encountered these men at Cambridge during his studies. Whichcote and Sadler were both present during the Whitehall Conference,\textsuperscript{171} and acted as personal liaisons between Menasseh Ben Israel\textsuperscript{172} and Oliver Cromwell. While there

\textsuperscript{169} Deus absconditus translates into English as ‘God is concealed.’ Deus absconditus functions as integral theological and epistemological framework, which Jean Calvin applies to how an individual attains knowledge of God. Calvin’s doctrine of Deus absconditus is discussed in his \textit{Institutio Christianae religionis} (Institutes of the Christian Religion, 1536). In it, Calvin states: “how can the infinite essence of God be defined by the narrow capacity of the human mind? How can the human mind by its own effort, penetrate into an examination of the essence of God, when it is quite ignorant of its own existence?” (\textit{Inst.} I.xiii.21). The hiddenness of God plays a central theme in Calvin’s theology, whereby he argues that “seeing God is incomprehensible to the nature of man and God is far away concealed from human intelligence.” (\textit{Inst.} I.i.286). For primary source see Jean Calvin, \textit{The Institutes of the Christian Religions} (trans. Henry Beveridge (Michigan: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 2002), 21; for a secondary source and examination of Calvin’s doctrine of knowledge see T.H.L. Parker, \textit{Calvin’s Doctrine of the Knowledge of God} (Oregon: Wipf&Stock, 2015), 12.

\textsuperscript{170} By the time Marvell enters Cambridge in 1634 Whichcote was undertaking a Bachelor of Divinity and had already come to notoriety for his unique sermons. Further, Marvell was at Cambridge during some of the most formative years of the Cambridge Platonists, where they were delivering and promoting their ideas in the forms of Sermons and lectures, but not yet publishing them. See Cassirer, \textit{The Platonic Renaissance in England}, 32.

\textsuperscript{171} Albrecht Classen and Marilyn Sandige, \textit{Friendship in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Age: Explorations of Fundamental Ethic Discourse} (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2001), 765.

\textsuperscript{172} Menasseh ben Israel (1604-1657) was a major Hebraic scholar of the Jewish community of Amsterdam and the founder of the modern Jewish community in England. Menasseh was born into a family of Marranos (Jews of Spain and Portugal who publicly accepted Christianity but privately practiced Judaism). After his father appeared as a penitent in an auto-da-fé, the family escaped to Amsterdam, where Jewish settlement was
is no substantial evidence to support that Marvell, Whichcote, and Sadler knew each other, all three men were profoundly significant members and contributors to Cromwell’s political agenda, as well as all being Cambridge graduates. To that end, part I has attempted to ‘suspend typical’ questions regarding Marvell’s life, and has endeavoured to avert making any commentary on Marvell’s life, which has already been arduously archived by other scholars. While Maltzahn’s and Smith’s biographical work has been used, it has been used in a way to facilitate a shift of focus towards aspects of Marvell’s life, and sociable interactions which have received minimal scholarly attention, if any. Consequently, part I has applied Foucault’s literary methodology to bring forward and examine four aspects of Marvell’s life, which suggest he had interactions with the Cambridge Platonists’, as well as being influenced by their theology, philosophy, and literature. Moreover, it has been established that current Marvell scholarship assumes that the critic must see both the man, and his epoch as mutually unified. There is a central contestation in current Marvell scholarship, which urges the critic to sharply distinguish the ‘poet,’ from the ‘propagandist,’ the ‘political,’ from the ‘religious,’ and the Revolution from the Restoration. In effect, this method of historical and literary criticism has not only obstructed the critic from being able to detach the man from his poetry, but essentially has dictated the projection of Marvell scholarship over the past thirty year. To

officially authorized. Menasseh, became the rabbi of a Portuguese Jewish congregation in Amsterdam in 1622. He founded that city’s first Hebrew printing press in 1626, publishing his works in Hebrew, Latin, Spanish, and Portuguese. Among his writings, Conciliador, 3 vol. (1632–51), was an attempt to reconcile discordant passages in the Bible; it established his reputation as a scholar in the Jewish and Christian communities. Menasseh maintained friendships with Hugo Grotius and Rembrandt, corresponded with Queen Christina of Sweden, and was an early teacher of Benedict de Spinoza. To support the settlement of Jews in Protestant England, where their presence had been officially banned since 1290, he dedicated the Latin edition of this work (1650) to the English Parliament. Further, Menasseh continued to plead for the formal recognition of Jewish settlement in England, and he appeared before Oliver Cromwell in London in 1655 to argue his cause. He returned to Holland in 1657, believing his mission to have been unsuccessful. His efforts, however, initiated the unofficial English acceptance of Jewish settlement and led to the granting of an official charter of protection to the Jews of England in 1664, after Menasseh’s death. See Yamini Chauhan, “Menasseh ben Israel,” Encyclopedia Britannica, Encyclopedia Britannica, September 19, 2013, https://www.britannica.com/biography/Menasseh-ben-Israel, (accessed June 20, 2018); for a detailed account of Menasseh’s life see Steven Nadler, Menasseh ben Israel: Rabbi of Amsterdam (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019).
that end, part I of this study has aimed to overcome this inability, and to move past Marvell’s political position by suspending typical questions concerning Marvell’s life. As a result, part I has suggested that suspending typical questions regarding Marvell’s early education and later life has revealed that he encountered skilled and elevated people, predominantly the Cambridge Platonists’, who would define and influence the course of his life.
CHAPTER THREE

MARVELL’S POETRY AND THE CAMBRIDGE PLATONISTS

For the purposes of this section, I will set aside a sociohistorical analysis of the author as an individual, and the numerous questions that deserve attention in this context: how the author was individualised in a culture such as ours; the status we have given the author, for instance, when we began our research into authenticity and attribution; the systems of valorisation in which he was included; or the moment when the stories of heroes gave way to an author's biography; the conditions that fostered the formulation of the fundamental critical category of ‘the man and his work.’ For the time being, I wish to restrict myself to the singular relationship that holds between an author and a text, the manner in which a text apparently points to this figure who is outside and precedes it.173

Alexander Jacob best defines Henry More’s *A Platonick Song of the Soul* (1647) as “psychological phantasmagoria in which the different phases of the soul’s movements in the macrocosm and in the human microcosm are displayed through More’s ardent Christian Neoplatonism.”174 More’s *Platonick Song* shares distinct structural similarities derived from Ficino’s *Theologian platonica de immortalitate animae (Platonic Philosophy, On the Immortality of the Soul 1482)*175 to whom More pays homage in the epigraph of the first chapter of *Psychozoia*.176 The major theme dominating More’s philosophical poem is the manifestation of the soul in its various forms: that is, the life of the soul, the immortality of

173 Foucault, *What is an Author?*, 4.
175 The *Platonic Theology* is the philosophical treatise of the Renaissance Platonist Marsilio Ficino (1433-99). The book is an encyclopaedic defence of the immortality of the soul, and it was largely responsible for elevating this question to a position of philosophical importance in the Renaissance. In addition to defending immortality, Ficino also articulates those ideas and positions that are most distinctive of his thought. He lays down the basic principles of a vitalistic natural philosophy, according to which a World Soul suffuses all of nature, imparting life, motion, and order to it. Ficino also presents his own restructuring of the Neoplatonic hierarchy of being. See James G. Snyder, “Theologia Platonica de Immortalitate,” *The Literary Encyclopedia*, January 16, 2012, https://www.litencyc.com/php/sworks.php?rec=true&UID=34220. (July 16, 2018); and C.A. Staudenbaur, “Galileo, Ficino, and Henry More’s Psychathanasia,” *Journal of History of Ideas* 29, no. 4 (1968): 565. Similar to Ficino, More structured his work in six chapters entitled: 1. The life of the soul (Psychozoia), 2. The Immortality of the soul (Psychathanasia), 3. The Infinite Worlds (Democritus Platonissans), 4. The Confutation of the sleep of the Soul (Antipsychopannychia), 5. The Praeexistency of the Soul, 6. Confutation of the Unitie of Souls (Antimonopsychia).
the soul, the sleeping of the soul, the unity of the soul, and the memory of the soul after death. Words such as “calefaction,” “exility,” “self-reduplication,” “Tricentreity,” “individuation,” “circumvolution,” “presentifick circularity,” and “Energie,” are frequently used to describe the soul. For More, the soul is constrained, “shackled by rusty chains” which “rears the soul unto her pristine state” (Psychathanasia, I, II: 20). The body is described as a “dark dungeon,” that is “wedg’d in things corporeal,” unable to free itself from the fleshy body and physical world.

In A Dialogue between the soul and the body Marvell defines the soul as being held captive by the body. Here, the speaker exclaims “O, who shall from this dungeon raise A soul, enslaved so many ways” (lines 1-2). Here, Marvell, similarly to More, employs the motif of the dungeon to represent the body and the captivity of the soul within it. For More, no physical human part of the anatomy “can reach further than its proper sphear,” which “divine senses by reason decree.” (Psychozoia, I:97). That is, the human body is completely incapable of perceiving the divine (incorporeal) experience, this can only be accomplished via the soul. More, like Plotinus, suggests that the world is only an image of the divine world (Enneads, II.ix.4). Similarly, Marvell asks in A Dialogue, between the Resolved Soul and Created Pleasure “if things of sight such heavens be / What Heavens are those we cannot see?” (lines 55-56). Here, there is a distinct continuity between Plotinus, More and Marvell’s construction of the corporeal world of flesh and material, and the incorporeal world of the divine. More uses verbs such as “allure,” “seduce,” “diligence,” “hidden,” and “warns” to describe the status of the soul in its different phases, and continually reiterates how the soul must overcome these sensual worldly pleasures. This is a theme that becomes overtly clear in

\[177\] This word will need some explanation because More has included in his general interpretations A-Z in the index of A Platonick Song of the Soul. More defines this word as the following: “Tricentreity is the centre of essence, it is the energy of the soul that culminates in one. It is, an essence of the Trinity.” See More, A Platonick Song of the Soul, 623.
Marvell’s *A Dialogue, between the Resolved Soul and Created Pleasure* where the soul metaphorically battles the “downy pillows,” “soft plumes,” “perfumes,” and ‘alluring senses,” with “The weight of thine immortal shield” (lines 1-2). In this instance, “the visible world and the senses are viewed as a prison, disruptive and deceptive in the soul’s progress towards God, a temptation to fallible sense, imperfect judgment, and unstable will.”  

