GIORDANO BRUNO AND SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURY ENGLISH WRITERS WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE WORKS OF HENRY MORE

A Thesis submitted for the degree of Ph.D.
by
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Note on Editions and Abbreviations


The following abbreviations have been used in footnotes:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Journal or Publication</th>
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<tr>
<td>JEGP</td>
<td>Journal of English and Germanic Philology</td>
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<td>JHI</td>
<td>Journal of the History of Ideas</td>
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<tr>
<td>MLN</td>
<td>Modern Language Notes</td>
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<td>MLQ</td>
<td>Modern Language Quarterly</td>
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<td>MLR</td>
<td>Modern Language Review</td>
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<td>MP</td>
<td>Modern Philology</td>
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<td>PMIA</td>
<td>Publications of the Modern Language Association of America</td>
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<td>PQ</td>
<td>Philological Quarterly</td>
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<td>RES</td>
<td>Review of English Studies</td>
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<td>Studies in Philology</td>
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London is the place of publication unless otherwise indicated.
Abstract

Giordano Bruno, perhaps the most original thinker in the latter part of the sixteenth century, crossed over to England in 1583. During his two-year stay he published six important cosmological and moral works. These are in Italian, as distinct from nearly all his other surviving works which are in Latin. The influence of Bruno's ideas on Galileo, Descartes, Gassendi, Spinoza and other Continental thinkers has long been explored. This study attempts to explore the impact, direct and indirect, that Bruno could have made on late sixteenth and seventeenth century English writers in the fields of science, philosophy and literature.

Bruno's political and religious motivations during his stay are discussed within the cultural English background in which he worked. Sidney's alleged patronage and the effect that astrological controversies, contemporary scientific and political debate had on Bruno's aspirations and style are also examined. It is shown how, in reaction to his reception in England and perhaps through the work of Thomas Digges, Bruno moved from Lullian mnemonics and other esoteric lore to a more modern cosmological approach. His works are discussed in connection with those of Alexander Dicson, Hariot, Gilbert, Bruce and especially Nicholas Hill.

It is suggested that Sidney influenced Eroici Furori, but that in turn Bruno's works could have influenced the work of, among others, John Donne, William Drummond,
Robert Burton, Herbert of Cherbury and John Wilkins. One chapter explores the possible influence of *Spaccio de la Bestia Trionfante* on Spenser's *Mutabilitie Cantos* and Thomas Carew's *CaelumBritanicum*.

The second part of this study draws a comparison between Bruno's and Hill's works and Henry More's poetry and prose treatises. Without discounting the enormous influence of Plato, Plotinus, Ficino and other neoplatonic sources, it is suggested that More sometimes also seems to adopt para-Brunian concepts to combat mid-seventeenth century materialism that gained ground in England through the works of Hobbes and Descartes. More's adoption of animistic atomism, the real extension of spirit as well as his concepts of *spiritus naturae*, divine space and an infinity of worlds are examined in the light of Bruno's works. Direct "borrowing" is not rigorously asserted. My purpose in this section is to show that the currents which Bruno strongly represented had become so widespread through the works of Hill, Kepler, Mersenne, Burton, Wilkins and others that Henry More's acceptance of infinite space and time in *Democritus Platonissans* and animistic atomism in later works can be read as the culmination of a significant intellectual movement that started during the period 1583-92 during which Bruno's works were printed.
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Introduction

Towards the end of the sixteenth century, Giordano Bruno published in England important ethical and cosmological works that gradually influenced the thought of such great men as Kepler, Galileo, Descartes, Gassendi, Leibniz and Spinoza, most of whom refused to acknowledge any Brunian matrix.

This study suggests the same could have happened in England, where Bruno's possible influence has not, so far, been adequately explored. This study is mainly concerned with the history of Bruno's ideas and their impact on English writers. In adducing parallel evidence, direct "borrowing" is not rigorously asserted as I am particularly aware of there being common sources for certain late Renaissance concepts.

Bruno's political and religious motivations during his stay at the French Embassy in London in 1583-85 are discussed, as well as the effect that contemporary scientific and political English thought could itself have had in altering his aspirations, and shaping his style and content. Thus I explore the influence that Digges, English astrological controversies, and Sidney could have had on Bruno.

When considering how widespread Bruno's ideas were and how one could approach them, even at second-hand through his "disciples" and antagonists, the aim has been to explore the connection between the works of Bruno and various English writers in science, philosophy and literature. Hariot, Nicholas Hill, Spenser, Donne, Edward Herbert, Thomas Carew and John Wilkins are the major writers who are discussed.
The second part of this study tries to draw a comparison between the works of Bruno and Hill and the poetry and prose of Henry More, the Cambridge Platonist. In particular their adaptation of mechanistic atomism, their concept of *spiritus universi* vis-a-vis the laws of matter, plurality of worlds, and the relationship of space to the Deity are discussed. I try to show how, at times, More's stand in opposition to Hobbesian scepticism and parts of Cartesian metaphysics could derive not only from allegiance to Plato and Plotinus (which is widespread and repeatedly acknowledged by More himself) but also from a knowledge, probably partial and indirect, of Bruno's ideas.
Waker of Sleeping Souls

On 17 February 1600, Giordano Bruno was taken from the prison of Tor di Nona to Campo di Fiori in Rome and burnt at the stake as an unrepentant heretic.¹

Discarding the accepted world picture of scholastic tradition, Bruno supported a number of concepts such as infinity of space and worlds and that of the minima that played a significant role in the rise of modern science and philosophy. His various aberrations conveniently forgotten, his modern disciples present Bruno as the first modern intellectual hero.² Doubtless, the gradual rise of technical advancement and the empiric method would have caused the downfall of scholasticism without the works of Bruno. Through defiance and persecution, however, the martyr's message acquires special urgency. John Owen, who was probably present at Bruno's "Laski" debate in New College, Oxford,³ put it this way:

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¹ V. Spamanato, Vita di Giordano Bruno (Messina, 1921), p.776. 
² Giordano Bruno, Vita e Opere. Inaugurazione del monumento a Campo de' Fiori (Rome, 1889). 
³ J. Nicholls, Queen Elizabeth's Progresses and Public Processions (1788), II, p.205. 

See D.N.B., XIV. pp.1314-15. Owen became a probationer fellow of New College, Oxford, in 1582 and actual fellow in 1584. His epigrams are full of allusions to contemporaries.
The Plagues are God's sharp arrows, you confess,
When comes then, Bruno, your great Healthfulness:
The reason's ready; for a plague like you
Your country disclaims that she ever knew.  

It was not in his native country only, however, that this
short defrocked Dominican attracted hostility. In 1576, after
minor theological skirmishes with his fellow Neapolitan monks
and superiors,² he was accused of defending the Arian heresy.
He fled to Rome where he shed off his allegiance to the
Dominican order.³ After that he became an itinerant philosopher
moving from one European city to another. In 1579, he barely
escaped the excommunication of the Calvinist Conistory in
Geneva after a bitter controversy with De La Faye.⁴ Towards
the end of 1581, Bruno arrived in Paris and printed his works
on mnemonics. By March of 1583, his name was mentioned in
Cobham's correspondence to Walsingham.⁵ In June of the same
year, Bruno had heated philosophical and scientific con¬
frontations with Oxford dons in the presence of the visiting
Polish prince, Alberto Laski. After that, his name soon went

¹ Epigrammatum (1659), III. p.57. trans. Thomas Pecke, Parnassi
Fuerperium (1659), p.109. Owen's epigrams were originally
published in 1612.

² V. Spampanato, p.246.

³ ibid., pp.699-700.

Philippe Jordan, dit Brunus, Italien, detenu pour avoir fait
imprimer certaines responses et invectives contre M.r de la
Faye cottans 20 erreurs d'iceluy en un de ses lecons".

⁵ Calendar of State Papers, Foreign 1583 and Addenda, p.214.
the round of the universities. In an arrogant letter to the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University, prefixed to his Explicatio Triginta Sigillorum, Bruno described himself as the "tamer of presumptuous and recalcitrant ignorance". ¹

In England, Bruno published important ethical and cosmological works. Through his voluminous printed works, Bruno's ideas filtered into European thought, but the great philosophers, Galileo, Descartes, Leibniz and Spinoza would not acknowledge any Brunian matrix.

Writing in 1586, Corbinelli wrote that "in England he has left great schisms in the Schools",² and there is little doubt that Bruno's ideas continued to exert considerable influence in late sixteenth and seventeenth century English science, philosophy and literature.

It is as the great opponent of Aristotle that Bruno's name comes to the fore. Despite several strong unrehearsed attempts by philosophers of nature such as Patrizzi and Telesio to throw off the undigested residuals of scholasticism, Aristotelianism still held a tight grip on most European and English universities. Giordano Bruno himself was bred in the tradition but he combated scholasticism with a vigour unprecedented.

¹ (n.d. but 1583), sig.A3.

² G. Aquilecchia, Due Dialoghi Sconosciuti e Due Dialoghi Noti (Rome, 1957), p.xii.

When Bruno arrived at the French Court in 1581, his fame for rabid anti-Aristotelianism had preceded him. Urgently seeking patronage, Bruno dedicated his *De Umbris Idearum* to Henri III. To a king avidly interested in esoteric and mystical practices, Bruno's philosophy, couched in signs and symbols, paradigms and enigmas, seals and mnemonic tables, must have proved attractive; Bruno soon acquired the king's patronage. As Bruno was not then a practising Catholic, the king gave him a special licence to lecture at the Collège de France, founded earlier by Francis II. From the Sorbonne, infiltrated by agents of the Jesuits and the Guise faction, it seems that he was barred. That great centre of orthodoxy, nevertheless, did not take at all kindly to a defrocked Dominican setting up as rival to their hegemony over men's minds.

To his critical, often hostile, audience, Bruno's religion seemed a random mixture of Christian and pagan concepts bristling with theological heresy. In Bruno, God became more immanent in nature than he was ever allowed to be at the Sorbonne. The resulting religion, despite its claim to universality, was more individual than corporate, and was thus a threat to established religion, especially so when the growing 'politique' movement in France was also teaching that unity in religion was not essential for the welfare of the state.

Though there was often "unreasonable clamour"¹ and attempts to stop him lecturing at the Collège, no serious trouble arose,

¹ V. Spampanato, p.315.
but it seemed to Bruno that the France of Henri III was not yet ready to be preached the sermon of truth. Despite the growth of the 'politique' movement after St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre in 1572, the papist, Jesuit and Guise factions, always assuming greater power, were starting to breathe uncomfortably down his neck, as they were soon to do down Henri's.

In an attempt to woo extremist Catholic opinion to his side, Bruno dedicated his Cantus Circaeus to Duke Henri of Angouleme, bastard son of Henri II of France and Janet Stewart, once tutor to the Queen of Scots.\(^1\) Angouleme was one of the main instigators of the 1572 Huguenot massacre, and this fact is indicative of Bruno's willingness to barter political allegiance for philosophical freedom. Bruno's friendship with Angouleme's counsellor, Jean Regnault,\(^2\) may have suggested this particular policy. But when Bruno's view that one may discard philosophically what one accepts as an article of faith remained unacceptable, Bruno began to think of crossing over to England. Regnault, who had Bruno's works much at heart,\(^3\) may have suggested a move to the

1 See, The Scots Peerage, ed. James Balfour Paul (Edinburgh, 1911), VIII. pp.539-540. Janet Stewart, natural daughter of King James IV by Isabel Stewart, Countess of Bothwell, daughter of James, third Earl of Buchan was married to Malcolm, third Lord of Fleming. She went to France in 1548 to supervise the education of the child Queen of Scots, until at the instigation of the Cardinal de Lorraine she was superseded by Madame Paris. She became mistress to Henri II, bearing him a son, Harry de Valois, 'le Bâtard d'Angouleme'.

2 Regnault wrote the introduction to Cantus Circaeus, II. i. pp.181-183.

3 Cantus Circaeus (Paris, 1582), sig.a.ijv.
French Embassy in England. Significantly, we first hear of Bruno in Cobham's dispatches informing Sir Francis Walsingham of Franco-Scottish connivances to free the Queen of Scots from captivity:

Il Signor Doctor Jordano Bruno, Nolano, a professor in philosophy, intends to pass into England, whose religion I cannot commend. 1

In the next paragraph Cobham wrote of plots to restore Catholicism in England. Gregory XIII and the Jesuits were subsidising opposition and intrigue through Thomas Morgan, later to figure prominently in the Throgmorton and Babington plots. Morgan was helping to smuggle Jesuits hot with instructions from Rome concerning the overthrow or murder of Queen Elizabeth. 2

The arrival of Giordano Bruno in England is immediately linked to Jesuitic intrigue. Following Cobham's warning, Bruno could not fail to come under the strict surveillance of Walsingham's efficient spy network, especially so if, on landing, he made a bee-line to the French Embassy, carrying secret instructions or letters of commendation from Henri III to Michel Castelnau, Marquis de Mauvissiere, as Bruno himself claimed.

The French Embassy was reputed to be a centre of Catholic propaganda. Mauvissiere's secretary, Chereilles, was in contact

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with Morgan and would have known of his involvement in the Throgmorton plot.¹

We do not know if Bruno took up residence at the French Embassy immediately on arrival in London, sometime in April 1583. It is certain, however, that he visited the embassy and had frequent conversations with Mauvissiere.² It is probable that Mauvissiere was attracted by Bruno's mastery in the art of memory, having himself started on his diplomatic career by repeating a sermon from memory to Cardinal de Lorraine.³ Like Regnault, Mauvissiere would have advised Bruno that there was need of caution, that the cities and universities of this heretic land were set in their established religion, and that he could not hope to proclaim his ideas from every rostrum.

Bruno learned that the French Embassy in Butcher Row, with its doubtful diplomatic immunity, was a hotbed of intrigue and counter-espionage.

1 Holinshed, IV, p.545. Francis Throgmorton confesses: "all my intelligence was ... by me written to Morgan and by him imparted unto my brother most times."
See, Calendar of State Papers, Scottish, VIII, p.290.
Chereilles to Mary, Queen of Scots, 30 March 1586: "I had the means of doing good service to you and to the said Morgan ... this so much more easily that no one knew I had acquaintance or familiarity with him, with whom, nevertheless, I have been intimate for the last eight years."

2 J.H. McIntyre, Giordano Bruno (1903), p.21, suggests that from April to June Bruno was lecturing in Oxford, and only later formed part of the Embassy staff. Bruno's evidence suggests otherwise: "with letters of the same king I went to England to stay with the Ambassador to His Majesty, called Sr. de Mauvissiere, Michel de Castelnau in whose house I did nothing but stayed as his gentleman". See V. Spampanato, Documenti della Vita di G. Bruno (Florence, 1933), p.85.

To this one might add that the London populace was critical of foreigners. Both Mauvissiere and Bruno suffered from this xenophobia, and both record how they were insulted as "dogs, traitors and foreigners" by a people that persisted, often with good reason, in equating the foreigner with the traitor.

Indeed xenophobia was not the sole prerogative of the vulgar. A love-hate relationship existed between the English and the French courts. The possible marriage of Elizabeth I to Henri III's younger brother, Alencon, was still in the air and highly suspect, the cause of bickering among the nobility in England and France. While sovereigns made protestations of goodwill, their distrust of each other's political and diplomatic moves was mutual, especially as Walsingham kept uncovering evidence of a Franco-Spanish Popish plot to free the Queen of Scots.

Henri III had himself earlier courted Elizabeth, but gave her over in 1575 to marry the daughter of Count de Vaudemont de Lorraine. In 1579, the pock-marked Duke of Alencon, through his proxy Simier, courted Elizabeth as "la plus fine femme du monde". If Henri III remained childless, a child of Elizabeth

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1. *La Cena de le Ceneri*, ed. Adolfo Wagner, *Opere di Giordano Bruno* (Leipzig, 1830), I, p.146. All references to Bruno's Italian works, unless otherwise stated, are taken from this edition.

2. *Calendar of State Papers, 1581-3*, VI, p.430.
sired by Alencon would ward off the claims of Navarre and unite French Catholics and English Protestants under one throne.¹

Divided loyalties of this kind would be difficult to tolerate, and Englishmen not unnaturally were awed at the prospect of being forced under a Catholic yoke. Memories of the burnings of bloody Mary haunted many Protestants, and the treacherous St. Bartholomew's massacre in Paris did not help to still their fears.

In 1579, John Stubbs wrote a scathing pamphlet forcefully protesting against the proposed match. Elizabeth was so visibly angered at The Discovery of A Gaping Gulf Whereunto England is likely to be swallowed by another French Marriage if the Lord forbid not the Bane by letting Her Majesty see the sin and Punishment thereof that Stubbs and his publisher are supposed to have had their right hands amputated.²

Mendoza, Spanish ambassador to Philip of Spain, had been voicing his fears that the marriage would take place since May 1581.³ The highlight of the marriage negotiations was an

¹ Neville Williams, Elizabeth, Queen of England (1967), p.203, quotes a private memorandum by Sir William Cecil, Lord Burghley, as saying in March 1579: "Contrariwise by judgement of physicians that know her estate in those things and by the opinion of women, being most acquainted with her Majesty's body in such things as properly appertain, to show probability of her aptness to have children, even at this day."

² D.N.B. pp.118-119: "I can remember" — wrote Stow the chronicler, who was present, — standing by John Stubbe [and] so soon as his right hand was off, [he] ... cried aloud: God save the Queen ... He could now only write with his left hand, and added the word Scaeva to his signature."

³ Calendar of State Papers, Spain, 1580-6, pp.95; 101.
elaborate triumph or pageant entitled *The Fortress of Perfect Beauty*. Taking place at the Tiltyard adjoining the Queen's house at Whitehall, the pageant itself, lasting almost three days, was a costly allegory on the royal courtship.¹ Two years earlier, Sir Philip Sidney had opposed a French marriage alliance.² Now he outwardly supports the match, while in reality aiding its dismissal. With Fulke Greville, we find him in the incongruous role of urging the foster children of Alencon's desire to win the fortress of Elizabeth's virtue. Dressed in richest armour "part blew, and the rest gilt and engraven",³ Bruno's two later "patrons" sought to win over Elizabeth's hand for the French prince. But in the pageant, the virgin queen, unassailable as the sun, elects to stand alone, her defenders proclaiming that:

no undermining may prevale, for that hir fort is founded upon so firme a rocke, as will not stir for either fraud or force. ⁴

In any case, Mauvissiere easily guessed the nation's animosity to such a marriage as well as Walsingham's suspicions. Even though the courtiers excuse themselves to the Queen, now equated with the Sun:

¹ J. Nicholls, *Queen Elizabeth's Progresses and Public Processions* (1788), II. p.125.
³ J. Nicholls, p.129.
⁴ ibid., p.137.
If Mercurie have said amisse, blame those bright beames which have bereft him of his wit.1

The English, the pageant suggested, could have no real benefit through such a marriage alliance, despite the value of creating a counter-balance to Spain's power. A page, dressed as an angel, voiced the fear that as Henri III had swallowed the kingdom of Poland, the France of Catherine de Medici was now inveighing to extend her territorial ambitions to England and Scotland:

Sir Knights, if in besieging the sunne ye understood what you had undertaken, ye would not destroy a common blessing for a privat benefit. Will you subdue the sun? ... We content to injoie the light, yee to eclipse it; we to rest under the feet, yee to run over the head; we to yeeld that which nothing can conquer, yee to conquer that which maketh all men captives. 2

Walsingham still kept the French under constant supervision which reached a peak when Bruno arrived in England, just when the Throgmorton plot was uncovered.3 Mauvissiere's connection with d'Aubigny, now Earl of Lennox, and a tool in the hands of the Jesuits, could prove dangerous.

1 ibid.
2 ibid. p.134.
3 Egerton MSS. 2074, f.72. confirms Francis Throgmorton was arrested on 5 November 1583. But as early as April, Henry Fagot had informed Walsingham that "Le grande fauteurs de la royne decosse est le Sieur Froquemorton et le milord Henry Howard et ils ne viennent jamais raporte chose d'icelle que la nuict." Calendar of State Papers, 1583. XII. no.61.
D'Aubigny had in fact been negotiating for some time with Henry of Guise, Gregory III and Philip of Spain to initiate an invasion of both England and Scotland. In September 1582, d'Aubigny's courier, George Douglas, had been trapped and under threat of torture revealed that he had carried information through Mauvissiere. From then on, the French Embassy became a constant source of information, with Walsingham even trying to bribe Mauvissiere's secretary, Cherelles.

That formidable Scottish Jesuit William Creighton had intimated that the best Jesuits were ready to cross over to England to "offer disputation". ¹ Cobham informed Walsingham that Creighton and Parsons had persuaded James to provide 15,000 men, and with the probable renewal of the excommunication of Elizabeth there were hopes that dissidents would rise in revolt. The Guise were also pressing Henri III to support d'Aubigny. ²

An increased flow of correspondence from Henry Fagot and William Fowler, Walsingham's spies, reflects the fevered activity inside the French Embassy at the time of Bruno's arrival. A student of St. Andrews University, ³ Fowler had studied in, and been

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¹ ibid., Cobham to Walsingham, 5 January 1583, p.11.


expelled from France in October 1582 for contravening the religion of the state. A minor theologian as well as a poet, Fowler would have listened to some of Bruno's lectures at the Collège. He would have been interested in Bruno's mnemonic treatises so popular in Paris. Fowler himself lists among "My Works" a work entitled "Art of Memorye", and in a scribbled page, in Fowler's hand, there is the following interesting statement which connects him to that other disciple of Bruno, Alexander Dicson. The note is presumably addressed to James I:

While I was teaching your majestic the art of memorye yow instructed me in poesie and imprese for so was yours, sic docens dicsan

Fowler contacted Mauvissiere through some debts apparently owing by the Queen of Scots to his father, Thomas. He also posed as Mauvissiere's agent, reporting definite plans for a French invasion:

il faut, il faut, thair are fyfe hundereth thousand men in France who doeth nothing but waist the realme and will wraik it iff they be not occupied otherwyse.

Acting on just such information, the Earl of Gowrie and the English party among the Scottish nobility seized the young king James and forced d'Aubigny to flee to France, from where he could still keep

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3 ibid., f.272v.

4 Calendar of Scottish Papers, VI, 1581-3, Fowler to Walsingham, May 1583. p.481.
in contact with Mauvissiere. Though there are signs that Walsingham considered Fowler an "underminer . . . who sometimes delivers such baits to his instruments as were stolen by corruptors of some about him"; Fowler still went on busily supplying snippets of information about visitors to the French Embassy. Later he was in close contact with Giovanni-batista Ciotti, the Venetian bookseller, who testified at Bruno's trial, and was the key contact between Bruno and the treacherous Mocenigo who denounced Bruno to the Inquisition. If any mention was made of Bruno's visits, it must either have been transmitted orally or been lost, but Fagot has this 

advertisement for 2 May 1583:

One Yeole came to our house, who reported that he had heard the ambassador say that he knew very well they were playing the fool with the French, but that those who think to do this are much deceived; and that he knew very well that the Kings of Spain and France were in a way to remedy it all. And he said all this in Italian. Note that he is an agent of the ambassador and has no confidence in him.

It is interesting to speculate whether this conversation occurred in the presence of Bruno, just arrived from France with

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1 Calendar of State Papers, Foreign, 1583 and Addenda, Fagot to Walsingham, 4 May 1583, p.292. "One called Finlay, a Scotchman, dined in the ambassador's house. He brought two gold rings, set, but I do not know the stones. They were sent to the Queen of Scots by the Duke of Lenox, and the ambassador has charge to convey them to her."

2 Calendar of Scottish Papers, VII, 1584-5, Walsingham to William Davison, 13 August 1584, p.258.

3 National Library of Scotland, Hawthornden MSS.2065.f.84. See, Docc.veneti. VI.sig.lv. in V. Spampanso, pp.687-691.

4 Calendar of State Papers, Foreign, 1583 and Addenda, Henri Fagot to Walsingham, p.292.
secret letters from Henri III. If it did, it ought to give
a new turn to what F.A. Yates calls Bruno's "secret mission"
in England. 1 Mauvissiere, we know, was indeed walking a
political tightrope, trying to aid the great treason while
ostensibly pursuing a policy of conciliation with Elizabeth. 2

F.A. Yates suggested that, at the instigation of Henri III,
Bruno was to infiltrate into the upper ranks of the English
nobility and there, where it really mattered, work out a policy
of reconciliation of the Catholic and Protestant religion. She
argues that Bruno had contacts with Du Perron who worked
unceasingly for the establishment of Catholicism in England. 3
Such a rapprochement could be brought about by preaching the
'politique' principle of toleration that draws religions closer
through "philosophical mollification". 4 This might have been
so, but certainly Henri III, knowing of Bruno's intransigence
in Geneva, Toulouse and at the College, could hardly have chosen

Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, III.
181-208.

2 Calendar of State Papers, Foreign, 1583 and Addenda, Henri Fagot
to Walsingham, 4 May 1583, p.292. "the ambassador received
letters from Mme de Mauvissiere ... she strongly begs that the
ambassador will be as secret as possible in these matters, and
that he has heard the Duke of Guise say that he hopes to be in
Scotland sooner than she or the ambassador thinks; but
meanwhile he is to entertain the Queen of England in as friendly
wise as he can; and that the King of Scots is always a Catholic
at heart."


a more incongruous figure than this fiery uncompromising
eratwhile Dominican to preach religious compromise. Towards
the end of Spaccio della Bestia Triomfante there are, it is
ture, elements of conciliation, but this is political. Bruno
was too much of a free-lance to follow any preconceived notions
of toleration aimed at righting the political balance of Europe
through a watering down of religion. And though, like
Pomponazzi, he might plead a religio-philosophical dichotomy,
his philosophy tended to become his religion. There is no
attempt at conciliation in the earlier Italian dialogues, and
what later unsuccessful attempts there are could have arisen
from Mauvissiere's advice to adopt, for his own safety, a more
moderate tone than that in his early public disputations and in
La Cena de le Ceneri.¹

One of Bruno's concerns was to free intellectual centres from
the grip of scholasticism. It was not long after his arrival
that Bruno had the opportunity of showing off his prowess in
public philosophical debate. The man of the moment in English
court circles was the attractive, bearded Alberto Laski, Polish
Palatine of Siradzia, with aspirations to the throne of Poland,²
who visited England in May 1583 and, according to Mauvissiere,

¹ I. pp. 165; 180-183.
Cf. D.W. Singer, p.27.

² A True and Faithfull Relation of What Passed for Many Yeers Between
Dr. John Dee and Some Spirits: Tending (had it succeeded) to A
General Alteration of Most States and Kingdomes in the Worlde ...
with a Preface by Meric Casaubon, D D. (1659), sig. Hv:
"It seems Laski though nobly born, and to great dignity yet
his thoughts did aspire much higher."
was being fêted everywhere.¹

Returning from the marriage at Ricot of Lord Norris's daughter to Sir A. Paulet's son,² Laski was entertained magnificently at Oxford University from the 10th to the 13th of June.³ We know that he stayed at Christ Church, saw the comedy Rivales and the tragedy Dido at All Souls, listened to debates daily, and at New College attended "public philosophie, physike and divinitie disputations, in which all those learned opponents, respondents and moderators, quitted themselves like themselves, sharplie and soundlie."⁴

In Bruno's La Cena, Frulla gives a very graphic account of this debate:

These are the fruits of England; search as much as you will, you will find only doctors in grammar ... a constellation of pedantic and intrincast ignorance and presumption laced with rustic incivility that will try the patience of Job. And if you do not believe me, go to Oxford and let them recount what happened to the Nolan, when he disputed publicly in theology in the presence of the Polish Prince Alasco and others of the English nobility. Let them tell you how well he could refute their arguments and how the poor doctor, put forward as the leader of the academy on that solemn occasion, was as puzzled as a chick in straw, stopping fifteen times over fifteen syllogisms. Let them tell you with what

¹ Papiers d'Etat Relatifs a l'Histoire de l'Ecosse, Teulet Papers, ii. p.570, 16 May 1583.
² Cf. Public Record Office, State Papers, 79. Vol.9, f.104v; "As for Alaschi they make me know he was a Palatyn in Poland, and of great authoritie." Cobham to Walsingham, 11 May 1583.
³ Oxford. Bodleian MSS.31160. f.89. "Accounts of monies received and layd out ... for the entertaynement of Palatine Laskie a nobleman of Polonia, 1583".
⁴ J. Nicholls, II. p.205. This debate took place on the 13th June. Anthony a Wood does not mention the name of the disputants on the 11th and 13th June, and it has previously been accepted that Bruno took part on the 11th of June. Cf. V. Spampanato, p.339.
incivility and discourtesy that pig behaved, and with what patience and humanity the Nolan, who showed himself a true Neapolitan, bred beneath a more benign sky! Hear how they stopped his public lectures, as well as those on the immortality of the soul and on the quintuple sphere.

Besides Bruno's declaration that he lectured at Oxford, very little information as to the kind of disputations and lectures he gave in Oxford is available. It had been assumed by Guttler in 1893, and other critics such as Gentile, Spampalato, Limentiani and Pellegrini later, that Bruno audaciously took part as one of an audience "e corona" and, as it were, by chance. Indeed he was to do just that six years later when, "ita mea mea sponte", he delivered his famous Oratio Consolatoria during the obsequies of Prince Julius, Duke of Brunswick.

Since the possibility of Bruno having given a set of lectures on cosmology and immortality may have an important bearing on the wider question of his subsequent influence on his contemporaries' works, we should examine other evidence.

From Gabriel Harvey we learn that in the Laski debate Bruno's adversary was Dr. John Underhill, that Bruno subjected the Aristotelian

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2 I. p.179.


philosophy to severe examination, and that he argued strongly and effectively against all comers.¹

N W.'s letter preceding Daniel's book about Jovius states: "You cannot forget that which Nolanus (that man of infinite titles amongst other phantastical toys) truly noted by chance in our Schooles, that by the help of translations all Sciences had their offspring."²

Angelo M. Pellegrini finds this evidence too flimsy and concludes that Bruno's avowed connections in London were 'legendary' rather than real, and borrowing N.W.'s phrase, asserts that the only time Bruno spoke at Oxford was indeed "by chance".³

It would be naive to argue that if Bruno said something in passing about the usefulness of translations, to which N.W.'s phrase specifically refers, then his lectures were also given by chance. Again it is difficult seriously to suggest any real quarrel could have arisen about the usefulness or otherwise of translations. What Bruno was arguing about in the Laski debate was theology and philosophy.⁴


Other evidence confirms that again it was not because of the Bruno-Underhill confrontation at the Laski debate that Bruno's lectures were suspended. George Abbot, Vice-Chancellor of Oxford intermittently from 1600 to 1605, and later Archbishop of Canterbury, writes that Bruno visited Oxford in "the traine of Alasco", but really recounts what happened in later lectures.

The relevant passage in Abbot's book, merits quotation in full:

When that Italian Didapper, who intituled himselfe, Philoteus Iordanus Brunus Nolanus, magis elaboratae Theologiae Doctor (Praefat in explicatio triginta sigillorum) &c. with a name longer than his body, had in the traine of Alasco the Polish Duke, seene our University in the yeare 1583 his hart was on fire, to make himselfe by some worthy exploite, to become famous in that celebrious place. Not long after returning againe, when he had more boldly then wisely, got up into the highest place of our best & most renowned schoole, stripping up his sleeves like some Iugler, and telling us much of Chentrum & chirculus & chircumferenchia (after the pronunciation of his Country language) he undertooke among very many other matters to set on foote the opinion of Copernicus, that the earth did goe round, and the heavens did stand still; whereas in truth it was his owne head which rather did run round, and his braines did not stand stil. When he had read his first Lecture, a grave man, & both then and now of good place in that University, seemed to himselfe, somewhere to have read those things which the Doctour propounded; but silencing his conceit till he heard him the second time, remembred himselfe then, and repayring to his Study, found both the former and later Lecture taken almost verbatim out of the workes of Marsilius Ficinus (De Vita coelitus coparanda). Wherewith when he had acquainted that rare & excellent Ornament of our land, the Reverend Bishop of Durham that now is, but then Deane of Christs-Church, it was at the first thought fit, to notifie to the Illustrious Reader, so much as they had discovered. But afterwards hee who gave the first light, did most wisely intreate, that once more they might make trial of him if he persevered to abuse himselfe, and that Auditory the thirde time, they should then do their pleasure.

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1 The Reasons which Doctour Hill hath Brought, for the Upholding of Papistry, which is falselie termed the Catholike Religion (Oxford, 1604), p.88.

After which, Iordanus continuing to be ide Iordanus, they caused some to make knowne unto him their former patience, & the paines which he had taken with them, and so with great honesty of the little mas part, there was an end of that matter.  

F.A. Yates seems to think that at the Laski debate Bruno's performance was that of a magus who set out to announce the Copernican theory in the context of astral magic and the sun-worship of Ficino's De Vita, but this is not exactly what Abbot says. Yates herself notes that Laski would not have been satisfied with Bruno's performance because Sidney took him to the conjurer John Dee on his return from Oxford.  

I suggest this was so because there probably was no magic discussed in the Laski debate, besides the fact that Laski was already enjoined to visit Dee at Mortlake almost a fortnight before the Oxford visit. Abbot's reference to Bruno's cribbing from De Vita is to the subsequent lectures. It is also well to remember that in Disputatio contra iudicum astrologorum and in De Vita itself, Ficino has very serious reservations about the use of astrology even for specifically medicinal purposes.  

We must admit that Bruno was still very interested in magical religion and esoteric signs and symbols, which were ———

1 George Abbot, pp.88-89.


3 A True and Faithful Relation of what Passed for Many Yeers Between Dr. John Dee and Some Spirits ... (1659), p.1. "28th May, 1583. As I and E.K. sate discoursing of the Noble Polonian Albertus Lasci his great honour here with us obtained his great good liking of all the States of the people...". Cf. ibid. p.3. where Dee asks about Laski's pedigree.

soon to reappear in his first book published in England, *Explicatio Triginta Sigillorum*. But Bruno's most important work in England lies in his cosmological concepts and his anti-Aristotelian approach. These are often shored up by Hermetic sources, but it is not his hermeticism that makes him a modern thinker. His frequent references to the Chaldees, the Egyptians and to Hermes Trismegistus are an attempt to anchor his "new philosophy" to the lost vision and intuition of early seers then obscured by the pedants, the grammarians and the scholastics.

George Abbot rakes in Bruno in attacking Hill's *A Quartron of Reasons of Catholike Religion*, with as many briefe reasons of Refusall.¹ Hill had charged Protestantism with a multiplicity of sects² and Francis Dillingham attacked him strongly.³ Abbot had read Dillingham's book and refers to it directly in the text. Abbot wanted to prove Hill used ideas and arguments mainly derivative from Bristow.⁴ Dillingham's marginal reference

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¹ (Antwerp, 1600).

² Thomas Hill, p.13, where fifty-seven sects are lined up for criticism.

³ *A Quartron of Reasons, composed by Doctour Hill, unquartered and proved a Quartron of Follies* (Cambridge, 1603), p. 6: "M. Perk. ex Molano."

⁴ *A Briefe Treatise of Divers plain & sure ways to find out the truth in this Doubtful & dangerous time of heresy* (Antwerp, 1599).
might have reminded Abbot of Bruno's lectures at Oxford, and he introduces Bruno as an analogy to Hill. Here is an apostle of the new religion found out as a plagiarist all along.

Abbot was an intransigent, "stiffly principled" in Puritan doctrine, who was still studying at Balliol when Bruno lectured at Oxford. When he later assumed the archdiocese of Canterbury, he spoke strongly against Catholics, instructing King James to disallow any moderation towards Popery, and issuing thundering circulars about the "slanderous doctrines taught by young students misled by late writers". Despite the insistence that Bruno relied heavily on Ficino, Abbot confirms that Bruno's lectures were given. In view of Pellegrini's comment that Bruno's connections with Oxford were legendary, it is important to note then that according to Abbot, who listened to these lectures, Bruno lectured at least four times. We also learn that Bruno's projected public lectures, as well as those on the immortality of the soul and the quintuple sphere, were suspended not because

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1 D.N.B., I. p.6.

2 B.M.Add.MSS. 6178. f.847. Letter from G. Abbot, concerning pardon offered by the Pope to those aiding Catholic kings against heretics, 2 November 1609.


5 Abbot's mention of Bruno's pronunciation would indicate that he was in Bruno's audience.
he left Underhill muddled "like a chick in straw" but because he was accused of plagiarism.

To accuse the apostle of a new philosophy of plagiarism is perhaps the most insidious way of undermining and counter-acting his concepts. Both the philosopher and the doctrine are immediately discredited, temporarily at least until listener or reader forgets the charge. In this context, it is interesting to note that Bruno shies away from any mention of Ficino when recalling the Oxford debate, and rarely mentions him. Of course, he wants readers to believe his lectures were stopped for other reasons than those Abbot urged. To defend himself directly against plagiarism would have attracted undesirable attention, no matter how forceful and true the defence.

Bruno may indeed have made an indirect defence in La Cena, which can be read as a repetition of the Laski debate. Nundinio, another presumptuous Underhill, is again likened to a "Fig", especially when he asserts that parts of Bruno's cosmology are directly borrowed from "the true narrations of Lucian."¹ Bruno contends that in fact he was adding little to what Copernicus, Philolaus and some Pythagoreans had said before him, but "timidly and inconstantly".² Where they claimed truth through faith, he could prove it through reason.³ When Aristotle and the Ancients

¹ I. p.165.

² ibid., I. p.154.
Cf. J R. Charbonnel, p.475.n.3.

³ ibid.
are right, they speak as "diviners" not as philosophers, as men who see and do not believe, and do not dare to understand.¹

Their was a way of speaking, while he proclaimed the reality. The interpretation of phenomena in the world of existents is, he claims, original to him.² But while insisting on the newness of his method Bruno confirms that some of his concepts were vaguely adumbrated in the works of Heraclitus, Democritus, Epicurus, Parmenides, Melisso and others.³ This could be Bruno's indirect rejoinder to the charge of plagiarism.

Bruno's defence is made even more explicit by a careful study of bibliographical evidence in Explicatio Triginta Sigillorum, published soon after the Oxford confrontation. The dedication to Mauvissiere, and the letter to the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford do not figure in all the extant copies of Explicatio. It is probable that both were written after Bruno's running quarrel with Oxford. The book's pagination and printing is so motley⁴ that it confirms my view that the letter was inserted after Bruno was driven out of Oxford and probably suitably doctored to suit Bruno's antipathy to the Oxford grammarians.

¹ ibid., I. p.193.
² ibid., I. p.126.
³ ibid., pp.185-186.
⁴ Explicatio Triginta Sigillorum (n.d, but 1583).
In the copy available at the National Library of Scotland, the sides of the letter are the only ones clumsily and imperfectly cut. The typography is italic but larger than that of the text. The first Letter-head is larger and figures a man whereas other initials figure flower designs.
In a letter that is tantamount to an insult, Bruno addresses the "most famous Doctors and celebrated Masters", convinced he is going to a university widowed of real learning.\(^1\) He introduces himself as "Philoteus Jordanus Brunus of Nola, Doctor of a more Scientific theology, professor of a purer less harmful wisdom, known in the best academies of Europe, approved and honourably received, a stranger to none but to barbarians and the ignoble, waker of sleeping souls, tamer of presumptuous and recalcitrant ignorance, ... whom only the propagators of folly and hypocrites detest".\(^2\) He goes on to say that he is not so much eager to show his wisdom and learning as to reveal the weaknesses of "the vulgar philosophy which accepts for a true demonstration what is but mere opinion".\(^3\)

This kind of language was almost aimed at creating an antipathy in an audience he was supposed to convert to his point of view. Why? Certainly there is no attempt at philosophical mollification in *Explicatio* and *La Cena*. In my view there is a deliberate attempt by Bruno to create a diversion by a show of arrogance, and an alternative reason why his Oxford lectures were suspended; a special kind of indirect apologia, a pre-emptive strike against false future accusers, such as Abbot, by Bruno accusing himself of a charge his shoulders could very well carry. The tone of Bruno's Italian dialogues, especially *La Cena* and *De La Causa*, pitched in a hyperbolic, highly-strung, pugnacious style, may in part be an unconscious ploy to work out a defence against that unfortunate charge so soon after lecturing in Oxford. This

\(^{1}\) *De La Cena*, I. p.183.

\(^{2}\) *Explicatio*, sig. A3-A3\(^v\).

\(^{3}\) Ibid., sig. A4.
particular chip on his shoulder may have encouraged him to greater individuality in both content and style. A style previously undistinctive is now changed into one that is recognizably his own.¹

Despite several points of contact with Ficino, Bruno's interpretations and points of emphasis, judgement and direction are in fact very often anti-Ficinian. Whereas Ficino's neo-Platonism is adapted and determinedly marshalled in defence of Christianity, Bruno's anti-Aristotelianism is aimed either at radically reforming a corrupt Christianity or the formation of an altogether different ethic, neither Protestant nor Catholic. Despite Bruno's declared aim to cut across sectarian interests and to proclaim one universal religion to be embraced by all, Cobham warned that such a religion could be dangerous to the fabric of the state, especially so with its insistence on universality, a method usually employed by Catholic apologists who preached damnation to "all which have sucked their errors out of the dugges of Luther's doctrine".² So that a Bruno free to preach his religion may be considered as dangerous as those Jesuits ready to "offer disputation".

At a time when cribbing was rampant, was it cribbing Oxford was afraid of? Or was it the heretical basis of Bruno's religion? If so, how far would it go to discourage and discredit the enemies of Aristotle, orthodoxy and the established religion? Is there a hint of collusion when Bruno suggests that Underhill was "put forward"³ to counteract his arguments in the Laski debate?

¹ Oliver Elton, "Giordano Bruno in England", Modern Studies (1907), p.25: "Bruno’s prose style, foreign to that of all contemporary prose, finds its nearest analogue in Thomas Nashe."


³ De La Cena, I. p.179.
It would be strange if, after Cobham's express warning, a strict Puritan like Walsingham failed to keep Bruno under close observation. He had certainly ample opportunity to do so. Even before the Laski debate, it would seem that Bruno was already moving in the Sidney-Walsingham circle. Abbot informs us that Bruno visited Oxford "in the traine of Alasco", and we know Sidney accompanied Laski to the magician Dee and his medium Edward Kelley after the Oxford visit. Walsingham was again closely connected to the "corifaeo" Underhill who was then chaplain-in-ordinary to the Queen and later elected to the bishopric of Oxford precisely on Walsingham's recommendation. The question arises: if Bruno was really accompanying Sidney and Laski — and Walsingham would certainly have known of this — could he have planted Underhill, considered by many a formidable debater, to counter Bruno's arguments and discredit his philosophy? The hypothesis is attractive, but practically impossible to prove unless other evidence is unearthed.

Bruno later went out of his way to cultivate his friendship with Sidney and Leicester, and to praise Walsingham's "culture and courtesy". Walsingham would have encouraged such a link with the French Embassy. For two whole years Bruno lived in Mauvissiere's house in Butcher Row. There is no doubt that in the charged atmosphere of the French Embassy, prior to and following the abortive Throgmorton plot, a certain amount of espionage and eavesdropping took place. Bruno himself was well placed to elicit information for or against Mauvissiere. One circumstance that seems

1 D.N.B., XX. pp.30-31.
2 La Cena, I. p.145.
to connect him, albeit indirectly, with shady activities is his friendship with Alexander Dicson.

In 1582, Dicson had returned from Paris where he had been studying, probably as the Queen of Scots' scholar. He met Bruno in Paris, and when the Nolan visited England their friendship was further consolidated by Dicson's immediate publication of De Umbra Rationis, patterned on Bruno's De Umbris Idearum and aimed at popularizing Bruno's memory system in England.

Dicson was a political agent, actively involved in attempts to free the Queen of Scots and, after her execution, generally to further the papist cause. What Dicson was most interested in was Bruno's memory system, an asset to anyone indulging in espionage. Robert Bowes, Treasurer of Berwick and resident English ambassador to Scotland, writes that "Dickson, master in the art of memory and sometime attending on Mr. Philip Sidney", was employed in passing information and intelligence from Scotland to Europe "in the business of the papists".

Dicson was also later accused of importing seditious books and propaganda from France, one such book being his own in defence of Bruno, and also of having visited Scotland in 1584 to obtain

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2 ibid., pp.183-190.

3 Calendar of Scottish Papers, XII: Robert Bowes to Burghley, 26 January 1592, p.626.

4 ibid.

5 ibid., XI. A. Dicson to Bowes, 9 August 1595, p.674: "save only a copy of the pretended scholar of Cambridge's letter, with my own answer thereto."
information as to the "depths of the havens of England, the number of parishes and the men that they may furnish on horse and foot". ¹

Despite his declaration of allegiance to Elizabeth, Dicson was still very much in contact with that other Catholic spy, Robert Bruce, ² and still a renegade and "a false knave". ³

Not unnaturally Bruno was on good terms with Dicsono Arclius ⁴ who appears as the abettor of the Nolan philosophy in De La Causa. Bruno describes him as the "so faithful friend ... whom the Nolan loves as his own eyes." ⁵ In a letter to Bowes, Dicson denied that he was often "acquent with strangers and ambassadors" for the purposes of spying. ⁶ In the 'Proemiale Epistola' of De La Causa, Bruno suggests that he was suspected of spying. He says that Mauvissiere rescued him not only from "unjust insults", ⁷ but also from "the suspicions of fools, the

¹ ibid., Dr. Macartney to Bowes, 23 May 1595. p.598.

See, Archives nationales. Fonds de Simancas. Liasse.B.57, nos. 356, 360 and 362: "Robertus Bruseus, vir nobilis, religione catholicus".

³ Calendar of Scottish Papers, XI., p.609.
Cf. Hatfield Papers, IV. p.205.

⁴ A native of Errol

⁵ I. p.227.

⁶ Calendar of Scottish Papers, XI., 9 August 1595. p.674.

⁷ I. p.203.
qualms of informers ... detraction, whispers, betrayals, contempt and hatred."¹ To Bruno, the diplomatic immunity of the French Embassy is seen as the "ruinosa roccia" on which perish "the false counsels of impetuous schemes."²

This was published when Mauvissiere himself was being accused of "intermeddling to convey secret letters to the Queen of Scots."³ Walsingham urged Henri III to recall Bruno's patron to Paris, adding that

one of the said parties has confessed that the ambassador has had secret conference with him touching means how the Queen of Scots might be set at liberty, and inquired particularly of the state of the country, conveniency of landing places, strength of the forts and disposition of the subjects.⁴

The way Bruno writes in La Cena and De La Causa shows that he made the French troubles his own. When he was being looked upon as a "dog and a traitor",⁵ Bruno tried to accommodate his English would-be sympathizers, and to court the influence of Robert Dudley, Philip Sidney, Sir Francis Walsingham and Queen Elizabeth herself whom he addressed as 'diva'.⁶

¹ ibid., I. p.204.
² ibid.
⁴ ibid., but significantly cancelled. The wording of this accusation is uncannily similar to that used by Dr. Macartney to Bowes about Dicson's involvement in espionage. See, Calendar of Scottish Papers, XI., p.598. See also Inventaire Chronologique des Documents Relatifs à l'Histoire d'Ecosse (Edinburgh, 1839), 15 August 1585 p.113, where the Queen of Scots asks Henri III to send back Mauvissiere to England instead of de l'Aubespine.
⁵ La Cena, I. p.146.
⁶ De La Causa, I. p.230. Cf. also 'Iscusazion del Nolano', prefixed to Eroici Furori, II. p.312: "Qual e' tra voi quel tra gli astri il sole."
Dudley, Sidney and Walsingham knew of Mauvissiere's involvement in plots to free Mary, and it would be almost inconceivable that no degree of suspicion rubbed off onto Bruno. Bruno himself knew he was suspected, and his surreptitious journeys to Paris and possibly to Scotland and Ireland did not help to allay such suspicions.

It is also interesting to note that Fowler's last dated "advertisements" to Walsingham from the French Embassy stop as soon as Bruno moves into the French Embassy. Bruno, knowing of Fowler's expulsion from France, would immediately have recognized him as an informer and advised Mauvissiere accordingly.

Bruno's connection with Sir Philip Sidney may throw some light on the changing climate of opinion inside the French Embassy. Bruno claimed to have discovered Sidney's merits as soon as he reached England in 1583, but Sidney's "patronage" did not become at all tangible before 1585, at the time when some of the suspicion seems to have been lifted off Mauvissiere.

Sidney was a relatively frequent visitor to the French Embassy, especially towards late 1584 when his father-in-law, Walsingham,

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1 A. Wagner, I. p.xxvi. Cf. ibid., p.xiv, where Wagner quotes Buhle who contends that De La Causa and Eroici Furori were printed in France after a study of the typography, paper and orthography.

2 V. Spampanato, "Doc. Parigini", p.652, where an entry in Cotin's diary reads "Bruno m'a dit beaucoup de choses de la géographie et de la froidure de ... l'Ecosse, et de la temperature d'Irlande."

3 In Calendar of Scottish Papers, IV., p.689, there is a letter to Walsingham bearing Fowler's mark. It is undated but could be December 1583, and suggests Fowler still had Mauvissiere's trust.
would have informed him that Mauvissiere "hath now left his wonted secret dealings with the Queen of Scots and frameth himself to become more acceptable to her Majesty."  

Sidney's friendship with Bruno seems to have strengthened just at this time. Whereas all the first four books printed in England were dedicated by Bruno to Mauvissiere, we see a gradual shift from French dependency in 1585. Both Spaccio de la Bestia Trionfante and Eroici Furori are dedicated to Sidney and are a genuine attempt to counter the "vile arsenic" of the "envious Erinnys" by political conciliation.2

One may also doubt whether Fulke Greville's and Sidney's interest lay merely in the Nolan's philosophy. The unrestrained, impetuous orator could be a very valuable French contact, and Mauvissiere himself writes of Sidney trying to acquire information.3

There seems little doubt, however, that Sidney, Culpepper, Gwynne and Dickson, would be interested in parts of Bruno's philosophy.

If we accept A.M. Pellegrini's view that Sidney's Defence of Poesy is indirectly an extended argument against philosophy because it was likely to "bring in Atheisme", and the corollary that Sidney lacked the "interests and talents" to really understand and appreciate

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1 Calendar of State Papers, Foreign 1584-5, Walsingham to Stafford, 3 December 1584, p.174.
2 Spaccio, II. p.107.
the Nolan view of the world, his alleged interest in Bruno must be sought elsewhere, and specifically in Bruno's contact with Mauvissiere and French policy in England.

Bruno's concept of a universal religion in stark contrast to the sectarian divisions then prevalent in England might have appealed to some members of the English nobility. But it is doubtful if Bruno's satiric attacks on the Oxford "grammarians" and Puritan extremes were aimed at weakening "the hard edges of these dangerous divisions by philosophical mollification", and so to lead to the formation of a 'politique' movement similar to that in France.

In the 'Proemiale Epistola' to La Cena de le Cenari published in 1584, Bruno had emphasised the warrior figure of Henri III at whose power "the very pivots of the world resound", whose anger "startles and mortally frightens other potent predators." In contrast to this, a peaceful Henri III is presented in Spaccio. He becomes a "most Christian, saintly, religious" king who disdains earthly conquest. Taking a cue from Henri's motto, Tertia coelo manet, Bruno presents him as a just king who "hates the resounding of martial instruments", pitting himself against the common enemies of England, Spain and the Guise faction:

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3 ibid., p.122.
4 ibid.
5 Spaccio, II. p.249.
The daring, tempestuous and turbulent spirits, who are his subjects, cannot hope that while he lives they can get any assistance for their warlike designs aimed at upsetting the peace of other lands on the pretext of adding other sceptres and other crowns to France.¹

Plots against Elizabeth are then shown to be contrary to Henri's will and policy,² and Bruno ends his book by confirming Henri's show of peace to England:

> Then why are you, O rulers, suspicious and fearful of him who has no intention of taming your forces, who has never harboured intentions against your crowns?³

It seems then that Bruno could accept political conciliation. But he was too unpredictable a visionary to preach a real philosophical conciliation. And even when he tries it, as in his discussions with Torquato and Nundinio in *La Cena*, he is flagrantly unsuccessful — almost determinedly so. His intellectual make-up was such that though he would immediately be branded as the enemy of old religions and new sects, he would not willingly be accepted as the apostle of a universal new philosophy, while his followers would be chary of owning any intimate alliance with him.

Thus when Bruno's lectures at Oxford were suspended, he published his books in England surreptitiously, and a small circle of sympathizers discussed delicate philosophical matters behind closed doors:

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¹ *ibid.*, II. p.250.

² *ibid.*

³ *ibid.*
In the court of Queen Elizabeth 'tis generally acknowledged, even by her enemies, that there was a set of very extraordinary men, and among them some, who understood everything else as well as the Art of Government, and who saw further than any since (or perhaps before) into the mysteries of Priestcraft and the extravagancies of Superstition ... the most remarkable instance of their liberty in thinking, and of their prudence in concealing their notions is this book /Spaccio/ which was written with the privy of a certain number among them, who had the few copies that were printed, and the work was particularly dedicated to Sir Philip Sidney ... the rest being a mixture of young and old persons, as Sir Christopher Hatton, Sir Thomas Smith, Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir Ambrose Philips, the Earl of Leicester ... in the book is represented a Council of the Gods, owning, rehearsing, and exposing their ancient worship, or the Religion of the Heathens, in a most learned, long and elegant Oration made to them by Jupiter, on the Festival in commemoration of their victory over the Giants.

It is interesting to note that all the Italian works printed in England are written within the framework of intimate conversation, with Philotheo as the central figure feeding the Nolan sympathizers' devotion and trying to convince the undecided of the truth of his vision. The literary framework may reflect the actuality of these discussions.

After the hasty publication of Explicatio Triginta Sigillorum, Bruno started on his La Cena. This strongly reflects his resentment at Oxford, the unfair treatment by the London mob, and perhaps, by his over-insistence on his knowing no English, the air of suspicion that clouded his stay at the French Embassy. But La Cena is also Bruno's attempt to recruit followers.

Thomas Zouch, Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Sir Philip Sidney (York, 1808), pp. 337-338, n.5.

2 La Cena, I. p.151: "finga di non intender."
I shall, in the next chapter, discuss this book in some detail. Meanwhile it is fair to point out that though most critics seem to accept Bruno's testimony to the Inquisition that the *Ash Wednesday* Supper dialogues took place at the French Embassy, they almost certainly took place at Fulke Greville's house. Bruno had earlier pointed this out to Mauvissiere himself. Would Bruno have levelled the charge of thoughtlessness and lack of consideration on the part of Fulke Greville if there were no real basis for it? As when Bruno, up to his knees in mud, complains that Greville had invited them to his house without providing horse or boat for the journey; that the servers at table had "cortesia di montagne"; or especially when the angry Nolan complains that "Signor Folco did not provide worthier opponents"?

Why is it then that, in a compromising situation, Bruno says that the *La Cena* discussions were held at the French Embassy? Bruno availed himself of the ambiguity arising from the fact that Theophilo is recounting to Prudenzio, Smitho and Frulla at the French Embassy the discussions that Nolan had with Torquato and Nundino

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1 *ibid.*, I, p.117.
4 *ibid.*, p.150.
5 *ibid.*, p.179. Cf. *ibid.*, p.117, where Bruno describes his journey as "piu' poetica e tropologica forse, che istoriale, sare' da tutti giudicata."
at Fulke Greville's house. The Inquisition would have read a more heretic posture in Bruno's partaking of the Ash Wednesday Supper in the house of a Protestant.

It is interesting to note that after publication of La Cena, there appeared a definite rift between Bruno and Fulke Greville. Greville was a Puritan and a Calvinist and these came in for Bruno's fair share of criticism. But did Greville object to a discussion held behind closed doors being published to all and sundry, with the consequent dangers that might entail? Greville's establishment could then easily be branded as a centre emanating not only the new philosophy but also seditious attacks on ministers of religion. Any untoward friendship with this purveyor of the new philosophy could be treasonable. No wonder Bruno speaks of people trying to poison his relationship with Fulke Greville.

For there is no doubt that wherever Bruno travelled, he dreamed of converting people to his own kind of religion. He would have liked "all the world to be of one religion" and believed that when his mission had been accomplished "people would know him for a great man."

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1 De La Causa, I. p.219. "La offesa fu privata, la vendetta e' pubblica."

2 ibid.

3 Spaccio, II. p.107.

4 Angelo Mercati, Sommario del Processo di Giordano Bruno (Vatican City, 1942), p.59: "Iacobus Britanus examinatus ... e chi li bastava l'animo di fare se havesse voluto, che tutto il mondo sarebbe stato d'una Religione."

5 ibid., Denunciation of Mocenigo. p.57.
A fellow prisoner of the Inquisition, Franciscus Gratianus, testifies that Bruno's hopes for a general reform in Germany and France had once been very high and that in England he was respected as the inveterate enemy to papistry and favoured as the new philosopher who would not compromise the truth, adding that if he had not been a monk the English would have adored him. 1 Thus in England, Bruno's former intimate relationship with Roman Catholicism apparently militated against his gaining wider support. To this must be added Bruno's transparent disdain for the Protestantism that had substituted Catholicism in England. 2

Bruno's intention was to preach a real universal moral reform. In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, it is thought that a sect of 'Giordanisti' did exist. At his trial Bruno, not unnaturally, denied that he ever started such a sect. 3 He contended that his philosophy strengthened rather than weakened established religion, that he was not attacking religion but false Aristotelian premises that distorted it, and that he did this openly in France, Geneva, Germany and England.

Anti-Aristotelianism did not, of course, reach England with Giordano Bruno. A Ramist movement directed mainly against Aristotle was already present when Bruno lectured at Oxford. 4 The popularity

1 ibid., p.61.
2 V. Spampaonto, Cotin's Diary, 7 December 1583, p.652.
"Mais souverainement il disteste les hereses de France et d'Angleterre, en ce qu'ils mesprisent les bonnes oeuvres et preschent la certitude de leur foi et justification."

3 Angelo Mercati, p.62: "Negat de secta Iordanorum, et quod habuerit unquam animum novam Religionis sectam introducendi, nec minus id dixisse."

of the "arch-pedant of France", as Bruno calls him, is attested by the fact that Mauvissiere himself had translated Ramus. But nobody had attacked Aristotle with such zeal as had Bruno, nor was scholasticism so persistently undermined as in the years 1583-5 when Bruno published his Italian dialogues in London. The impact of the Laski debate, dramatic though it was, pales before the lasting significance of the Italian dialogues and their Latin counterparts, through which his influence persisted in major European universities, often creating, rather than healing, divisions.

When Henri III recalled Mauvissiere, Bruno accompanied him back. J. Corbinelli, writing from Paris in June 1586, states:

The Nolan still storms against Mordente and writes new dialogues. Now he wants to destroy the whole of the Peripatetic philosophy and from what I see he seems to put his case very effectively indeed. I think he shall be persecuted by this university. Soon he shall leave for Germany.

So this 'sentinel' of souls toured the centres of learning, often derided and persecuted, asking people to study before dismissing him. After the initial enthusiasm of La Cena which

1 W. Ong, Ramus and Talon Inventory (Cambridge, Mass., 1958), nos. 501; 504.
2 Fabricius Mordente, who published Compasso o Riga in 1584.
3 'lapidato', literally 'stoned'.
5 La Cena, I. p.115.
sees him triumphant over general ignorance,\(^1\) there are signs that Bruno himself might have despaired of any realization of his dreams. The point gradually crystallized in his opinion that what was needed was a general reform of the Catholic Church itself. He said he was disillusioned with the English Protestants, and their insistence on faith to the detriment of good works.\(^2\)

He approached Don Bernardino Mendoza, then in Paris, and a Jesuit, Alonso Spagnol, to conciliate him with the Papacy.\(^3\) In view of the scathing satire against Catholicism and the divinity of Christ in Spaccio,\(^4\) the later Bruno has been accused of sacrificing his philosophy on the altar of expediency. Bruno defended himself by saying Spaccio laid the foundations for future works:

> because as I intend to discuss moral philosophy according to the inner light, which irradiates the divine intellectual sun, it seems first expedient first to foreshadow certain ideas ... to highlight certain occult and confused shadows.\(^5\)

A careful study of Bruno's works may yet prove this to be true. His main battle with Roman Catholicism is then seen to be directed not against points of ethics, but at abuses arising out of the fact that the Church, besides losing much of its pristine simplicity,

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1. I. p.130.
2. V. Spampnato, p.652.
3. Ibid., pp.744-745.
5. II. p.110.
had arrogated to herself the right to establish unnecessary theological dogma, thus depriving free minds of the right to speculate. His books and his death were his individual assertion to proclaim truth as he saw it, without caring overmuch for theological compromise. This was the apostolic mission that Bruno presented himself as "Dormitatum animorum Excubitor."¹

¹ Explicatio Triginta Sigillorum sig. A3.
The New Philosophy

During his two-year stay in England, Bruno published seven books — *Explicatio Triginta Sigillorum*, *La Cena de le Ceneri*, *De La Causa, Principio e Uno*, *De l'Infinito Universo e Mondi*, *Spaccio della Bestia Trionfante*, *Cabala del Cavallo Pegaseo*, and *De Gli Eroici Furori*. Bearing no imprint or a false Paris or Venetian one, they were all published in London. The printer is not usually indicated and when given the name turns out to be fictitious. There were obvious reasons why Bruno published his books surreptitiously. Submitting them openly to any of the Stationers' Company would have meant unnecessary scrutiny from the licensers.¹

Under pressure at the Inquisition tribunal for founding a heretical sect of 'Giordanisti',² Bruno admits to printing his books in England. He claims he had been convinced to do so by his printer who argued a French or Italian imprint would make them a more attractive purchase.³ This explanation is not particularly satisfactory.

After Oxford's unwelcome attention, any of his books submitted to an English licenser would have been very carefully examined for


² V. Spampanato, p.707.

³ ibid.
a possibly heretical basis, especially when the 'new philosophy' is so openly declared in the _Explicatio_. That this was the real reason is borne out by the fact that neither _Explicatio_ nor _La Cena_ carry any imprint. Besides, the twenty-three master printers in London were very proud of their licences and privileges; it would be unlikely they would attribute their labour to foreign presses to increase Bruno's sales, unless, of course, they were either printing pirated versions or, as in the case of the Marprelate tracts, clandestinely printing seditious political doctrine.¹

Bruno was aware that he had enemies who could hound him out of London, just as effectively as out of Oxford. Taking refuge with Mauvissiere, he would probably have been warned not to attract attention to the French Embassy as any kind of centre for the propagation of new philosophies.²

Considering the tone and content, no English licensor would have put his imprimatur to Bruno's early works: no English printer would run the risk of openly printing seditious libels.³ The Stationers' Company could impose a heavy fine or even withdraw a printer's licence; it often invoked the Star Chamber and the Privy

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² Calendar of Scottish Papers, VI, Fagot to Walsingham, 29 April 1583, p.430, where Mauvissiere is reported to have employed two booksellers, ostensibly as cook and butler, to import and distribute papist propaganda.

Council for the protection of its rights against infringement: author, printer and licenser were subject to imprisonment.

A careful study of type-faces suggests that Thomas Vautrollier, John Wolfe or John Charlewood could have printed Bruno’s works. All three had at one time fallen foul of the Stationers’ Company, and all three had printed foreign books.

In fact it has been suggested that Vautrollier, a French Huguenot printer, fled to Scotland after publishing Bruno’s Spaccio, and that the Star Chamber stepped in and withdrew his licence for some time.  

It must also be remembered that a number of secret presses operated in vaults and cellars in London back-streets similar to those described in Bruno’s Cena. Pirate printers, like John Wolfe, often used other printers’ devices, type-faces and style to make their books indistinguishable from licensed ones. It is possible that Bruno utilized one of these back-street presses to avoid prosecution, but Harry Sellers has produced typographical evidence, based mainly on head-ornaments, which suggests that Charlewood printed all of Bruno’s Italian dialogues.

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1 All three printers used a ‘g’ with its bowl smaller than its loop identical to that used in the introductory part of Explicatio, which seems to have been the first of Bruno’s works to be printed in England. See, Frank Isaac, English Printers’ Types of the Sixteenth Century (1936), p.30 et passim.

2 George Stronach, D.N.B., XX, pp.189-190.


4 "Italian Books printed in England before 1640," The Library, II (1924), sig. IV.
arguments, it must also be concluded that *Explicatio* was at least partly printed by Charlewood as well. The introductory part of *Explicatio* contains an identical initial 'P' of a man holding an inkwell that is used again in *Cena*.¹

Although Charlewood uses the same head-ornaments in *Cena* and *Causa* that he was to use again in Lyly's *Endimion* (1591), the existence of an almost indistinguishable Aldine anchor and dolphin at the end of *Cena*² makes it possible that the book was printed in a secret press whose indiscriminate borrowing of ornament and devices can be construed as an elaborate attempt to throw the Stationers' Company off the scent. The diagrams in the body of *Explicatio* were probably printed in France and are superior to any used in *Cena* and *Causa*.³ The diagrams in the latter, white lines on black surface, are so inaccurate and untidy that they suggest a secret press working under pressure lacking the engraving means that Bruno's cuts needed and that any normal press would have.

When we recall Bruno's advice to Frulla and Prudentio at the end of *Cena* not to divulge their secret discussions because people in power might punish them "more severely than previously",⁴ we realize that Bruno himself acknowledged the fact that the

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¹ Cf. *Explicatio*, sig.A3 with *Cena*, p.3.

² Fly-leaf of *Cena*, p.129.

³ Cf. 32 pages of diagrams following sig.G8 in *Explicatio* with diagrams in *Cena*, pp.56; 58; 104; 125 and in *Causa*, pp.134; 136; 138 in the first editions.

⁴ *Cena*, I. p.198.
Italian dialogues could be construed as seditious and dangerous not only to established religion but also to the fabric of the state. Thus in Causa, Bruno prefers the old philosophic tradition previously promulgated by Catholic monks to the new pedantic formulae of the Oxford grammarians.  

The fact, however, that his books were written in Italian made them less dangerous. If proved seditious, a first offence could have earned Bruno a præmunire, whereas it would have been treason if they had been published in English. Bruno's ignorance of the language prevented him appealing to the masses of the people. His audience would be almost exclusively a coterie of intellectual elite who were given considerable leeway as to what metaphysical views they entertained.

To them Bruno presented himself as the master of a new exhilarating philosophy. Claiming 'divine inspiration', he preached a Divine Mind universally and eternally present in the world of nature. Even in Explicatio, which is mainly concerned with establishing a memory system, he insists on finding 'correspondances', seals and memory-hooks that can join

1 Causa, I. pp.224-225.
2 State Papers, 1584-5, p.138.
3 Opera Latina, II.ii, p.161.
4 Causa, I. p.242.
man to the soul of the world. Prefaced by the bold letter
to the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford, it becomes a treatise on
natural religion that leads to the metaphysical foundations
that we find in his Italian dialogues.¹

When published in 1584, Cena must have become the talking
point of literary London not only because of the bold sequaciousness
of some of Bruno's concepts but also because, despite some adulatory
phrases to Elizabeth and Walsingham, it was a gigantic libel on
Oxford learning and London manners: "La offesa fu privata, la vendetta e' pubblica."²

It is reasonable at this stage to examine in some detail some
basic Brunian concepts mooted in Cena and further developed in
Causa and Infinito especially. It is these three books, together
with their poetic Latin counterparts De Minimo, De Monade and
De Immenso, that most effectively portray the essential Bruno.

Cena contains five dialogues. Except for the second which is
of specific interest to Bruno's biography, the other four dialogues
deal digressively with Bruno's new vision of an expanding universe,
a metaphysical concept of possibilities arising out of his particular
study of Copernicus's mathematical calculations.

Immediately Bruno points out that Copernicus's physics were
not just a 'likely story'. His mathematics reflected physical
reality and he was not concerned with the saving of appearances.³

¹ Explicatio, sig.G.iiij°-G.vij°.

² Causa, I. p.219.

³ Cena, I. p.152 "Ma e' certo che il Copernico la intese come
la disse et con tutto suo sforzo la provò."
Bruno does not, however, present himself as the disciple of Copernicus. He tells Fulke Greville that he is his own master; a seer more profound than Copernicus, "the Nolan sees neither with Copernicus's nor Ptolemy's eyes, but with his own when it comes to judgement and decision."¹ Where Copernicus had been over-cautious and tentative, Bruno becomes bold and assertive. Where Copernicus refuses to discuss infinity, Bruno makes it the basis of his new philosophy. Bruno shatters the traditional solid spheres to range freely in an illimitable universe. No doubt he utilized De Rerum Natura, which is quoted verbatim often in Bruno's works especially in De l'Infinito but Bruno's innumerable worlds are, as opposed to Lucretius's "impacts", animated:

Even more so the stars have life in them, through which with harmonious and natural will emanating from an intrinsic principle they move towards things and through spaces convenient to them.²

It is true, that Bruno's plurality of worlds is presented as a logical possibility along the Epicurean concept of ἴδιω τίδα, but there are important differences. As opposed to the Epicurean concept of infinite worlds strewn in infinite space but separated from each other by the void "interworlds" so that any communication or link is completely excluded, Bruno puts forward an infinity of worlds similar to our solar system, where the stars are as many suns, worlds which "communicate" with each other in such a manner that each can see an

¹ ibid., I. p.126 "al che rispose il Nolano, che lui non vedea per gl'occhi di Copernico, ne di Ptolomeo; ma per i proprii qua/n/ to al giudicio, et la determinione."

