

## Speculative Tensions: The Blurring of Augustinian Interiority in *The Second Anniversarie*\*

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As the second of two commemorative poems marking Elizabeth Drury's untimely death, John Donne's *The Second Anniversarie* revisits the theme of mortality from a perspective that is more private and introspective than that of its predecessor. While *The First Anniversarie* addresses its reading audience as it catalogues evidence of decay throughout the physical universe, the second poem features an interior conversation between the speaker and his soul regarding the mysteries of the soul's hidden aptitudes and its afterlife.<sup>1</sup> The technique of inner colloquy as a means to disclose the soul's nature is fundamentally Augustinian in origin, being most evident in his early dialogues, but also implicitly shaping his discussions of self-knowledge.<sup>2</sup> Augustine uses the framework of inner dialogue to focus his mental attention on the interior self and thereby disclose interior truths hidden within the soul's cognitive capacities. *The Second Anniversarie*, designed to trace the *Progres of the Soule*, draws upon Augustinian techniques of introspective scrutiny to craft its spiritual itinerary, as Louis Martz, Edward Tayler, and others have demonstrated.<sup>3</sup> However, what remains less recognized is the poem's complex renegotiation of that tradition, as it both engages and resists techniques of Augustinian interiority. *The Second Anniversarie* represents the psychological perspective of an inconstant, conflicted speaker, whose persistent attachment to the world's follies and

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\*See the parallel articles on Donne's *The Second Anniversarie* in this issue, as well as the response by Judith Anderson.

For debates inspired by this article, please check the *Connotations* website at <<http://www.connotations.de/debanniversaries0251.htm>>.

curiosities undermines his attempts to gain the very spiritual knowledge that he professes to desire. Alternating between moments of interior presence and external distraction, the poem charts a digressive and vexed progress, as Donne's speaker remains simultaneously enticed by terrestrial and transcendent ambitions, a state of mind pertinent to the poet himself.

### 1. Augustinian Foundations: Interior Dialogue as a Basis for Epistemic Certainty and Spiritual Understanding

In order to understand *The Second Anniversarie's* unusual engagement with Augustinian dialectic, it will be helpful first to consider Augustine's own use of the dialogue form and to recognize its importance for his philosophy and spirituality. Early in his career (386-96), Augustine composed a collection of literary-philosophical dialogues, which he described as mental conversations taking place between himself and his reason. Through a scripted sequence of questions and responses, the dialogue's literary personae discuss a range of philosophical concerns, including the soul's relation to the body, its immortality, and its capacity for self-understanding.<sup>4</sup> Even after abandoning the dialogue's literary form, Augustine continued to write dialectically, advancing his philosophical argument through a sequence of questions (see *Confessiones* 10; *De Trinitate* 10-15). One of the assumptions underpinning the dialogue form is the notion of *anamnesis* or recollection: a Platonic belief that the soul once enjoyed complete understanding in its heavenly pre-existence before it descended into its life in the body (see *Meno* 81 c2-d4). Consequently, the process of learning represents the recollection of forgotten knowledge from within oneself and not the acquisition of evidence from without.<sup>5</sup> The dialectical process serves to excavate and disclose answers that were latent and previously unrecognized within one's own mental capacities.<sup>6</sup>

The notion of anamnesis held a powerful appeal for Augustine, since it reinforced both his belief in the capacious powers of memory