Peter Sterry defines the soul in a similar fashion, however, slightly more detailed:

We have the principles of the soul in us, for the most part in sensual pleasures; as a piece of gold in the dirt; as the sun in a cloud; as the brain or fancy in a mist of fumes. Wipe the dirt off the gold, scatter the cloud from before the sun, the mist on the fancy; chase vain delights out of the soul: All these will shine in their proper beauties.

Here, much like Marvell, Sterry is suggesting that the soul must not pursue sensual pleasures and vain delights, but rather “wipe,” and “scatter,” the surface layer of the corporeal world, and search inward into the incorporeal for divine knowledge. Additionally, In *A Drop of Dew* the world is described as “dark,” “careless,” “divided,” “excluding,” and the soul as “unsecure,” “restless,” “impure” and “congealed.” This dualism of soul and body is a central theme in More, Sterry, and Marvell’s work, but what is also central to all three authors’ work is the cyclical nature of the soul, its immortality, and its pre-existence. More sought to defend the Orthodoxy of the doctrine of pre-existence and asserts this view in *The Praeexistency of the Soul*. More turns to Origen’s *On First Principles* as a theological framework to support his view on the pre-existence of the soul. Essentially, Origen views the life of the soul as a gradual process, wherein the soul first falls away from God and then reascends towards an ultimate reunion with him. Origen reasons that “We must suppose, therefore, that in the beginning God made as large a number of rational and intelligent beings, or whatever the before-mentioned minds ought to be called, as he foresaw what number would be

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sufficient.”181 Marvell’s *On a Drop of Dew* shares both More and Origen’s schema of the soul’s cycle. Here, the dew (soul), flower (body), and sun (heaven) serve as metaphors to detail the cycle of the soul’s journey from “the clear region where ‘twas born,” and while “congealed on earth: but does, dissolving, run / Into the glories of the almighty sun” (lines 38-39), and returns to Heaven. Consequently, the following chapters will aim to reveal the continuities between More, Sterry, and Marvell’s construction and treatment of the soul in their respective works through analysis of theme, subject, and style to establish the distinct philosophical, and theological consistencies in the authors’ treatment of the soul.

3.1 Henry More and Marvell

“A chast soul can never mis’t” (*A Dialogue between Thyrsis and Dorinda*, line 7).

There are two similarities found in More’s *Psychozoia* and *Psychathanasia* and Marvell’s *A Dialogue, between the Resolved Soul and the Created Pleasure, A Dialogue between the Soul and the Body*, and *On A Drop of Dew*. The first, a thematic similarity, made evident in the title of each authors’ works. Both authors from the outset of their work make it apparent to the reader that the soul will operate as the central theme (this is not as obvious in *On a Drop of Dew*). The second, a genre similarity, whereby, both authors have used poetry as a literary medium to discuss the theme of the soul. This can be considered important because the functionality of poetry and the poet for members of the Cambridge Platonists, especially Sterry and More, serves as an integral form of literature, wherein “the poet is touched and warmed by the Divine Ray of God.”182 Both Marvell and More, have situated themselves

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182 Sterry has situated the function of poetry within the literary tradition of Plotinus, who believed that the purpose of poetry and art was to expound and translate the unexplainable workings into the divine. This is considered a significant deviation from Plato, who believed that poetry held seductive powers over individuals and was viewed negatively. For a detailed description of the function of poetry in Plotinus’ philosophy see Raoul Mortley, *Plotinus, Self and the World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 112; for primary source accounts see Sterry, “God’s Poem,” in Sterry: *Platonist and Puritan*, ed. Pinto, 164; “The Poet and the Thieves,” 174; “Orpheus and Christ,” 181; “The Heavenly Aeneas,” 188.
within the Neoplatonic tradition of the poet, which is evident in both authors’ attempting to convey theological and philosophical notions of the divine via poetry. While there are definitive stylistic deviations in the authors—namely, More’s use of lyric, which is clear in the title ‘song of the soul.’ Instead Marvell’s poems belong to the tradition of the poetic dialogue, utilising the Socratic Dialogue form as a device for presenting a full-scale philosophical world view. However, it is fair to say that both authors’ poems securely fit within the metaphysical genre. While there are certain similarities and differences in More and Marvell’s styles, there are three very distinct philosophical and theological similarities in the way in which the authors treat the soul. First, both authors believe that the soul has extensions. More vigorously maintains that the soul does have extensions, arguing: “let us first consider [the soul] a while, what she is in her own Essence, without any reference to the any Body at all, and we shall find her a Substance extended and indiscernible… she hath as ample, if not more ample, Dimensions of her own, then are visible in the Body she has left.”

In The Resolved Soul and Created Pleasure, the Speaker supports More’s view that the soul has extensions by suggesting that unconfined by his body, his soul reaches out to the object of desire: “where the souls of fruits and flowers / Stand prepared to heighten yours.” (lines 15-16). More displays the soul as “puzzled,” “stupid,” “bungled,” and “lost,” in the “ill-disposed matter,” of the physical world (Psychozoia, I:41). Similarly, in Marvell’s The Resolved Soul and Created Pleasure, the soul is aware of the “ill-disposed matter,” of the physical world, and is sceptical of the corporeal pleasure that it consists of. This is evident in: “gentler rest is on a thought / Conscious of doing what I ought.” (lines 23-4). Here, the soul’s

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185 Henry More, The Immortality of the Soul, 3.2.1.
consciousness is not focusing on a physical action, but rather a metaphysical action of ‘thought.’ Marvell clearly highlights the juxtaposition between *vita contemplativa*, where the function of the soul is to contemplate, rather than *vita activa*, where the function of the body is to be active.\(^{186}\) By Marvell defining the soul as *vita contemplativa*, and the body as *vita activa* further reinforces the poet’s emphasis placed upon the supremacy of the contemplative soul, instead of the active body. Furthermore, both More and Marvell admonish that the virtuous soul must overcome the body’s metaphorical “dungeon,” and “stupid state.” Only by casting aside interest of the material earthly world can be the soul hope to sustain its journey towards the vision of the divine world and God. The second similarity is found in the authors’ reinforcement of the theological supremacy of the soul over the body, especially regarding the soul’s cyclical and eternal structure. This is most evident in *On a Drop of Dew*, in the soul (metaphorically represented as a drop of dew) completes its cycle from being, to falling to the earthly realm imbued in the body (the rose), then finally “dissolving, run / Into the glories of th’ Almighty Sun” (lines 39-40), back to heaven. More writes in *Psychathanasia*, that “the Soul’s eternality is my greatest quest,” (I: 25), this quest is also evident in *On a Drop of Dew*, where the soul lives eternally in the divine realm of the Almighty Sun. However, this theological ideology is not as apparent in *A Dialogue between the Soul and Body*, where there is no resolution, nor is an attempt made to resolve the problem voiced by the opposing speakers. The soul asks, “O who shall, from this dungeon, raise / A soul inslaved so many ways?” (lines 6-7). To this, the body responds “O Who shall me deliver

\(^{186}\) The concept of *Vita activa* (the active) and *Vita contemplativa* (the contemplative) is a theological doctrine, which holds that the active should be completely subservient to the contemplative on the basis that one should reflect on issues and matters, rather than act. The complete subordination of *vita activa* to *vita contemplativa* has been fundamental to much Christian theology. The *vita activa* is viewed as only necessitating the body, whereas the *vita contemplativa* arouses the soul and functions as a way for individuals to communicate with God. Thomas Aquinas details one of the most compressive philosophical accounts of *vita activa* and *vita contemplativa* in his *Summa Theologiae*. Stating that “it is impossible for one to be busy with external action and at the same time give oneself to the divine contemplation of God.” See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologicae: Volume 46, Action and Contemplation: 179-182*, ed. Jordan Aumann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 6; for a secondary source see Miroslav Volf, *Work in the Spirit: Towards a Theology of Work* (Oregon: Wipf&Stock, 1991), 70.
whole, / From bonds of this tyrannic soul? (lines 11-2). Here, there is no Socratic dialogue, but rather a succession of pros and cons from the viewpoint of the soul and the body, each interlocuter supporting their own existence. On this point, the body prevails over the soul in this poem on the basis that the body offers the last word:

But Physick yet could never reach  
The maladies thou me dost teach;  
Whom first the cramp of Hope does tear,  
And then the palsie shakes of Fear;  
The pestilence of love does heat,  
Or hatred’s hidden ulcer eat;  
Joy’s cheerful madness does perplex,  
Or Sorrow’s other madness vex;  
Which knowledge forces me to know,  
And memory will not forego;  
What but a soul could have the wit  
To build me up for sin so fit?  
So architects do square and hew  
Green trees that in the forest grew.  
(Lines 31-40).