² ibid., I. pp.165-6 "cossi et molto maggiormente hano la vita in se, per la quale co una ordinata et natural volonta' da intrinseco principio se muovono alle cose, et per gli spacii convenienti ad essi."
immense number of other surrounding stars, which in their
turn can see others further off, and so on to infinity—as Gassendi puts it, borrowing an image from De Immenso—in the same way that in a forest one sees a limited number of trees that there can be, but these in turn serve as observation posts to see the others which are further off. Bruno's physical possibility is founded mainly on the infinity of space, not on the Epicurean void and geocentric worlds. It is specifically linked to the heliocentric theory of Copernicus, whereas the metaphysical possibility for the plurality of worlds is based on the theological idea of the infinity of divine substance. As P.H. Michel writes:

This infinite plurality, which is inseparable from perfect homogeneity, far from being incompatible with the unity of the formal principle and the material principle, is the sole adequate expression of them. Coherence of the system is consequently assured through agreement between a metaphysics and a cosmography.

Like Epicurus and Lucretius, Bruno also uses infinity to liberate the spirit of man. As in the Hermetic philosophy, man is central to Bruno's cosmology. Bruno's universe is full of deity and man himself is God's greatest miracle, as in Trismegistus whom he quotes at the start of De Immenso.

1 De Immenso, I.iii. p.122.
4 Cf. Lucretius, p.54: "That is the spur that lends my spirit strength to pioneer through pathless tracts of their pierian realm where no foot has ever trod before."
5 De Immenso, I.i. p.206: "Hinc miraculum magnum a Trismegisto appellabitur homo, qui in deum transeat quasi ipse sit deus, qui conatur omnia fieri, sicut deus est omnia."
Far from lessening man's importance by discrediting Ptolemaic geocentricity, Bruno enlarges man's vision and importance:

The Nolan, by admitting effects completely opposite, has freed the human soul and the knowledge that had been walled in the narrow prison of turbulent air.

He presents himself as a modern St. Paul translated to the seventh heaven, who returns to earth to confirm his mission:

Here now is he who has surmounted the air, penetrated the sky, brushed past the stars, overpassed the limits of the world and annihilated the fantastic walls of the first, eighth, ninth, tenth and other spheres that had been added by the accounts of vain mathematicians and the distorted vision\(^2\) of vulgar philosophers.\(^3\)

That is why Bruno can claim this world is also one. In this conceptual framework of infinite space, Bruno introduced another dimension of history in progress.\(^4\) Truth becomes the daughter of time and the history of the universe is conceived as occurring within an ever-renewing pattern, with variations, incyclic regeneration. While he is thus prepared to borrow the intuitions

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1 Cena, I. p.129: "Il Nolano per caggionar effetti al tutto contrarii, ha disciolto l'animo humano, et la cognizione che era rinchiusa ne l'artissimo carcere de l'aria turbulente."

2 Strictly "blind seeing".

3 Cena, I. p.129: "Hor ecco quello ch'ha varcato l'aria, penetrato il cielo, discorse le stelle, trapassati gli margini del mondo, fatte svanir le phantastiche muraglia de le prime, ottava, nona, decima, et altre che vi s'havesser potute aggiongere sphere per relatione de vani mathematici, et cieco veder di philosophi volgari."

of the Greeks, Egyptians, Magi, and Chaldees, 1 Bruno points out that modern man was in fact wiser than his predecessors. 2 He thus attacks Aristotelians not because of their disrespect towards the Ancients but because they were aliens to the truth. 3 Bruno seeks, however, to gain the support of ancient texts to which, he says, much of his new doctrine approximates. He asks that listeners should not turn their backs on or actively oppose his philosophy before having considered its merits:

Where the doctrine is explained gradually, proceeding from firm and established principles ... the listener must remain silent, and before having heard and understood all believe that as the doctrine progresses all his difficulties will eventually cease. 4

Only prejudice causes supposedly wise men to "bite before they know whether it's stone or bread." 5 Ignorance and folly militate against the glorious vision of a new Jerusalem and the proclamation of the millennium.

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2 Cf. Plato, Hippias major, 282a.

3 ibid: "nemici non tanto de la antiquita quanto alieni da la verita."

4 ibid., I. pp.134-5: "Dove la dottrina va per i suoi gradi, procedendo da posti et confirmati principii et fondamenti, a' l'edificio, et perfettione de cose che per quella si possono ritrovare, l'auditore deve essere taciturno, et prima d'haver tutto udito, et inteso; credere che con il progresso de la dottrina cessaranno tutte difficoltadi."

5 ibid., I. p.115: "Non morder se non sai s'è pietra, o pane, Non gir discaulo a' semina le spine."
Against Nundinio, Bruno accepts willingly the physical reality of terrestrial movement.¹ He agrees with Copernicus the sun is central,² but denies the sun could be immobile. Even the so-called fixed stars and suns move, and this must be realized by all scientists who deal in truth and not in "ombre phantastiche." Thus centre and circumference are ever-shifting, and whole planetary systems are seen to move in an infinite space without any kind of boundary:

I am certain that it is not possible for either Nundinio or other professors of understanding to find even a semi-probable reason as to why there ought to be a margin to this corporeal universe.³

Stars and suns are free in space, their movement being necessarily intrinsic and natural. The solid spheres, with their "extrinsic motors" transporting heavenly bodies as if they were "nailed" to them, are thus abolished. Bruno maintains that if such spheres really existed the movement of heavenly bodies would be violent or laborious and contrary to the laws of motion.⁴

Therefore the earth and the other stars move according to their proper and local differences through their intrinsic principle which is soul.⁵

¹ ibid., I. p.163.
² ibid.
³ ibid: "Et son certo che non solamente a Nundinio, ma anch'ora a tutti i quali sono professori de l'intendere, non è possibile giamai di trovar ragione semiprobabile per la quale sia margine di questo universo corporale."
⁴ ibid.
⁵ ibid: "Muoversi duque la terra, et gli altri astri secondo le propri e differenze locali dal principio intrinseco che è l'anima propria."
Thus in Bruno, although the principle of motion is often inextricably linked to the soul of the world, the stars must conform to "local differences", and the mechanical laws of matter implanted within them by a spiritual God.

It is these natural laws that man must be encouraged to study without fear of theological harassment. Earlier than Galileo,¹ and Campanella,² he makes the plea that man must study two books, nature as well as Scripture, for properly interpreted the one complements the other. Scripture's role is to illumine moral and religious truths, not to dogmatise on physics and celestial mathematics. That is the role of science and philosophy, both of which must speculate boldly and freely. This need not detract from the spiritual value of the Scriptures. Mosaicical statements run counter to modern discoveries because Moses elected to speak to the people in a "vulgar" way they could understand, and he must not be interpreted literally.³

Once this is accepted, there is nothing to stop devout men accepting either heliocentricity or Bruno's rider to it, an expanding illimitable universe. The end of Cena is a statement to this belief:

Again it is confirmed that the universe is infinite. This results from an immense ethereal region. It is truly a sky which is called space or womb, in which there are many

² Apologia pro Galileo, p.23.
stars similar to our earth ... infinite matter resulting from the actually infinite power of God.

This is often repeated in De Minimo and De Immenso.

Bruno's promise of better dialogues resulted in De La Causa, Principio e Uno, where he seeks to distinguish between the infinity of the universe and the infinity of substance. Whereas substance approximates to the orthodox conception of God, being "all, and as a whole, in each without distinction or difference", the universe is bedevilled by "parts".

Ever since Jacobi published parts of Causa, this work has often been discussed as the "most eminently metaphysical" of the London cosmological trilogy. Shying away from the rough and tumble of coarse debate of Cena, Bruno "dispenses with the shell to present the kernel of his philosophy." As its title suggests, De La Causa is mainly concerned with Cause, Principle and Unity. Some of his

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1 Cena, I. p.177: "Pure di nuovo gli confirmava che l'Universo è infinito. Et che quello costa d'una immensa etherea reggione. E' veramente un cielo il quale e' detto spazio et seno, in cui sono tanti astri che hanno fissione in quello, non altrimenti che la terra ... Vero soggetto, et infinita materia della infinita divina potenza attuale."

2 ibid., I. p.200.

3 Causa, I. p.246: "Dovete avvertire, che se l'anima del mondo et forma universale se dicono essere per tutto; non s'intende corporalmente et dimensionalmente, perché tali non sono ... ma sono per tutto spiritualmente."


early efforts are again at distinction and/or separation of concepts. In fact distinction is often the basis of Bruno's dialectics.

In God first principle and first cause are the same thing in different circumstances.¹ In Nature, principles and causes are different things operating in different circumstances.² Thus although the terms 'principle' and 'cause' are often used indiscriminately or identically, not everything that is a principle need be a cause:

because the point is the principle of the line but not its cause; the instant is the principle of action, the term 'whence' the principle of motion but not its cause, premises might be the principle of argumentation but not its cause.³

Diosco follows Theophilo in arguing that in nature principle is concerned and intimately involved with what intrinsically contributes towards the constitution of existents, as matter and form; whereas cause is the efficient that produces things and has its being outside the composition of matter.⁴

¹ Causa, I. 23¹: "Quando diciamo Dio primo principio et prima causa; intendiamo una medesima cosa con diverse ragioni; quando diciamo nella natura principii et cause; diciamo diverse cose con sue diverse ragioni."

² ibid.

³ ibid., I. p.235: "Benche alle volte l'uno si usurpa per l'altro; nulla di meno parlando propriamente non ogni cosa, che e' principio e' causa, perché il punto e' principio della linea, ma non e' causa di quella; l'istante e' principio dell' operatione, il termine 'onde' e' principio del moto, et non causa del moto, le premisse son principio de l'argumentazione, non son causa di quella."

⁴ ibid: "principio sia quello che intrinsecamente concorre alla constitutione della cosa, e maneg nell' effetto, come dicono la materia et forma ... Causa chiami quella che concorre alla produzione delle cose esteriormente, et ha l'essere fuor de la composition."
Matter is then seen to graduate from becoming into being through a complex operation of principles and causes. The whole universe becomes animated by spirit. The universal Mind becomes the most real and intimate constituent of the Soul of the World.\(^1\) It is Mind which fills all, illuminates the universe and guides nature towards the production of natural species, in the same way that rational entities are "congruously" produced by the human mind.\(^2\)

Though he is prepared to accept Plato and Plotinus as to the hegemony of mind over matter, Bruno seeks to approximate the two concepts. In so doing, like Cardan, he highlights a new concept of matter that, despite various borrowings, is efficiently synthetized. He seeks to prove philosophically that indeed "David Dinant\(^3\) was not

\(^1\) ibid.

\(^2\) ibid: "Questo e' uno medesmo, che empie il tutto, illumina l'universo et indirizza la natura a produrre le sue specie come si conviene, et cossi ha rispetto alla produttione di cose naturali: come il nostro intelletto alla congrua produttione di specie rationali."

\(^3\) David, of Dinant (Belgium) or Dinan (Brittany) was a materialistic pantheist teaching in Paris in the early part of the 13th century. His Quaternuli, burnt in 1210, interpreted Aristotle with the help of De divisione naturae of John Scotus Erigena.

in his turn mad in taking matter to be most excellent and divine."¹

Immediately, however, Bruno seeks to dissociate himself from the heretical doctrines of materialistic atomism of Democritus and Epicurus;² whereas they assert that what is not extended body is nothing, Bruno believes spirit is just as real. He attacks Avicebron, the Cynics and the Stoics for allowing "forms merely to be accidentals of matter".³ Though admitting he had previously been tempted to accept their views because they had a deeper understanding of matter than Aristotle, he says that after more mature consideration he found it necessary to admit two types of substance, form and matter:

It is necessary that there is a substantial act which contains an active potency over all, as well as a subject which maintains passive potency over all.⁴


² ibid., I. p.251.

³ ibid.

⁴ ibid: "Et molto tempo son stato assai adherente a questo purer, solo per questo, che ha fondamenti piu' corrispondenti alla natura, che quei di Aristotele; ma dopo haver piu' maturamente considerato, havendo risguarda a piu' cose: troviamo che e' necessario conoscere nella natura doi geni di sustanza, l'uno che e' forma, et l'altro che e' materia, perche e' necessario che sia un' atto substantialissimo, nel quale e' la potenza attiva di tutto." Cf. Leibniz to Rebond, 10 January 1714. Philosopische Schriften, III. p.606.
This is indeed Aristotelian dualism and is transitional. But Bruno, more than Cardanus, moves forward to a characteristically individual position where form and matter become two principles of one and the same substance, transcending either: "Non dico il composto, ma il semplice". 1

Having established a close link between spirit and matter, Bruno also shows that all matter, being essentially divine, is alive. The smallest monad or the largest planet is animate with actual or potential life-giving forms. 2 This he deduces from the infinite goodness and power of God. All possesses soul 3 and it cannot be otherwise because the universe is the 'simulacrum' of God: 4

However small or minute a thing is, it contains a spiritual substance which if it finds the matter well disposed, extends into a plant or an animal or receives the organs of whatsoever body it assumes, and which we commonly term animate. For spirit is found in all things. 5

1 ibid., I. p.264. Cf. Sigillus Sigillorum, II.ii. p.203: "Est ... forma infinita quia est ita omne esse, ut non ad hoc et ad illud esse finiatur ... sicut ex opposto infinita dicitur materia, quae non hoc vel illo esse per formam finiatur."


3 ibid., I. p.239.

4 ibid: "Mi par che detrabano alla divina bonta' et all' eccellenza di questo grande animale, et simulacro del primo principio."

5 ibid., I. p.241: "sia quanto piccola, et minima si vogla, ha in se parte di sustanza spirituale, la quale, se trova il soggetto disposto, si stende ad esser pianta, ad esser animale et riceve membri di qual si vogla corpo, che comunemente si dice animato, perche spirto si trova in tutte le cose."
Bruno adopts the current animism and, although accepting Atomism, argues that the 'primordials' of the world are vital and not mechanical. Bruno states that life does not, and can not, proceed from purely material and mechanical forms but necessarily "must have reference to a symbolic principle, vital and animated." This principle resides in the Soul of the world, which owes its origin to Platonic, Plotinian and Ficinian sources, but is far more intimately linked with matter. In Plotinus, it is the body which is in the soul. The soul "presides over it from above" and remains distinct:

Imagine that a stately and varied mansion has been built; it has never been abandoned by its architect, who, yet, is not tied down to it; he has judged it worthy in all its length and breadth of all the care that can serve to its Being — as far as it can share in Being — or to its beauty, but a care without a burden to its director, who never descends, but presides over it from above; this gives the degree in which the Cosmos is ensouled, not by a soul belonging to it, but by one present to it; it is mastered, not master; not possessor but possessed. The Soul bears it up, and it lies within, no fragment of it unsharing. The Cosmos is like a net which takes all its life, as far as it ever stretches, from being wet in the water; it is at the mercy of the sea which spreads out, taking the net with it just so far as it will go, for no mesh of it can strain beyond its place ... so far as the universe extends, there soul is; and if the universe had no existence, the extent of soul would be the same; it is eternally what it is.

P.H. Michel notes that

Contrary to Plotinus, for whom procession is not performable, and for whom natural magic is only a piece of wizardry from which the dreamer should escape, Bruno, not content with

1 Jack Lindsay, Giordano Bruno: Cause, Principle and Unity (1962), p.88.

2 Causa, I. p.241.

bringing reality back to God, causes God to act on everything through the intermediary of the soul; whence it follows that the "forces" are concealed in the womb of matter.¹

Prime matter has a dynamic force of its own:

The Soul of the world then is the formal constitutive principle of the universe and all it contains; I say if life resides in all things, the soul becomes form to all things.²

Prime matter cannot be destroyed, and because of this Bruno’s world-soul becomes the "intrinsic formal principle, eternal and subsistent" of all things.³ This concept, Bruno argues, is infinitely "much better" and satisfying than the aetiological causes of Aristotle who spoke in ignorance of the real substance of things,⁴ because this spiritual substance is no less subsistent than matter. So that only the exteriors change and disintegrate because they are not things, but of things; not substances, but of substances; are accidentals and circumstances merely.⁵

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¹ The Cosmology of Giordano Bruno, p.115.

² Caussi, I. p.242: "L'anima dunque del mondo è il principio formale constitutivo de l'universo, et di ciò che in quello contiene; dico che se la vita si trova in tutte le cose; l'anima viene ad esser forma di tutte le cose."

³ ibid.

⁴ Matter, form, efficient and final cause. In Aristotle's Physics, 198.a.24., formal, final and efficient cause seem to coincide.

⁵ Caussi, I. p.242.

⁶ ibid: "per che non è meno subsistente la sostanza spirituale, che la materiale. Dunque le forme esteriori sole si cangiano, et si annullano anch'ora, perché non sono cose; ma de le cose; non sono sustanze; ma de le sustanze, sono accidenti, et circostanze."
This spirit so approximates and is involved in matter that Bruno, accords it extension:

It is a sort of prime form which informs all, is extended and dependent; and because it informs all and is in all extended it communicates the perfection of the whole to its parts.\(^1\)

In fact spirit also contains some elements of matter.\(^2\) So that Bruno seems to arrive finally with a double substance, spiritual as well as corporeal, so that in fact "the one and the other are resolved into one entity and one root."\(^3\)

That is why Bruno's matter as opposed to Plato's and Plotinus's, becomes itself the source of all actuality.\(^4\) Matter is a primary entity like spirit, and both unite to form essentially one substance, spirit becoming "the eternal companion" of matter.\(^5\)

Bruno acknowledges his debt to David of Dinant whose Quaternuli and De Tomis subtly manipulate 'Nous' and 'hyle' into one eternal substance that is "a mode of God". Dinant's dialectical argument is buttressed by his doctrine of "differentia" which can only be

\(^1\) ibid., I. p.243: "E' una sorte di forma Prima la quale informa, si estende, et depende; et questa perchë informa il tutto, e' in tutto, et perchë la si stende, comunica la perfettione del tutto a le parti."

\(^2\) ibid., I. p.270.

\(^3\) ibid., I. p.264: "sia doppia sustanza, altra spirituale, altra corporale? che insomma l'una e l'altra si riduca ad un essere et una radice."

\(^4\) ibid., I. p.277.

\(^5\) ibid., I. p.243.
predicated of composite beings and accidental forms. When God, spirit, and matter are then defined as simple entities which can therefore include no "differentiae", they become substantially identical. This naturally led to Dinant's special brand of Monism and a materialistic pantheism that "most stupidly [stultissime] maintained" God can be defined as Aristotle's Prime Matter.¹

Bruno, who argued on the same lines in his theory of the "coincidence of opposites", tended to accept that there can be no differentiation of substances but only of accidental forms. This also led to his view that all logical analysis must terminate in a unique, absolutely simple, principle which is God, who is closely involved in Matter. This is his "Monad of Monads".²

It is thus not merely by way of "apposition or reception" from higher hypostases, but by way of "separation" from matter that things come into being. So that as opposed to Platonic doctrine, we should say rather that Matter "contains forms, but does not exclude them ... Matter must be called divine, the best parent, genetrix and mother of all things."³

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¹ Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, I.iii.8. David of Dinant was known to Bruno only through Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas.
³ Cf. A. Em. Waite, Hermetic and Alchemical Writings of Paracelsus (1894), I. pp.248-253: "All created things proceeded from one matter, not each one separately ... in the beginning of the Great Mystery of the separation of all things there went forth first the separation of the elements so that before all else those elements broke into action, and each in its own essence."
But it is on the Socratic pattern, "Know Thyself", that Bruno reduces diversity to simplicity, duality to unity. Striving towards the One leads Bruno to accept Nicholas of Cusa's "coincidentia oppositorum" and the unification of all:

If potency does not differ from act, it is necessary that the point, the line, the surface and the body do not differ. Necessarily then in infinity, point and body are the same: because if the point extends itself it becomes line, if the line extends itself it becomes surface, if the surface extends itself it becomes body.

And it is this absolute oneness that makes Bruno assert in De La Causa that: "The universe is then one, infinite and immobile."

Preceded by the metaphysical basis of substance in Causa, De l'Infinito is the climax of the London trilogy and sets out to discuss the physics and cosmology of the world of existents. It deals with spatial 'extensive' infinity engaging in polemic against Aristotle's De Coelo and Physics. Bruno's discussion of extensive infinity again involves a study of substance, monadology and atomism that is essentially different to that of Democritus, Epicurus, and Lucretius.

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1 Causa, I. p.287.
2 ibid., I. p.281.
3 ibid., I. p.280.
4 V. Salvestrini, p.85.
Having reduced all diversity to unity, the distinction between God and Nature often becomes blurred. Unlike Plotinus and Ficino, whose doctrines of emanation allow their Deity to remain transcendent, Bruno's attempts at 'distinction' imply the immanence of his Deity in matter: "God is in all, and all is in God".¹

Some of these concepts indeed Bruno borrowed from Cusanus, but Bruno often departs from his source in boldness and originality of application. Cusanus too holds all diversity to rest in God, who is the "complication" and cause of all material existents. While he, however, allows that the Universe may be termed infinite because it cannot be measured, he concludes it is the finite image of an infinite God. Accepting Cusanus's concept of causality, Bruno on the contrary concludes that "An infinite cause must have an infinite effect."²

But Bruno seeks to maintain a distinction between Deity and Space by predicating two species of infinity³ so that the universe becomes "the unfolded image and aspect of the intensive infinity" of God.⁴


² De Immenso, I.ii. p.12.


⁴ S. Greenberg, p.190. n.4.
I call the universe all infinite because it has no margin, term, or surface; I do not call the universe totally infinite because each part that we encounter is finite; I call God totally infinite because he excludes from himself every term, and every one of his attributes is one and infinite because all of him is in the world and in each part of it totally and infinitely.¹

Despite the fact that Cena, Causa and De L'Infinito are essentially a single essay on infinity, they contain almost the entire Brunian philosophy, with the notable exception of the doctrine of the "minima", that was to receive its clarifications and modifications in his later Latin works.

Bruno's doctrine of the minima is also characteristic, and in the 17th Century was taken up by Nicholas Hill, David Gorlee, Sebastian Basso, Jean Magnenus and Gassendi. It is not of course completely original to Bruno and had been used by the Arab scholastics, known as the Mutakallimum. Andrew G. Van Melsen has shown that the doctrine was cogently discussed by Averroes and Averroists such as John de Jandun and Augustine Niphus for whom the minima theory occupied "the central place in the sphere of his interest".²

Like Bruno later, Niphus believes in discontinuity:

¹ De L'Infinito, II. p.25: "Io dico l'universo tutto infinito, per che non ha margine, termine, ne' superficie; dico, l'universo non essere totalmente infinito, per che ciascuna parte, che di quello che possiamo prendere, e' finita, e de' mondi innumerabili, che contiene, ciascuno e' finito. Io dico dio tutto infinito, perche da se' esclude ogni termine, et ogni suo attributo e' uno et infinito; e dico dio totalmente infinito, perche tutto lui e' in tutto il mondo et in ciascuna sua parte infinitamente e totalmente."

Every specific action requires a determinate quantity. Now since no thing is without a specific action, no thing will be without its own definite quantity. Therefore no natural substance can be divided infinitely.\(^1\)

In discussing Aristotle's example of the "stone being worn away by water", and how it all "passes away" at a particular moment in the eighth book of *Physics*, Niphus notes that

Averroes proceeds from the supposition that every increase or decrease consists in the adding or subtracting of a certain number of natural minima. Therefore the process of excavation is discontinuous.\(^2\)

It is shown by Van Melsen that whereas Aristotle speaks about the natural minima "only in connection with the theoretical division of some substance", Averroes and Niphus discuss them as certain physical entities.\(^3\) Giordano Bruno, basing his concept on that of the Mutakallimum, Averroes, Niphus and others developed also "his own minima theory" and linked it to his "own new philosophic system".\(^4\) Van Melsen adds that

However new this theory \(\text{Bruno's}\) may have been, we can find many points in it which are borrowed from the Aristotelian minima theory, and others which remind us strongly of Democritus.\(^5\)

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3. From *Atoms to Atom*, pp.66-69.

4. ibid., p.78.

5. ibid.
Despite Van Melsen's criticism of Kurd Lasswitz's claims for Bruno, it can safely be stated that De Minimo was the strongest and clearest exposition of the minima theory in the late 16th Century. Lasswitz had written:

'It was Giordano Bruno's special merit that he determined the concept atom in a clear and unassailable manner. As long as the atom is considered merely as the terminus of division, it remains doubtful whether such an atom has eventually to be admitted or not. The insight, however, that clear understanding requires a primary of composition makes the concept atom a necessary concept. Hence Bruno taught that there must be a primitive whole which is at the beginning of our speculation, and this whole is the atom. Moreover, he acknowledges the relativity of the concept atom.'

Bruno's De Minimo is conscious of putting forward a great truth. His minimum is the substance of things, "Minimum substantia rerum est". His minimum is an indivisible unit. It is not just the element of which everything is composed, but also the germ and principle of all existence. Bruno thinks he has discovered or re-discovered an important truth, and on it means to build a temple of hardest diamond that will last into future centuries:

At mihi sufficiat reru pro pondere lucem
Adpetre, & templum solidum exadamante futurum
Trigere in seclum usq adee meliora professo,
Et quacunge Deus iussit consurgere vena
Nunc canere incipiam.

1 Gesichte der Atomistik, I. p.381.
But Cf. Atoms to Atom pp.116-117.

2 De Minimo, p.9.

3 ibid., pp.8-9.
It is the basis of his atomism and is a development of the doctrine of monads that he had already suggested in his *Acrotismus Camoeracensis* in 1538, where he still speaks like an enlightened Averroist:

There is a limit to the division of natural things; an indivisible something exists. The division of natural things reaches the smallest and last parts which can not be seen even with the aid of artificial instruments.

His *De Minimo* is both physical and metaphysical. Like the Mutakullimum, Averroes and Nifo, but with more strength and emphasis and in an anti-Aristotelian framework, Bruno puts forward his belief in discontinuity and argues strongly that the minimum is found in all things, which would be non-existent did not the minima underlie them. Without the monad there would even be no number, for it constituted the species, which determined each genus; it is in reality the ultimate foundation of all existence, being "God and abundant Nature", Art interpreting the monad as that which persists beyond and which is common to every genus:

Quandoquidem minimum sic integrat omnia, ut ipsum
Ni substernatur, reliquorum non siet hilum.
Esto nulla monas, numerorum non erit ullus:
Namq ea constituit species, statuens genus omne.
Quocirca in cunctis primum est fundamen, ut unde
Et Deus, & natura parens, arsq explicat alte
Quod super omne genus perstat, quod & in genere omni est.2

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1 I.i. p.154: "Facit certe natura divisionem, per quam consentaneum est ad illas ultimo minima partes devenire, ad quas nullam artificium instrumento aliquo proplius accedere possit".

2 *De Minimo*, p.9. In this book there is frequent elision of *ue* in *arsque*.
This same minimum, which is above the confines of finiteness, persists as the constant in all things. Itself attaining to infinity, it brings into being, unites, renews and propagates all creatures, both composite and simple:

Claudit finitum, infinitum permeat amplum,
Efficiens, nectens, integrans, atq propagans
Quidquid compostum, & simplex quodcumq creatur
Immenso a secolo pedens: quia maxima quaeq
Ex minimo, in minimo, ad minimu sunt, per minimumq. ¹

Bruno maintains that all errors in science, mathematics and even metaphysics arise just because the minimum is disregarded.² All error can be reduced to ignorance of the minimum, which is often linked to Greek atomism. In fact like Democritus and Leukippus, Bruno postulates an empty space and atoms, but his animistic atomism differs substantially from the impious "impacts" philosophy, also adopted by Lucretius, where life is the chance product of push-and-pull. Bruno's minimum is a "primordial force", the creating germ and the spark divine that brings everything to life. Each substance possesses a definite minimum from which it develops and into which it can be reduced:

Ex minimo crescit, & in minimum omnis magnitude extenuantur.³

Julius Scaliger had, as Van Melsen points out, a few decades earlier called the minima "prima ad compositionem":

¹ ibid., p.9.
² ibid., p.22.
³ ibid., p.98.
That small piece of stone which is removed every time at once will be the smallest particle of stone and "the first particle of the compound".

But in Bruno the atom and the minimum are more clearly defined, and although in many ways the Mutakallimun were the precursors of Bruno, the distinction between terminus of division and primary building block in relation to all matter seems to have been original to Bruno. This minimum cannot be destroyed, and it is foolish to fear death or annihilation, because birth and death become merely relative. Bruno even proves the immortality of the soul from the incorruptibility of atoms, whose source of motion is not derived from other atoms or fields of force but comes from within and is basically animistic. Possibly influenced by the symbolism of Philolaus, Bruno tries to identify God with the monad, indeed his God becomes the *monas* *monadum* in whom the infinitely great and the infinitely small coincide:

Deus est monas, omnium numerorum fons, simplicitas omnis, magnitudinis et compositionis substantia et excellentia super omne momentum, innumerabile, immensum.

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1 *Exercitationes* (Frankfurt, 1607), p.83. First published in 1557. See From Atomes to Atom, pp.74; 117.

2 Xenia Atanassieitch, *La Doctrine Metaphysique et Geometrique de Bruno.*
Cf. De Minimo p.28: "Non enim distinguant *of Scholastics* inter terminum qui nulla pars est, et minimum quod prima pars est".
Cf. ibid., p.145. "Sic nihilo variat in rerum substantia".
De Minimo, p.10.

3 ibid., p.13.

4 H. Diels, *Die fragmente der vorsokratiker* (1906), I., p.243: "The activity and essence of number must be evaluated by the power that is found in the Decad. Because it is great, perfect, all-powerful, it is the beginning and the guide to paths divine, celestial and human ... without it everything is ... indeterminate and uncertain".

5 ibid., p.7.
Bruno maintains: "Deus est monadum monas"\(^1\) with such vigour that Marin Mersenne discussing his "lies about the minima" labelled him as "the most dangerous thinker among atheists and freethinkers.\(^2\)

Despite Bruno's assertion that he "believed all that a faithful Christian ought to believe",\(^3\) nearly all his works acquired the reputation of militating against religion. As later with Thomas Hobbes, this resulted in an outright condemnation of his philosophy, but among those who used Bruno's ideas were the Continental giants whose systems straddled much seventeenth-century thought. In effect, Bruno's works seem to have been a source for Kepler, Galileo, Campanella, Basso, Mersenne, Descartes, Gassendi, Spinoza and Leibniz.

This is not the place to make a lengthy dialectical survey of their reliance on, and adaptations of, Bruno's thought but as some of Bruno's concepts probably filtered into English seventeenth-century thought at second-hand through Kepler, Campanella, Mersenne, Gassendi and others it may be profitable to discuss their relation to Bruno.

\(^1\) ibid., p.17.


\(^3\) V. Spampanato, pp. 712,ff.
Kepler often refers to Bruno’s works, often to disprove his theories. His De Stella Nova Serpentaria (1606) exhibits a fair amount of animus, although his strictures often seem tempered by hidden admiration:

Itaque defendit illum infelix ille Jordanus Brunus; nec obscuræ asseruit specie dubitantis et Guilielmus Gilberto libro de magnete, cetera præclarissimo, religiosum tamen affectum eo demonstravit, quod existimeret, non alia re rectius intelligi infinitam Dei potentiam, quam si infinitum mole conderet mundum.¹

In Dissertatio cum Nuntio Sidereo, he specifically tries to use Galileo’s most recent discoveries to attack Bruno’s theory of an infinity of worlds:

Similarly, you correct and, in part, unsettle Bruce’s doctrine, borrowed from Bruno. These men thought that other celestial bodies have their own means revolving around them, like our earth with its moon. But you prove that they were talking in generalities. Moreover, they supposed it was the fixed stars that are so accompanied. Bruno even expounded the reason why this must be so. The fixed stars, forsooth, have the quality of sun and fire, but the planets, of water. By an indefeasible law of nature these opposites combine. The sun cannot be deprived of the planets; the fire, of its water; nor in turn the water of the fire.² Now the weakness of his reasoning is exposed by your observations.

¹ Joannis Kepleri astronomi opera omnia, ed. Ch. Frisch (Frankfurt, 1858-70), II, p.688.
² De L’Infinito, II. pp.66-67: "Avete più volte udito, che quelli son per sé lucidi e caldi, ne la composizion de’ quali predomina il foco; gli altri riaplondono per altrui partecipazione, che son per sè freddi et oscuri, ne la composizion de’ quali l’acqua predomina, da la qual diversita’ e contrarieta dipende l’ordine, la simmetria, la complessione, la pace, la concordia, la composizione, la vita. Di sorte, che li mondi son composti di contrarij; e gli contrarij, come le terre, acque, vivono e vegetano per gli altri contrarij, come li soli, foci. Il che, credo, inteso ch disse, il tutto essere consistente per l’ite di concordi et amor di litiganti."
In the first place, suppose that each and every fixed star is a sun. No moons have yet been seen revolving around them. Hence this will remain an open question until this phenomenon too is detected by someone equipped for marvellous refined observations. At any rate, this is what your success threatens us with, in the judgement of certain persons.  

On the other hand, Jupiter is one of the planets, which Bruno described as earths. And behold, there are four planets around Jupiter. Yet Bruno's argument made this claim not for the earths, but for the suns.

In *Epitome Astronomiae Copernicanae ... Doctrina Sphaerica* (1618), he tries to answer the question whether the sphere of the fixed stars is infinite and concludes:

> Sic astronomia nihil pronunciat: in tanta enim altitudine sensu distituitur oculorum. Hoc sculm docet astronomia, quocumque stellae vel minimae cernuntur, finitum esse spaciurn.

A few pages earlier he had put forward for discussion Bruno's infinite stars as centres of new worlds, as the suns of heliocentric systems placed at regular intervals in immense space. His figure 16 in fact refers specifically to Bruno:

> Censes igitur stellareus centra in eadem superficie sphaerica disponi.

> Hoc quidem incertum est. Cum enim aliae parvae sint, aliae magnae; non est absimile vero, parvas ideo vide-ri, quia procul in altum aetherem recesserunt; magnas-deo, quia nobis propiores. Neque tamen absurdum, duas fixas in equali apparenti magnitudine, aequali a nobis intervallo absese.

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At de planetis certum est, illos non esse cum fixis in eadem superficie Sphaerica, sed inferiores esse fixis; tegunt enim interdum illas, nec vicissim alias a fixis teguntur.

LIBER PRIMVS

Si de fixis certius nihil conflat, uidetur illaregio infinita esse; nec sol hic noster aliudérit, quam una ex fixis, nobis major & clarior ut-sa, quia propior quam fixæ: atq ita circa qua-libet fixam poterit esse talis mundus, quale cir-ca nos est; Vel, quod eadem radit, inter innum-merabiles locos in illa infinita fixarum conge-ris. Mundus hic noster cum Sole fuc erit unus, nulla re diversus a locis alius circa fixas singulares: Vt in subjecta figura litera M:

Ita quidem Brunus & veterum aliqui. At non sequi-tur, si centra fixarum non sunt in eadem superficie Sphae-rica; propterea regionem per quam sunt dispersae fixae, esse undiquaque sibi similis.¹

Besides, Kepler also manipulates various ideas used by Bruno such as the relativity of gravity — "Gravia & levia tantum per comparationem, non absolute"²—; the concept of virtù impressa in relation of "moving things with the ship",³ and the rotation of suns on their axes.⁴

¹ ibid., pp.34-35.
² ibid., p.99.
³ ibid., p.137.
⁴ ibid., p.513.
As is well known some of these concepts were also adopted by Galileo, and it is interesting to note that as early as August 1602, we find the Englishman Edmund Bruce in a letter from Florence telling Kepler that he had met Galileo who confirmed that he had read _Prodromus Dissertationum Cosmographicorum_ (Tubingen, 1596) — "mentre lo aveva negato a Giovanni Antonio Magini" — and was putting forward Kepler's inventions and ideas as though they were his own:

So di certo chi'egli ha esposto ai suoi uditori ed altri le tue invenzioni come sue. Ma ho fatto e farò in modo che tutto ciò ridondera a maggior onore non suo, ma tuo. ¹

Bruce repeated this from Padua in August 1603.² Kepler himself, as early as 1606, was writing of "infelix ille Jordanus Brunus" and saying that his martyrdom at the hands of religious orthodoxy was robbing him of a fame he merited. This is made evident by Martin Hasdale's letter to Galileo himself:

I had this morning occasion for friendly dispute with Kepler when we were both lunching with the Ambassador of Saxony ... He said concerning your book _Sidereus Nuncius_ that truly it has revealed the divinity of your talent, but that you had given cause of complaint not only to the German nation but also to your own, since you make no mention of those writers who gave the signal and the occasion for your discovery, naming among them Giordano Bruno as an Italian, Copernicus and himself.³

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¹ Opere di Galileo, Ediz. Nazionale, I. p.82.
² ibid., p.90.
Like Bruno, Galileo tried to reconcile Reason with Scripture, putting forward the subtle distinction of the double truth:

Come gia' aveva tentato Giordano Bruno, egli /Galileo/ in una lettera del 1613 al Castelli e poi, più ampliamente, in altra del 1615 a madama Cristina Lorena, pose la sottile distinzione della doppia rivelazione divina della verità, l'una conseguita nei Libri Sacri, l'altra razionale.1

One possible link of Galileo to Bruno is the use, the "top-sail experiment" and its combination with the concept of virtila impressa. F.R. Johnson points out that in discussing heliocentricity, Thomas Digges had first used the particular variation of having a sailing ship adopt the function of a hypothetical moving earth discounted by Aristotle, and specifically discussed what influences can be drawn from the experiment of dropping a heavy weight from the top-sail of a moving ship, and measuring the distance from the foot of the mast to the position of impact on deck relative to the speed of the ship.2 In De La Cena, Bruno adopts the Diggesian experiment:

All things then which are found on earth move with the earth. And if from outside the earth, anything is thrown towards it, by the latter's movement it loses its rectilinearity. As is shown in the example of the ship sailing along the river. If anybody, standing on the river-bank, straight throws a stone he shall miss his mark, by as much depending on the speed of the course. But if anybody is placed at the top of the mast of this same ship, though it should sail as fast as it can, he shall never miss his mark ... So that if someone who is inside the ship straight throws a stone from the foot to the top of the mast, or of the top-sail, this returns down by the very same course, no matter how fast the ship goes.3

3 De La Cena, (1584), p.78.
Boand puts forward his reason why this should be so:

Which proceeds from no other cause than that the stone, dropped by the man who is supported by the ship and consequently moving along with it, has such an impressed force \(\textit{virtù impressa}\) which the other stone, falling from the hand of man outside the ship, lacks even though the stones are of the same weight, must cover the same distance and drop from the same position ... which diversity can proceed from no other cause than that things which are somehow linked to the ship, move together with it; and whereas one stone carries within it the same force as that of the moving ship, the other lacks this participation.

In the second day of the Dialogue on the Two Great World Systems, Galileo also substitutes a stone for Digges's plummet, and also argues that the stone's movement downward from the top-sail is dual "a straight one towards the centre, and a circular one about the centre" because of \textit{virtù impressa}:

Salviati: And that stone which is on the round top, does it not move as being, together with the ship, carried about by the circumference of a circle about the centre; and therefore consequently by a motion indelible in it, if all external obstacles be removed? And is not that swift motion that of the ship?

Simplicio: By my last conclusion you mean that that same stone, moving with a motion indelibly impressed upon it, it is not to leave but follow the ship, and in the end to light in the selfsame place where it falls when the ship lies still ...

Salviati: ... And forasmuch as the moving cause is not one alone, which might be retarded because of the new operation, but that they are two, distinct from each other, of which gravity only draws the body towards it about the centre, and the virtue impressed \(\textit{virtù impressa}\) conducts it about the centre, there remains no occasion of impediment ... But tell me, seeing that your instance is wholly grounded upon the nullity of the virtue impressed, if I should demonstrate to you that the medium has nothing to do in the continuation of projections after they are separated from the projicient, will you admit the impressed virtue?\(^1\)

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1 ibid., p.81.
2 Trans. G. de Santillana (Chicago, 1957), pp.162-165. Cf. ibid., p.140. This argumentation was also followed by G.B. Benedetti in De Mechanica (1585), chap. 17. But See also P. Duhem, Études sur Léonard de Vinci, (Paris, 1900-13).
More recent critics like Gentile and Spampanato have traced in Galileo a number of Brunian echoes and parallels, while Berti's careful study of Galileo's manuscripts has proved the issue beyond doubt. Helene Vedrine and P. Michel show how Bruno's idea of the sun turning on its own axis was copied by Galileo in his Lettre sulla macchie solari while E. Namer's recent study of Bruno links him closely with the thought of Galileo. Despite several resemblances, however, it is important to state that Galileo publicly rejected the two main concepts on which Bruno's philosophy is centred — the infinity of habitable worlds and the indivisible monad. His Salviati argues that

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\text{L'infinito è per sè solo da noi incomprensibile, come anco gl' indivisibile.}^5
\]

Privately, however, in a letter Fortunio Liceti dated 12th February, 1640 he is more sympathetic to Bruno's position:

Many and subtle are the reasons given for each of both sides, but none of them, to my mind, leads to a necessary conclusion, so that I remain in great doubt which of the two answers is the true one. There is only one particular argument of mine that inclines me more to the infinite and interminate than to the terminate (note that my imagination is of no help here, since I cannot imagine it either finite or infinite). I feel that my incapacity to comprehend might more properly be referred to incomprehensible infinity, rather than to finiteness, in which no principle of incomprehensibility is required. But

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   idem, Opere Italiane, I, p.88.
   V. Spampanato, Quattro Filosofi Napolitani nel carteggio di Galileo, I, pp.11-35.


3 Vedrine, pp.214; 229-230; 236. Michel, p.204. n.76.


5 Opere, ed. F. Flora, I, p.858.
this is one of the questions haply inexplicable in human reason, and similar perchance to predestination, free will and such others in which only Holy Writ and divine revelation can give an answer to our reverend demands.  

Seeing that this doubt could not be resolved by science, Galileo refrained from discussing it at length and this is where he basically differs from Giordano Bruno who is quite happy to turn to metaphysics when science can not provide the answer to physical problems:

Il male fu ch’essi sostituirono ad Aristotele il loro cervello, con la conseguenza che, non curando le leggi della natura e pretendendo di assoggettarla a se stessi, riuscirono più nocivi degli stessi peripatetici che intendevano combattere. Esempio il Bruno che, pur ammettendo il sistema eliocentrico, lo sconvolgeva in mezzo alle induzioni di un suo sistema senza alcun fondamento scientifico.

It is probably for this reason that Martinus Horky and John Wooddubnianus, sought to dissociate Galileo from the "aniles fabulae" of Bruno and Bruce. Because of this it becomes easy to understand why Galileo never felt a need to mention Bruno by name. Tobia Adami, the typographer to Campanella’s Apologia pro Galileo refers directly to "Iord. Brunum Nolanum" and seems to support some of Bruno’s basic theses. In De Sensu Rerum, Campanella describes the stars as being centres of heliocentric systems and implies an infinite universe. In his

1 Quoted. G. de Santillana, p.44. n.40.
3 Horky, Quatuor Problematum (Patavii, 1610), sig. B’.
5 Frankfurt, 1622, p.4.
6 Frankfurt, 1620, III. chap.iv.
widely-read *Apologia pro Galileo*, he asserts infinity of worlds and refers the doctrine to

quidam Nolanus, & alij, quos heresia nominare non
permittit, hanc sententiam tuentur.¹

Although mainly concerned with defending Galileo, Campanella adopts some of Bruno's theories. Campanella recalls how in

his own *Quaestiones*, he went straight against Galileo:

At vero Galileus, in epistolis de solarib. maculis, expresse
negat, homines in stellis alijs esse posse, (quod nos in
quaestionibus argumento physicco comprobavimus),²

and goes on to show how some of Galileo's ideas were put forward by "Keplerus & Nolanus".³

Like Bruno, Campanella asserts that stars and comets are a compound of earth and water,⁴ and goes on to assert that there is a plurality of suns. There is then not one centre of attraction but a plurality of centres for a plurality of worlds. Unlike Bruno, and like Galileo, Campanella is willing to submit his ideas to the authority of the Church:

Quapropter suspendo judicium; & ad Galilei argumenta
respondeo, paratus obedire mandatis Ecclesiae & meliorum
judicio.⁵

¹ *Apologia*, p.9.
² *Apologia*, pp.51-52.
³ *ibid.*, p.52.
⁴ *ibid.*, p.49.
⁵ *ibid.*, p.54.
Sebastian Basso, who wrote Philosophiae Naturalis Adversus Aristotelem, seems also to have been influenced by Bruno's De Minimo and De Immenso. He adopts the same non-mechanistic atomism of Bruno, and attempts an identification of God and Nature.¹ But, as Tullio Gregory points out, there are also important differences:

Ma a differenza di Bruno, però, Basso discute e appoggia le sue tesi atomistiche su basi sperimentali, con numerose osservazioni sul movimento dei corpuscoli, che contribuirono notevolmente à quello sviluppo della fisica atomistica che culminò in Descartes and Gassendi.²

Basso, however, never names Bruno, probably for reasons of prudence. For, despite Bruno's assertion during his trial that he "believed all that a faithful Christian ought to believe",³ nearly all his works, Italian and Latin, soon acquired the reputation of militating against religion. As later with Thomas Hobbes, this often resulted in an outright public condemnation of his philosophy.

It is significant that even Marin Mersenne, mediator of old and new philosophic and scientific theories, identified Bruno with a metaphysical cosmological hypothesis anchored in a materialistic basis.⁴ Mersenne argues that Bruno's physics and mathematics lead on to a natural religion that seeks to attack Christianity:


³ V. Spampanato, pp.712ff.

Iordanus Brunus might have been excused if he had contented himself merely to philosophize about the point, the atom, and the one. Only, however, if he had no other design than to prove that the circle and the straight line, the point and the line, the surface and the body are the same thing. If one really examines Bruno’s concepts as regards the homogeneity of the universe, his expansion and contraction of centre which he uses to describe birth, life, and death, one will see Bruno wants to deny the immortality of the soul and its degradation to that in beasts and plants.  

The title of Mersenne’s book is itself indicative. L’Impiété des Déistes, et des plus subtils Libertins découverte, & refussée par raisons de Theologie, & de Philosophie ... Ensemble la refutation des Dialogues de Jordan Brun, dans lesquels il a voulu establir une infinité de mondes, & l’âme universelle de l’Univers often incorporates direct quotations from Bruno’s works and sets out to discover the reason "pourquoi Iordan Brun a esté brusle a Rome".

The poem prefixed to the book by N. Guirault is also indicative of the trend of Mersenne’s attack:

Nous donneroit d’autres alarmes,
Il renverse fort sagement
De Jordan Brun l’enseignement,
Sur qui l’impie se fonde,
Car il soutient l’infinité
De la machine de ce monde,
En privant lieu de liberté.
En fin voyant l’erreur rebelle
Qui se paist de confusion,
S’appuyer sur l’opinion,
Qui tient qu’une âme universelle
Infuse dans le vaste corps
Du monde ...


2 (1624), II. p.299.

3 ibid., I. sig.a,vi.
Bruno's De La Causa, De L'Infinite, Sigillus Sigillorum and le Minimo come under severe strictures that extend over hundreds of pages. Bruno is described as being "encore este pire que Cardan"¹ because he believes in the transmigration of souls:

"Si vous lisez son troisième chapitre de Existentia Minimi, vous cognoistrez aysemant qu'il favorise la transmigration des ames d'un corps en un autre²

an idea to which he often returns to attack with vehemence:

"Je desirerois fort qu'ils m'explicassent dit comment il est possible qu'il y ait une ame universelle, & par consequent que mon ame soit la meme que la vostre, & que celle d'un beuf, d'un moucheron, d'une rose, & d'une pierre.³"

Mersenne also strongly attacks Bruno's "lies" about the minima which are accepted by other "heretics" such as Gorlee, Charpentier, Basso, Hill⁴.

In the second volume of his book, Mersenne often seeks to rebut the theories found in Bruno's De L'Infinite, putting them forward through the mouth of the Esist in debate against the Theologian: "Voila quasi tout le discours que me tint ce Libertin".⁵ It is obvious that the Esist stands for Bruno for we often see him translating verbatim:

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¹ ibid., I. p.232-3.

² ibid., I. p.230.

³ ibid., II. pp.390-391.


⁵ ibid., II. p.298.
d'ou il arrive que la verite depend bien en sa connaissance
des sens, comme d'un principe d'icelle, mais tres-foible,
& tres incertaine, & qu'elle ne reside point dans le sens,
mais dans l'object sensible, comme dans un miroir, dans
la raison par forme de discours, dans l'entendement par
maniere de conclusion, dans l'esprit & dans l'ame connoissante
en sa propre, vive & naturelle source. Ce qu'il mettoit en
avant pour m'introduire dans l'infinite du monde, car bien
que les sens ne se portent que jusque aux estoiles, neantmoins
la raison nous monstre, disoit-il, qu'il y a un espace infty
hors la convexite du premier mobile, lequel a une aptitude,
& capacite infty de contenir, plus que la cause efficente a
un puissance infty ... Pourquoi voulons nous, ou comment
pouvons nous penser que la divine puissance soyt oysiou?

Mersenne's Theologian replies that

"C'est fort mal raisonné de conclure un effet infiny d'une
cause infty, lors que la cause n'agit pas necessairement,
mais librement" and in nearly two hundred pages seeks a rebuttal of Bruno's theories:

"Les raisons sont examines, par lesquelles Iordan Brun pretendait
preuver que l'univers est infty."?

Reponse au 2 Argument de Iordan Brun... car l'objet de la
puissance divine est tout ce qui n'enferme, & ne contient
aucune repugnance, ou contradiction (ce qu'on appelle possible)
mais l'objet de la volonté divine est le peu de choses lesquelles
Dieu choisit, & qu'il veut creer entre une infty de semblables
& de differentes, qu'il laisse dans la seule possibilite,
& dans la non-repugnance."

Mersenne attacks "les deux infinites" of Bruno, and argues that
even if this universe is finite, "Dieu ne peut estre appele envieux".

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1 ibid., II. pp.282-294.
Cf. De Immenso, I.i. p.235.

2 ibid., II. p.283.

3 ibid., II. p.326.

4 ibid., II. p.311.

5 ibid., II. p.321.

Bruno is repeatedly accused of being a "sophiste" who can be refuted through his own arguments, "Iordan Brun refuté par luy mesme", 1 "que Iourdan, & ses complices sont fort mal fondez, & fort mauvais Dialecticiens", 2 so that finally the Deist is converted away from the theses of Bruno by the Theologian and philosopher. 3

After Mersenne especially it thus became customary to condemn Bruno's thought en bloc, with the result that his books, long since on the Index, (Bruno appeared on the Indicia librorum expurgandorum in 1603. See V. Spamanato, pp. 580; 782) became rarer to acknowledge as accusation followed another. But contemporaries were often struck by ideas in Basso, Gorlee, Descartes, Gassendi and Spinoza apparently drawn from Bruno's Italian and Latin works. Thus Tomasi Cornelii and Daniel Huet accuse Descartes of plagiarism when he patterns his hypothesis of the vortices on Bruno's theory about the vicissitude of an infinite universe in De Immense. 4 This charge is later repeated by Leibniz who quotes Spleissus's remark that Descartes, though borrowing largely from Bruno, completely by-passed and failed to mention him. 5

1 ibid., II. p.330.
2 ibid., II. p.339.
3 ibid., II. p.475.
5 Opera Omnia (Geneva, 1708), III. pp.146-147: "Praterire nomina autorum".
Huet, however, seeks to approximate Descartes' thought to Bruno's:

Quem Cartesianae doctrinae antesignanum jure dicas ... nam & universi infinitatem & Mundorum in numerabilitatem tuetur, & duo esse vult Astrorum genera, Soles & Tellures, hoc est Stellas fixas & Planetas ... Qui legerit hunc librum [De Immenso], feret operae pretium, & quam pulchre ei cum Cartesio conveniat, cognoscet.1

Descartes' system of vortices, though more severely mathematical and more logically based, seems indeed to be derived from Bruno.2 Descartes' reticence as to his source, almost traditional, may be linked to his intimate friendship with Mersenne who strongly repudiated Bruno in public, as well as to his distaste of Lullism with which Bruno was so closely involved. "Syllogisms more proper to encourage idle talk upon things which we ignore," would have militated against the rational basis of Cartesian physics.3 Pierre Gassendi, in his Preface to Exercitationes, published in 1624, promised to argue for a plurality of worlds,4 but in Syntagma Philosophicum discusses the system of "Iord. Brun"5 only to discount them as "fabulae"6 in favour of that "other opinion" that conforms to the faith:

1 Censura, p.215.
2 N. Badaloni, p.282
4 Opera Omnia, III. p.102.
5 ibid., I. p.140.
6 ibid., I. p.139.
Veniendum iam est ad aliam sententiam, quam praediximus esse maxime principiis Sacrae Fidei, Religionisque consentaneam. ¹

H. Brunhoffer insists that Galileo and Spinoza owed many of their concepts to Bruno, going so far as to state Spinoza's philosophy would never have existed had it not been for Bruno.² There is again no mention of Bruno in Spinoza's works, but we know Spinoza read Italian³ and had editions of Bruno in his library.⁴ Even a cursory study of both philosophies will unearth obvious similarities. Thus the oneness of the universe and homogeneity of matter, the immanence of the deity in nature, the concept of evil as deficiency and the infinity of space. In both philosophies God's system is resolved in the kind of geometric progression that More accepted. But whereas Spinoza too soon accepted the mechanical necessity of Democritus that led to the 'Spinozium Atheismi' that More attacked,⁵ Bruno continued to believe in the spirituality of the universe.⁶

¹ ibid., I. p.141.
² Giordano Brunus Weltanschaung (Leipzig, 1882), pp.135-309.
⁵ Opera Omnia (1679), pp.615-635: "Ad Substantiam quatenus Substantia est, necessariam Existentiam pertinere, Unicam in Mundo Substantiam Esse; quae praecipuae apud Spinozium Atheismi Columnae, brevis solidaque Conflutatio."
⁶ Causa, I. p.241 et passim.
For in Bruno, matter and spirit tend to coincide. He can at least try to unite Plato and Democritus in a metaphysical monadology that is essentially his own.

Leibniz had read Bruno, and his "windowless monads" were also apparently influenced by Bruno's monadology,¹ as well as Francis Mercury van Helmont's, who, in his turn, also seems to have been influenced by Bruno.²

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¹ Ludwig Stein, *Leibniz und Spinoza* (Berlin, 1890), p.210 argues that the term 'monad' as a name for the indestructible spiritual elements of the universe was suggested to Leibniz not by Bruno's works but by F.M. Van Helmont who corresponded with Leibniz in 1696 when the term first appears in Leibniz's writings. See Bertrand Russell, *A Critical Exposition of the Philosophy of Leibniz* (1937), p.137 where Leibniz's borrowing of Bruno's 'Monas monadum' are regarded as 'slips'.

English Influence on Giordano Bruno

When Bruno arrived in England in 1583, his philosophy was in a formative stage. It went on developing throughout his entire period here, with various accretions jostling in his brain in the attempt to reach some kind of synthesis.

The history of Bruno's thought is marked by subtle borrowings and new insights from other philosophers and scientists. He borrowed ideas indiscriminately from Plato, Plotinus, Epicurus, Lucretius, Averroes, Ficino and Copernicus. These ideas are often transformed into something new by a daring and radical sequaciousness that takes up other people's premisses and drives them to their logical conclusions.

Bent as he was on preaching a universal truth, he was himself influenced by the historical and mental patterns of the countries in which he sojourned. The quarrels and friendships, contacts and alliances he made helped to mould his philosophy.

Thus at an early stage he took up the role of magus, playing about with Raymond Lull's memory systems and transforming them into something more esoteric that appealed to the royal court of Henri III. For a time he seemed to adopt Ramist anti-Aristotelianism, but then turned to attacking Ramus as that "arch-pedant of France" when Ramism had gained a significant foothold in Oxford and Cambridge. Then he adopted Copernican cosmology for his own purposes because

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1 See Dedication to Rector and Professors of Wittenberg University in De Lampade Combinatoria Lulliana (Wittenberg, 1587). See, V. Spampanato, pp.741-742.
"the Nolan sees with his own eyes". He liked people to look up to him as the bold assertor of a new philosophy.

Bruno's original intention when he crossed the Channel from France may have been to present himself as a magus, with his memory system as some kind of a passport to a position of influence among the upper strata of the English nobility if the English 'Diana' took a liking to his esoteric lore.

Explicatio Triginta Sigillorum presents a mystical seer who somehow had effected an Egyptian synthesis of Jewish tradition and Greek Platonism, and whose memory system held the key to the secrets of nature.

Things did not quite turn out that way and although Egyptian and Hermetic strands still supported many of his basic concepts, during his stay in England these were driven below the surface to play but a secondary role in the development of his philosophy. It is still true, however, that at times we can catch Bruno looking both ways — as the last great mystic magus and as the daring exponent of the new sciences. I believe that his two-year stay in England was formative of this dual attitude.

1 Cena, I. p.126.

2 Sommario del Processo di Giordano Bruno, p.61.

3 Professional astrologers such as Arise Evans, John Dee, Richard Harvey, John Booker and John Case rose to positions of power and influence in the nation. See, D.N.B.

4 Explicatio, sig. G.iiiV.

He came to England as the "waker of sleeping souls" — who often refused to be waked. But it is in the reaction of the English, their apathy or opposition, that the genius of Bruno really manifested itself. The hostile reception given to his memory system and his Copernican theories forced Bruno to shift his stance as he hopefully sought other channels for recognition. The current historical and scientific controversies as well as the ideas of the scholars he was pitted against were formative of his originality. Indeed, it is through polemic that Bruno arrives at many of his basic principles, and this is reflected in the very structure of his Italian dialogues.

The first disciple to adopt and push Bruno's ideas in England was Alexander Dicson. It was perhaps unfortunate that Dicson later turned out to be a secret agent working for the Papists, and himself eager to become known as another "master in the art of memory". His De Umbra Rationis, later published as Thamus, appeared in 1583 and was obviously patterned on, and heavily influenced by, Bruno's De Umbris Idearum. Ostensibly attacking Xenophon, Dicson attacked Ramus,¹ and thus sparked off the Bruno-Ramus controversy which McIntyre, D.W. Singer and F.A. Yates² mention, without noting the effect it had on Bruno's works.


² J.L. McIntyre, Giordano Bruno (1903), pp.35-36.
One "G.P. Cantabrigiensis" immediately took up arms against the ostentatious propounders of artificial memory, "memoriographae ostentatores ... Nolani, Dicsoni repellantur."¹ In his Antidicsonus, G.P. attacks the Brunian use of celestial images as basically absurd² and calls it an art for impious impostors,³ suggesting that the Ramist memory method based on dialectical sequaciousness⁴ is infinitely better than that of Bruno and Dicson.

Dicson replied in Defensio, "done by the advice and order of my Lord [Leicester] and his nephew Sir Philip [Sidney],"⁵ in which he strongly defended the Brunian method against the slur of the Puritan Ramist, fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge, who was none other than William Perkins.⁶

Perkins countered by his Libellus de memoria, where Brunian mnemonics become an unwarranted revival of "barbarism and Duncedom".⁷

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¹ Antidicsonus cuisdam Cantabrigiensis G.P., accessit libellus in quo dilucide explicatur impia Dicsoni artificiosa memoria (1584), dedication to Thomas Mofet. Cf. Bacon, De Augmentis Scientiarum, VI.ii., trans. J.L. McIntryre, p.333: "Some men, rather ostentatious than learned, have laboured about a certain method not deserving the name of a true method, as being rather a kind of imposture, which may nevertheless have proved acceptable to some triflers. Such was the Art of Lully, simply a massed collection of technical terms. This kind of collection resembles an old broker's shop, where many fragments of things are to be found but nothing of any value."

² Antidicsonus, p.17.

³ Ibid., p.45.

⁴ Ibid., p.20.

⁵ Calendar of Scottish Papers, XI, Dicson to Robert Bowes, 9 August 1595, p.674.

⁶ John Durkan, pp.183-190.

⁷ Libellus de memoria verissamque bene recordandi scientia: Admonitiuncula ad A. Dicsonum de Artificiosae Memoriae, quam publice profiteetur, vanitate (1584), p.4.
Bruno's memory system which had gained him the patronage of Henri III, was immediately attracting overt hostility in Protestant England. As Perkins pointed out the artificial memory systems were akin to the Papists' insistence on the efficacy of medals, statues and images of saints, and thus possibly associated with secret Catholic sympathizers. Perkins thundered against the Brunian method because it was basically mediaeval, "the remainders of Poperie yet sticke in the minds of many".

This approach sounded a warning to Bruno, and after his Explicatio Triginta Sigillorum, he left off dabbling in memory systems, until after he left England in 1585. William Perkins's strong attack on Bruno's method may have helped to alter Bruno's system, cumbered with seals and images, towards the more dialectical approach that we find in the Italian cosmological dialogues.

It is interesting to note, also, how often Bruno adopted Protestant attitudes. The accusation in the 'Sommario' that he not only lived in heretic lands but also adopted their customs and

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1 W. Perkins, A Warning Against the Idolatrie of the Last Times (Cambridge, 1603), p.833: "the like do the Papists with images."


3 W. Perkins, p.811.

4 See, De Lampade combinatoria Lulliana (Wittenberg, 1587) De Specierum Scrutinio (Prague, 1588).
beliefs is often confirmed. Bruno often followed the English Biblical exegetists whose aim was to reduce Catholicism to a moral fable. He is often seen to deny transubstantiation, doubt the virginity of Our Lady, affirm that Moses simulated miracles, and make fun of the Catholics' veneration of saints and images.

From La Cena on, Bruno is mainly concerned with suppressing the mediaeval and hermetic side to his philosophy. Though he makes a sly reference to Ramus, and indirectly repays Dicson's support, Bruno now concentrates more fully on a basically anti-aristotelian approach and a modern concept of space arising out of heliocentric theories. He becomes concerned with things, not shadows, and a new empiric strain invades his metaphysics.

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2 ibid., p. 17: "che e' bestemia grande quella de' cattolici, il dire che il pane si transustanzii in carne."

3 ibid., p. 104. In his trial, although asserting that "ancor e possibile fisicamente Virginem concipire", Bruno defended himself by proclaiming "che la Vergine Beata non ha conceputo fisicamente Cristo."

4 ibid., p. 48.

5 ibid., p. 52: "negava che le reliquie si dovessero onorare, dicendo che stava in petto di qualunque persona a mettere fuori una testa di qual si voglia morto per reliquie; ma quando ancor le reliquie fossero certe e vere, non si dolevano pero onorare." Cf. ibid., p. 54: "biasimava l'immagini, e diceva ch'era una idolatria, e se ne burlava con gesti brutti e profani."

6 *Cena*, I. p. 250.

7 ibid., I. p. 227.
Thomas Watson, poet and gentleman friend of Christopher Marlowe, chiefly known for his sonnet-sequence *Hekatopathia*, also wrote a brief philosophical treatise on memory entitled *Compendium Memoriae Localis*.\(^1\) He speaks of the "profound and mystically learned Sigilli of the Nolan",\(^2\) but asks that his own attempt be not compared with the systems of Bruno or Dicson because "it may bring more infamy on the author than utility to the reader".\(^3\) The use of 'infamy' is basically ambiguous in context and is the kind of comment with a hidden barb which confirms that Bruno was wise to shift his ground to discuss cosmological theories instead of mnemonics.

Indeed Bruno borrows a leaf from his Ramist opponents, in seeking to dislodge scholasticism by dialectical sequaciousness. In his determination to undermine the Stagirite, one can indeed compare Bruno to Ramus himself, who had attracted the attention of Paris by defending his thesis that "All that Aristotle has said is false."

There were other factors that helped Bruno adopt a more modern attitude. The magus that he presented in *Cantus Circaeus*, *De Umbris* and *Explicatio* is essentially a mystic concerned with seeking and interpreting the unity of nature, but not in making predictions for

\(^1\) No place or date of publication but probably London, 1583. STC suggests the printer was Thomas Vautrollier.

\(^2\) *Compendium Memoriae Localis* (1583), Dedication to Henry Noel.

\(^3\) Ibid.
any given year, in casting nativities or any such mundane affairs. This was just as well, for prognosticators had fallen upon really hard times, often plunging into disrepute by overplaying their hands. Controversies as to the usefulness or credibility of astrology reached their peak at the very time of Bruno's sojourn in England; when astrology was often linked with political or quasi-political motives. 1 Attacks against prognosticators began as early as 1560 when William Fulke published his Antiprognosticon;2 after a comparative lull of more than twenty years, the matter assumed urgency in 1583. In 1564 the Bohemian astrologer, Cyprian Loewicz had in his De coniunctionibus magnis insignioribus superiorum planatarum foretold the end of the world by March or early April 1584.3 Sometime in 1582 Richard Harvey, brother to Gabriel, obviously influenced by Loewicz's predictions, worked on the conjunction between Saturn and Jupiter. His book, An Astrological Discourse upon the great and notable Conjunction of the two superior Planets, Saturne & Jupiter, which shall happen the 28 day of April, 1583, prognosticated barrenness, shipwrecks and burnings. Besides proclaiming the end of the world to be near, Harvey said that many nobles and ecclesiastics would be involved in treason and prosecuted.4

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2 1560.
3 Loewicz's book was reprinted in London in 1573 by Thomas Vautrollier.
Robert Tanner follows both Loewicz and Harvey in these dire predictions for 1583.¹

The failure of their predictions naturally made Harvey and Tanner the laughing stock of the Universities. The brunt fell on Harvey. He was ridiculed in the "Terrae Filius" verses at Oxford² and, as Thomas Nashe wrote in *Pierce Penniless*:

The whole Universitie hyst at him, Tarlton at the Theater made jests at him, and Elderton consumed his ale-crammed nose to nothing, with bear-bayting him with whole bundells of ballets.³

Bruno would most certainly have followed this controversy. His own printer, Charlewood, published a book for Henry Howard, then a frequent visitor to Mauvissiere and often suspected of traitorous dealing with Mary Queen of Scots.⁴ Howard’s book was very influential in cutting astrologers down to size. He poured scorn on the inspiration of those who would set themselves up as prophets for the nation. Howard assaulted prophecy through the reading of stars and signs as but "the scum of pride and dregs of ignorance" aimed at causing "great disorder in the Commonwealth, especially among the simple and unlearned people".⁵ Singled out for special attack were those who, like Bruno in his mnemonic treatises,

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¹ *A Prognosticall judgement of the two superiour Planets, Saturne and Jupiter, which shall happen the 28 day of Aprill, 1583.*

² The equivalent of the "tripos" verses at Cambridge.

³ *Pierce Penniless his Supplication to the Divell* (1592), sig. F3.

⁴ See, above, p.14, n.2.

⁵ *A defensative against the poysen of supposed Prophecies, not hitherto confuted by the Pen of any Man, which being grounded, either upon the warrant and Authority of Old Painted Bookes (1583), Title-page.*
extolled the virtue of signs⁠¹ and who used the Cabbalists' and Egyptians' art and "toyes" for their "darke and mysticall" purposes.⁠²

William Perkins, who was involved with Dicson in the Brunian-Ramist controversy, again appears on the scene and in his Foure Great Lyers striving who shall win the whetstone thunders, like Howard, against the impudence of prognosticators.⁠³ He ridicules the prophecies of four professional astrologers, 'B', 'F', 'T' and 'D'.⁠⁴ He questions the theories promulgated by Pontano in De Rebus and De Fortuna⁠⁵ that the stars are really

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¹ ibid., p.58.
² ibid., p.94.
³ H.G. Dick definitely established the authorship of this book in "The Authorship of Foure Great Lyers," The Library, XIX (1939), 311-314. The general opinion is that it was published in 1585 (see, E.F. Bosanquet, English Printed Almanacks and Prognostications (1917), pp.49-50). The evidence for this dating is an allusion to Richard Harvey's Astrologickal Discourse as having been published two years earlier (Rene Pruvost, "The Astrological Predictions of 1583," The Library, XIV (1933), 104-106). An earlier date is, I think, more probable. Richard Harvey's book had almost certainly been published originally in 1582. Tanner's A Prognostication, imitating Harvey's title and saying the conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter will take place in February 1582-3 was published early in the year and had "more than once, or twice culled out whole sides verbatim, without any mention of Harvey" (John Harvey, Astrologickal Addition (1583), sig. E6'-E7.). Allowing for printing time and Tanner's thieving, this would certainly throw Richard Harvey's book into 1582, and Foure Great Lyers at least into 1584. Besides, John Harvey's Astrologickal Addition, in print by 1 April 1583, twice refers to his brother Richard's second edition (sig. C6; D3).

⁴ Probably Buckminster, Frende, Twyne and Diges.
⁵ Foure Great Lyers, sig. C3v.
agents of Providence as well as ridiculing the untruths arising from the power of signs.¹

John Harvey, who had strongly supported his brother Richard's prophecies, had also connected the Hermetica with astrology and thus helped to throw Trismegistus and the Cabbala into disrepute. To his Astrological Addition, he appended "the Learned Works of Hermes Trismegistus intituled Iatro-Mathematica".² Astrology had indeed sunk so low after the failure of Richard Harvey's predictions that even his brother John was converted to the opposite camp. Indeed he makes a complete volte face and, forgetting his own defence, marvels "what moved so famous learned men in this facultie, to ascribe or attribute so exceeding much unto that silly Conjunction."³

Bruno therefore thought it opportune to shift his ground from Hermetic seals and signs and mediaeval astrology, and anchor his thought more firmly in Copernican astronomy. In La Cena, heliocentricity comes to the fore and "shades and umbra" are disregarded.⁴ In De La Causa, he speaks disparagingly of the "fantastiche idee di Platone"⁵ which he later tries to discard.