and his suspicion of sense experience. While granting that knowledge of temporal particulars is useful and necessary for lived experience, Augustine considered such sense-based knowledge to be less significant than the interior truth discovered from within the soul.<sup>7</sup> Hence, in his early dialogue *Soliloquies*, Augustine's Reason advises him to develop the spiritual eye of the mind, which has the capacity to perceive interior truth. The power of inner perception is strengthened by distancing oneself, both physically and psychologically, from the world's distractions.<sup>8</sup> The soul does not learn from outward signs and sounds; it learns by withdrawing into itself to consult the subtleties of the "interior teacher," namely Christ, who is the source of wisdom (see *De Magistro* 38). In the dialogue *On the Magnitude of the Soul*, Augustine argues that the soul grows by withdrawing from materiality and engaging its interior rational powers (see *De Quantitate Animae* 17.30). In the concluding chapters of this work, he illustrates the way in which the soul's flourishing is realized as it advances through the interior hierarchy of its aptitudes, which extend from regulating the body's responses to engaging the transcendent aspiration for divine wisdom. Repeatedly exhorting his soul to "rise up" through its interior powers, Augustine offers a textual record of the soul's journey toward the summit of its own capacities to encounter divine wisdom.<sup>9</sup> In each of these works, Augustine argues that attention to the temporal, material world represents a distraction, diverting the soul from the more urgent task of dialectically excavating interior wisdom. As we shall see, *The Second Anniversarie's* interior colloquy borrows the same rhetorical technique of interior exhortation so as to advance the soul's progress; however, the speaker's persistent attraction to external goals ultimately undermines his own aspirations for interior wisdom.

The technique of interior dialogue is important for Augustine, since the exercise enabled him to discover a basis for epistemic certainty, thereby countering the arguments of philosophical skepticism. Augustine had for a time subscribed to the skeptics' doctrine that nothing could be known with certainty.<sup>10</sup> Through the exercise of

inner dialogue, Augustine discovered a means to refute this doctrine: his awareness of his own thinking could offer proof for the inviolable certainty of his own existence: even if he is deceived, even if he errs, he knows that he exists. The mind's certainty of its own existence and its own cognitive operations becomes the basis for epistemic confidence and the repudiation of skepticism. Inward attention focuses the mind on these certainties; outward attention engenders doubt and confusion, since the mutable nature of physical phenomena resists absolute claims.<sup>11</sup> An early expression of this philosophical discovery is found in the *Soliloquies*, where Reason asks Augustine: "Do you know that you think?" Augustine responds in the affirmative, and, as their colloquy progresses, Reason points out that Augustine has discovered several irrefutable truths; namely, that he exists, that he knows that he is alive, and that he knows that he has a capacity for knowing (see *Soliloquies* 2.1). These certainties become the basis for knowing anything else.

In addition to disclosing an effective refutation of skepticism, the technique of inner colloquy also offered Augustine a basis for establishing the soul's unique dignity as an image and likeness of God. In his later work *On the Trinity*, Augustine unpacks the spiritual implications of self-knowledge. In pondering the Delphic exhortation to "know thyself," Augustine recognizes not only that he exists, but that he remembers, that he understands, and that he desires to understand, thus introducing one of many interior cognitive trinities that affirm humanity's divine image as a reflection of the Trinity (see *De Trinitate* 10.3-4; 10.10). Augustine further substantiates his argument for the soul's divine image by drawing on two biblical passages: the first is Genesis 1:26, describing humanity as created in the image and likeness of God; the second is Paul's claim that "we see now through a glass darkly, but then, face to face" (1 Cor 13:12). Augustine transforms Paul's "dark glass" into a metaphor for illuminative contemplation, suggesting that the soul's self-reflection on its interior sacredness represents a powerful foretaste of the beatific vision. He parses Paul's *speculum* (mirror) to signify *an image*, since mirrors produce images;

further, the term *aenigmate* (commonly translated as *darkly*) represents for Augustine a *likeness*, though one that is indistinct and difficult to discern. Thus Paul's *speculum aenigmate* becomes shorthand for the soul's recognition of its innate dignity as an image-bearer (see *De Trinitate* 15.9). This interior image becomes discernable only by withdrawing from the physical senses and engaging the interior senses, which are capable of interpreting the interior text of memory and its narrative of salvation. Augustine claims that "whoever then can understand the [inner] word [of thought], not only before it sounds, but even before the images of its sound are contemplated in thought [...] whoever, I say, can understand this, can already see through the mirror and in this enigma some likeness of that [divine] Word."<sup>12</sup> As we shall see, *The Second Anniversarie's* speaker never fully engages the interior senses, thus rendering the perception of his own interior sacredness blurred and occluded.