Here, the body accuses the soul of building the body up for sin, and ultimately, impugning the soul for all abstract emotions the human body experiences, such as: hope, fear, love, hatred, and sorrow. However, the body does not deny the eternality of the soul. If the “architect” is interpreted as God, the “green trees” as the soul, and the Forest as the body: the body is simply suggesting that God needs to ‘square and hew,’ the soul. Hence, the body is stating that the soul needs to conform to the body instead of rejecting it.
Marvell’s use of the Dialogue form distances the speaker from his apparent subject. Rosalie Colie suggests that “the formal, epigrammatic language of ‘A Dialogue’ helps to distance speaker and reader from what is going on, and lays stress on the abstract character of the conventional set problem.”\(^{187}\) This is significant as the argument has been made that Marvell’s religious verse functions as a philosophical guidance for Christians during his time. Therefore, by using the schema of the Dialogue Marvell is able to distance himself from the poem. Despite these minor inconsistencies between the representation of the soul in More’s *Psychozoia* and *Psychathanasia* and Marvell’s *A Dialogue, between the Resolved Soul and the Created Pleasure, A Dialogue between the Soul and the Body*, and *On A Drop of Dew*, both authors use similar metaphors to describe the body, the soul, and God. For example, More and Marvell use the metaphor of the body as a dungeon, the mirror to represent the visible world, circle’s and spheres to describe God’s perfection between soul and centre, and the sun and light as the illuminators of God and the divine realm: all of which occur as metaphors in Neoplatonic literature.\(^{188}\) The authors’ use these metaphors to reinforce and support the concept that the soul’s highest achievement is the attainment of God and the divine. This union is an overtly Neoplatonist system described by Plotinus as an abandonment of all duality of intellection: \(^{189}\)

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\text{Since the souls are of the Intellectual, and the Supreme still loftier, we understand that contact is otherwise procured, that is by those powers which connect Intellectual agent with Intellectual object; indeed, the Soul is closer to the Supreme than Intellect to its object... such is its similarity, identity, and the sure link of kindred (Plotinus, Enneads, VI.ix.8).}
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Importantly, Christian Neoplatonists, such as More mark an important difference between Plotinian philosophy and Christian theology, especially Origen, who is considered the first

Christian author to speak of three ‘Hypostases’ in the Trinity: Origen replaces Plotinus’ One with the Christian Trinity. Despite such varying philosophical nuances, Plotinus’ ontology offers a suitable framework for creation ex nihilo for Christian writers such as Origen, Augustine, the Cappadocian Fathers, the Cambridge Platonists, and in this case for Marvell’s poetry. Essentially, for More and Marvell there is a distinct hiddenness to the divine realm of God, which the soul can only achieve through the process of Acies Mentis.

3.2 More’s Soul

So if what’s consonant to Plato’s school
 (Which well agrees with learned Pythagore,
 Egyptian Trismegist, and th’ antique roll
 Of Chaldee wisdom, all which time hath tore
 But Plato and deep Plotin do restore)
 Which is my scope, I sing out lustily (Psychozoia I: 4).

Henry More’s Philosophical Poems present certain interpretative difficulties. First, the mechanics of More’s text is disjointed. In the opening pages More, states that his texts consist of six ‘songs,’ however, a second title page characterises the poems as ‘arguments.’ Here, the

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192 The most widely accepted theistic explanation of initial creation is the theory that God created the universe from absolutely nothing. The Latin phrase *Creatio ex nihilo* literally means “created out of nothing.” Most major Christian theologians in history— for example, Irenaeus, Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, Barth, and Tillich—believed that God initially created the universe from nothing. See Thomas Jay Oord, “Creation of Nihilo: An Introduction,” in *Theologians of Creation: Creation Ex Nihilo and Its New Rivals*, ed. Thomas Jay Oord (New York: Routledge, 2014), 4-16.
193 Acies Mentis (gaze of the mind). The Phrase *acies mentis* in its Greek iteration is found in Plato (*Rep.* 7.533d) and is taken up by Plotinus (*Enn.* 1.6.7-9). While the term *acies mentis* is a part of the theological vocabulary of Augustine, it is a term in which Augustine certainly found in the work of Plotinus’ *Enneads*, a treatise he read shortly before converting from Manicheism to Christianity. In short, *acies mentis* is a philosophical framework, whereby it is the capacity by which humans can see the true greatness of their souls. Importantly, the concept of *acies mentis* places emphasis on the intelligence of the mind that must look inward, rather than outward at physical phenomena. For a detailed analysis of *acies mentis* see Edward Fitzgerald, *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia* (Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1999), 5-6. For primary source accounts of Augustine see Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 7.1.1; 7.2.3; 7.8.12.
reader is confronted with More’s first literary discrepancy. Second, More heavily draws upon allegory to express philosophical and theological claims, and he does through the application of imagery, evocative language, symbolism, and metaphor. While all these elements are relatively straightforward poetic techniques, More situates them within an overtly metaphysical framework. For example, More attributes the name Ahad (to the one), Atove (to the Good), and Abinoam (to the Father of Delights). More then goes on to create a cosmology and ontology, where he personifies ‘eternity’ as the first son Aeon, after Aeon is Psyche who is attributed with the sensual aspects of the universe. Of interest, More constructs his own vocabulary in relation to his poetry. One example is the word ‘Ether’, which More defines as “the vehicle of touch, smell, sight, of taste and hearing too, and of the plastick might,” which is further portrayed as a shimmering silken texture. More’s definition leads to a further enquiry into the definition of ‘plastick might,’ which he makes no effort to elaborate upon. While More appended explanations to his work to provide interpretive guidance to his reader, he unfortunately does not offer a complete comprehensive or cogent system, whereby the reader can easily decipher each name, allegory, metaphor, or reference. Such interpretive difficulties have been commented upon by Daniel Fouke, who asserts that “More’s Philosophical Poems are laden with annotations explaining its dense philosophical and theological meanings, which are further complicated by obscure unexplained allegories.” Robert Crocker, author of Henry More’s biography makes further comment on More’s complicated and unusual allegorical style, opining that “More’s use of allegory in his Philosophical Poems is profoundly obscure and difficulty unique.” Fouke and Croker’s criticism of More’s Philosophical Poems is consistent with Ernst Cassirer, who posits that

194 More, A Platonick Song of the Soul, 12.
there is a “lack of critical evaluation of both poetic style and philosophical understanding.” Despite such criticism, the aim here is not to critique the soundness of More’s philosophical framework, or the apparent inadequacy of his poetic acumen, but rather to offer a clear and comprehensive account of how he defines, discusses, and constructs the soul in his *Philosophical Poems*. However, it is important to bear in mind the difficulties put forward by Fouke, Crocker, and Cassirer when offering such an analysis.

More’s *Philosophical Poems* are structured in traditional Spenserian Stanzas: each stanza contains nine lines in total: eight lines in iambic pentameter, followed by a single ‘alexandrine’ line in iambic hexameter, with a rhyme scheme ababbcbcc. More’s first poem *Psychozoia* (The Life of the Soul) is set out in one book and sectioned into three Cantos. Canto I consists of 61 stanzas, Canto II, 148 stanzas, and Canto III, 71 stanzas. More’s second poem *Psychathanasia* (The Immortality of the Soul), has a slightly more complex structure, whereby it is divided into three Books. Book I consists of IV Cantos, Book II consists of III Cantos, and Book III consists of IV Cantos, and each Canto varies in stanzaic number. While sufficient scholarly work has been attributed to the numerological structure of More’s *Philosophical Poems*, no research thus far has found any literary or philosophical significance regarding the varying stanzaic numbers. Moreover, the title

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199 See Isabel Rivers, *Classical and Christian Ideas in English Poetry* (London: Routledge, 2003), 70-4. While it is out of the scope of this thesis, it is important to note that several of Marvell’s poems, especially *Upon Appleton House* and *Upon the Hill and Grove at Bilborough*, significantly use numerology as principle of literary organisation. In *Upon Appleton House* the speaker stresses the correspondence between the good man (Lord Fairfax) and the architectural proportion of his house (line12). Several references are also made to “Holy mathematics,” and “the circle in the quadrature.” (lines 45-48. It is also important to note that the use of numerological composition is considered a Neoplatonist literary form, therefore examining Marvell’s use of numerology would only strengthen the literary continuities between his poems and the work the Cambridge
draws the reader’s attention to the theme of the poem, which in this case is the life of the soul. More offers a detailed description of the soul’s external constitutions—namely, a cosmological and cosmogonic narrative that describes the creation of the soul (Psyche) via Ahad (the One) and Atove (the Good). However, the union between Ahad and Atove can only take place to manifest psyche when Aeon (eternity and intellect) is first manifested in the ethereal realm to then lay the foundations that constitute the corporeal world for psyche to inhabit.200 “So ancient Atove hence all joyning Ahad height / This Ahad of himself the Aeon fair / Begot, the brightnesse of his father’s grace” (Psychozoia, I: 7-8). Here, the process of multiplications unites Psyche to Aeon in a symbolic marriage, which represents the unity of these primordial entities, and together constitute all worldly action.201 Once More has offered this cosmogony, he then details the very self of the soul. Here the soul is described as a tripartite “inward triple golden film,” which consist of Physis (Nature), Arachnea (sense-perception), and Semele (intellectual imagination).202 Of interest, is the first two ‘films’ of the soul: Physis (Nature) and Arachnea (sense perception), as these also function as central themes in Marvell’s poems being examined. More metaphorically defines Arachnea as a “clear shining mirror,” in which the worldly phenomena are reflected, and Arachnea is the basis of all corporeal life.203 More explains that Arachnea is ‘one of the films’ of the soul, which makes the soul “drowsie,” and “sensual,” as well as causing “sweet agony.” More suggests that the sensual part of the soul needs be awoken by Atove’s “firey darts,” to “save that will to him return / That all to him return, nought of him is forlorn.” (Psychozoia, I:6).

Platonists, especially, Henry More. For a detailed account of Plotinus’ use of numerology see Svetla Slaveva-Griffin, Plotinus on Numbers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

200 We note immediately that the One, in Neoplatonism, is beyond Being, a transcendent energy. Here, As Aeon is intellectual life itself, which must be constituted before the soul. This appellation is derived from Plotinus’s Platon-Parmenian identification of Being with Mind before Being with Body. See Plotinus, Enneads, V.1.8.