¹ ibid.
² 1583, Title-page.
³ A Discoursive Probleme concerning Prophecies. How far they are to be valued, or credited, according to the surest rules, and directions in Divinitie, Philosophie, Astrologie and other learning (1588), p.110.
⁴ I. p.163: "Noi, che guardiamo, non a le ombre fantastiche, ma a le cose medesime."
⁵ I. p.277.
by making a frontal attack on the very ideas he had put forward in Explicatio Triginta Sigillorum:

non li sigilli ideali, separati da la materia; per che quelli per certo, se non son mostri, son peggio di mostri, voglio dire chimere e vane fantasie.¹

How far Bruno had travelled in an English atmosphere can be gauged by a comparison of his Cantus Circaeus, De Umbra and Explicatio with the specific condemnation of astrological predictions in Spaccio de la Bestia Trionfante:

He thinks of his day of judgement because it has been prognosticated that the period of more or less, or exactly so, thirty-six thousand years is near; then the revolution of the great year of the world threatens the coming of another Caelus who will recover the dominion as is foretold by the movement and trepidation of the spheres, and by the various, hitherto unseen and unheard-of relationship and habits of the planets. He fears that Destiny will command that the hereditary succession should not be like that of the preceding great mundane revolution, but more various and diverse, despite the croaking of prognosticating astrologers and other diviners.²

When subsequently Bruno went to Oxford he was partly warned against indulging in any esoteric hermetic lore. As we learn from George Abbot, Bruno there propounded the theory of heliocentricity,³ but there is no reference to a plurality of worlds or the infinity of the universe. Bruno may not as yet have hit upon the 'logical' consequence of heliocentricity.

¹ ibid., Cf. De Immenso, I.ii. pp.303; 310.
² II. p.124.
³ The Reasons which Doctour Hill hath Brought, for the Upholding of Papistry, which is falselie termed the Catholike Religion (Oxford, 1604), pp.38-59.
The hostile reception to his lectures would probably have attracted his attention to a work by Thomas Digges where Copernicus was also defended. Digges and his mentor John Dee were then leading astronomers in contact with Bruno's friends, Sidney, Dyer, Gwynne and Culpepper. We know that Sidney accompanied Prince Laski to Dee's house at Mortlake after the Oxford debate, and though there is no reason to believe that Bruno may have met Digges himself, Bruno may soon have become acquainted with his work.

Seven years previously, Digges had printed the first diagram of the Copernican system in an English book, *A Perfit Description*, which translated important sections of *De Revolutionibus*. In his preface, Digges had attacked Osiander's introduction, which sought to make it appear

that Copernicus meant not as some have fondly excused him to deliver these grounds of the Earth's mobility only as Mathematicall principles, fayned & not as Philosophicall truly asserted.

What exactly had Digges done in *A Perfit Description of the Caelestiall Orbis*? True to his intentions, this work is little more than a summary of the Copernican universe as explained in Book I of *De Revolutionibus*. It was highly popular, being reprinted eight times before the turn of the century and twice during Bruno's stay in England. Certainly, unlike Osiander's "Ad Lectorem", it defends the physical reality of heliocentricity.

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1 At the time Digges was probably overseeing the improved plans for the works and fortifications at Dover Haven. But see F.R. Johnson, *Astronomical Thought in Renaissance England* (Baltimore, 1938), p.169.


3 *A Perfit Description* (1576), sig. M1.

4 ibid.
Watson, Kocher and Johnson would have us believe more. They dispute the statement prevalent in histories of science that Bruno first preached the Copernican system in England together with his own corollary that the universe is infinite in extent. They contend that the development of the idea of an infinite universe really began with Thomas Digges. ¹ This is questionable. Copernicus had himself broached the subject of infinity but left it unanswered:

whether the world has its boundes or is indeed infinite and without bounds, let us leave to be discussed of Physicists; sure we are that the Earth is not infinite but has a limited circumference.²

In De Revolutionibus compared "De Immensitate coeli ad magnitudem terrae", asserting

It therefore follows that the Heavens are immeasurable in comparison with the Earth. Thus the Earth appears as a mere point compared to the Heavens, as a finite thing to the infinite.³

but continues on the same page that

What is proved is only the vast size of the Heavens compared with the Earth, but how far this immensity extends is quite unknown.⁴

F.R. Johnson argues that Digges made important additions of his own, firmly maintaining a universe, with numberless stars extending through infinite space:


The first of the moveable Orbes is that of \( \sqrt[3]{\text{astronomical symbol for Saturn}} \) which being of all other next to that Infinite Orbe immoveable garnished with lights innumerable is also in his course most slow, and once only in thirty years passeth his Periiode ... and this may wel be thought of us to be the gloriusse court of ye great god, whose unserchable worcks invisible we may partly by these his visible coijecture, to whose infinite power and maiesty such an infinit place surmountinge all other both in quantity and quality only is conveniente.

This is very close to Bruno's concept that an infinite God implies an infinite space. However, a closer examination of Digges's context reveals that he did not attempt more than he claimed — a summary of Copernican views.

Digges certainly does not describe an infinite physical universe with any accuracy or consistency — he was not trying to do either. His diagram of the universe, printed in 1576 and in all subsequent editions of A Perfit Description, followed the plan of De Revolutionibus as far as the planets were concerned but, as F.R. Johnson writes,

Instead of representing the sphere of the fixed stars by merely the customary circle standing for the eighth sphere, it scattered the stars out to the border of the diagram, and inserted the legend: THIS ORBE OF STARRES FIXED INFINITELY UP EXTENDETH ITSELF IN ALTITUDE SPHERICALLY, AND THEREFORE IMMOVABLE: THE PALLACE OF FOELICITYE GARNISHED WITH PERPETUALL SHINING GLORIOUS LIGHTES INNUMERABLE, FARR EXCELLINGE OUR SONNE BOTH IN QUANTITY AND QUALITY.

This is where F.R. Johnson stops his quotation; but Digges's legend runs on:

THE VERY COURT OF COLESTIAL ANGELLES DEVOID OF GREEFE AND REPLENISHED WITH PERFITE ENDLESSE LOVE THE HABITACLE OF THE ELECT.

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1 ibid., sig. N3.


3 A Perfit Description, p. 166.
That Johnson misses out the last quotation about this being the traditional **habitaculum Dei** where joy abounds shows that he realized Digges's conclusions were not supported by any scientific data but merely a pious reiteration as to the existence of the **caelum empyreum** of the Church Fathers. It is a direct borrowing from Palingenius's **Zodiaca Vitae**, where we have the **primum mobile** surrounded by infinite space which is devoid of all matter except the purest light and inhabited only by God and the highest order of spirits:

Atqui infinitum corpus posse esse negavit
**Deoctus Aristoteles**: ego in hoc assentior illi
Quippe extra coeli fines non ponimus ullam
Corpus: sed puram, immensam et sine corpore lucem:
Lucem qua nostri solis longe minor est lux:
Lucem, quam terreni oculi non cernere possent:
Lucem, quam ex se se effundit Deus infinitam

This is the way Palingenius tries to reconcile the strictly bounded Ptolemaic universe with the concept that a Deity that is all-powerful can create an infinite universe. Digges's legend would appear to be a Palingenian idea appended to Copernicus, and not original to him. We know that "M. Digges hath the whole Aquarius of Palingenius bie hart: & takes mutch delight to repeate it often."  

It is significant that although Digges accepted Palingenius's notion of this earth being a "darcke starre", he did not believe in the possibility of a plurality of worlds, which seemed the logical conclusion to a universe infinite in extent:

1 **Zodiaca Vitae**, XII, 71-77.


3 *A Perfit Description*, sig. M2.
Some have thought that every starre a world we may well call. The earth they count a darkned starre whereas the least of all.  

Digges also has his sun in the centre, and this is not treated as just another star, whereas Rudolf Thiel rightly points out: Copernicus had banished the Earth from the centre of the universe; Bruno now did the same for the sun. Intuitively he realized that the Sun was only a Star, one among millions of other stars. This second upheaval, even more revolutionary than the first, was in Bruno's time pure prophecy; many generations were to pass before it could be incontrovertibly demonstrated. And yet it sufficed to have put it into words; the idea took permanent root in the minds of all astronomers.*

Foster Watson suggested, long before Johnson and Larkey, that when Kepler, in De Stella Nova in pede Serpentarii, credited the "insane philosophizing" of an infinite universe to Bruno, he did this because he was unaware of Digges's A Perfit Description. This may well be true, but the same could not be said of Digges's own friends and contemporaries in England. William Lower, writing to Hariot on behalf of the philosophers of Trafenti, rose to the defence of Bruno, not of Digges:

Consideringe of Keplers (pag.106, de nova stella serpentariij) reasons by which he indeavours to overthrow Nolanus and Gilberts opinions concerninge the immensitie of the sphere of the starres and that opinion particularlie of Nolanus by wch he affirmed that the eye beings placed in anie part of the universe the apparence would be still all one as such as here. When I was a sayinge that although Kepler had sayd sometings at most that mighte be urged for that opinion of Nolanus, yet of one principall thinges hee had not thought; for although it may be true that if the ey placed in anie starre of \( \odot \) the...

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starres in Capricorne will vanish, yet so Easly not therefore so soundlie concluded (as he thinkes) that therefore towards that partes of the world ther will be a voidnesse or thin scattering of little starres whereas else round about ther will appeare huge starres close thruste togeather.1

If anything, it might be said that Kepler, Hariot and Lower were unaware of the modern interpretations of A Perfit Description, which had never been considered as broaching the subject of a physical infinity. And when in his title Digges included the tail-pieces "by geometrical demonstrations approved", he certainly was not thinking of infinity, which can hardly be verified that way. There is no evidence that shows contemporaries regarded Digges as the apostle of infinity in 16th or 17th century England.

The opposite is true of Giordano Bruno. As Capek points out the fame of having thought out the Copernican system to its end, both in natural philosophy and in metaphysics, belongs to Bruno.2 We know that his De La Cena is the first book to really advocate infinity, while De La Causa and De L'Infinito strongly support this thesis. Lower rightly refers 'immensitie' to Nolanus. Again, in one of the most widely-read books of the 17th century, Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy,3 wherever we find a reference to Digges he is always associated specifically with the rotation of the earth

1 B.M.Add.MSS.6789.f.425, Lower to Hariot, 21 June 1610.


3 It was published six times by 1651.
as a planet and never with infinity, the latter notion being always reserved for Giordano Bruno.

Burton included "Infelix Brunus, as Kepler calls him" among professed atheists who put forward "some prodigious tenent, or paradox of the Earth's motion, of infinite worlds in an infinite waste, so caused by an accidental collision of Motes in the Sun, all which Democritus held ... and are lately revived by Brunus". Later Burton states: "We may likewise insist with Campanella and Brunus that ... there be infinite Worlds and infinite earths or systems, in infinite aether ... Kepler (I confesse) will by no means admit of Brunus' infinite worlds, or that the fixed stars should be so many".

Nevertheless, Bruno was certainly influenced by the climate for Copernicanism created by Digges's book. G. Aquilechia in an interesting introduction to De La Cena suggests Bruno was probably informed of the contents of Digges's work. Of course, references to concepts of an infinite universe and a plurality of worlds were found in many ancient Greek and mediaeval philosophers. It has even been suggested, by twisting out of context parts of De Revolutionibus, that Copernicus himself, despite his own disclaimer, advocated the infinity of the stellar universe.

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2 ibid., p.11.
3 ibid., p.425.
5 A Perfit Description, sig.01v.
The same has happened to Bigges's Palingenian appendage to Copernican theory. It is important to distinguish accurately between the real physical infinity found in Bruno's Italian dialogues and what Bigges actually wrote in *A Perfit Description*. It is possible, however, that seeing the Palingenian additions so closely juxtaposed to Copernican theory in Bigges, Bruno asserted with daring speculation what should "logically" follow. Indeed Bruno's *De Immanso* also juxtaposes Palingenian ideas and that of an infinite universe. Bruno's disdain for this "janitor" Ozander's *Ad Lectorem* to Copernicus's *De Revolutionibus*, and his praise for Palingenius's *Zodiacus Vitae* exactly parallel Bigges, and there is no doubt that it was some comfort for Bruno to know that one of England's leading astronomers was a kindred soul.

In fact, Bruno probably used Bigges's *A Perfit Description* towards the end of the third dialogue of *De La Cena* when Theophilo, Smitho and Prudenzio discuss the fierce debate about geocentricity that the Nolan had had with Torquato and Nundinio at the residence of Fulke Greville.

In *A Perfit Description*, Bigges discusses what inferences, for or against heliocentricity, can be drawn from the experiment of dropping a heavy weight, a plummet, from the top-sail of a moving ship, and measuring the distance from the foot of the mast to the position of impact on deck relative to the speed of the ship. His

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2 *De Immanso*, I.ii, p.292: "Palingenius quasi vigilat."
*Cf. ibid.*: pp.296-298; 307; 303: "Palingenius ... mitte infinitam spacio sine dicore lucem."

correct detailed description, in a book that was supposed to present the reader with "Geometricall Demonstrations", suggests that Digges had actually performed the experiment:

And of thinges ascendinge and descendinge in respect of the worlde we must confess them to have a mixt motion of right & circulare, albeit it seeme to vs right & streight. No otherwise then if in a shippe under sayle a man should softly let a plummet downe from the topppe alongeth by the maste even to the decks: This plummet passing alwayes by the streight maste, seemeth also to fall in a righte line, but beinge by discours of reason wayed his motion is found mixt of right and circulare. 1

Smitho mentions the Diggesian variation of a free-falling body from the mast of a moving ship to combat Mundinio's arguments for a stationary Earth. Instead of the plummet, Bruno uses a stone, but we have virtually the same experiment. The same ship imagery is retained, and Bruno even uses a diagram in an attempt to give the experiment a scientific basis. Unfortunately, however, the accompanying diagram 2 bears little relation to the text, missing out the relevant lettering, A to E, about which Smitho is arguing. Despite this, Bruno's drift is sufficiently clear:

From your reply to the arguments taken from winds and clouds, we shall consider that of the other from the second book of De Caele where Aristotle argues that it would be impossible that a stone thrown straight up high could return by the same rectilinear perpendicularity; but it will be necessary that the very fast movement of the earth will leave the stone far behind to the West. For, this movement being inside the earth, it is necessary that its movement will change every relation to it of straight and oblique; for there is a difference between the motion of the ship and the motion of those things which are in the ship .... All things then which are found on earth move with the earth. And if from outside the earth, anything is thrown towards it, by the latter's

1 ibid., sig. 02.
2 La Cena de le Ceneri, p.77.
movement it loses its rectilinearity. As is shown in the example of the ship sailing along the river. If anybody, standing on the river-bank, straight throws a stone he shall miss his mark, by as much depending on the speed of the course. But if anybody is placed at the top of the mast of this same ship, though it should sail as fast as it can, he shall never miss his mark ... So that if someone who is inside the ship straight throws a stone from the foot to the top of the mast, or of the top-sail, this returns down by the very same course, no matter how fast the ship goes.

After Smitho's exposition of what appears to have been the English experiment, Theophilus himself, who is Bruno's spokesman, comes up with yet another variation that seems to juxtapose the concepts of static and dynamic forces:

If then we have two persons, one of whom stands inside the moving ship and the other outside it, both men sharing with their hand the same circle of air, and from this same position they simultaneously let fall a stone, without imparting to it any impetus [spinta], that of the first will neither lose position nor deviate from its course thus hitting the appointed mark. That of the second will fall far behind. Which proceeds from no other cause than that the stone, dropped by the man who is supported by the ship and consequently moving along with it, has such an impressed force [virtù impressa] which the other stone, falling from the hand of man outside the ship, lacks even though the stones are of the same weight, must cover the same distance and drop from the same position ... which diversity can proceed from no other cause than that things which are somehow linked to the ship, move together with it; and whereas one stone carries within it the same force as that of the moving ship, the other lacks this participation.

It is important to state that Bruno does not put forward these experiments as proof for the Earth's motion. He knows the result is polemically inconclusive, merely disproving the Scholastic contention that if the Earth's movement were real the stone would be left behind to the West. The same ideas were later used by

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1 ibid., pp.77-78.

2 ibid., pp.80-81.
Galileo, J. B. Morin, and Gassendi.

A. O. Lovejoy contends that Bruno seized upon the Copernican theory because it seemingly supported, on the physical level, the concepts he had arrived at through metaphysics. However, it is through a gradual understanding of what heliocentricity implied that Bruno moved towards an infinite universe. In his early books infinity hardly plays a part at all. De LA Cena, published in England in 1584, started the process towards infinity of De L'Infinite and De Immense. Singer points out that Bruno was already lecturing on the "Sphere" in 1581 at Toulouse. There he was, however, mainly concerned with writing and lecturing on Aristotle's De Anima, and not De Caelo.

Bruno's stay in England then was formative of his philosophy, but any borrowed insight is made his own, and Bruno develops in new directions, with the heliocentric theory supporting and developing his metaphysical speculations. Even when Bruno is quite happy merely to propound Copernican theories, he amplifies them in new poetic contexts.

He discourses on comets, sun spots, about our earth not being a perfect sphere, and above all on the concept of homogeneity of substance. To all this he adds the notion of relativity of motion that was established three and a half centuries later, for in a universe expanded to infinity hardly anybody could "claim

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2 D.W. Singer, p. 16.
the distinction of being stationary, and hence nothing could be said absolutely to move".\textsuperscript{1}

Above all he wakened his readers to a concept of infinity. He taught that even our solar system contains planets we do not see, that there are innumerable suns with attendant planets, that every planet is a world with limitless possibilities of life. It is the immense vitality of the Brunian vision to a people accustomed to near horizons that exerted an influence on the science, philosophy and literature of late sixteenth and early seventeenth century.

But Bruno was himself very strongly influenced by the English. Thus astrological controversies and initial inimical reaction to his mnemonics helped to concentrate more fully on Copernican cosmology, whereas Digges's adumbrations and Palingenian additions could have led him to formulate the doctrine of a plurality of worlds in a universe infinitely extended.

We know also that he often adopted the customs of the countries he visited, and often their "modo di parlare". It is tempting to see Bruno borrowing the sun-eyes-goddess imagery that Elizabethan courtiers reserved for their queen. In The Fortress of Perfect Beauty, which was apparently partly written by Sir Philip Sidney,\textsuperscript{2} Queen Elizabeth is equated to a goddess and the Sun whose "bright beames ... deprive Mercury of his wit". She is unassailable as the Sun, and can buffet all storms:

\begin{itemize}
\end{itemize}
no undermining may prevale, for that hir fort is founded upon so firme a rocke, as will not stir for either fraud or force.¹

Bruno's praise of Queen Elizabeth is very reminiscent of this:

Non hai materia di parlar di tanto mature, discreto e provido consiglio, con il quale quell'animo eroico gia' venticenque anni è piu' col cenno de' gli occhi suoi nel centro de' le burrasche d'un mare d'avversita' ha fatto trionfar la pace e la quiete, mantenutasi salda in tanto gagliardi flutti e tumide onde di si varie tempeste, con le quali a tutta posse le ha fatto impeto quest'orgoglioso e pazzo oceano, che da tutti contorni la circonda."²

The question has often arisen as to whether Bruno's works had any influence on such men as Sir Philip Sidney and Fulke Greville. It is maintained that Sidney and Fulke Greville were among Bruno's intimate friends, that he was well received at court and Queen Elizabeth herself read and treasured his books.³ This information can, of course, be gleaned from Bruno's own works but there is little direct evidence to confirm that this was so.⁴

¹ J. Nicholls, Queen Elizabeth's Progresses, II. p.129.

² De L a Cena, I. p.245.
Cf. "Documenti Veneti", XIII. ed. V. Spamanato, p.734: "Ed in particolare nel suo libro Della Causa, principio ed uno io lodo la regina d'Inghilterra e la nomino diva, non per attributo di religione ... in Inghilterra, dove allora mi ritrovava e composi quel libro, se suole dar questo titolo de diva alla Regina."

³ Thomas Zouch, Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Sir Philip Sidney (York, 1606), p.336, n.5.
Cf. Julius Caesaris la Galla, De Phaenomenis in Orbe Lunae, quoted in Opere di Galileo Galilei, ed. A. Favaro (Florence, 1929-1939) III. p.352, where it is said that Queen Elizabeth called Bruno "faithless, impious and godless".

⁴ Cena, I. pp.117;137;145.
Critics like Yates, Symonds, Siebeck and Cook accept Bruno's words and suggest that Sidney could not fail to be influenced by the forthright views and originality of Bruno's moral and cosmological works:

Even more conducive to the philosophical meditation which the authorship of this tractate [A Defense of Poesy] required may have been Sidney's friendship with a famous philosopher and highly gifted nature, who in that year came to England and entered the circle composed of Sidney and his intimate friends.

It has often been maintained that Sidney was the "patron of the famous atheist Giordano Bruno, who was in a secret club with him and Sir Fulke Greville, held in London in 1587", and that this club held frequent assemblies on metaphysical and philosophical themes so dangerous that "the doors of the apartments in which they met were kept shut". This may or may not be true; there is obviously an attempt here to connect Bruno's activities with the School of Night, to whom his works were well known.


2 A.S. Cook, Sidney's Defense of Poesy (Boston, 1890).

3 Thomas Zouch, p. 337. The date is obviously mistaken as Bruno left England in 1585.

4 Ibid., p. 338.
Yet there is evidence that Bruno did meet Sidney, and that each could have influenced the other. I shall argue that it was mainly Sidney who influenced Bruno, and not the other way round. In Bruno's works the impression is constantly given that Bruno looked up to Sidney and would have valued his patronage — even though in reality this may never have been given. In De L a C ena, he speaks of the cultured and virtuous Sidney who

is well known to me, first by reputation when I was in Milan and France, and now since I have been in this country, through having met him in the flesh.

Among the thirty-eight dedications addressed to Sidney, two of them are by Bruno, and Bruno is one of two writers who addressed Sidney specifically as a poet during his lifetime. Bruno's two dedications imply familiarity, and a fair degree of acceptability. Toland reads Spaccio de la Bestia Trionfante as some kind of textbook to Elizabethan free thought. He speaks of "a set of very extraordinary men" who laboured against priestcraft and superstition, and calls Spaccio the most remarkable instance of their liberty in thinking, and of their prudence in concealing their notions ... written with the privity of a certain number among them, who had the few copies that were printed, and the work was particularly dedicated to Sir Philip Sidney.3


A careful study of Sidney's prose and poetry does not unearth the similarities to Bruno that we might have been led to believe. There is no reference to infinity or to plurality of worlds, and only indirectly do we hear of other worlds being inhabited:

Then ev'n of fellowship, O Moone, tell me
Is constant Love deem'd there but want of wit?
Are Beauties there as proud as here they be?¹

This is not surprising since most of Sidney's sonnets ante-date Bruno's most original work on cosmology and were written at least a year before Bruno's arrival in England.² However, it seems to me that those who dismiss the Bruno-Sidney acquaintance completely are mistaken. There is no contradiction in a man of Sidney's character and status striking an acquaintance with the Nolan on the ground that Sidney "shared the profound piety of the learned men of his age."³ Bruno thought otherwise, and recent studies of Sidney show he was not the moral Christian of the consciously created ideal,⁴ but in some ways a man with similar interests to the Nolan. Besides we often tend to forget that practically all of Bruno's works are eminently moral, not least his Spaccio.

We know, for example, that Sidney's method for memorizing poetry is similar to Bruno's memory-system and against that of Ramus:

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² W. A. Ringler, pp.xlii-xliv.


They that have taught the Art of Memory, have shewed nothing so apt for it, as a certaine room divided into many places, well and thoroughly known: Now that hath verse in effect perfectly, every word having his natural seat, which seat must make the word remembered.1

This is confirmed years later, in 1595, when Dicson wrote to Robert Bowes that his defence of Brunian mnemonics was "done by the advice and order of my lord and his nephew, Sir Philip".2

Certainly foedus evangelicum was a dominant motive in Sidney's life. So it was in Bruno's. It is also true that at the time he was discussing philosophy with Bruno, Sidney had started translating Philip du Plessis Mornay's work "concerning the trueness of the Christian religion".3 Many since Fulke Greville's time have considerably inflated Sidney's militancy "against atheisme" so that "sir philip might have all those religious honours whch are wothely dew to his lyfe and death".4 But one can also suggest that Sidney's Protestantism was as much political as religious.5

As a statesman who had witnessed the massacre of St. Bartholomew in France,6 he viewed with some comfort the support the moderate


3 Calendar of State Papers, Dominion, 1586. Vol. 195. art.33.

4 ibid.


6 D.N.B., XVIII, p.221.
Politique movement was gaining under Henri III: "If French can yet three parts in one agree". Thus, though he vehemently supported proposed penal legislation against the Jesuits in 1584-85, he aimed at a political detente that could, despite religious differences, draw England and France closer together in the same way that Bruno suggested at the end of Spaccio.

Although Sidney rejoiced over Languet’s approval of "my intention of giving up the study of astronomy", he possessed Bruno’s curiosity of mind and went on dabbling in astronomy and geometry. Together with his friend Edward Dyer, he studied chemistry under John Dee, and he liked nothing better than to dispute abstruse subjects "in an inn with a few university men". It was Sidney who took Laski to Dee’s den in Mortlake after his Oxford visit. Certainly, he tolerated the use of magia naturalis granting the reality of occult influences. He took astrology seriously enough to have his horoscope cast, and we can see him hitting at the debunkers of astrology such as W. Perkins and W. Fulke:

1 *Astrophel*, Sonnet 30.

2 Cf. Mona Wilson, ed., *Astrophel and Stella*, (1931), p.ix. where it is suggested that Sidney could not serve Elizabeth’s purpose of "maintaining a peaceful equilibrium at the cost of consistency and truth."

3 S.A. Fears, ed., *The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney and Hubert Languet* (1845), p.25. See, ibid., p.28. Sidney’s interest in astronomy is attested in his present to his father of "an instrument for astronomy of silver gilt."

4 Thomas Moufet, *Nobilis, or a View of the Life and Death of Sidney* (San Marino, Cal., 1940), p.75.

5 ibid., p.83.

6 Bodleian MS.Ashmole 356 (5).
Though dustie wits dare scorne Astrologie,
And fooles can think those Lampes of purest light,
Whose numbers, ways, greatnesse, eternitie
Promising wonders, wonder to invite,
To have for no cause birthright in the skie...
For me, I do Nature unidle know
And know great causes, great effects procure. 1

The frequent use of stellar imagery in *Astrophel and Stella* can hardly be said to be borrowed from Bruno. He was probably using for a purely rhetorical purpose the tropes so common in many Italians of the Renaissance including Bembo, Castiglione and Tansillo.

Frances Yates points out that it is characteristic of Bruno that he often links his metaphors with his philosophy, where macro- and microcosm are closely linked and patterned, so that the whole universe may often be read as a hieroglyph under which divine truth lies ready to be decyphered. Through a careful study of emblems, Yates traces a close connection between *Astrophel and Stella* and *Eroici Furori*, concluding that Bruno not only influenced Sidney, but that the *Eroici* is thus seen to be a work of the greatest importance to students of Elizabethan poetry. Through its connections with Sidney it forms a link between that poetry and some of the deepest currents of contemporary thought and feeling.2

Although it may be claimed with some justification that Bruno represents "the French form of Italian influence that is often seen as the immediate inspiration of the English Petrarchists",3 Sidney would have been more directly influenced by Petrarch and French

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3 *ibid.*, n.4.
writers such as Michel de l'Hopital.¹ My contention is that Sidney himself really influenced Bruno to a significant extent, and that Spaccio and Eroici show Bruno competing for Sidney's favour.² Eroici, published in 1585, was one of the last books dedicated to Bruno while he was alive, and post-dates the writing of Sidney's sonnet-sequence to Stella, which was of course published posthumously in 1591, five years after Sidney's death at Zutphen. Though Sidney was still writing sonnets in 1583-85, most of his original poems were written by 1582, before Bruno's sojourn in England, and could not have been influenced by anything Bruno had written till then.³ Yates's idea that in the dedication to Eroici Bruno was tendering advice to Sidney not to indulge in the Petrarchan adoration of the mistress may well be mistaken.

A study of Sidney's sonnets in connection with Eroici Furori shows that Bruno took a leaf out of Sidney's love notebook and adapted it to suit his purpose. The "emblem" approach Bruno would have borrowed from Marco Antonio Epicuro's La Cecaria, the influence of which Bruno acknowledges in De La Cena.⁴ He is also, of course, influenced by other sources especially by Italian love treatises such as Ficino's Sorra lo Amore, Leone Ebreo's Dialoghi d'Amore, Castiglione's Cortegiano and Bembo's Asolani. Eroici Furori's each of two sections contains five

¹ Defence of Poesy (Glasgow, 1752), p.81: "But before all that Hopital of France; than whom I think, that realm never brought forth a more accomplished judgment, more firmly builded upon virtue".
³ W.A. Ringler, p.440.
dialogues in which "Nolano's" sonnets on the heroic lover's pursuit of divine love are explicated in such a manner that the emblematic imagery reflects the "profonda contemplazione" that will make the reader aware of the hidden divine principle within him.

J.C. Nelson has pointed out the "pervasive thematic similarity" that exists between Troici and the Platonic love treatises:

- like almost all writers of Platonic love treatises Bruno calls man a microcosm (II.iii.476). Love is symbolized by fire, because it converts into itself that with which it comes into contact (I.i.340). Love is born from beauty (I.i.338); it enters through the eyes (I.i.345; I.iv.383); it is a god (I.iv.377); a torment (I.iii.366); an ardent desire for the unpossessed (II.iii.483); it is bittersweet.

Many of these ideas were familiar to the Renaissance theorist and sonnet-writer and, of course, find a place in Sidney's poetry. Ringler and Howell show that whereas many took Petrarch as their model, Sidney often refuses to adore his mistress in Petrarchan style, In Vita or In Morte.

As early as Sonnet 5 in Astrophel and Stella, we read:

True that true Beautie Vertue is indeed, Whereof this beauty can be but a shade Which elements with mortall mixture breed: True, that on earth we are but pilgrims made, And should in soule up to our country move: True, and yet true that I must Stella love.

1 I. p.306.


3 Astrophel, Sonnet 5.
In fact as the sonnet-sequence progresses, Petrarchan allegiance is shed off and Sidney's attempt to love his woman physically comes to the fore.¹

Bruno himself seems to have been aware of this and of Sidney's love for Penelope Devereux, Lady Rich.² In recalling the Ulysses-Penelope myth in Eroici, Bruno plays with metaphors in the same way that Sidney plays with words to discover the identity of his beloved:

The principal lesson that love teaches is that one contemplates in shadow the divine beauty, when he cannot do so in a mirror; and like the suitors of Penelope amuses oneself with the maid-servants when one is not allowed to converse with the mistress.³

Bruno's suggestion is that physical attraction ought to be recognised as such. At the end of the Eroici dedication, Bruno's palinode exempts from the strictures on womanhood the ladies who were associated with Sidney. In "Iscusazion del Molano", he forgets the pride, arrogance, envy, falsity, libidousness, avarice and ingratitude "borrowed from Pandora's box"⁴ and sings the praises of

¹ ibid., Sonnets 62-63. This relation between body and soul was becoming increasingly accepted, due to the influence of Aristotelian love theorists. Leone Ebreo had, before Bruno and Sidney, rejected Ficino's concepts of rarified love. See A.J. Smith, "The Metaphysic of Love", RBS, IX (1958), pp.362-375. See Speroni, "Dialogo di Amore", Opere (Venice, 1740), i.6,22-23, where human beings in love are described as "centaurs" whose bodily desires are inextricably mixed with reason.


³ Eroici, II. p.331. Cf. Astrophel, Sonnet 88 where Sidney seems to disagree with this idea.

the virtuous ladies of England, showering them with Petrarchan praise and, like Sidney, addressing them as nymphs and goddesses. Queen Elizabeth herself appears as a sun among stars as she had done in The Fortress of Perfect Beauty. Bruno's reference to "Quell' unica Diana" whom he does not in Eroici wish to name is sufficiently ambiguous, however, to be referring not to Queen Elizabeth merely but also to Penelope Devereux. A riddle to be made out only by those in the know, as Bruno's ironic exclamation implies: "Comprendasi dunque il geno ordinario!". Thus the ladies, with a possible reference to Stella of Sidney's sonnets are described as stars: "E siete in terra quel ch'in ciel le stelle." Thus, argues F.A. Yates, seems to be confirmed in Florio's dedication of his translation of Montaigne's Essays (1603) where, addressing Lady Rich and Sidney's daughter, the Countess of Rutland, he makes a direct reference to Bruno's "Iscusazion":

Or as my fellow Nolano in his heroycall furies wrote (noble Countesse) to your most heroicke father, in a Sonnet to you Ladies of England, You are not women, but in their likenesse Nymphs, Goddesses and of Celestiall substance,
E siete in terra quel ch'in ciel le stelle.

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1 ibid., II. p.312. Cf. Astrophel, Sonnet 37: "Towards Auroras court a Nymph doth dwell." Cf. ibid., Sonnet 82: "Nymph of the gard'n, where all beauties be."

E.G. Fogel, "A Possible Addition to the Sidney Canon," MLN, LXXV (1960), 389-394, marshalls impressive evidence that Sidney wrote part of the pageant.

3 Eroici, II. p.303.

4 ibid.

5 Emblematic Conceit, p.111.
In a book dedicated to Sidney, whose Astrophil is a lover of celestial substances and whose Stella is "the onely Planet of my light", Bruno could thus refer indirectly to Sidney's sonnets circulating in manuscript.

In Astrophel and Stella, Sonnets 72, 92 and 97, as well as in the 5th Song, Sidney refers to Stella as Diana, while in Certain Sonnets, 31, the lover's search leads ultimately to the beauty of Diana. Sidney's reference to Penelope Devereux as his Diana is well attested by his friends and contemporaries. Henry Constable dedicated his Diana (1592) to Lady Rich, and Samuel Daniel in Newman's 1591 edition of Astrophel and Stella evokes Diana as the inspiring influence on the poet. It is through her again that man can rise to the beatific vision, for the earthly Stella is symbolic of another heavenly stella, the "inward sunne" of the "Heroicke minde."

Vertue of late with vertuous care to ster
Love of her selfe, took Stellas shape, that she
To mortall eyes might sweetly shine in her.

1 Astrophel and Stella, ed. Mona Wilson, pp. xvi-xvii: "Astrophel is meaningless in itself, and useless as a disguise for Stella's lover ... But the Astrophel habit has won the day, and readers who share my annoyance at the slur on Sidney's scholarship must substitute Astrophil for themselves."

2 Astrophel, Sonnet 68.


5 Astrophel, Sonnet 25.

6 ibid.
Bruno similarly refers to Diana as the "goddess ... of contemplation and truth, that is the Diana, who constitutes harmony in second intelligence, who receive splendour from the first to communicate it to others."¹

Earlier still, in Eroici Furti, Bruno seemed to equate Stella and Diana, significantly in the Diana-Actaeon sequence where he explains how the soul can rise and fall from heavenly things. Here the second intelligences are compared to a ray of light.

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¹ Eroici, II. p.394: "cioè de la dea de li deserti de la contemplazione de la veritade, cioè de la Diana, ch'è l'ordine di seconde intelligenze, che riportano il splendor ricevuto da la prima, per comunicarlo a gli altri, che son privi di più aperta visione."

² ibid., II. p.349.

³ ibid., II. pp.408-409.
This recalls the mood of several of Sidney's sonnets towards the end of the sequence when, though still subjugated, Astrophel's hope of possessing his Stella has vanished. Sidney boastfully confirms the rumours that link his name to Stella's:

But if I by a happy window passe,
If I but stars upon mine armour beare, 2
Sicke, thirsty, glad (though but of empty glasse)
Your morall notes straight my hid meaning teare
From out my ribs, and puffing prove that I
Do Stella love. Fooles, who doth it deny?

Sidney's Sonnet 103 also seems to provide ideas and images for the close of Erocli Furori. Sidney sees Stella gliding on a boat in the Thames, the personified river happy because Stella's eyes, "those fair planets", shone on his face. Struck by Stella's beauty, Astrophel exclaims that Stella, elsewhere "the only planet of my light", should be translated to the "highest place":

O happie Terns, that didst my Stella beare,
I saw thy selfe with many a smiling line
Upon thy cheerfull face, joye's livery weare:
While those fair planets on thy streams did shine.

The bote for joy could not to daunce forbear,
While wanton winds with beauties so divine
Ravisht, staid not, till in her golden hair
They did themselves (o sweetest prison) twine ... 
She so discheveld, blusht; from window I
With sight thereof cried out; o faire disgrace
Let honor's selfe to thee graunt highest place. 4

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1 Cf. Astrophel, Sonnet 28: "The raines of Love I love, though never slake
And joy therein, though Nations count it shame.

2 W. A. Ringler, p.490, confirms that Thomas Lant pictured Sidney's armour with stars upon it, in engravings he made of Sidney's funeral processions.

3 Astrophel, Sonnet 103.

4 ibid., Sonnet 103.
In the fifth dialogue of *Ercici Furcri*, Bruno writes that the suffering of the lover can change to wonderful happiness if he can see the "two most beautiful stars" in the world. He returns to the Stella theme, saying that only she can effect the cure that will lead the lover to experience divinity:

Allor se avvien, ch'aspergan le man belle
Chiusunque a lor per rimedio s'avvicina,
Provar potrete la virtù divina,
Ch'a mirabil contento
Cangiando il rio tormento,
*Vedrete due più vaghe al mondo stelle.*

This is repeated in the final "Canzone de gl'Illuminati", where Oceanus, symbolizing natural good, vies with Jupiter, symbolizing suprarational truth. Oceanus boasts of the beauty and goodness of this "unique nymph" of the Thames, here assuredly also Queen Elizabeth, so marvellously beautiful that "not even the sun shines so among stars":

*Et io comprendo nel mio vasto seno
Tra gli altri quell paese, ove il felice
Tamesi veder lice,
Oh'ha di più vaghe ninfe il coro ameno,
Tra quelle ottagno tal fra tutte belle,
Per far del mar più che del ciel amante
Te, Giove altitonante,
Cui tanto il sol non splende tra le stelle.*

Jupiter's reply to Oceanus's boast is that since no one can be allowed to be more blessed than he, the laws of sempiternal change require that this Thames nymph and the sun change places, so that she is translated into the heavens as a sun among stars:

*Vaglia il sol tra tue ninfe per costei,
E per vigor di leggi sempiterne
De le dimore alterne
Costei vaglia per sol tra gli astri miei.*

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1 *Ercici*, II. p.432.
2 *ibid.*, II. p.436.
3 *ibid.*
Bruno thus sublimates earthly love, possibly ending with the same hidden allusions to Stella that he had used at the start of *Eroici Furori*—ambivalent in that as in much mediaeval and Renaissance allegory one symbol or image could have a multiple significance. Bruno protects his dual significance by explicitly refusing to name "quell unica Diana ... Comprendasi dunque il geno ordinario!" Bruno's frequent references to Diana and Stella may only partly allude to Queen Elizabeth. They can also refer to Astrophel's Stella. Bruno, I believe, carefully trimmed his sails. Taking care not to mention Elizabeth I by name, as he had done in *Cena*, he contrived a reference to Penelope Devereux which would be clear to Sidney, and perhaps differently interpreted by the "geno ordinario". Sidney himself had transferred attributes he had previously assigned to the queen to his Stella. Whereas in the public pageant "Perfect Beauty" belonged to the Queen, in the private sonnet-sequence it is "Stella's face, whose lecture shewes what perfect beautie is". Bruno adopts this subterfuge. Thus Sidney addresses "Phenix Stella", and Bruno intent on heaping hidden meanings elaborates and expands the concept in two emblem sonnets about "Unico augel del sol, vaga Fenice". Sidney's images

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1 ibid., II, p.303.


3 *Astrophel*, Sonnet 77.

4 ibid., Sonnet 92.

of sun-stars-eyes-moon-fire are constantly employed by Bruno in an emblematic framework, often possessing "hid meaning" and biographical allusions easily understood by the scholar-knight to whom Eroici Furori was dedicated. It is significant that in urging Sidney to sublimate the cult of Stella, Bruno points to another heavenly Stella, paradoxically fusing disparate elements inherent in Sidney's metaphor into a unity. On the linguistic level, this attempt at coincidentia oppositorum succeeds but the ambiguity leads to a basic dichotomy. Often Bruno's 'stella' remains the cruel fair of Sidney's Astrophel "whose grace is such, that when it chides doth cherish". Bruno is thus often seen to be talking about an earthly inconstant mistress:

E' tale la mia stella,
Che sempre mi si toglie, e mai si rende,
Che sempre tanto brucia e tanto splende,
Sempre tanto crudele e tanto bella,
Questa mia nobil face
Sempre si mi martora, e si' mi piace.

That is why Maricondo tells Cesarini in Eroici that the heroic mind aspires to the "inward sunne" not merely through "guardar a le stelle", but through

proceeding to the depths of the mind ... man reaching through simulacra towards the most intimate part of himself, considering that God is near him, with him, and within him".

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1 Cf. Astrophel, Sonnets 44; 62; 108.

2 Ibid., First Song, st.5.

3 Eroici, II. p.364: "Luna incostante." Cf. Astrophel, Sonnets 44; 65; 76.

4 Ibid., II. p.387: "ma procedendo al profondo de la mente ... intonar l'orecchie di simulacri ... venir al piu intimo di sè, considerando che dio è vicino, con sè, e dentro di sè." Cf. Certain Sonnets, 31: "Within my selfe to seeke my onelie hire."
It is for this reason that Bruno displays a tendentious display of anti-feministic satire that persists despite his equating the ladies of Sidney's acquaintance with nymphs and goddesses. The palinode in "Iscusazion" hardly balances the weight of invective against womanhood in the troici introduction.

Bruno's attack on the English vogue for Petrarch is not essentially different from that of Astrophel and Stella, though it is more radical. Sidney had written:

You that poor Petrarch's long deceased woes,
With new-borne sighs and denisend vit do sing;
You take wrong waies, those far-fet helps be such,
As do bewray a want of inward touch. 1

Far from attacking Sidney's concept of womanly love, Bruno was in reality endorsing it. Could one otherwise visualize a Bruno in urgent need of patronage directly addressing Sidney in the vein he does at the start of his troici?

D'cosa veramente, o generosissimo Cavaliero, da basso, bruto, e oporco ingegno d'essersi fatto costantemente studioo; et aver affisso un curioso pensiero circa o sopra la bellezza d'un corpo feminile. Che spettacolo, o dia buono! più vile et ignobile può presentarsi ad un occhio di terzo sentimento, che un uomo cogitabunde, afflitto, tormentato, triste, maninconioso, per divenir or freddo, or caldo, or fervente, or tremante, or pallido, or rosso, or in mina di purplesso, or in atto di risoluto, un, che spende il miglior intervallo di tempo e li più scelti frutti di sua vita corrente, destillando l'elixir del cervello can mettere in concetto, scritto e sigillar in publici monumenti quello continue torture, que' gravi tormenti, que' razionali discorsi, que' faticosi pensieri, e quelli amarissimi studj, destinati sotto la tirannide d'una indagna, imbecille, stolta e poza sporcaria? 2

1 Astrophel, Sonnet 15.
2 Troici, II. p. 299.
Possibly through Florio, Bruno would have read and discussed the Stella sonnets, recognizing the basic anti-Petrarchan tendencies that underlie at least some of them. Bruno agrees with Sidney that women must be loved as women, not as goddesses, despite the palinode,¹ which seems to be conscious "self-contradiction".² Perhaps borrowing a cue from Sidney,³ Bruno puts forward sexual love as "quel più dolce pomo che vuol produr l'orto del nostro terrestre paradiso".⁴ J.C. Nelson points out that the real target of Bruno's apparent diatribe against women is not "vulgar love" at all — which is justified in several passages — but the refined and studied love celebrated by Petrarch and the countless Petrarchists of Bruno's century.⁵

Bruno knew that Sidney very often addressed his Stella in terms different from those used by other poets for their "a Dori, a Cintia, a Lesbia, a Corinna, a Laura."⁶

¹ ibid., II. p.301: "Voglio dire, che a le donne, ben che tal volta non bastino gli onori et ossequi divini, non per ciò se le denno onori et ossequi divini. Voglio, che le donne siano così onorate et amate, come denno essere amate et onorate le donne."


³ See E.G. Fogel, "A Possible Addition to the Sidney Canon," p.394, n.13: "An entry in the catalogue of the sale of Benjamin Heywood Bright's manuscripts at Sotheby's in 1844 reads as follows: 101 Francse (Abraham) Yeeld, Yeeld, Yeeld, O Yeeld:omnia Vincit Amor. Venus est Signissima pomo. An Original and Unpublished work by this singular writer addressed to Sir Philip Sidney ... The discovery of the manuscript purchased by "Rodd," or perhaps of a detailed description of it, may afford something very close to positive proof of Sidney's authorship of the Fortress of Beauty sonnets."

⁴ Eroici, II. p.300.


⁶ Eroici, II. p.302.
O give my passions leave to run their race ... 1
Let folk orecharg'd with braine against me crie.

where indeed we have poetry of physical seduction of the type
approved by Bruno: 2

Let Vertue have that Stella's selfe; yet thus
That Vertue but that body graunt to us. 3

Sidney lists the reputedly lecherous Edward IV as "first in praise"
because he dared to lose his crown "rather than faile his love". 4
A common catalogue of his lady's charms ends rather suggestively:

"Yet ah, my Mayd'n Muse doth blush to tell the best." 5

Sidney later prays "that my sunne go downe with meeker beames
to bed", 6 because it would have been justice to cuckold Lord Rich:
"Is it not evill that such a Devill wants hornes?" 7 In fact when
Stella promises Astrophel conditional supremacy over her heart if
he remained virtuous, he throws aside all principle and concludes:

And though she give but thus conditionly
This realme of blisse, while vertuous course I take,
No kings be crown'd, but they some covenants make. 8

1 Astrophel, Sonnet 64.
2 Eroici, II, p.300: "Ma che fo io? che penso? Son forse nemico de la generazione? ... Anzi aggiungo che per quanti regni e beatitudini mi s'abbiano possuti proporre a nominare, mai fui tanto savio o buono, che mi potesse venir voglia di castrarmi o dovenir eunuco ... Io non credo d'esser legato ... Nè credo d'esser freddo se a refrigerar il mio caldo non penso che basterebbono le nevi del monte Cauco o Nifeo."
3 Astrophel, Sonnet 52.
4 ibid., Sonnet 75.
5 ibid., Sonnet 77.
6 ibid., Sonnet 76.
7 ibid., Sonnet 78.
8 ibid., Sonnet 69.
The "vertuous course" is conveniently abandoned, and he is soon found using erotic symbolism in an attempt at physical seduction:

Most sweet-faire, most faire-sweet, do not alas,
From coming nears those Cherries banish me:

For though full of desire, emptie of wit,
Admitted late by your best-graced grace,
I caught at one of them a hungrie bit. 1

It is thus evident that Sidney had no need of Bruno's advice about viewing sceptically the love of women. Towards the end of the sequence, Sidney was prepared to relinquish his pursuit of Stella but says he can never be free from her thrall, and his sequence ends disconsolately:

So strangely (alas) thy works in me prevale,
That in my woes for thee thou art my joy,
And in my joyes for thee my only annoy. 2

At this point in time Sidney will not sublimate his emotion, nor does he want to move up the Platonic scala and aspire towards a divine object. Eroici urges him to sublimate his cult of Stella and to seek within himself the way to the One that Sidney had looked towards in Certain Sonnets 31 and 32.

Though the play on words in these sonnets may suggest that they could have been addressed to Lady Rich, 3 the overwhelming evidence is that they antedate the Astrophel and Stella sequence.

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1 ibid., Sonnet 82.
2 ibid., Sonnet 108.
3 Thus "Thou web of will, whose end is never wrought" to signify Penelope; and the pun on her husband's surname: "Grow rich in that which never taketh rust," in Certain Sonnets 31 and 32. See D.G. Hoffman, The Explicator, VIII, 1950.
and were written two years before Bruno reached England. W.A. Ringler confirms that Certain Sonnets 31 and 32 appear at the end of the Clifford MS transcribed in 1581 which contains the third 'state' of the Old Arcadia. ¹

It is possible, then, that Bruno used these sonnets as a springboard for his inspiring Actaeon sequence in Eroici Furori, ² a careful study of which shows how far Bruno was falling in line with ideas adopted earlier by Sidney in a book submitted to his "uncoparable judgment". ³

Published in 1585, Bruno's Actaeon sequence and its commentary touch on nearly all the points adopted by Sidney in 1581 for his 'renunciation' sonnets; the connection being enforced throughout by similar imagery and verbal echoes. Indeed Bruno's commentary appears to fit his own as well as Sidney's sonnets.

The Diana-Actaeon myth is adopted in a startlingly similar manner. In each case the hounds stand for the poet's thoughts intent on finding beauty and fulfilment through the search for hidden truths. Both authors are driven by fate, blinded by fond fancy and both realize, at a price, that the kingdom of God lies within them. This leads to a moral and intellectual reform.

² Eroici, II. pp.339-353.
³ See p.119,n.1.
There now follows an examination of Sidney's 'renunciation' sonnets, with the concepts put forward in Bruno's Actaeon sequence, the allegorical core of *Eroici Furori*, which seems to have been borrowed partially from Sidney:

Thou blind man's marke, thou fool's self chosen snare
Fond fancie's scum, and drags of scattered thought,
Band of all evils, cradle of causelesse care,
Thou web of will, whose end is never wrought;

**Desire, desire I have too dearly bought,**
*With price of mangled mind thy worthless ware,*
*Too long, too long asleepe thou hast me brought,*
*Who should my mind to higher things aspire.*

In Sidney, the lover is unnamed but the phrasing suggests the Diana-Actaeon myth. In Bruno the lover, Actaeon, lives a life of causeless care, searching for a fading feminine beauty that similarly turns out to represent a band of evils. He becomes his own snare, the hunter turned hunted, because, like Sidney's Astrophel, he has lived "according to the foolish world, sensual, blind and fanciful." Seemingly driven by fate, his thought is scattered and uncertain:

Il giovan Actaeon, quand' il destino
Gli drizza il dubio et incauto cammino;
as he follows enmeshed in his own will, "perche l'operazion de l'intelletto precede l'operazion de la voluntade."

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1 *Certain Sonnet*, 31.

2 *Eroici*, II. p.299: "un uomo cogitabundo, afflitto, tormentato, triste, maninconioso, per divenir or freddo, or caldo, or fervente, or tremante."

3 *ibid*: "strumenti di morte del vascello di Pandora."

4 *ibid.*, p.341.


6 *ibid.*, p.339.
Sensual desire extorts the same price as in Sidney, the hounds standing for the lover's thoughts also mangling his mind:

*Troppò infelice fico mi riportate:*

*Mi sbrianate, e volate, ch'io non viva.*

It is then the lover becomes aware he has been ensnared too long in female adoration which has rendered him sleepy "lazy and quiet" and which Bruno, as with Sidney, equates with the sleep of the soul. Shaking this off, the lover aspires to higher things, "ad annidarsi alto applicandolo a più alto proposito et intento".

In Sidney's sestet the lover, brought to the edge of ruin, must learn his moral lesson:

*But yet in vaine thou hast my ruine sought, In vaine thou madest me to vaine things aspire, In vaine thou kindlest all thy smokie fire; For vertue hath this better lesson taught, Within my selfe to seeke my onelie hire; Desiring nought but how to kill desire.*

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1 ibid., p.340.
2 ibid., p.349.
3 ibid., p.341: "da la gabbia, in cui stava ozioso e quiete."
4 ibid., p.341.
5 Certain Sonnet, 31.
In Bruno, too, the road to reform is clear, and again he seems to follow Sidney. Inordinate desire in both intellect and will must be controlled: "qua finisce la sua vita secondo il mondo passo, sensuale, cieco e fantastico e comincia a vivere intellettualmente"; while the moral lesson is just as effectively spelt out as in Sidney — the kingdom of God lies within self: "perche gia avendola contratta in se, non era necessario di cercare fuer di se la divinita".

Sidney's Certain Sonnet 32 is an amplification and a continuation of ideas he had broached in the preceding one, with the renunciation being made explicit from the start:

*Leave me o Love, which reaches but to dust, And thou my mind aspire to higher things: Grow rich in that which never taketh rust: What ever fades, but fading pleasure brings.*

*Draw in thy beames, and humble all thy might, To that sweet yoke, where lasting freedomes be: Which breakes the clowdes and opens forth the light, That doth both shine and give us sight to see.*

Bruno's lover also adopts a Platonic stance and would separate spirit from matter to achieve a solution "as the Platonists would have it", to rise to higher contemplation of the One:

*Quando il mio pondo greve Converra che natura mi disciolga*.

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2. Ibid., p.341.
3. Ibid., pp.340-341.
4. Certain Sonnet, 32.
5. Ercoli, II. p.349.
6. Ibid.
and could almost have been translating Sidney when he wrote:

Lasciarni, vita, ch'al mio sol rimonte
Fatta gemino rio senz' il mio fonte.

The sestet of Sidney's second "renunciation" sonnet then revolves around the theme of *contemptu mundi*; shedding matter, the soul seeks a reunification with its source:

O take fast hold, let that light be my guide;
In this small course which birth draws out to death,
And think how evil becometh him to slide,
Who seeketh heav'n, and comes of heavenly breath.
Then farewell world, thy uttermost I see,
Eternall life maintaine thy life in me.²

The same kind of solution is attempted by Bruno's disillusioned lover. Nothing is left him but the acute sense of his own poverty and misery. He earnestly prays that death come to his succour now that he is "deprived of life":

Altro non mi rimane, che il senso de la mia povertà,
infelicità e miseria. E per che non son oltre lasciata
da questo? per che non mi soccorre la morte, ora che son
priva de la vita? A che mi trovo le potenze naturali
prive de gli atti suoi? Come potro io sol pascermi di
specie intelligibilie, come di pane intellettuale, se la
sustanza di questo supposto è composta?³

Being of "heavenly breath", the lover seeks fulfilment in death.

There is a sense in which Bruno also accepted this final solution:

Mio spirto più ch'il suo rivale vale,
S'ove l'error non più l'assale sale;⁴

but throughout this life, spirit and matter must be combined in
harmony, and the soul "seeks to recall thought to the care of the

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2 Certain Sonnet, 32.
3 Broici, II, p.347.
4 ibid., p.352.
body". This short life which "birth draws unto death" must also be respected and enjoyed:

È legge del fato e de la natura, che ogni cosa s'adopra secondo la condizion de l'esser suo. Per che dunque, mentre perseguitate il nettare avaro de li dei, perdete il vostro presente e proprio, affliggendovi forse sotto la vana speranza de l'altrui? Credete, che non si debba sdegnar la natura di donarvi l'altro bene, se quello che presentemente v'offre, tanto stoltamente disprezzate?

Sdegnarà il ciel dar il secondo bene
A chi il primo don caro non tiene.

For matter and spirit, Bruno explains in his commentary, are not two contrary essences, but one essence "suggetta a doi termini di contrarietade", a unity arising out of the coincidence of opposites, so that a valid description of the Platonic scala for Bruno involves a constant movement, not only upward towards "L'alto concetto", but downwards into matter:

Come, quando il senso monta a l'immaginazione, l'immaginazione a la ragione, la ragione a l'intelletto, l'intelletto a la mente, allora l'anima tutta si converte in dio, et abita il mondo intelligibile, onde per il contrario disconde per conversion al mondo sensibile, per via de l'intelletto, ragione, immaginazione, senso, vegetazione.

It is through this cyclic regeneration of events in which matter and spirit coincide that one can make "real progress towards that

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1 ibid., p.349.
2 ibid., p.340.
3 ibid., p.348.
4 ibid., p.349.
5 ibid., Cf. Above, p.126, n.5.
6 Inoici, II. p.344.
7 ibid., p.349.
8 ibid., p.348.
which is really beautiful,"¹ an eternity "which has neither margin
nor is circumscribed".² It is love of both matter and spirit that
leads towards ultimate perfection. Contemptu mundi is forgotten,
and a note of exhilaration, probably borrowed from Ficino, is
introduced:

Io per l'altteza de l'oggetto mio
Da suggetto più vil dovegno un dio.³

The rejection of dualism is never completely achieved in Bruno's
Eroici for matter is always seen to remain 'inferior', but never-
theless a harmonization of these opposites into one eternal
undivided substance is consistently attempted. Eroici Furori
stubbornly persists in attempting a synthesis out of the disparate
positions taken by Sidney, for Platonism in Certain Sonnets 31 and
32 and against it in Astrophel and Stella.

In this context, we may also examine a sonnet, almost certainly
by Sidney which is found in the Bodleian Library:

The darts, the beames, the stringe so stronge I prove;
Which my chief partte, doth passe throughge, parche, and tye,
That of the stroke, the heat, the knott of love,
Wounded, inflam'de, knitt to the deathe I dye.

Hardned and coulde, farr from affections' a snare
Was once my mynde, my temper, and my lyfe,
Whiles I that syghte, desyre, and vow forbare,
Which to avoyde, quenche, loose nought booted stryfe.

Yet will not I grieue, ashes, thralldom change
For other's ease, their frutte, or free estate,

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¹ ibid., p.343.

² ibid.

³ ibid., p.337. Cf. Ficino, Sopra le Amore (Florence, 1544),
p.238: "innalza l'uomo sopra lo uomo: et in Dio lo converte."
So brave a shott, fear fyre, and bewtve strange
Did me Pearce, burne, and bynde, long since and late.
And in my woundes, my flames and bondes I fynde
A salve, fresh ayre, and hygh contented mynde.1

Sidney's imagery and argumentation seem to find their annotation in Eroici Furori, where Bruno's lover is held prisoner in the same manner, "con tue punti, tuei vampi, e tue catene",2 which Bruno glosses:

The darts or pricks are those news which stimulate and waken the yearning lover; the flames are the beams of present beauty burning whoever longs for them; the chains are the parts and circumstances that enchain the attention of the lover's eyes ... In such a manner that the heart ... fears that her wound will heal, the fires burn out, the knot be untied.3

But Bruno might have been using Bembo's Asolani as his starting point.4 When the beams emanating from the mistress's eyes are withdrawn, then paradoxically Bruno's lover sees the true light, Sidney's "sight to see". In Bruno, true loving, or divine contemplation, which is the chief aim of Eroici Furori, also proceeds from "that seeing":5

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1 This poem is attributed to "SPS" in Bodleian MS Rawl. poe.85. It is immediately preceded and followed by two other poems by Sidney, and also subscribed "SPS". A transcript in B.M. Harleian MS.7392 is, however, anonymous. MS Rawl. poe.85 is an anthology of courtly verse compiled by a Cambridge student in the late 1580's. It contains 143 poems, 23 of which are certainly by Sidney. Cf. W.A. Ringler, pp.517-518. Cf. Above, p.127, n.1.

2 Eroici, II, p.342.

3 ibid., p.344.

4 Gli Asolani e le Rime (Turin, 1952), p.27: "Voi mi poneste in foco
Per fornir amei 'l mio di; Donna, perire."

5 Eroici, II, p.345.
Per che, mentre alcuno sta mirando la figura manifesta a gli occhi, non viene ancora ad amare; ma da quello istante che l'animo concipie in sé stesso quella figurata non più visibile, ma cogitabile, non più dividua, ma invidua, non più sotto specie di cosa, ma sotto specie di buono o bello, allora subito nasce l'amore. Or questo è quel vedere, dal quale l'anima vorrebbe divertir gli occhi de' suoi pensieri. ¹

A similar kind of parallel can be drawn in discussing the manner in which both Sidney and Bruno utilized what was often a collective and almost anonymous influence derived from the concepts and imagery of such other Italian sonneteers as Guidiccione, Bembo, Francesco Maria Molza, Marco Antonio Epicuro and Luigi Tansillo whom Bruno admired very much. F.A. Yates makes very valid comparisons when she discusses Bruno's use of emblematic conceits and Sidney's imagery. She discusses this mostly in relation to the stars-eyes equation in both poets, and comes to the conclusion that Sidney was heavily indebted to Bruno for his manner and matter. ² This, I think, is mistaken. There is the problem of dating, of course, and all reliable evidence shows that Eroici Furori post-dates Certain Sonnets as well as much of the poetry in Astrophel and Stella. ³

Yates's comparisons still hold good but, as I see it, show Bruno utilizing Sidney's sequence on earthly love and adapting it for his heavenly 'Canticle', ⁴ using Petrarchan phraseology with a hieroglyphic meaning, something which Sidney denied his poems possessed:

¹ ibid., p.346.
² Emblematic Conceit, p.121.
³ W.A. Ringler Jr., p.440.
⁴ Eroici, II. p.301.
You that with allegorie's curious frame,
Of other's children changelings use to make,
With me these paines for God's sake do not take:
I list not dig so deepe for brassen fame.
When I say 'Stella', I do mean the same
Princesse of Beautie, for whose only sake
The raines of Love I love, though never slake
And joy therein, though Nations count it shame,
I beg no subject to use eloquence,
Nor in hid wayes to guide Philosophie:
Look at my hands for no such quintessence;

Bruno's cast of mind, as shown in his De Umbria Idearum, Cantus Circensa and Explicatio, was towards something more esoteric than the accepted commonplaces of Petrarchist allegory, which he attacked. He would reach for the quintessence, in "hid wayes to guide Philosophie" would perhaps make changelings from others' children. But he was sure none better than Sir Philip Sidney could understand his drift:

To you therefore I present these, for the Italian will reason with him who understands; my poetry lies under the censure and protection of a poet; my philosophy will make itself clear to your genius.

This shows Bruno very much aware of Sidney's capabilities as poet and critic. In fact, apart from Scipione Gentile, Bruno is the only other writer to address Sidney specifically as a poet. A study of the traditional stars-eyes equation, so common in Sidney and Bruno, shows the latter was paying Sidney's "uncoparable judgment" the compliment of imitating his imagery. Thus sonnet 42 in Astrophel and Stella and sonnet 47 in Eroici Furori are strangely very much

1 Astrophel, Sonnet 28.
2 Eroici, II. p.302.
3 Ibid., p.311.
   Cf. Ibid., p.302.
4 W.A. Ringler, p.lxi.
alike. Again in Sidney's sonnet 48, the dominant image is that of stars and eyes, possessing the double-function of feeding the lover's vision and contemporaneously impairing it. The earthly lover can in the sight of his beloved visualize love, humility and virtue, wishing ever to remain in the benevolent light. But the stars-eyes also emanate harmful rays causing in each case "cureless wounds". Despite this, the lover in Sidney can still say, as with Petrarch:¹

Dear Killer, spare not thy sweet cruel shot;  
A kind of grace it is to slay with speed.²

Bruno's poem ends in a similar manner:

Open the portals of your eyes my lady  
And gaze on me if you would slay me.³

Bruno's commentary tries to lift this image from the Petrarchist level onto that of the Biblical Canticle. He possibly finds a clue in Sidney's use of 'grace' with its spiritual connotations, and links this with the imagery Sidney had used earlier:

Stella oft sees the very face of woe,  
Painted in my beclouded stormy face.⁴

In the commentary Bruno explains that "the face in which shines the story of his woes, is the soul as it is exposed to superior grace ... but God often ... does not seek to quieten the troubled sky of the human mind by ridding it of shadows and enigmas".⁵

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¹ Cf. to Petrarch's Rime (207): "Un modo di pietate, occider tosto."  
² Cf. John Webster, The Duchess of Malfi, IV.ii.108: "It is some mercy when men kill with speed."
³ Astræphel, Sonnet 48. 
⁴ Aroici, II. p.390.
⁵ Aroici, II. p.391.
In Bruno, however, the person addressed is no longer an earthly mistress but has been transformed into the Deity:

The lover at last prays that he does not suffer deprivation of the light; because although those looks can slay him, they also give him life ... the supreme joy, which the Cabalists call *mors oculi*, the same which is eternal life that man can glimpse now and possess absolutely in eternity.¹

What Bruno here seems to be doing is to borrow images traditionally employed by the Petrarchists, and infused with personal emotion by Sidney, and accaparating them for the Deity instead of the mistress. In other words, he is merely being original in their application in a different framework, "in hid wayes to guide Philosophie"; leading the heroical enthusiast towards "l'alto concetto", an idea which Sidney, cavalier-fashion, brushed aside at the time he was writing *Astrophel and Stella*:

Some do I heare of Poet’s furie tell,
But (God wot) wot not what they meane by it.²

This was an *Astrophel* intent on addressing his lady about his physical love towards her. He is thus not consciously willing to allow his love to lead ultimately up the platonic scala to be sublimated into a love of God. Bruno thought he had found a new way out by allegorically manipulating Sidney's own earlier 'adumbrations' of heroic frenzies in *Certain Sonnetu* 31 and 32. Bruno writes of the love towards the One in the same emblems and imagery normally reserved for the mistress in such a manner that, were it not for the prose commentary, it would be difficult to

¹ ibid.

² *Astrophel*, Sonnet 74.
distinguish between heavenly love and profane in *Eroici Furori*. Bruno had good reason to believe Sidney might agree with his concept of heroic love. In *Defence of Poesy*, Sidney consolidated what he had already written in the 'renunciation' sonnets of 1581; that the aim of learning and all experience is:

    to know, and by knowledge to life up the mind from the dungeon of the bodie, to the enjoying of his owne divine essence.1

a suggestion adopted by Bruno in:

    Et io, merce' d'amore
    Mi cangio in dio da cosa inferiore.2

If my conclusions are correct, we here have the inventive Bruno moulding into a new shape in quite an original manner some of the ideas and images found in Sidney and other sonnet writers, just as he had adapted astrological and scientific controversies in Richard Harvey and Digges to clarify his position and infuse originality into his own cosmological system.3 Sidney then remains an important chain linking Elizabethan to Italian culture, not merely because he was influenced by the works of Petrarch and Bembo, but also because his reactions to either in turn seem to have affected the ethical concepts of Giordano Bruno. Time and again, Bruno seems to adopt an image from Sidney, exhibiting his inventiveness by expanding it into an emblematic conceit for Sidney to decypher "per che l'Italiano ragioni con chi l'intende".4 Addressing Sidney, "singolarmente parlo a voi, eccellente Signore",5 Bruno claims:

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1 *Defence of Poesy* (III.ii.)
2 *Eroici*, II. p.338.
3 See Above, Chapter 4.
4 *Eroici*, II. p.311.
5 Ibid., II. p.302.
E' possibile di convertir quasivogla fola, romanzo, sogno et profetico enigma, et transferirle in virtù di metafora et pretesto d'allegoria a significar tutto quello che piace a chi più comodamente è atto a stiracchiare gli sentimenti, et far quasi tutto di tutto, come tutto essere in tutto.

Eroici Furori is just such an exercise in metaphor and allegory at the basis of which may lie the poetry of Sir Philip Sidney.

1 ibid.
A Crucible in England

We have already mentioned Bruno's possible indebtedness to Digges. Digges, however, commended the "philosophie of that grave philosopher Aristotle", whereas Bruno was not only a radical Copernican but also a resolute atomist whose doctrines on the minima and the infinity of the universe rejected practically the whole of Aristotelian physics and cosmology. This is where Bruno seems to have been allied with the group known as "the School of Night". We have also already seen William Lower defending the "opinion of Nolanus" against the strictures of Kepler in a letter to Thomas Hariot, and indeed with anti-Aristotelianism gathering momentum, Henry Percy, Thomas Hariot, Nicholas Hill, William Lower and other "Traventane philosophers" preferred to follow Bruno.

Indeed, as well as other members of the School of Night, they were themselves avowed atomists and Copernicans, some of them believing in infinity of worlds, and these positions combined in the three-pronged attack on Aristotelian natural philosophy as found in Bruno.

1 See A Perfit Description, sig. M1.

2 See Above, p. 108.

3 See, M.C. Bradbrook, The School of Night (Cambridge, 1936). Arguments against the existence of this "school" are well marshalled by E.A. Strathmann, Sir Walter Raleigh (New York, 1951), pp.262-271.

4 See, idem., "The Textual Evidence for The School of Night," MLN, LVI (1941), 176-186.
Most of them were conversant with Bruno's works. Henry Percy owned and annotated Bruno's De gli Eroici Furori,¹ as well as De Specierum Scrutinium et Lampade Combinatoria Raymundi Lulii.²

"Deep searching Northumberland",³ or the Wizard Earl as he was better known, had drawn around him some of the most brilliant minds of the period — Christopher Marlowe, George Chapman, George Peele and John Donne.⁴

Percy himself was interested not just in Bruno's cosmology but also in more esoteric works about a world-soul and Hermetic lore. This is made evident by Peele:

The Muses' love, patron and favourite ...  
To whom the heaven lies open as her book  
By whose direction undeceivable,  
Leaving our Schoolmen's vulgar trodden paths,  
And following the ancient revered steps  
Of Trismegistus and Pythagoras,  
Through uncouth ways and unaccessible  
Dost pass into the spacious pleasant fields  
Of divine science and philosophy.⁵

F.A. Yates suggests that in an untitled essay, Percy seems to be borrowing directly from Bruno's Eroici when he speaks about the difficulty of reconciling the pursuit of truth with an earthly love:


3 George Chapman refers to Henry Percy in this manner in dedicating his "The Shadow of Night" (1594) to Matthew Roydon.


Here did I behold a demonstration declaring the height of the aier with no small wonder, because it had ense bene taught me, Nullum vacuum in rerum natura. Unchaining my mynd from the former conceites to behold the project of this great promiser, I studied by still interrupted with the worthes of my Mistria which had sealed deeper impression in my memory.

Among members of this school we find the same concern with a liberation of man's mind and the acceptance of an expanding universe that we find in Bruno:

... my working soule
That in her highest pitch, she may controule
The court of skill, compact of misterie,
Wanting but franchisement and memorie
To reach all secrets: then in blissful trance
Raise her (deare Night) to that perseverance,
That in my torture, she all earths may sing
And force to tremble in her trumpeting
Heavens christall temples.

In their writings, aspiration and doubt militate. In studying physics and astronomy they often sought for the truth underlying phenomena:

All you posset with indepressed spirits,
Indu'd with nimble, and aspiring wits,
Come consecrate with me, to sacred Night
Your whole endeavours, and detest the light.
Sweete Peacees richest crowne is made of starres,
Most certaine guides of honored Marinars,
No pen can any thing eternall wright,
That is not steeped in humor of the Night.