## 2. Donne's Appropriation: Distracted Dialogue, Skepticism, and Spiritual Anxiety

Donne's *The Second Anniversarie* shares with Augustine's works a desire to explore the soul's interior capacities, but because it lacks the latter's epistemological and spiritual certainty, the poem offers a blurred and conflicted vision of the interior self. The poem's internalized imperatives, exhortations, and questions represent recognizable variations of Augustine's dialectical techniques of inner scrutiny. Donne's speaker engages his soul in conversation: posing epistemological questions about the soul's capacity for knowledge (see 254, 279-80), exhorting his soul to forget the world (see 49), to desire heaven (see 43, 45), to fix its attention on spiritual themes (see 321-22), and to persist in pursuit of them (see 325).<sup>13</sup> Though summoning the resources of the Augustinian tradition, the speaker hesitates to embrace its radical interiority, since to do so would necessitate a dramatic detachment from the pleasures and public accomplishments

that entice the embodied soul in its lived experience. With the speaker being unable or unwilling to release the desire for external goals, his colloquy does not disclose interior wisdom but rather his interior conflict between sacred and secular aspirations; such a conflict is not irrelevant to Donne's own historical circumstances, as he weighs the possibility of abandoning secular achievement to seek ordination.<sup>14</sup> As Richard Jordan and Ramie Targoff have each argued, *The Second Anniversarie's* speaker cannot sustain the visionary experience to which the poem aspires.<sup>15</sup> The poem's meditative focus on the spiritual interior dissipates to follow tangential threads of temporal concern, thereby frustrating the possibility of spiritual progress.

The first hundred lines of the poem recount the speaker's initial attempts to replicate the Augustinian exercise of detachment by disregarding temporal concerns and attending to the soul's interior life. The speaker exhorts his soul to "thirst" (45, 47) and to "forget" (49, 61). Through the former imperative, the speaker seeks to stir within his soul a desire for the Last Judgment, when "man doe but vanish, and not die" (42). The desire to incite "thirst" for mortality motivates the imagined death-bed scene (see 85-120), which represents the soul as emancipated from the weight of bodily impurity and "exalted" (116) in "happiest Harmonee" (92). Through the latter imperative, the speaker directs himself to "Forget" (49), that is, to abandon temporal attachments, including both his autobiographical identity ("Let thine owne times as an old story be" [50]) and the "fragmentary rubbidge" (82) of human affairs. The speaker's exercise in detachment assumes an anti-intellectual quality, as he disparages the sense-based knowledge of culture and science: "study not why, nor whan; [...] For though to erre, be worst, to try truths forth, / is far more busines, then this world is worth" (51, 53-54). The records of human and natural history serve only to explicate the corrupt "Carkas" (55) of the mutable world and so they offer contingent forms of knowledge, which the soul must ultimately abandon when it departs from the body. Hence, the speaker directs his soul to engage the interior sight of "Memory" (64) and to "Looke vpward" (65)

toward the heavenly beatitude exemplified in the soul of Elizabeth Drury.<sup>16</sup> Borrowing Augustine's technique of interior exhortation, the speaker instructs his soul to forget the changeable, material world and desire the permanence of heavenly joy.

Despite his efforts to forget the world, the speaker clearly remains drawn to it, since his attempts "T' aduance these [heavenly] thoughts" (220) are undone by relapsing preoccupations with temporal concerns. Continuing his efforts to stir the soul's desire for the end of its mortal life, the speaker imagines the peace enjoyed by the heavenly communion of blessed souls.<sup>17</sup> Yet, the reflection on eternity appears to stir feelings of dissatisfaction and indifference, since the speaker redirects his focus away from the city of God to engage with the city of man. Abandoning spiritual reflections to muse contemptuously upon human failings, the speaker considers how the social fabric of church and court are corroded by vanity: parasitic, catechism-spewing theologians infect the former; slandering gossips poison the latter.<sup>18</sup> His attention to social corruption has the effect of obscuring the more significant interior vision of human harmony and reveals that his desire for secular success is stronger than his spiritual yearnings. A further example of disrupted interior focus occurs when the speaker considers the soul's "Ioye [...] essentiall" (470) in paradise. The theme of the Lord's gift of grace to the heavenly righteous has the perverse effect of triggering associations with the public honours bestowed by royalty. While divine honor magnifies the soul, royal favor insidiously "swell[s]" (475) human pride, causing it to resemble an abscess about to burst its messy puss.<sup>19</sup>