201 More, A Platonick Song of the Soul, 29.

202 This philosophical concept is overtly Neoplatonist and most likely derives from Plotinus’ cosmological and ontological structure of The One, The Intellect, and The Soul. This ontology is also later taken up by Origen and defined as the Hypostasis.

203 More, A Platonick Song of the Soul, 29.
Here, More suggests that the Soul needs to distance itself from its second ‘film’ Sense perception, which makes it ‘drowsie,’ and needs to return to God.\textsuperscript{204} This is more evident in Arachnea, which “disjoints, and makes the heart to quake / To good the soul doth further reunite” (Psychozoia, I:6). It becomes apparent that More’s representation of the soul is sceptical of sense perception, which is described as follows:

\begin{quote}
Arachnea old hag, foul, filthy, and deform,
Cannot come near. Joyfull Eternity
Admits no change or mutability,
No shade of change, no imminution,
No nor increase; and what increase can be
To that that’s all? And where Arachnea hath no throne
Can ought decay? Such is the state of great Aeon (Psychozoia I: 9).
\end{quote}

Here, Arachnea (\textit{sense perception}) is defined as an old hag, foul, filthy, deformed, and more importantly can decay, unlike Aeon which is eternal. More’s strong use of negative adjectives depicts the physical world as untrustworthy and degraded. In other words, More suggests that the soul is eternal and should distance itself from the outwardness of the “deformed,” and “decaying,” world of sense perception and look inward “into the hidden rayes,” of “the Soul’s excellence” (Psychozoia, I:12).

Interestingly, More evokes Narcissus to describe the corporeal world: “Like Narcissus, on the grassie shore, / Viewing his outward face in watery glasse,” where “To that vain shadow: the boy, alas! / Unhappy boy! The inward nought attends, / But in foul filthy mire, love, life and form he blends” (Psychozoia, I:11). Essentially, for More, the divine

\textsuperscript{204} Here a distinct similarity can be drawn between More and Plotinus. Plotinus states “For the activity of sense-perception is that of the soul asleep; for it is the part of the soul that is in the body that sleeps; but the true wakening is a true getting up from the body, not with the body.” Plotinus, \textit{Enneads}, III.vi.
incorporeal world will not present itself to individuals who mimic the narrative of Narcissus, and who love the transient body over the eternal soul. Interestingly, the allegory of Narcissus is also present in the Sermons of Peter Sterry, who much like More, suggests that “all those formes, and images of things, which includes: sight, hearing, smell, taste, and feeling,” consist of the “lower and more outward part of the universe,” whereby “the soul, like Narcissus forgets to be itself and forgets that itself is the face of the shadow and its true glory lays buried.” But, More and Sterry differentiate between two realities. First, the corporeal ‘outward world’ of sense perception, which is “deformed,” “narcissistic,” “foul,” and “filthy,” and second, the incorporeal ‘inward world’ which is “hidden,” “excellent,” Perfect,” “bright,” “good,” “warm,” and “eternal.” For More the “deep searching soul,” must pursue the inward incorporeal world to reunite and raise itself to “God’s own spright, who raiseth from the dust / The slumbering soul” (Psychathanasia, I:5). At its heart, More is suggesting that the souls who seek the divine through knowledge of the divine are drawn back by God’s love to eternal life in God, while the souls who seek knowledge of God in the physical world are reduced to insensible matter. That is, “Their rotten relics lurk close underground / with living weight no sense or sympathy / They have it all” (Psychathanasia, I.II:20). This is certainly a theme that emerges in Marvell’s A Dialogue, between the Resolved Soul and the Created Pleasure, where the soul has to overcome the sensual worldly pleasure of “fruits,” “flowers,” “soft plumy pillows,” “perfumes,” and “minted gold.” Additionally, More does not only suggest that the corporeal word is deformed and foul, but

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205 Narcissus is a figure in both literature and art who has experienced various interpretations throughout the centuries. For example, Neoplatonic readings of Narcissus emerge from Plotinus (see Enneads.1.6.8), where Narcissus is a symbol of selfish arrogance. Marsilio Ficino in his Commentarium in convivium platonis de amore (1469) takes Narcissus as an example of one who loves the transience of the body over the eternal soul. More’s reference to Narcissus is purposeful, whereby he is situating himself with the Neoplatonic tradition of interpreting Narcissus. See Rosemary Barrow, “Narcissus and Echo,” in A Handbook to the Reception of Classic Mythology, ed. Vanda Zajko et al (New Jersey: Wiley Blackwell, 2017), 301-311.

goes one step further to state that the corporeal world is a thinly veiled shadow that obstructs the soul’s ability to attain the divine:

Calling thin shadows true realitie,
And deeply doubt if corporalitie,
(For so they term those visible) were story’d
Whether that inward first vitalitie
Could then subsist. But they are ill accloy’d
With cloddie earth, and with blind dusckishesse annoy’d (Psychathanasia I.1: 12).

Here, More argues that the corporeal world is only a shadowy reality of the divine, in which the soul’s inward vitality must subsist. Once again, a theme evident in Sterry, who uses the metaphor of shadow to describe the corporeal world:

This soul thus bred, thus divinely formed, thus nourished, thus impregnated, sends forth from itself this whole visible world, in the figures of those first glories, in the similitude of their unity, variety, and order, without thought, care, or trouble, without ever taking a look to this world; as a person with their face to the sun, casts their shadow upon the ground behind them. There is only this difference, as this great soul casts the shadow of this corporeal world from itself, there is no ground for it to fall upon, beside the soul itself.207

Sterry uses the sun and the shadow as a metaphor to suggest that a person who does not take care to look backward or inward into the soul is blinded by the brightness of the sun, and the only remnant of the soul that remains for this person is the physical shadow that the body casts. Consequently, the soul is trapped as a physical shadow in the corporeal world. Of significance here is the emergence of distinct thematic and philosophical similarities between More, Marvell, and Sterry, who all suggest that the soul must overcome the corporeal pleasures and sense of the body and must seek the divine knowledge of God through thought.

3.3 Marvell’s *A Dialogue, Between the Resolved Soul, and Created Pleasure, and A Dialogue between the Soul and Body*

*A Dialogue, Between the Resolved Soul, and Created Pleasure* belongs to the tradition of the poetic dialogue. The poem grows out of the initial ten lines, then proceeds in the traditional sense of a dialogue juxtaposed between two interlocutors: the *Soul* and the *Created Pleasure*. The poem alternates between the trochaic heptasyllable (and, in the second part, some six-syllable lines) of Pleasure and the Soul’s iambic octosyllables, with two choric stanzas, and the first of which divides the poem into two halves. Unlike *A Dialogue between the Soul and Body*, which consist of a simple ten-line lyric within themselves, and unusually the speakers appear to be talking to a third party rather than to each other. Much like More’s *Philosophical Poems*, Marvell’s *A Dialogue, Between the Resolved Soul and Created Pleasure* and *A Dialogue between the Soul and Body* are related to one kind of medieval soul-body debate, where a virtuous soul overcomes and chastises a guilty body. On this point, Nigel Smith offers two interesting pieces of analysis regarding *A Dialogue, Between the Resolved Soul and Created Pleasure* to reveal the relationship between the author and a text, in a manner in which, the text points to this figure who is outside and precedes it. First, “the different stanza forms used by Pleasure in the second half contrast with the same stanza form being used by the Soul: the Soul is faithful to her forms; Pleasure is driven to experiment.” Second, “the participants in the dialogue are distinguished by different prosodies. In the first part of the poem, *Created Pleasure* speaks in trochaic heptasyllabe, while the Resolved Soul responds in iambic trimeters, but the Soul’s metre remains the same.” This poetic structure of the Soul’s metre remains the same, and acts as a literary technique, which reinforces the

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208 Foucault, *What is an Author?*, 4.
210 Ibid., 34.
philosophical concept that the soul is immutable, and also offers a literary piece of evidence that informs the reader of the author’s sensibilities of the Soul, without determining any historical relations to the text. Here, the poetic schema functions as an analogical relation to the text, rather than a genealogical relation.\(^{211}\) The concept of the immutability of the soul is also dominant in More’s *Philosophical Poems*, while not as stylistically complex as Marvell, More writes “This is the state of th’ evermoving soul” (*Psychathanasia*, I.II:8). Frank Kermode furthers the analysis of *A Dialogue, Between the Resolved Soul and Created Pleasure* by arguing that the poem includes a full example of the literary banquet of sense. “In the first section the soul resists sensual temptation, and in the second overcomes temptations of women, wealth, worldly glory and important learning.”\(^{212}\) Also, the senses are treated in ascending order: from taste and touch, dependent upon sense; to smell, positioned between these and the higher senses; to sight and hearing, which operate without contact.\(^{213}\) Ultimately, by the end of the poem the soul has completed an imitation of Christ (*imitatio chrisit*) and its cyclical progression towards the divine realm. Importantly, Smith reinforces “the significance of the concentration upon the senses in the second half of the poem, the sense of sight, the temptation of pleasure, worldly power and knowledge, and the promise of one beauty.”\(^{214}\) Smith articulates that “Marvell’s use of the myth of Paris may indicate his acceptance of the story of the Judgment of Paris as an informing principle.”\(^{215}\) This is

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\(^{211}\) Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, 9.  
\(^{212}\) Marvell, *Andrew Marvell*, ed. Frank Kermode and Keith Walker, 44.  
\(^{213}\) Smith, *The Poems of Andrew Marvell*, 33.  
\(^{214}\) Ibid., 33.  
\(^{215}\) Smith, *The Poems of Andrew Marvell*, 33. The Judgment of Paris was and continues to be a popular theme in literature and art. According to the Ancient Greek narrative, Paris, was chosen by Zeus to determine which of the three Goddesses was the most beautiful, and which one would claim the golden apple (the Apple of Discord), inscribed ‘for the most beautiful.’ Rejecting bribes of kingly power from Hera and military might from Athena, Paris chose Aphrodite and accepted her bribe to help him win the most beautiful woman alive Helen. His seduction of Helen (the wife of Menelaus, king of Sparta) and refusal to return her was the cause of the Trojan War. During the war Paris was fatally wounded. For a detailed description of the Judgment of Paris see M.C. Howatson, *The Oxford Companion to Classic Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 422.
significant because the myth has been previously interpreted allegorically by Marsilio Ficino, in *Opera* (1576).\textsuperscript{216} However, Marvell subverts Ficino’s acceptance that all three choices offered to Paris had to be accepted by rejecting each of them.\textsuperscript{217} Marvell’s subversion of Ficino’s interpretation of the Judgment of Paris reveals that Marvell, to an extent, was familiar with Ficino’s corpus of literature, specifically *Opera*. This is significant because Ficino’s work serves as an integral theological and philosophical framework for More’s *Philosophical Poems*. Moreover, Marvell’s use of the Judgment of Paris reinforces the primary argument suggested—that is, there are distinct similarities, or at least distinct literary influences shared by Marvell and members of the Cambridge Platonists.