2 M.C. Bradbrook, p.130 equates this phrase with the School of Night.

3 The painful striving towards new earths is here very reminiscent of Bruno.


Perhaps the greatest mind in Percy's circle was Thomas Hariot. He had probably been introduced to Percy in 1588,¹ and his most productive work was carried out in the Earl's residence, Sion House near Isleworth, between the years 1590 and 1615.

Hariot had been using telescopes contemporaneously with Galileo² and discovered sun spots about the same time.³ It is possible he had been set on this particular track by reading "Maculam qui in sole notari"⁴ in Bruno's De Monade, or his De Minimo, where they are more fully discussed:

Ergo non mediocre mini comperta labore
Quae in solis disco inveniet descripta⁵

Hariot was also among the first to accept Brunian elliptical orbits and, if we are to credit Lower's veracity, discovered many other things.

I remember long since you told me as much, that the motions of the planets were not perfect circles ... You taught me the curious way to observe weight in water, and within a while Ghetaldi comes out with it in print. A little while before Viète prevented you of the garland for the great invention of algebra.⁶

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¹ Biographia Brittanica (1747-66), IV, pp.2539-43.
² B.M.Add.MSS.6789, f.425, Lower to Hariot, 21 June 1610: "We are here so on fire with these things that I must resume my request and your promise to send mee of all sorts of these Cylinders."
³ Arthur Berry, A Short History of Astronomy (1898), p.154. Galileo saw sun-spots in 1610 but proclaimed their discovery publicly in 1612, by which time they had been independently observed by Hariot, the Dutch John Fabricius and the German Christopher Scheiner.
⁴ De Monade, (Frankfurt, 1591), p.337.
⁵ De Triplici, Minimo et Mensura (Frankfurt, 1591), p.5.
Hariot's mathematical reputation rests mainly on his *Artis Analyticae Praxis* itself composed as a textbook for the instruction of the Earl of Northumberland, and published posthumously from the notes of Walter Warner and Thomas Aylesbury. A careful study of Hariot's manuscripts besides proving Hariot's interest in algebraic negative and complex roots entirely neglected in *Artis*, yields more parallels with Bruno.

Hariot's work is inextricably linked to Bruno in a direct reference that has escaped notice. Hariot is here seen to be very much concerned with Bruno's interpretation of motion in both Space and Time:

Interpretatio NOLANI.
De Motu. Elementares propositiones T. Tempus 4
S. Spatium 5
G. Gran

For Bruno infinite time was a mode of infinite space. All estimates of direction and position were relative. Motion is rendered meaningless within the concept of infinity, but Bruno conceived each of the


2 J.A. Lohne, pp.186-200.
Cf. H. Kargon, p.22. n.1.

3 B.M. Add. MSS. 6782-89.

4 B.M. Add. MSS. 6785. f.310v.
Cf. Bruno's *De L'Infinito*, II. p.93: "Non bisogna cercare s'èstra il cielo sia loco, vacuo o tempo ... Estra dunque l'imaginata circonferenza e convesso del mondo e tempo; per che vi e la misura e ragione di moto, per che vi sono di simili corpi mobili."
D.W. Singer, p.68 writes that in a paper read before the Elizabethan Literary Society in February 1933, Miss Ethel Seaton pointed out that the words "Nolanus, de immenso et mundi" were scribbled in one of Hariot's manuscripts. I have not been able to trace this reference.

5 De Immense, I.i. pp.244-247.

6 *De L'Infinito*, II. p.36.
numerous worlds to be moving on its own course in relation to other worlds in time and space, both as an autokinetic entity and as part of the infinite whole. This concept of relativity seems to have been accepted by Hariot, as is attested by Lower’s letter to him in defence of Bruno’s theories:

For sayd I (having heard you say often as much) what if in that huge space between the starres and Saturne their remaine ever fixed infinite number wch may supplie the apperance to the eye that shall be placed in the wch by reason of those lesser magnitudes doe flie our sight. What if about & that move other planets also such as appeare not.

Often cumbered with incomplete diagrams and sometimes unrelated numbers, Hariot’s manuscripts show that he often sought the key to the explanation of phenomena in the kind of atomism sustained by Bruno. Indeed, Hariot’s concept of indivisibility of atoms is as much concerned with “point, line and surface” as Bruno’s is.

For both Hariot and Bruno, atomism is directly linked to the two infinities — minimum and maximum — in a parallel anti-aristotelian framework. In his section entitled “De Infinitis” Hariot discusses the coincidence of minimum and maximum in the same manner as Bruno.

This is one page from Hariot’s manuscripts:

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1 B.M.Add.MSS.6789.f.425, Lower to Hariot, 21 June 1610. 
Cf. ibid., I.ii. pp.42-43.

2 B.M.Add.MSS 6782.f.374. 
B.M. Birch MSS.4458.ff.6-8.

3 Harleian MSS.6083.ff.279; 289-302. 
Cf. Bruno’s De Minimo, I.iii. p.140, trans. D.W. Singer, p.74: "For the substance for the building of all bodies is the minimum body or the atom, and for the building of a line or a surface, the minimum is the point."

4 De Minimo, p.10: "Inde maximum nihil est aliud quam maximum". 
Cf. ibid., p.55: "minimum est virtute maximum."
In Aristotle's *De Mundo*, we find a finite universe composed of infinitely divisible matter. Bruno reversed this notion. He argued for an infinite universe composed of matter that could be split only to the minima — the monad or atom that constitutes the basic indivisible of Hariot. Hariot adopted Bruno's views, suggesting that all nature can be understood through the monad, which as in Bruno is not merely a concept in mathematics but has real physical existence that that quantity which I call numerically infinite, has not only act rationall by supposition: but also act real or existence in an instant, giving it actuall Being, or in time, pressed [2] by motion both finite & infinite: with many reall consequences or properties consequent.[3]

1 B.M.Add.MSS.6782.f.374.

2 Harleian MSS.ff.289-302.

3 B.M.Add.MSS.6782.f.363.

Like Bruno, he criticizes those who introduced the concept of divisibility in infinity, thus leading to absurd deductions:

That a finite line may have an infinite number of partes, & if all the partes be in continuall proportion, that number must be composed of an infinite number of finite partes; & an infinite number of infinite partes.

Often this kind of arguing finds Hariot tied up in the kind of mathematical paradox so beloved of Bruno:

The Infinite is generated out of the finite,
The Infinite is composed of the finite,
The finite is resolved into indivisibles,
The finite is composed of indivisibles.

Sometimes he even tries to prove infinity geometrically. It can also be established that William Gilbert was quite taken up by the Nolan's speculations as to the minima and infinity. His De Mundo nostro sublunari philosophia nova, published posthumously in 1651, is in some ways an amplification and modification of the theories in De Magnete. De Mundo discusses the double motion of the earth which is specifically credited to Bruno:

Alius movendi modus Nolanum cum esseet junior ... Alius modus juxta Nolanum,

showing Gilbert had read Bruno's De La Cena.

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1 ibid., f.371.
   Cf. De L'Infinito, II. p.45.

2 B.M.Add.NSS.6785.f.436:
   "An ex finto generetur infinito
   An ex finitis componatur infinitis.
   An resolvatur finitu in indivisibilia
   An componatur finitu indivisibilis."


4 In a letter of 13 July, 1608 to Kepler, Hariot speaks of a book which Gilbert had left in his brother's hands, De Globo et Mundo nostro sublunari philosophia nova contra Peripateticos. See, Henry Stevens (1900), No.226.

5 De Mundo nostro sublunari philosophia nova (Amsterdam, 1651), pp.199-201.

6 (1584), pp.81-128.
Indeed De Mundo and De Magnete are fraught with ideas from Bruno. Gilbert did away with the four sublunary elements of antiquity and in his "De Telluris substantia sensibili" replaced them with the one basic substance that approximates to Bruno's minima which, reacting to inherent necessity, keeps all matter in flux, ever changing but never destroyed. Nowhere, however, does Gilbert specify what type of matter exists elsewhere in the universe although it is probable he believed in homogeneity of substance throughout.

Gilbert never specifically accepted the fact that the earth rotates around the sun. The sun is the cause of motion for all the globes within its sphere of virtue; it is the centre of motion for the planets, but Earth is not specifically mentioned as one of the planets. Certain passages in De Mundo, however, suggest that Gilbert was moving towards full acceptance of Copernican heliocentricity:

The place of the earth is not in the middle, because the planets in their circular motion do not observe the Earth as a centre of motion, but the greater Sun.

and a passage in manuscript suggests he thought of the earth as a planet.


2 De Mundo, pp.107-112.

3 ibid., pp.195;202.

4 ibid., pp.193-194.

5 ibid., p.120: "Locus telluris non in medio, quia planetae in motu circulari tellures non observant, tanquam centrum motionum, sed Solem magis."

6 B.M. MS.12.F.F.XI., p.166., where Gilbert included a parenthesis "quae sidus est", the "quae" referring to Earth.
Gilbert, like Bruno and others, also accepted the concept that stars are endowed with souls which control their intrinsic motion:

Nor Greek philosophers alone, but also the Egyptian and Chaldean, — all seek in the world a certain universal soul, and declare the whole world to be endowed with soul.¹

As in Bruno, the operation of the planetary soul is on a higher level than that of the human soul:

The human soul uses reason, sees many things, investigates many more; but however well equipped, it gets light and the beginnings of knowledge from the outer senses, as from beyond a barrier — hence the very many ignorances and foolishnesses whereby our judgments and our life-actions are confused ... But the earth's magnetic force and the formate soul or animate form of the globes, that are without senses, but without error, and without the injuries of ills and diseases, exert an unending action, quick, definite, constant, directive, motive, imperant, harmonious, through the whole mass of matter; thereby are the generation and ultimate decay of all things on the superficies propagated.²

Indeed both Bruno and Gilbert follow the Platonic tenet that worlds are nobler because they can dispense with locomotive organs and rely on autokinetic organism. Locomotive organs are necessary for living beings that must find sustenance outside themselves. Not so the stars and planets. They get their movements from an inner soul even in seeking the light and heat they do not intrinsically possess.³

Stars and planets possess a peaceful movement, and the space or 'void' through which they move is, in Gilbert, filled with Bruno's aether, which is an incorporeal body that extends almost to infinity.⁴

² ibid., p.311.
³ ibid., pp.308-309.
Bruno, of course, is never as specific as when he is propounding a universe infinitely extended, asserting that an all-powerful ubiquitous Deity could only create an infinite universe. Though Gilbert is nowhere as specific as that, in the discussions leading up to and immediately following his examination of the specific Brunian theories, he favours a vastly expanded universe. *De Magnete* shows ample evidence of Bruno's thought in discussing the spheres, the varying distances of stars to Earth and infinity:

Besides, what genius ever has found in one same *Ptolemaic* sphere those stars which we call fixed, or ever has given rational proof that there are any such adamantine spheres at all? No man hath shown this ever; nor is there any doubt that even as the planets are at various distances from the earth so, too, are those mighty and multitudinous luminaries ranged at various heights and at distances most remote from the earth; they are not set in any sphaeric framework or firmament, as is supposed, nor in any vaulted structure. As for intervals imagined by authors, they are matters of speculation, not of fact; those other intervals do far surpass them and are far more remote; and situated as they are in the heavens, at various distances, in thinnest aether, or in that most subtle fifth essence, or in vacuity — how shall the stars keep their places in the mighty swirl of these enormous spheres composed of a substance of which no one knows aught? Astronomers have observed 1022 stars; besides these, innumerable other minute stars appear to our senses; as regards still others, our sight grows dim, and they are hardly discernible save by the keenest eye; nor is there any man possessing the best power of vision that will not, while the moon is below the horizon and the atmosphere is clear, feel that there are many more, indeterminable and vacillating by reason of their faint light, obscured because of the distance. Hence, that these are many and that they never can be taken in by the eye, we may well believe. What, then, is the inconceivably great space between us and the remotest fixed...

1 *De L'Infinito*, pp.21-27.

2 *De Mundo*, pp.48-49; 113-114; 192-193; 202.
stars? and what is the vast immeasurable amplitude and height of the imaginary sphere in which they are supposed to be set? How far away from earth are those remotest of the stars: they are beyond the reach of eye, or man's devices, or man's thought ... This primum mobile presents no visible body, is in no wise recognizable, it is a fiction believed in by some philosophers, and accepted by weaklings who wonder more at this terrestrial mass here than at those distant mighty bodies that baffle our comprehension.

Here, as well as in the similar views in De Mundo reiterating ideas found in Bruno's De l'Infinito, the tone and context are essentially Brunian. Gilbert's views are, in many ways, a composite of ideas taken from Bruno and Digges and expanded into a theory of animistic magnetism based on his own experiments and observation, that tended to assume overall importance.

Francis Bacon, like William Lower earlier, linked Bruno and Gilbert, confirming the suggestion that among his contemporaries Gilbert's debt to the Nolan was tacitly recognized. With his insistence on empiricism, Bacon attacked those who built hypothesis on insufficient data:

So have alchemists made a philosophy out of a few experiments of the furnace; and Gilbert our countryman has made a philosophy out of the observation of a loadstone.

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1 De Magnete, pp.319-321.
3 ibid., pp.155;236.
6 ibid., IV., p.132.
Bacon believed that Bruno and Gilbert ascribed too many things to their insights or observations, and thus created "a ship out of a shell":

Patrizzi, Telesio, Bruno, Severin the Dane, Gilbert the Englishman and Campanella have all taken the stage with new fables, neither honoured by applause nor elegance in argument.¹

Despite this, several points of contact have been suggested. I. Frith wrote that in Bacon's assertion in Novum Organon that "true form is such that it deduces the particular nature from some source of essence, existing in many subjects, and more known (as they term it) to Nature than the form itself",² the "they" refers to Bruno's:

God, as an absolute Being, is not concerned with us; but in so far as he communicates himself to the effects of Nature, he is nearer to Nature than Nature itself.³

Some of the phraseology and myths used in Novum Organon recall Bruno's De La Cena,⁴ and McIntyre suggests that Bacon adopted a spiral rather than a circular movement for heavenly bodies only

¹ ibid., II., p.13 in Preface to De Historia Naturali et Experimentali Monitum: "Patricius, Telesius, Brunus, Severinus Dannus, Gilbertus Anglus, Campanella, scenam tontarunt, et novas fabulas egerunt, nec plausu celebres nec argumento elegantes."

² The Life of Giordano Bruno, the Nolan (1887), p.107.

³ Spaccio, II., p.229. Cf. De Immense, I.i. p.367: "... Unus,
Non generinus, meus atque tuus quia spiritus est, o Unanimis cimex, longe plusquam mihi sim nam Intimus ipse mihi es: quapropter me tua vexat Curia magis, qua nulla mei est."

⁴ J.L. McIntyre, pp.326-327, n.1.
after reading Bruno's works. In Bacon, again as in Bruno, hylozoism is linked to atomistic mechanism. Like Bruno, having shaken off the chains of Aristotelianism, Bacon makes a bee-line for the Greek atomists Democritus and Epicurus:

The doctrine of Democritus concerning atoms is either true or useful for demonstration. For it is not easy either to grasp in thought or to express in words the genuine subtlety of nature, such as it is found in things, without supposing an atom. 

But, as McIntyre points out, Bruno's minima and Bacon's particulae verse differ essentially from the atom of Epicurean physics. Bacon believes in an interaction between the gross or denser parts of matter and Bruno's invisible material spirits, both of which are physically mixed like air in snow, causing flux and reflux in material nature.

Bruno's 'intuitions' were, however, contrary to Bacon's nature, and we later see Bacon reacting against a return to the finely woven theories of Democritus and Bruno, and protesting that scientists should produce proof through experiments, not just hypotheses. It seemed to him that most atomists had but exchanged masters:

All their stir has but little advanced the matter, since their aim has not been to extend philosophy and the arts in substance and value, but only to change doctrines and transfer the kingdom of opinions to themselves.

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1 ibid.
2 Works, X. p.287.
3 op. cit., p.331.
4 Works, X. p.159.
5 J. B. McIntyre, p.331.
6 Works, VIII. p.30.
Nicholas Hill, another member of the School of Night, was among the foremost to accept Bruno's theories. A scholar of St. John's College, Oxford, he took his degree in Arts in 1592, and took to studying esoteric doctrine becoming "most eminent" in "the Lullian doctrine". He spent his early years in the company of Edward, the prodigal earl of Oxford touring Italy and the Continent. He later joined the retinue of the Wizard Earl

with whom he continued for some time in great esteem. At length being suspected to comply with certain traitors against King James I fled beyond the seas and there died. He is said to have swallowed poison in 1610 after his son Laurence died of the plague in Rotterdam.

His book, Philosophia Epicurea, Descripereana, Theophrastica, is the first book written by an Englishman actively to support in print the animistic atomism and hypothesis of a plurality of worlds put forward by Giordano Bruno. Charles T. Harrison spoke of the

disorderly form of his book and the unsystematic presentation of his thought. His mind was a hodge-podge of widely various notions.

This charge has lately been repeated by H. Kargon who described Hill's book as a "confused, self-contradictory melange of the views of many thinkers", and it is to some extent true.
Yet Hill’s book ought to be of extreme significance to those who study the inception of atomistic materialism in England. As Kargon says, Hill is "an imperfect mirror" who can somehow illuminate the "various streams which fed into the group" around the Wizard Earl and Thomas Harriot.

C.T. Harrison credits Hill with starting a one-man revival of atomism, it is a matter of some interest that it antedates the efforts of such men as Sennert and Basso.  

...but Hill was, of course, relying on a host of other writers and, as we shall show, mainly on Giordano Bruno. Hill himself, in the margin to the first edition of Philosophia Epicurea, mentions some of his sources. These include Hermes Trismegistus, Cusanus, Nicetas, Copernicus, Gilbert, Patrizzi and Bruno. Repeating this list, and arguing that Hill was "probably the least able and the least original" of the Northumberland Circle, H. Kargon, who traces the history and growth of atomistic doctrines in England, does not explore Hill’s reliance on any of these writers.

In our case, Hill is certainly one of the most interesting members of Northumberland’s Circle, being the first Englishman actively to defend in print the atomic theories of Democritus and Epicurus as put forward by Giordano Bruno. Whereas all other members of the group were at the turn of the century characteristically reticent about atomism and related con-

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2 Philosophia Epicurea, p.92.
trouversies because of their political vulnerability, \(^1\) Nicholas Hill chose to publish his views abroad. In so doing he confirmed the close links that early English atomism had with Bruno's basic ideas. Some of his contemporaries rejected his book and made fun of his ideas in the same way that they had made fun of Bruno's a couple of decades earlier:

He had a peculiar and affected way, different from others, in his writing... entertained fantastical notions in philosophy.\(^2\)

Ben Jonson, who ridiculed the notion that there existed men in the moon, also made fun of Hill's atomology:

All those atomi ridiculous:
Whereof old Democrit and Hill Nicholas
One said, the other swore, the world consists.\(^3\)

But Nicholas Hill was obviously an influence in propagating atomism and the doctrine of a plurality of worlds in England and on the Continent. He is mentioned in Robert Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy and quoted approvingly by John Wilkins,\(^4\) while Grant McColley argues that his mechanistic philosophy anticipates some of the ideas of Hobbes and Locke.\(^5\) Originally printed in Paris in 1601 and reprinted in Geneva in 1619, his book was also widely read on the Continent. Tobia Adami in his preface to Campanella's Apologia pro Galileo refers to Hill's

\(^1\) Kargon, p.133.

\(^2\) Anthony a Wood, p.87.


\(^4\) A Discovery of a New World, 1638, p.27.

work, together with the works of Rheticus, Maestlin, Patrizzi, Galileo, Gilbert and Bruno; while Marin Mersenne refutes the lies about the minima put forward by "Gorlee, Charpentier, Basso, Hill, Campanella, Brun." Ralph Cudworth had the two editions of Philosophia Epicurea in his library, and this might possibly have influenced his colleague Henry More's acceptance of the doctrine of the minima and of infinity of worlds.

Philosophia Epicurea refers only once to Giordano Bruno and that only casually in the margin. In the second edition all reference to Bruno disappears to completely expunge any notion of theological unorthodoxy. Although at one point speaking of "rejecting ecclesiastical traditions", he lived and died "in Romish persuasion" and could not be expected, despite his intellectual courage, to openly support Bruno's cause, and it has never been realized to what extent Hill's work reflects and copies Bruno's theories. A careful study of their works will confirm beyond all doubt that this first English "Modern" atomist relied

1 Frankfurt, 1622, p.4.
3 Robert Burton, Anatomy of Melancholy, II. sec.ii. mem.3.
4 Bibliotheca Cudworthiana (1690-1), sig. E4v-F1v.
5 1601, p.92.
6 A Wood, II. p.87.

for many of his basic notions on the homogeneity of substance, Divine act and potency, and the infinity of the universe on Bruno's Latin treatises published in Frankfurt in 1591, the De Minimo and the De Immane.

Nicholas Hill described his philosophy as neither new nor old, "nec Nova nec Vetus". It is really a composite of both ancient and modern philosophy that is put forward as points for discussion "proposita simpliciter, non edocita". The method often results in ambiguity and perplexity, and he told his young son Laurence, to whom the book is dedicated, to defend him against the charge of obscurity by answering that "all open writers were Luciferi", "CHIIOCIIObCIUIICAIU, respondeo damnatiassimum esse Luciferi nomen". It is at this dedication that Ben Jonson hits when he speaks of

one English man who had maintained democritus opinion of atoms, being old wrot a book to his son (who was not then six years of age) in which he left him arguments to maintain and answer objections, for all that was in his book, only if they objected obscuritie against his book he bid him answer that his father above all names in the world hated most the name of lucifer, and all open writers were Luciferi.

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1 p.1.
2 ibid.
3 ibid., sig. aij.
This dedication shows that Hill expected violent reaction to his ideas and shows him trying to answer them:

Obijicienti - Dei immersionem materia impiam, respondeo posse lectorem si placeat primum efficiens physicum proximum a metaphysica distinguere hypostasi ...
Obijicienti - Probabilem huius libelli perniciem, respondeo me nihil proponere dogmatice, sed suum unicumque permettere arbitrium. Quod si Catholicae & Apostolicae fidei aliquid sit repugnans in hoc libro igni illud, & inferis mando.

Indeed, Hill’s work, like Bruno’s, bristled with theological controversy.

Des les commencement du siècle, Nicholas Hill, qui se disait disciple de Democrit et d’Epicure, avait élevé sur ces questions des doutes inquietants. On the immortality of the soul, et les ouvrages de Greville et de Digby nous ont prouvé que la discussion était à l’ordre du jour.

George Williamson says that the Epicurean inception of the "mortalist controversy" in England may be found in Nicholas Hill’s *Philosophia Epicurea.*

This is not really so, for many of the ideas put forward for discussion in Hill’s book were mainly borrowed from Giordano Bruno’s *De Minimo* and *De Immense* published just a decade earlier. These two books are in fact the basis of Hill’s philosophy.

Thus whereas often Hill is seen to support the Greek atomism of Democritus and Epicurus, a reading of Bruno makes him confirm that atoms or the minima were created by God who implanted in them harmony, regularity and order. Always there is a "divine action" to supplement the impious push and pull "impacts" philosophy of Greek atomism:

1 *Philosophia Epicurea,* sig. aiiij.


Prima corpuscula sunt vere solida, impenetrabilia, inalterabilia, multiformia, divinae actioni in natura terminos ponentia.¹
Atomi materiales substantiant species, divinam actionem physicam terminant, impenetrabiles & vere solidae.²

and atoms are very often linked to God who often, as in Bruno, is visualized as the monas monadum:

The continuity of the atoms implies the unity of the universe, the unity of the universe implies the unity of the formal cause, and the unity of the formal cause implies the unity of the efficient cause.³

Hill followed the Greek atomists in trying to find a basis for creative action in push and pull and impact, "the striking or flowing together of atoms" whose meeting strengthened the parts involved:

Actus primorum principiorum (in quo varietas specierum fundatur) fuit eorum subita coincidentia, & instantaneus coalitus, tardi intellectus tardiori lingua non expressilis

but then continued that life requires a "spermatic form" to act upon matter:

Quae causa ponit in esse, conservat in esse, & quae generant conservant, sanguine non tranquante in formam carnis nisi mediante forma spermatica.⁵

This is the kind of atomism that is put forward by Bruno in De La Causa and De Minimo:

Quae solum per individuam animae substantiam sumus id quod sumus, quae circum veluti centrum quoddam ubique totum at omorum exglomeratio fit et agglomeratio.⁶

¹ Philosophia Epicurea, p.15.
² ibid., p.18.
³ ibid., p.117: "Atomorum continuitas unitatem universi, unitas universi unitatem causae formalis, unitas causae formalis unitatem efficientis infert".
⁵ ibid., p.3.
In De La Causa, Bruno states that life cannot proceed from purely material and mechanical forces but necessarily "must have reference to a symbolic principle, vital and animated". 1 All living matter is in reality composed of a "doppia sustanza, altra spirituale, altra materiale". 2 It is divine action that can thus establish "congrua produzione", 3 which in turn can occur because spirit itself is not completely devoid of body. Bruno had departed from the ancient and scholastic doctrine that form transcended and was completely independent of matter. In De Minimo, the minimal realities are soul and the atom, both of which are indestructible. 4 In De La Causa the soul is never completely destitute of matter. 5 Similarly, Hill writes:

Spiritus est corpus subtilissimu sensum subterfugiens acutissimum. 6

Hill adopts this reasoning, even though he knew this would lead to severe reaction from the orthodox camp. Form, he argued, is of a most fleeting and evanid nature and necessarily requires some corporeality:

Responteo illas species esse in nostra experientia fugacissimae, & evanidae naturae, & necessario exigere aliquam corporeitatem subiecti ad fixationem suum. 7

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1 I. p.241.
2 ibid., I. p.264.
3 ibid., I. p.235.
4 I.iii. lines 50-55.
5 I. p.270.
6 Philosophia Epicurea, p.9.
7 ibid., p.25.
and indeed a little later asserts that representative forms are "non-material materials":

Formae rerum repraesentativae, & constitutivae sunt materiales non materiataes.¹

Like Giordano Bruno, however, he still holds that the soul is the noblest part of the material substrate, and that it is imbued with a vital potency that effects being and becoming.

In De Immenso, Bruno had written:

Sicut anima per se est principium vitae animalis, ita est per se primo principium motus, sicut ipsa se ipsa vivit, ita et se ipsa movet.²

This is the orthodox accepted concept of the soul as the divine act in the production of life, and Hill writes of the soul as

Actum divinum in homine tanquam congruo & bene disposito organo ... nobilissimam partem materiae subsistentem.³

This hegemony of soul over body is often repeated especially in the case of man:

Anima humana species, & simulacra rerum materialisat, substantiat, & vigorem illis concilia^, illas quodammodo animans, & vitali imbuens potentia

but Hill also accepts the unorthodox conclusion that because "Spiritus est corpus subtilissimu",⁵ the soul is then immortal because, among other reasons, of the incorruptibility of atoms, "Animae immortalitas ex corporeum atomorum incorruptibilitate".⁶

This outrageous concept was put forward by Bruno in De Minimo:

¹ ibid., p.27.
² I. ii. p.86.
⁴ ibid., p.61.
⁵ ibid., p.9.
⁶ ibid., p.75. prop.395.
Ex proxime dictis concluditur mortem ad corporis substantiam non pertinere, multoque minus ad animam.¹

It is in fact only after having proved the indestructibility of the minima that Bruno puts forward the immortality of the soul. The minimum as element of body can not be subject to nothingness. There always remains the last part that is the first building block of any composition:

Compositum porro nullum substantia vera est,
Sed quae componis, parsque ultima compositorum,
Qua tu te aedificas circum.²

All that is composed is not substance but accident, and death results when decomposition occurs. Having posited the indestructibility of the minima, Bruno easily concludes the immortality of the soul. As in the greater circle expansion starts from the centre, in the same manner the "spiritus architectus", after having assembled atoms from all sides, expands and governs the totality of composition throughout the years until the cord of life is broken. It then returns to the centre and from there, renewed, it penetrates the vast world, but we usually call this death, because we travel towards an unknown light:

¹ Heading, De Minimo, Chapter 3.
² De Minimo, p.12.
Ut centri in magnum exglomerat se expansio gyrum, Collectis atomis circum undique spiritus architectus se infuso totum moderatur, adusque Tempus quo exactis numeris, vel stamine rupto Corporis, in centrum redimat se, et inde per amplum Recens se insinuet mundum, et hoc dicere mortem Suevimus; ignotam in lucem quia pergimus!

Bruno then says that birth is the expansion from the centre, life is sustenance within the sphere, and death the contraction or return into the centre:

Nativitas ergo est expansio centri, vita consistentia sphaerae, mors contractio in centrum.¹

That is Bruno’s De Minimo. This is Nicholas Hill’s Philosophy Epicurea:

Nativitas est expansio centri, vita consistentia sphaerae, mors contractio in centrum.²

There is here no doubt that Hill is adopting Bruno’s views to the letter, and Hill goes on to agree that the soul’s immortality is linked to the incorruptibility of atoms:

Animae immortalitas ex corporeum atomorum incorruptibilitate, ex aeternitatis comprehensione, ex perpetuitatis desiderio …

Bruno had argued that the most telling argument for the soul’s immortality lies in the fact that soul which is the indivisible substance which builds, amasses, reassembles, arranges, vivifies, and, like a marvellous creator, moves all this work, can never be of an inferior rank to the body or matter that is amassed, assembled, arranged and moved:

¹ ibid., p.11.

² ibid., p.13.

³ Philosophia Epicurea, p.10.

⁴ ibid., p.78.
This is the very reason why man ought not to fear death:

\[ \text{Mortem non esse timendam}. \]

Again Nicholas Hill adopts this reasoning:

\[ \text{Philosophus contemnit mortem, sed indies eam cogitat, & commentatur.} \]

Indeed, says Hill, man is the acme of earth's perfection, the fruit of every possible combination, the ultimate production of earth's generative action:

\[ \text{Homo est ultima genitalis terrae efflorescentis, & omnem possibilem combinationem molientis germen.} \]

Hill held, like Bruno, that although the numerous species of being had developed from a few and that there could even be migration from one species to another, as from decayed vegetables to animals, each generative seed contained within it "pre-existing patterns" that controlled the growth and development of the species:

\[ ^1 \text{De Minimo, p.13.} \]
\[ ^2 \text{ibid., Cf. De Immense, I.i. p.205: "Anima sapiens non timet mortem".} \]
\[ ^3 \text{Philosophia Epicurea, p.10.} \]
\[ ^4 \text{ibid., p.9.} \]
\[ ^5 \text{ibid., pp.34-35. Cf. De Minimo, p.10.} \]
\[ ^6 \text{ibid., p.8.} \]
Semen individuum no ta generativu principiu, quam ipsa genitura, utpote quae tota habet in fluida substantia speciei anatomiam, quae postea explicatissime se nostris sensibus offert, adveniente accrescentequa, materia per preexistentes in seminulo figuras ideata.

This is so because God, being the "monas monadum" of Bruno, can act both directly and indirectly in the production of life. Hill says that

God acts on everything indirectly or directly, except when it comes to atoms when he then only acts immediately - Deus agit in omnibus mediate, & immediate, primis corpusculis exceptis in quae immediate solummodo agit. 2

Indeed these primis corpusculis, which correspond to Bruno's minima and are indeed very often described as such, are of prime significance in Hill's philosophy. Like Bruno, Hill maintained that the minima are the basis of all things and potentially minimum and maximum coincide.

In Bruno we read "minimum est virtute maximum, magnum, totum" 3 and "Inde maximum nihil est aluid quam minimum" 4 so that because

La nature qui cree les choses part du minimum, l'intelligence qui apprend ces choses doit également partir du minimum. 5

This is exactly the conclusion that Hill is driven to:

As in the production of a particular thing, from the smallest insensible things to others infinitely greater and very sensible, Nature starts with a minimum of intelligence and ends with a maximum. 6

1 ibid., p.23.
2 ibid., p.21.
3 De Minimo, p.55.
4 ibid., p.10.
5 Xenia Atanassievitch, La Doctrine Metaphysique et Geometrique de Bruno, p.40.
6 Philosophia Epicurca, p.19.
The reason for this is given by Bruno who argues that the minimum, as centre of the circle, is distinguished by a great creative force which can expand to an infinite mass through composition:

Nam minimum substanta praecellit robore mire
Concursu molem quocumque increvit in amptam. ¹

This being so, all calculations, whether physical or mathematical, must have the minima as basis. Indeed all error stems from the fact that physicists and mathematicians persist in disregarding the minima and accepting infinite divisibility. Bruno writes:

Principium & fundamentum errorum omnium tum in physica, tum in mathesi, est resolutio continui in infinitum.²

Again Hill argues along similar lines:

Fundamentum erroris mathematici ... continui divisibilitate in infinitum ... Divisio continui in infinitum praeterquae quod infructuosa sit.³

because always and everywhere one must find the minimum, the certain basis of all composition:

Quod si finitam speciem massamque reponas,
Ut certum est maius, minimum sic denique certum est; Immo ipsam opperies in toto, semper, ubique.⁴

Bruno had argued that the main fault of the Scholastics was that they failed to distinguish between the minima and the terminus:

Non enim distinguunt inter terminum qui nulla est pars, et minimum quod prima pars est.⁵

¹ De Minimo, p.14.
² ibid., p.23.
³ Philosophia Epicurea, pp.74-79. Cf. De Minimo, p.83: "Ineptissime divisione continui in infinitum".
⁴ De Minimo, p.20.
⁵ ibid., p.28.
This distinction between *terminus* and *minima*, which are not even on the same plane, "Minimum et terminus non sunt in eodem genere quanta",\(^1\) seems to have been original to Bruno.\(^2\) Hill adopts the distinction but does not expand on the subject except for the statement that:

Terminus a minimo distinguitur manifestissime nec pars rei est aliquota, aut aliquanta terminus, ut apertissime est videre in alogia, & *\(\alpha\upmu\rho\pi\epsilon\rho\iota\sigma\iota\kappa\)*

figuram commensurabilium quantum ad terminos, quadrilateralas, nec enim perimetra figurarum quadrangularum, quorum alteri altera dupla est sibi invicem dupla sunt, aut *\(\mu\upmu\tau\epsilon\rho\iota\sigma\iota\sigma\iota\kappa\)***\(^3\)

The basis for both Hill and Bruno remain the *minima*, on which God acts directly, and which expand throughout the world of existents. Where Bruno had written that "Natura est Deus in rebus", Hill maintains:

Deus in rebus sentit, intelligit, providet, & sollecit
administrat singulis, coexistes inexistes & res creatas substantias.\(^5\)

Everything then directly or indirectly reflects the power and goodness of God. We must not only examine one particular species, effect, or event but the whole fabric:

Deus expressit se in rerum productions tantumque in effectu adequato, non speciebus particularibus sed tota fabrica considerata.\(^6\)

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\(^1\) ibid., p.48.

\(^2\) Xenia Atanassievitch, p.48 n.1.

\(^3\) *Philosophia Epicurea*, p.80.

\(^4\) *Spaccio*, II. p.225.

\(^5\) *Philosophia Epicurea*, p.68.

\(^6\) ibid., p.23
Indeed the goodness of God is known by the most vile as well as the most noble effects. Vile and abject are in reality relative. This concept which acquired popularity throughout the seventeenth century had been enunciated by Bruno:

Nihil est absolute imperfectum, malum ... perfecti et imperfecti, boni et mali accidentales compositiones et nomenclatures accipient: optima enim quaeque ordialiter in iis, quae abjectissima vilissimaque censentur, inexistunt.  

and is adopted by Nicholas Hill:

Dei ex nobilioribus effectibus non est evidentior aut clarior quam ex vilissimis apparentior est veritas principiorum & praecceptorum Arithmeticon in minimis numeris, quam maximis.  

Because of this Hill combated the notions then prevalent that Nature was degenerating, that there had started the onset of universal decay signalled by comets and supernovas which seemed to upturn established cosmological beliefs. Nature, argued Hill, was most certainly:

Bene administrata republica & florentissima illius faciet ... Mundus est perfectissima compages ...  

and although things often are apparently taking a turn for the worse this is really not so. Nature renews herself uniformly. Rather than decay, one must put forward the concept of cyclical improvement, for Nature is said to progress with a certain regression:

Natura non progreditur simpliciter, sed cum regressu.  

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1 De Immense, I.i. p.312.  
2 Philosophia Epicurea, p.25.  
3 ibid., pp.64-67.  
4 ibid., p.39.
This occurs everywhere because of what Hill terms the "plastici principiij vigor". ¹

Again such concepts can be found in Bruno's De Immenso. In discussing chaos and decay, Bruno argues that disorder or disintegration is an illusion occurring because of our partial view of things. Omnipresent, there is an intrinsic principle working on matter guiding and directing and imposing perpetual order on things:

Val nihil est natura, vel est divina potestas
Materiam exagitans, impressusque omnibus ordo Perpetuus.²

so that nothing is ever destroyed completely:

Sic nihil variat rerum substantia.³

Indeed Bruno argues that everything in the universe contributes towards the well-being of other species, or other planets, as in the case of suns and earths whose mutually exchanged attributes contribute to propagate life:

Non est ex effluxu propriæ substantiæ extra suum corpus,
vel alienæ influxu ... actio vere et passio consistit in alteratione per calidum et frigidum.⁴

Hill also maintains that there is "communication" between suns and earths. In actual fact

heavenly bodies do not exhaust themselves, but contrarily are refreshed by mutually exchanged virtue.⁵

¹ ibid., p.77.
² I. ii. p.193.
³ De Minimo, p.10.
⁴ De Immenso, I.ii. p.179.
⁵ Philosophia Epicurea, p.37. prop.249; See prop.12.
Comets and supernovas are not thus harbingers of doom but can be explained naturally. Hill's idea is that a comet is a solid celestial body having the same nature as planets, that it also revolves around the sun but that it differs from the "well-known planets" because of the unusual inclination of its orbit which forces it to cross the planetary orbits to complete its revolution, and that is the reason for its brief attendance:

Cometae apparentia est lux solis reflexa in aequam, & oculis nostris opposita astri superficie, in qua radius visualis cum solari radio angulus efficit. Subiectum cometae est, planeta solam circumcursans, a famosis planetis different. Subiectum cometae est, planeta, Solen circumcursans non minus, atque aliter, quam Tellus, substantia quaedam composita est; ab istis vero famosis planetis sola relatione different: quoniam ea de causse rara apparent, quia eorum circulus non venit ad eam oculorum nostrorum et Solis oppositionem, ut specularum reddat lucem.

This, except for the introduction of a Greek word, is lifted almost verbatim from Bruno's De Immenso:

Cometae apparentia est lux Solis reflexa in aqua, & oculis nostros oppositac, astri superficie, in qua scilicet radius nostrer visualis cum solari radio angulum efficit. Subiectum cometae est, planeta, Solen circumcursans non minus, atque aliter, quam Tellus, substantia quaedam composita est; ab istis vero famosis planetis sola relatione different: quoniam ea de causse rara apparent, quia eorum circulus non venit ad eam oculorum nostrorum et Solis oppositionem, ut specularum reddat lucem.

In discussing the comet, Bruno argues that the "tail" which sends back the sun's reflected rays is a vapour and essentially different from the solid part of the star:

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1 ibid., pp.71-72.

2 I.i. p.225.
Caudam ergo oportet esse substantiam quidam vaporosam, quae ad partem solidam non spectet, sed per humorem per aerem ab illo corpore astri effluentem, virtute concipientis et dissolventis caloris a sole.  

ill again lifts this bodily from De Immenso:

Cauda cometae est substantia vaporosa ad astri partem solidam non spectans, reflexam solis luce refrangens, & in crinitam formam ducentis, cuius copia densitatis, & raritas caudam intendent, reddit, extendit, & minorat.  

In De Immenso, Bruno had put forward the concept of an infinitely powerful god and linked it specifically with an infinity of worlds. The world of existents must necessarily reflect the power and goodness of God, because it is absurd to suggest that an agent will fail to act according to its own nature:

Infinitas virtus si neque a scipcia finitur, nec ab alio, tunc necessitate suae naturae agit.  

and later:

An infinite cause must have an infinite effect.  

ill also adopts this logical sequaciousness of Bruno that goes right across the accepted orthodox position that though God is infinite, the universe is finite. He argues:

Every agent acts according to the manner of its nature: therefore, the infinite God can not display Himself in the huge mass of the universe if it is finite.  

1 ibid., I.ii, p.230.

2 Philosophia Epicurea, p.72.

3 I.ii, p.246.

4 ibid., I.ii, p.12.

5 Philosophia Epicurea, p.35.
and that anybody who denies the infinity of the universe must know that the efficient cause can only be known through the production of infinite effects for infinite power can not be understood except in so far as there exist infinite opportunities: "Potentia infinita non est nisi respectu infiniti possibilis".¹ Declaring that Christians are free to reject ecclesiastical traditions, "sed traditiones ecclesiasticas respuit",² because philosophy and a knowledge of nature do not contribute to irreligion, Hill argues for the reality of a universe infinitely extended. Those who stick to traditional orthodox beliefs about the finitude of the universe are branded as cowards:

A person cannot but be described as cowardly who conceives of the world as limited, for how can he embark on anything great, or raise his spirits to the height of achievement, if his limited notions of God and nature impose a limit to his endeavours so that in an unseemly manner he is induced to give up his objective — Non potest non esse pusillanimis qui mundum arbitratur finitum, quomodo enim magnum aliquid molietur, aut animum suum esserat in actionis summitatem, cui Dei, naturaeque contracta, & in angustias diducta, effectio terminum praesigit, & humilem a propositio desistentiam suadet ...³

Just a few pages earlier Hill had asserted "Astrea terrae natura probabilis";⁴ that it roams free through the aether, "Terrae in soluto & libero aethere suspesio";⁵ that it is improbable there

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¹ ibid., p.67.
² ibid., p.24.
³ ibid., p.96.
⁴ ibid., p.92.
⁵ ibid. Cf. De Immenso, I.i. p.212.
is a centre or middle point in infinity, "Improbabilis centri, & medij puncti infinitas ... Medij in mundo infinite nullitas";¹

These are some of the nineteen propositions that Hill puts forward to prove "Terrae Motum" and it is obvious that they are also taken from Bruno. Indeed here, Hill makes the only reference to Bruno throughout the book:

Nemes Cusanus, Nicetas, Copernicus, Nolanus, Gilbertus, Franciscus Patricius.²

Hill also writes about the problem of relative and absolute gravity to which Bruno returns repeatedly in De La Cena, De L'Infinite and De L'Immense. Hill argues first that nothing can be considered as heavy in its proper place:

Gravitatis nullitas praesertim rerum in propriis locis existentium.³

but then moves forward and attacks the orthodox established idea that parts of a unit or whole always sought their proper place. Parts, says Hill, do not seek the whole except by accident which is what Bruno had stated a decade earlier:

Naturalis & physicus locus partis est totum, cui se agnoscit; totius aetern non est locus quaerendus, nisi per accidentem partibus sibiinvicom illoclatis, & allocatis, nec coexistentis spatij; multo minus corporis continentis supericii concave habita est ratio in speciali, & physica ποπογαν.⁴

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¹ ibid.
Cf. De Minimo, p.49.

² ibid.

³ ibid.

⁴ ibid., p.94. Cf. De Immense, I.i. p.228: "Omnes talem accipiunt locum per accidentem, qualis ne per accidentem quidem loci definitio competet possit. Se anim est superficies corporis sive contenti sive continentis, sive concava sive convexa, ministri est, quod non potest esse immobiles."
Like Bruno, Hill also argued that infinity impaired established concepts of "up" and "down", "Infinitas mundi tollit realitates superioritatis, & inferioritatis". In Bruno, heaviness is not an absolute quality in bodies; it exists only in virtue of respective positions, and stars and planet lack weight, "siquidem est sine ponderi tellus". Multiplicity of centres and gravity are in Bruno linked with infinity and plurality of worlds and the same concepts are similarly linked in Hill. Hill’s reliance is perhaps nowhere so obvious as when he discusses the nature of space.

After making a similar distinction between the absolute infinity of God and that of the universe, "Nulla essentia est infinita, nulla vis finita ... infinitas autem attribuitur rei cum comparatione ad alium", Hill approximates space to the Deity, copying attributes for an infinite space directly from Bruno. Hill’s definition:

_Spatium est Quantum, Continuum, Profundum, Indifferenter receptivum, Immiscibile, impenetrabile, Non formabile, Illocabile, Incomprehensum, Cointelligendum omni antiphysico, Non inhaerens, non adiacens, non substantians._

is exactly paralleled in Bruno’s _De Immenso_:

_Est ergo specium, quantitas quaedam continua physica ... indifferenter omnia recipiens ... immiscibile, impenetrabile, non formabile, illocabile, extra et omnia corpora comprehendens et incomprehensibiliter._

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1 _Philosophia Epicurea_, p.30.
_Cf. De Immenso, I.i., p.220.

2 P. Michel, pp.231-232.

3 _Philosophia Epicurea_, p.63.
_Cf. De Immenso, I.i., p.285.

4 _Philosophia Epicurea_, p.65.

5 I.i., p.231.
More important than this similarity is the fact that Hill also derives infinite space and a plurality of worlds from the infinite goodness and power of God. Again Hill uses Bruno as his model, and again even the changes in vocabulary are slight. Bruno had argued that because Divine essence is infinitely powerful it necessarily followed that it must act accordingly. This is

**De Immense:**

Ut consideret uter cœrūs, qui duas contradictionis partes tuentur, exigere probationem debet ab altero: et cujus maxime intereat ostendere et probare. Quilibet dicit, eum decere probationem, cujus est dubia sententia. Eiusque subinde dubia est sententia, qui a principiis per se manifestis et ab utraque altercatinum parte concessis, alius, vel contrarium ejus quod ab illis consequatur, consequit ve possit affirmari — Principia communia sunt:

*Divina essentia est infinita*
*Modum essendi modus possendi sequitur*
*Modum possendi consequitur operandi modus.*

This is Hill's **Philosophia Epicurea:**

Eorum qui duas contradictionis partes tenent illum probatio suae sententiae decet, cuius dubia est sententia, illius autem dubia est sententia qui principiis per se manifestis, & ab utraque altercatinum parte concessis alius, vel contrarium ejus quod ab illis consequatur affirmat. — Cum ergo principia haec ab omni-bus concessa sint.

*Divina essentia est infinita.*
*Modum essendi modus possendi sequitur.*
*Modum possendi modus operandi sequitur.*

Bruno had gone on to assert that God who is a simple essence must act according to his power, that it is absurd that either He or intractable matter can frustrate infinite possibilities, and that in fact liberty and necessity coincide in Him. There is therefore nothing to fear that the divine will acting by necessity will not act freely; but it would indeed be far better that the divine will should not act freely if it did not act as required by necessity and nature:

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1 I.i. p.242.

2 p.66.
Deus est simplicissima essentia, in qua nulla compositio potest esse, vel diversitas intrinsece.
Consequenter in eodem idee est esse, posse, agire, velle, essentia, potentia, actio, voluntas, et quidquid de eo vere dici potest, quia ipse ipsa est veritas.
Consequenter Dei voluntas est super omnia, ideoque frustrari non potest neque per seipsam, neque per aliam.
Consequenter voluntas divina est non modo necessaria, sed etiam est ipsa necessitas, cujus oppositum non est impossibile modo, sed etiam ipsa impossibilitas.
In simplici essentia non potest esse contrarietas ullo modo, neque inaequalitas: voluntas, inquam, non est contraria et inaequalis potentiae.
Necessitas et libertas sunt unum, unde non est formidandum quod, cum agat necessitate naturae, non libere agat: sed potius immo omnis non libere ageret, aliter agendo, quam necessitas et natura, imo naturae necessitas requirit.¹

Hill accepts all these notions although he sometimes puts them forward in a shortened form:

Deus est simplicissima essentia in qua nulla diversitas.
In simpliciter codem idea est posse agere.
Divinus actus primus, & non frustrabilis, alia necessitans in coactus.
In simplici essentia non potest esse aut inaequalitatis, aut contrarietas,
Necessitas, & libertas sunt unum in primo agente.²

Bruno also argued that unless infinite potentiality was translated into reality it did not exist. Infinite space can not be denied since it is better to be than not to be,³ to make than not to make.

Potentia infinita non est, nisi sit possibile infinitum; non est, inquam, potens facere infinitum, nisi sit potens fieri; quae enim impossibilis, vel ad impossibile potest esse potentia?
Quic Spacio, in quo est mundus, simile spatium extra mundum, non est ratio quae tollat neque faciat esse finitum ...

¹ De Immanente, I.i. pp.242-243.
² Philosophia Epicurea, pp.66-67.
³ Cf. Hamlet, III.i.56.
Hill again adopts Bruno's argumentation, more often than not verbatim:

Potentia infinita non est nisi respectu infiniti possibilis. Spatium infinitum est, & homogenum. Melius esse qua non esse, facere qua non facere. Infinitae potentiae frustratio absurdissima. Mundus est perfectissima compages cui nihil potest addi ad perfectionem. De Deo & natura optime sentendum. De rebus maximis nihil citra sensum, & rationem sentiendum. Qui infinitatem mundi negat causam infinito agente antistitem debet reperire.2

In one chapter of De Immenso Bruno described a picturesque journey to the moon,3 and suggested that all planets contain the same things — rivers, mountains, ponds and towns.4 Hill also maintained his belief that this earth, planets and stars are similar in nature:

1 De Immenso, p.243.

2 Philosophia Epicurea, p.67.

3 I.i. pp.15-19.
Cf. P. Michel, p.185.

4 Cf. De Immenso, I.i. pp.328;341.
The superior globes (to use the same term as the vulgar) are homogenous in substance to our earth and by analogy contain the same things.¹

He also argued that whereas the inhabitants of the sun would be "gyganteis", those on the moon would be "pygmaeis".² Like Nicholas of Cusa, Bruno had refused to be drawn on the relative superiority of inhabitants on other stars:

One can even suppose that the inhabitants of other worlds are superior, but nothing can prove that absolutely.³

Grant McCelley, in pointing out the supposedly advanced cosmological beliefs of Nicholas Hill, mentioned particularly the idea that each of the planets has a movement of axial rotation, an idea apparently not set forth by other writers till perhaps a decade later.⁴

and noted that this axial rotation together with their great distance from the sun made it possible for the planets to bear the sun's intense heat. In reality this opinion had been put forward by Bruno exactly a decade before Hill in De Immenso:


2. ibid.

   Cf. *Docta Ignorantia*, II.xii.

Distantia inter solem et lunam et quamcunque Tellurem oportet esse tantam, quanta vehementiorem caloris vim possit illam sustinere: est quippe ingens solis sphaera, quae ignis potentissima efficacia haec omnia corpora dissolveret, nisi se motus et gyratione tueretur, ut motibus pluribus velociusque agantur proximiora. Inter haec vero et solem si quae deveniant, quae nequeant tanta se rapiditate convertere, vel ita parva mole consistant, ut nimis cito debeant eandem corporis partem eisdem exponere radiis, statim igne.1

Again there is no doubt that Hill is following Bruno.

Throughout his book, in fact, Hill seems to be relying mainly on Bruno's De Minimo and De Immenso. He had also probably read De Monade, because this was bound with De Immenso in the 1591 Frankfurt edition, and throughout we find that he is exhilarated by two of Bruno's main theses — the minima and a plurality of inhabited worlds.

At the end of De Immenso, Bruno had written that the pre-eminence of God's unity is not in question:

The unity expresses itself in the multiple without ceasing to be the Unity. What is it in the plurality and diversity of universes that causes such indignation? Ought there to be only one star in the sky, one man on earth? That is a strange notion of Unity. In the infinite universe, unity and omnipresence of the formal principle manifest themselves as an upthrow of existence in all places and cause life to open up everywhere in its most varied forms: Anima unique est una, spiritus unus mundanus, totus in toto ... unique omnia producit.3

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1 De Immenso, I.ii. p.141-142.
2 Philosophia Epicurea, p.71.
Although seeking to allay orthodox fears, Hill also ends his book in a paean to God's unity, definitely stating that a plurality of worlds does not rule out the unity of God, or that of the efficient cause:

Data mundorum pluralitate, & Disterminatione cum absoluta primariorum globorium discotinuatione, tene non tollitur Dei unitas, nec efficientis primi, ut enim forma substantialis sic primum efficiens apparetem solummodo multiplicitatem induit per signatam materiam.¹

Perhaps because of its lack of originality, Hill's book is extremely important as a vehicle for the dissemination of Bruno's ideas in England and on the Continent.² How many realized that in reading Hill's Philosophia Epicurea they were often really reading Bruno's De Minimo and De Immenso?

Apparently, Nicholas Hill intended to publish other works, similar in tone and content to Bruno's works. Anthony à Wood wrote that

He Hill left behind him in the hands of his widow various matters under his own handwriting, but nothing that I can learn fit for the press. Among them are imperfect papers "concerning the eternity, infinity & of the world" and others "of the essence of God, & ". Some of which coming into the hands of William Backhouse of Swallowfield in Berks, esq; from the widow of the said Nich. Hill, living behind Bow Church in London, about 1636, various copies were taken of them, and Edm. Earl of Mulgrave about that time having a copy, another was taken thence by one Dr. John Everard, part of which I have seen under another hand ... and Mr. Rob. Hues ...³

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¹ Philosophia Epicurea, p.118.

² See ibid., sig.aij.

³ Athenae Oxoniensis, II. p.86.
I have not been able to trace these papers, but if ever they are traced it is safe bet that they will also owe a great deal to the works of Giordano Bruno, his unacknowledged master.

Another Englishman who put forward definitely Brunian thesis was Edmund Bruce. Writing to Kepler in 1603, Bruce expresses his general view of the universe:

Ego opinor mundos esse infinitos; unusquisque tamen mundus est finitus, sicut Planetarum, in cuius medio est centrum solis. Et quaedammodum tellus non quiescit, sic neque sol; volvitur namque velocissime in suo loco circa axem suum; quem motum sequuntur reliqui Planetae; in quorum numero tellurem existimo; sed est tardior unusquisque quia ab eo distat longior. Stellae etiam sic moventur ut Sol; sed non illius vi, sicut Planetae circumaguntur; quoniam unusquisque earum Sol est in non minori mundo hoc nostro Planetarum. Elementarem mundum nobis proprium et particularem non puto nam aer est et inter ipsa corpora, quae stellas vocamus, per consequens et ignis et aqua et terra. Terram autem, quam calcamus nostris pedibus, nec rotundam nec globosam esse credo, sed ad ovalem figuram proprius accedere. Nec solis nec stellae vel lumen ex materia, sed potius ex eorum motu procedere et demanare judico. Planetae vero a Sole suum lumen assumunt, quia tardius moventur et propriis motibus impeduntur.\(^1\)

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\(^1\) Epistolae ad Johannem Keplera Mathematicum Caesareum scriptae (1618), p.201.
The "Spaccio" as Matrix

The considerable spread in England of Bruno's first editions, and especially of the moral and cosmological works that form the basis of this study, is indirect evidence that although Brunian philosophy was often driven underground it went on being utilized and adapted, often without adequate acknowledgement of any Brunian matrix.  

We have produced evidence to show that just as Bruno's influence on the continent was widespread and unacknowledged, Bruno's ideas did not pass unnoticed in England either. Thus although Caesar La Galla reports that Queen Elizabeth thought of Bruno as "faithless, impious and godless", and although some of his contemporaries maintained that Bruno was met with scorn in court and university circles, Bruno claimed the attention of some of the most forward-looking Englishmen of the time. Dicson, Watson, Hariot, Gilbert and Nicholas Hill, though not "disciples" of Bruno helped directly or indirectly to propagate the Nolan philosophy. In the next chapter we shall also see Bruno's influence on such writers as Francis Godwin, Edward Herbert,

1 See Appendix I.

2 De Fhaenomenis in Orbe Lunae, Quoted in Opere di Galileo Galilei, Edizione Nazionale (1929-39), III, p.352.

3 Hotmanni Patris ac Filii et clarorum virorum ad eos Epistolae (Amsterdam, 1700). Among the letters sent by Alberico Gentile to Jean Hotmann, letter 85, dated "Oxon ... die 8 novembris 1583" he refers to some of Bruno's arguments without mentioning him by name: "Nam, ut ita sit, et falsa magis et absurdas et fatuas assertiones maximorum virorum audivimus ... Lunam urbiun atque montium orbe, terram moveri, cetera elementa stare ... sum secentis similibus."
Robert Burton and John Wilkins. Here too there is often some acknowledgment of a Brunian matrix.

In rigidly literary works, however, because the process of creation is different, and conscious borrowing is minimized, acknowledgement of a source is often considered unnecessary. The study of influences is hardly ever definitive; it often becomes merely tentative and dialectic, an attempt at tracing what Livingston Lowes terms the tell-tale "hooks and eyes" and their transformation in the imagination, where a vast welter of fragmentary borrowings conglomerate in a "fortuitous fashion" to shape the work of art.¹

The writer can then defend himself by claiming that he utilized the ideas and images not of one particular writer but those that had been inherited from a common literary tradition. Or as Nicholas Hill put it:

Obijicienti — Exscriptio nem nonnullorum, respondeo quae exscripti esse translatas ab aliis in illos a quibus desumpsisse videor.²

In this chapter, we shall examine the possible indebtedness of Edmund Spenser and Thomas Carew to Bruno's Spaccio de la Bestia Trionfante, the Italian moral dialogue published in England in 1585 and described by Toland as "the most remarkable instance of ... liberty in thinking" of a group of Elizabethan courtiers, among them Sir Philip Sidney, Sir Thomas Smith and Sir Walter Raleigh.³ As Toland said, Spaccio significantly conceals, for reasons of prudence, some unorthodox ideas under the guise of allegory:

¹ The Road to Xanadu (New York, 1930), p.343.
² Philosophia Epicurea, sig.aij.
In the Book is represented a council of the Gods, owning, rehearsing and exposing their ancient worship, or the religion of the Heathens, in a most learned, long and elegant Oration made to them by Jupiter, on the Festival in commemoration of their Victory over the Giants.¹

In reality, it is a concealed attack on established religion which it tries to reform. Bruno explains that Jupiter's war with the giants allegorizes the "continuous war and without truce" that the soul has against "vice and inordinate desires".²

Indebtedness to Bruno of concepts in Spenser's poetry has often been pointed out, and just as often discounted, but no careful study of Bruno's possible influence has been made. This can hardly be discounted by Ellrodt's maintaining that Bruno's conception of substance is heretical,³ or Brent Sterling's unsupported statement that Spenser's reliance on Bruno is "anachronistic".⁴

We have come round to believing that there is rather more "orthodox" Renaissance Platonism in Spenser's poetry than Ellrodt and Stirling supposed.⁵ They were writing mainly in reaction, and the proven influence of, say, Ovid does not necessarily leave Bruno out of the reckoning. No source ought to be discounted without a thorough examination conducted in the belief that

¹ ibid.
² Spaccio, II. p.114.
influence is not always restricted to the interaction through sympathy of kindred souls. In this light, I shall examine how far, if at all, the claim that Bruno influenced Spenser is justified and shall specifically put forward Fortuna's "episode" in Spaccio as the closest analogue we have to Spenser's Mutabilitie Cantos. In so doing, I hope to give a philosophical basis to Mutabilitie Cantos which are often discussed in terms of a pageant.

Obviously there exist basic differences between the two men, contemporaries and protégés of Sir Philip Sidney. Bruno and Spenser, we are told, were "poles apart."¹ B.E.C. Davis has written:

Between Bruno and Spenser lie all the differences dividing the philosopher from the poet, the active and the receptive intelligence, the born heretic from the instinctive conformist.²

Spenser is often read as an orthodox product of the Schools, unlikely to share Bruno's daring rationalism or Bruno's scorn for the Aristotelian texts then studied in Oxford and Cambridge:

For the same reason his theology, with its Protestant conception of divine transcendence, is totally incompatible with Bruno's pantheism.³

However, traces of transcendentalism are in evidence in practically all of Bruno's works, Italian and Latin, whereas charges of pantheism and materialism have been levelled at

¹ Oliver Elton, Modern Studies (1907), pp. 27-30.
³ ibid.
Spenser himself.¹ C.S. Lewis has strongly refuted these charges,² although later in life he was ready to admit that in the *Mutabilitie Cantos* Spenser was playing a subtle dangerous game that could lead to ambiguity.³

During Bruno's residence in London between 1583 and 1585, Spenser lived in Ireland apparently out of touch with the Sidney circle to which Bruno often claimed allegiance. The possibility of Spenser having met Bruno is slight, although Cotin's diary suggests that Bruno himself visited Ireland.⁴ Spenser was of course Sidney's protégé more than ever Bruno was. But Bruno's dedications and warm regard towards Sidney were well known.⁵

It can be argued that Sidney had books dedicated to him by men he had never met, but Bruno's address to Sidney suggests a close friendly relationship, and the *Spaccio* and *Erorti Furori* would have caught Spenser's attention if for no other reason than that his own patron had apparently lent his name to the Nolan philosophy. Spenser himself, writing to Gabriel Harvey, reported the case of Stephen Gosson who "writing a certaine Booke, called

¹ Edwin Greenlaw, "Spenser and Lucretius", *SP*, 17 (1920), 437-464.
Cf. idem., "Spenser's *Mutabilitie Cantos*", *PMLA*, 45 (1930), 684-713.


⁴ V. Spampanato, p.652.

⁵ See Above, p.133.
the School of Abuse, and dedicating it to Maister Sidney, was
for his labor scorned."

Unlike Hariot, Lower or Hill, Spenser, however, never mentions
Bruno. Although indicative, this is not so very important.
Spenser did much 'cestial thieving' from the Italians. Ideas
and images are often borrowed from Tasso, Boiardo, Trissino and
Ariosto — in some cases whole stanzas are lifted bodily and
transmuted, or translated, into memorable English poetry. 2
Indeed it would have been surprising if Spenser had acknowledged
Bruno when more obvious sources remain unacknowledged. Sometimes
a specific source can be traced with a fair amount of certainty,
but when it comes to dealing with basic Renaissance neoplatonic
notions it is sometimes almost impossible to see where Spenser
derived his way of thinking. Thus Winstanley's analogues from
the Fowre Hymnes and Eroici 3 could have been derived from

Gosson wrote The Schools of Abuse in 1579, and Sidney, it is
said, wrote his Defence in answer to it. See Mona Wilson, ed.,
Astrophel and Stella, Introd.

D.C. Allen, "Arthur's Diamond Shield in The Faerie Queene",
JEGP, 36 (1937), 234-243.
W.E. Kenrick, Edmund Spenser, An Essay in Renaissance Poetry,
(1925).
Alastair Fowler, pp.107-110.
Jefferson B. Fletcher, "Benivieni's Ode of Love and Spenser's
Fowre Hymnes," MP, 8 (1911), 545-560.
R.W. Lee, "Castiglione's Influence on Spenser's Early Hymnes,"
PQ, 7 (1928), 65-77.
et al. (Baltimore, 1957), X, pp.6-7; 16-17; 112-113.

3 Lilian Winstanley, ed., The Fowre Hymnes (Cambridge, 1907),
pp. lvi-lxxii.
Castiglione, Benivieni, Ficino and other neo-Platonist writers, but Winstanley narrows her search to Ficino's *In Platonis Convivium* and Bruno's *Eroici Furori*, pointing out that whereas Ficino is mainly concerned with analyzing Plato's speeches in the light of Plotinus to show them in harmony with Christian doctrine and exegesis, Bruno's Platonism is more poetically embedded and fuller of the spiritual ardour that would appeal to Spenser.¹ I do not believe that Winstanley proved her case, because the phrases and ideas she put forward were not peculiar to, or characteristic of, Bruno but could be found in Renaissance trattatisti, as well as in the earlier more diffuse Christian Platonism. Spenser *Seems to have* believed in the theory of furor poeticus² and came to look upon "heroic frenzies" as a madness springing from an urgent desire to unite with goodness or the One.³ But this was not peculiar only to Bruno, though he maintained it with most vigour. Both Bruno and Spenser maintained

¹ L. Winstanley, *p. lviii*.


³ Cf. *Eroici*, II, *p.344*: "Anzi insani son chiamati quelli, che non sanno secondo l'ordinario, o che tendono più alto, per aver più intelletto."

that only persons of a barbarous nature seek merely the physical
side of love. Again, this concept is a commonplace of Renaissance
Platonism; it is common in Ficino and Castiglione and practically
every other trattatista: physical love is not ruled out but
couraged, for corporal beauty can be an index to spiritual
beauty, a shadow of divinity. Higher and lower forms of love
co-exist and even Bruno who can dismiss lust as "a dirty piece
of dung" admits that the heroic lover cannot hope to remain
forever in spiritual ecstasy: "He commonly wanders and trans-
ports himself, now into one, now into another form of the double
eros".

In The Tears of the Muses Spenser castigates those whose
"dunghill thoughts" dare not aspire higher. In The Faerie
Queen he also scorns this "dunghill mind", stating
specifically that "The dunghill kind delights in filth". In
A Hymn in Honour of Love he again rejects the lover whose
"dunghill thoughts ... themselves enure to dirty drosse".
But this idea was also commonplace.

1 Cf. Eroci, II. p.300: "Anzi aggiungo, che per quanti regni e
beatitudini mi s'abbiano possuti proporre e nominare, mai fui
tanto savio o buono."
Cf. The Faerie Queene, III. vi.
"Franckly each paramour his leman knows,
Each bird his mate."

2 Cf. Eroci, II. p.333: "com' è dire una sporca avarizia ...
un amor di persone al tutto vile."
ibid., p.330: "Non come inebriato da le tazze di Circe va
cespitando et urtando or in questo, or in quell' altro fosso."
ibid., p.332: "Tutti gli amori, se sono eroici, e non sono
puri animali."

3 Eroci, II. p.331.

4 Line 393.

5 III.xii. 15.

6 Ibid., II.xii. 87–86.

7 "A Hymne in Honour of Love," line 183.
The beauty in the lover's body is seen as shadowy and accidental. In both Bruno and Spenser, but in many others as well, external beauty is a ray from the deity, a distant resemblance of the spiritual matrix from which the lover's soul had its birth. The idea is commonplace, but both Bruno and Spenser stress this in similar language and imagery. Thus in Bruno's *Eroici Furori* we read:

\[
\text{La bellezza che si vede ne gli corpi è una cosa accidentale e umbratile ... Io mai fui fascinato da cosa simile; che potesse al presente esser fascinato da qualche statua o pittura, dalle quale mi pare indifferente.}
\]

Spenser seems to approach this in *Hymn in Honour of Beauty*:

\[
\text{How vainely men doe ydle wits invent,}
\text{That beautie is nought but mixture made}
\text{Of colours faire, and goodly temp'rament}
\text{Of pure complextions, that shall quickly fade}
\text{And passe away, like to a summers shade ...}
\text{Or why doe not faire pictures like powre shew}
\text{In which oft-times we nature see of art}
\text{Exceld, in perfect limming every part?}
\text{But ah! believe me there is more then so,}
\text{That workes such wonders in the minds of men.}
\]

While this analogue is close, it still remains true that many such parallels can be validly attributed to a common neo-Platonic source. In fact, Robert Ellrodt, writing mainly in

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2 Lines 64-86.
reaction to excessive claims made by Josephine Bennett, draws a learned distinction between Renaissance Platonism and the more diffuse Neoplatonism that had assimilated to Christian and Judaic thought patterns at an earlier date, and discounts Spenser's indebtedness to Renaissance Platonism. More recent criticism is making a more cautious appraisal of this indebtedness. An interesting "borrowing" could have been Spenser's use of Spaccio in Mutabilitie Cantos, which B.E.C. Davis is convinced "were undoubtedly written under the direct influence of Bruno, if not actually inspired by him". We cannot, however, be so definitive. Davis says that in Bruno

Nature is, deus in rebus, the image and manifestation of God. "Spenser's cosmogony thus ordained not by accident but through divine immanence must assuredly have been preferable to the materialism and the pagan myths of Ovid as an explanation of the law of change."

Preferable assuredly it might have been, but this does not leave Bruno in sole command of the field for, though often used by Bruno and Hill, the formula "natura est deus in rebus" was not exclusively theirs. Other concepts, though perhaps "closer in thought and phrasing" to the Nolan, might easily have been derived from either Lucretius's De Rerum Natura or Ovid's Metamorphoses. Since, however, I believe that Spaccio

1 Neoplatonism in the Poetry of Spenser, pp.96-97.


3 Ibid., p.236.
provides the closest analogue to *Mutabilitie* Cantos, Spenser's concept of matter and the law of change can justifiably be examined within a Brunian framework, always with the proviso that, in Spenser, Bruno could only have been one of many sources.

Professor Greenlaw suggested that parts of the *Faerie Queen* and especially the Garden of Adonis are animated by a scepticism that militates against Spenser's supposed Christian Platonism and even negates a spiritual God. This is the solution he arrived at to avoid the charge of inconsistency in a poet who is recognizably eclectic. Spenser's exposition of what appears to be a Lucretian concept of substance is expressed thus:

> For in the wide wombs of the world there lyes,  
> In hatefull darkness and in deep horrore,  
> An huge eternall Chaos, which supplyes  
> The substances of Natures fruitfull progenyes.

> All things from thence do their first being fetch,  
> And borrow matter, whereof they are made,  
> Which, when as forme and feature it does ketch,  
> Becomes a body, and doth then invade  
> The state of life, out of the griesly shade,  
> That substance is eterne, and bideth so;  
> Ne when the life decayes and forme does fade,  
> Does it consume, and into nothing goe,  
> But chaunged is, and often altred to and free.  

This argument is also similar to Picson's naturalistic interpretation of matter in *Causa.*

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1. *The Faerie Queene,* III.vi. st.36-37.