Once again, the earth-bound glance at worldly achievement eclipses the speaker's interior vision of the soul's happiness, revealing his persistent attraction to public recognition even while aware of its vanity. The recurrent exhortations to the soul to "Returne not [...] / To earthly thoughts" (321-23) but rather to ascend "up" (325, 339, 347, 351, 353, 356) testify to the speaker's struggle to maintain interior focus and sustain spiritual desire, since his thoughts more easily turn to regard exterior ambitions. Years later, Donne the preacher would

describe this same conflict between interior presence and external distraction in Augustinian terms: “The art of *salvation* is but the art of *memory* [...] There may be enough in *remembering our selves*; but sometimes, that’s the hardest of all; many times we are farthest off from our selves; most forgetfull of our selves” (*Sermons* 2: 73-74). The speaker’s persistent attraction to human affairs reveals a resistance to engage the soul’s interior sacredness, thus undermining the *Second Anniversarie*’s “art of salvation.”

The speaker’s resistance to engage in a sustained interior reflection is likewise evident when the poem turns to questions of the soul’s knowledge. Like Augustine’s works, the *Second Anniversarie* demonstrates a clear fascination with epistemology: the verb “to think” appears thirty times in the space of a hundred lines (85-185), and the verb “to know” appears thirteen times over the course of twenty-six (254-80).<sup>20</sup> Even so, the poem actually gives surprisingly little attention to the process of knowledge acquisition. Unlike Augustine’s work, which meticulously records the coordination of affective and rational powers in the soul, Donne’s poem rather abruptly overlooks or dismisses the potential of these interior powers. When the speaker asks himself, “Poore soule in this thy flesh what do’st thou know?” (254), he quickly succumbs to skepticism, offering a discouraged response: “Thou know’st thy selfe so little, as thou know’st not [...]” (255). Donne’s speaker does not register awareness of his own capacity to reason and to desire; nor does he recognize that this self-conscious awareness of his cognitive capacities could offer a basis for certain knowledge, as Augustine did. Instead he disregards his interior powers, which could be known with certainty and observes natural particulars beyond the soul, which cannot be reliably known because of their mutability.<sup>21</sup> He initially puzzles over the soul’s relation to the body (“Thou art to narrow, wretch, to comprehend / Euen thy selfe: yea though thou wouldst but bend / To know thy body” [261-63]); then muses on the body’s composition (“Haue not all soules thought / For many ages, that our body’is wrought / Of Ayre, and Fire, and other Elements? / And now they thinke of new ingredi-



ents" [263-66]); and finally speculates on the causes of bodily ailments and growths: gallstones (see 269-70), the "putrid stuffe" (273) of phlegm, as well as "Nailes and Haires" (278). His attention veers beyond the soul-body problem to consider quandaries vexing various disciplines. He notes the way in which minds puzzle over "Catechismes and Alphabets" (284), the histories of Caesar and Cicero (287), and natural causes ("Why grasse is greene, or why our blood is red" [288]). The speaker seems to conclude that ignorance is humanity's only certainty: "What hope haue we to know our selues, when wee / Know not the least things, which for our vse bee?" (279-80). Agonizing over what he does not know about the material world, the speaker becomes ever further removed from the interior cognitive acts that would grant him epistemological certainty. Though expressing a desire to "straight know [...] all" (299) and comprehend "th'Art of knowing Heauen" (311), the speaker in fact aggravates his skeptical uncertainties by disregarding the interior truths that Augustinian dialectic reveals; namely, that he exists, that he has the capacity to understand, and that he has the desire to understand.