Much like More, Marvell in *A Dialogue, Between the Resolved Soul and Created Pleasure* describes the senses as dangerous and untrustworthy, in which the soul needs to “learn to wield / The weight of thine immortal shield” (lines 1-2), to overcome the *Created Pleasure*. Marvell, also describes the natural world and humanly senses as “disguised,” and further questions the “Heavens we cannot see.” Similarities can be drawn between More’s allegory of Arachnea and Marvell’s *Created Pleasure*. Much like More’s Arachnea, the *Created Pleasure* embodies the material world, which tempts the Soul with seven of the patristic and medieval Deadly sins: Gluttony (11-16), Sloth (19-22), Pride (31-4), Lust (51-4), Avarice (57-60), Wrath, and Envy. For the Soul to overcome these sins it calls for the divine to aid it through this metaphorical and metaphysical battle, “In this day’s combat let it shine: / And show that Nature wants an art / To conquer one resolvèd heart” (lines 7-9). Similarly, in the opening lines of *Psychozoia*, More asks the divine to guide his soul:

\begin{quote}
*Psyche*, I’ll sing. *Psyche*! From thee they spong
O life of Time, and all Alterity!
The life of lives instill his nectar strong.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{216} See Marsilio Ficino, “Epistolarum,” *Opera* (Basel, 1576), lib.10:919-20.
My soul t’inebriate, while I sing *Psyches song* (*Psychozoia* I: 1:1).

The above examples support More and Marvell’s request for divine guidance of the soul through the material world to overcome the created pleasure and Arachnea. Additionally, these lines illustrate the duality between the Soul’s awakening, and the body’s torment. Similarly, More describes the Soul as fighting against “humane things,” which try to “seduce the soul,” (*Psychozoia*, I. II:94), and urges that the soul must overcome “every faculty and object,” which “cannot reach further than there proper sphere” (*Psychozoia*, I.II,97). This indicates that both More and Marvell are aware of the senses as a means not only for pleasure, but also to gain perception, which is essential to a higher vision of the mind and the soul. For both Marvell and More, the Soul must defeat the body, and awaken itself from worldly seductions, so that it can ascend to the divine realm, and be unified with God. Furthermore, in *A Dialogue, Between the Resolved Soul and Created Pleasure*, the soul does not only rebuke the temptations offered by the *Created Pleasure*, but in fact questions the entire ontological framework in which the earthly world exists. The Soul does this by stating: “When the Creator’s skill is prized, / The rest is all but earth disguised” (lines 35). This can be understood as the Creator is God, and the skill is reference to the divine realm of Heaven. The soul is claiming that when the divine realm created by God is the prize, the earthly world is nothing more than a disguise. Importantly, “the linguistic differences between the two interlocuters in this dialogue lies not in their syntax, but in their imagery and their terms of argument.”218 This is evident when the souls ask: “If things of sight such heavens be, / What heav’ns are those we cannot see! (lines 55-56). In this instance, the soul is aware that there are incorporeal objects which the body cannot see, but the soul can. Here, the soul concludes that there is a definitive distinction between the corporeal and the incorporeal worlds and is

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218 Colie, *My Echoing Song*, 78.
suggesting that soul must be aware of the ‘disguised’ earthly world and focus on the heavens that it cannot see. Once “the soul does fence / The batt’ries of alluring sense,” and “overcome thou shalt be crowned” (lines 47-50). The end Chorus of the A Dialogue, Between the Resolved Soul and Created Pleasure shares thematic and literary similarities to Sterry’s Gold in the Dirt, wherein Sterry exhorts the reader to chase vain delights out of the soul to attain salvation. Her the Chorus sings:

    Triumph, triumph, victorious Soul!
The world has not one pleasure more:
The rest does lie beyond the pole,
And is thine everlasting store (lines 73-8).

Similarly, to Sterry’s Gold in the Dirt, the penultimate lines of A Dialogue, Between the Resolved Soul and Created Pleasure, suggest that only once the soul has overcome the ‘disguised alluring sense,’ can it rest in the eternal realm of God.

    Marvell’s A Dialogue, Between the Resolved Soul and Created Pleasure mimics More’s Psychozoia and Psychathanasia in two ways. First, the idea that is most evident in both authors is the absolute disparity between the divine realm and the earthly realm is mediated by the soul. Here, the soul functions as a prisoner of the body, whereby it must not only somehow unshackle itself from the ‘ill-disposed matter’ of the physical world, but also not be tempted by the sensual pleasures of the world that attempt to obstructs its ascent to the divine. Second, both authors apply similar literary techniques to convey their philosophical treatment of the soul. Both More and Marvell use the dungeon metaphorically to describe the body, allegorically define the sun as the divine sphere, and the shadow as an allegory for the disguise of the physical world. Of importance, More and Marvell not only share similar literary techniques, but also at the heart of their work support the central tenets of Cambridge Platonism, namely, the doctrine of moral realism. Both authors agree that good (the soul or Psyche), and evil Arachnea (sense perception), right and wrong, are real properties
corresponding to the nature of things. If one wishes to attain knowledge of the divine and ultimately enter the Kingdom of God, they must understand the doctrine of good and evil. Furthermore, More’s Psychozoia and Psychathanasia and Marvell’s A Dialogue, Between the Resolved Heart and Created Pleasure serve as theological and philosophical blueprints that guide individuals in their religious journey to knowledge of the divine and God.

Unlike More’s Psychozoia and Psychathanasia, and Marvell’s A Dialogue, Between the Resolved Soul and Created Pleasure, there is no mention of sin and no distinction between the external and the internal worlds in A Dialogue between the Soul and Body. The two interlocutors are solely concerned with the soul/body relationship, rather than the themes of dualistic worlds and the “heavens we cannot see.” The soul and the body produce arguments that reveal their independence from one another and support their supremacy over the other. As Colie correctly states:

Neither soul nor body is sympathetic in the poem: the paradoxes expressed by both—manacled in hands, “mine own Precipice I go,” “Shipwreck’d into Health again”—not only expresses their significant detachment from their plight, but the parochial ignorance of their views of each other.219

While A Dialogue between the Soul and Body makes no attempt to discuss the ‘ill-mattered,’ and ‘disguised,’ earthly realm like Psychozoia, Psychathanasia, and A Dialogue, Between the Resolved Soul and Created Pleasure, what it does discuss however, is the ‘dungeon’ like body that ‘enslaves,’ the soul, which is an apparent theme in all four poems. Here, Marvell uses the anatomy of the human body as a metaphor that chains the soul with ‘nerves and arteries, and veins’ (lines 8-10). The soul describes its confinement in the body as ‘magic,’ where it is “constrained not only to endure / Diseases, but what’s worse the cure: / And ready oft the port to gain, / Am shipwreck’d into health again” (lines 27-30). The most apparent philosophical theme in A Dialogue between the Soul and Body is the body imprisoning the

219 Colie, My Echoing Song, 57.
soul and obstructing it from reaching the divine realm. This theme is pertinent in More’s *Psychathanasia* where he uses metaphor to describe the body and the soul within it:

Like a Meteor, whose material  
Is low unwieldy earth, base unctuous slime,  
Whose inward hidden parts ethereall  
Ly close upwrapt in the in that dull sluggish sime  
Ly fast asleep, till at some fatal time (I.1.2)

Here, More describes the body as an ‘unctuous slime,’ wherein the ‘ethereall’ hidden soul lays ‘upwrapt’ in the ‘sluggish sime’ of the body. This is similar in Marvell’s *A Dialogue between the Soul and Body*, where the soul cries out:

O, who shall from this dungeon, raise  
A soul inslav’d so many wayes?  
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 and 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? (lines 1-10).