2. De *La Causa,* I, pp.256-257: "Noi veggiamo che tutte le forme naturali cessano dalla materia e novamente vegnono alla materia; onde par realmente nessuna cosa esser constante, firme, eterna e degna di aver esistimazione di principio, accetto che la materia. Oltre che le forme non hanno l'essere senza la materia, in quella si generano e corrompono, dal seno di quella esceno ed in quello si accogliono".
But Spenser had apparently written earlier of pre-existent souls waiting in the first seminary of all things that are born to live and dye.¹

Old Genius lets them out of the gate of life for a short span "till they agayn return by the hinder gate,"² freed from matter's "sinfull mire". This is still area of controversy and has been for a long time.

One of the earliest attempts at refuting Lucretian scepticism in Spenser's poetry was made by E.M. Albright in "Spenser's Cosmic Philosophy and his Religion".³ She dates all the mutability passages as relatively early, 1579-80, and reads them as youthful attempts at a "world philosophy" which Spenser was later to reject.⁴

It is true that some of these ideas had occurred to Spenser earlier, and that Gabriel Harvey and his circle had criticized him for expressing views akin to Lucretius,⁵ but Albright's early dating of the Mutability passages is unnecessary to maintain Spenser's orthodoxy and can in any case be conclusively disproved.

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¹ *The Faerie Queene*, III.vi. st.30. Cf. above, p.163, n.3.

² *ibid.*, st.32.

³ _PMLA_, 44 (1929), 715-759.

⁴ *ibid.*, p.717.

⁵ H.M. Belden, "Alanus de Insulis, Giles Fletcher, and the Mutabilitie Cantos," _SP_, 26 (1929), 142-144.
by topographical evidence within the text showing these passages were written later than 1585.¹

It is now generally recognized that the Mutabilitie Cantos, which first appeared in the 1609 folio of The Faerie Queen printed by Matthew Lownes, were to form part of Spenser's projected seventh book on the Virtue of Constancy. Professor Fowler has confirmed on numerological grounds the suitability and "authority" of the rubrics of these cantos when presented as an essential part of The Faerie Queene.² In mediaeval tradition, the number seven represented mutability as well as its anti-type, Constancy,³ and it is reasonable that in any seventh book, Spenser would have incorporated these cantos bodily despite their allegedly "unperfite" state, the inset story culminating in Mutabilitie's rejection illustrating the legend of Constancy.⁴ They form what C.S. Lewis would call the "allegorical core" of the book. The thematic experience of mutability opposed to the uncorruptibility of God and Nature relates them to the whole epic and, as Northrop Frye suggests,

² Cf. F.M. Padelford, "The Cantos of Mutabilitie; Further Considerations Bearing on Date," PMLA, 45 (1930), 704-711.
³ Douglas Bush, "The Date of Spenser's Cantos of Mutabilitie," PMLA, 45 (1930), 954-957.

⁴ Alastair Fowler, p.58. Cf. John Donne, Devotions, sig. C11: "And seven is infinite." idem., Essays in Divinity (1651), p.124: "Seven is ever used to express the infinite."

makes a fitting end to the whole.¹ Indeed it seems to me that
Mutabilitie Cantos grow out of Book VI. There Fortune had
played a secondary role to the Blatant Beast. Now she takes
the scene, is completely personified as Mutabilitie and we have
Spenser embarking on "this so doubtfull case"² as to whether
Mutabilitie the Titaness daughter of Chaos³ and symbol of change,
rules over heaven and earth. Mutabilitie Cantos repeat sentiments
Spenser had expressed earlier in the Garden of Adonis, where Chaos
is depicted as living in "hatefull darkness and in deeps horrore".⁴
Mutabilitie is now shown as presumptuous, pretending to a power
she does not possess, a perversion of the original laws of Nature:

That not men onely (whom she soone subdued)
But eke all other creatures, her bad doings rowed.

For she the face of earthly things so changed,
That all which Nature hath establisht first
In good estate, and in meet order ranged,
She did pervert, and all their statutes burst.⁵

She has "made them all accurst", ⁶ "By which we all are subject
to that curse".⁷

At first sight this would seem directly opposed to the concept
of matter proposed in the Garden of Adonis. Spenser had written that:

¹ "The Structure of Imagery in the Faerie Queene," University of
Toronto Quarterly, 30 (1961), 109-127. See also Donald Cheney;
"By their relation to the six completed books of The Faerie Queene,
the Cantos of Mutabilitie invite consideration as a coda
summarizing and restating the meaning of the poem."

² Mutability Cantos, VII. st. 57. See, S. Evans, "A Lost Poem

³ Mutability Cantos, VI. st. 28. In VI.st.13 she is a "Giantesse".

⁴ F.G., III.vi. st.36.

⁵ Mutability Cantos, VI. st 5-6.

⁶ ibid., VI. st.5.

⁷ ibid., VI. st.6.
That substance is eterne and bideth so ... But changed is, and often altered to and from

and he immediately amplifies this statement to prevent any queries that may arise in interpretation:

The substance is not changed nor altered;
But the only forms and outward fashion;
For every substance is conditioned
To change her hew, and sondry forms to don,
Meet for her temper and complexion. 

Professor Levinson rightly pointed out the similarity of this passage to another in Bruno's Spaccio where similar concepts are expressed:

He knows that of the eternal corporeal substance (which is not producible ex nihilo, nor reducible ad nihilum, but rarefiable, condensable, formable, arrangeable, and 'fashionable') the composition is dissolved, the complexion is changed, the figure is modified, the being is altered, the fortune is varied, only the elements remaining what they are in substance, that same principle persevering which was always the one material principle, which is the true substance of things, eternal, ingenerable, and incorruptible. He knows well that of the eternal incorporeal substance nothing is changed, is formed or deformed, but there always remains that one thing which cannot be a subject of dissolution, since it is not possible that it be a subject of composition; and therefore, either of itself or by accident, it cannot be said to die; because death is nothing but the divorcing of parts joined in a composite, in which state all of the substantial being of each part remaining (which cannot be lost), that accident of friendship, of accord, of complexion, union, and order ceases. 

1 F.O., III. vi. st. 37.
2 ibid., st. 38.
3 Spaccio, II. p. 111.
Although therefore Lucretius and Ovid are strong candidates as possible sources, there are elements suggesting Spenser could have been using Bruno as well. The words "substance" and "complexion," are not Lucretian but Brunian and are adopted by Spenser although this has been in fact disputed, because the terminology is also Scholastic.

Bruno's debate in Spaccio centres around the same problem, and tries to harmonize the realities of matter and spirit, change and permanence. Bruno speaks of an "eterna sustanza incorporea" which is lifted above matter and beyond time to become symbolic of the Deity. This concept of spiritual substance is directly opposed to Lucretian scepticism even in a dialogue that purports merely to study "natural" causes and which itself contributed to the naturalist spirit found in the works of Telesio and Campanella. This spiritual substance becomes all the more explicit in Ericei:

Cossi il sapiente ha tutte le cose mutabili come cose che non sono, ed afferma, quelle non esser altro che vanità e un niente.

Matter, however, in both Bruno and Spenser, is considered on one plane as indestructible but similar ideas occur frequently in Ovid and Lucretius. Change operates in them as an energy renewing itself in ever-recurrent cycles of

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3 Leon Blanchet, p.391.

4 *Ericei*, II, p.324.
birth, generation and death, as we have seen in Bruno's De Minimo and Nicholas Hill's Philosophia Epicurea where in both cases it is argued: "Nativitas est expansio centri ... mors contractio in centrum".¹

In Spenser, Adonis, who symbolizes matter, is subject to mortality:

Yet is etere in mutabilitie,
And by succession made perpetuall,
Transformed oft, and chaunged diverslie.²

Venus, symbolic of Anima Mundi and therefore spiritual,³ informs matter with life so that Adonis "may not for ever die and ever buried be".⁴

What Greenlaw and Albright then read either as final scepticism or youthful inconsistency need not be attributed to Spenser. If Spenser had read Spaccio he could find Lucretian and Ovidian indestructibility of matter fused with a concept as to the value of Religion and the permanence of God at the very end of Bruno's dedication to their common patron, Sidney, for despite its naturalistic tendencies, the ethics of Spaccio move towards "Tranquil Repose ... and

² F.Q., III.vi. st.47.
⁴ F.Q., III.vi. st.46.
  Cf. Eroici, II. p.351: "Così essendo composta di potenze superiori et inferiori, con le superiori versa circa la divinitade, con l'inferiori circa la mole, la quale viene da essa Anima del Mondo vivificata e mantenuita intra li tropici de la generazione e corrosione de le cose viventi in essi mondi, servando la propria vita eternamente."
Secure Quiet" in God.¹

Spenser was, of course, influenced by other sources. Bennett claimed Chaucer's Parlement of Foules and Alanus de Insulis's Pleynt of Kynde as literary antecedents.²

More recently Professor Fowler has suggested Stephen Hawes' The Passetyme of Pleasure and Petrarch's Trionfi.³ The pervasive influence of Ovid also seems convincing,⁴ but a strong formal similarity also exists in the plea of Mutabilitie in Spenser and the plea of Fortuna in Bruno's Spaccio. The same dramatis personae figure in a similar dramatic action and the outcome is very much the same. In each case the Fortuna/Mutabilitie plea takes place within a framework of purification.

Dedicated to Sir Philip Sidney, often regarded, with Essex, as the most probable prototype for Sir Calidore, Spaccio de la Bestia Trionfante as its full title implies is mainly concerned with reformation and self-conquest. Bruno's Jupiter, we learn, "è soggetto al fato de la mutazione",⁵ and now his main objective is to rid himself of "dissoluzioni, e fragilitade umane, e talvolta brutali e bestiali" through the seeking out and expulsion of the triumphant beast:

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¹ Spaccio, II, p.120.


³ Spenser and the Numbers of Time, p.227.

⁴ Cf. Stephen Hawes, The Faetyme of Pleasure, ed. W.E. Mead (1928), where Hawes' influence on Spenser is discounted.

⁵ W.P. Cummings, "The Influence of Ovid's Metamorphoses on Spenser's Mutabilitie Cantos", SP, 28 (1931), 241-256.

⁶ II, p.111, ibid, p.130.
Allora si dà spaccio a la bestia trionfante, cioè ai vizj che predominano, e sogliono concucer la parte divina.¹

In fact Bruno asserts that Jupiter's war against the seeds of the Giants and the Titans allegorizes:

la guerra continua e senza triegua alcuna, che fa l'anima contro i vizj e disordinati effetti.²

In Spenser's Book VI of The Faerie Queen, depicting the legend of Courtesy, Sir Calidore's hunting of the Blatant Beast also allegorizes the soul's constant war against defects:

But most of all Defetto him annoyde,
Creeping behinde him still to have destroyde.³

Before he can redeem Pastorella and tame the Blatant Beast, Sir Calidore must also conquer himself. This objective is specifically stated in the first canto:

In vaine he seeketh others to suppresse,
Who hath not learned him selfe first to subdew;
All flesh is frayl, and full of ficklenesse,
Subject to Fortune's Chance, still changing new.⁴

Towards the end of Canto XII the Blatant Beast with a thousand spiteful tongues (which bears similarity with Bruno's "multi-form beast")⁵ this compound of vices and defects but especially

¹ ibid., 114.

² ibid., 113.

³ VI.v.20.

⁴ VI.i. st.41.

⁵ Spaccio, II. pp.176-177 where the vision of the multi-headed monster appears just after Jupiter has expelled Wealth and Poverty: "O Mercury, that which I told you seemed to be a shadow, I now see as so many beasts herded together; for I see it as being canine, porcine, ram-like, monkey-like, ursine, aquiline, deer-like, falcon-like, leonine, asinine and as all the "ines" and "likes" that ever were. So many beasts, and
of defamation\(^1\) represented by the tongue of dog, cat, bear, tiger, serpent, this offspring of "Cruell Typhaon whose tempestuous rage/Makes the heavens tremble oft"\(^2\) is caught tamed and muzzled by Sir Calidore:\(^3\)

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\(^1\) Spaccio, II, p.146: "The worst of it is that they \[^{Calvinists}^\text{defame us.}\]

\(^2\) VI.vi. st.11.

\(^3\) VI.xii. 22-24.
So did he eke long after this remaine,
Untill that, whether wicked fate so framed,
Or fault of men, he broke his yron chaine,
And got into the world at liberty againe ... 

So now he rangeath through the world againe,
And rageath sore in each degree and state;
No any is, that may him now restraine,
He grown is so great and strong of late. 1

The hunt, it seems, must start all over again, for the
Blatant Beast still roams the earth triumphantly at the
close of Book VI of The Faerie Queen. During the legend
of Courtesy, its ravages had been supplemented by those of
"Fate, and Fortune oft defyde" 2 prominently expressed in
such episodes as the slaying of Meliboe 3 where Fortune is
already personified in a general manner:

... yet Fortune, not with all this wrong
Contented, greater mischief on her threw,
And sorrows heart on her in greater throng ... 
It so befell (as Fortune had ordain'd) ...
Till Fortune would her captive bonds unbye:
Her sickness was not of the body, but of the mynde. 4

In Mutabilitie Cantos, Fortune is completely personified
attempting, like Typhon, to "make the heavens tremble" by
asserting hegemony over the gods. The closest analogue to

1 VI.xi. 38-40.
2 VI.iv. st.26.
3 But see also VI.xi.
4 VI.xi. st.2-8.
Mutabilitie's "incident" is in fact the Fortuna episode in Bruno's Spaccio de la Bestia Trionfante. The Mutabilitie Cantos themselves, especially in the procession or pageant of the months, are like Bruno's Spaccio, concerned with self-conquest and the taming of evil, sometimes bestial, passions. Spenser carries on where he had left off at the end of Book VI so that, as A.S.P. Woodhouse said in a very different context:

the last line of Mutabilitie Cantos is a full stop, both to the Cantos and to The Faerie Queen. To read it is really to be in at the death of the Blatant Beast — nothing more can happen.1

It is in such a framework that I mean to explore Spenser's Mutabilitie and Bruno's Fortuna.

Arbitrarily, Mutabilitie and Fortuna decide to make an appearance before the senate of the gods, presided over by Jupiter. Both seek to argue out a case "with a not uncommon arrogance" for cosmic recognition. Indeed, in Spenser, Mutabilitie is bolder than Fortuna who seeks a seat in the heavens. It rejects Jupiter's "proffers vaine" to

seeke by grace and goodnesse to obtaine
That place from which by folly Titan fell;
There-to thou maist perhaps, if so thou faine
Have Jove thy gratious ord and Soveraine".2


2 Mutabilitie Cantos, VI. st. 34.
Like Bruno, Spenser could have read in Natalis Comes the statement that Fortuna once rebelled against the gods and almost pushed Jupiter from his throne. Indeed Mutabilitie demands not equality but hegemony over all the gods:

Sith shee his Jove and him esteemed nought
No more then Cynthia's selfe; but all their kingdoms sought.

In Spenser, Mutabilitie is immediately linked to Fortuna and does in fact represent Fortune in time. Whereas Bruno's senate of the gods celebrates victory over the Titans and Giants when Fortuna approaches, Spenser's Mutabilitie approaches the senate of the gods to prove that the seeds of the defeated Titans can still assert hegemony over men and gods. Bruno's Fortuna, replying to the strictures of Moraus, Jove and Mercury, asserts she is above Jupiter but does not seek to overthrow him:

Io dunque Fortuna ... onde non è stella minima ne grande che appaja nel firmamento, da cui non si dica, ch'io dispenso ... li più egregi et eccellenti filosofi del mondo, quali sono stati Empedocle et Epicuro, attribuiscono più a lei, che a Giove istesso, anzi che a tutto il concilio de' dei insieme.  

Mutabilitie's "bold presumption" is reflected in just the same manner:

1 Natalis Comes, also known as Natale Conti, was born in Milan and died in 1582. His Mythologiae, sive explanationes Fabularum, 10 vols. (Venice, 1561) was often used by Spenser. For the Fortuna episode in Comes, see R.B. Levinson and J.G. Lotspeich in The Works of Edmund Spenser, ed.cit., VI, pp. 400; 410. See J. Erskine Hankins, Source and Meaning in Spenser's Allegory, p.9.

2 Mutabilitie Cantos, VI. st.18.

3 ibid., VI. st.23; VII. st.47.


5 Mutabilitie Cantos, VI. st.21.
Yet what if I can prove, that even Ye Yourselves are likewise chang'd, and subject unto HEE? 1

It is interesting that both Bruno and Spenser include Saturn in the senate debate against Fortuna. 2 This is, of course, anachronistic because Saturn, who was himself a Titan, had been banished by his son Jupiter after the Titanomachia. Bruno links the traditional concept of change as found in Lucretius and Ovid to the new astronomy and refers to the "depressiones del soppo Saturno", 3 and Spenser similarly alludes to the by now commonplace "So many turning cranks ... so many crookes" of "grim Sir Saturne". 4

Where in Spaccio we are told of Jupiter's "dissoluzioni, fragilita umana, e talvolta brutali e bestiali", 5 Mutabilitie specifically attacks Jupiter and the other gods for their "bestial elements" in the procession/pageant of the months referring to Jupiter's several rapes, of Europa, of Leda 6 and indirectly of Amphytrion's wife, Alcmena. These several rapes had already been clustered in Faerie Queen III.xi. st. 30-35, together with those of Danae, Ganymede and Antiope.

1 ibid., VII. st. 49.

Cf. The Contention between Liberality and Prodigality (1602), ibid., VIII, pp. 333-334; 337.

3 Spaccio, II. p. 124.

4 Mutabilitie Cantos, VII. st. 52. Cf. ibid., VI. st. 27; 34.

5 II. p. 113.

6 ibid., VII. st. 41-42.
Now they occur in the pageant which is Mutabilitie's case and, even more, as Z.P. Zitner says, its rebuttal\(^1\) \textit{Why?}

Because the iconographic details weaken Mutabilitie's case by demonstrating order and control in the universe.

Those animals traditionally associated with evil or evil passions in myth, legend, or animal lore are tamed by their riders. Thus April rides Europa's bull (lust), June the Crab (deceit), July the Lion (wrath), October the Scorpion (... war and discord), November the Centaur.\(^2\)

In Bruno, after Fortuna had described her baneful power, Homo had also argued that her own arguments are really her own rebuttal:

\begin{quote}
Communemente, o cieca madonna, tutti gli altri dei aspettano la retribuzione di queste sedie per l'opre buone c'hanno fatte, faccioni e posson fare: e per tali il senato s'è proposto di premiar quelli; e tu, mentre fai la causa tua, ne ameni la lista e processo di quei tuoi delitti per gli quali non solo devresti esser bandita dal cielo, ma e da la terra ancora.\(^3\)
\end{quote}

but earlier still Sophia recounted how Jupiter himself has now repented of his former disguises, and the consequent stellification of his sins as Ram, Twins, Lion, Taurus, Eagle, Bear and other signs of the zodias. Jupiter wants to reform the sky before the coming

\begin{footnotes}
\item[1] \textit{The Mutabilitie Cantos} (1968), p.59.
\item[2] ibid., p.58.
\item[3] \textit{Spaccio}, II. p.\textsuperscript{17f}.
\end{footnotes}
of Caelus and retribution; he is no longer the "carnal voluptuary" that the procession of the stars in the sky suggests, but is given over to reform:

Cra non son bestie nelle quali si trasmute, non Europe che l'incornino in toro, non Danae che lo impallidiscano in oro, non Leda che l'impiumino in cigno, non ninfe Asterie e frigii fanciulli [Ganymede] che lo imbecchino in aquila, non Delide che lo inserpentiscano, non Mnemosine che lo degradino in pastore, non Antiope che lo semibestialino in Satiro, non Alcmene che lo trasmutino in Anfitrione: perché quel temone che volgeva e dirizzava questa nave de la metamorfosi, è divenuto si fiacco, che poco più che nulla può resistere a l'empito de l'onde, e forse che l'acqua ancora gli va mancando a basso.³

Spenser's Jupiter seems to have already established such a reform. Although Mutabilitie tries to anatomize him "an an embodiment not of constancy but of mere self-satisfaction in moral allegory", the fact that the riders have tamed the signs of the zodiac suggests that the gods have reformed. It is not just pure spectacle.

Lotspeich points out that in this pageant the version of Orion's death given does not agree with any of the classical versions, but probably follows Natalis Comes who says that

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1 Spaccio, II. p.124.
2 ibid.
3 ibid., II. p.123.
4 Blisset, p.259.
Orion boasted of his skill in hunting. In envious rage, Diana hid a scorpion under a rock where Orion was about to pass and killed him. In remorse, Diana translated both Orion and the scorpion among the stars, and it is probably the recollection of this tale that accounts for Spenser’s epithet "Dianae’s doom unjust". Exactly this same version, however, also occurs in Bruno’s *Spaccio de la Bestia Trionfante*:

> For what reason does Scorpio receive the reward of 21 stars? As a reward for a murder ordered by the frivoliy and envy of Diana, who made him kill the emulous hunter, Orion.

Spenser’s *Mutabilitie* also attacks the gods’ mortal origin, saying that Jupiter himself was born in Crete or Thebes and therefore subject to the law of change:

> Then let me aske you this withouten blame, Where were ye borne? some say in Crete by name, Others in Thebes, and others other-were; But wheresoever they comment the same, They all consent that ye begotten were, And borne here in this world, ne other can appeare.

> Then are ye mortal borne, and thrall to me, Unlesse the kingdome of the sky ye mak Immortal, and unchangeable to bee.

Similarly, Sofia admits in *Spaccio* the mortal origin of Jupiter:

> Atteso che tutti sanno bene che Giove fu un re di Creta, uomo mortale, e di cui il corpo, non meno che quel di tutti gli altri uomini, è putrefatto o incinerito.

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1 *Spaccio*, II. pp. 187-188.

2 *Mutabilitie* Cantos, VII. st. 53-54.

3 *Spaccio*, II. p. 226.
While earlier on Jupiter is brought about to agreeing that he is subject to Mutabilitie:

Vedi, dunque, cara sorella, come ne doma il tempo traditore, come tutti siamo suggetti alla mutazione .... La veritate sola con l'absoluta virtude è inmutabile ed immortale ... ¹

That is why, in both Bruno and Spenser, Fortuna/Mutabilitie instils terror in the gods.² In Spaccio, as Bruno explains to Sidney, although Jupiter is allowed the last word, he is still subject to a higher entity:

Abbiamo dunque qua un Giove non preso per troppo legittimo e buon vicario o luogotenente del primo principio e causa universale; ma ben tolto qual cosa variabile, suggetta al fato della mutazione. ³

Jupiter is afraid of the coming of Caelus or Uranus, who had fathered and in turn been deposed by the Titans, who at the end of the Great Platonic Year might bring change and consequent ruin on Jove himself:

Particolarmente Giove si trova esser tale individuo, sotto tal composizione, con tali accidenti e circostanze, posto in numero per differenze che nascono da le contrarietadi, le quali tutte si reducono ad una originale e prima, che è primo principio de tutte l' altre, che sono efficienti prossimi d'ogni cambiamento e vicissitudine: per cui, come da quel che prima era Giove, appresso fu fatto Giove, cossi da quel ch'al presente è Giove, al fine sara altro che Giove.⁴

¹ ibid., II. p.131.
² ibid., II. p.178. Cf. Mutabilitie Cantos, VI. st.25.
³ ibid., II. p.111.
⁴ ibid., II. p.111-112.
To boost his morale, he lays a feast to recall his victories over the Giants and the Titans, and remembers with some pride the victories over "presuntuoso Tifeo," but still feels a strong sense of insufficiency.

In Spenser, "Jove all fearlesse" also has a deep-rooted fear that he can be overcome. However, he asserts himself strongly:

But wote thou this, thou hardy Titanesse,
That not the worth of any living wight
May challenge ought in Heavens interesse:
Much lesse the Title of old Titan right:
For we by conquest of our soveraine might,
And by eternall doome of Fates decree,
Have wonne the Empire of the Heavens bright;

He too remembers the victories of Titanomachia, over Typhon, and his reactions show his realization that he was dealing with a formidable rival:

The father of the Gods when this he heard,
Was troubled much at their so strange affright,
Doubting least Typhon were again uprear'd,
Or other of his foes, that once him sorely fear'd ...

Of that bad seed is this bold woman bred,
That now with bold presumption doth aspire
To Thruste faire Phoebe from her silver bed,
And eke our selves from heavens high Empire,
If that her might were match to her desire:
Wherefore, it now behoves us to advise
What way is best to drive her to retire.

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1 ibid., II. p.128.
2 Mutabilitie Cantos, VI. st.33.
3 ibid., VI. st.20.
4 ibid., VI. st.15.
Like the other gods, Jupiter has his "hidden feares". As Donald Cheney writes, the gods are being challenged on two fronts. As astronomical figures they exhibit erratic behaviour, while as anthropomorphic deities they possess frailties akin to human. Mutabilitie indeed deems Jupiter to be no "equall judge", and it is Nature as direct representative of God that delivers the final verdict:

Great Nature, ever young yet full of old,
Still moving, yet unmoved from her sted; Unseen of any, yet of all beheld.

Initially "our enemy Fortuna" is presented as essentially evil, corrupting Nature's laws and clinging to a "perversa speranza" that she could overthrow the gods, but she is soon transformed into a cosmic principle, essentially different from the fickle maiden of many Renaissance writers. In both Bruno and Spenser she has a formidable presence, and comes to possess beauty and dignity:

In which faire beames of beauty did appear
That could the greatest wrath soon turn to grace.

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1 ibid., VI. st.21,28.


3 Mutabilitie Cantos, VI. st.35.

4 Mutabilitie Cantos, VII. st.13.
Cf. Spaccio, II. pp.127-128.

5 Spaccio, II. p.129.

6 ibid., II. p.177.

7 ibid., II. p.179.

8 Mutabilitie Cantos, VI. st.31.
That is why in both Bruno and Spenser Jupiter deliberates

What way is best to drive her to retire. 1
Whether by open force, or counsell wise. 2

In both instances, Fortuna/Mutabilitie is allowed to put forward a very strong case — her ubiquitous capabilities are, at least, partially recognized. Yet in both cases, Fortuna/Mutabilitie is strongly attacked for perverting the laws of nature, and for making Truth and Justice a relative. Fortuna argues that

Nessuna cosa è absolutamente mala ... come voi, dei virtuosi, siete mali ad riguardo dei visiosi, quei del giorno e de la luce son mali a quei de la notte ed oscuritate; e voi tra voi siete buoni, e lor tra lor sono buoni. 3

Spenser's Titaness also seems to be putting forward a naturalistic metaphysical scepticism where no absolute standards are possible: 3

Ne shee the laws of Nature onely brake,
But eke of Justice and of Policie;
And wrong of right, and bad of good did make,
And death for life exchanged foolishlie. 4

Although Spenser reads this perversion as gradually leading to ruin, Mutabilitie's arguments in the Senate debate, are, as Fortuna's, more forcefully expressed than Jupiter's. It is

1 ibid., VI. st.21. Cf. Spaccio, II. p.184: "Molto eccellente ha fatte le sue ragioni la Fortuna, disse Giove, e per ogni modo mi par degna d'aver sedia in cielo; ma ch'abbia una sedia propria, non mi par convenevole, essendo che non n'ha meno, che sono le stelle ... Talmente dunque Giove negò la sedia d'Ercule a la Fortuna."

2 Spaccio, II. p.178.


4 Mutabilitie Cantos, VI. st.6.
because she controls all mankind that she boldly aspires
to take her place in the Heavens:

And now, when all the earth she thus had brought
To her behest, and thralled to her might,
She gan to cast in her ambitious thought,
T'attempt the empire of heavens hight,
And Jove himself to shoulder from his right. 1

In Spaccio, Fortuna argues that she rules over "la Raggione,
Veritade, Sofia, Giustizia", 2 and could even "instil terror" 3
in the gods who, she claims, usurp her honours and her rights:

Io son quella dea divina ed eccellente, tanto desiderata,
tanto cercata, tanto tenuta cara, per cui per il più
volte è ringraziato Giove, dalla cui mano aperta
procede la ricchezza, e dalle cui palme chiuse tutte il
mondo plpra, e si mettano sozzopra le citadi, regni ed
imperii. 4

This claim is similar to that made by Mutabilitie at the bar
of Nature:

Then weigh, O soveraigne goddesse, by what right
These gods do claime the worlds whole soverainty;
And that is onely dew unto thy might
Arrogate to themselves ambitiously:
As for the gods owne principality,
Which Jove usurpes unjustly; that to be
My heritage, Jove's self cannot deny ...

Yet maugre Jove, and all his gods beside,
I doe possesse the worlds most regiment. 5

1 ibid., VI. st.7.
2 Spaccio, II. p.179.
3 ibid., II. p.177-178.
4 ibid., II. p.177-178.
5 Mutabilitie Cantos, VII. st.16-17.
In Spaccio, right at the beginning of Book I, we were told that everything delights in change and motion, in transition from one extreme to another:

Se ne li corpi, materia ed ente non fusse la mutazione, varistade e vicissitudine, nulla sarebbe conveniente, nulla di buono, nulla dilettevole ... Ogni delettazione non veggiamo consistere in altro, che in certo transito, camino e moto ... Tanto che la mutazione da uno contrario a l'altro per gli suoi participii, il moto da un contrario a l'altro per gli suoi mezzi viene a soddisfare.¹

Spenser's Mutabilitie uses universal delight in motion to assert her hegemony over the other gods:

Onely the starrie skie doth still remaine: Yet do the starres and Signes therein still move, And even it self is mov'd, as wizards saime. But all that moveth, doth mutation love: Therefore both you and them to me I subject prove.

Then since within this wide great Universe Nothing doth firme and permanent appeare, But all things tost and turned by transverse: What then should let, but I aloft should reare My Trophee, and from all, the triumph beare? Now judge then (O thou greatest goddesse threwl) According as thyselfe doest see and heare, And unto me addoom that is my dew; That is the rule of all, all being rul'd by you.²

In Spaccio, Giove's sleight of hand in argument prevents Fortuna a seat among the gods precisely because she has argued so convincingly for her ubiquitous power over men and gods:

¹ ibid., II. p.121.
² Mutabilitie Cantos, VII. st.55-56.
Molto eccellentemente ha fatte le sue ragioni la Fortuna, disse il padre Giove, e per ogni modo mi par degna d'aver sedia in cielo; ma ch'abba una sedia propria, non mi par convenevole, essendo che non n'ha meno che sono le stelle; perché la Fortuna e' in tutte quelle non meno che ne la terra, atteso che quelle non manco sono mondi che la terra ... le tue ragioni, O Dea, mi paiono pur troppo efficace, conchiuso che ... io non voglio ardire di definirti stanza ... Talmente, dunque, Giove negò la sedia d'Ercole a la Fortuna, che a suo arbitrio lascio e quella ed altre tutte che sono ne l'universo.¹

Nature in Spenser, before delivering the verdict, also acknowledges the power and universality of change:

I well consider all that ye have sayd,  
And find that all things stedfastnes doe hate  
And changed be.²

and this is also echoed in Spenser's Canto VIII: "All that moveth, doth in Change delight",³ but again by a deserving peripeteia,⁴ perhaps invited by Mutabilitie's "unto me addoom that is my dew", Mutabilitie's aspirations are dashed and Jove's jurisdiction confirmed, but within a larger scheme of things:⁵

Cease therefore, daughter, to aspire ...⁶  
For thy decay thou seekst by thy desire.

¹ Spaccio, II. p.184.  
² ibid., VII. st.58.  
³ ibid., VIII. st.2.  
⁴ Alastair Fowler, p.229.  
⁵ C.S. Lewis, Spenser's Images of Life, p.229.  
⁶ Mutabilitie Cantos, VII. st.
as Momio tells Fortuna early on in the debate. As soon as sentence is passed, Fortuna/Mutabilitie leave without a word:

Dalla qual sentenza, comunque che sia, non dissentino gli dei tutti; e la orba dea, vedendo la determinazion fatta citra ogni sua ingiuria, si licenzio dal Senato.¹

C.S. Lewis argues that the whole debate in Spenser resolves itself into another coincidentia-oppositorum;² this can be seen as Brunian: as Bruno explained to Sir Philip Sidney, change and mutability must be examined within a larger framework:

Però, conoscendo egli che in tutto uno infinito ente e sostanza sono le nature particolari infinite ed innumerabili che, come in sustanza, essenza e natura sono uno, cosí per raggion del numero che subintranó, incorreno innumerabili vicissitudini e specie di moto e mutazione; ciascuna, dunque, di esse, e particolarmente Giove, si trova esser tale individuo, sotto tal composizione, con tali accidenti e circostanze, posto in numero per differenze che nascono da la contrarietadi, le quali tutte si riducono ad una originale e prima, che è primo principio de tutte l'altre, che sono efficienti prossimi d'ogni cangiamento e vicissitudine.³

On the cosmic level then, change and permanence are seen to involve one another and are not really opposed. After recurring cycles of change in a world of flux, all will resolve itself into Unity, into God: this is the final thought of Bruno’s Spaccio:

There is the termination of the tempestuous travails; there the Bed; there, Tranquil Repose; there secure Quiet.⁴

² Ibid.
³ Spaccio, II. p.112.
⁴ Spaccio, II. p.249.
This Christian purpose is made even more evident in Spenser:

But time shall come that all shall changed bee,
And from thenceforth none no more change shall see ...  
But thenceforth all shall rest eternally
With Him that is the God of Sabbath hight.  

Things are despite appearances moving towards a constant Unity, 
through a coincidence of opposites. In Spaccio, Sofia had 
convinced Saulino that mutability is ubiquitous working towards 
the perfection of things:

il principio, il mezzo, il fine; il nascimento, l'aumento, 
et la perfezione di quanto vegiamo, è da contrarii,  
per contrarii, ne contrarii, a contrarii.  

This perfection, achieved through cycles of change, is repeated 
in Eroici Furori, and again perfection is achieved through 
coincidentia-oppositorum:

Natura, la perfezione de la quale consiste ne l'unità,  
e la dove convengono li contrari, consta la composizione 
e consiste la virtute. 

a harmonious synthesis or resolution of contraries that represent 
"the perfection of the ideal form" that is also found in Martianus 
Capella's De nuptiis:

1 Mutabilitie Cantos, VII. st.59.  
Cf. Eroici, II. pp.325-326.  
III. "De P rovidentia", xiii. p.1694: "aeterni sabbati quies."  
pp.xvi-xvii where Augustine asserts that the 7th age will be  
"our Sabbath, which shall be brought to a close, not by an  
evening, but by the Lord's day, as an eight and eternal day,  
consecrated by the resurrection of Christ, and prefiguring the  
eternal repose, not only of the spirit, but also of the body."

2 Spaccio, II. p.122.  

3 Eroici, II. p.338.  

4 Ibid., II. p.326.
mundana perfectio est; nam monadem fabricatori deo,
dyadem materiae procreanti, triadem idealibus formis
consequenter aptamus.¹

In Spenser, Mutabilitie asks:

For who sees not that Time on all doth pray?
But Times do change and move continually. ²
So nothing here long standeth in one stay.

to which Nature replies that if all things change, they change
in a fixed cyclical pattern of recurrence, change and order
implying each other, until perfection is reached:

They are not changed from their first estate;
But by their change their being doe dilate;
And, turning to themselves at length again,
Doe worke their own perfection so by fate.³

However, this notion is an old one and although the scenery,
the dramatic structure and machinery in Spenser's Mutabilitie
Cantos find their closest analogue in Bruno, some ideas were
derived from a number of other sources. In a very different
framework, Pythagoras thus explains the doctrine of metem-
psychosis in Ovid's Metamorphoses:

All things are in a state of flux, and everything is
brought into being with a changing nature. Time itself
flows on in constant motion, just like a river ... Nor
have the heavens the same appearance when all things,
wearyed with toil, lie at rest at midnight and when
bright Lucifer comes on his snowy steed; there is still
another aspect when Pallantias /Aurora/, herald of the
morning, stains the sky bright for Phoebus' coming. The
god's round shield itself is red in the morning when it

¹ Quoted, A. Fowler, Spenser and the Numbers of Time, p.20 n.2.

² Mutabilitie Cantos, VII. st.47.

³ ibid., VII. st. 58.
rises from beneath the earth and is red when it is hidden beneath the earth again; but in its zenith it is white, because there the air is of purer substance and it is far removed from the debasing presence of the earth. Nor has Diana, goddess of the night, the same phase always. She is always less today than she will be tomorrow if she is waxing, but greater if she is waning. O Time, thou great devourer, and thou, envious Age, together you destroy all things; and, slowly gnawing with your teeth, you finally consume all things in a lingering death... Nothing retains its own form; but Nature, the great renewer, ever makes up forms from other forms. Be sure there's nothing perishes in the whole universe; it does but vary and renew its form. What we call birth is a beginning to be other than what was before; and death is but a cessation of a former state. Though, perchance, things may shift from here to there, still do all things in their sum total remain unchanged.

Whereas, however, the emphasis in Ovid is on fluctuation, the emphasis in Bruno is stronger on "perfettione" through fluctuation, although again it might be argued that there are elements even of this in Metamorphoses. Spenser indeed sees the cycles of reincarnation as progressive — a perfection that often implies transcendence, a final consummation when "none no more change shall see", a Christian application that is obviously absent in Ovid and Lucretius. Seen within this Christian framework, Bruno's Fortuna and Spenser's Mutabilitie can be dismissed. In Bruno, but more so in Spenser, the discussion is lifted from the materialistic philosophy of Lucretius and Ovid with a devout appeal for a return to God and Religion.


2 ibid., pp.391-392.
Finally, Spenser's Mutabilitie Cantos were probably to form the allegorical core of the seventh book of The Faerie Queen. That book was to be dedicated to Constancy, and it is interesting to note that, having rejected Fortuna's claim to Hercules' seat in heaven, Jupiter proposes to give it to her anti-type, Courage and Constancy.

Courage must not be far off; because that will that administers judgement with prudence through law must be constant and strong ... So Constancy and Courage lead us ... You will be impregnable to vices, unconquered by labours, steadfast against perils, inflexible against pleasures, scornful of Wealth, a subduer of Fortune, and triumphant over all.¹

¹ Spaccio, II. pp. 135-186.
When we discuss the work of Thomas Carew (1594-1639), we are on much surer ground. Carew praised John Donne for being original:

The Muses garden with Pedantique weedes
Oerspred, was purg'd by thee; the lazie seeds
Of servile imitation thrown away.¹

The same could only rarely be said of Carew himself. Despite its elegance and its wit, his poetry is not only derivative of Donne himself,² but also of the Italians — Marino, Ripa, Guarini and Bruno. It is perhaps indicative of the disparity of poetic strength that whereas Donne often transforms his borrowings almost beyond recognition into something richer, Carew is often content with "servile imitation".³

Thomas Carew, "that excellent wit, the King's Carver", as Herbert of Cherbury called him,⁴ is perhaps best known for his "Celia" poems, "A Rapture" and "To my Inconstant Mistress". He spent some time in Italy in the service of Sir Dudley Carleton, spoke Italian fluently and made several translations and imitations from Italian originals. He also spent at least five

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¹ "An Elegie upon the death of the Deane of Pauls, Dr. John Donne." For Carew's text I have used Rhodes Dunlap, The Poems of Thomas Carew (Oxford, 1949). Dunlap notes many similarities between Spaccio and Caelum Britannicum.


years in the service of Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury and could have read Bruno's *De L'Infinite*, easily available in Herbert's library. But the doctrine of the infinity of space and plurality of worlds that is characteristic of this work remains unused by Carew. The close connection between Love and Jealousy that exists in Bruno's *Eroici Furori* finds its counterpart in a "Chorus Song" to a play presented before Charles I and Queen Henrietta:

Beauty and Fear did her create
Younger than Love; Elder than Hate,
Sister to Both, by Beauties side
To Love, by Fear to Hate ally'd:
Bespore her issue is, whose race
Of fruitfull mischieves drowes the space
Of the wide earth in a swolne flood
Of wrath, revenge, spight, rage and blood.  

Bruno's lineage for jealousy is vaguely similar. He maintained:

quantunque sia figlia de l'amore, da cui deriva, compagnia
di quello, con cui va sempre insieme, segno del medesimo,
per che quello s'intende per necessaria conseguenza, dove
lei si dimostra ... tutta volta ... vien a perturbar et
attossicgarre tutto quel che si trova di bello e buono ne
l'amore.  

Jealousy is necessary in love, but when it is allowed to take
over it is ruinous, eating love away as rust does iron:


2 "Foure Songs by way of Chorus to a Play," Rhodes Dunlap, p.59.

Come l'amore non ha più stretta compagna che costei, così anco non ha senso di maggior nemica come nessuna cosa è più nemica al ferro, che la ruggine, che nasce da lui medesimo.1

Often, in his early cavalier poetry, Carew adopts anti-Petrarchanism, or an anti-Platonic stance against the sentimental platonising of erotic relationships not uncommon in Queen Henrietta Maria's circle. Thus in "Ingrateful Beauty Threatned", he writes:

Let fooles thy mystique formes adore,
I'le know thee in thy mortall state.2

But this disdain was also not uncommon. Carew's lascivious "A Rapture" is the perfect profane counterpart of Eroici, and possibly shows Carew's future interest in Spaccio. In the latter work, Sofia tells Saulino how an ageing Jove, intent on reforming the heavens, has lost most of his previous sexual appetite. Her bawdy description of Jupiter's decaying sexual vigour suggests a possible source for Carew:

Ora non son bestie nelle quali si transmute ... non Danae che lo impallidiscano in oro ... perche quel temone che volgeva e dirizzava questa nave de la metamorfosi, è devenuto si fiacco, che poco piu che nulla può resistere a l'empito de l'onde, e forse che l'acqua ancora gli va mancando a basso. La vela è di manera tale stracciata e sbusata, che in vano per ingonfiarla il vento soffia. Gli remi, ch'al dispetto di contrarii venti e turbide tempeste soleano risospingere il vascello avanti, ora, faccia


Carew's lover is seen using imagery and bawdy strikingly similar to that of Bruno's Jupiter but revels in his "un-restrained Appetite" and enacts his own rape:

So will I rifle all the sweets, that dwell
In my delicious Paradise, and swell
My bagge with honey, drawn forth by the power
Of fervent kisses from each spicie flower.

Then as he approaches consummation, Bruno's "rudder" image seems to be adopted for a similar purpose:

 Thou like a sea of milke shalt lye display'd,
 Whilst I the smooth, calme Ocean, invade
 With such a tempest, as when Jove of old
 Fell down on Danae in a storme of gold;
 Yet my tall Pine, shall in the Cyprian straight
 Ride safe at Anchor, and unlade her freight:
 My rudder, with thy bold hand, like a tryde,
 and ddealful Pilot, thou shalt steere, and guide
 My Bark into Loves channell, where it shall
 Dance, as the bounding waves doe rise and fall.

Carew's "A Second Rapture" also possibly shows his interest in Spaccio. Bruno's Jupiter "comincia a declinare da le lascivie e vizii e quelle condizioni che la virilitade e gioventude apportan seco," but Sofia reminds us of the lascivious fun he usually had with his daughter, Venus, the queen of love:

1 Spaccio, II, p.123.
2 "A Rapture", line 112.
3 ibid, lines 59-63.
4 ibid., lines 81-90.
di abbracciaria col sinistro braccio, e strenger petto a petto, e con le due prime dita della destra premendogli il labro inferiore, accostar bocca a bocca, denti a denti, lingua a lingua (carezze più insieme che possono convenire a un padre in verso de la figlia).

Carew seems to have had Bruno's ageing Jupiter in mind when he asked:

Give me a wench about thirteene,
Already voted to the Queene
Of lust and lovers ... 
Whose kisses fastned to the mouth
Of threeascore yeares and longer alcouth,
Renew the age, and whose bright eye
Obscures those lesser lights of skie:
Whose snowy breasts (if we may call
That snow, that never melts at all)
Makes Jove invent a new disguise;
In spite of Juno's jealousies:
Whose every part doth re-invite
The old decayed appetitie:
And in whose sweet embraces
May melt myselfe to lust, and die. 

that Bruno's Jupiter intent on moral reform suggests. In

Epilogue to a Play presented before the King and Queen Carew's
debt is more immediately apparent. In Spaccio, Bruno had written

Troublesome and sad is the state of hunger; displeasing
and dull is the state of satiety: but that which pleases
us is the motion between one state and another. The state
of venereal ardour torments us, the state of satisfied
lust saddens us, but that which pleases us is the transit
from one state to another ... Labour does not delight us,
except in the beginning; after rest, and if not in the
beginning after getting tired, there is no delight in
rest ... so that only the change from one extreme to the
other, through all its intervals ... comes to satisfy us.

1 ibid., II. p.128.

2 "A Second Rapture".

3 Spaccio, II. p.123: "Giove ... comincia a declinare da le lascivie
e vizi, e quelle condizioni, che la virilitade e gioventude
apportan seco."

4 II. pp.121-122.
Carew's poem makes the same points about the coincidence of opposites and their importance in man's well-being:

Hunger is sharp, the Sated Stomack dull,
Feeding delights, t'wixt Emptinesse and full:
The pleasure lyes, not in the end, but streames
That flowe betwixt two opposite Extreames.
So doth the flux from hott to cold Combine
An equall Temper ...
After much rest labour delights, when paine
Succeeds long travaile rest grows sweete againe.¹

When we come to Caelum Brittanicum, however, Carew's indebtedness to the Nolan calls out for recognition. But this is never given. Carew's justification is that he probably had to execute a complex masque at short notice on the orders of Charles I and he had to comply:

Non habeo ingenium; Caesar sed jussit: habebo. Cur ne posse negem, posse quod ille putat?²

Even the royal architect Inigo Jones used the side wings of Giulio Parigi's first intermedio of The Palace of Fame, which he had already used in 1631 for Jonson's masque, Chloridia.³ This, however, need not confirm any evidence of haste for, after his quarrel with Jonson, Inigo Jones made use of Parigi's designs "for almost every masque which he composed".⁴

¹ "Epilogue to a Play presented before King and Queene, att an Entertainement of them by the Lord Chamberlaine in Whitehall hall", p.127.

² Caelum Brittanicum (1634), title-page.
Carew's reliance on Bruno was first noted by Robert Adamson in Encyclopaedia Brittanica, 9th ed., (1875-89). V. p.101: "The Caelum is founded on Spaccio de la Bestia of Bruno, and is a work of considerable merit."


⁴ ibid., p.223.
Whatever the reason, Carew found the moral and allegorical action of Spaccio amenable to his purpose. Spiritual and platonic love was a popular theme for discussion in Queen Henrietta's circle, and poets and masque writers vied with each other stressing the chaste affection uniting their king and queen. Jonson's 1631 Love's Triumph through Callipolis celebrates this, and so does Carew's Caelum Brittanicum. Linking up with Inigo Jones, Carew artfully incorporated some of the machinery and ideas of Spaccio as the basis for the many antimasques and songs on which the Caroline masque depended. The overall structure of the Fortuna episode in Spaccio is retained, but hints from other parts of the book are also employed. Spaccio then remains no longer the preserve of the scholar-philosopher, but widens its implications in the quasi-dramatic structure of the masque against a background of court life. Even the title Caelum Brittanicum seems to arise from Jupiter's fears expressed early in Bruno about the coming of Caelus who will inaugurate a new era of virtue peace and plenty similar to that Charles I is seen to inaugurate towards the end of Carew's masque.  

In Bruno's Spaccio it is "per amor della bellezza che si vede nella bonta e giustizia naturale" that the moral reforms must be carried out.  

In Carew, the sovereigns' "exemplar life" invites others to reform.

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1 Caelum Brittanicum, line 862ff.  
2 Spaccio, II. p.124.  
3 Caelum Brittanicum, line 62.
The Senate of the gods meets in Bruno and Carew on a feast-day chosen to commemorate the fall of the Giants and the Titans.\(^1\)

Afraid of Caelus, Jupiter wants to start a reform in the heavens:

Jove is grown old and fearfull, apprehends a subversion of his Empire, and doubts lest Fate should introduce a legall succession in the legitimate heire by repossessing the Titanian line, and hence springs all this innovation.\(^2\)

Innovation involves restraints even upon the gods themselves. As the gods had overcome the Titans, they must now also overcome their own passions, and here Carew borrows liberally from Bruno:

Baccus hath commanded all Tavernes to be shut, and no liquor drawn after tenne at night. Cupid must goe no more so scandalously naked, but is enjoyned to make him breeches though of his mothers petticoats. Ganymede is forbidden the Bedchamber, and must only minister in publique. The gods must keep no pages, nor Groomes of their Chamber under the age of twenty-five, and those provided with a competent stocks of bearde ... Vulcan was brought ... and fined for driving in a plate of Iron into one of the Sunnes Chariot-Wheelles ... for breach of a penall Statute prohibiting worke upon Holydayes, that being the annual celebration of the Gigantomachy.\(^3\)

The above is merely a repetition with the slightest of variations of images found in Spaccio:

Ha ordinato al suo fabro Vulcano, che non lavorare a' giorni di festa; ha comandato a Bacco, che non faccia comparir la sua corte, e non permette di vagare le sue Eventi, furor che nel tempo di carnascale, e ne le feste principali de l'Anno, solamente dopo cena, a presso il tramontar del sole, e non senza sua speziale ed expressa licenza ... a vietato a Cupido d'andar piu vagando in presenza de gli uomini, eroi e dei così sbracato, come ha di costume, et ingiuntogli,

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\(^1\) ibid., line 247. Cf. Spaccio, II. p.114: "Nel giorno dunque, che sul cielo celebra la festa de la gigantomachia."

\(^2\) Caelum Brittanicum, line 247ff. Cf. Spaccio, II. p.124: "Pensa al suo giorno del giudizio ... dove la revoluzion de l'anno del mondo minaccia, ch'un altro Celeo vegna a ripigliar il dominio."

\(^3\) ibid., lines 247ff.
che non offenda oltre la vista dei colicoli, mostrano
le natiche per la via lattea et olimpico senato; ma che
vada per l’avventure vestito al mano da la cintura a basso
... Quel Ganimedeo, che al marco dispetto de la gelosa
Giunone gli era tanto in grazia ... è da temere, che da
paggio di Giove non debba aver a favore di farsi come
scudiare di marte ... Ma imposto a tutti li dei di non
aver paggi o cubiglioni di minore etade, che di
tentricinque anni.

Soon the gods proceed to the main work. Jupiter must dispense
with the heavenly constellations that reminded him of his
previous lusts and vices.

Perche vi si vedono aperto gli frutti, le reliquie,
gli riporti, le scritture, le storie di
nostri adulterii, incesti, fornizazioni, ire, sdegni,
rapine ed altri iniquitadi e delitti; e ch che per premio
di errori abbiamo fatto maggiori errori inalzando al
cielo i trionfi dei vizi e sedie de scleragani,
laschiando bandite, sepolte e neglette ne l’inferno
le virtudi e la giustizia.

Carew expands only slightly on this and shows how Jupiter had
stellified his sins in despite of his jealous Juno. He also
shows the ageing Jupiter, as Bruno’s, when confronted with
“testimony of his misdeeds”, visibly ashamed:

And though of old, when youthfull blood conspir’d
With his new Empire, prone to heats of lust,
He acted incests, rapes, adulteries
On earthly beauties, which his raging Queen,
Swoln with revengefull fury, turn’d to beasts,
And in despight he retransform’d to Stars,
Till he had filled the crowded Firmament
With his loose strumpets, and their spurious race,
Where the eternal records of his shame
Shine to the world in flaming Characters.

2 ibid., II. p.134.
3 ibid.
4 Caelum Britannicum, p.155. lines 7ff.
Carew's Jupiter must seek to rehabilitate himself in the eyes of Cælus, "to expiate the infectious guilt of these detested luxuries"\(^1\) by removing "Th' Infamous lights from their usurped Sphære".\(^2\)

The images in the boreal, zodiac and austral zones\(^3\) represented Jupiter's vices and had to be replaced by virtues. In this way, Jupiter and universal man can expel the "triumphant beast" within him:

Vice, that unbodied, in the Appetite
Drests his Throne, hath yet, in bestiall shapes,
Branded by Nature, with the character
And distinct stampe of some peculiar Ill,
Mounted the Sky, and fix'd his Trophies there:
As fawing flattery in the little Dog;
I' th' bigger, churlish Murmur; Cowardize
I' th' timorous Hare; Ambition in the Eagle;
Rapine and Avarice in th'Adventrous Ship
That sail'd to Colchos for the golden fleece;
Drunkon distemper in the Goblet flowes;
I' the Part and Scorpion, biting Calumny;
In Hercules and the Lion, furious rage;
Vaine Ostentation in Cassiope.\(^4\)

Again these heavenly signs with all their attributes are to be found in Bruno:

la Saetta de la Detrazione, il Cane de la murmurazione,
la Canicola de l'adulazione! Bandiscasi da noi l'Ercole
de la violenza ... la Cassiopea de la vanità ... l'Aquila
de l'arroganza ... la Lepre del vano timore! Non ne sia
oltre sentro il petto l'Argo nave de la vanità, la
Tazza de l'insobrietà ... Non fia, che ne s'avvicine il
Scorpio de la frode, il 'cone de la tirannia ... il
Saggitario de la detrazione!\(^5\)

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\(^1\) ibid., lines 86-87.

\(^2\) ibid., line 88.

\(^3\) Spaccio, II. pp.143;238.

\(^4\) Caelum Britannicum, lines 356-369.

When Jupiter proceeds to dismantle the Heavens of his sins, there are various suggestions as to what should happen to the dethroned luxurious "signs", and in some cases again Carew either summarizes Bruno, or subtly incorporates the ideas in Spaccio for the purpose of his genre to have a stronger visual impact or as basis to an antimasque:

All the Stars are quench'd, and the Spheare darkned. Before the entry of every Antimasque, the Starres in these figures in the Spheare which they were to represent, were extinct; so as, by the end of the Antimasques in the Spheare no more stars were seen.e Carew also refers to contemporary prognosticators and astrologers, John Booker and Richard Allestre, about recent solar eclipses and predictions therefrom, but his conclusions still centre mainly on Bruno's allegory. Thus in Spaccio, Jupiter thinks that the dethroned constellation "Eagle" should be given to the drinking German nation as their universal symbol:

De L'Aquila, uccello divino ed eroico e tipo de l'Imperio, io determino e voglio cosi, che vada a ritrovarsi in carne ed in ossa nella bibace Alemagna: dove piu che in altra parte si trovara celebrata in forma, in figura, in imagine ed in similitudine, in tante pitture, in tante statue, in tante celature, quanto nel cielo stelle si possono presentar agli occhi de la Germania contemplativa.e Carew gives us a shorter version, but Momus' barb is, if anything more pointed:

The Eagle had beene a fit present for the Germans, in regard their Bird hath mew'd most of her feathers lately.e

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1 Caelum Brittanicum, lines 356-369.
2 Spaccio, II. p.140.
3 Caelum Brittanicum, p.163.
Again where Bruno's Mettuno would donate the Dolphin to the French "in the sea of Marseilles"; Carew, a Nomus argues it would have "beene most welcome to the French". In Spaccio, Jupiter asks Juno how she would like to dispose of the "skalding Crab" (Granchio scottato):

Appresso, dovendosi definire del Granchio (il quale) perché appar scottato dall' incendio del foco e fatto rosso dal calor del sole, non si trova altrimente in cielo che se fusse condannato a le pene de l'inferno, dimando Siuone, come di cosa sua, che ne volesse far il sanato; di cui la più gran parte lo rimese al suo arbitrio. E lei disse che, se Mettuno, dio del mare, il comportava, arrebbe desiderato che s'attuffasse a l'onde del mare Adriatico, la dove ha più compagni che non ha stelle in cielo. Alter, che sara appresso l'oneratissima Republica veneziana la qual, come fusse anch' ella un granchio, a poco a poco da l'oriente sen va verso l'occidente retrogradando. Consenti quel Dio che porta il gran tridente. E Giove disse, che in loco del Cancro starà bene il tropico della Conversione, Emendazione, Repressione, Ritrattazione, virtù contrarie all Mal Progresso.

Caelum Britannicum adopts this solution:

Lord of this Tropique, sits the skalding Crab ...
His backward paces and so retrograde
'Proce down-hill to th' opposed Capricorne,'
Thus I depose him from his laughty Throne.

But again Carew adopts this image and the traditional retrograde movement mentioned by Bruno for the purpose of his genre. He thus argues that the Crab should

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1 Spaccio, II. p.213.
2 Caelum Britannicum, p.164 line 413.
3 Spaccio, II. p.221.
4 Caelum Britannicum, p.162. lines 351ff.
Drop from the Sky, into the briny flood,
There teach thy motion to the ebbing Sea,
But let those fires that beautif'd thy shell
Take humane shapes, and the disorder show
Of thy regressive paces here below.  

so that, in Carew, Mercury’s speech is followed by the "second
Antimasque [that] is danc’d in retrograde paces, expressing obliquity
in motion", and deviation from truth, reason and justice.

In place of Libra or the Scales [Bilancia], the gods in
Spaccio decide to institute

La Equità, il Giusto, la Retribuzione ... la Giustizia
senza rigore a riguardo di tutti, che spingano
l'Ingratitudine, la Temeitade, l'Insolenza, l'Ardire,
l'Arroganza, il poco Rispetto, l'Iniquità, l'Ingiuria
ed altre famigliari di queste 3

Carew's Nomus makes similar comments:

In my opinion there were some innocent, and some generous
constellations, that might have been reserved for Noble
uses: as the Skales and Sword to adorn the statue of
Justice, since she resides here on Earth onely in picture
and Effigie.4

But the dethronement of the stars symbolizing Jupiter’s past
sins proceeds, and new claimants appear before the senate of
the gods. Thus when in Bruno, Hercules’ constellation is
plucked from heaven, several contenders come to plead for the
vacant seat, namely Wealth, Poverty and Fortune. The same
happens in Carew and again there is no doubt that he is using
Bruno as his basis.

1 ibid., p.162, lines 342-346.
2 ibid.,
3 Spaccio, II. p.223.
4 Caelum Brittanicum, p.164.
That I prevent the message of the gods
Thus with my haste, and not attend their summons,
Which ought in Justice call me to the place
I now require of Right, is not alone
To shew the just precedence that I hold
Before all earthly, next th'immortal Powers. 1

is the same claim made by Wealth in Spaccio:

Anzì mi meraviglio, disse, che sin tanto abbi
differito di collocarmi, e prima che ti ricordassi
di me, hai non solo collocate altre dee et altre nume,
che mi denno cedere, ma altre hai sostenute, che bisognasse,
che io da per me medesima venissi ad opporermi e presentarmi
contra il pregiudizio mio e torto, che mi fate. 2

Wealth is dismissed because it is really neutral, "ne vergogna,
ne onore" 3 or as Carew says "no credit ... no disparagement", 4
and poverty, as her "contrary", claims the seat; she also is
dismissed by Momo in Bruno, by Momus in Carew, both using similar
arguments. This is Momo, who for Bruno represents synderesis, 5
signifying the prodding of conscience, critic of manners and
"libertà di parlare". 6

Poverty, Poverty, you would not be completely Poverty
if you were not still so poor in arguments, syllogisms
and good consequences. Not because you are her opposite
wretched one, does it follow you must be invested with
that of which she is despooled or deprive, and that
you should be the very thing which she is not. As for
instance you must be Jove or Momus, because she is
neither Jove nor Momus ... They know also that by reason
of your being opposites, it follows that you cannot be
together in the same place; but it does not follow that
where she is not and cannot be, you must or can be. 7

1 ibid., lines 479-484.
2 Spaccio, II. p.162.
3 ibid., II. p.169.
4 Caelum Britannicum, line 575.
5 Spaccio, II. p.114.
6 ibid., II. p.131.
7 ibid., II. p.170.
Carew's Momuc, "Hypocrítique of Manners, Protonotarie of Abuses, Arch-Informer" speaks much along the same pattern, and censures Poverty:

I cannot but wonder that your perpetual conversation with Posts and Philosophers hath furnished you with no more Logick, or that you should thinke to impose upon us so grosse an inference as because Plutus and you are contrary, therefore whatsoever is denied of the one, must be true of the other; as if it should follow of necessity, because he is not Jupiter, you are. No, I give you to know, I am better vers'd in cavils with the gods, then to swallow such a fallacie, for though you cannot bee together in one place, yet there are many places that may be without you both, and such is heaven, where neither of you are likely to arrive.

Fortuna who argues she is impartial in both hands and blinded eyes enters holding her wheel and makes a slightly stronger plea in Bruno than in Carew and it is only Jupiter's sleight of hand in argument, his "wisest counsel", that prevents her taking a seat in Heaven, but her arguments are similar to Carew's:

That Plutus is refus'd, dismaies me not,
He is my drudge, and the externall pompe,
In which he deckes the World, proceeds from me,
Not him; like Harmony, that not resides
In strings or notes, but in the hand and voyce.

Yet here like blinded Justice, I dispence
With my impartiall hands, their constant lots,

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1 Caelum Britanicum line 136.
2 ibid., lines 627-638. Rhodes Dunlap, p.281.
3 Specchio, II. p.180.
4 ibid., II. p.184.
And if desertlesse, impious men engrosse
My best rewards, the fault is yours, you gods,
That scant your graces to mortalitie,
And niggards of your good, scarce spare the world
One virtuous, for a thousand wicked men.
It is no error to conferre dignity,
But to bestow it on a vicious man;
I gave the dignity, but you made the vice,
Make you men good, and I'll make good men happy.  

Momus reflects on Fortuna's plea in just the same fashion as in Bruno:

Alas! What would it advantage you, if vertue were as univercall as vice is? It would only follow, that as the world now exclaims upon you for exalting the vicious, it would then raile as fast at you for depressing the vertuous.

Carew then departs from Bruno in introducing Hedone or Pleasure
to justify the introduction of the seventh antimasque of the "five senses":

Come forth my subtle Organs of delight,
With changing figures please the curious eye,
And charme the eare with moving Harmonie.

1 CaelumBrittanicum, lines 708-712. Cf. Spaccio, II. p.177: "Io, che son tanto degna, e tanto potente, che metto avanti la Bicchezza, la guida, e spinge, dove mi pare e piace, donde voglio, la scaccio; e dove voglio, la conduco."

2 CaelumBrittanicum, lines 697-703. Cf. Spaccio, II. pp.181-182: "Non veggo mitre, toche, corone, arti, ingegni ... io, che getto tutti ne la medesima urna de la mutazione e moto, sono eguale a tutti, tutti egualmente rimo, e non rimo alcuno particolare piu che l'altro, vegno ad esser giustissima ... La voi, da voi, dico, proviene ogni inequalita, ogni iniquitade ... Tal che quando avviene, che un poltrone o forfante monta ad esser principe o ricco, non è mia colpa."

3 CaelumBrittanicum, lines 721-725. Cf. Spaccio, II. p.183. Momus says: "Ma quando tutti venissero indifferenti, eguali e simili, non mancaresti per tanto ad essere pur iniqua."

4 ibid., line 808.

5 ibid., lines 805-807.
Mercury dismisses Medone. She is a bewitching siren who
hast with cunning artifice display'd
Th' enamel'd outside, and the honied verge
Of the faire cup, where deadly poyson lurks

Momus agrees and dismisses all the suitors. None better than
the "Royal Vertues" merit stellification. Thus towards the
end of the masque, the virtues of "Religion, Truth and Wisdom"
are installed, as in Spaccio, but whereas in Bruno Jupiter
declares that the triple Crown awaits in heaven the most
invincible king Henri III for his efforts towards peace and
stability, in Carew the sovereign, Charles I, also as a reward
for the virtues of peace, is promised translation into the stars
as the need of the genre demanded:

Then shall you see
The sacred hand of bright Eternitie
Would you to Stars, and fix you in the Spheare ... This is decreed by Jove, which my returne
Shall see perform'd.

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1 ibid., lines 810-812.
2 ibid., line 850.
3 ibid., line 1060.
4 Spaccio, II. p.249.
5 Caecum Brittanicum, lines 850-855:
"Of your owne Royall vertues, and the cleare
Reflexe they take from th'imitation
Of your fam'd Court, make Honours storee full,
And have to that secure fix'd state advance'd
Both you and them, to which the labouring world,
Wading through streames of blood, sweats to aspire."
6 ibid., lines 862-866.
The intricate Inigo Jones scenery shifts again to provide spectacle and more opportunities for the popular antimasques:

Atlas, and the Spheree vanisheth, and a new Scene appeares of mountaines, whose eminent height exceed the Clouds which past beneath them, the lower parts were wild and woody: out of this place comes forth a more grave Antimasque of Picts, the naturall Inhabitants of this Isle, antient Scots and Irish, these dance a Merica or Marshall dance ... At a distance above these sate a young man with a white embroidered robe, upon his faire haire an Olive garland with wings at his shoulders, and holding in his hand a Cornucopia fill'd with corne and fruits, representing the genius of those kingdoms.¹

In translating Charles I and his queen to the stars, Carew's departure is only minor, and we are told that

Jove shall not to enrich the Skie,  
Beggar the Earth, their Fame shall flye  
From hence alone, and in the Spheree  
Kindle new starres, whilst they rest here.²

He solves the problem of having the sovereigns in heaven as well as on earth by adopting Bruno's use of the river Fridanze, the mythical name of the river Fo:

¹ ibid., p.176.
² ibid., lines 992-995.
Did not the River Biverhridanue, the grace acquire In Heaven and Earth to flow, Above in streams of golden fire, In silver waves below?¹

And so a masque that reflects the "dignified voluptuousness and exquisite elegance"² of the Caroline court comes to an end on a Brunian tone, and the Chorus sings:

Propitious Starres shall crowne each birth, Whilst you rule then, and they the Earth.

The Song ended, the two Clouds, with the persons sitting on them, ascend; the great Cloud closeth againe, and so passeth away overthrowth the Scæne; leaving behind it nothing but a sirene skye. After which, the Masquers dance their last dance, and the Curtaine was let fell.³

Carew's, like Nicholas Hill's, is an extreme case, but perhaps none better serves to illustrate the possible indebtedness that Elizabethan, Jacobean and Caroline writers might have owed to Bruno.

¹ ibid., lines 997-1001. Cf. Spaccio, II. pp. 240-241: "Veneno, disse Giove, al fino ridano, il quale non so come trattarlo, e che e in terra, e ch'e in cielo, mentre le altre cose, de le quali siamo in proposito, facendosi in cielo, lasciare la terra ... Sia dunque l'ridano in cielo, ma non altrimenti, che per credito et immaginazione! Lucide non impedisca, che in quel medesimo luogo veramente vi possa essere qualch'altra cosa, di cui in un altro di questi prossimi giorni definiremo; perch'e bisogna pensare sopra di questa sedia, come sopra quella de l'orsa maggiore."

² M.J.G. Grierson, Metaphysical Lyricœ, p. xxxvi.

³ Caælum Britannicum, lines 1137ff.
Weave Out A Net

It is not to be expected that Bruno's influence should often be as widespread, pervasive and direct as in the case of Nicholas Hill's *Philosophia Epicurea* and Thomas Carew's *Caelum Britannicum*, but increasingly Bruno's basic ideas became acceptable to an English audience. To borrow, and violently twist out of shape, Donne's memorable words, this

Man hath weav'd out a net, and this net throwne
Upon the Heavens, and now they are his own.¹

As I see it, typically Brunian ideas were very much in the air and went on being utilized as the seventeenth century wore on, although Bruno himself was often considered by contemporaries as a fantastic philosopher who "seems, and is not wise".² In *Epigrames and Elegies*, which he published in collaboration with Christopher Marlowe, John Davies refers to Bruno's troubles in London and Oxford where he disastrously tried to "shew his night cap fine", presenting himself as the "waker of sleeping souls" and other over-wrought titles, was sick at the hostile reception from academics and populace,³ and glad to find refuge and noble patronage in the embassy of Mauvissiere near the church of St. Clement's Danes:

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¹ "The First Anniversary", lines 279-30.

² *Epigrames and Elegies*, (Middleborough, 1590), sig.A³v.

³ "Proemiale Epistola" to Mauvissiere in *De La Causa*, I. p.203.
Brunus which thinkes himselfe a faire sweet youth
Is Thirtie nine yeeres of age at least:
Yet was he never to confesse the truth,
But a dry starveling when he was at best.

This sull was sick to shew his night cap fine
And his wrought Pillow overspред with lawne;
But hath bin well since his griefes cause hath line,
At Trollups by saint Clements church in pawne.¹

F.A. Yates has put forward a case to prove that Samuel
Daniel's Delia and Michael Drayton's Ideas Mirrour were
directly influenced by Bruno's emblematic approach;² and this
has lately been strongly supported by Pierre Spriet's claim that
Bruno was "une influence certaine" on Daniel.³ There are indeed
a number of similarities. Thus Daniel's "my desires wings" of
Sonnet 27 in Delia recalls "l'ali del bel desio" of Eroici Furori,
while the use Daniel made of the Icarus and Actaeon myths can be
validly compared to Bruno's.⁴

Daniel (1562-1619) had heard Bruno's lectures in Oxford, had
read his books, did not really think much of him⁵ and though he

¹ Epigrammes and Elegies, sig.C2v.
² Emblematic Conceit, pp.115-116.
³ Samuel Daniel: Sa Vie - Son Oeuvre (Didier, 1968), pp.30;
217-221.
⁴ Spriet, pp.40-41.
⁵ Samuel Daniel, The Worthy Tract of P. Jovius, containynge a
Discourse of rare Inventions, both Militarie and Amorous,
called Imprese (1585). Letter of N.W.: "You cannot forget
that which Nolanus (that man of infinite titles among other
phantastical toyes) truely noted by chaunce in our Schooles,
that by the help of translations al Sciences had their off-
spring; and in my judgement it is true."
was well versed in the emblems of Alciati (his book of emblems appearing in the same year as Bruno's emblem book, *Eroici Furori*) was not in his poetry very much concerned with philosophic ideas but with melody and phrasing. The verbal similarities in *Delia* to *Eroici* about the "force of murthering eyes" do not amount to much, and might easily have been borrowed direct from Philippe Desportes and Sidney to whom he claims allegiance.¹

It is possible that Bruno's insistence in *Eroici* that real poetry is not derived from rules² encouraged Daniel's "individuality and independence" from classical metrics and also led to Fulke Greville's simpler style.³

¹ *Delia* (1592), sig. A2; Sonnet 29.