Recognizing the dissipation of his inner focus into the realm of physical phenomena, the speaker seeks to reclaim his inner attention by shaking off sense and fantasy and by mounting a metaphorical watchtower to see all things "despoyld of fallacies" (295). This much-discussed passage has been interpreted as expressing a desire for complete, unmediated understanding, such as Paul describes and Elizabeth Drury exemplifies.<sup>22</sup> If so, then the "watch-towre" (294) is an unusual choice of image. If the speaker did indeed desire to detach himself from the bodily senses (from the "spectacles" [293] and "lattices" [296] of sight), then why mount a watchtower, which would in fact heighten, enlarge, and intensify one's external perception? If the speaker wanted to remove himself from the physical senses and engage the inward sight of Augustinian meditation, then would he not invoke the Pauline *speculum* of inner scrutiny that forms the gateway toward the face-to-face encounter? This unexpected image offers the most complex example of the recurrent tension between

interior focus and external distraction evidenced throughout the poem. The image invokes, mistranslates, and subverts one of the most important symbols of Augustine's thought, and consequently it offers a potent illustration of the poem's unorthodox appropriation of Augustinian interiority.

As explained earlier, the term *speculum* in Augustine's lexicon is shorthand for Paul's enigmatic vision found in Corinthians and the soul's reflection on its spiritual dignity as an image-bearer (see *De Trinitate* 15.9). Similarly, in the *Confessions*, Augustine invokes the *speculum* to describe the perfection of the soul's knowledge.<sup>23</sup> There is one image or analogy for spiritual enlightenment that Augustine explicitly rejects, and that is the image of a watchtower. He needs to do so because, in Latin, the terms for watchtower and mirror are easily confused. In Latin, the word *mirror* appears as *speculum* in the singular form (in the nominative and accusative cases) and as *specula* in the plural form (in nominative and accusative cases). The Latin word for *watchtower* appears as *specula* (in the nominative singular), and so is easily confused with the plural form of *mirrors*. Given this potential for misinterpretation, Augustine takes pains to clarify that both he and Paul are referring to mirrors and not to watchtowers:

He [Paul] uses the word *speculantes*, that is, beholding through a mirror, not looking out from a watch-tower. There is no ambiguity here in the Greek language, from which the Epistles of the Apostle were translated into Latin. For there the word for mirror, in which images of things appear, and the word for watch-tower, from the height of which we see something at a greater distance, are entirely different even in sound; and it is quite clear that the Apostle was referring to a mirror and not to a watchtower.<sup>24</sup>

It is more typical for Augustine to play with etymological similarities as a way to reinforce his argument, and so his insistence upon a single interpretative possibility in this passage is all the more striking. Clarifying that the *speculum* signifies an interior reflective turn, whereby the soul perceives the interior language of thought, Augustine rejects the watchtower analogy, since the outward-gazing focus

implied in the image contradicts his exhortations to engage the interior self.

It is unusual, and perhaps even perverse, that Donne would place the image of a watchtower in the midst of his reflection on the soul's knowledge, since it seems to defy Augustine's exhortations. Nonetheless, the image's external orientation accurately captures the speaker's recurrent preoccupation with the world's curiosities and attractions. Resisting the inward speculative dialectic that is so necessary to the poem's spiritual progress, the speaker blurs his interior focus, and so, to paraphrase Donne's own sermon, he resists the "interior art of memory," thereby becoming "farthest off from [himself] and most forgetful of [himself]" (*Sermons* 2: 73-74). His professed desire for perfected understanding is at odds with his digressive preoccupation with external goals, revealing the inner conflict between spiritual and secular aspirations.

A similar staging of vexed impulses occurs in Donne's poem "Goodfriday, 1613. Riding Westward," written within a few years of the *Anniversaries*. In this poem, the rider's goals are likewise conflicted. Having turned away from the east, and thus implicitly from the devotional image of Christ, the speaker travels westward pursuing "Pleasure or businesse" (7). The geographic opposition between the spiritual east and secular west corresponds to the psychological conflict between the speaker's interior sight and his secular preoccupations, between the weighty spectacle (16-17) of the crucified Christ present to memory (34) and the business that both occupies his field of vision and ultimately directs his itinerary.<sup>25</sup> Either fearful of divine punishment, or unwilling to relinquish worldly pleasures, the speaker disregards the image of the Trinity within to gaze upon the secular western horizon beyond.<sup>26</sup> With his back turned to Christ, the speaker asks "Restore thine Image, so much, by thy grace, / That thou may'st know mee, and I'll turne my face" (41-42). Yet, his prayer for spiritual restoration contradicts his posture of defiance.<sup>27</sup> Unlike Paul and Augustine, Donne's speaker resists the possibility of a face-to-face encounter, even in the midst of praying for its transformative graces.