Marvell’s soul is constrained within the body, which is subject to physical damage, such as blindness and deafness, and it is attempting to break free from these physical injuries. While it is not explicitly discussed in *A Dialogue between the Soul and Body* in consistency with Marvell’s *A Dialogue, Between the Resolved Soul and Created Pleasure*, it can be surmised, that the image of the soul imprisoned within the body, literally depicts the soul’s pursuit and salvation in reaching God and the divine realm. This is an integral theme to Marvell and More because in *A Dialogue between the Soul and Body* it is clear that on earth the soul can
be experienced only through the senses. That is, a choice between body and soul is always an illusion, qualified by the context of the human world which imposes such choices.\textsuperscript{220}

3.4 \textit{On a Drop of Dew}, Sterry’s Sermons and More’s Philosophical Poems

\begin{quote}
Do throw away the outward Clay at last,
So when that form the Heav’ns at first decreed
Is finished within, Souls do not need
Their Bodies more, but would from them be freed.
For who still cover’d with their earth would ly?
Who would not shake their fetters off, and fly,
And be, at least, next to a Deity?\textsuperscript{221}
\end{quote}

\textit{On a Drop of Dew} is self-mirroring in its structure, whereby it represents a real drop of dew, which, is used as a focus for the reflection on the soul’s emanation and return. These are two themes which are evident in the work of More and Sterry. Moreover, \textit{On a Drop of Dew} is considered emblem literature, where the soul functions as the poetic emblem.\textsuperscript{222} The second half of the poem (lines 20-40), on the soul, matches, point for point, the first half (1-20), applying the description of the dewdrop to the matter of the soul.\textsuperscript{223} The metre of the first section of the poem (1-20), concerns the dewdrop, and alternates almost line by line (only two adjacent lines 4-5, have the same number of syllables). The second half of the poem is

\textsuperscript{220} Colie, My Echoing Song, 28.
\textsuperscript{222} The Emblem structure is a two-part structure that turns from an organised description of an object to a meditation on a consideration of the meaning of that object. During the 16\textsuperscript{th} and 17\textsuperscript{th} century the emblem emerged as a culturally significant innovation whose presentation of texts and images often introduced new meaning into traditional modes of expression. Emblems became one of the primary vehicles of cultural knowledge, expressing highly complex ideas in compact and compelling forms. See Michael Theune, \textit{Structure and Surprise: Engaging Poetic Themes} (New York: Teachers and Writers Collaborative, 2007); and Stephen Cushman et al, \textit{The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics: Fourth Edition} (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2012), 402.
\textsuperscript{223} Smith, \textit{The Poems of Andrew Marvell}, 40.
concerned with the soul and is marked in groups of lines with similar syllable lengths, notably 27-32 (seven syllables per line). The rhyme scheme also varies, with a greater degree of variation in the first twenty lines (abcabcddeffghhiijj) compared to the second twenty lines (klklmmonopqrqrsstt).224 Additionally, the couplets at the end of each section imply clarity resolution and stasis, as opposed to the undulating and conflicting movement implied in the first parts of those sections. Marvell uses oxymoronic language to describe the drop of dew as “born,” but “enclosed,” “extent,” but “unsecure,” “shinning,” but “impure.” Marvell uses words, which incorporate notions of freedom, and then juxtaposes them against language which implies constraint. Here, Marvell is drawing attention to the central theme of his poem: the conflict between the body and the soul. The soul in On a Drop of Dew, “becomes so long divided from the sphere,” where it rolls restlessly becoming unsecure. The ‘divided sphere’ can be understood as the dual realm of earth and heaven, which functions as a metaphysical framework, in which the body and the soul exist. The soul, in the philosophy of More and Sterry, as well as Plotinus, occupies a central position between the phenomenal world and the physical world, which is evident in On a Drop of Dew. This philosophical concept is present in On a Drop of Dew, wherein the soul (dewdrop) “Shed from the Bosom of the Morn,’ makes its flight from the earthly realm (imbued in the rose) back to the sun (heaven), and during its time in the earthly realm it, “Trembles and grows impure: / Till the sun pity its pain / And to the skies exhale it back again” (lines 18-20). In this instance, while the soul remains on earth becoming impure, it nonetheless, still remembers its “former height” (line 22). ‘Remembering’ and ‘recollecting’ “combined with other allusions to Platonism (the restless of the soul, the metaphor of light) to bring out not simply the Christianised Platonism of the poem, but the heterodox doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul.”225 This is noteworthy.

224 Smith, The Poems of Andrew Marvell, 40.
because the heterodox doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul directly adheres to More’s fifth poem entitled *The Praeexistence of the Soul*. Furthermore, the first section of *On a Drop of Dew* indicates the central position of the soul, avoiding contact with the world around it, and gazing mournfully at the sky.226

See how the orient dew,
Shed from the bosom of the Morn
Into the blowing roses,
Yet careless of its mansion new,
For the clear region where ’twas born;
Round in itself incloses:
And, in its little globe’s extent,
Frames, as it can, its native element.
How it the purple flow’r does slight,
Scarce touching where it lyes;
But gazing back upon the skies,
Shines with a mournful light;
Like its own tear:
Because so long divided from the Spheer (lines 1-14).

In the above stanza, Marvell defines the two orders of reality, he develops the spatial and implicitly dynamic character of geometrical images as in the description of the dewdrop.227 Ann E. Berthoff posits that “the perfect sphere symbolises the purity of the soul, while the kinetic imagery expresses temporality.”228 The soul, which lives inside the earthly rose is “careless of its new Mansion,” and trapped in the corporeal world, wherein it gazes upon the skies and shines with mournful light. Here the soul is set on paradise, easily rejecting all worldly signatures, even the perfection offered by the “roses.”229 Marvell’s use of the sun, light, and sky as a symbol for heaven and the divine realm is important because Sterry also

226 Adkins, “Neoplatonism in Marvell’s ‘On a Drop of Dew’ and ‘The Garden,’” 81.
227 Ibid., 81.
places significance upon the divine nature of the light and the sun. In a sermon delivered by Sterry entitled *The Suns Sun*, Sterry exalts that “God is the Divine understanding, who is the original form of the sun, the suns sun, which itself shinning in the visible heavens is the essence or essential form of the Divine.”

In another short passage entitled *Millions of Angels* Sterry defines the divine as:

A bright or light Body, like the sun, sends forth Millions of Beams round about every point of itself. Such a Brightness, such as Fruitfulness is there in the person of Christ; Millions of Angels every moment spring and sparkle from him.

In another sermon, Sterry offers an ontological framework for the natural world, wherein, “the chief object of the soul is the glorious body of the sun in its purity, at its height. The second is the sky, air, the earth, and the seas, as they are all enlightened and guided with the sun-beams.” Here, Sterry is placing significant theological importance on the function of the sun and the sky, as both serve as a guide for the soul’s return to heaven, and as illuminators to reveal the natural world. Similarly, in *Psychozoia* More delineates between the divine realm of the “glorious Sun,” and the “deadly shadow, of Hyle’s cell and the dreaded night,” which can only be availed by the “Holy light.” (*Psychozoia*, II.IX:183).

Additionally, More describes the function of the sun as essentially guiding the soul, and raising the soul to heaven:

And circle-like her shape doth all misfashion;
But that bright flame that’s proper to the just,
And east away all drosse and cankered rust
With its refining heat, unites the mind
With God’s own spriht; who raiseth from the dust

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233 *Hyle* is one of the “inward triple golden films,” which encompass More’s description of the soul, and is attributed to sense perception. More also considers *Hyle* as a sub-category of Arachnea. See More, *A Platonick Song of the Soul*, 29.
The slumbering soul, and with his usage kind
Makes’t breath after that life that time hath not defin’d (Psychathanasia I.1.4).

Here the sun does not only guide the soul, but it also purifies it, by metaphorically eating away the cankered rust of the chains that bind the soul. The sun also unites the mind through God’s own spright and raises the slumbering soul from the earthly realm (the dust), with the usage of his divine kind. Here similarities can be seen between Marvell, Sterry, and More’s use of light, and the sun as a symbol of the divine realm, and earthly objects as symbols of the corporeal world. All three authors emphasise the significant theological function of the sun and light as representations of the divine realm, whereby the Sun facilitates as a divine conduit for the Soul to return to heaven. In On a Drop of Dew, the warm sun pities the soul’s pain and to the skies exhales it back again. More also suggests that the soul’s journey through the corporeal world and eventuation to heaven can be assisted by “Borrowing from the glorious Sun / A little light to illustrate this act” (Psychozoia, II:83). Essentially, the author’s use the sun as a symbol of divine guidance for the soul to complete its earthly cycle to heaven.

In On a Drop of Dew, the dewdrop (soul) “Rememb’ring still its former height, / Shuns the swart leaves and blossoms green” and “[recollects] its own light” (lines 22-24). Here, the soul in “recollecting its own light” exhibits consciousness of its own light and remembers its former height, as well as exhibiting awareness of the corporeal environment of the leaves and green blossoms, in which it lives, but shuns. Thus, the “soul avoids the distractions offered by images within the mind of temporal things and recovers its original knowledge of its immortal nature.”234 It is interesting to observe that More describes the ultimate evil suffered by humankind as forgetfulness “O dolefull lot of disobedience! / If God

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should souls thus drench in Lethe lake (Psychozoia I.I:7). Here More, like Marvell, is suggesting that the soul is shrouded in forgetfulness, and to achieve its ascension to the divine realm it must remember its former height. Importantly, in On a Drop of Dew the soul is aware of its state, “in its pure and circling thoughts,” and rejects the excluding corporeal world, which is “Dark beneath,” and instead is “ready to ascend,” to “the bright above,” so that it may be absorbed by the divine light. This theme is evident in both More and Sterry. In Psychathanasia, the soul must reject the “outward form of nature,” and seek the “inward centre hid.” More maps the inward hidden centre and the importance of the soul’s ascension to heaven via the metaphor of divine light:

O thou eternall Spright, cleave ope the skie,  
And take thy flight into my feeble breast,  
Enlarge my thoughts, enlighten my dimmer eye,  
That wisely of that burthen closely prest  
In my straight mind, I may be dispossett:  
My Muse must sing of things of mickle weight;  
The soul’s eternity is my great quest:  
Do thou me guide, that art the souls sure light,  
Grant that I never erre, but ever wend aright (Psychathanasia, I.1:25).