² *Eroici*, II. pp. 314-315: "Cicala ... Son certi regolisti di poesia, che a gran pena passano per poeta Omero, riponendo Virgilio, Ovidio, Marziale, Esiodo, Lucrezio et altri molti in numero di versificatorii, esaminandoli per le regole de la poetica d'Aristotele. Tansillo ... Sappi certo, fratel mio, che questi son vere bestie: per che non considerano, quelle regole principalmente servir per pittura de l'omerica poesia o altra simile in particolare, e son per mostrar tal volta un poeta eroico tal, qual fu Omero, e non per instituir altri, che potrebbero essere con altre vene, arti e furori, eguali, simili e maggiori di diversi geni..."

We know from Bruno's Spaccio that his period of friendship with Fulke Greville (1554-1628) was of short duration. Bruno informs us that the envious Erinnys poisoned their relationship; there had been a definite rift, which Bruno regretted:

And although I have had occasion to rebuke others for their rudeness towards me, I must not leave ... without saluting you [Sidney] and that most generous and humane spirit, Sir Fulke Greville ... It was he who, after you, offered me his good offices.

Bruno had promised to dedicate a book to Greville, but had never come round to doing so. Despite this, we know that Greville was exposed to the Nolan philosophy, had probably read the moral dialogues dedicated to Sidney as well as the cosmological works in which he was so interested.

Greville's biography of Sidney makes no mention of any connection either of them had with Bruno. If he had resented being connected with De La Cena, this is only natural. Besides, anyone who prudently omitted all mention of Astrophel and Stella, would have just as prudently suppressed any link Sidney might have had with Bruno. On the other hand, Bruno himself, as Cotin recalled, hit back strongly against the anti-social 'faith without

1 op. cit., II. p.107.
2 ibid.
3 Cena, I. p.137: "Allora gli disse il signor Folco Grivello: Ti grazia, signor Nolano, fatemi intendere le ragioni, per le quali stimate la terra muoversi!"
works' belief to which the Calvinist Greville subscribed.¹ The staid Greville would almost certainly have been alienated by Bruno's inflated ego, and what he considered the transformation of "Truth into Rhetorike":

Many came first Wise men to those Schooles;  
Then grew Philosophers, or Wisdome-mongers;²  
Next Rhetoricians, and at last grew fools.

Possibly, however, there are some points of contact with Bruno in Greville's poetry and drama. Caulica, obviously influenced by Sidney, could have been influenced by Spaccio:

Nature the queen of change to change is loving  
And form to matter new is still adjourned ...  
Her plants which summer ripes, in winter fade,  
Each creature in unconstant mother lieth,  
Man made of earth and for whom earth is made,  
Still dying lives and living ever dieth³

This parallels Brunian concepts about the coincidence of opposites and mutability in ever-recurring cycles of regeneration. Such ideas occur again at the beginning of Time's debate against Eternity in Chorus Tertius of Greville's drama, Mustapha, which Franklin B. Newman has traced to a particular passage in Spaccio, where Sophia is explaining the notion of change to Saulino.⁴ One stanza, particularly, seems to me to be far more reminiscent of the Fortuna episode later

¹ Emblematic Conceit, p.118.  
² "Treatie of Humane Learning," st.40.  
³ Caulica, 7.  
on in Spaccio, when Fortuna defends herself against the
strictures of Momus and the other gods. ¹

Day, Night, Houres, Arts, All God or Men create,
The world doth charge me, that I restlesse change;
Suffer no being in a constant state:
Alas! Why are my revolutions strange
Unto these Natures, made to fall, or elise
With that sweet Genius, ever-moving Time?²

The stanzas immediately following then parallel Tansillo's
explanation of change and its psychological importance to
man's sanity. The concept of the pleasurability of change
can be traced back to the Greeks,³ but Greville highlights
the particularly Brunian angle that such fluctuations are
indeed necessary to man's inner nature:

considerando il male et il bene, stimando l'uno e l'altro
come cosa variabile e consistente in moto, mutazione e
vicissitudo — di sorte ch'il fine d'un contrario è
principio de l'altro, e l'estremo de l'uno è cominciamento de l'altro — non si dismette, né si gonfia di
spirito, vien contintente ne l'inclinazioni, e temperato
ne le voluttadi.⁴

Indeed in Bruno, 'contrarietade' is often symbolized by the
Tree of the Knowledge of good and evil forever sending forth

¹ Spaccio, II. pp. 129; 177-184. See Above, p. 224.
² G. Bullough, ed., The Poems and Dramas of Fulke Greville
(New York, 1945), II. p. 105.
³ Aristotle, Nichomachean Ethics, trans. H. Rackham (Loeb
Classical Library, New York, 1926) VII. pp. 447; 449:
"nothing ... can continue to give him pleasure always
because his nature is not simple." "change in all things is sweet ... owing to some badness
in us."
⁴ Eroici, II. p. 324.
a mean of new syntheses "dove li contrarj convogno".¹ In the
first dialogue of the second part of Eroici Furori, Cesarino
assures Maricondo that this change is necessary in all human
states -- political institutions, religion, art and science:

E quanto a gli stati del mondo, quando me ritroviamo ne le
tenebre e male, possiamo sicuramente profetizar la luce e
 prosperitate ... dicendo, che doveano succedere le tenebre
di nove religioni e culti ... Similmente accade a tutte
l' altre generazioni e stati! Li quali se durano e non
sono annichilati a fatto per forza de la vicissitudine de
le cose, è necessario dal male vognan al bene, dal bene
al male ... Per che questo comporta l'ordine naturale.²

Greville uses these opposing elements to create syntheses in
"Lawes, Arts or Sects":

What Weariness; what lothesome Desolations
Would plague these life and death-begetting Creatures?
Nay what absurdity in my Creations
Were it, if Time-borne had Eternall features;
This nether Orbo, which is Corruptions Sphere,
Not being able long one shapre to beare

Could Pleasures live? Could Worth have reverence?
Lawes, Arts or Sects (more probabilities)
Keep up their reputation in Mans sense,
If Novelty did not renew his eyes;
Or time take mildly from him what he knew,
Making both me, and mine, to each still new.³

The argument is similar to that of Tansillo to Cicada in
Eroici where again the virtues of novelty are discussed:

because both contraries in excess ... are vices when they
exceed the limit; and likewise when these extremes produce
less they become virtues ... indeed, I say they are one
and the same virtue: because vice exists there where
contraries exist ... the minimum of vice lies in the centre,
where contraries meet and are become one and indifferent.⁴

¹ ibid., II. p.325.
² ibid., II. pp.379-380.
³ G. Bullough, II. p.405.
⁴ Eroici, II. p.325.
This defence of change is perhaps more forcefully put in Sophia’s speech to Saulinc in Spaccio:

If there were no change in bodies, no fluctuation or vicissitude there would be nothing agreeable, nothing good, nothing pleasurable ... Every pleasure that we see consists in nothing else than a certain transit, progress or movement ... from one state to another. In nothing present can we have delight if we have not become tired of what is past ... so that the change from one extreme to another with all its intervals, the movement from one contrary to another comes to satisfy us; until at last we see such a familiarity between contraries that they agree with each other more than like with like.¹

This coincidence is, however, at times seen as destructive of human endeavour, as in Bruno’s ninth sonnet in Eroici

where the gods are seen to pull in different directions:

Son vive l’acque, e l’incendi non more;  
Chi a gli occhi ho Teti, et ho Vulcano al core.  
Altri amo, odio me stesso;  
Ma s’io m’impiumo, altri si cangia in sasso:  
Poggia altri al ciel, s’io mi ripogno al basso.²

In Greville’s Mustapha, Nature is also seen as an angry deity bent on destruction in the very process of creation. ‘Chorus Sacerdotum’ discusses the problem of evil and the persisting dualism in a conflicting world-order:

Vainly begot, and yet forbidden vanity,  
Created sickle, commanded to be sound.  
What meaneth Nature by these diverse Lawes?  
Passion and Reason, self-division cause:  
Is it the markes, or Majesty of Power

¹ Spaccio II. pp.121-22.  
² Eroici, II. p.323: "nessuna cosa composta esser vero ente."
To make offences that it may forgive?
Nature herselfe, doth her own selfe defloure,
To hate those erreours she herselue doth give ... 
If Nature did not take delight in blood,
She would have made more easie waies to good.¹

Juxtaposed to this, however, the 'Chorus Quintus : Tartarorum',
which reflects Greville's mature judgement, commits man to a
more beneficent Nature, and frees him from the superstitions
of those "who are but ignorant of cause".² Indeed, as in
Bruno, the wise man who can achieve continence, can read these
inconveniences as but transient:

parimenti la pena non gli è pena, per che con la forza
de la considerazione ha presente il termine di quella.
Così il sapiente ha tutte le cose mutabili come cose,
che non sono.³

The world of existents can then be seen as the great
simulacrum hermetically proclaiming the glory of God:

Man should make much of Life, as Natures table;
Wherein she writes the Cypher of her glorie.
Forsake not Nature, nor misunderstand her:
Her mysteries are read without Faiths eye-sight:
She speaketh in our flesh; and from our Senses,
Delivers downe her wisdome to our Reason ... 
She neither taught the Father to destroy;
Nor promised any man, by dying, joy.⁴

As in Bruno, however, love of the material world must be linked
with spirit, and must lead towards the deity.⁵ Man ought not to

¹ Lines 3-18.
² ibid., line 17.
³ Eroici, II. p.324.
⁴ G. Bullough, II. p.136.
⁵ Napoleone Orsini, Fulke Greville tra il mondo e Dio (Milan and Modena), pp.6ff; 113.
put too great a store on becoming attached to either earthly things or an earthly mistress. But such a concept had become commonplace in Renaissance Platonism. Greville holds, however, that in reaching towards the One, in a strikingly similar manner to Bruno's *Eroici*, man's aspiration is linked to an illimitable universe:

The minde of Man is this worlds true dimension;  
And knowledge is the measure of the minde;  
And as the minde, in her vast comprehension,  
Contains more worlds than all the world can finde.  

Greville's frequent astronomical images may show traces of Brunian influence, "Who seeks true glory must look to the sky". Man's lust becomes the sky, and he reaches upward:

Am I borne up to the skies?  
See where Jove and Venus shine,  
Showing in her heavenly eyes  
That desire is divine.  
Look where lies the milkyway,  

His earthly mistress takes on, as in Bruno's *Eroici*, the divine aspect and characteristics of the deity as a source of unity and constancy:

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1 *Caelica*, 50; 70; 71.  
2 *Eroici*, II. p. 343: "Sempre dunque dal bello compreso, e per conseguenza misurato, e conseguentemente bello per partcipazione fa progresso verso quello ch' è veramente bello, che non ha margine e circoscrizione alcuna."  
4 *Caelica*, 62.  
5 *ibid*.  
6 *ibid.*, 56.
I stepped forth to touch the sky,
I a god by Cupid dreams;
Cynthia who did naked lie,
Runs away like silver streams, ...
Thus stand I like arctic pole,
Where Sol passeth o'er the line,
Mourning my benighted soul
Which so losest light divine.  

Caelica, or Cynthia, or Myra become aspects of God:

Joys are shadows of perfection

Only like fate sweet Myra never varies
Yet in her eyes the doom of all change carries

And yet 'doom', or death, as in Bruno, can progressively lead
towards a spiritual regeneration and a re-union with the One.

We perish into reality; and man's mind, the microcosmos of the
physical world, only finds satisfaction in its source:

A Circle with no line environed,
Not comprehended, all it comprehends;
Worth infinite, yet satisfies no minde,
Till it that Infinite of the God-head finde.

These are images of importance in Bruno, and Greville could not
fail to notice and be influenced by them. But his orthodoxy and
his Calvinism made him adopt a more devoutly Christian tone:

Eternal truth, almighty, infinite,
Only exiled from man's fleshly heart ...
We pray to Christ.

1 ibid.
2 ibid., 4.
3 ibid., 7.
4 Spaccio, II. p.391: "La qual medesima è vita eterna che l'uomo
può aver in disposizione in questo tempo, et in effetto ne
l'eternita'."
5 "A Treatie of Humane Learning," st.2.
6 Caelica, 98. Cf. ibid., 99.
Towards the end of *Caelica*, Greville's earlier desire to seek out the truth about the universe is accompanied by a note of caution:

Man, dream no more of curious mysteries, ...
For God's works are like him, all infinite,
And curious search but crafty sin's delight.  

This is again repeated towards the end of the sequence:

And as finite things seek infinite,
From thence deriving what beyond them is,
So man was led by charms of this dark spirit,
Which he could not know till he did amiss.  

This is a fall-back to the Christian idea, the mystic way that Bruno propounds in *Eroici Furori* without in any way accepting Greville's obscurantist tendency to refrain from seeking complete knowledge of the universe.  

Whereas in *Spaccio* Bruno had preached an active life dedicated to the erection of a new political, scientific and aesthetic civilization, and the harmonious development of man in society as the supreme end of man's striving "according to the natural light", he can still preach the virtues of the contemplative life. In *Eroici*, written as counterpart to *Spaccio*, there is the absorption of the soul, through divine ecstasy, into a divine universal entity. Here, as in Greville, all action and

1 *ibid.*, 39.
2 *ibid.*, 103.
5 *Spaccio*, II. p.110.
good works can be seen as illusory, and the declared practical ethics of Spaccio remain unfulfilled:

So that the wise consider mutable things as things that are not, and affirm they are mere vanity and a nothing.¹

Greville’s Christian pessimism is indicative of the resurgence of melancholy that marks Jacobean literature. The new astronomy discovered corruption and mutability in an erstwhile immutable Heavens. The literature and sermons of the time abound in statements that man was living on borrowed time, and that this change merited but little of Bruno’s exhilaration. It was only as the century wore on that Bruno’s and Hill’s idea that Nature progresses with a certain regression caught on and led to the new optimism.

Francis Godwin’s The Man in the Moone also appears to have been influenced by Bruno and Gilbert. D.W. Singer suggests it was written soon after the Laski incident in 1583 as a skit on the scandal Bruno had created at Oxford.² Internal evidence points to 1601 as the earliest possible date,³ though this need not detract from Singer’s arguments.⁴ Ample parallels suggest

¹ Eroici, II. p.324.
² op. cit., p.183.
⁴ D.W. Singer, p.183 is mistaken in saying that Gonsales quits this earth deliberately. See, The Man in the Moone, p.46.
that Godwin's Domingo Gonzales might have had Bruno himself as a model. Like Bruno, Gonzales is a man of very small stature with a great desire to assert his ideas.¹ He too was "intended unto the Church"² but had to flee his country because he was involved in squabbles. He also finds refuge in the house of a French nobleman, acting again as his secretary "because my hand indeed was faire".³ After a number of adventures reminiscent of Bruno's in Europe, Gonzales trains a flock of wild swans or Gansaws to carry him through air by a system of weights and pulleys.⁴ The Gansaws carry him first to the top of El Pico⁵ and later "to my unspeakable foare and amazement strooke bolt upright, and never did linne towring upward, and still upward"⁶ towards the moon.

It is here that Godwin puts forward, "with some liberty of conceite",⁷ ideas that are essentially Brunian.⁸ Flying towards

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¹ The Man in the Moone, p.6.
² ibid., p.2.
³ ibid., p.4.
⁴ ibid., pp.23-25.
⁵ ibid., p.43.
⁶ ibid., p.46.
the moon, Gonsales experiences a total refutation of Aristotle's cosmology. Although he neither accepts nor refutes the Copernican doctrine of heliocentricity, Gonsales accepts diurnal rotation and shatters the idea of solid spheres or that a sphere of fire ringed the moon. Believing Bruno's concept of homogeneity of substance, Godwin took the next logical step, as did Bruno and Hill, and put inhabitants on the moon. These Lunarians have somehow managed the essential reform of Christianity that is envisaged in Bruno's Spaccio. They esteem learning and wisdom and true religion, and truth is their greatest aim. The Lunarians grow to a ripe old age and, having achieved wisdom, are not afraid of dying. After a year among the Lunarians, by means of the Gansaws and an Ebelus, Gonsales returns to earth where he is accused of being a magician.

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1 The Man in the Moone, p.60.
2 ibid., pp.56-58.
3 ibid., p.66.
4 ibid., p.77.
5 ibid., p.107-109. Cf. to Jonathan Swift's Houyhnhnms in Gulliver's Travels, Bk.IV.
6 ibid., p.115. An Ebelus is a stone that partially repels the Earth's attraction. It was given to Gonsales by the leader of the Lunarians.
7 ibid., p.120.
One courtier who could have been influenced by Bruno is Sir Walter Raleigh (1552-1618). He was a friend of Percy, Hariot and Nicholas Hill, all three very conversant with Nolan concepts, and although no book of Bruno is listed in Raleigh's library catalogue of 1608, some of his ideas approach close to Bruno's. Thus Raleigh states that Hermes Trismegistus came prior to Moses and thus had more authority because he was closer to the pristine source of knowledge. In the Preface to his History of the World, Raleigh says of Hermes that he "lived at once with, or soon after, Moses," but later he takes issue with Ficino and concludes:

But by those which have collected the grounds of the Egyptian Philosophie and Divinitie, he is found more ancient than Moses; because the Inventor of the Agyptian Wisedome, wherein it is said, that Moses was excellently learned.

It is known that prior to Raleigh only Bruno in Spaccio, together with Angelus Vergerius and Francois de Foix, had claimed Hermes lived before Moses.

2 ibid., II. p.319.
3 Spaccio, II. pp.228-229.
4 F. Lefranc, p.461. Francois de Foix edited the Hermetica and is a likely source for Raleigh. He published Mercure Trismegisti Pimandras Utraque Lingua Restitutas (Bordeaux, 1574) and also a French translation with his own commentary, Le Pimandre de Mercure Trismegiste de la Philosophie Chrestienne (Bordeaux, 1579). For antiquity of Hermes see Le Pimandre, sig.A3r-A5v, but there is no record of either Vergerius or Foix in Raleigh's Library catalogue. See Walter Oakeshott, op.cit., pp.285-327.
Raleigh might well have met Bruno through Mauvissiere, with whom he was in frequent business and diplomatic contacts towards the end of 1585.  

The Diana imagery, already mentioned in connection with Sir Philip Sidney, seems to have been accepted bodily by Raleigh in five of his "Cynthia fragments" in praise of Queen Elizabeth. A strong case for this has been put forward by Pierre Lefranc; all we need add here is that Raleigh himself was nicknamed "Marina" or "Ocean" by Elizabeth, and thus the "Canzone de gl'Illuminati", where Oceanus sings the praises of "the unique nymph" to Jupiter, would have had a special appeal for him.

Raleigh's transcendental-immanentistic active Deity, "which now sustaineth and giveth continuance to the Universe ... filament the whole world," as well as the tendency to approximate God and Nature may have been borrowed from Bruno, but might just as well come from Cusa or Teleaio. His world-soul is similar to Bruno's "artefice interno", in that it is a "seminary strength, infused into matter", but Bruno's most characteristic concepts, animistic

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3 See Above, pp.129-130.


5 P. Lefranc, p.448.

atomism and infinity of worlds, remain unused by Raleigh.

One major Jacobean writer who possibly shows traces of Brunian influence is John Donne (1572-1631), whose 'harsh' style bears some similarity to Bruno's. 1 Donne had the opportunity to know Bruno's works either through his connection with the Herbert family, 2 or with Henry Percy whose library also contained editions of Bruno. 3 Donne had read Lull and Ramus. 4 He had also read the work of Florio, 5 where Bruno is mentioned with approval, as well as Perkins's controversial pamphlets attacking Bruno and Dicson. 6 Edmund Gosse asks:

Did he [Donne] dip with curiosity in the forbidden writings of Galileo's fellow-martyr, Giordano Bruno? We know not; yet here at least was an Italian with whom Donne had not a little sympathy in the construction of his mind. 7

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1 "Verse Letter to Samuel Brooke"

I sing not, Siren like, to tempt; for I
Am harsh.

Cf. De Immenso, VIII, x. 34-37:

Quod si ut sum factus, divum pro munere, memet
ingerero rigidum, membriaque viriliter acrem,
infrarem, invictum, sementosaeque sonantes;
narcissis referam; peramarunt me quoque Nymphae.


4 ibid., p.28.

5 ibid., I, p.150.

6 ibid., I, p.269.
Donne would have known of Kepler's strictures on Bruno for doing away with the spheres, the placing of stars at varying distances from the earth, and the concept of an infinity of worlds surrounding an infinity of suns. We can be sure of this because in writing of the alterability of the heavens in *Biathanatos* (1603), Donne annotated his text to "cap. 23. Keplerus de Stella Serpent", agreeing that Augustine's followers were just as stubborn as Aristotle's who defending the Heavens to be inalterable, because in so many ages nothing had been observed to have altered, his Schollers stubbornly maintain his Proposition still, though by experiences of many new stars, the reason which moved Aristotle seems now to be defeated. Kepler's strictures on Bruno appear just six pages earlier in the same chapter of *De Stella Nova serpentaria* (1606), and Donne could not have missed them:

> Itaque defendit illam infelix ille Jordanus Brunus: nec obscure asseruit specie dubitantis et Guilielmus Gilberto libro de magnete, cetera praeclarissimo, religiosum tamem affectum eo demonstravit, quod existimaret, non alia re rectius intelligi infinitam Dei potentiam, quam si infinitum sole condert mundum.

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2 ibid.

3 Joannis Kepleri astronomi opera omnia, ed. Ch. Frisch (Frankfurt, 1858-70), II. p. 638.
Donne had also read Kepler's *Dissertatio cum Nuntio Sidereoc* which specifically tries to use Galileo's discoveries against Bruno's theory of an infinity of worlds.\(^2\) Donne, of course, had visited Italy, knew Italian well and frequently quoted a line or two from Petrarch's lyrics.\(^3\) He was conversant with the works of Molza, Tansillo, Marino and Guarino,\(^4\) but never refers to them. These poets celebrate the religion of love and devotion towards an earthly mistress, and there are elements in Donne's love poems which suggest reliance on, or adaptation of, Bruno. Mario Praz has pointed out similarities between Donne's "Ecstasy" and Bruno's *Candelaio*\(^5\) but there is a danger in accepting Bruno too easily as a source. It is often true that many of Donne's conceits derive from universal analogy akin to Bruno's use of emblematic imagery. Donne uses created things, including man himself, as a hieroglyph,\(^6\) where images and signs reflect patterns of deity, and traditionally man becomes a

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1 E. Gosse, I. p.257.


D. C. Allen, "Donne's Compass Figure," *MLN*, 71 (1956), 256-257.


Henceforth cited as *Devotions*. 
"little world". Though Bruno uses this "scientific" truth of
the age more often than most, this was fairly commonplace
during the Renaissance, but the way Donne enlarges on this idea
could suggest a verbal correspondence with De Immenso's

cosmology:

Tellurea et quodcumque astrorum compositum sit, etherogenesis partibus esse animal ostendit ipse
motus, vita, et vegetatic omnis, quam a spiritu, vita, motuque illius trahimus. Ostendunt ita parcea ita in ipso
corpus compositae, quenadmodum cernimus in cuialibet
animalis corpus venas, arterias, nervos, fibras, ossa.  

and Donne's Devotions upon Emergent Occasions

If all the Veines in our bodies were extended to Rivers,
and all the Sinews, to vaines of Mines, and all the
Muscles, that Iye upon one another, to Hilles, and all
the Bones to Quaries of Stones, and all the other pieces
to the proportion of those which correspond to them in
the world, the aire would be too little for this Orbe of
Man to move in, the firmament would bee but enough for
this star.4

In the face of the infinite, man becomes diminutive but he can
rise out of the 'crampt' position in which orthodox cosmology
had imprisoned him. Man will go on daring. Thus where Bruno
writes that

Man is no more than an Ant in the presence of the infinite;
and a star is no more than a man.

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1. Spaccio, II. pp.113-114: "Come in ogni uomo, in ciascun
individuo si contempla un mondo, un universo."

2. Ibid. p.157
Cf. ibid., I.i. p.146.

Cf. John Davies, "orchestra" st.51-52. See, M.H. Nicolson,


5. De La Cause, II. p.281.
and Nicholas Hill that "Relatively we have less quantity than the smallest ants"¹ Donne seems to echo them, though again this metaphor was probably already traditional:

Be more than man, or thou'rt less than ant.²

Possibly remembering Bruno's burning from Kepler's "infelix ille Jordanus Brunus", Donne also spoke suggestively of seeing in

Authors, too stiffe to recant.
A hundred controversies of an Ant.³

In De La Cena Bruno had spoken of freeing man's soul and thoughts from

the close prison of turbulent air. Whereas before as from a slit men could hardly see the distant stars, now they have grown wings to soar and tear open those cloudy veils.⁴

In De Minimo, Bruno gives an imagistic description of the way man achieves knowledge. The sensus from its dungeon of darkness (carcere tenestrarum) perceives the universe only through vents and holes (per cancellos et foramina).⁵ Reason sees the light of the Sun as through a window; the intellect in the open dominates all diversity and contemplates the Sun itself:

1 Philosophia Epicurea, p.111.

2 The First Anniversary, p.277. line 190.

3 The Second Anniversary, p.299. lines 281-282.

4 De La Cena, I. p.129.

5 Hill, Philosophia Epicurea, p.36. prop.244-245.
Solus est oculus in carcere tenebrarum rerum colorum, 
& superficiem veluti per cancellos et foramina 
prospicio. Ratio tamquam per fenestram lunam a
sole derivans, & ad solem repercussam, quoadmodum
in corpore lunae speculatur. Intellectus in aperto 
& quasi ex alta specula unique oculus super omnes 
particulatitates, turbae & confusionem in universo, 
& distinctionem specierum ipsum praefulgentem solem 
contemplatur. 4

In The Second Anniversary, Donne also speaks of the liberation 
that occurs when "this Pedantery of being taught by sense" is 
conquered:

Thou look’st through spectacles; small things seem great 
Below; But up unto the watch-towe get, 
And see all things deceyld or fallacies: 
Thou shalt not peep through lattices of sies. 2

In De Immenso, right at the very start of Book IV, the giant 
Enceladus praises those who tear open the enclosed sky, and 
feels free to know the "unheavy" earth moves in so vast a 
space

Anguipedum generose magis, furibunde, proterve, 
Invictoque signum vultu, sub pondere vasto 
Tremulae: audi qui quondam audas robore coelum 
Scindas, nunc pressus resupino pectore ab altis 
Colibus; hac triquatra tumulatus mole superbia; 
Impio, nempe animi petulantis praemia lactans, 
Talibus insultas superum imperterritus irae. 3

while in Devotions, Donne seems to adopt the giant-metaphor in 
a remarkably similar correspondence to Bruno. Donne writes:

1591, p.7.

2 p.300, lines 293-296.
Cf. De la Caigne, I. p.215: "liberati dall’ondo di qualche 
oscusa torre."
p.202: "It is no longer necessary for him [Bruno] to see Diana 
through mere apertures and windows."

Our creatures are our thoughts, creatures that are born
Grants; that reach from East to West, from earth to Heaven,
that do not only besride the Sea and Land, but span the
Sun and the Firmament at once; My thoughts reach all,
compass all. Inexplicable mystery: I their Creator
am in a close prison, in a sickle bed, anywhere, and any
one of my creatures, my thoughts, is with the Sunne in one
pace, one steppe, everywhere.

We know that Donne greatly admired Kepler and Galileo as
scientists, although again he was chary to attribute any
of his ideas to them. To him, Bruno would have been a mere
speculator, "too stiffe to recant", but the data uncovered by
Kepler and Galileo to confirm Copernican cosmology had been
highlighted again and again in Bruno and Nicholas Hill, the
latter's book often faithfully reflecting Bruno's basic views.
Bruno's martyrdom, referred to in Kepler's "infelix illo
Jordanus Brunus", would have been an incentive to a man of
Donne's temper to read works available in Percy's and Herbert's
libraries.

Much of the similarity of Donne to Bruno can be considered
accidental. It could arise from the heterodoxy of the Italian
pantheists of the age, but some parallels suggest possible
acquaintance.

Cf. ibid., p.50: "la nostra immaginazione è potente di
procedere in infinito, imaginando grandezza dimensionale oltre
grandezze."
Cf. J.L. McIntyre, p.135: "It is infinite man, or infinite
ars, or infinite tree." See above p.164, n.5.

2 C.M. Caffin, John Donne and the New Philosophy (New York, 1958),
pp.79-87; 122-154.

3 The Sermons of John Donne, ed. E.W. Simpson and C.R. Potter
(Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1962), X. p.304n.

4 F. Gosee, I. p.269.
Thus the problem of change and order was a commonplace there, but the way Donne discusses mutability is strikingly at odds with the vision of Nature as Order which orthodox Elizabethans and Jacobins accepted. In Donne's sublunar world

Disorder summons us, deceives us, possesses us, destroys us in an instant.

In this the honour which Man hath by being a little world, that he hath these earthquakes in himself ... these eclipses, sudden effusations, and deranging of his senses; these Blazing starres, sudden fiery exhalations; these Rivers of Blood, sudden red waters?

This might recall Bruno's De L'Infinito where Fracastoro, in his role as astronomer and physician, compares the world's "accidents" to diseases in the human organism:

secondo diverse e varie compassioni d'ossa, d'intestini, di vene, d'arterie, di carne, di nervi, di polmone, ... presentando li suoi monti, le sue valli, li suoi recessi, le sue acque, li suoi spiriti, li suoi fuochi, con accidenti proporzionali a tutte meteoriche impressioni, quai sono li catarri, le originali, li calculi, li vertigine, le febri et altri innumerali disposizioni et abiti, che rispondono a le nebbie, pirosse, navi, cauni, ascensioni, a le scette, fuochi, terremoti e venti, a servide et alczose temperati.

Change and recurrence are fused in Donne through "Discord of Extremes" which conflicted with English received opinion, and was probably one reason why Donne supported it so enthusiastically.

In Paradoxes, Donne writes:

2 Devotions, sig. A4v.
3 ibid., sig.A5v.
5 Wilbur Sanders, John Donne's Poetry p.29. Cf. Joan Webber, Contrary Music (New York, 1963), p.188.
So I asseverate the more boldly, because while I maintain it, and feel the contrary repugnancies and adverse fomentings of the elements in my body, my body increaseth ... All the rich benefits we can frame to ourselves in Concord, is but an even conservation of things; in which Evenness we can expect no change, no motion, therefore no increase or augmentation, which is a member of motion ... Discord is never so barren that it affords no fruit; for the fall of one estate is at the worst the increase of another, because it is impossible to find a discommodity without advantage, as to find corruption without generation.

This concept had been expressly stated by Bruno and Hill, but became increasingly accepted as the seventeenth-century wore on. In The Progress of the Soul (1601), Donne's theory of metempsychosis also seems to have correspondences with Bruno's Cabala del Cavallo Pegaseo, where Onorio, the Ass, speaks of the ubiquity of change, defends the doctrine of metempsychosis and extols the virtues of asininity. Some of the adventures that befell Onorio might well have been the progenitors for Donne's disquisition of "the unfettered souls quick nimble haste" to successively enter the body of a sparrow, a fish, a bird, a whale, an elephant, a mouse, and finally an ape who tries to rape Siphatecia, the apocryphal fifth daughter of Adam.


2 "The Progress of the Soul" (1601), pp.326-327. Cf. Bruno's Cabala del Cavallo Pegaseo, II. p.294, where Bruno rules out "sine against kind".
Bruno tries to raise serious problems. Donne is often unchristian and mocking, and his concept of destiny and its link with the relativity of evil is similar to Bruno's "Fara", which possesses a dual significance. Donne speaks of

That swimming College, and free Hospital
Of all mankinde, that cage and vivarie
Of foules and beasts, in whose wombe, Destiny
Us, and our latest nephews did install.

(From thence are all deriv'd, that fill this All)
Didst thou in that great stewardship sableke
So diverse shapes into that floating parks,
As have been moved, and informed by this heavenly sparke.

Great Destiny, the Commissary of God,
Thou hast mark'd out a path and period
For everything; who, where wee of-spring tooke,
Our waves and ends sees at one instant; Thou
Knot of all causes, thou whose changeless brow
N'er smil'd nor frownes, O vouch thou safe to looke
And shew thy story.

and repeats Chorico's argument that "in tutte e di tutte le
cose non esser altro che opinioni."³

There's nothing simply good, nor ill alone.
Of every quality comparison,
The only measure is, and judge, opinion.⁴

¹ Destiny. See, Cabala del Cavallo Pegasus, II. p.276.
² "The Progressse of the Soule", p.311.
³ Cabala del Cavallo Pegasus, II. p.287.
Cf. F. Ure, "A Note on Opinion in Daniel, Greville and Shakespeare," MLR, 46 (1954), 334-338. Cf. Tertullian's De Anima, trans. F. Holmes, The Writings of Quintius Sept. Flor. Tertullianus in Ante-Nicene Christian Library, ed. A. Roberts and J. Donaldson (Edinburgh, 1870), XII. pp.494-496: "Carpocrates ... was a fornicator ... asserted that souls are reinvested with bodies, in order to ensure the overthrow by all means of divine and human truth. For this life became consummated to no man until those blemishes which are held to disfigure it have been fully displayed in its conduct; because there is nothing which is accounted evil by nature, but simply as men think of it (non natura quid malum habeat, sed opiniones). The transmigration of human souls thencefore, into any kind of heterogenous bodies, he thought by all means indispensable."
In discussing metempsychosis, Donne indicates he was deviating from the contemporary doctrine of metempsychosis by insisting that "the Ithagorian doctrine doth not onely carry one soule from man to man, nor man to beast, but indifferently to plants also." 1 In none of Plato's works is there any allowance for souls passing from men and beasts to plants, 2 but J.H. Mueller has traced this particular variant in Carporcrates through Tertullian 3 and it can also be found in Roco della Mirandola:

The Ithagorceans degrade impious men into brutes and, if one is to believe Impedocles, even into plants. 4 But other thoughts and imagery similar to Bruno's are used by Donne in The Progressse of the Soule. Thus in Bruno's Cabala del Cavallo Pegaseo, the soul of Onorio, the beast of burden which carries "cocomeri", or melons, not only migrates from man to beast to plant through the various hierarchies of the great chain of being but is also capable of retaining its memory:

Allora, scampando io da' fortunati campi, senza acerbir de l'onde del rapido sete ... io feci finta da bevere di quell' umore in compagnia de gli altri: ma non feci altro ch' accostarvi e toccarvi con le labbra, a fin che vennessero ingannati gli soprastanti. 5

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2 See, Phaedo 81a-82c; Timaeus 42c-d; Phaedrus 248c-249d; Republic 699b-699c.
As with "opinion", in Bruno the concept of relativity is even related to the human body. Bruno argues that the soul of the human being is the same in its specific and generic essence with that of flies, oysters, plants, and everything which lives, or has a soul; ... Now the aforesaid spirit by fate or providence, order or chance, unites itself to this or that kind of body, and, by reason of difference in structure or of members, reaches different grades of perfections of faculty and act. Hence, that spirit or soul which was in the spider, and possessed its industry, claws and members of a certain number, mass and shape, united with the human seed, acquires another intelligence, instruments, postures and deeds.

an argument that is repeated in De Immanse:

Alia item species est in muscis, araneis, vermineis, in quibus omnibus haec omnia quae nectrym corpus constituentes, proportionali conspirant conditions. 1

The thoughts and imagery of Bruno are repeated in Donne's poem. Donne's soul, like that of Cenric, not only migrates from man to beast to plant but is also capable of retaining its memory:

And therefore you must not grudge to finde the same soule in an emperour, in a beast-horse, and in a moucheron, 2 since no unconciencse in the soule, but an indisposition in the organs worked this. 3 And

1 Cabala del Cavallo Regasco, II. p.277.

2 De Immanse, I.ii. p.158.

3 A fly, gnat or midge of the Culex genus. See, La Fontaine's fable, "Le lier et le moucheron." Also the French expression, "rejeter le moucheron et avaler le chameau — to strain at a gnat and swallow a camel." J.T. Shawcross, p.340 is obviously mistaken to equate it with "mousseron" from the French "mousseron". Cf. M. Morcenne, Impitié des Déistes, p.326: "Je désirerais qu'ils m'explicassent ... que mon ame soit le même que la vôtre, & que celle d'un bouf, d'un moucheron, d'une rose, & d'une pierre."

4 Cabala del Cavallo Regasco, II. p.277.
therefore though this soul could not move when it was a
Melon, yet it may well remember, and now tell me, at
what lascivious banquet it was serv'd. And though it could
not speake, when it was a spider, yet it can remember, and
now tell me, who used it for poisson to attaine dignitie.2

Bruno does in fact show a serpente changing into a man in Cabala:

che d'un serpente il capo si formasse e stornasse in
figura d'una testa umana ... perche non sarebbe altro che
uomo. Come per il contrario l'uomo non sarebbe altro che
serpente.3

The concept of assimilation and transformation is also frequent
in Donne's illustrative imagery of penitent sinners:

Make that licentious Goate a Man, that
insinuating Serpent a Man.4

Imagery and concept are also seen to be surprisingly near in
this instance. Bruno had written that

the viner is not deadly and poisonous to the viner
but each thing is bad in respect to something else.5

which Donne could have had in mind when he preached that

the Toad poisons not itself, nor does the viner bite
itself, but all their ill powres down upon man.6

1 Cf. ibid., II. p.275, where Gonorio carries "cocomeri" or melons.


3 II. p.277.

4 The Sermons of John Donne, IV, p.327; VII. p.135.

5 Scaccio, II. p.173.

6 The Complete Poetry and Selected Prose of John Donne,
Jack Lindsay has pointed out what seems to be another direct borrowing in Donne's "Loves Alchymie":

And as no chymique yet th' Elixer got,
But glorifies his pregnant pot,
If by the way to him befal
Some odoriferous thing, or medicinal

which admittedly seems very close to Bruno's:

Let us then see what innumerable discoveries we are enabled to proceed by way of trial, experiments, comparison, observation, and abstraction. For does it not sometimes occur that, as we pursue a certain end, another nobler still arises before us, as with alchemists who, in seeking gold, find that which is far better and more desirable.

Donne was also very much aware of scientific developments in contemporary cosmology as is evident from his frequent references to astronomy in his poetry. Although agreeing with Kepler that the Aristotelians seemed to be defeated, Ptolemaic and Copernican theories still jostled side by side in his works. As with Bruno and Hill, Donne links astronomy with philosophy. Specifically, he links the concept of plenitude, in which he believed fully, to cosmology and moved on to accept, without qualification, a plurality of worlds which is so linked in Bruno's De L'Infinito:

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1 TLS, 20 June 1956, p.523.
2 op.cit., p.401.
3 TLS, 20 June 1936, p.523.
5 Devotions, sig.C1-2. "Meere vacuitie, the first agent of God, the first instrument of God, Nature will not admit; Nothing can be utterly empitie." Cf. ibid., sig.R4v: "No corner of any place can bee empty; there can be no vacuity."
Richiede il spazio infinito ... per la dignità de le nature e specie corporee ... per la ragione d'innumerabile gradi di perfazione ... per la continenza di questi immemorabili e richiede un spazio infinito. Niente meno dunque è bene, che siano, come possono essere, immemorabili mondi simili a questo.¹

In rehearsing a "naturalist" view, Donne is very close to Bruno and Hill:

For I think, I need not aske leave, that there is no Phenix; nothing singular, nothing alone. Men that inhere upon Nature only, are so far from thinking, that there is anything singular in this world, as that they will scarce think, that this world it selfe is singular, that that every planet, and every star is another world like this: they fInd reason to conceive not onely a plurality in every species in the world, but a plurality of worlds; so that the abhorrens of Solitude, are not solitary; for God and Nature, and Reason concur against it.²

Thus although very much aware that the doctrine of a plurality of worlds ran counter to accepted Church thought, Donne cautiously supported the "new heresy":

Subtilly men have, with some appearance of probabilite, imagined, that in that heaven, in those manifold spheres of the Planets and the Starres, there are many earthly, many worlds, as big as this world which we inhabit.³

while in another sermon Donne argues that

the merit and passion of Jesus Christ is sufficient to save millions of worlds.⁴


This plurality of worlds is accepted for the same reason as that given by Bruno and Hill that God is not jealous and will thus extend his creation to infinity. Donne uses the traditional image of "circle-circumference":

O Eternall and most Gracious God, who considered in thyselfe, art a Circle, first and last, & altogether; but considered in thy working upon us, art a Direct line, and leadest us from our beginning, through all our waies to our end. ¹

He was to repeat this hieroglyph for the deity in his sermons:

In God's own place ... in that sphere, which though a sphere is a centre too; in that place, which though a place, is still and everywhere. ²

Bruno had written in De L'Infinite:

Per che veilte, quel centro de la divinita, che può infinitamente in una spera, se così si potesse dire, infinita amplificarsi, come invidioso, rimaner più tosto sterile, che farsi comnicabile, padre, secondo, ornato e bello? ³

but this hieroglyph was common and could be found in a number of writers, among them Cusanus and St. Bonaventura. In his "Anniversaries", Donne accepts terrestrial motion but is not so sure that he can accept heliocentricity. He seems to waver between opposing cosmologies in both his poetry and prose:

The Heavens are not the less constant, because they move continually, because they move continually one and the same way. The Earth is not the more constant, because it lies still continually, because continually it changes, and melts in all parts thereof. ⁴


² Fifty Sermons (1649), XLIV.

³ II. p.24.

⁴ Devotions, sig.A.11.
This approximates Bruno's concept of relativity that in a universe infinite in extent nothing can be said absolutely to move or to stand still. As Donne writes

I am up and I seem to stand, and I goe Round; and I am a new Argument of the new Philosophie, That the Earth moves round; why may I not believe, that the whole earth moves in a round motion, though that seem to me to stand?

The concept of a plurality of worlds seemed for Donne the logical outcome of accepting the concept of plenitude, but only Bruno and Hill had linked this specifically with Copernican cosmology; and only Bruno had linked it with the world-soul in the same manner that Donne does in The First Anniversarie: An Anatomie of the World.

Having accepted a plurality of worlds and an infinitely extended space, as opposed to Bruno and Hill, Donne is not exhilarated. He does not see nature "progressing with a certain regression". Rather, he sees the decay and dissolution of the world patterned in man's abilities:

And as our Bodies, so our minds are crampt.

Marjorie Hope Nicolson traces this poem to the emergence of the

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1 De L'Infinite, II. p.94. Cf. De Immense, I.i. pp.244-247.

2 Devotions, sig.R5v-R6.


4 Devotions, sig.H1v: "The Heavens have had their Dropsie they drowned the World, and they shall have their Fever and burne the World."

5 The First Anniversarie, p.276. line 152.

telescope and Galileo's *Sidereus Nuncius* which appeared in 1610.

The problems mooted in the poem suggest Brunian influence as well, as can be seen by a close study of its most famous passage:

And new Philosophy calls all in doubt,
The Element of fire is quite put out;
The Sun is lost, and th'earth, and no mans wit
Can well direct him, where to looke for it.
And freely men confess, that this world's spent,
When in the Planets, and the Firmament
They seeke so many new: they see that this
Is crumbled out againe to his Atomis.
'Tis all in pieces, all coherence gone;
All just supply, and all Relation:
Prince, Subject, Father, Sonne, are things forgot,
For every man alone thinkes he hath got
To be a Phoenix, and that there can bee
None of that kinde, of which he is, but hee. 1

Here there is immediately a denial of the centrality of the earth,2 with the consequent 'loss' of both sun and earth. This goes beyond a tentative acceptance of heliocentricity, even beyond Kepler's first law of planetary motion that the earth and other planets move in elliptical orbits because of their disparate foci, 3 beyond Copernicus along the same path as Bruno. The "Sun is lost"

1 The First Anniversarie, pp.277-278. lines 205-218.

2 Hiram Haydn, p.163.

3 See De La Cena, I. p.163: "Di corpi naturali nessuno si è verificato semplicemente centro."
Cf. "Elegie upon the untimely Death of the incomparable Prince, Henry," p.256. lines 21-24:
"If then, least Movings of the Centre Make
(More then if whole Hell belch't) the World to shake,
What must This doo, Centres distracted so,
That Wee see not what to believe or knows?"
suggests that even the sun is but relatively a centre in a vastly extended universe where other galaxies exist. There is not just one planetary system, not singularity but plurality, but Donne transforms Bruno's optimism into pessimism by stating that men are seeking so many new worlds because this is doomed.

Now that all coherence, "all just supply, and all Relation" is gone, Donne seems to accept a Democritean basis when he agrees that this world "is crumbled out again to his Atomis", but again the alignment is towards a Brunian monadology. Despite the inherent pessimism within the poem, Donne knows it is folly to think our atoms can be completely destroyed. As the old world decays, there is replacement:

It teares
The Firmament in eight and fortie sheeres,
And in these constellations then arise
New starres, and old doe vanish from our eyes.
As though heav'n suffered earthquakes, peace or war,
When new Towers rise and old demolish't are.

How does this happen? As in Bruno, through the world-soul, a hieroglyph and a symbol of which Donne could also read in Gilbert's "terrella", without which "the universe would go to pieces". Donne in effect seems to utilize ideas from both Bruno and Gilbert for this concept. The soul of Elizabeth Drury is visualized as a "Magnetique force" that is able "to draw and fasten sundred parts in one". It is this which can build a new world out of the ashes of the old:

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2 The First Anniversarie, p.279, lines 257-260. This idea is found in Spaccio and is possibly based on Hyginus's Fabularum liber. Cf. F.A. Yates, The Art of Memory, p.304.


4 The First Anniversarie, p.278, line 222.
The Cyment which did faithfully compact
And glue all vertues, now resolv'd, and slack'd,
Thought it some blasphemy to say sh' was dead.\(^1\)

As with Bruno and Hill it is blasphemy to say that a human being or matter can be demolished completely:

The twilight of her memory doth stay;
Which, from the carkasse of the old worlde, free
Creates a new world; and new creatures bee
Produced.\(^2\)

In fact in both Bruno and Hill, the immortality of the soul is derived through the incorruptibility of matter and atoms.\(^3\)

For Donne, the "new philosophy", of which he is "become a new argument", does not mean just the new astronomy but includes a wider connotation. It is linked, as in Bruno, with God as the essential monad, the world-soul, the immortality of the soul and man's search for spiritual truths and aspirations.

It is unreasonable to claim that the impact of Bruno's work created Donne's originality.\(^4\) We cannot even be certain that Donne read Bruno, but he was certainly influenced, possibly indirectly, by some of Bruno's most basic concepts.

A lesser writer, a great admirer of and "borrower" from John Donne, William Drummond of Hawthornden, possessed the only copy extant in England of Bruno's *Summa Terminorum Metaphysicorum*\(^5\) and this may have acted as a counter-balance to Aristotle in Drummond's works.

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1 ibid., p.273. lines 49-51.


3 See Above, p.

4 TLS., 11 July 1936, p.580.

Marjorie Hope Nicolson has pointed out that Drummond's God was a God of Platonic plenitude "but even more a Deity of telescopic astronomy and Bruno-esque philosophy".¹

Outstretching heaven's wide vasts, the bounds of nought,
Transcending all the circles of our thought ...
O King, whose greatness none can comprehend,
Whose boundless goodness doth to all extend,
Light of all beauty, ocean without ground,
That standing, flowest, giving, doth abound.

But Drummond is not so sure that he can support an infinity of worlds of "madding wits", although this itself need not raise theological problems, for God remains the centre of all worlds:

Were worlds as many as the rays which stream
From heaven's bright eyes, or madding wits do dream,
They would not reel in nought, nor wand'ring stray,
But draw to thee, who could their centres stay.²

Lord Edward Herbert of Cherbury (1583-1648) possessed Bruno's first edition of Bruno's De L'Infini⁴, and this seems to have influenced De Veritate, where the ideas, tone and imagery closely parallel this book's:

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¹ The Breaking of the Circle, p.194.

² "Hymn of the Fairest Fair, See The Breaking of the Circle, p.194.

³ Ibid.
Cf. M.H. Nicolson, p.120. n.21.

If the embryo could be told that there existed a better world beyond its mother's womb and a better life than its own, I imagine it would not believe it, or would reject it, alarmed, it may be, by the harsh prospect of the free air. But when it is ripe for birth, the veil, so to speak, is lifted, and it issues forth, discovering a new world of objects. Thus a second world exists, and I have often compared it with the embryo's knowledge in the womb... why then should there not be a third and a fourth state, and many more if there are no limits to infinity? We shall find, moreover, that the secrets of all things are revealed, and that nothing exists in the infinite which we may not hope to attain. But those who lack faith think that at the last day they utterly perish... Are they not aware that the soul is too sublime and lofty to desire to return to the world's deep and gloomy cavern? And since the faculty of sight reaches to the sun and even to the stars, while the understanding and the will refer to the infinite and eternal, is it to be supposed that in spite of our aspirations we do not reach and grasp them? I think it is the height of stupidity not to perceive that you can penetrate into every corner of the world, that you are not confined to the range of your observation of the skies when you examine the motions...
of the heavens. What a pigmy you become if you limit yourself entirely to the compass of your two arms! But the divine animal is too great to be compressed within these narrow bounds.¹

These ideas may be misunderstood, and I will add an explanation of them, though in symbolic language ... Wrapped only in this covering, he raises his head, in other words his intellectual faculties, above the clouds and freely contemplating all things, he paces at large the courts of heaven and earth, waiting bravely for that death which is the birth of a new life ...² On this journey you will first encounter the blue which is commonly supposed to be the ceiling of heaven; but this is ignorance ... as experts in optics tell us.³ When you have passed through this tract you will discover that the stars have been created not merely to sparkle, but to be new earths.⁴ And at last to prolong the account no further, the infinite itself will unfold. What reaches and illimitable depths may there not be in the infinite? You may gain some idea of them by reflecting that there is no number which can fill or empty it ...⁵ At every point it is identical, and occupies no space nor is limited by any boundary.⁶ Consequently, whatever the expanse into which our souls may emerge, masters of them—

¹ De L'Infinito, II. p.22: "O che ripugna, che l'infinite ... non venga esplicato più tosto in questo suo simulacro infinite et interminato, capacissimo d'innumerabili mondi, che venga esplicato in si angueste margini?"

² ibid., II. p.51: "S'aprira la porta de l'intelligenza de li principj veri di cose naturali; et a gran passi potremo discorrere per il cammino de la verita, la quale ascasa sotto il velame di tante sordide e bestiali imaginazioni sino al presente è stata occolta per l'ingiuria del tempo e vicissitudine de le cose."

³ ibid., II. pp.49; 91; 103.

⁴ ibid., II. pp.52-53; 66; 93; 98.

⁵ ibid., II. p.30: "Oltre, si come la nostra imaginazione e potente di procedere in infinito, imaginando sempre grandezza dimensionale oltra grandezza, e numero oltra numero, secondo certa successione e, come si dice, in potenzia; così si deve intendere, che dio attualmente intende infinita dimensione et infinito numero."

Cf. De Immenso, I.i. p.204: "Imaginatio et intellectus ultra positum numerum et magnitudinem, atque spatium, tum ad mathematicum tum ad physicum objectum non sistet unquam."

Cf. ibid., I.i. p.248: "Dum numerum numero, molem moli superaddit."

⁶ ibid., II. pp.48; 65; 103.
selves, when this life is over, the infinite will increase rather than diminish. What need is there, then, to confine the reward or punishment of souls which depart this life to any narrow dwelling when you contemplate the infinite? It is true that a small urn holds our ashes, but the whole visible world cannot afterwards comprehend the soul. The authors may therefore be right in holding that there is ample opportunity for rewards and punishment in the infinite, and in maintaining that so far from the infinite being capable of any addition, it extends to, and reaches, every point of space.² Thus everything seems capable of being divided into an infinity of parts, but since in the end it must be resolved into a unity (the ultimate characteristic of the infinite),³ infinity and unity must appear to meet.

A book which shows familiarity with Bruno's ideas is The Anatomy of Melancholy of Robert Burton (1577-1640). First published in 1621, this great compendium of the medical, scientific and religious opinions of the time was republished at four-year intervals till 1638. One of the most formative books of the period, with each new edition substantially augmenting the preceding, it "transmitted" and popularized ideas expressed by Bruno and Nicholas Hill.

¹ ibid., II. pp.24; 26-27.
² ibid., II. pp.93; 103.
³ ibid., II. p.100. Cf. De Immenso, I. i. p.307: "Et omnia ubique in alteratione sunt atque motu, quae omnia in infinito in rationem unitatis veritatis et bonitatis veniunt; qua universum singularissimo jure dicitur — But all things come in infinity to the order of Unity, Truth and Goodness; whereby it is named universum." See, D.W. Singer, p.86.
Possibly, Burton may have read Bruno’s comedy of humours, Il Candelario, for his Philosophaster also deals with a Paracelsan physician who swindles large sums of money out of gullible victims who, like Bruno’s Cencio,¹ and again like Jonson’s Epicure Mammon have waking dreams of unbounded wealth.²

Robert Burton, it can be shown, possessed copies of Raymond Lull, Fromondus, and Giordano Bruno’s Frankfurt 1591 edition of De Monade, to which there was always appended De Immenso,³ and this is immediately evident when Burton discusses the new cosmology.

Robert M. Browne, who compared the successive versions of The Anatomy of Melancholy, although noting that Burton considerably expanded several cosmological ideas that interested him, states that there occurred no fundamental change of opinion.⁴ However, through the Anatomy, despite the fact that often “Ptolemaic, Copernican and other schools criss-cross and collide”⁵ in a work of dialectic in which Burton is constantly moving back and forth from one hypothesis to another and not committing himself to a particular

¹ I.xiii.

² See Lawrence Babb, Sanity in Bedlam (Michigan, 1959), p.64.


⁵ Lawrence Babb, p.61.
one, it is found that Burton practically always connects the Copernican system with the concept of infinite worlds as put forward by Bruno and Hill. Richard G. Barlow has recently pointed out that Burton does in fact support the new astronomy. He argues that many earlier commentators have missed

the important fact that Burton does agree with Origanus that the Earth has one motion and is a planet, as well as with the corollary arising out of it that there must be an infinite worlds ... because they base their remarks on early editions where Burton clearly favours the old astronomy.¹

Indeed in the early editions of Anatomy in the "Prologue to the Reader", Burton calls the theory of infinite worlds "absurd and insolent fictions" and warns that although he was using the pen-name "Democritus Junior", readers must not expect

some prodigious tenent, or paradox of the earth's motion, of infinite worlds in infinito vacuo, ex fortuita atomorum collisione, in an infinite waste, so caused by the accidental collision of Notes in the Sun, all which Democritus held, ... and are lately revived by Copernicus, Brunus and some others.²

This caveat is repeated in later editions and possibly suggests that there are no radical differences between the first and subsequent editions,³ but certainly there is more sympathy towards some Brunian ideas especially in the section titled "Ayre Rectified: With a Digression of the Ayre" which expands considerably from 1621 to 1638. A number of other writers are quoted in the latter edition to support ideas which in the first edition seem to have been the sole prerogative of Bruno.

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³ See, R.G. Barlow, p.292.
Among these we notice Bruno's "disciples" Nicholas Hill and Edmund Bruce. This is the relevant section of the first edition:

And those several Planets have their several Moones about them, as the earth hath hers, as Galileus hath already evinced by his glasses ... Kepler, the Emperor's Mathematician, confirms out of his experience, that he saw as much by the same helps. Then the earth and they be planets alike, inhabited alike, moving about the Sunne, the common centre of the world alike: And we may inferre with Brunus, that which Melissus, Democritus, Leucippus maintained in their ages there be infinite worlds — Infiniti alij mundi, vel ut Brunus; terrae huic nostrae similis — and infinite earths, because infinite starres & Planets like unto this of ours. Kepler betwixt jest and earnest ...

We notice that whereas before Bruno is shown championing the concept of an infinity of heliocentric systems, now he is linked and supported everytime by Bruce, Campanella and Nicholas Hill; who with Bruno become the new "Copernicall Giants":

And those several Planets have their several Moones about them, as the earth hath hers, as Galileus hath already evinced by his glasses: four about Jupiter ... Kepler, the Emperor's Mathematician, confirms out of his experience, that he saw as much by the same help, and more about Mars, Venus; and the rest they hope to find out, peradventure even among the fixed starres, which Brunus and Brutius have already averred. Then (I say) the earth and they be Planets alike, inhabited alike, moved about the Sunne, the common Centre of the World alike, and it may be those two greene children which Nubrigensis speaks of in his time, that fell from Heaven, came from thence. We may likewise insert with Campanella and Brunus, that which Pythagoras, Aristarchos, Samus, [sig] Heraclitus, Epicurus, Melissus, Democritus, Leucippus maintained in their ages, there be infinite Worlds, and infinite earths or systems, in infinito aethere, which Eusebius collects out of their tenents, because infinite starres and planets, like unto this of ours, which some stick not still to maintaine and publikely defend — "sperabundus expecto innumerabilium mundorum in aeternitate perambulationem, &c — I confidently count upon the eternal movement of innumerable worlds" (Nic.Hill.Londinensis philos. Epicur). 2

1 Anatomy of Melancholy (1621), p.327.
2 ibid., (1638), p.254.
In the following pages, Burton's sympathy is still evident although we find that he is somewhat troubled by the religious problems inherent in the concept of a plurality of worlds:

For if the Firmament be of such an incomparable bignesse, as these Copernicall giants will have it, infinitum, aut infinito proximum, so vast and full of innumerable starres, as being infinite in extent, one above another, some higher, some lower, some neerer, some farther off, and so farre asunder, and those so huge and great: insomuch, that if the whole sphere of Saturn, and all that is included in it, totum aggregatum (as Fromondus of Lovain in his Tract de immobilitate terrae argues) evehatur inter stellas, videri a nobis non poterat, tam immanis est distantia inter tellurem & fixas, sed instar puncti, &c. If our world be small in respect, why may not we suppose a plurality of worlds, those infinite starres visible in the Firmament to be so many Sunnes, with particular fixt Centers; to have likewise their subordinate planets, as the Sunne hath his dancing still around him? Which Cardinall Cusanus, Walkarinus, Brunus, and some others have held, and some still maintaine, Animae Aristotilisna innutritae, & minutis speculationibus assuetae, secus forsan, &c /minds nourished on Aristotelianism and accustomed to minute speculations might think differently/. Though they seeme close to us, they are infinitely distant, and so per consequens, there are infinite worlds? What hinders? Why should not an infinite cause (as God is) produce infinite effects, as Nic.Hill, Democrit.philos. disputes? Kepler (I confesse) will by no meanes admit of Brunus infinite worlds, or that the fixed starres should be so many Sunnes, with their compassing planets, yet the said Kepler betwixt jest and earnest in his perspectives, Lunar Geography, & somnio suo dissertat, cum, nunc. syder seems in part to agree with this, and partly to contradict; for the Planets, he yeelds them to be inhabited, he doubts of the Starres: and so, doth Tycho in his Astronomicall Epistles, out of a consideration of their vastity and greatness; ... But who shall dwell in these vast Bodies, Earths and Worlds, if they be inhabited? rationall creatures, as Kepler demands? or have they soules to be saved? Or do they inhabit a better part of the world than we do? Are we or they Lords of the World? 1

1 ibid., pp.254-255.
It is probably because of the theological implications involved that Robert Burton refuses to openly support the theory of infinity or plurality of worlds. He even linked Bruno with Macchiavelli, Vanini and Aretino as among those who supported "atheisticall paradoxes".¹

With John Wilkins, (1614-1672) the theory of a plurality of worlds revived in England by Bruno and Hill, gains significance and some acceptance. Galileo's observations through the "perspicillum" provided apodictic proof that seemingly supported Bruno's views as to the homogeneity of substance. The similarities between earth and moon now more than ever led writers to extend the thesis of homogeneity along Bruno's and Hill's lines with the possible habitability of planets and stars, separate centres of gravity, and the infinity of the universe.

In 1620, Ben Jonson, who had ridiculed Hill's "atomy ridiculous", presented a court masque in which he made exquisite fun of the "Poet's" plurality of worlds (News of a Discovery of a New World in the Moon). John Webster makes his Duke Brachiano tell Vittoria Accorombona:

Had I infinite worlds
They were too little for thee.²

and in The Devil's Law Case exclaims:

0, if there be another world in the Moone,
As some fantasticks dream.³

¹ Anatomy of Melancholy (1621), p.768.
² The White Devil, V.iii. 18-19.
³ III.iii. 164-165.
In England, the idea was still somewhat new and then only supported by "fantasticks". In Burton's Anatomy it was still classed with "absurd and insolent fictions".

Wilkins was concerned with showing that "the strangeness then of this opinion" should not keep people from discussing it openly. Like Bruno, Hill and Campanella, Wilkins makes a direct frontal attack on Aristotle's De Caelo, maintaining that "a plurality of worlds doth not contradict any principle of reason or faith".

Wilkins mentioned Bruno by name, and indeed accepted some of the theories championed by Bruno and Hill. Wilkins shows he had probably read De La Cena, for immediately following his reference to Bruno, he refers to Lucian in a similar manner:

Thus Lucian also in his Discourse of a Journey to the Moon, where he speaks many things out of mirth and in a jesting manner.

This seems to be an echo from Bruno:

Quando Luciano disse la luna essere una altra terra così abitata e colta, come questa, venne a dirlo per burlarsi di quei filosofi, che affermorno essere molto terre.

The opening of A Discovery is very reminiscent of De La Cena's.

Wilkins complains that:

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1 A Discovery of A New World in the Moone (1638), p.21.
2 Ibid., p.25.
3 Ibid., pp.24-25.
4 Ibid., p.82.
5 Ibid., p.83.
6 De La Cena, I. p.165.
It has always been the unhappiness of new Truths in Philosophy to be derided by those that are ignorant of the causes of things, and rejected by others, whose perverseness ties them to the contrary opinion, Men whose Envious pride will not allow them any new thing for Truth, which they themselves were not the first Inventors of.  

As Paul Michel rightly points out, in Bruno's *De L'Infinito* and *De Immense*, the problem of a plurality of worlds is linked with gravity and multiplicity of centres. He had maintained that celestial bodies lack weight, indeed that all bodies lack weight absolutely:

To be heavy or light is not suitable to worlds, any more than to parts of worlds, for these differences do not depend on the nature of things, but on their position and their relation to one another.

Whereas in *De La Cena*, Theophilus had used the Aristotelian formula "no body is heavy or light in its place", in *De L'Infinito*, Philotheo states expressly that no body is heavy or light by nature:

Therefore, the principal bodies — the celestial bodies — separated from each other by vast extents are "without weight", whereas their parts — the heavy bodies — tend to draw near to the place "of their conservation", a tendency which becomes weaker moreover as the distance increases, because a heavy body far removed from the Earth would no longer fall back and would be unable to draw near to it except by an effort to pierce the interposed layers of air.

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1. p. 4.


3. Appealing to empirical observation about the behaviour of fire, Aristotle maintained that some elements are always and naturally light, others are always heavy and do not merely display their qualities when removed from their place. *De Caelo*, IV. 4. 311a. 16ff.

Bruno then perceives the variables of mass and distance though this is not formulated in a physical law. Wilkins's conclusions on gravity, mass and distance run very close to Bruno. He agrees with Copernicus, Foscarin and Kepler that there can be a "general aptitude" for condensed Bodies, when they come within the Sphere of their own Vigour, to naturally apply themselves, one to another by Attraction or Coition.

but takes up a Brunian position maintaining that they "can cease to move" towards each other if they are far enough, such that "consequently, they cannot be stiled heavy". Wilkins goes on to explain:

So that from hence, there might be just occasion to tax Aristotle & his followers, for Teaching that heaviness is an absolute quality of itself, & really distinct from condensity; whereas 'tis only a Modification of it or rather another Name given to a condensed Body in reference to its Motions. For if it were absolute, then it should always be inherent in its subject, and not have its essence depend upon the Bodies being here or there. But it is not so. For ... Nothing is heavy, which is so far distant from that proper Orb to which it does belong.

In De La Cena, Bruno had maintained that

Water in its proper place is not heavy, and is not a burden on the beings that are in the depths of the sea which is also repeated by Wilkins:

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1 ibid.

2 Discovery of a New World, p.141.

3 ibid.

4 ibid., p.145.

5 Trans. P. Michel, p.190.
When a Man is in the bottom of a deep River, tho he have over him a multitude of heavy Waters, yet he is not burdened with the weight of them. And though another Body, that should be but of an equal Gravity, with these Waters, when they are taken out, would be heavy enough to press him to death; yet notwithstanding, whilst they are in the Channel, they do not in the least manner crush him with their load. The reason is, because they are both in their right places. ¹

Heaviness then is not absolute, but relative. This had been shown to be true even in Copernicus who had gone on to assert a plurality of centres of gravity:

Pluribus ergo existentibus centris — Since therefore there are more centres than one, we may discuss whether the centre of the Universe is, or is not, the Earth's centre of gravity. Now it seems to me gravity is but a natural inclination /appetentiam quandam naturalem/ bestowed on the parts of bodies by the Creator so as to combine the parts in the form of a sphere and thus contribute to their unity and integrity.²

but had refrained from pronouncing in favour of an infinite universe.³ Bruno, on the other hand, links plurality of worlds with multiple centres of gravity:

Bruno gives heaviness a definition which is closely cognate with that of Copernicus, but with this difference, that the tendency of matter to come together in the form of a globe is not limited to the restricted realm of the "wandering celestial bodies", but extends to the realm of the fixed stars, that is to say, to infinite space.⁴

Wilkins accepts this argument and tries to prove that "a plurality of worlds doth not contradict any principle of reason or faith".⁵ Like Bruno and Nicholas Hill, both of

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¹ A Discovery, p.147.
² De Revolutionibus (1543), p.7.
³ ibid., pp.5-6.
⁴ P. Michel, p.231.
⁵ A Discovery, p.24.
whom he mentions, he argues that plurality of worlds does not lessen the pre-eminence of God, who expresses Himself in plurality without ceasing to be a unity:

Another Argument he [Aristotle] had from his master Plato, that there is but one World, because there is but one first mover, God. But here I may deny the consequence, since a plurality of worlds doth not take away the unity of the first mover ... Nicholas Hill. Phil.Ep. part.379.

Wilkins mentions the fact that orthodox theologians such as Baronius and Caesar la Galla had "purposely writ a Treatise against this opinion". 2 La Galla had directly attacked Bruno's "heresies", but Wilkins takes a very strong line in support of infinity of worlds:

But suppose too that it were Hereticall, and against the faith, yet it may be admitted with the same privilege as Aristotle, from whom many more dangerous opinions have proceeded.3

Thus although such ideas went against accepted scholastic beliefs and theological orthodoxy, Wilkins maintains with Bruno and Hill that "tis probable the earth hath a starry nature";4 that indeed all suns and planets were composed of the same homogenous matter;5 that there were no solid Orbs, that the moon and other planets were habitable, "a habitable World in the Moone (which I now affirm)",6 because "it is not Aristotle but the truth that should

1 ibid. Wilkins should have referred to part.508. P.art.379 refers to the constitution of comets.

2 ibid., p.34.

3 ibid., p.31.


6 ibid., p.52.
be the rule of our opinions". ¹ Later he mentions Bruno by name, saying that "Lornandus Brunus /sic/ held a particular worlde in every starre", ² and points out that the "fancies of Bruno and Hill have now been supported and

more directly proved by Maestlin, Kepler and

Galileaeus each of them late writers, and famous

Men for their skill in Astronomy." ³

In 1640, Wilkins published another work, A Discourse concerning

A New Planet: That the Earth may be a Planet. Galileo seems to have been the main source, providing Wilkins with arguments and "experiments" for the movement of the earth. Several of his ideas and diagrams were borrowed directly from Galileo, ⁴ while some of his arguments concerning virtù impressa, though they could easily have been found in, and may ultimately have been derived via Bruno's De La Cena, find a more direct echo in

Galileo to whom Wilkins refers:

To which purpose Galileaeus urges this experiment. If any one should let fall a stone from an High Mast, he would not find ... "that the stone would always descend unto the very same place, whether or no the Ship did move or stand still." The reason of which is, because the motion of the ship is likewise impressed in the stone: which impression is not equally prevalent in a light body... Thus likewise will it be in this other experiment. If a man upon a running horse should in his swiftest course let fall a Bullet or Stone, these heavy bodies, besides their own descent would also participate that transverse motion of the Horse. For as those things that are thrown from us,

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¹ ibid., p.30.
² ibid., p.82. Corrected to 'Brunus' in third edition of 1640.
³ ibid., p.35.
⁴ Cf. A Discourse (1640), pp.171; 222; 226; 229 to G. Santillana, trans. Dialogue on the Great World Systems, pp.189; 402; 353; 337.
do continue their motion when they are out of the hand
in the open Aire: so likewise must it bee when the force
is conferred by that motion which the arm has from the
horse.¹

In his controversies over heliocentricity with Carpenter,
Fromondus and more especially Alexander Rosse, Wilkins shows
dependence on Hill, Mersenne and Campanella, themselves
influenced by Bruno's ideas. He also admits the paternity of
Kepler, with whose Somnium and Epitomes Astronomiae Copernicanæ
(1618) he was well acquainted.² Thus one diagram, later also
used by Henry More,³ goes back via Galileo to Kepler.⁴ Many
of Wilkins's ideas

you may see more fully set downe by those who have purposely
handled this subject, Copernicus, Rheticus, Galilaeo, but
more especially Kepler: unto whom I doe acknowledge my ⁵
selfe indebted for sundry particulars in this discourse.

Later, as first secretary of the Royal Society, Wilkins was in a
position of influence, contributing to the scientific movement in
England. He had been confirmed Master of Trinity College, Cambridge
in August 1659 and in 1664 proposed Henry More and Ralph Cudworth
as members of the Royal Society.⁶

¹ A Discovery, pp.169-170. See Above, pp.79-80 for Bruno
and Galileo.