The conflict between internal and external focal points reveals a psychology vexed by opposing desires for enlightenment and for secular pleasures.<sup>28</sup>

Likewise, Donne's speaker in *The Second Anniversarie* recurrently turns his attention away from interior reflection to fix his vision on the external horizon made visible by the watchtower. Rather than representing a mirror or *speculum*, which would capture the soul's reflection on its divine likeness, Donne inserts a deliberately mistranslated glass: a *specula* (watchtower), which is more opaque and enigmatic than any *speculum*. The speaker does not self-consciously reflect upon his own cognitive powers, nor recognize their triune patterns, and so he disregards the basis for both epistemic certainty and his soul's sacred interiority; in other words, he disregards the *speculum* within. Though articulating a desire to "see all things despoild of fallacies" (295), the speaker's attention more eagerly attends to the world's corruption (see 325-37) and vanity (see 474-79). His disingenuous expression of desire for spiritual illumination is no less daring or conflicted than that of the Westward Rider, who, while turning his back to God, prays for the gift of grace.

It is telling that Donne the preacher does not invoke the image of a watchtower to express the cognitive immediacy of revealed wisdom. Sensitive to the logic of the image, Donne represents the watchtower in his sermons as an externally directed vantage point exposing the sins of society. In a Lenten sermon of 1618 preached on Ezekiel 33:32, Donne explains that the prophet, looking from the watchtower, views the city's transgressions and calls for repentance (see *Sermons* 2: 164-65). Thus the view from the tower discloses the fallibilities of a fallen world, not the clarity of heavenly revelation. When Donne wishes to represent the perfection of the intelligible faculties, he follows Augustine by invoking the Pauline mirror as a symbol of the face-to-face encounter.<sup>29</sup>

Given the intertextual resonances of this image in Donne's sermons and Augustine's theology, the watchtower seems to complicate, rather than to clarify, the speaker's intentions by pointing to conflicts

between secular and spiritual aspirations, between the horizon of business and that of Christian devotion, between the art of salvation and poetic artistry.<sup>30</sup>

In his reappraisal of the *Anniversaries*, Louis Martz observed “that a failure in meditation may become a success in poetry” (“Donne’s *Anniversaries* Revisited” 38). Had Donne fashioned a successful progress of the soul, with a narrating voice not only oblivious to the vanities and curiosities of sense experience, but also attentive to the hidden truths and divine image of the interior self, then the poem would arguably have been less allusively complex or psychologically fascinating. Indeed, for *The Second Anniversarie* to follow faithfully the principles of Augustinian meditation, it would need to renounce its own rhetorical artistry, since the interior text of wisdom is written in the wordless language of the soul’s inner thought (see Stock, *Inner Dialogue* 4-5). Though failing to access these inexpressible mysteries, the poem nonetheless successfully renders the creative inconsistencies of human desire, with its capacity to subvert the very ideals to which it aspires. By recognizing the poem’s renegotiation of Augustinian interiority through its digressive and evasive movements, we are brought to a richer appreciation of Donne’s art of pious defiance, in which the journey to the heavenly city is ever distracted by the “business and [verbal] pleasure” expressed in the city of man.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>As Sicherman notes, in *The First Anniversarie* the pronoun “thou” refers to the external audience of the world; in *The Second Anniversarie*, the pronoun refers to the soul (see 130).—All references to the *Anniversaries* cite *The Variorum Edition of the Poetry of John Donne*, vol. 6.

<sup>2</sup>These dialogues include, among others, Augustine’s *Soliloquia*, *De Quantitate Animae*, *De Immortalitate Animae*, and *De Magistro*.

<sup>3</sup>For Augustinian readings of the *Anniversaries*, see Martz, *The Poetry of Meditation*; Tayler; and Guibbory. For Donne's Augustinian debts more generally, see Friedman 437; Johnson 28-29, 36; Sherwood 112; Brooks; Ettenhuber; Masselink; Papazian; and Vessey.