For More, the “eternal Spright,” must “cleave ope the skie,” towards heaven, where the “souls sure light,” enlarges “thoughts and enlightens dimmer eye.” Here, More is not only describing the soul’s ascension to heaven with the guidance from the eternal Spright, but is also stating that the eternal Spright provides divine knowledge to the soul, which enlarges its thoughts and enlightens it. Similarly, in On a Drop of Dew, the soul “gazes back upon the skies,” “Remembr’ing still its former height,” and ultimately, while “congealed on earth: but does, dissolving, run / Into the glories of th’ Almighty Sun.” In a slightly more detailed account, Sterry in his The Mediatory Kingdom also uses the sun as a metaphor to describe
both the divine knowledge of God, and the revealing of the divine realm, which he juxtaposes with language associated with darkness:

God in the Creature is seen by a shadowy Image alone, which lies
As a veil upon the pure Glories of his Divine Face and Person.
He now shines forth like the sun in a cloudy day, by that obscure
Image of his Coelestial Form, a reflected, refracted Light.
God in the kingdom of the Father, (the Father of Lights in the
Simplicity of the Divine Nature) is the eternal sun, at its height, at
Its Noon-sted, in its Meridional Glories (lines 1-7).

Sterry reveals two important theological themes in this passage, which are innately similar to More and Marvell. First, in the opening lines Sterry reveals that there is a “shadowy Image,” of God, which is a “veil upon the Glories of his Divine Face and Person.” Here, it seems Sterry is stating that human beings only see a shadowy image of God. However, when God is imbued with the sun he becomes the divine light, and his image shines forth. Sterry goes on to state that “God resembles the lovely Morning, the golden Hour of the Day, where there is no shade.” Sterry’s pastoral environment of The Mediatory Kingdom is similar to On a Drop of Dew, where the “orient dew, / Shed from the bosom of the morn / Into the blowing roses” (lines 1-2). Both Sterry and Marvell set their poems in the early morning within a pastoral environment to emphasise the theological significance of the sun as divine guidance. Further, both authors apply floral imagery and metaphor to convey the relationship between body, soul, and God. Marvell depicts this through the Rose, the dew drop, and the sun. Sterry conveys this by metaphorically comparing “two Lillies or Roses which are joined upon one stalk in the fair morning” (lines 27-28). One interpretation of Sterry’s sermon can be understood that like the body, which is conjoined to the soul, the stalk is conjoined to the Rose. Much like the body, which has no utility in the divine realm, once the stalk has been separated from the blossom of the rose it also has no utility. Also, much like On a Drop of
Dew, which culminates with the dewdrop dissolving into the almighty sun, allegorically signifies the soul ascending to the divine realm: Sterry concludes his sermon by stating that the rose “cannot fully; clearly, but not completely blossom until the Sun comes to its full height” (lines 30-33). It is feasible to suggest, that Sterry is postulating that that rose (the soul) cannot completely become its own entity from the stalk (the body), until the divine sun (light) assists it. Essentially, what can be drawn from this comparison is that Marvell’s On a Drop of Dew, and Sterry’s The Mediator Kingdom exhibit two clear theological similarities. The first, that there is an evident conflict between the soul and body, which can only be harmonised once the soul distances itself from corporeal objects and senses and turns towards the immaterial. Second, divine light (sun) functions as both a metaphor and an allegory for the guidance of the soul in its cyclical journey.

Essentially, Marvell, Sterry, and More share three intrinsic theological similarities regarding their representation of the soul. First, they agree upon the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, which is guided by divine light through its corporeal journey on earth. Second, the soul must reject the sensorial and sensual temptations of the corporeal world. Third, that the soul must be awoken from its bodily unconsciousness to achieve its ascension to the divine realm, which as a result reinforces the heterodox doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul. Besides theological similarities, each author also shares literary similarities. This is most evident in the authors’ emphasis placed upon the sun as a symbol of divine light. The symbol of the sun as divine light is used by all three authors and is most apparent in On a Drop of Dew. The emphasis placed upon circular metaphors and patterns is also used by all the authors. Here, the circle motif can be interpreted as reflected in the pattern of generation, descent, and return in which the dew drop (soul), rose (body), and sun (heaven), participate in the soul’s cycle. The emanation and the return of the soul is a significantly prominent Neoplatonic notion, which was also a concept that the Cambridge
Platonists were concerned with. While this argument is fully substantiated by Joan Adkins in her article *Neoplatonism in Marvell’s “On a Drop of Dew” and “The Garden,”* what Adkins does not fully substantiate in *On a Drop of Dew* is the soul’s rejection of the physical world and senses, in which it must detach itself from to return to the divine realm. This situation is similar to that found in *A Dialogue, between the Resolved Soul and Created Pleasure,* More’s *Psychozoia* and *Psychathanasia,* and Sterry’s Sermons, where the soul is faced with temptations of the corporeal world it must overcome. While *On a Drop of Dew* heavily draws upon themes of the soul’s cycle, and rejection of the corporeal world to convey ideas that are consistent with the Cambridge Platonists, the poem also incorporates geometrical metaphors in an attempt to harmonise the relationship between the soul and the divine. In this instance, geometrical syntax provides a framework through which the poem builds its entire theological and philosophical edifice. This is most notable in the repetition of spherical imagery and language, interestingly this is a literary trope, which is also emulated by Sterry, More, and specifically Plotinus. Here, the soul, which is metaphorically described as a drop of dew, symbolises the perfect circle. In a Neoplatonist ontology, the Universal sphere contains all beings in perfect contemplation of the divine intellect. Plotinus builds on the illustration by comparing the universal soul to the sphere as it revolves around the centre:

If someone assigns the Good [that is the One] to the centre and the Intellect to the unmoved circle, then he will assign the Soul to the moving circle. It is moved by seeking. The Intellect immediately possesses and has received that which is beyond being. While the soul seeks it. The sphere of the all is moved by that which naturally is sought because it possesses the seeking souls (4.4.16.23-9)

Plotinus further develops the illustration by comparing individual human souls to circles within the universal sphere, “We come to rest as we join our centre to the centre of all, just as the centres of the biggest circles join the centre of the sphere which contains them” (6.9.8.19-22). On this point, literary critic Don Parry Norford posits two important concepts regarding

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235 Aphrodite Alexandrakis et al, *Neoplatonist Aesthetics* (New York: SUNY Press,
the use spherical imagery in poetry. First, Norford writes, “the circle represents the conceptual world: the Platonic realm of unified perfection, infinity, eternity. God himself was defined as a circle whose centre is everywhere and circumference nowhere.”236 Second, that in On a Drop of Dew, “the circular image of the dew drop symbolises the world of eternity, infinity, imagination, and the theological constructs, which we develop to conceptualise it.”237 These two points, reinforce Marvell’s emulation of both Neoplatonist imagery and Christian theology. On the other hand, while not directly speaking to On a Drop of Dew; but instead Upon Appleton House, critic David Ormerod suggests that Marvell’s use of spherical language and metaphor does not only function as a complex metaphor that compares the soul and the divine realm to abstract shapes, but also operates as a cryptic code in which, solving is the main goal of “human contemplation and inquiry to the Divine.”238

Importantly, the overarching philosophical and theological theme, which is evident in the works examined is the representation of the movement of the mind between two poles of soul and matter. Here, the poet reveals an urgent exhortation to the reader to abjure the darkness of matter and sensual pleasures, and aspire to the incorporeal splendour of the soul in the divine realm of “Eternal Light.”239 Thus, “the reader observes a soul pursuing the pathway of salvation; and insofar as the soul’s salvation is ultimately at issue, the poem’s concern is with assurance and perseverance as hallmarks of salvation.”240 Essentially, the poems which have been examined suggest that their trajectory is towards the transcendence,

237 Ibid., 246.
238 Ormerod, Andrew Marvell Pastoral and Lyrics Poems 1681, 159.
239 The term “Eternal Light,” is frequently used my More is his Philosophical Poems. I have incorporated it here to suggest that More’s “Eternal Light,” is evident in both Marvell and Sterry’s sermons. Essentially, I am suggesting that like More, Marvell and Sterry’s sermons seek to establish a guideline, wherein an individual can rely upon and turn to for the salvation of their soul through the earthly realm and into heaven.
a reconciliation with the corporeal and incorporeal, and the salvation of the soul. How the soul achieves this “triumph,” (75) in *A Dialogue Between the Soul and Body* remains opaque. Despite the ambiguity of the soul’s “triumph,” the poem, nonetheless functions as a commentary on the complex theological and philosophical conflict between the body and the soul, and how anatomically and metaphysically the soul and the body interact in the milieu of seventeenth-century literature.

Section II of this thesis has offered a literary comparison of the works of Marvell, More, and Sterry and suggested that there are distinct philosophical, theological, and literary consistencies between the authors. The most noticeable theological and philosophical continuities are to be found in the authors’ treatment of the soul and its function with the cosmos. To that end, the authors’ support the theological doctrine of the immortality of the soul, the philosophical viewpoint that the corporeal world should be viewed with scepticism and sensual pleasure ultimately rejected, and the argument that the soul can only achieve its ascension to heaven and salvation through reason and knowledge. Importantly, all the authors, some more than others, apply Plotinus’ metaphysical and ontological framework as a philosophical blueprint to support their treatment of the natural world and the soul. Moreover, the authors and poems, which have been analysed mimic and emulate each other thematically, structurally, and stylistically. Most noticeable in the authors’ choice to structure their work in the form of poetry, the repetition of ‘light’ and ‘dark’ metaphors to differentiate between the ontological structure of the earthly realm and the divine realm, the allegorical use of the sun as a conduit of divine guidance for the soul, and the use of geometrical and spherical metaphor to emphasise the oneness of God and the theological importance of the purity of the soul. Essentially, section II of this thesis has aimed to offer a comprehensive analysis and close reading of Marvell’s *A Dialogue, Between the Resolved Soul, and Created Pleasure*, *A Dialogue between the Soul and Body, On a Drop of Dew*, More’s *Psychozoia*,
Psychathanasia, and Sterry’s Sermons to explore the argument that Marvell’s poems share distinct philosophical, theological, and literary similarities to the members of the Cambridge Platonists. No commentary has been made on historical context, which was discussed in section I, but rather section II intended to offer a holistic approach to the work of Marvell and the Cambridge Platonists by solely focusing on the literature rather than the men. As previously discussed in section I, Marvell scholarship has been dominated by situating Marvell within his historical and political context, this section has diverted from the current trend in Marvell scholarship, and has exclusively focused on the literature to reveal literary influences in Marvell’s poetry, which have thus far gone largely unnoticed. More importantly, section II has been approached methodologically and theoretically through Foucault’s *What is an Author?* and *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. This section has been concerned with the “architectonic unities of systems, which are not focused on history, context, or socio-political traditions, but with internal coherences, axioms, deductive connexions, and literary compatibilities,” 241 which as a result offers a new interpretive trend of Marvell’s poetry that mimics, emulates, and borrows, from the poetry of Henry More, the Sermons of John Sterry, and the sermons and writings of his teacher John Sherman.