² A Discourse, p.141.


⁴ Epitome, p.827.

⁵ A Discourse, p.233.

⁶ A List of the Royal Society (1664). Among the listed books
of the Society we find two of Bruno's. See Catalogue of the
Scientific Books in the Library of the Royal Society, (1839)
p.637. La Cena de le Ceneri. See Catalogue of Miscellaneous
Bruno, Giordano. De La Causa, principio e uno, 12°, 1584.
Problems for the Cambridge Platonists

When the Cambridge Platonist, Henry More, started his literary-philosophic career in 1640, many of the concepts which Bruno had discussed were coming more often into the arena of public debate, and attracting less animus than before. In England, in 1638, there was a fair amount of sympathy for the cosmological ideas championed by Bruno and his English "disciple", Nicholas Hill. This is very much in evidence in Robert Burton's fifth edition of the Anatomy of Melancholy.¹

We have seen how, in A Discovery of A New World, John Wilkins, mentioned Bruno by name and paid him the compliment of adopting some of his ideas.² An Oxford man, Wilkins had studied at New Inn Hall and Magdalen, graduating M.A. in 1634. On 17 August 1659, he was confirmed Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, where he particularly "associated with Latitudinarians".³

As first Secretary of the Royal Society, he was highly influential, attracting and reconciling disparate, and possibly conflicting, attitudes in the same manner as Marin Mersenne. He proposed Henry More and Cudworth as members of the Royal Society and we find them listed with Elias Ashmole, Isaac Barrow, John Dryden, William Petty, Robert Boyle and Henry Oldenburg among the earliest members.

¹ See Above, pp. 295-296.
² See Above, pp. 298ff.
A great friend of the Cambridge Platonists, Wilkins held Henry More especially in great respect, saying:

more than once, that he Rank'd him with the Great Genius's of Antiquity, Plato, Xenophon, Plutarch, Tully & C. with whom he should reckon it a very particular Happiness to be in Company & to hear them discoursing. 1

Wilkins's books, like Burton's running into several editions, were among the first books of popular astronomy, and an immediate source to many poets of the time. 2 His books could obviously have been a formative influence, and it is quite possible that More was initially attracted to the idea of a plurality of worlds through A Discovery and A Discourse.

In actual fact, More makes no direct reference to Bruno throughout his works. Yet even a cursory examination will uncover significant similarities. Geoffrey Bullough, Marjorie Hope Nicolson and Rosalie Colie 3 mention some of these similarities, but they do not explore much further. Lee Haring goes into some detail only to conclude that if More was derivative of Bruno he would have "acknowledged" the fact. 4

1 R. Ward, p. 308.


We know, however, that Henry More could easily come into contact with Bruno's ideas. His friend and colleague, Ralph Cudworth, possessed the two editions of Hill's *Philosophia Epicurea* and we have seen how Bruno's basic concepts regarding divine essence, space, infinity of worlds and the minima are, in Hill, taken over, very often verbatim, from *De Minimo* and *De Immensa*. More's great friend and pupil, Lady Anne Conway, wife of Edward, third Viscount of Conway and Kilulta probably possessed a copy of one of Bruno's Italian cosmological dialogues. I have traced this in the inventory of her father-in-law's library when his books were sequestered by Parliament in 1643, at a time when the second Viscount Conway was declared a delinquent. In the Conway library at Ragley More wrote part of his books and had interesting, sometimes heated, conversations with many contemporary scientists and theologians. A friend of Anne, Lord Edward Herbert of Cherbury, also possessed a copy of Bruno's first edition of *De L'Infinito*. More could also get at Bruno's ideas down the grapevine indirectly through Kepler, Campanella, Mersenne, Burton and Wilkins with whose works More shows familiarity.

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1 See Above, pp.166-192.

2 *Public Record Office, State Papers, 20.7.f.113*:

"Giordano Bruno, dialogo It." His books were later returned after repeated petitions. See *Public Record Office, State Papers, 23.0.75. ff.370-377*: "grant unto your petitioner his books upon a favourable composition... The petition of Edward Viscount Conway and Edward Conway sonne and heire apparent of the said Viscount." The second Viscount died sometime in 1654, a devoted bibliophile, who continued collecting books till the end. He was succeeded by his son Edward who was married to Anne Conway.
However, many of the "similarities" between Bruno and More, although basic, could have arisen because both tapped the same sources, and while stressing similarities we shall not overlook divergencies. Giordano Bruno was one of the most influential nature-philosophers of the Renaissance precisely because he could adopt and fuse together disparate elements from other systems, what Augusto Guzzo calls his "philosophic latitudinarianism and scientific pragmatism". Although stating that not all philosophies carried equal value, Theophilo in De La Causa can tolerate other cults. Earlier in De Umbria Idearum, Bruno argued that the search for truth must be effected through separate paths, none of which must be scorned:

\[
\text{non eius non essi ingenii, ut determinato alienae philosophiae generi simus adstricti: neque ut per universum quacumque philosophandi viam contemnamus.}\]

Thus Bruno's physics is partly indebted to the atomism of Democritus, Epicurus and Lucretius, his cosmology to Copernicus, and his metaphysics to Plotinus and Nicholas of Cusa. But he claims that the attempt to fuse all these is his own. We know him particularly for his concept about the infinite extension of space, the doctrine of the plurality of inhabited worlds, and his persistent emphasis on the minima as the key to all knowledge.

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1 Quoted, Luigi Cicuttini, Giordano Bruno (Milan, n.d.), p.144.

2 I. pp.258; 260.

3 De Umbria Idearum, II.i. p.17.
Henry More is just as ready to borrow insights from other potentially antagonistic philosophies. Epicurus, Lucretius, Plotinus, Averroes and Copernicus also figure largely in More's reading list, but it is worth considering whether it is more than just coincidence that, adopting Bruno's premisses, More should nearly always reach Bruno's conclusions.¹ For often it is Bruno's or Hill's concepts that More adopts to stem the growing tide of materialistic atomism.² It is also significant that More, Ralph Cudworth and other Cambridge Platonists should often be accused of philosophic and religious latitudinarianism.³

The intellectual atmosphere prevalent in the middle of the seventeenth century is too well known to need lengthy re-statement. To many Christians, the concept of Substance as put forward by Bruno and Hill was still anathema. In his works, Bruno developed the Platonic or Plotinian doctrine of immanence, going further than any mediaeval or Renaissance exegetist. As A.O. Lovejoy said, Bruno found in the doctrine of immanence

a source of pantheistic "cosmic emotion" that earlier Platonists never felt in any such intensity. He corrected Neoplatonism at a point where it was unnecessarily at variance with itself, by merging the conception of "matter" in that of God, or the Infinite.⁴

² ibid., pp.158-165.
⁴ "The Dialectic of Bruno and Spinoza," University of California Publications (Berkeley, 1904), I. p.152.
This quasi-identification of matter with God, who is often visualized as the monas monadum, raised storms of protest and theological controversy and charges of heresy and atheism were hurled indiscriminately at those who defended similar ideas. However, Copernican cosmology, Baconian empiricism, Galilean dynamics and Bruno's concept of an infinity of worlds were being slowly accepted. Despite several attempts at censorship, in England there was no Inquisition sitting cross-legged at the birth of new ideas. Scientists and nature philosophers, as distinct from political pamphleteers and religious agitators, were relatively free to explain phenomena without resorting to diplomatic solutions which described physical reality as plausible conjecture.¹

The Cambridge Platonists, among them John Smith, Benjamin Whichcote, Nathaniel Culverwel, Cudworth and More, accepted many of the new theories and the scientific method, but they made significant departures, often interpreting discoveries and scientific data in the light of their declared metaphysical considerations.

A reluctance to concede all to scientists and mathematicians is also typical of Bruno and Hill. In De Monade, Bruno even insists on the close relationship that exists between magic, alchemy and physics.² His atomism, like Nicholas Hill's,


² Kurd Lasswitz, Geschichte der Atomistik (Hamburg and Leipzig, 1890), I. pp.391-392.
is strongly laced with animism and "magical" sympathies and shall constitute an important consideration when we discuss More's partial acceptance and rejection of Galilean physics and Cartesian mechanical philosophy.

Starting in dynamics, and the formulation of the law of inertia, Galileo united experiment with mathematics to inaugurate an intellectual and scientific revolution. No longer a mere copy, the world of existents became the real workshop of rational man. Thus, as Wilkins wrote, some of the insights or "fancies" of Bruno and Hill were now being corroborated scientifically by Maeslin, Kepler and Galileo.¹

Francis Bacon had earlier argued for a pragmatic exercise that substituted practical experiment for the traditional teleological interpretations favoured by the Aristotelians:

Human knowledge and human power are one; for where the cause is not known the effect cannot be produced.²

Earlier still, as the sixteenth century drew to its close, anti-Aristotelianism was centred in small pockets of resistance that looked to Ramist or Brunian dialectic for inspiration. Often their physics were just as erroneous as Aristotle's, and they were censured by men like Hooker because they merely spread "the plague of superficial and pretentious disputation".³

¹ See Above, p. 303.

² Novum Organum (1620), I.aph.3.

By the middle of the seventeenth century the method had considerably altered. Many conceded that the Aristotelian doctrine of "essential substances" failed to give a satisfactory account of phenomena and turned towards atomism or corpuscularianism. Joseph Glanvil, voiced the convictions of many when he argued that the texts studied at universities, such as Magirus's *Physica Peripatetica* and Scipion de Pleix's *Corps de Philosophie*, were merely verbal and failed to help in "the use of common life". Aristotle was still, however, a strong influence. Andrew Van Melsen speaks of the imposing character of his philosophy:

His solution of the fundamental problems shows a calm balance between the requirements of sense experience on one hand, and the intellectual interpretation on the other ... His enormous empirical knowledge ... The rigorous logical connection of the system in which he compressed all his knowledge. Aristotle is the founder of scientific logic. Only in the last hundred years did man succeed in developing logic beyond Aristotle. Even so, the outstanding modern logician, W. Scholz, states: "Even nowadays Aristotle's *Organon* is still the most beautiful and instructive introduction into logic of all." No wonder that for a long time everybody remained under his spell.

Logic had somehow to be combined with experiment, and this led to the gradual emergence of atomism. The collection of information tables such as are found in Bacon's *Sylva Sylvarum*

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4. ibid., p.122.
and Boyle's *Hydrostatical Experiments* merited rational analysis, this latter being compared to the bee that "transforms and digests" empiric data by a power all its own. Reared in an atmosphere of cautious optimism, the scientific method progressed considerably. Technical achievement led to empiric principles which in turn led to new achievements in astronomy, optics, medicine and other sciences. Natural science gradually became a power tool, and "the relief of man's estate" its chief aim.

Bacon positively refused to base his philosophy on theology. Like Descartes, he discussed natural laws in terms of matter and motion. He is against mixing philosophy and religion because this "will make an heretical religion, and an imaginary or fabulous philosophy". Though he never disputed Design, applied teleology did not appeal to him.

That is one reason why the Cambridge Platonists often distrusted Bacon and Baconian empiricists. In a pointed reference to The Advancement of Learning, John Smith wrote:

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1 *Novum Organum*, I.aph.95.


4 *ibid.* Henry More's attack on William Petty's "slibber-sauce" experiments in a letter to Samuel Hartlib, 12 March 1648-49. Sheffield University Library, Hartlib Papers, XVIII: "So that I think there was more need of an Architectonicall witt, then of an Empiricks industry." Cf. *ibid.* Letter to Hartlib, 27 August 1649. See. R. Cudworth to R. Boyle, 16 October 1684, *The Works of Robert Boyle* (1772), VI. p.511: "You have much outdone Sir Francis Bacon, in your naturall experiments, and you have not insinuated anything, as he is thought to have done, tending to irreligion, but the contrary."
It was a dangerous and unworthy spirit in that Philosophy which first separated and made such distances between Metaphysical Truths and the Truth of Nature.¹

For the many new discoveries led to the emergence of a new philosophy, gradually convincing men to radically alter their beliefs. In contrast to the optimism generated by philosophers like Bruno, Hill and Hakewill for the new science must be posited the confusion and doubt of many humanists who felt with John Donne that this world "is crumbled out again to his Atomies".² Halley's comet and subsequent supernovas were read as spelling disaster. Like Richard Harvey in Bruno's day, many now took particular pleasure in prognosticating the end of the world.³ R.G. Collingwood writes it is "philosophically foolish and historically false" that the acceptance of heliocentrism was a great blow to man's dignity.⁴ Throughout the

¹ "The Excellency and Nobleness of True Religion," from Select Discourses, ed. John Worthington (1660), Disc. IX. Chap. VIII. C.A. Patrides, The Cambridge Platonists (1969), p.187. n.140 traces this reference to Francis Bacon's Of the Advancement and Proficience of Learning (Oxford, 1640), p.137: "Naturall Theology, is truly called Divine Philosophy. And this defined to be a Knowledge ... such as may be had by the light of Nature; and the Contemplation of the Creature; which Knowledge may be truly termed Divine in respect of the Object; and Naturall in respect of the Light."

² "The First Anniversarie", line 212.


Middle Ages, preachers had quoted Augustine's "inter urinas et faeces nascimur" at assenting audiences, and decried man as the basest part of creation. This is very true, but many still clung desperately to the

jigsaw picture of earth and heavens compounded from the forcible union of Greek science and Christian dogma, of an eternal and immutable heavens eternally circling a corrupt degenerate earth.¹

Milton could still see the stars "bending one way their pretious influence", and in the Nativity Ode the music of the spheres is linked to angelic voices as symbolic of cosmic harmony. In Paradise Lost, then, he stuck to Ptolemy.

Henry More is caught at the cross-roads, very often undecided. Early More accepted Copernican cosmology, attacking the "stiff standers for us'd Ptolemee", ² but decades later "suspend my Assent".³ He also had his doubts as to the reality of the music of the spheres, at one point suggesting they were the work of "lightsome phansies", ⁴ then curiously attempting a rational explanation as to why we do not hear the music that is there.⁵

² Psychathanasia, p.156. st.5.
⁴ Psychathanasia, p.159. st.16.
⁵ ibid., p.159. st.17-18.
The untuning of the sky met vehement opposition for the old belief and prejudice did not overnight die of exposure to the cold gusts of science, nor without the usual ritual of mourning and panegyric. Despite the strong stress on logic and empiricism, credulity persisted even among those who proclaimed the scientific method. Towards the end of Harmonices Mundi, Kepler abandons his geometric solids to seek refuge in a literal interpretation of the music of the spheres similar to that of Henry More. It is no wonder lesser men like Drummond complained:

"Thus Sciences by the divers Motiones of this Globe of the Braine of Man, are become Opiniones, nay, Errores, and leave the Imagination in a thousand Labyrinthes."

Man's doubt was itself interpreted as proof of the onset of universal decay:

"Even the generall Soule of this great creature, whereof every one of ours is a severall piece, seemes bedrid, as upon her deathbed and neere the time of her dissolution to a second better estate and being."

Perhaps the classic example of the onset of this inevitable dissolution can be found in Sir Thomas Browne's Urne Buriall:

"We cannot hope to live so long in our names, as some have done in their persons, one face of Janus holds no proportion unto the other. 'Tis too late to be ambitious. The great mutations of the world are acted, or time may be too short for our designs ... Circles and right lines limit and close all bodies, and the mortal right lined circle must conclude and shut up all."

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1 Harmonices Mundi (Linz, 1619).


4 θ the character of Death.

5 Thomas Browne, Religio Medici and Other Works, ed. L.C. Martin (Oxford, 1964), p.120.
Many learned men and divines combated the new science because they felt, as Osiander in his "Ad Lectorem" to De Revolutionibus had predicted, that the liberal arts would be thrown into disarray. Henry More himself, though not inimical to new directions, knew that the scientific method could be used to undermine divinity:

The Tempter would take advantage where hee may to carry men captive out of one darke prison into another, out of Superstition into Atheisme itself.¹ saying also that:

Mankind is in a laps'd condition, like one fallen down in a fit of Epilepsie.²

The Cambridge Platonists suggested rationality should not become the prerogative of the scientific method, but should play a significant role in religious areas of research and debate:

To take away Reason therefore, under what Fanatick pretense soever, is to disrobe the Priest and despoil him of his breast-plate, and which is worst of all, to rob Christianity of that special prerogative ... That it dares appeal unto Reason.³

Joseph Glanvil, discussing the "religious temper and tendencies" of the experimental philosophy "profest by the Royal Society" ended with a recommendation for the defence of reason in religion.⁴ Men like Boyle and Harvey, like Hill before them,⁵ saw no threat

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¹ Antidote Against Atheism, sig. B2.
² ibid., sig. C6v.
³ Henry More, A Collection of Several Philosophical Writings, 2nd ed. (1662), sig. A3v.
⁴ Philosophia Pia (1671), Title-page.
⁵ Philosophia Epicurea (1601), sig.a.iijv.
to established religion and argued that a rational analysis of natural laws afforded impressive evidence for asserting the divine origin of the universe. Boyle wrote not only *The Sceptical Chymist* but also asserted that

by being addicted to experimental philosophy a man is rather assisted than indisposed to be a good Christian. ¹

The Cambridge Platonists were not averse to this kind of defence, a double attitude concerned with upholding new discoveries but also, perhaps primarily, with re-interpreting them in the light of Christian belief. They argued strongly that the world of existents could not be fully understood purely by the scientific method. Henry More argued even against Boyle, Descartes, Matthew Hale and Robert Hooke that science should not be separated from metaphysics, that man had no right to assume that all valid forms of inference are indispensable or even useful in science and mathematics, that to reduce everything to matter in motion was absurd, and that in fact there could exist epistemic principles that are useful only in metaphysics:²

I have from my very first letters to Descartes till this last book of mine *Enchiridion Metaphysicum* always expressed an opinion that this mechanical way would not hold in all phaenomena.²

The problem as to what constituted matter and what spirit had always been fraught with dangerous possibilities. Bruno's and Hill's formula "Spiritus est corpus subtilissimum" led to

¹ *The Christian Virtuoso* (1690), Title-page.

Cf. More's Preface to *Antidote Against Atheism*, sig. A4: "And therefore Descartes, whose Mechanical wit I can never highly enough admire, might be no Master of Metaphysicks to me."
the "mortalist controversy" and the new method stressing sense observation as the only real way to knowledge, soon led to the materialistic ontology of Hobbes, which would abolish final causes completely. As may be expected, Hobbes' outspokenness met either enthusiasm or condemnation. Cowley hailed him as the "Columbus of the golden land of new philosophies", but a broadside attack published on Hobbes's death in 1679 read:

Here lies Tom Hobbes, the Bug-bear of the Nation Whose death hath frightened Atheism out of fashion.

Bishop William Lucy, using colourful imagistic terms, wrote vehemently:

The Wild Bore hath been in the Vineyard ... digged at the Roots of Religion ... and surely if any one man for some hundreds of years might be called that Bore, it is Mr. Hobbs.

In the 19th century, John Tulloch held the view that while Platonism may be said to have originated the Cambridge movement, "Hobbism was the means of concentrating its thought and giving dogmatic direction to it." Thus both More and Cudworth condemn

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3 "To Mr. Hobbs", Works of Abraham Cowley (1668), sig. z.
5 Observations, Censures and Confutations of Notorious Errors in Mr. Hobbs His Leviathan (1663), sig. b2.
the "morbus mathematicus" and "mechanical credulity"\(^1\) of astronomers, geometricians and physicists.\(^2\) Henry More early speaks against the daring wit of man "in pursuit of scientie" that forgets "the reverend laws of piety".\(^3\) His friend John Smith opposes mathematical man to

Metaphysical man ... who running and shooting up above his own logickall or Self-rationall life, pierceth into the Highest life: Such a one, who by Universal love and Holy affection abstracting himself from himselfe, endeavours the nearest Union with the Divine Essence that may be, as Plotinus speaks, knitting his owne centre, if he have any, unto the Centre of the Divine Being.\(^4\)

However, the Cambridge Platonists were not merely conservative, aligned to stem the tide of materialism. Their metaphysics often moved, albeit uncertainly, towards some kind of synthesis. This is perhaps nowhere more evident than in the poetry and prose of Henry More. Like Mersenne, he tried to divert scientific theory to the service of Christian apologetics. The mathematicians "had done a great deal more if they had

\(^1\) The Immortality of the Soul, sig. Pp5.
Cf. Antidote Against Atheism, sig. B2\(^v\): "For it is possible that mathematical evidence itself may be but a constant undiscoverable Delusion."

\(^2\) Ralph Cudworth, Liber Arbitrium, B.M.Add.MSS.4982.II.f.54.

\(^3\) Psychatesania, p.93. st.54.

Cf. H. More, Antidote Against Atheism, sig. C4\(^v\): "The Inward Man".
promised lesse", claiming

Monsieur des Chartes hath attempted bravely, but yet methinks on this side of Mathematicall evidence. A more attractive synthesis of matter and spirit could be found in Bruno, and Hill's Philosophia Epicurea. A study of More's works in the light of their theories will, I think, prove relevant.

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1 "To the Reader Upon this second Edition", The Philosophical Poems, sig. B3.

2 ibid.
Henry More early subscribed to an ideal of "gnosis" or "knowledge of God" that could lead to the meditation of the mystic. More's poetry is partially derivative of the traditional "negative way" of Christian mysticism. Very early, he was concerned with Plato's land of ideas and forms, where "nought increaseth, nought here hath its fall".\(^1\)

Educated at Eton (1628-1631) and Cambridge, where he acquired the nickname "Angel of Christ's", More came under the influence of apocalyptist Joseph Mede, a great believer in religious toleration. Shaking off an early unwilling allegiance to Calvinism, unable to stomach "the hard doctrine" of Predestination,\(^2\) More took to natural philosophy in earnest studying Aristotle, Cardanus, Julius Scaliger and Aquinas.\(^3\)

Just before he received his bachelor's degree in 1635, he underwent a spiritual crisis marked by a short poem, *Aporia*, which reflects the grief and doubt of a believer who had lost the way.\(^4\) This internal conflict lasted about four years, when More marked the regaining of divine light through *Euporia*:

\(^1\) *Psychozoia*, p.4. st.14.

\(^2\) *Opera Omnia*, (1679), p.vi.

\(^3\) *ibid.*

\(^4\) *The Conway Letters*, p.299.
I come from Heav'n; am an immortal Ray
Of God; O Joy! and back to God shall goe. ¹

In 1639, after graduating M.A., More entered holy orders
and in 1641 was elected Fellow and Tutor at Christ's possibly
as successor to Robert Gell, ² a position which he held through¬
out the Civil War, the Puritan interregnum and the Restoration.
During one of the most turbulent eras in English history, the
Cambridge divine remained relatively unperturbed. Except for
a year's tenure of the living at Ingoldsby parish in Lincolnshire,
he seems to have rejected all ecclesiastical and academic
preferment, ³ and discarded "the affairs of the world". ⁴

More was not, however, radically disengaged, and his work
is steeped in conflict and controversy. Polemic with Thomas
Vaughan, Descartes, Hobbes, Spinoza, Baxter, Boyle, Matthew
Hale and George Foxe ⁵ sharpened his ideas and often, it is
to be feared, forced him into absurd conclusions. ⁶ To the
end, he combated "Hobbianism" ⁷ as a disease in the body politic,
and when he died in 1687 he was engaged in writing a "cure for
the world", Medela Mundi.

¹ The Philosophical Poems, p.334. See C.A. Standenbaur, "Galileo,
² C.C. Brown, "Henry More's Deep Retirement: New Material on the
³ Lord Conway to Henry More, 9 November 1669. B.M.Add.MSS.23216.f.53.
⁴ The Philosophical Poems, sig.A3.
⁶ Cf. C.A. Patrides, p.32: "Henry More, I fear, could not always
tell a hawk from a handsaw."
⁷ Opera Omnia, p.vii.
In Cambridge, where he spent all of his adult life except for brief visits to London and longer ones to Ragley, More led a relatively cloistered life which inclined him to meditation, and the "Via Purgativa Illuminativa" of Christian neoplatonism. Finding peace in the spirit, More preached a moral regeneration to a country torn by political strife and religious dissension. Of him it can be said, as of Milton, that he became the poet of the new dispensation to justify the ways of God to man. The new Jerusalem, however, was not to be found during the life of the body which he described as "umbratil imitation". The first poem of any importance, Psychozoia, was written in 1640 and published with others in 1642 under the general title, Psychodia Platonica, when More was twenty-eight years old. Ostensibly written as a spiritual diary, the overall framework and tone of the published version betray a specifically didactic purpose. His declared intention was "Plato and deep Plotin to restore". The modern reader will not often be particularly enthralled by More's poetry. S.T. Coleridge suggests that More's poetry failed because his undoubted poetic and philosophic genius, supported by great erudition, failed to combine:

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1 Opera Omnia, p.vii.

2 The Philosophical Poems, p.337.

3 Opera Omnia, p.viii.

4 ibid.

5 Psychozoia, p.2. st.4.
It was not his good fortune to discover, as in the previous generation Shakespeare had discovered, a mordant or common base for both.\textsuperscript{1}

Despite this, More's poetry deserves to be better known. It can often reflect, not without some distortion, the intellectual atmosphere and throw important light on some of the ideas that shaped the development of seventeenth century literature, science and philosophy.

\textit{Psychozoia} does not reflect at all accurately the turbulent times. Although there is some evidence of his interest in the Copernican system,\textsuperscript{2} More's loyalty to Plato and Plotinus is more immediately evident. More claimed that he was the first Cambridge man to possess a copy of Plotinus.\textsuperscript{3} \textit{Psychozoia} is not concerned with progress but with a return. In a way, much of the philosophy of the time is also concerned with a return. Following Bruno and Hill, many corpuscularian philosophers had revived the mechanistic principles of Democritus and Leukippus and it is interesting to note that, having shaken off the chains of Aristotelianism, many seventeenth century scientists and philosophers made a bee-line to other Greek philosophies.

\textsuperscript{1} Flyleaf of the \textit{The Theological Works of Henry More} (1708), B.M. Ashley, 5176.

\textsuperscript{2} \textit{Psychozoia}, pp.8-9, st.30-31.

\textsuperscript{3} \textit{Letters on Several Subjects} (1694), p.27.
More sought to strengthen Christianity by an infusion of Platonism along Ficino's lines, stressing similarities and using both against materialistic corpuscularianism or atomism. Early he sought to equate the Platonic Triad with the Christian Trinity, quoting St. Paul, who transferred things said of Jupiter to God himself, as precedent:

The last accomplishment of all, and the highest perfection as the apostle witnesseth, is Love, and this is ever referred to the Holy Ghost, whom Peter Lombard contends to be Love ... and this agrees ad amussim with Uranore or Psyche whom Plotinus calls the celestiall Venus, out of which is born the heavenly Cupid, the divine love. The same is also Juno the sister and wife of Jove; that is, of the Divine Intellect, as the same philosopher observes. And the Greek name of Juno doth fitly agree to this purpose, her name implying Love. And a further signe that Juno and Venus are one, is, that Astronomers have noted one and the same Starre by both their names ... So then the proper effect of this third Hypostasis in either Trinity is Love.

This 'erudite' attempt to combine Christianity with Platonism is characteristic of More's poetry where a mixture of ideas and names borrowed from Classical myth, the Cabala, Hebraic and Christian doctrine militate against credibility. It certainly warns the reader that it was not poetry as poetry that More was after — often the poet is subordinate to the philosopher.

1 "To the Reader", The Philosophical Poems, sig.C.
In *Psychozoia*, More's orthodox God is often seen to be equated to the Plotinian first hypostasis.\(^1\) Out of the First, Father of Lights, of which hardly any attribute can be predicated,\(^2\) emanates

... that ancient Eidos omniform, 3

Fount of all beauty, root of -flowing glee

who parallels the Son of the Christian Trinity but is inferior to the One out of which Eidos or Aeon proceeds through "undiminished giving",\(^4\) and who in turn leads to the third hypostasis, "That virgin wife of Aeon, Uranore".\(^5\) In *Psychozoia*’s scheme of things, Uranore, or Psyche, or the Soul of the Universe, as she is variously called, becomes the subject of the poem, and More sets out to describe its various action up and down the great chain of being.\(^6\) Although Psyche, as Plotinus’s All Soul, is invisible, More says that man can see its "outward vest" which is the visible world and can describe its "pourtraiure".\(^7\) The visible world becomes a fitting garment for the All-Soul, and More quotes Philo Judaeus that even Moses had made Aaron’s garment so that

\(^1\) *Psychozoia*, p.2. st.5.


\(^3\) ibid., p.3. st.9.


\(^5\) *Psychozoia*, p.5. st.15.

\(^6\) ibid., p.9. st.32.

\(^7\) ibid., p.5. st.18.
the shoulder-peaces mought represent the Heavens; the
two precious stones there, the two Hemispears; the
twelve names engraven, the twelve signs of the Zodiack. ¹

While Psyche thus emanates "delightfull immutations" to the
visible world, it must also be seen to be united to the
second hypostasis. In the marriage of Psyche to Aeon, we
have More's One displaying a curious vein of anthropomorphic
humour, hardly consonant with a hypostasis of whom both
Plotinus and More thought it degrading even to attribute
the predicate of being or action:

Thus farre he spake, and then again respired;
And all the time he held their hand in one;
Then they with cheerfull look one thing desired,
That he would break this happy union.
I happy union break? quoth he anon:
I Ahad² Father of Community?
Then they: That you would let your hand be gone
Off from our hands: He grants with smiling glee:
So each stroke struck on earth is struck from these same three.³

The alexandrine shows More hovering in doubt between accepting
a graded Platonic triad and the completely equal "unprocessional"
Christian Trinity.⁴ But he says he chooses to put forward the
mere Platonicall description of Universall life, or
life that is omnipresent, though not alike omnipresent.⁵

His hypostases are not only unequal, as in Plotinus, but at
each stage of descent, despite the process of "undiminished
giving", there is also a very definite "withholding". The

¹ The Philosophical Poems, p.343,

² ibid., p.421: "Ahad ... One or The One because the multitude
or plurality of Beings is from this One."

³ Psychozoia, p.10, st.38.

⁴ Lydia Gysi, Platonism and Cartesianism in the Philosophy

⁵ "To the Reader", The Philosophical Poems, sig. B7.
overall impression, then, is certainly not one of divine pantheistic immanence but of the One who, despite being the source of all, remains utterly transcendent.

In More, Physis, or vegetative nature, is thus described as Psyche's representative, "th'externall form of this large flowing stole". More insists on calling Physis a "seminal world", a spiritual by-product of all three hypostases strangely linked to all that is material:

The first of these fair films, we Physis name. Nothing in Nature did you ever spy, But there's portrayed: all beasts both wild and tame, Each bird is here, and every buzzing fly; All forest work is in this tapestry: The Oke, the Holm, the Ash, the Alpine tree, The lonesome Buzzard, th'Eagle, and the Fly, The Buck, the Bear, the Boar, the Hare, the Bee, The Prize, the black-arm'd Clock, the Gnat, the Butterflie.

Snakes, Adders, Hydraes, Dragons, Toads and Frogs, Th'own-litter loving Ape, the Worm, and Snail, Th'undaunted Lion, Horses, Men and Dogs, Their number's infinite, nought doth't avail To reckon all, the time would surely fail: And all besprinkled with centrall spots, Dark little spots, is this hid inward veil: But when the hot bright dart doth pierce these knots, Each one dispreads it self according to their lots.

The "centrall spots" represent the spirit that wakens matter into life. Already More had allotted life and "the plastick might" to spirit. In actual fact, like Plotinus, the early

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1 *Psychozoia*, p.11. st.40.
2 Ibid., p.11. st.41-42.
More was "almost ashamed of being in the body". There is a hankering for a return to the divine source. The ultimate aim of Psychozoia is mystical union with the unutterably transcendent One by a constant urge to move up the Platonic scala. This must be accompanied by a profound Christian humility.

As More adds in the Notes to the 1647 edition:

our endeavour must be not onely to be without sin, but to become God, that is, impassible, immaterial, quit of all sympathy with the body... I might fitly make their Philosophy [Stoicism, Platonism and Phytagorism], or rather the life that it deth point at (for that's the subject of the poem) a Type of that life which is very near to perfection, but as yet imperfect, having still a smack of arrogation, and self-seeking... So that I reserve as the true and adequate Character of Christianisme, the most profound and spirituall humility.

More is concerned with becoming an "Anautaesthete", with shedding even the awareness of self:

So both their lives do vanish into mine,
And mine into Atuvus life doth melt.

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1 "The Life of Porphyry", in Plotinus, The Enneads, p.1.


3 Psychozoia, p.51. st.146.
   Cf. The Philosophical Poems, p.422.

4 Autoparnes and Hypomone, "Autoparnes is the soul denying itself: Hypomone the soul bearing the anguish of this denial of itself: From these two, results Simon, the soul obedient to the spirit of Christ." The Philosophical Poems, p.422.

5 Psychozoia, p.52. st.147.
Thus an attempt is also made to shed off the physical realm. Only if matter is seen to be conquered can one achieve the peace of Aeonland. Here mutability is ruled out and eternal union with the godhead made possible.1

As opposed to Brunian thought, More's matter, or the scholastic Hyle, is thus seen to be the villain in the human drama, the evil witch that inhibits the odyssey to the fatherland. In Bruno and Hill there is a constant attempt to amalgamate spirit and matter, both possessing their own nobility: "Spiritus est corpus subtilissimum."2 This type of amalgamation is much later accepted by More's friends and colleagues, Ralph Cudworth and Francis Mercury van Helmont:

Therefore Spirit and Body are not contrary essences, as many do vainly and falsely affirm; for every created Spirit is corporeal, having in it the true essence and Nature of Body, viz. it is an extended Being, bounded, circumscribed with place, moveable &c. And therefore a humane soul is corporeal... the most pure and Spiritual Angels also are corporeal, and as it were Spiritual bodies.3

F.M. Van Helmont seems to have been acquainted with Bruno's De Minimo. For him, as for Bruno, God becomes monas monadum. Although it was influenced by the vitalistic doctrines of Paracelsus and the elder Van Helmont, his monadology seems to be a development of Bruno's ideas.4 His "Dull Monades or

1 ibid., p.3. st.9.
3 Seder Olam, or the Order of Ages (1694), p.11. The Latin edition was published in 1693. For Cudworth see Below p.539.n.3
4 F. Copleston, A History of Philosophy (1953), III. p.269.
single beings are indestructible. Each monad, like Bruno's and Hill's, is both corporeal and spiritual, all spirit being to some degree corporeal. Various internal attractions lead to the formation of conglomerates or structures, each of which is governed and directed by a central monad. In man this central monad is the soul. The soul strives for perfection through a return to God, but before this can happen it must pass through various cycles of change:

It therefore enters into union with other bodies or sets of monads until it has perfected itself. It then returns to God, who is the monas monadum.

God is seen as being "present in all things, that he is everywhere centrally present". F.M. Van Helmont entered More's life relatively late and could not have influenced More's early works at all. Probably influenced by patristic debates about "vehicles", "manifestations" of the soul, More, in 1642, still believed in such "fictions" as "corporeal angels". In Psychozoia, however, matter is decried. Hyle is an "old hag, foul, filthy and deform", the final degeneration:

The last Extreme, the farthest off from light, That's Nature's deadly shadow, Hyle's cell. O horrid cave and womb of dreaded night!

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1 A Cabbalistical Dialogue (1682), pp.4; 9; 13.

2 Seder Olam, p.11.

3 F. Copleston, III. p.269.

4 Seder Olam, p.8.

5 See, Conway Letters, p.322.

6 Epistolare Quatuor, p.105. The debate had been started by the Byzantine Platonist Michael Psellos; a treatise De Daemonum Operando (11th Cent.) reprinted in a Ficino collection of 1494.

7 Psychozoia, p.3 st.9

8 ibid., p.19 st.9
Matter is seen as tending towards evil, often as being completely evil. This is More's initial reaction to "Hobbist" ideas circulating in manuscript and the corpuscularian theories that blossomed in the middle of the seventeenth century. Immediately averse to surrendering to the vital claims of matter, More initially adopts a negative attitude and almost refuses to speculate. It is Psyche, the All-Soul, who is indeed "mother of that nimble throng," and though Physis does in fact represent "vegetative nature" it must wage unending war on Matter:

But that old Hag that hight
Foul Hyle mistresse of the miry strond,
Oft her withstands and taketh great delight
To hinder Physis work, and work her all despight.

It is interesting to note that even Physis, "An Arteficer's imagination separate from the Arteficer and left alone to work without any animadversion", derives its power from God:

But it according to the Imprest Art
(That Arts impression's from Idea-Lond)
So drives it forth before it every part
According to true Symmetry.

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2 ibid., p.17. st.1.

3 The Philosophical Poems, p.431.

4 Psychozoia, p.12. st.44.

5 The Philosophical Poems, p.346.

6 Psychozoia, p.12. st.44.
This fits in well with Bruno's argument: "Physis optima Deitas", but is also frequently reiterated in Enneads. In Psychozoia, nature is shown to possess a "harsh obdurate light" that leads to heresy or irreligion. More preaches a transcendent God, and his advice to the bungling naturalist is similar to that of Milton's Raphael: "Thy God seek out and leave Nature behind." In fact, much of Psychozoia is taken up specifically with leaving Nature behind, the soul urging separation to return to its divine source. This is allegorized in Mnemon's and Simon's journey towards the land of Theoprepy.

Mnemon's discussion with Don Psittaco, Pico and Corvino reveals that Truth was not to be found in Sense, Reason, Authority or Scripture, but in a divine spirit that was "the sole ground of certainty".

Leaving Don Psittaco, Mnemon links up with Simon and suffers with him the trials inherent in the purgative process. They must pass through Dizoia, the land of "foul duality" inherent in man's composite nature, symbolized by the giant daemon sheared

1 De Immenso, I.i. p.305.
2 Psychozoia, p.46. st.123.
4 Psychozoia, p.38. st.94.
5 ibid., p.41. st.103.
in two. After trials similar to those of Spenser's Guyon, Mnemon and Simon overcome all obstacles. Mnemon is strongly drawn by Stoicissa, Platonissa and Pythagorissa on Eloim Hill, but More is so orthodox that he repudiates them because they contain dangerous elements, "Great pity things so fair should have so foul a spot". It is thus only orthodox Christian humility that can ensure real salvation, and More spells out the moral of his journey:

Strange things he spake of the biformity
Of the Dizoians; What monogroll sort
Of living wights; how monstrous shap'd they be,
And how that man and beast in one consort;
Goats britch, mans tongue, goose head, with monk's mouth distort.

With many such like falsehoods; but the streight
Will easily judge all crooked wanderings.
Suffice it then we have taught that ruling Right,
The Good is uniform, the Evil infinite.

This is vaguely reminiscent of the discussion of the problem in Spaccio de la Bestia Trionfante where the same ideas and images occur, but More seems closer to Spenser's Archimago, the enemy of unity who prevents his victims from contemplating a single truth, deriving wicked pleasure when he sees his "guests ... divided into double parts".

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1. Psychozoia, p.24. st.27.
2. Ibid., p.68. st.61.
3. Ibid., p.67. st.58.
   Cf. p.68 st.61: "what so is not of Christ but doth partake
   Of th' Autaesthesian soil, is life Daemoniake".
4. Ibid., p.71. st.70-71.
6. The Faerie Queen, I.ii.9.
Indeed in *Psychozoia*, there is little to suggest Bruno or Hill could have provided material for More. The main source is undoubtedly Plotinus's *Enneads*. But there exist elements suggesting More was ready to discard any thoroughgoing allegiance to Plotinus's view of matter. In 1640, More still agreed that there could be no "endless extension" but starts his approach towards vitalistic atomism. Plotinus had ruled out atoms completely:

> Atoms cannot meet the need of a base. There are no atoms; all body is divisible endlessly ... Any number of reasons might be brought, and have been brought against this [Democritean] hypothesis and it need not detain us longer.\(^2\)

Henry More's thought in this period of gestation is still confused, possibly because of indiscriminate mingling of physical and ethical principles.\(^3\) More preaches the transcendent God of Neoplatonism and Christian exegesis. Yet already Plotinus's doctrine of strict emanation through the process of "undiminished giving" seems to be muted when it comes into contact with even the most furtive atomism:

> Dependance of this All hence doth appear, And several degrees subordinate, But phancie's so unfit such things to clear, That oft it makes them seem more intricate: And now Gods work it doth disterminate Too farre from his own reach: But he withall More inward is, and farre more intimate Then things are with themselves. His Ideall And Centrall presence is in every Atom-Ball.\(^4\)

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2. Ibid.
It can be argued that this is indeed Plotinism emanation. But atomism is alien to Plotinus, and it seems to me that this is a development on the Enneads and on Ficino. The idea of the "divinity within" was commonplace; in different ways it was admitted by the Stoics, Plotinus and in St. Augustine's "intimus intimo suo". Bruno took to its extreme the tentative direction offered by a number of mediaeval monists, among them the AmalRICS condemned by the Church,¹ and moved towards the more pantheistic formula, Deus sive Natura.

It still remains true, however, that in both Plotinus and Ficino there is, despite the strong emphasis on transcendence, a link between matter and God. Emile Brehier writes:

Or la doctrine propre de Plotin c'est que la transcendance bien comprise implique au fond l'immanence, en d'autres termes qu'il ne peut y avoir de continuité véritable dans le domaine des réalités spirituelles s'il n'y a absorption de la réalité inférieure dans la réalité supérieure.²

Plotinus himself had earlier used More's imagery, but his stress is on transcendence:

The only reasonable explanation of act flowing from it lies in the analogy of light from a sun. The entire intellectual order may be figured as a kind of light with the One in repose at its summit as its king; but this manifestation is not cast out from it — that would cause us to postulate another light before the light — but the One shines eternally, resting upon the intellectual Realm; this, not identical with its source, is yet not severed from it nor of so remote a nature as to be less than Real-Being; it is no blind thing, but is seeing, self-knowing, the primal knower. The One, as transcending Intellect, transcends knowing; above all need, it is above the need of the knowing which pertains solely to Secondary Nature. Knowing is a unitary thing, but

¹ H. Vedrine, p.325. n.6.


Cf. Enneads, pp.532-541.
defined: the first is One, but undefined: a defined One would not be the One-Absolute; the absolute is prior to the definite. Thus the One is in truth beyond all statement; any affirmation is of a thing; but "all-transcending, resting above even the most august divine mind" — this is the only true description, since it does not make it a thing among things, nor name it where no name can identify it.

Although Plotinus also says that "All that is not One is conserved by virtue of the One", the emphasis lies on the "transcendent", and matter is still thought to be evil:

The soul's evil will be this association \( \sqrt{\text{with the body}} \), its good the release. Why? Because, even unmerged, a soul in any way to be described as attached to the universe is in some degree fallen from the All into a state of partition.

Henry More thinks it is "not mis-beseeming" in poetry to accept the "Hyperbolicall expression" of the close dependence that things have on God, quoting at length from Orpheus and Hermes Trismegistus. Indeed More argues that in *Psychozoia* the "whole Universe is exhibited to the mind as one vitall Orb, whose centre is God himself":

*This Ogdoas let't be an Unitie
One mighty quickned Orb of vast extent,
Throughly possesst of lifes community
And so those vests be seats of God's vitality.*

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1 *Enneads*, pp. 384-385.
2 ibid., p. 397.
3 ibid., p. 532.
5 *Psychozoia*, p. 21, st. 15.
More later develops a closer connection between atoms and God. Unlike Bruno, he does not discard all idea of Plotinian hierarchy. Unlike Plotinus, he no longer seems to regard matter as the final term of degradation. There is the Plotinian movement of necessary emanation, but in the following stanza there is the suggestion that each atom has a central life of its own, that it proceeds from God directly without an intermediary:

... in each Atom of the matter wide
The total Deity doth entirely won,
His infinite presence doth therein reside,
And in his presence infinite powers do abide.  

Bruno had been very strongly influenced by Plotinus and Ficino, but

l'idée de l'affaiblissement progressif de l'Un à travers ses manifestations ne se retrouve plus dans les œuvres de la maturité, notamment dans le De Immenso.  

This is very evident in De Minimo, as well as in Nicholas Hill's

Deus agit in omnibus mediate & immediate,
primis corpusculis exceptis in quae immediate solummodo agit.

In Bruno, God and Reason do not stand outside the universe, "for the inner principle which is the real nature, the real soul, which possesses everything" that lives in Him must be worthy of Him:

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1 The Philosophical Poems, p. 411: "All things flowing from him ... with abatement as is most discernable in the Extremes".

2 Democritus Platonissans, p. 208, st. 69.

3 H. Vedrine, p. 325.

4 Philosophia Epicurea, pp. 61; 68.
Non est Deus vel intelligentia exterior circumrotens et circunducens; dignius enim illi debet esse internum principium motus, quod est natura propria, species propria anima propria, quam habeant tot quot in telius gremio et corpore vivunt ... animantium.¹

This "internum principium", Hill's "plastici principi vigir", is the principle of self-preservation of matter and Bruno couples with it the concept of "natural desire" that was later taken up by Wilkins.² Bruno refers to it repeatedly in De La Cena, Summa Terminorum Metaphysicorum and in De Immenso: "Potentia et voluntas naturalis frustrari non debet".³

In Bruno's De Immenso, Plotinus's analogy of the ideal light becomes a reality — it leads to the contemplation of real nature:

Cease therefore to persuade yourself of the existence of that chimera of that infinite light without any body, fashioned and created by your senses, and holy only because it is contrasted to the darkness. Add that no essence is really distinct from being:

Natura estque nihil nisi virtus insita rebus,
Et lex, qua peragunt proprium cuncta entia cursum.⁴

Before that he had urged his readers to understand where nature and God exist, since it is in the universe that one can find the real basis for the causes of things, the force of principles, the quality of the elements, the seeds of producible things, the exemplar forms, the active potency that animates all things.⁵

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¹ De Immenso, I.ii. p.158.  
Cf. De Minimo, p.136.

² A Discourse, pp.197; 200.

³ De Immenso, I.i. p.243.  
Cf. Copernicus, De Revolutionibus (Nuremberg, 1543), p.7: "appetentiam quandam naturalen".

⁴ I.ii. p.310.

⁵ ibid., I.ii. p.213.
These ideas are taken further in De Minimo where there is an identification of minima with God.

It seems to me that sometimes More is closer in thought to Bruno and Hill than to the pious metaphors of Plotinus and the Midrash or the Talmud. A pious belief in divine immanence is not to be confused with divine extension, and More makes his meaning quite clear a few years later, in 1648, in his first letter to Descartes:

Now the reason which makes me believe that God is extended in this fashion, is that he is omnipresent, and fills intimately the whole universe and each of its parts, for how could he communicate motion to matter as he has done betimes, and as he is actually doing according to you, if he did not have immediate contact with matter.

Indeed still later in Conjectura Cabbalistica, More is prepared to admit, as Bruno admitted in De La Causa that Plotinus strips matter more naked than it really ought to be:

And in chapter the thirteenth, he declares that if Matter would keep herself what she is ... she must necessarily be un receptive of all Entityes: Nay, if there be but the least shadow of them, she must not share therein, that she may conserve to herself her own property. But the Philosopher is so severe in such expressions, that he seems to strip Matter more naked than she really ought to be. But he is more moderate in others, where he will permit her to be the Possibility of the outward and sensible World, and only argues her to be no Entity, because she is only this Possibility ... the Essence of Matter excludes real existence, and consists only in Capacity or Possibility of Being.
One shining model for the antidote to Plotinus was Bruno, but More could again get at his ideas indirectly through Hill and possibly others. It was Bruno who had, according to A.O. Lovejoy, corrected Platonism ... by merging the conception of matter in that of God.¹

More sought to make God central to matter, "working from within", perhaps in reaction to Descartes who would make God an absentee landlord. More argues:

And now Gods work it phancie doth disterminate
Too farre from his own reach: But he withall
More inward is, and farre more intimate
Then things are with themselves. His Ideall
And Centrall presence is in every Atom-Ball.²

As C.C. Brown writes:

Each "atom ball" of Democritean matter goes beyond the descriptive possibilities of More's light (sun-rays) analogy — each atom-ball had in itself as it were a central sun, not merely derived from the Sun of all but actually possessing a central life of its own.³

This concept is further developed in Democritus Platonissans:

So do these Atomes change their energies
Themselves unchanged into new Centreities ...
But from their inmost Centre they project
Their vitall rayes, not merely passive be,
But by occasion wak'd rouse up themselves on high

So that they're life, sprite, not matter pure,
For matter pure is a pure nullitie.⁴

¹ "The Dialectic of Bruno and Spinoza", University of California Publications (1904), I. p.152.
² Psychozoias, p.19. st.10.
³ The Early Works of Henry More, p.98.
⁴ pp.194-195. st.14-16.
This is the sort of approach towards a fusion of matter and spirit that will later be adopted by Cudworth, F.M. Van Helmont and Lady Anne Conway, a fusion that is attempted in many of Bruno's works and Hill's Philosophia Epicurea. Thus in Spaccio Bruno contended that although the transcendent God has nothing to do with humanity or the world of existents, he nevertheless contributes to the effects of nature

and is more intimate to those than nature itself.¹

More's mention in Psychozoia of a "boundless universe",² however, though it anticipates his future interest in an infinite universe, seems no more than a pious antiphon at this juncture. It does not go against Plotinus's denial of "endless extension".³ Infinity is linked merely with intellectual possibility and specifically related to the spiritual world and not the physical as in Bruno, or Hill.⁴

More important, there exists in Psychozoia a basic ambiguity relating to spirit and matter that, perhaps against More's wishes, drew him gradually to accept the strong claims for matter as an essential complement to spirit.

¹ II. p.228.
² Psychozoia, p.38. st.91.
³ Enneads, p.109.
⁴ Psychozoia, p.23. st. 24.
Psychozanasia, the most comprehensive of More's philosophical poems, was written during 1641. Its eleven lengthy cantos are mainly concerned with defending the immortality of the soul.\(^1\)

Despite the "spots" he had found in Platonism, More still owes allegiance to Plotinus\(^2\) because his doctrine is "nearest allyd to Christianity".\(^3\) He focusses part of his attack on the materialistic atomism of Democritus and Lucretius reappearing in seventeenth-century guise in Scotland, Ireland and England:\(^4\)

\begin{quote}
Such is thy putid muse, Lucretius,
That fain would teach that souls all mortall be;
The dusty atoms of Democritus
Certes have fall'n into thy feeble eye,
And thee bereft of perspicacity.\(^5\)
\end{quote}

Psychozoia generally preached a radical detachment of soul and body, man must move from a state of "partition" towards the One as in Plotinus.\(^6\) The first canto of Psychozanasia is still preoccupied with the theme of purgation, but as the poem evolves there occurs an important shift in emphasis. Psychozanasia gradually adopts a dual attitude to matter. Plotinus's "seek no further"\(^7\) is modified. Only philosophers bent on mischief, says More, refuse to see the power of God reflected therein:

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\(^1\) Opera Omnia, p.viii: "ut eo pecto eorum temporum aliquo modo lenire possem aerumnas ac miserias, contra quas nullus est certa Animae Immortalitatis persuasione praesentius Remedium."

\(^2\) Psychozanasia, p.77. st.18.

\(^3\) ibid., p.78. st.20.

\(^4\) Opera Omnia, p.viii.

\(^5\) Psychozanasia, p.74. st.6.

\(^6\) Enneads, p.532.

\(^7\) Enneads, p.541.
They have extinguish'd natures awful light
By evil custom, and unkind abuse
Of Gods young tender work.

In so far as more importance is given to matter, the move
suggests a drawing away from a Plotinian bias towards a more
materialistic basis, in the sense put forward by Bruno, Hill
and Basso. Both Plotinus and Bruno would rise from multiplicity
to unity, from the many to the One. There exists, however, an
essential difference. Towards the One of Plotinus an approach
is made from "partition" by the soul's gradual shedding off of
matter as in Euporia and Psychozoia. All things owe their being
to the One who is the fount of all. Because, however, the One
is beyond all attributes, nothing can be referred back to him.
This is the via negativa that Mnemon and Simon adopted. It is
the denial essentially symbolized by the gradual wasting of
Simon's parents, Autoparnes and Hypomone.²

Bruno's ascent to the One is achieved in a distinctly different
manner. It is not through denial but through "involvement" of the
many that unity can be reached:

montando noi alla perfetta cognizione, andiamo complicando
la moltitudine; come descendendosi alla produzione delle
cose, si va explicando la unità.³

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1 Psychatlanasia, p.75, st.7.
2 Psychozoia, pp.65-66, st.50-52.
3 De La Causa, I. p.287.
    Cabala del Cavallo 'egaseo, II. p.270.
In Psychatanasia, although More still maintains that spirit is completely independent,⁴ "the soul from death and sickness standeth free",⁵ he is not completely unaware as to the claims of matter. Matter is, however, distinguished from Nature. It is still described as almost non-existent⁶ and certainly neither "the root substantiall of nimble life"⁷ nor the "needful prop to hold up life".⁸ Where, however, before "Proteus, Vertumnus, changeableness"⁹ and Idothea "the fleet passage of fading forms"¹⁰ were used as alternative names of hyle or the Platonic Ananke,¹¹ we now find that "fading forms Quantitative" are slightly above hyle. Also whereas before the degrees were seven — the Triad and Psyche's four vests — now Hyle has been added at the foot of the scale so that we have the full Ogdoad:

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¹ p.132. st.7.

² ibid., p.131. st.6.


⁴ Cf. Enneads, p.122: "So that Matter, as the Actualization of Non-Being, is all the more decidedly Non-Being, is Authentic Non-Existence".

⁵ ibid., p.103. st.1.


⁷ The Philosophical Poems, p.431.

⁸ ibid., p.429.

The first we name Nature Monadical,
The second right; Life Intellectual,
Third Psychical; the fourth Imaginative,
Fifth Sensitive, the sixth Spermatical,
The seventh be fading forms Quantitative,
The eight Hyle or Ananke perverse, coactive.

But the emergence of life must be assigned to spiritual causes
and the concept of matter be seen to be attacked. More was
now convinced it is no proper defence of religion to refuse to
speculate about matter and atomism. The possibility of our
resolving into monad is symbolized by More's vision of the
vanishing rainbow. Assailed by doubt, More enters Dante's
selva oscura:

Near a black pitchy wood, that strongest throw
Of starry beam no'te easily penetrate.

An angel, interpreting More's vision, assures him that
matter can lead one up the scala to the One. There is now
no questioning the reality of matter and More's acceptance of a
principle shared by "Cartesianism" is immediately evident:

The naked essence of the body's this
Matter extent in three dimensions
(Hardness or softness be but qualities)

---

1 ibid., p.100. st.32. Cf. De Umbris Idearum, II.i. p.49:
"So that under the lowest rung of the ladder is infinite
number or matter — Unde sub infimo gradu schalae naturae
est infinitus numeros, seu materia."

2 ibid., p.105. st.8.

3 Psychatenasia, p.99. st.100.

4 ibid., p.97. st.10.

5 ibid., p.114. st.12. Cf. Rene Descartes, Principiae Philosophiae,
Oeuvres. ed. C. Adam and P. Tannery (Paris, 1897-1913), III. p.123:
"The nature of matter ... does not consist in hardness, or gravity
or colour or that which is sensible in any other manner, but
consists only in length, breadth and depth."
and again:

Who questions but there is a quantitie
Of solid bodies?

This is very near to Sextus Empiricus's Outlines of Pyrrhonism, and it is to Sextus that More's Notes refer, for his interpretation of Body. But whereas Sextus stresses the importance of solidity or resistance, together with trinal dimension, More sticks closer to the "Cartesian" formula. In Book 3, Chapter 7 (Henry More mistakenly refers to Book III.v.) Sextus Empiricus writes:

But some define body as what has three dimensions combined with resistance or solidity \( \alpha \nu \tau \iota \tau \iota \mu \kappa \alpha \nu \). ... Now apart from length and breadth and depth and solidity the Body would be nothing; but if these things are the Body, anyone who shall prove that they are unreal will likewise abolish the Body; for wholes are abolished along with the sum of their parts.

Sextus then goes on to say that "it is impossible to be positive" about the existence of "Body or Incorporeals" so that there needs to be a suspension of judgement because "the doctrine of Principles is open to doubt." In his Discourse on Method, Descartes used methodical doubt but he refers disparagingly to Sceptics and Pyrrhonists. A few pages later, Descartes defines Body, and it is significant that he misses solidity, hauiness or resistance:

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1 Psychagnasia, p.93. st.53.
2 The Philosophical Poems, pp.382; 423.
4 ibid., pp.362-363.
5 ibid., pp.364-365.
6 1637.
A continuous body, or a space indefinitely extended in length, breadth and height or depth ... for I even expressly supposed that it possessed none of those forms or qualities which are so debated in the schools.  

In his *Metaphysical Meditations*, Descartes also insisted on that quantity "commonly called continuous, or the extension in length, breadth and depth that is in this quantity", describing solidity or hardness as mere quality. The same kinds of arguments are used in his *Principia* which More could not, of course have used in *Psychatanasia*.

More takes the "Cartesian" view as expressed in *Discours* and *Meditations*, but refers in his 1647 Notes to the Ancients as reported by Sextus Empiricus. Henry More notes that the "ancient Philosophers [were] near to this", but like Descartes, More in both poem and Notes rejects solidity or resistance as pertaining to quantity:

*Matter extent in three dimensions. But for that *

**buttens** [solidity] simple trinall distension doth not imply it, wherefore I declined it.**

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1 ibid., pp.29-34.

2 1641.

3 ibid., p.121.

4 ibid., pp.129,135.

5 1644.

6 ibid., p.200.

7 *The Philosophical Poems*, p.423.
It is significant to note, however, that when years later in the prose treatises More sought to accord extension to spirit, he found it necessary to accord "solidity" to matter or Body. Thus in The Immortality of the Soul, More argued that

It is not the Characteristicall of a Body to have Dimensions, but to be impenetrable. All Substance has Dimensions, that is Length, Breadth and Depth; but all has not Impenetrability. See my Letters to Monsieur Descartes, besides what I have intimated in this Treatise ... I have already intimated it being not Trinall Dimension, but Impenetrability that constitutes a Body.

As opposed to Descartes, More states that atoms exist and are only finitely divisible, and already there is an attempt to start interpreting atomism or corpuscularianism for teleological purposes as Descartes would never dream of doing. Linked with life, matter assumes, as in Bruno and Hill, a nobility of its own.

All life's immortal; though the outward trunk may changed be.

Descartes, in Discours and Meditations, had given paramount importance to extension. More suggests it is false to claim that "If not extended, then that quantum's nought". Lack of corporeity need not mean non-existence and in

1 A Collection of Several Philosophical Works, 2nd edn. (1662), pp.41-42.
2 Psychajnasia, p.94, st.56.
3 ibid., p.99, st.17.
4 ibid., p.94, st.56.
5 ibid., p.111, st.1.
discussing whether "stretchen corporeity longs to the soul". 

More concludes, as he had done earlier, that the soul is a self-moving substance that exists "not by extension, but by a totall self-reduplication", proving "Some Vertue is not Extentionall". Plotinus had written:

"Extension is of Body; what is not of Body, but of the opposed order must be kept free of extension." 

Henry More's allegiance to Plotinus is very evident at the start of Psychatanasia, when he draws severall comparisons as to how the soul acquires its knowledge. The images are mostly borrowed from the Enneads. Thus the soul is first compared to the legendary fish, lucerna, then a "lamp arm'd with pellucid horn" and finally to the moon in its several phases.

1 ibid., p.115. st.15.
2 ibid., p.86. st.25.
3 ibid., p.119. st.33.
4 Psychatanasia, p.119. st.33.
5 The Enneads, p.525.
6 ibid., I.iv.8; V.vi.4.
The Philosophical Poems, p.375.
   Cf. Lee Haring, p.16. n.8.: "More credited the lamp-metaphor to Plotinus in one of his notes, but I have been unable to find it in the Ennead to which he referred." This metaphor can in fact be found in The Enneads, I.iv.8. trans. S. McKenna, p.47.
   to which More referred.
7 Psychatanasia, p.81. st.4.
8 ibid., p.81. st.5.
As the moon receding from view, "that deeper wades in the earth's duskish Cone", 1 gets closer to the Sun, so the soul withdrawing from humanity reaches nearer to God in its contemplation. 2

When More starts the discussion on "first matter" 3 proper his alignment away from Plotinian thought is on the way. Bruno and Hill had adopted Atomism, but with a very important difference. It can be pointed out that atomists were mechanical, not teleological, philosophers. 4 Bruno and Hill postulated empty space and atoms as do Leukippus, Democritus and Lucretius but their atomism differs considerably from the Greek materialistic philosophy which considered life as the product of chance union of atoms. The minimum of Bruno and Hill is a "primordial force", 5 not merely an infinitely small corpuscle but also body and soul, material substance and centre of energy, which is why Bruno calls it monad, 6 an emanation from the monas monadum who is God. Bruno and

1 ibid., p.81. st.6.
2 ibid., p.82. st.7.
3 Psychatnanasia, p.103. st. 2. Cf. De La Causa, II. pp.252-253.
6 F. Olgiati, L'Anima dell'Umanesimo e del Rinascimento (Milan, 1924), p.672.
Hill as opposed to Bacon and Descartes, were both Atomists and teleological philosophers. Even in De Monade, where his atomism is most rigid, Bruno's favourite image is that of the organic embryo that gradually and necessarily develops according to a preconceived plan in a Nature that works for ends. This image is also frequent in Cardanus.¹

More adopts the same "Pythagorean" terminology.² He is now prepared to believe matter cannot be destroyed. Like Bruno, Hill and Cardanus,³ More suggests only fools accept neant. In a world of flux, death means no more than change.

Bruno had insisted:

Anima sapiens non timet mortem ... Manet ergo substantiam omnem pro duratique aeternitas, pro loco immensus, pro actu uniformitas.⁴

Henry More links atomism with the type of animism that is found in Bruno and Hill's Philosophia Epicurea. Death is read as a return to the centre. In De Monade, Bruno stressed that all phenomena are produced by the "internal energy" of atoms.

All motion whether it be the movement of stars and planets, the strokes of a swimmer, birds' flight issued from an intrinsic source, and life itself radiated from an infinite number of centres and not one unique centre.⁵ To assign to the source

¹ De Subtilitate (Nuremberg, 1550), p. 4: "Ad formam igitur comparata, materia ponentia est, in seipsa vero actu. Quemadmodum foetus cum nonum perfectus est, infans ponentia est, sed qualis foetus actu est."

² The Philosophical Poems, p. 430: "Monad, Monas, is Unitas, the principle of all numbers, an embleme of the Deity".

³ De Subtilitate, p. 3.


⁵ I.ii.p.339.
of motion a fixed place that would be the centre of the universe would preserve the Aristotelian cosmology. Death of any thing is then, according to Bruno, a return to its individual centre. This is also evident in De Minimo and Hill:

Nativitas est expansio centri, vita consistentia sphaeras, mors contractio in centrum.

In Bruno and Hill this "contraction into the centre" is a "very solid argument in favour of our immortality". Having established the indestructibility of atoms, Bruno moves easily to the immortality of the soul: "As in the circle, expansion derives from the centre, the creative spirit spiritus architectus after having assembled atoms from all sides ... governs them throughout the years till life ceases. Then they go back to the centre and from there, renewed, they are again dispersed into new entities, but we usually say that it is death because we move towards an unknown light Ignotam in lucem quia pergimus."

In Henry More's Psychatanasia, which seeks to defend the immortality of man's soul,

Though things be lost
And strangely chang'd, yet nought at all is lost
Unlesse he list. Nor then so lost but he
Can then return. In everything compost
East part of th'essence its centraity
Keeps to itself; it shrinks not to a nullity.

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1 De Minimo, p. 13.
See, Above, p. 175.

2 ibid.

3 ibid., p. 12.
When that compounded nature is dissolv'd,
Each centre's safe, as safe as second light
Or drove into the Sun, or thence out rol'd.
So all depend on th'Universall spright.1

In his definition of Body, More speaks of

an infinite number of vitall Atoms ... the last
projections of life from the soul of the world,
and are act or form though debil and indifferent;
like that which they call the first matter. But
they are not merely passive, but meet their
information halfway, as I may so speak: are
radiant ab intimo, and awake into this or the
other operation, by the powerful appulse of
some superadvenient form. That which change
of phantasmes is to the soul, that is alteration
of rayes to them. For their rayes are ab intrinseco,
as the phantasmes of the soul. These be the reall
matter of which all supposed bodies are compounded,
and this matter (as I said) is form and life, so that
all is life and form whatever is in the world, as
I have somewhere indicated in Antipsychopan.2

Because all composed things are intimately linked with "natura
universalis"; matter is not "prope nihil" but "possibilitas,
capacitas, receptio, formabilitas" and intimately linked to
life.3 In De La Causa, this is symbolized by the "pregnant woman
who yet lacks her offspring though it is ready to break out".4

2 The Philosophical Poems, pp.423-424.
3 De Immenso, I.i. p.204.
4 De La Causa, I. p.274.
It is the same in *De Monade*, where life is seen as a seed of infinite potentiality and actuality, producing all things, containing all things. In More

Life's full pregnancy
Breaks out when friendly sympathy doth smite.
The higher rank the higher energie
From natures lowly lap to God's sublimity.  

In More, as in Bruno and Hill, such sympathy is associated with homogeneity of substance. More's atomism approximates Bruno's and Hill's in being essentially animistic. Cudworth had immediately realized Cartesian physics contained "an undiscernd tang of the Mechanick Atheism" and urged More to "controvers" with Descartes. More and Cudworth were more favourably inclined towards "cosmo-plastick or Hylozoick" theories, where each unit was "not altogether dead and inanimat". More's World-Soul, unlike the Platonic which exerts its influence from without, is inextricably linked to matter:

1 *Psychathanasia*, p.144. str.21.
Cf. Sigillus Sigillorum, II.ii. p.179: "Una vita vivificat omnia."


4 The True Intellectual System, p.146.

5 ibid.

... there is one Mundane spright
And body, vitall corporality
We have from hence. Our souls be co-unite
With the worlds spright and body, with these herself has sight.

Our body struck by evolution
Of outward forms spread in the worlds vast spright,
Our listening mind by its adversion
Both notice take, but nothing is espight
In it. Of old Gods hand did all forms write
In humane souls, which waken at the knock
Of Mundane shapes. 1

Indeed the soul can "exercise functions of life" only after it
has "wrought herself into sure sympathies with this great world", 2
and, as in Bruno and Donne, More makes an anatomical approximation
of man to the world. 3 Hill had written that

Homo est ultimum genitalis terrae efflorescentis, 4
& omnen possiblem combinationem molientis germen.
reading man as the last and most perfect production of the
generative action of earth. More accepts this but stresses
man's link to the divine source:

But we may man be call'd the epitome
Of all things. Therefore no low life him made.
Therefore man's soul from Gods own life outray'd,
His outgone Centre's on than centre staid. 5

1 Psychathanasia, p.150. st.44-45.

2 ibid., p.134. st.17.
et spiritum habere quandam continuitatem cum spiritu universi."

3 ibid., p.135. st.19-20.
Cf. De Immenso, I.ii. pp.157-158.

4 Philosophia Epicurea, p.9.

5 Psychathanasia, p.144. st.22.
But man's soul though individually important, is linked to the great world and events may affect it. In De Minimo and De La Causa, Bruno compares the soul to a spider weaving its web, so that birth is seen as

an expansion of the centre ... death a contraction into the centre.  

Like Davies in Noce Teipsum, More adopts this image:

Like spider in her web, so do we sit Within this spirit, and if ought do shake, This subtle loom we feel as it doth hit.

More says that our soul "hangs twixt" the spiritual world of eternal ideas and the "Out-world", and asks how our soul can ever reach the truth about physical reality:

Flies she to sense? Sense pleads for Ptolemea ... Philolaus and wise Heraclide Be frantick both, Copernicus twice mad.

It is here that Henry More adopts Bruno's or Hill's method of using (Kepler would say "abusing") Copernican theory to shore his metaphysical speculations. In De La Cena and passim in his other works Bruno is fond of tracing current theories to a revered Greek origin, roping in Philolaus and Heraclitus to

2 Psychatmanasia, p.152. st.54.
3 ibid., p.153. st.58.
4 ibid., p.154. st.60.
disprove the stability of the earth;\(^1\) More does the same:

Though contraire unto sense, though it be new
But sooth to sayen th'earth's motion is of tri'd
Antiquitie, as I above did chew:
In Philolaus and in Heraclide
Those subtile thoughts of old did close reside
Yet reason ought to bear away the bell.\(^2\)

The place of reason as a means to knowledge in religion with which
Psychozoia was primarily concerned and the place of rational inquiry
in "natural philosophy" of course involve different issues. More
now frequently points out the importance of reason, in discussing the
Out-world,\(^3\) which becomes so important that in defending the immortality
of the soul he is drawn into an "exile discourse"\(^4\) that seeks
also to defend heliocentricity. One main source for his
cantos on Copernican astronomy was Galileo. More's reference
to a diagram "as it is described in Galileo, pag.242"\(^5\) is
evidence that More used the Latin translation, *Systema Cosmicum*,
printed in Lyons in 1641.\(^6\) He mentions the lunar mountains
discovered by Galileo\(^7\) as well as the four satellites that
circle the planet Jupiter,\(^8\) and generally shows he must have

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\(^1\) De La Cena, I. p.154: "Ma certamente al Nolano poco si aggiunse, che il Copernico, Filolau, Eraclide di Ponto ...
ben che timida et incostantemente, per che l'aves più per fede, che per scienza."

\(^2\) Psychathanasia, p.156. st.6.

\(^3\) ibid., p.176. st.10.

\(^4\) ibid., p.176. st.9.

\(^5\) The Philosophical Poems, p.390.

\(^6\) Lee Haring, p.37.

\(^7\) Psychathanasia, p.170. st.62.