<sup>4</sup>See Stock, *Inner Dialogue* 1-17.

<sup>5</sup>Most scholars interpret Augustine as using the term *anamnesis* metaphorically to describe memory's capaciousness. Memory not only functions as the basis of identity (see O'Daly 148-51) but also forms the introspective space of divine encounter (see Stock, *Augustine* 212-32, esp. 226). Borrowing the term from Augustine, Donne refers to *anamnesis* in an early sermon, describing the intellectual and spiritual powers of memory: "Plato plac'd all learning in the memory; wee may place all Religion in the memory too: All knowledge, that seems new to day, says Plato, is but a remembering that, which your soul knew before" (*Sermons* 2: 74).

<sup>6</sup>"Within ancient philosophy, which provides Augustine with his point of departure in the genre, the paternity for the soliloquy belongs to the Platonic dialogues [...]. The presumption of this [dialectical] questioning is that the required knowledge is present but hidden in memory; its expression requires an interior dialogue in order to become apparent to the subject" (Stock, *Inner Dialogue* 67).

<sup>7</sup>Augustine distinguishes between *scientia*, which offers knowledge of temporal and mutable things necessary to live in the world, and *sapientia*, which pertains to immutable truth (see *De Trinitate* 12.17).

<sup>8</sup>See *Soliloquies* I.12; cf. Stock, *Inner Dialogue* 76-78.

<sup>9</sup>The imperative "Ascende" is repeated throughout the final chapters of *On the Magnitude of the Soul* (*De Quantitate Animae*). For a more detailed account of this influential passage, see my "Nicholas of Cusa's Dialogue with Augustine."

<sup>10</sup>See O'Daly 162-63; Stock, *Inner Dialogue* 43-47.

<sup>11</sup>See *Civitas Dei* 11.26; *De Trinitate* 15.12. For a fuller account of the *cogito* argument in Augustine, see Matthews 29-38; O'Daly 169-71; Stock, *Augustine* 259-73; and Stock, *Inner Dialogue* 90-120.

<sup>12</sup>*De Trinitate* 15.10: "quisquis igitur potest intellegere uerbum non solum antequam sonet, uerum etiam antequam sonorum eius imagines cogitatione uoluantur [...] quisquis, inquam, hoc intellegere potest iam potest uidere per hoc speculum atque in hoc aenigmate aliquam uerbi illius similitudinem de quo dictum est: in principio erat uerbum, et uerbum erat apud deum, et deus erat uerbum."

<sup>13</sup>Sicherman (see 128-30), Schwarz (see 61-62), and more recently Targoff (see 90-105) discuss *The Second Anniversarie's* dialectical quality; however, these discussions overlook the technique's Augustinian origins.

<sup>14</sup>Evetts-Secker notes that the *Anniversaries* emerge from a pivotal period in Donne's professional life, during which he weighs the possibility of a religious vocation (see 51). Despite the importance of these personal circumstances, it

nonetheless seems unwise to interpret the *Anniversaries* as purely confessional, since their ultimate purpose is to commemorate the deceased daughter of a powerful patron. Throughout this essay, I adopt Strier's critical approach to the *Holy Sonnets*; that is, I interpret *The Second Anniversarie* as offering occasional glances into the poet's thoughts.

<sup>15</sup>See Jordan 107; Ramie Targoff argues that the soul's desire for the body engenders this reluctance (see 88-105).

<sup>16</sup>The poem transforms Elizabeth Drury into the fullest realization of humanity's image-bearing sacredness, and so those passages describing her celestial state represent the poem's most sustained expressions of contemplative focus. See Netzley's essay in this volume, which interprets the refrain commemorating Elizabeth's death as part of the poem's progressing strategy of "symbolic reanimation" (39).