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CHAPTER FOUR

POET, PURITAN, CAMBRIDGE PLATONIST?

The author’s name has other than indicative functions. It is more than a gesture, a finger pointed at someone; it is, to a certain extent, the equivalent of a description. When we say ‘Aristotle,’ we are using a word that means one or a series of definitive descriptions of the type: ‘the author of the Analytics,’ or ‘the founder of ontology,’ and so forth.242

To reconcile the life and work of Andrew Marvell into a thirty-thousand-word thesis is a task of astronomical difficulty. When the life and the literary work of Marvell are examined what emerges is a metaphorical palimpsest. Biographical details exhibit traces of political and religious discontinuities, which do not completely disappear between the young Marvell and the mature Marvell, but significantly vary. While biographical details and historical methodology function as fundamental tools in examining the life of literary figures, it has its flaws. This methodological difficulty is evident when the literary historian attempts to map the life of Marvell—a life which cannot be so easily recorded as Nigel Smith and Nicholas Malzahn have already noted. However, what complicates the study of Marvell even further is the fact that Marvell’s public religious ideologies do not align with his private poetic religious ideologies. What is meant by this? Marvell’s religious, political, and theological sensibilities are distinctly different to those of his public. Due to Marvell’s ability to act as a ‘chameleon’ as Nigel Smith suggests, it has significantly complicated and obstructed any definitive conclusive reading of Marvell’s overarching themes, and it has certainly made any definitive conclusion on who the historian thinks the man is exceedingly difficult. To complicate matters further when analysing biographical details of Marvell’s life, his name alone carries difficulties on the basis that it alters in spelling and title. This conceptual conflict is reinforced by Foucault who suggests that “the name of the author poses all the

242 Foucault, What is an Author?, 303.
problems related to the category of the proper name.”

Therefore, this thesis has approached Marvell from both a genealogical methodology (historical) and an analogical methodology (architectonic). That is, this thesis has utilised two methodologies, which are commonly viewed as diametrically opposed in literary studies to arrive at a new interpretive trend of Marvell’s poetry—that is, an interpretive trend that suggests that the poems *A Dialogue, Between the Resolved Soul and Created Pleasure*, *A Dialogue Between the Soul and Body*, and *On a Drop of Dew* share distinct theological, philosophical, and thematic similarities to the members of the Cambridge Platonists Peter Sterry, Henry More, and Ben Sherman. Foucault’s work *What is an Author?* and *The Archaeology of Knowledge* have been applied as theoretical frameworks through which the life and poetry of Marvell has been read. Foucault’s useful suggestion to “suspend typical questions,” has served as an integral maxim for this thesis. Marvell scholarship has focused too heavily upon biographical and historical accounts to extract a coherent reading of Marvell’s poetry, and in the process has largely ignored the importance of literary criticism.

4.1 Conclusion

Part one of this study has followed a traditional historical methodology. However, where it deviates, is in its theoretical approach to suspend typical biographical questions and details, which have already been considerably ‘book kept,’ as Beckett would say. The examination of Marvell senior’s influence on Marvell’s early childhood is an aspect of Marvell’s life, which has received minimal if any scholarly attention. The same can be said about Marvell’s education at Hull Grammar, his sociable interactions at Cambridge University, and his time in the court of Oliver Cromwell. There is no sustained account of Marvell senior’s Latitudinarian views and his distinctively different Puritanism, which significantly deviates...
from traditional Puritanism of his day, and Marvell scholarship has paid minimal attention to the seven years in which Marvell spent at Cambridge, where he was surrounded by members of the Cambridge Platonists. Nigel Smith reinforces the frustration with the lack of historical evidence during this part of Marvell’s life, writing that “we know very little about Marvell’s life, especially the early parts in Hull and Cambridge.” These are, however, the most formative years in Marvell’s life, which would have shaped his literary acumen and his religious views. Regardless of the difficulties associated with determining Marvell’s sociable relations with members of the Cambridge Platonists, I have, nonetheless, made an argument that Marvell certainly had interactions with some members of the Cambridge Platonists and their associates, namely, Ben Sherman, the Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, and Ralph Cudworth who was the current Hebrew teacher at the time of Marvell’s study of Hebrew. I have further suggested that to make the claim that Marvell was not aware of the entire Cambridge Platonists’ movement would be exceedingly difficult, as I have attempted to elucidate that Marvell’s ability to mimic and emulate literary techniques and themes was second nature to this him. As a result, I have postulated a definitive argument, which claims that Marvell was aware of the Cambridge Platonists and was significantly influenced by their theological doctrine of moral realism, their construction and treatment of the soul, the structure of the corporeal world, and the heterodox doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul. Moreover, this study has suggested that “the critic should re-examine the empty space left by authors’ disappearances; we should attentively observe, along its gap and fault lines, its new demarcations, and the reappointment of this void.” The aim here, has been to offer a new and fresh interpretation of Marvell’s theological, philosophical, and poetic themes. To my knowledge, no significant scholarly work has focused on the direct influence the Cambridge

244 Smith, “How to make a biography of Andrew Marvell,” 195.
245 Foucault, What is an Author?, 303.
Platonists had on Marvell’s poetics. Scholars such as Legouis and Toliver, as well as Smith, and Hutton gloss over the influence the Cambridge Platonists had on Marvell, and any attention given to Marvell’s use of Neoplatonic tenets is simply attributed to Plotinus with no subsequent explanation given to how Marvell encountered the literary works of the Greek Neoplatonists or Christian Neoplatonists. To that end, this study has attempted to breach this scholarly gap and fill the ‘void,’ to use Foucault’s words, in tracing the influences of Marvell’s poetic use of the Cambridge Platonists.

4.2 The Importance of the Cambridge Platonists

The Cambridge Platonists are recognised as the first philosophers of religion writing in the English vernacular. They occupied a contextual period which lies between the systems of Descartes and Leibniz, Rationalism and Empiricism, ancient and modern science, and between religion and philosophy. The Cambridge Platonists were at the heart of the formation of modern thought, and many of their questions are still our own today in the twenty-first century. Furthermore, “they were the first group of philosophers to develop a vernacular for philosophical writing: indeed, much of the terminology of modern English philosophy: ‘conscious’, ‘self-conscious’, ‘philosophy of religion’, ‘theism’, even ‘Cartesianism’, are coinage of the Cambridge Platonists.” More importantly, and to some extent scarcely examined and recounted, is the significantly crucial function of the Cambridge Platonists as transmitters of Neoplatonist philosophy, as well as Christian Neoplatonist philosophy into the English speaking world, which had a profound influence on subsequent English literary figures. Sarah Hutton and Anna Baldwin’s *Platonism and the English Imagination* (1994) offer a noteworthy account of the influence of Platonism on English literary figure, and

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Marvell does feature alongside Thomas Traherne and Henry Vaughn. However, Hutton tends to isolate the influence of Marvell’s Neoplatonist tenets to the work of Marsilio Ficino, and that of the Florentine Academy, thus paying minimal attention to the genealogical gap that separates the Florentine Academy, Erasmus, and the Cambridge Platonists. Therefore, if attention is focused on tracing Neoplatonist philosophy in English literature and thought, what becomes clear is that after the work of the Cambridge Platonists there is an emergence of the sustained use of Neoplatonist Philosophy in the history of English literature. This is most notable in the works of William Blake, Samuel Coleridge, Williams Wordsworth, Percy Shelly, and later writers such as W.B. Yeats, and Virginia Woolf, who all feature in Baldwin and Hutton’s *Platonism and the English Imagination*. To that end, the most comprehensive account and study of the influence the Cambridge Platonists had on literary figures are the complied essays edited by Douglas Hedley and Sarah Hutton *Platonism at the Origins of Modernity: Studies on Platonism and Early Modern Philosophy* (2008). The various authors in this volume greatly contribute to the important influence the Cambridge Platonists had on English literature, and specifically attribute members of the Cambridge Platonists as transmitters of Neoplatonist thought. In other works, Douglas Hedley’s *Coleridge, Philosophy and Religion; Aids to the Reflection and the Mirror of the Spirit* (2004) offers what I believe to be the most trenchant and detailed account of the influence the Cambridge Platonists had on Samuel Coleridge. Despite the works mentioned, scholarly criticism evaluating the important position the Cambridge Platonists hold in the oeuvre of religious studies and literary studies is nebulous. Therefore, I hope that this study will continue the work of Hedley, Hutton and Baldwin, and extend both the academic study of the Cambridge Platonists as important figures in the history of philosophy, religion, and transmitters of Neoplatonist thought, and promoting new interpretive trends of Marvell’s complex and varied poetry. Consequently, this study has aimed to offer a unique reading of Marvell’s poems to
suggest that his theological, philosophical, and poetic themes were influenced by the
seventeenth century English theologians known as the Cambridge Platonists. While it is
exceedingly difficult to offer an appropriate and noteworthy conclusion to such an enigmatic
and difficult poet, I believe that Augustine Birrell encapsulates the figure we call ‘Marvell,’
in such a way:

A more elusive, non-recorded character is hardly to be found. We know all about him [Marvell], but very little
of him… the man Andrew Marvell remains undiscovered. He rarely comes to the surface.²⁴⁹

Bibliography