<sup>17</sup>"Returne not, my soule, from this extasee,  
And meditation of what thou shalt bee [...] With whom thy conuersation must be there [in heaven]. With whom wilt thou Conuerse?" (321-22, 24-25)

<sup>18</sup>"Shalt thou not finde a spungy slack Diuine  
Drinke and suck in th'Instructions of Great men,  
And for the word of God, vent them agen?  
Are there not some Courts, (And then, no things bee  
So like as Courts) which, in this let vs see,  
That wits and tongues of Libellars are weake,  
Because they doe more ill, then these can speake?  
The poyson'is gone through all" (328-35).

<sup>19</sup>"If thy Prince will his subiects to call thee  
My Lord, and this doe swell thee, thou art than,  
By being a greater, growen to be lesse Man,  
When no Physician of redresse can speake,  
A joyfull casuall violence may breake  
A dangerous Apostem in thy brest;  
And whilst thou ioyest in this, the dangerous rest,  
The bag may rise vp, and so strangle thee" (474-81).

Marotti sees in these lines Donne's resentment and disappointment in having failed to achieve the political success to which he had aspired (see 244).

<sup>20</sup>Sicherman records the recurrence of "think" from lines 85 to 185 (see 136).

<sup>21</sup>While my reading implies a mind-matter dualism, Ursell's essay in this volume, by contrast, reads the poem as collapsing such dichotomies through the cohesive energy of poetic breath.

<sup>22</sup>See, eg., Ettenhuber 217; Harvey and Harrison 984; Lewalski 292 and Tayler 20-67.

<sup>23</sup>Cf. *Confessions* 12.13 and 13.15.

<sup>24</sup>*De Trinitate* 15.8: “*Speculantes, dixit, per speculum videntes, non de specula prospicientes. Quod in graeca lingua non est ambiguum unde in latinam translatae sunt apostolicae litterae. Ibi quippe speculum ubi apparent imagines rerum ab specula de cuius altitudine longius aliquid intuemur etiam sono uerbi distat omnino. Satisque apparet apostolum ab speculo, non ab specula.*”

<sup>25</sup>Friedman explains the conflict by invoking the terms of *The Second Anniversarie*: “the point [...] is to remind us that what most men call seeing is but to ‘peepe through lattice of eyes’ while true vision is the work of a faculty that lies much closer to man’s spiritual essence—memory” (435).

<sup>26</sup>Helen B. Brooks reads the “Spheare” of the first line as a symbol of geometric equality and thus synonymous with the Trinity (see 291). While the speaker recognizes the importance of spiritual practice, his eyes aim at goals beyond the inner self.

<sup>27</sup>Schoenfeldt points out that this posture is “a profound violation of social decorum” (569). Sherwood notes the posture recalls that of the unconverted soul, who is turned toward earthly matters and away from God (see 107).

<sup>28</sup>For Friedman, the conflict of the poem represents “the spiritual power of memory attacking the defenses of articulate imagination” (442).

<sup>29</sup>In a Sermon of 1628, Donne interprets Paul’s face-to-face encounter as expressing the perfection of the soul’s heavenly understanding. While the dark glass signifies the partial, fragmented, and mediated nature of human knowledge, the latter denotes its completion and “perfection” (*Sermons* 8: 219). In earthly life, we see “obscurely in respect of that knowledge of God, which we shall have in heaven” (*Sermons* 8: 229). In heaven, “[w]e shall see all that concernes us, and see it alwayes” (*Sermons* 7: 348). For the Augustinian resonances of this sermon, see Ettenhuber 206-07.

<sup>30</sup>No work has done more to entrench an uncritical reading of the watchtower image than Edward W. Tayler’s *Donne’s Idea of a Woman*. Tayler devotes two chapters to elucidate the connotations of Donne’s “watch-tow’r.” While insisting on the formative influence of Augustine’s *De Trinitate* to the poem’s meditative exercise, Tayler avoids *De Trinitate* 15.8 in which Augustine clarifies that his use of “speculantes” refers to “looking through a mirror” and not a “watchtower.” Tayler only addresses this passage in the last footnote of the last chapter titled “Watch-tow’r,” saying: “Augustine’s careful distinctions do not, of course, prevent him from making etymological connections” (167n26). Here Tayler asks the reader to disregard Augustine’s own painstaking clarification; the result can only be a misreading of Augustine’s text.

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