\(^8\) ibid., p.171. st.65.
had *Systema Cosmicum* at hand while writing the third book of *Psychathanaea*.

In some ways, however, More seems close in temper to Bruno and Hill. Kepler had accused Bruno of misusing Copernican theory for metaphysical purposes. More adopted Bruno's and Hill's example. As he read Galileo he would have felt, as Kepler had done, that many of Galileo's ideas were anticipated by Bruno. The work of Burton and Wilkins would have convinced him that Bruno's and Hill's "fancies" were now being confirmed by Galileo. In More the sun is given the importance that it has in Bruno, standing as a symbol for the Deity, central in the same way that God is central to all creation in *De Immense*:

Centrum igitur spaci immensi statuetur ubique, Undique enim et quaque est versus dimensione tanta,
where God also becomes the centre around which there congregates a dynamic universe:

Deus est monadum monas, nempe entium entitas —
God is the monad of monads, namely essence of essentiae.


2 See, *De Minimo*, I.iii. p.143. 
  Cf. *Psychathanaea*, p.173. st.73: 
  "And curious men will judge t' a vagrancy
  To start thus from my scope. My pitched end 
  Was for to prove the immortality
  Of humane souls".

3 John Wilkins, p.85.

4 *De Immense*, I.i. p.218.

  "Simpliciter tandem monadum monas una reperta est 
  Quae multum et magnum completit in ista
  Integranda means, dansque entibus esse, Deusque est 
  Extans totum."
More's description owes much to traditional Platonic iconography, and indeed to Aristotle's "unmoved mover." but also has some affinity to Bruno:

One steddy Good, centre of essencies
Unmoved Monad, that Apollo hight,
The intellectual sunne whose energies
Are all things that appear in vitall light,
Whose brightnesse passeth every creatures sight,
Yet round about him stir'd with gentle fire
All things do dance; their being, action, might,
They thither do direct with strong desire
To embosome him with close embracements they aspire.

Unseen, incomprehensible He moves
About himself each seeking entity
That never yet shall find that which it loves.

Here indeed we see More adopting neo-Platonic iconography, but that "Apollo hight" may be particularly revealing. The Sun-Apollo-God identification is characteristically Bruno's.

In Dissertatio Cum Nuntio Sidereo, Kepler says as much:

At the centre the sun rotates, instigator of all the motions, truly an Apollo, the term frequently used by Bruno.

Bruno uses this emblem repeatedly in De Immenso and the Italian dialogues. Thus in Spaccio and Broici he repeatedly refers to this "sun, Apollo" into which all things are reduced as

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Cf. Summa Terminorum Metaphysicorum, I.iv. p.73: "Deus ergo est substantia universalis in essendo, qua omnia sunt, essentia omnis essentiae fons."

3 ibid., p.158. st.12-13.

4 Opere di Galileo Galilei, ed. A. Favaro, (Florence, 1929-39) III. p.120.

5 De Immenso, I.i. pp.216; 260; 262; I.ii. p.49.
to one source, just as all light is reduced to the first and self-illuminated source.¹

Bruno had also asserted that the search for unity with the godhead is not only incomprehensible, but also inaccessible and unattainable:

Questa verità è cercata come cosa inaccessibile, come oggetto inobiettabile, non sol che incomprehensibile. Pero a nessun pare possibile di vedere il sole, l'universale Apolline, e luce assoluta per specie suprema et eccellentissima.²

Henry More contends that

No finite thing shall reach infinity ... Still falling short they never fail to seek, Nor find they nothing by their diligence ... So doth the Earth one of the erring Seven Wheel round the fixed Sunne, that is the shade Of steddy Good, shining in this Out-heaven With the rest of those stars that God hath made Of baser matter.³

Then he refers to the possibility that the sun may rotate on its own axis:


Therefore full safely he may steddy stond,
Unmov'd, at least not mov'd out of place.
I'll not deny but that he may turn round
On his own centre. So the steps we'll trace
Of Essence, Plato's On, which steddy stayes
And moves at once, that same Lao hight
In that old Clarian oracle, that says
It is the Sunne.  

Obviously there are here references to Plato, Fuller and
esoteric sources. The coincidence of rest and motion in the
infinite can be found in Nicholas of Cusa, and it is further
developed by Bruno and Hill, but it is fair to point out that
Bruno seems to have been the first Copernican to maintain that
the sun rotated on its own axis.  

In De Minimo, Bruno also
developed the thesis that absolute motion and absolute rest
are identical:

Ergo quies motusque simus sunt maxime in illo
Uno, quod minime motum, quod maxime idemque est
A fine ad finem gradiens; immobile prorsus
Et simus in cunctis totum manet et super ipsa.  

That is why Divine Wisdom, says Bruno, can be found in all
things, and can be called the most mobile as well as the most
immobile. This had been adopted by Nicholas Hill:

In infinito ... in moto simpliciter velocissime
supra finitam magnitudinem motus, & quius, in  
circulo extensissimo corda & recta coincidunt.

1 ibid., p.160, st.19.

2 De Immenso I.ii. p.45: "Certum est Solis machinam ita circa
proprium centrum converti.
See H. Brunhoffer, Giordano Bruno Weltanschaung und

3 p.17.

4 Philosophia Epicurea, p.7.
More had already maintained in connection with *Psychatianasia* that if quantity consisted of indivisibles or atoms

That the Chord of a segment of a Circle, is equall to the Ark, &c.\(^1\)

Now he puts forward the idea that "Plato's On" has some kind of instantaneous rotation, "steddy stayes and moves at once," and relates it to heliocentricity. The idea of the sun turning on its own axis had been borrowed by Galileo\(^3\), and had become almost traditional by More's time. Indeed some of the ideas discussed with learning and authority in Galileo had earlier been used to shore up Bruno's metaphysical conclusions, although it has become fashionable to minimize Bruno's contribution to the history of thought mainly due to "the coming of the mathematical method as the decisive factor distinguishing new from old."\(^4\) More's debt to Galileo is sometimes acknowledged, especially in the Notes to the 1647 edition of *The Philosophical Poems*. Many of the ideas about *virtù impressa*\(^5\) and those regarding the earth's

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motion were by then an integral part of the scientific and 
philosophic controversies of the time.

Such an idea, as well as the "double movement" of clouds,^1
the apparent gravity of the Earth,^2 and the "foul botches of 
false feigned Orbs" of Tycho Brahe^3 had been discussed and 
answered by Bruno and Hill in a manner similar to Galileo,
Wilkins and Henry More. More here seems to be relying more 
heavily on Systema Cosmicum. His experiment with the pendulum,4
as well as his indirect praise of Gilbert^5 seem to have had 
their inspiration directly from Galileo.

Where, however, More diverges from Galileo, he seems to 
agree with Bruno and Hill. In the poem, he refuses to allow 
the moon tidal influence on Earth, and indeed, five years later 
in the Notes, devotes ten pages of prose to disprove Galileo.6

2 ibid., p.164. st.36.
3 ibid., p.166. st.44.
4 ibid., p.165. st.40.
   Cf. Galileo Galilei, Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World 
   Systems, trans. Stillman Drake (Berkeley and Los Angeles),
5 Psychatanasia, p.162. st.28.
6 The Philosophical Poems, pp.391-400.
   Cf. Enchiridion Metaphysicum (1671), pp.183-190.
More refers to *Principiae Philosophiae*, published two years after *Psychathanasia*, and contends that "the Flux and Reflux of the sea depends on the motion of the earth". Extrinsic motion was repellent to him. Earlier than either Descartes or More, Bruno and Hill had put forward similar views:

> Da questo considerar, che nulla cosa si muove localmente da principio estrinseco senza contatto più vigoroso della resistenza del mobile, depende il considerare quanto sii sollienre goffaria e cosa impossibile a persuadere ad un regolato sentimento, che la luna muove l'acqui del mare, caggionando il flusso in quello, fa crescere gli umori, feconda i pesci, empie l'ostreche e produce altri effetti.

More was indeed as resolute an anti-mechanist as Bruno and Hill and his animism is evident throughout. All movement occurs naturally and intrinsically, not vidently or extrinsically. In this he agrees with Bruno, Hill and Wilkins. There are, however, particular dangers in accepting anyone readily as the exclusive source or matrix. Thus Bruno had asserted that if a large slice of Earth or Moon could be dislodged from the mass, it would naturally and "sympathetically" revert to its source.

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1 ibid., p.391. In *Harmonices Mundi*, Kepler had also described the Earth as a living animal whose breathing produces the tides. See *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Walther von Dyck and Max Caspar (Munich, 1937), VI. p.270., but he had linked this to the pull of the moon. As Kepler's cosmology developed, he abandoned the concept of planetary souls. See Max Jammer, *Concepts of Force* (Cambridge, Mass., 1957), p.90.


4 De L'Infinito, II. p.95.
This is repeated in *De Immenso*:

Ergo et tellurem spacium complectitur istud
Integre, membrisque venit formabile ab istis,
Ut nequeat simul ad spacium spectare alienum, ...
Telluris medium dico in Tellure deorsum,
Et medium Lunae Lunaribus aio deorsum.¹

and this is apparently repeated by Henry More:

Where there a shiver out from off the Moon
And cast quite off from that round entire masse
Would't fall into our mouths? No, it would soon
Make back to th' centre from whence forc'd it was:
The same in Mars and Sol would come to passe,
And all the stars that have their proper centres.
So gravity is nought but close to press
Unto one Magick point, there near to enter:
Each sympathetick part doth boldly it adventure. ²

But the very same example is given by Copernicus, and by Campanella.³ Campanella then refers this to infinity of worlds and tries to draw a distinction between Bruno's "insights" and Galileo's "sense" discoveries,⁴ arguing that even if the doctrine of a plurality of worlds can be condemned as false this need not concern Galileo since he only discovered the existence of more systems within our world with the "senses" and not the imagination as "Cusanus & Keplerus & Nolanus".⁵ In the next stanza More goes on to assert that "The Earth's not heavy found"⁶ as Bruno had done in *De La Causa, De L'Infinito*


² *Psychatamasia*, p.164. st.35.

³ *Apologia pro Galileo* (Frankfurt, 1622), Trans. L. Firpo, (Turin, 1968), pp.80;120.

⁴ ibid., p.121.

⁵ *Apologia pro Galileo*, pp.9-10.

⁶ *Psychatamasia*, p.164. st.36.
and De Immenseo: "Non gravis est igitur Tellus."\(^1\) But again this idea had also been adopted by Hill\(^2\) and Wilkins. Arguing, like Bruno and Hill, against the Aristotelian objection that the "gravitie and magnitude of this Earthy Globe, do make it altogether unfit for so swift a motion",\(^3\) Wilkins had stated that

Heavinesse can only be apply'd unto those bodies which are out of their proper places, or unto such parts as are severed from the whole to which they belong. And therefore the Globe of Earth, considered as a whole and in its proper place, cannot truly be called heavy.\(^4\)

Even as early as Psychatianasia, More's concept of space approximates Bruno's. It is a liquid pervious expanse through which planets and suns can roam like a flock of birds\(^5\) without meeting any resistance.\(^6\) In the same manner that Bruno repeatedly makes fun of having the stars "nailed with stoutest nails" in the sky,\(^7\) More asserts repeatedly that

\(\text{De Immenseo, I.i. p.262. Cf. ibid., I.i. p.228.} \)
\(\text{De La Causa, I. p.188. Cf. De L'Infinito, II. p.38.} \)
\(\text{Cf. Hill, Philosophia Epicurea, p.94.} \)
\(\text{A Discourse, p.154.} \)
\(\text{ibid.} \)
\(\text{De L'Infinito, II. pp.50-51. Cf. De Immenseo, I.i. p.369.} \)
\(\text{Cf. Psychatianasia, p.159. st.15; p.174. st.1.} \)
\(\text{Pschatianasia, p.167, st.48:} \)

"But now that all the heavens be liquid, hence I'll fetch an argument. Those higher stars They may as well in water hang suspense As do the planets. Venus orb debars Not Mars, nor enters he with knocks and Mars; The soft fine yielding Aether gives admission."

"Sphaerae per aetheream regionem ab anima propria moventur."
\(\text{De L'Infinito, II. p.49. Cf. ibid., II. pp.50; 69; 91-92.} \)
Thus for to stud the heavens with nails bright.¹

In De L'Infinito and De Immenso, More could have seen Bruno's attempt at translating the ideal geometric space into a concrete reality, an ethereal vastness liquid and corporeal² which could contain a plurality of worlds created by an infinitely good God. But he could have read Bruno's arguments in Hill, Kepler, Burton and Wilkins, in the last three cases having them referred back to Bruno and Hill, and in the case of Hill copying word for word from De Immenso and De Minimo. More takes up this concept warily and links it, as Bruno and Hill do, with God's omnipresence and goodness. In Bruno's De Immenso, God and Nature impose a "perpetual order"³ and there is communication between one planet and another, one sun and another because the void "interworld" space of the presocratics is filled with ether that offers no resistance. There is a healthy exchange of heat and cold, and this is not just a physical phenomenon but a biological one through which the planets and suns live and propagate life as well as themselves.⁴

¹ Psychatanasia, p.166. st.46.
Cf. ibid., p.167. st.49:
"That famous star nail'd down in Cassiopee,
How was it hammer'd in your solid sky?"

² De Immenso, I.i. p.231.


⁴ De Immenso, I.ii. p.179.
In Hill, "Mundus est perfectissima compages",¹ and the idea of degeneration or corruption in the heavens is ruled out. Heavenly bodies do not exhaust themselves but on the contrary are refreshed by mutually exchanged virtue:

Orbes non se exhauriunt, aut exinaniunt, sed mutuis viribus se refocillant, & confederati alterna idiomaturn communicatione seinvicem corroborant, & redintegrant fractas vires alter alterius.²

After championing strongly the hypothesis of a plurality of worlds, Hill argues that although relatively we have less quantity than the smallest ants in an infinite universe, we need not envy the "humaneness of the inhabitants of other worlds."³

Henry More reasons in much the same fashion. He also speaks of mutually exchanged virtue:

And you who boldly all Gods providence
Confine to this small ball, that Tellus hight,
And dream not of a mutuall influence,
And how that she may shine with beames bright
At a farre distance clad with Sol's lent light,
As Venus and the Moon."⁴

More attacks those who argue that if God created other habitable worlds He must love us less:

¹ Philosophia Epicurea, p.67.
² ibid., p.37.
³ ibid., p.111.
⁴ Psychatanasia, p.175. at.3.
But if the Earth doth thankfully reflect
Both light and influence to other starres,
As well as they to it, where's the defect?
That sweet subordination it mars;
Gods love to us then not so plain appears:
For then the starres be mutually made
One for another ...

Rare reason! why! then God would be too good.
What judgeth so but envie, and vain pride,
And base contract self-love? which that free floud
Of bounty hath so confidently tied
Unto it self alone. Large hearts deride
This pent hypocrisie. Is he good to me?
That grace I would not ere should be deny'd
Unto my fellow: My felicity
Is multiply'd, when others I like happy see. 1

Then More also notes that there is "communication" of a similar
type to Bruno's and Hill's:

But if the rolling starres with mutuall rayes
Serve one another; sweet fraternity
And humble love, with such like lore we'll raise,
While we do see Gods great benignity
Thus mutually reflected in the skie,
And these round-moving worlds communicate
One with another by spread sympathy:
This all things friendly will concatenate. 2

After this short significant diversion into the doctrine of
a plurality of worlds, More decides he has ventured out of
his depth:

But let more hardy wits that truth determinate.

It me behoves t'hold forward on my way; 3
Leaving this uncouth strange Philosophy. 3

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1 ibid., p.175. st.5-6.
2 ibid., p.176. st.7.
3 ibid., p.176. st.7-8.
He feared this could lead to an infinite unbounded universe. More's God "through all the world doth wend", and although here the "Infinite Good" is an attribute essentially spiritual, it harks back to the earlier pregnant suggestion that this Earth is not "Gods onely darling dear delight". God, says More, perhaps recalling Plato's *Timaeus*, is bountiful. Only envy, pride and "base contract self-love" would restrict his "free floud of bounty" to this world alone: "Large hearts deride this pent hypocrisie".

In Bruno and Hill, omnipotence and omnipresence are two sides of one coin, while liberty and necessity coincide, "Necessitas et libertas sunt unum". More is warier. Whereas in Bruno and Hill "infinite power is nothing except in respect of infinite possibilities," in More God's power can be, and is,

1 *Psychatanasia*, p.178. st.16.

2 *ibid.*, p.175. st.3.

3 29E. More later quotes this passage in *Democritus Platonissans*, p.187.

4 *Psychatanasia*, p.175. st6.

5 *ibid.*


7 De *Immenso*, I.i. p.243.

8 *ibid.*, I.i. p.243: "Potentia infinita non est, nisi sit possibile infinitum."
controlled. Only rash philosophers, says More, assert the contrary, suggesting an infinite God must create an infinite universe. Agreeing with Kepler’s strictures of Bruno, More says firmly it is a "horrid blasphemy" to suggest God’s actions "will have no set measure". More’s "antagonists", however, put some very pointed questions as to the possibility of a universe infinitely extended:

Whence wasn't, say they, that God the creature made
No sooner? Why did infinite delay
Precede his work? should God his goodnesse staid
So long a time? Why did he not display
From infinite years this out-created ray?
The mighty stars why not inhabited,
When God may souls proportion to their clay
As well as to this earth? Why not dispred
The world withouten bounds, endlessse uncompassed?

Like Kejzer, More replies that a finite universe created in time is consonant with God’s wisdom and goodness. There can be no other infinity but God’s, and he confidently asserts:

Nought’s infinite but tight eternity
Close thrust into itself: extension
That’s infinite implies a contradiction.

In the next chapter, we shall see how More changed his standpoint asserting, in the revised version of Psychatnasia itself,

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1 Psychatnasia, p. 178. st. 18.
2 ibid., p. 179. st. 21.
3 Max Caspar, Kepler, p. 335.
4 Psychatnasia, p. 179. st. 22.
5 ibid., p. 179. st. 19.
6 ibid., p. 181. st. 27.
7 ibid., p. 183. st. 35. Cf. Philosophia Epicurea, p. 36.
that a limited creation, a "God main'd in goodnesse" was an 
"inconsistencie". Also that "dated divinitie" was the "dream 
of a drie brain".  

Meanwhile, however, in Psychodia Platonica More had included 
Antipsychopannychia, a "confutation of the sleep of the Soul 
after death", and Antimonopsychia, "a confutation of the Unity 
of Souls". These are partly directed against Averroes, indeed 
aimed at rejecting some of the ideas aired in Psychatjanasia 
itself. How far he was in danger of being "misinterpreted" 
is realized by More himself at the start of Antimonopsychia:

Even so am I, that whylom must recover
The wished land, but now against my mind
Am driven fiercely back, and so new work to find.

These "confutations" show a conservative More, intent on retracting 
the very close connection, spiritual and material, between the 
human and the World-Soul which he had posited in Psychatjanasia; 
and to which More now seeks a "corrective" that would protect 
his theological orthodoxy from such a basically heretic bias as 
Averroes' and Bruno's unity of souls:

It is evident that each individual spirit or soul has a 
certain continuity with the spirit of the universe.

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1 ibid., p. 185, st. 42.
3 ibid., sig. Y2.
4 Antimonopsychia, p. 285, st. 1.
5 Psychatjanasia, p. 134, st. 17.
6 De Magia, III. pp. 408-409.
Bruno's formula "a certain continuity" \[ \text{continuitas quaedam} \] is basically ambiguous, keeps his options open for the double hypothesis of either the One Universal Soul of the World which is non-divisible, or a Soul that can itself emanate into substantial individual and independent souls.

It is not my intention here to deal at length with the controversy as to whether Bruno's World Soul is an "all-devouring Unitie", with individual souls being mere transitory effects. Felice Tocoo asserts that in *Lampas Triginta Statuarum* Bruno boldly shows that the Soul of the Universe does not really divide into an infinite number of individual souls. The cause for multiplicity lies in matter, but there remains one real substantial soul:

As only one is the image when, if a mirror is shattered, it is reproduced completely in many fragments, flawed and confused in others, and hardly discernible in smaller parts.

More strongly rejects the argument through a differing interpretation of the same image:

Now comes the story of Praxiteles
Into my mind, when looking in a glasse
With surly countenance, it did much displease
That any should so sourly him outface;
Yet whom he saw his dogged face it was:
The he with angry fist struck his own shade.
Thus he the harmlesse mirror shattered has
To many shivers; the same shapes invade
Each piece, so numbers he of surly vizards made.

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1 *Lampas Triginta Statuarum*, III. p. 59.

2 I Frith, *The Life of Giordano Bruno, the Nolan* (1887), p. 374 reports that in the Lenin State Public Library (Norov Collection) the fly-leaf of *Lampas* contains a number of entries on the soul, headed "Anima non est accidens."

3 *Antimonopsychia*, p. 286. st. 4-5.
These shapes appeared from the division
Of the broke glasses: s so rashere phansies deem
That Rationall souls (whom they suppose but one)
By the divided matter many seem;
Bodies disjoid, broke glasses they esteem. 1

Henry More asserts his orthodoxy by demanding that after death
the individual soul is not re-united with any "Mundane life ...
sunk in deep drowsihead", 2 but is translated into a Christian
Heaven or Hell. 3 Man's individuality is asserted because each
human soul possesses a memory that is dependent neither on the
body nor on the World Soul. 4 In a Christian Heaven, however, the
soul has little inclination to remember "low trifles ... earthly
slime", 5 and foreknowledge of itself "is lost in light divine". 6
Henry More thus rejects some of the potentially dangerous elements
inherent in Psychathanasia, and claiming that "in the middle trod
I safely went", 7 asserts the separability and independence of
spirit from matter:

Then 'twas unto Elias to let flie
His uselesse mantle to that Hebrew Swain;
While he rode up to heaven in a bright fierie wain. 8

1 Antimonopsychoia, p.286. st.4-5.
2 ibid., p.233. st.17.
3 ibid., p.250. st.37.
4 Antimonopsychoia, p.293. st.33-34.
5 ibid., p.293. st.34.
6 ibid.
7 ibid. p.292. st.27.
8 ibid., p.295. st. 39. Cf. Hill, Philosophia Epicurea, p.29:
"Elias assumptus ade anthropophagus, & ignis aetneus tertiae
identatis exemplum est." Cf. J. Wilkins, A Discourse, p.87.
The Aesthetics of Infinity

In 1646, Henry More published a slim volume which included *Democritus Platonissans or the Infinitie of Worlds* and two shorter poems, *Cupid's Conflict* and *The Philosophers Devotion*. When in 1647, More published his collected edition of poetry under the general title *The Philosophical Poems*, *Democritus Platonissans* was wedged "here in its proper place" between *Psychat/hnasia* and *Antipsychopannychia* in the hope that "the overstrangenesse of the argument prove no hinderance".¹

It will be remembered that though *Psychat/hnasia* had grudgingly mentioned a plurality of inhabited worlds in a universe "endless uncompassed",² More had firmly asserted that "extension that's infinite implies a contradiction",³ and had reflected the growing feeling that the end of the world was at hand, and any "hope" for man lay in the heaven of orthodox Christian theology:

> Then this short night and ignorant dull ages Will quite be swallowed up in oblivion.

A Heraclitean "shining conflagration",⁵ will completely destroy all life as some kind of punishment for the sins of the world.⁶

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¹ *The Philosophical Poems*, sig. P5. Cf. J. Wilkins, *A Discovery*, p.21., argues that the "strangeness then of this opinion", plurality of worlds should not keep people from discussing it openly.

² *Psychat/hnasia*, p.181. st.27.

³ *ibid.*, p.183. st.35.

⁴ *ibid.*, p.183. st.37.

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ *ibid.*, p.184. st.38.
By 1646, however, a new optimism had crept into his poetry. In the four intervening years, More realized that arguments from Copernican theory which he had used to deny a universe infinite in extent, could be used for a contrary purpose. He is now prepared to have "new reasons weigh'd" against Psychatanasia's conclusions:

But now roused up by a new Philosophick furie, I answer that difficultie by taking away the Hypothesis of either the world or time being finite: defending the infinitude of both.²

This important switch is marked almost symbolically by More transferring the last lines of Psychatanasia to Democritus Platonissans itself:

Therefore my restlesse Muse at length forbear,³
Thy silver sounded Lute hang up in silence here.

In the preceding chapter, it was seen that More was not initially repelled by the concept of a "boundlesse" universe, although he did agree with Kepler that it was a "horrid blasphemy"⁴ to suggest God must necessarily create an infinite universe. In Psychozoia, More indulges in nothing more specific than the

1 Democritus Platonissans, p.191.
2 ibid., p.190.
3 ibid., p.218. st.107. 
traditional pious antiphon about God's greatness, and infinity, if at all present, is only "spiritual" and never physical. In Psychatanasia, though settling for the orthodox Christian universe of "set measure", More refused to admit that Earth is "God's onely darling dear delight".

The pregnant questions of his antagonists then, together with a clarification as to the kind of animistic atomism he was prepared to accept, may have helped More gradually to change his mind quite radically. It is also important to state that a plurality of worlds now seemed to be supported by Burton and Wilkins whose books popularized this concept, relating it to Bruno and Hill. It will not do to describe Henry More as some kind of philosophical weather-cock "immensely susceptible to ideas and uncritical of those he accepted". To do so would lead to the error of regarding Democritus Platonissans as divorced from the rest of his poetry and the prose treatises, with both of which it then could have no logical connection.

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1 Psychanopia, p.38. st.91.
2 Psychatanasia, p.179. st.19.
3 ibid., p.175. st.3.
6 See, Lee Haring, p.32.
   See, P.G. Stanwood, op.cit., p.ii.
Democritus Platoissaeus in fact grows naturally from the ideas, cosmological and philosophical, that More had discussed in *Psychathanasia* and leads just as naturally to the theories of Space and matter discussed in *Antidote Against Atheism, Conjectura Cabbalistica, The Immortality of the Soul, Divine Dialogues* and *Enchiridion Metaphysicum*.

In this connection, Bruno's works, available in both Italian and Latin, as well as Hill's *Philosophia Epicurea*, assume some importance. Bruno and Hill had already forged strong links between Animism and Atomism such that their monadology would have been attractive to a man of More's philosophic temper and aspirations. The close linking of matter and spirit, fed by the animistic and magic naturalism of Renaissance writers such as Paracelsus and J.B. Van Helmont, was becoming increasingly acceptable even in *Psychathanasia*. Serge Hutin argues that, at one point, More's own monadology seems to be little more than a transfiguration of Brunian theory;¹ it possibly also has strong links with the archeus or "vital principle" of J.B. van Helmont. The latter's monadology was later on in the century developed by F.M. Van Helmont whose monads harmonize to each other by the efflux of 

a "cosmic sympathy" induced by God who is visualized as the supreme monad.¹ More, however, never accepted the concept of God as a Monad among monads, but, accepting animistic atomism, he gradually championed a decentralized universe, unbounded, unmeasurable and actually infinite. It was, however, a slow process. "Orthodox" writers like Thomas White and Kenelm Digby rejected infinity on physical and theological grounds.² More had to safeguard theological orthodoxy before making a positive stand, and even then he was cautious enough to "cast in many correctives and coolers" which militated against strongly argued positions. His "To the Reader" to Democritus Platonissans is a classic example of how to say and unsay things at one and the same time:

And what a glorious Trophee shall the finite
world erect when it hath vanquished the
Infinite; a Pymee a Giant.³

Before 1646, Henry More realized that he had accepted his inherited belief in a finite closed universe too readily. In the three stanzas he added to Psychatianasia "for a more easie and naturall leading" to his new poems,⁴ More wrote that though his "triumphant Muse seemeth to vant as in got victorie",⁵ he had become reconciled to a possibly different truth.⁶ Linking

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² K. Digby, Of Bodies (1644), p.65.
⁴ Democritus Platonissans (1646), sig. A2v.
⁵ Psychatianasia, p.184. st.39.
⁶ ibid.
the universe with the concept of an eternally infinite Deity, More prepared the way for a fuller discussion in Democritus Platonionsans, the poem infused with a "new Philosophick furie" which first sings the "aesthetics of infinity" in England.¹

More than any other, this poem captures the tone and temper of Bruno's works. In propounding infinity, although "Mens judgements are left free", ² More realized he was going against accepted philosophical, physical and mathematical theories. Like Wilkins, he does not deny the "overstrangeness of the Argument".³ All contemporary philosophers and scientists of standing, whom More quotes approvingly elsewhere, were either flatly against, or non-committal about, infinity. They were also against a universe possessing any claim to eternity. The cautious Galileo was non-committal and though his Salviati suggests that neither Simplicio nor "anyone else has so far proved whether the universe is finite and has a shape, or whether it is infinite and unbounded", ⁴ he concedes finitude to keep within the bounds of theological orthodoxy.⁵ And Marin Mersenne, though voicing some doubt in a private letter to Jean Rey, ⁶ had publicly condemned Bruno's concept of

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² ibid., p.191.

³ ibid., p.189.


⁵ ibid., p.320.

infinity in his widely-read volumes, *L'Impiété des Désistes* athees et libertins de ce temps, combattue et renversée de
point ... Ensemble la refutation des Dialogues de Jordon Brun,
dans lesquelles il a voulu établir une infinité des mondes et
l'âme universelle de l'univers, Mersenne attacks particularly
Bruno's fifteen "contractions" in *Sigillus Sigillorum*. De La
Causa, De Minimo and *De Immenso* also come under heavy fire for
denying God the liberty of creating a finite universe.

Although Henry More seems to want to argue that "Des-Chartes,
though he seem to mince it, must hold infinitude of worlds", it is almost perverse to suggest that Descartes had in fact
fired More with any enthusiasm to sing an infinity of worlds,
which are also inhabited. More had been interested in infinity
since 1642, at least two years before the appearance in print of
*Principia Philosophiae*, where the concept is consciously played
down. Descartes, although apparently supporting "not only the
Copernican but also the Brunonian thesis" in fact, refuses to
discuss it:

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1 *L'Impiété des Désistes* (Paris, 1624), especially Vol. II.
chap. 6 ff. "C'est fort mal raisonné de conclure un effet
infiny d'une cause infinie, lorsque la cause ne s'agit pas
nécessairement, mais librement", II. pp.283-284.

2 *Democritus Platonissans*, p.189.

3 P.C. Stanwood, pp. ii-v.
Lee Haring, p.2.
3a. See Above, pp 370-372.

pp.122-123.
We will never hamper ourselves with disputes about the infinite, since it would be absurd that we who are finite should undertake to decide anything regarding it, and by this means in trying to comprehend it, so to speak regard it as finite.¹

Descartes classed infinity among Christian mysteries and was specifically against a plurality of worlds.² In letters sent to More himself, Descartes writes:

The reason I say that the world is indeterminately, or indefinitely, great is that I can discover no bounds in it; but I would not dare call it infinite, because I see that God is greater than the world.³

Earlier, in the same letter, Descartes had drawn a distinction between the extension of power and substance, arguing specifically against More's thesis: "God is positively infinite, that is, exists everywhere". He asserts it is an intellectual error to make God's infinity consist in His being everywhere.⁴ That, says Descartes:

is an opinion I cannot agree with. I think that God is everywhere in virtue of His power; but in virtue of His essence He has no relation to space at all.⁵

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² ibid., p.265.


⁴ ibid., Cf. Psychathanasia, p.178, st.16.

⁵ Epistolae Quatuor, p.250.
Realizing, however, that "in God essence and power are not distinct", Descartes pronounced the world "indefinite" although it "conflicts with my conception ... that the world should be finite or bounded".²

Although later in Enchiridion Metaphysicum (1671) More comes to agree with Descartes, he now claimed that a universe of finite dimensions would suffice for Cartesian physics:

ne indefinite quidem materia opus est tuae Philosophiae, certus finitusque stadiorum numerus suffecerit.³

More's infinitely powerful and good God demanded more abundance. Like the God of Bruno and Hill, God is an infinite agent that must act according to his infinite nature:

foecunditatem nempe divinam, cum nullibi sit otiosa, ubique locorum materiam productisse, nullis vel angustissimis praeternissio intervallis.⁴

This is similar to Bruno's De Immenso:

Nullum ociosum et avarum potest ad bonorum effectum se communicare et diffundere, et sine causa non se diffundens potest esse bonum.⁵

Descartes would have known that this argument approached dangerously near to the condemned heretic doctrines of Bruno, but he does not

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¹ ibid.

² ibid., p.251.

³ ibid., p.77.

⁴ ibid., Cf. Hill, Philosophia Epicurea, p.16: "Omne agens agit secundum modum suae naturae, infinitus ergo Deus si finita solummodo haec mole, virtute, & essentia produxerit, nullatenus se expressit."

⁵ i.i. p.238.
tell More so. Descartes seems to disregard Bruno completely and only makes one slight reference to him in a letter to Isaac Beckman.¹

Johann Kepler, whose books were found in Cudworth's library,² and were possibly in More's own because his Somnium provided a direct model for More's Insomnium Philosophicum,³ reproached Bruno for misusing Copernican astronomy, and shuddered at the concept of Bruno's infinity,⁴ which he says was alien to experience and rooted in an irreverently pantheistic interpretation of Nature. Why then should the devout Christian Platonist More accept Bruno's and Hill's view against Aquinas, Mersenne, Descartes, Galileo, and Kepler?

Nearer home, freer from the strangulating reach of the Church Inquisition, More had found men ready to espouse infinity.

¹ Anthony Kenny, op.cit., p.16.

² Bibliotheca Cudworthiana, sive Catalogus variorum librorum plurimis facultatibus. Insignium Bibliothecae instructissimae Rev. Doct. Cudworth ... Quorum auctio habenda est Londini ... Per edvardum Millingtonum (1690-91), sig. E2-3. See, ibid., sig. Bv; "The Rabbinical part" of Cudworth's library was "generously given away by his will," and is not catalogued. Henry More's "Whole study of Books whether printed or Paper Books" were bequeathed to his Nephew, Christopher Coleby, Dean of Midlham. See, Conway Letters, p.482.


William Gilbert, asserting that the "universe's bounds are unknown and unknowable", agreed with Bruno that an omnipotent God was more likely to create an infinite universe. His space is filled with ether almost similar to that of Bruno and Hill extending to infinity, while his exhilaration is also essentially Brunian. Wilkins, who mentions Bruno and Hill, was willing to admit "That a plurality of worlds doth not contradict any principle of reason or faith". In the 1638 edition of Anatomy, even Burton put forward Bruno's and Hill's infinity of solar systems with habitable worlds as a probable hypothesis. Herbert of Cherbury possessed and used Bruno's first edition of De L'Infinito, and as headpiece to Democritus Platonissans More quoted from Herbert's De Causis Errorum supporting the argument that it is imprudent to reject utterly the possibility of "infinitis rerum spatiis extare possunt". Despite this, the theory of a real physical infinite

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2 ibid., p.216.
4 p.254.
5 See Above, p.163. n.4.
6 Democritus Platonissans, p.186.
universe remained "overstrange", fathered then by the rash and daring fancy of Giordano Bruno\(^1\) whom More does not, of course, mention directly but to whose ideas his poetry, indirectly perhaps down the grapevine via Hill, Burton and Wilkins, owes more than he could ever acknowledge.

More's acknowledged sources, Ficino, the Pythagoreans and the Platonists, opted for a closed finite universe. Their limited "peras" was good as distinguished from the unlimited "apeiron" which was classified as bad. F. Solmsen has pointed out that in De Caeo there is not only an attack on plurality of worlds but also a sustained polemic against the idea of infinite body.\(^2\) The finite cosmos of Aristotle, which is entirely by itself with nothing to surround it or to supply it with new material, was one of the conceptions that had taken shape in Timaeus, (326-333) for the world according to Plato was finite.

\(^1\) See, Correspondance du P. Marin Mersenne, II. p.357.

Plato never considers whether the Cosmos may be infinite. The only alternative to his single bounded Cosmos seems to be the simultaneous existence of many Cosmoi, which Plato does his best to discredit.¹

There is nothing really to suggest in the *Timaeus*, considered by many to represent the mature doctrine of Plato, that Plato either accepted the Phytagorean theory of the Central Fire or that he opted for an infinity of worlds. The Earth is central, and the universe is finite. Like Aristotle he denied the unlimited void of Leukippus and other atomists, and he of course denies that the Demiurge allowed any material to be left over from which new worlds can be formed.² If the world were not unique, the "strong powers" in the body left outside it could impair its life and even destroy it:

Accordingly, to the end that this world may be like the complete Living Creature in respect of its uniqueness, for that reason its maker did not make two worlds nor yet an indefinite number; but this Heaven has come to be and is and shall be hereafter one and unique.³

As F.M. Cornford points out, Plato's single everlasting world, "complete and free from age and sickness"⁴ rules out both the innumerable co-existing worlds of the atomist Leukippus, as

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¹ *Timaeus*, 31A; 55C-D.
² *Timaeus*, 32C - ff.
³ 31B.
⁴ *Timaeus* 33A-B.
well as a suggestion of single worlds which figured in Empedocles and in some Ionian systems,¹ and possibly also Patron's strange doctrine of 183 worlds arranged in a triangle:²

For the god, wishing to make this world most nearly like that intelligible thing which is best and in every way complete, fashioned it as a single visible living creature, containing within itself all living things whose nature is of the same order.³

But this itself suggested to Plato the possibility that there can have been created more than one copy of the model— a plurality of visible worlds. But even this is ruled out:

Have we, then, been right to call it one Heaven, or would it have been better to speak of many and indeed of an indefinite number? One we must call it, if we are to hold that it was made according to its pattern. For that which embraces all the intelligible living creatures that there are, cannot be one of a pair; for then there would have to be yet another Living Creature embracing those two, and they would be parts of it.⁴

Later in the Timaeus after discussing the solids Plato returns to the problem only to dismiss it:

Now if anyone, taking all these things into account, should raise the pertinent question, whether the number of worlds should be called indefinite or limited, he would judge that to call them indefinite is the opinion of one who is indeed indefinite about matters on which he ought to be definitely informed. But whether it is proper to speak of them as being really five, he might, if he stopped short there, reasonably feel a doubt. Our own verdict, indeed, declares the world to be by nature a single god, according to the probable account; but another, looking to other considerations, will judge differently. He, however, may be dismissed.⁵

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¹ Plato's Cosmology, p.43.
² ibid., p.220.
³ Timaeus 30D-31.
⁴ Timaeus 31A.
⁵ Timaeus 55C-D.
Also Plato, even with the Greek atomists, held our Earth to be the centre of this universe,\(^1\) But there were suggestions that Plato accepted something resembling the heliocentric system. There is a statement in Plutarch attributed to Theophrastus that Plato, when he had grown old, repented of having assigned to earth the central position which did not really belong to it.\(^2\)

Here Plato is said to believe in the Pythagorean central fire and in agreement with Philolaus, Nicolas, Selencus, Cleanthes, Heraclides and Ephantus. Again F.M. Conford informs us that Theophrastus does not often disagree with Aristotle, and the two could be reconciled, if we could suppose that Plato's repentance took place after he had written the Timæus. But then we should expect to find the Central Fire and planetary motion in the Laws and the Epinomis. Neither of these works ever hints at the existence of the Pythagorean Central Fire, and the passages\(^3\) alleged to support planetary motion are at least incapable of other interpretations. \(...\) What is certain is that Theophrastus' statement is, in any case perfectly consistent with the repentant Plato's recognizing a fire properly situated at the centre of the Earth.\(^4\) It provides no ground for rejecting Aristotle's plain assertion that the Earth in the Timæus is not a planet but situated at the centre.\(^5\)

But although Plato, Heraclides, Philolaus and the others did not anticipate Copernicus\(^6\) because they all believed the Earth to rotate at the centre, there is sufficient ambiguity in the texts which, coupled with Theophrastus' rumour, makes possible

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\(^1\) *Plato's Cosmology*, p.124.


\(^3\) *Laws*, 822C and *Epin.* 987B

\(^4\) not of the Universe.

\(^5\) *Plato's Cosmology*, pp.125-129.

\(^6\) ibid., p.129 n.2.
a different interpretation. Thus R. Mondolfo argues that
the elderly Plato accepted enthusiastically the system which
made the Earth revolve round a Central Fire, the source of
life and heat. Bruno himself partially propagated this view
at a time when he felt he was expressing the most revolutionary
ideas about the universe:

Copernicus was not satisfied to make assumptions as a
mathematician; as a physicist he proved the motion of the
Earth. However, though Copernicus, Nicetas of Syracuse,
Philolaus, Heraclides of Pontos, Ephantos the Pythagorean,
Plato in Timaeus (but rather timidly and without vigour
seeing that he relied on faith rather than on knowledge),
the divine Nicholas of Cusa in the second book of Docta
Ignorantia ... all that means little to the Nolan, for it
is from other more solid principles ... that he derives
his certainty.²

Even Libertus Fromondus, a staunch opponent of heliocentricity,
which he described as a "rash opinion, and bordering upon heresy"
in Ant-Aristarchus sive Orbis terrae immobiles reported Theop-
phantastus' rumour; on the very first page of the book:

Pythagorae Sarnio, aut forte ante eum Aristarcho, dum caelum
& terram olim non tam oculis quam intellectu circumspicit,
in mentem venit, terram moveri, solem vero & caelum stare.
Nam terram planetam quendam esse censuit, qui circa solem
in centro mundi definulum converteretur ... Pythagoram seuti
Aristarchus Samius (nisi tamen hic Pythagora vetustior fuit)
Philolaus, Nicetas, Selencus, Cleanthes Samius, Leucippus,
Heraclides, Ephantus, imo Plato iam senex, ut narrat
Theophrastus.³

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1 L'Infinito nel pensiero dei Greci, p.329.

2 De La Cena, I. p.154.

3 p.1.
This idea is also taken up by Wilkins, just two years before More's *Psychatanasia* was published:

To them [heliocentric theorists] agreed Philaenus, Heraclides, [sic] Pontius, Nicetas, ... Leucippus and Plato himself (as some think). So likewise Numa Pompilius, as Plutarch relates it in his life, who in reference to this opinion, built the temple of Vesta round like the universe; in the midst of it was placed the perpetual vestall fire; by which he did represent the Sunne in the centre of the world.¹

Some of Wilkins's ideas were combated strongly by Alexander Rosset:  

It is true that Numa built a round Temple, not in reference to this opinion of the Earth's motion, as you dreame, for he was not of this opinion; but in reference to the roundness of the world, as Plutarch saith: and he placed the Vestall fire in the middle, not to represent the Sunne in the centre of the world (that is your glossa), but to represent the site of the elementary fire, which he conceived to be in the midst of the world.²

but Henry More obviously found it necessary, like Bruno and Wilkins, to twist Plato out of shape and link him with heliocentricity and an infinity of worlds. Indeed on the title-page of *Democritus Platonissans*, More quotes Libertus Fromondus¹ Ant-Aristarchus and a section from the *Timaeus*:

So, being without jealousy, he desired that all things should come as near as possible to being like himself.³

The temptation to read into Plato's own words Renaissance or "Platonick" ideas that are alien to Plato's thought was too strong for men like Bruno, Wilkins and More. The fact, however, that the Demiurge is not jealous or ungrudging does not in any

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¹ *A Discourse*, 1640, p.17.

² *The New Planet, No Planet*, 1646, p.3.  
*Cf. F.H. Conford*, p.129.

³ *Timaeus* 29E.  
*Cf. Enneads*, p.150.
way imply an infinite universe. Plato here denies, as elsewhere in Phaedrus 247a, that the gods grudge man a perfection and felicity similar to their own; but taken out of context the goodness of the Demiurge can be shown to "overflow" into an infinite creation.

H. More, in a poem that was supposed to restore "Plato and deep Plotin" is seen to go against their concept of a finite universe, for Plotinus too definitely rejects "endless extension" as well as the notion of indivisible atoms, which More is gradually accepting. Near the end of Timaeus, Plato argues that it is the duty of man not to be engrossed in mortal ambitions and appetites which severely limit his vision:

If his heart has been set on the love of learning and true wisdom ... he is surely bound to have thoughts immortal and divine, if he shall lay hold upon truth, nor can he fail to possess immortality in the fullest measure that human nature admits. 246

This is the same kind of exhortation that More subscribed to when he added two quotations from Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury and Descartes opposite the 1647 title-page. Herbert's De Causis Errorum (1645), exhorts men not to restrict their vision by over-dependence on the senses, and attacks those "authors, who estimate all by the measure of their own senses so that they reject out of pride or imprudence the things that can exist beyond in infinite space." 3

1 Psychoselia, p.2. st.4.
2 Enneas, p.109.
3 Democritus Platonissens, p.186.
The other quotation is from *Principia Philosophiae*:

We will commence with those phenomena that are of the greatest generality, and upon which the others depend, as, for example, with the general structure of this whole visible world. But in order to our philosophising aright regarding this, two things are first of all to be observed. The first is, that we should ever bear in mind the infinity of the power and goodness of God, that we may not fear falling into error by imagining his works to be too great, beautiful, and perfect, but that we may, on the contrary, take care lest, by supposing limits to them of which we have no certain knowledge, we appear to think less highly than we ought of the power of God.

II. That we ought to beware lest, in our presumption, we imagine that the ends which God proposed to himself in the creation of the world are understood by us.

The second is, that we should beware of presuming too highly of ourselves, as it seems we should do if we supposed certain limits to the world, without being assured of their existence either by natural reasons or by divine revelation, as if the power of our thought extended beyond what God has in reality made; but likewise still more if we persuaded ourselves that all things were created by God for us only ...

In Descartes, this follows almost immediately on his statements that there cannot exist any atoms, that "the extension of the world is indefinite", and that "there cannot be a plurality of worlds."  

It is significant that at least three of the persons quoted by More as some kind of support for his "Essay upon the Infinity of Worlds out of Platonick Principles", are specifically

3 *The Philosophical Poems*, p.187.
against plurality of worlds. But More has chosen his texts wisely — the texts of Timaeus, Ant-Aristarchus and Principia seem to support his new-found enthusiasm for infinity of worlds, whereas in reality they are against it. But More felt he was not doing violence to Plato's philosophy, and that his could be a valid interpretation.

More, it is true, is now arguing for infinity on "Platonick" grounds; and yet in Psychathanasia which is the second part of "A Platonick Song of the Soul," he had also stated explicitly that:

Nought's infinite but tight eternity
Close thrust into itself: extension
That's infinite implies a contradiction. ²

and More himself admits a disparity:

For mine own part, I must confess these apprehensions do plainly oppose what heretofore I have conceived; but I have sworn more faithfull friendship with Truth than with myself. And therefore without remorse lay battery against mine own defence: not sparing to show how weak that is, that myself now seems not impregnably strong. I have at the latter end of the last Canto of Psychathanasia, not without triumph concluded that he would hath not concluded ab aeterno from this ground:

That's infinite implies a contradiction

And this in answer to an objection against my last argument of the souls Immortalitie, viz. divine goodness which I there make the measure of his providence. That ground limits the essence of the world as well as its duration, and satisfies the curiositie of the Opposer, by shewing the incomposibilitie in the Creature, not want of goodness in the Creatour to have staid the framing of the

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¹ The Philosophical Poems, sig.A4.

² Psychathanasia, p.183. st.35.
universe. But now roused up by a new Philosophick furie, I answer that difficulty by taking away the Hypothesis of either the world or time being finite; defending the infinitude of both.  

And yet it can still be argued that More does not abandon his earlier principles, because the Christian orthodoxy of this "wary philosopher" also makes him state that infinity of worlds is but a mere hypothesis:

the severity of my own judgement and sad Genius, hath cast in many correctives and coolers into the Canto itself; so that it cannot amount to more than a discussion. And discussion is no prejudice but an honour to the truth; for then and never but then is she victorious. And what a glorious Trophee shall the finite world erect when it hath vanquished the Infinite; a Pygme a Giant!  

More is keeping his options open. Here he is in agreement with Plato, Fromondus and Descartes. In the body of Democritus Platonissans his "new Philosophick furie" makes him go flat against them, and we have no doubt where his instincts lie. And yet it is significant, that much later, in 1668, when More is still as "Platonick" as ever and in controversy with the Cartesians, More states again explicitly that

When you have fancied the World as infinite as you can, you must still be enforced to conclude it finite.

His last words are indeed against infinity. Here he is in agree¬ment with Descartes. Thus in Enchiridion Metaphysicum (1671), the universe is

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1 "To the Reader", Democritus Platonissans, pp.189-190.

2 ibid., p.190.

3 Divine Dialogues, p.521.
Not infinite, but merely indefinite, as Descartes said somewhere, reserving infinity for God alone.1

The Platonists indeed argued not only for a finite universe but also for a finite God. Even Aquinas had to argue the paradox of an infinite God who is also infinitely good against their thesis "Omne infinitum est imperfectum ... Sed Deus est perfectissimus. Ergo non est infinitus".2 Bruno neatly reverses the argument: "finitum quodlibet est imperfectum".3 Infinity then becomes Bruno's message rather than his problem.

The Italian dialogues, printed in England in the 1580's, dealt with the physical and metaphysical implications of a universe extended to infinity. The two books, however, which really come to grips with the concept are De L'Infinite Universo e Mundi and its Latin counterpart De Immenso et Innumerabilitibus seu De Universo et mundi, begun in England but published in Frankfurt in 1591. Refusing to accept the void of Democritus and Epicurus, Bruno had adopted an exaggerated realism that transformed geometric space into concrete reality:

1 (1671), p.39.

2 Summa Theologiae, I.vii.

3 De Immenso, I.i. p.307.
Est ergo spacio quantitas quaedam continua physica
triplici dimensione constans, in qua corporum magnitude
capitatur, natura ante omnia corpora, et citra omnia
corpora consistens, indifferentem omnia recipiens.¹

The design of De L'Infinito and De Immenso is similar.

At times, Bruno is prepared to use diagrams and translate
ideas and images almost verbatim from the earlier work.²

The works indeed move along parallel lines. The first
book of De Immenso, like the first dialogue of De L'Infinito,
puts forward Bruno's astronomical theories arising from
Copernican observations. The second book of De Immenso,
as the second dialogue of De L'Infinito, is concerned with
Aristotelian objections to infinity. The three central books
of De Immenso pattern the third dialogue in confuting the
theory of geocentricity and the earth's mobility. The last
two books of De Immenso, as the last two dialogues of
De L'Infinito, refute in detail Aristotle's arguments
against an infinite space and a plurality of worlds.

Unlike Descartes, Bruno never confuses the "infinite"
with the "indefinite" or the "indeterminate".³ B. Spaventa
argued that Bruno's absolute infinity of the universe
depends exclusively on God:

¹ ibid., I.i. p.231.
    See, J. Fiorentino, Jordani Bruni Holani Opera Latina
    Conscripta (Naples, 1879), I. p.xliii.
³ Descartes to Mersenne, 18 December 1629, Correspondance
It is this kind of infinity, leading to "such a vanity as multiple worlds" that Bruno was asked to abandon before the Inquisition tribunal on 24 March 1597. Some time later the order was given for a stricter interrogation: "quod interrogetur stricte, postea detur ei consura". In England "Infelix illae Jordanus Brunus" was recognized as the apostle of infinity by Hariot and Lower, by Hill and Bacon, Burton and Wilkins. Would Henry More be unaware of this fact? We can not be certain that More read Bruno's works, but for a considerable stretch of time, and that the most formative, Henry More gloried

In this new old opinion here defined
Of infinite worlds.

Indeed More often seemed to echo Bruno and Hill. His Democritus Platonissana, or An Essay upon the Infinity of Worlds out of Platonick Principles is embodied in an anti-

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1 Saggi di critica filosofica, politica e religiosa (Naples, 1867), pp.265-266.
4 Democritus Platonissana, p.199, et seq.
Aristotelian framework similar to De L'Infinito and De Immenso. Like Bruno and Hill, More derives infinity not merely from the Epicurean concept of "possibility", or the new astronomical discoveries but dialectically from the infinite goodness and omnipotence of God. In Bruno, as in Hill, plurality of worlds is presented as a logical possibility, as a physical possibility linked to the heliocentric theory, and as a metaphysical possibility because of God's infinite power and essence. Then possibility is translated into actuality, "Modus possendi consequitur operandi modus."¹ Hill's echo is "Modum possendi modus operandi sequitur."² Like Bruno, Hill, Cusanus, Synesius and others, More adopts the common traditional concept of the "universe being all centre and all circumference."³ More, however, refers this image specifically to Synesius.⁴ In De Minimo, the universe is described as an infinite sphere whose centre is in no particular place but can be everywhere:

Interea sensum protoplasten stultitarum
Inde vide centrum, cui nulla est sectile parte.
At fluxus omnes de gyro terminat unum,
Tendat in immensum quantumvis fimbria campi.
Ergo infinito minimum neque terminus esse
Terrai poterit moles, neque terminus ullus
Esse potest velut id est conclusum margine nulla.⁵

¹ De Immenso, I.i.243.
² Philosophia Epicurea, p.66.
³ De La Causa, I. p.282.
⁴ The Philosophical Poems, p.409.
More speaks in similar fashion when he compares the infinity of the universe to that of God:

A circle whose circumference nowhere is circumscribed, whose Centre's each where set,
But the low Cusp's a figure circular,
Whose compass is ybound, but Centre's everywhere. 1

This image of unknown origin but said to come from a lost treatise of Empedocles could be found in Nicholas of Cusa, Synesius, St. Bonaventura and even the Roman de la Rose, but both Bruno and More link it with physical infinity and the human soul which approaches divinity by its ability to wander throughout the vast expanse. 2 Because of this both poets are filled with joy and enthusiasm. Bruno bursts into beautiful Italian poetry:

Quindi l'ala sicure a l'aria porge,
Ne temo intorno di cristallo, e vetro,
Ma fendo i cieli, e a l'infinito m'orzo;
E mentre dal mio globo a gli altri sorzo,
E per l'eterno campo oitro penetra,
Quel ch'altro luogo vede, lascio al tergo. 3

In the three poems published in 1646, More repeats Bruno's ecstatic journey through a divine space:

1 Democritus Platoissans, p. 195, st. 8.


3 De L'Inffinito, II. p. 16.

See trans. T.W. Singer, p. 254: "Henceforth I spread confident wings to space
I fear no barrier of crystal or glass;
I cleave the heavens and soar to the infinite.
And while I rise from my own globe to others
And penetrate even further through the eternal field
That which others saw from afar, I leave far behind."
My nimble mind this clammy clod doth leave
And lightly stepping from starre to starre,
Swifter than lightning, passeth wide and farre,
Measuring th' unbounded Heavens and wastfull skie;
No ought she finds her passage to debarrs;
For still the azure Orb as she draws nigh
Gives back, new stars appear, the world's walls 'fore her flie.

This very same journey of the soul More could have found in

De Immenso.

Intrepidus spacion immensum sic fendere pennis
Exorior, neque fama facit me impingere in orbis,
Quos false statuit verus de principio error,
Ut sub conflictio reprisamur carcere vere,
Tanquam adamantiis cludatur moenibu totum...
Adque alios mundo ex isto dux adsurgo nitentes
Aethereum campunque ex omni parte perrero
Attribis mirus et distans post terga reliquos.

More then speaks immediately of

this needless, thanklesse inclosure,
Which I in full disdain quite up will tear
And lay all ope

which is reminiscent of Bruno's praise for those who would tear
the enclosed sky:

Invictoque gigas vultu, sub pondera vasto
Trinacriae: audaci quondam ausus robore coelum
Scindere...
Non homines potius veros, qui, viribus alti
Ingenii, minas caeli tempore, repertis
Mundum ultra mundis, ultra laqueria picta,
Quae totum claudant, reprisantque hase ora recurva
Luminibus tantis, oculatque arce superne;
Unde Deus solium est fictum, rigidumque tribunae.

1 Democritus Platonissane, p.192. st.5.
2 De Immenso, I.i. pp.201-202.
3 Democritus Platonissane, p.192. st.5.
In De Immanento, Enceladus the giant ecstatically sings the beauty of infinity saying that "he can embrace the true heavens in his vast arms":

Verum igitur coelum vastis comprehend lacertis.
Et quantum decus est mundo, stellaeque tuentur. 1

More writes in words that could easily have come from De Immanento in "Cupid's Conflict": It is through Bruni's ecstasy, also the theme of Eroici Furori, that Henry More is led to the One:

When I myself from mine own self do quit
And each thing else; then an all-spreading love
To the vast Universe my soul doth fit;
Makes me half-equal to all-seeing Jove.

My mighty wings high stretch'd then clapping light,
I brush the stars, and make them shine more bright.

Then all the works of God with close embrace
I dearly hug in my enlarged arms. 2

Indeed, in Democritus Platonissans, More sings ecstatically:

So now my soul drunk with Divinitie,
And borne away above her usual bounds
With confidence concludes infinitie
Of Time of Worlds, of finite flaming Rounds;
Which sight in sober mood my spirit quite confounds. 3

But More realized that a mere description of a journey through space would not attract sympathizers. In "sober mood" he then involved himself in dialectic against Aristotle's arguments.

As in The Philosophers Devotion, 4 More in Democritus Platonissans is concerned with translating the infinite goodness of God into

1 ibid.
3 Democritus Platonissans, p. 209, st. 72.
4 The Philosophical Poems, p. 330:
"Sing aloud His praise rehearse
Who hath made the Universe."
the infinite goodness of the universe. In so doing, he abandoned the orthodox concept of a potential infinity and followed in Bruno's and Hill's footsteps. John Wilkins and Robert Burton seemed by 1638 also to have taken such a step.

Bruno's strongest theological argument itself arose from the orthodox concept of God's omnipotence and infinite divine essence. In *De L'Infinito*, the Aristotelian Albertino asserts that, although God is omnipotent, the passivity of matter must necessarily limit creation. In *De Immense*, the Scholastic argument is very much the same:

Quaeritur activam prae ter passiva facultas,  
Non et tot natura potest portare, quot ille  
Condere ...  

For the Aristotelians, infinite was merely a potential that could never be realized, actual infinity pertaining to God alone. Bruno rejects these arguments because this "potential" infinity would reduce God to an expert guitarist who can, but never does, play the guitar. Scholastic theologians, especially Thomists, had argued that the passivity of matter was no obstacle but God had chosen to create a universe of set measure. This is the argument that Gassendi will adopt

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1 *De L'Infinito*, II. p.11.


against Bruno later. God could have created more worlds, but he had created just one, and that was finite — again a divine reticence or "withholding" along Plotinian lines. According to Aquinas, God alone is infinity in essence and "He acts always within a framework of relative infinity [secundum quid]." In this world, absolute infinity is thus completely ruled out:

Non est possibile esse aliquam multitudinem actu infinitam.  

Nicholas of Cusa, considered by many a precursor of Bruno, agrees with St. Thomas and opts for a privative infinity.

As Sidney Greenberg writes:

For Cusanus, the infinite can be applied to the universe only in the sense that the universe is the greatest of created things; the universe is not limited by anything but itself limits all things. It is thus a 'maximum contractum' while God is 'maximum absolutum'. The universe is therefore for Cusanus a relative or privative infinity.

In Bruno and Hill on the other hand the universe is actually infinite. In God, potentiality and action, omnipotence and omnipresence become a corollary to each other. To Bruno, it seemed absurd that an infinite cause should not have its corresponding infinite effect:

If the Deity, with its original unity embraces all that is unfolded in the universe, is infinite, then the universe which is the unfolded form of God's essence must be infinite.

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4 De L'Infinite, II. p.30.
Cf. De L'Infinite, II. p.26: "Dunque chi nega l'effetto infinito, nega la potenza infinita."
Indeed in so far as "Necessitas et libertas sunt unum", God is denied liberty of choice and the universe must necessarily be infinite. As both Bruno and Hill argue:

Divina essentia est infinita,
Modum essendi modus possendi sequitur,
Modum possendi modus operandi sequitur.

Henry More makes liberty and necessity coincide even in Antidote Against Atheism:

It is more perfection that all this be Stable, Immutable and Necessary, then Contingent or but Possible.

This concept was also accepted by F.M. Van Helmont and More's favourite pupil and friend, Lady Anne Conway:

Because God doth all things according to his infinite wisdom, therefore there is no difference of Will in him; and therefore in all things he doth, he is a necessary agent, and yet also the most free Agent. Therefore he did necessarily create the Worlds, and that not by constraint from any foreign Agent, but from the Determination of his Internal Goodness and Wisdom ... Therefore God is a Creator from Eternity, and so by consequence did make Creatures from Infinite Ages; and also still doth and will create new to all Eternity. The Worlds therefore, in respect of us, are infinite and innumerable.

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2 ibid., I.i. p.242.
4 sig. B5v.
In Democritus Platonissans, the imperative 'must' frequently emphasizes necessity. Indeed More marks this link by unconsciously interchanging 'Omnipotency' for 'Omnipresency'.

Granted that God is omnipotent, says Bruno, he would be infinitely envious if he did not create an infinite universe:

Deus infinita potens et finita faciens, infinite esse inviduus, finite bonus.

God's omnipotence would resolve itself into infinite waste, and God himself become some kind of second-rate entrepreneur unwilling to maximise expansion and cost-efficiency, a guitarist playing no guitar. He must therefore produce a real, positive infinity. This actual infinity will differ from God whose infinity is "complicatamente, totalmente". In the world each part is finite, and so Philoteo draws a distinction between God and the universe:

I say that the universe is entirely infinite because it has neither margin, limit, nor surface; I say that the universe is not totally infinite because each of its parts can be seen to be finite.

This is reflected in Hill and in Henry More's discreet but very real positive infinity:

I will not say our world is infinite. But that infinity of worlds there be.

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1 See "Errata", The Philosophical Poems, p.437. Cf. ibid., p.412. The error might have been the printers.

2 De Immenso, I.ii. p.291.


Against Descartes, More suggests that the concepts of Infinity and Eternity will raise the same kind of thorny problems whether these attributes are directed to the Deity or to the world. Descartes had maintained that the idea of God as "ens infinitum et infinite perfectum" was the very first innate idea of the human mind, prior even to that of self. More would disagree:

Who dare gainsay but God is everywhere
Unbounded, measureless, all Infinite;
Yet the same difficulties meet us here
Which erst we met and did so sore affright.  

More does not, however, stop to prove God infinite and omnipotent. He accepts such attributes as true, and then adopts the logical sequaciousness characteristic of Bruno and Hill. If God can "eas'ly vent His mighty virtue thorough all extent", Bruno's and Hill's "Modum possendi modus operandi sequitur," this must necessarily happen:

Unless omnipotent power we will impair
And say that empty space his working can debare.  

The same argument occurs in De L'Infinite and De Immenso:

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2 Democritus Platonissans, p. 203, st. 47.

3 ibid., p. 203, st. 48.
Cf. De Immenso, I, i. p. 235: "Infinita causa injuriose finiti
dictur effectus causa, quinimo ad finitum effectum neque
nomen neque rationem potest habere efficientis."

4 Democritus Platonissans, p. 203, st. 48.

5 De L'Infinite, II. p. 20: "Tributtare il mondo."
Quin potius spaciurn est res quaedam nata repleri: 
Dedecet ergo siet nequicquam tanta facultas 
Quam faciat frustra Deus et natura manere.¹

and in Hill's *Philosophia Epicurea*: "Infinitae potentiae 
frustratio absurdissima."² More says that God's omnipotence 
will not be frustrated anywhere and asks whether our space 
had more aptitude to respond to God's will:

Was this one space better than all beside, 
And more obedient to what God decreed? 
Or would not all that endless Emptiness 
Gladly embrac'd (if he had ever tride) 
His just command? And what might come to pass 
Implies no contradicticus inconsistentnesse.³

Bruno argued also that there arose no inconvenience in 
conceiving an infinite number of suns and earths, each 
of which is provided with a variety of species:

Quoniam, quidquid in infinito est, infinitum 
operation esse, si ex eo infinitum constitui 
intelligatur, non inconveniet infinitos 
intelligere soleas et tellures, ex quibus 
tanquam primis in synodos mundorum 
currentibus, universitas est innumerabilium 
astrorum, quorum propriarum singula 
speciorum varietate exornantur, ut et illis 
sub speciebus innumerabilia continentur 
individua singulis.⁴

And later Lady Anne Conway also strongly upheld such 
views against Descartes:

Either God works in those spaces, or he doth not: if 
he doth not, there God is not there; for wherever he 
is, there he worketh.⁵

¹ *De Immense*, I.i. p.236. Cf. ibid., I.i. p.246: "Agit ergo 
necessitate, quae neque ab intrinseco et per se, neque ab 
extrinseco et per aliud frustrari potest."

² p.67.

³ *Democritus Platonissans*, p.203. st.49.

⁴ *De Immense*, I.i. p.285.

⁵ *The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy*, p.22.
Bruno had strongly defended an infinite universe not only from God's omnipotence but also from God's infinite goodness. Often in De L'Infinito and De Immenso being is shown to be better than non-being. He then moved from "la bontà di questo esser corporeo" to state that whereas this finite good exists by virtue of reason and convenience, an infinite good that reflects God's goodness exists of necessity, "l'infinito è per assoluta necessità." God's goodness being as infinite as his power, power must resolve itself into action. It would be repugnant if God's goodness resolved itself into so narrow a margin when it could have created an infinite universe. Over and over again this argument comes to the fore in De Immenso:

Ut quippe repugnat finito actio infinita, vel subjectio, ita et infinito efficienti finiti formatio.


2 ibid.


Stultitia est miseranda quidem quae possibile inquit Finitum, quod promoveat sine fine potestas.¹

Indeed for Bruno the problem is not cosmological but rather ethical.² God is not sparing of his powers and his goodness must not remain unused:

Non satis est unum, quia mens faecunda per amplum Totum se fundens extra omnia, cum sit in omni Et simili bonitate potens faecundat inane.³

The same is true of Nicholas Hill.⁴

Although suggesting that Henry More, steeped in Plotinus and the Scholastic philosophers, "needed no other sources to provide the grounds of his argument", A.C. Lovejoy notices the similarity of More's conclusions to Bruno's:

How simply and directly the new conception of the physical world could be drawn from familiar and orthodox mediaeval premises is as clearly illustrated in More's poetic version of the argument as in Bruno's reasonings.⁵

Where, however, with Plotinus and other Scholastic philosophers the concept remained orthodox, Bruno's daring converted it to unorthodoxy and heresy because he embedded it in the physical world and preached infinity in actu. It thus became a strange opinion to maintain.

Henry More, despairing of his readers' "acceptance", hoped that the

¹ ibid., I.ii. p.275.
³ de Immenso, I.i. p.239.
⁴ Philosophia Epicurea, pp.66-67; 118.
⁵ The Great Chain of Being, p.125.
overstrangeness of the Argument prove no hindrance. Infinitie of Worlds! A thing monstrous if assented to, and to be startled at.¹

He argued that it was only his "sportfull phancie" that suggested such a discussion:

And discussion is no prejudice but an honour to the Truth: for then and never but then is she victorious.²

Despite this, however, Henry More said that his ideas in Democritus Platonissana "do plainly oppose what heretofore I have conceived,"³ and the truth he defends is similar to that championed in De L'Infinite and De Immense, and Hill's Philosophia Epicurea.

More agrees with Bruno and Hill that God's fecundity must not go to waste. Thus whereas in Psychatanasia, More had argued that it was "not want of goodness in the Creatour to have staid the framing of the universe"⁴ in Democritus Platonissana he stressed the idea that the universe must be regarded as a simulacrum of the Deity. That being so, it is no wonder that we find a gradual approximation of Nature to God. In Bruno, the attributes of God are inherited by an infinite universe which sings the perfection of the Creator.⁵ In Resoluation More does the same:

¹ The Philosophical Poems, p.189.
² ibid., p.190.
³ ibid., p.189.
⁴ Democritus Platonissana, p.190.
⁵ De Immense, I.i. pp.302-308. Cf. De L'Infinite, II. pp.22; 103-104.
Power, Wisedome, Goodnesse sure did frame
This Universe and still guide the same.
But thoughts from passion sprung, deceive
Vain mortalls. No man can contrive
A better course then what's been run
Since the first circuit of the Sun...
Purge but thy soul of blind self-will
Thou staight shalt see God doth no ill.

Infinity then arises necessarily out of God's goodness and
potenza. Grant McColly stresses this element:

From Copernicus Bruno drew not a heliocentric universe,
for his infinite universe had no centre, but rather a
heliocentric system which became the pattern for his
infinite worlds. Thus we find in his cosmology the
infinite worlds of the Greeks now freed from their
enveloping shells and transformed into heliocentric
systems following Copernicus, with the whole unending
 cosmos proceeding from the potenza infinita of God...
The most powerful argument, however, and the one which
gave emotional and religious life to the conception of
plurality was the principal sign of the poteniza or
Plenitude of God. On the basis of this principle, John
Wilkins held that an additional world would "not derogate
from Divine Wisdom ... but rather advance it" and that
it is probable "God might create some /worlds/ of all
kinds, that so He might glorify himself in the works of
His power and wisdom." Behind and supporting the
infinite systems of Henry More is the infinite poteniza
of their Creator, who:

Where'er he is then can he eas'ly vent,
His mighty virtue thorough all extent.

The idea that the universe is a simulacrum of God is recurrent
in Platonism. It is found in Plotinus, Ficino, and Cusanus,
but it is always argued that "infinite actuality, which is
absolute eternity cannot emerge from the possible." Bruno,

1 "Resolution," The Philosophical Poems, pp.314-315.
In The Apology of Dr. Henry More (1664), 486 More links
the "vastness of the universe which is more consonant
to the sacred attributes of God, his Power and Goodness"
with Cartesianism.

2 De Immensae, I.i. pp.209ff.

3 "The Seventeenth Century Doctrine of a Plurality of Worlds,"

however, recalling Plato's Timaeus that the Demiurge is not envious, makes his universe an actually realized infinity.

Otherwise God's bounty would be finite:

\[
\text{Deus infinita potens et finita faciens}
\]
\[
\text{infinite case invidus, finite bonus.}\]

More's conclusion is similar:

And that even infinite such worlds there be,
That inexhausted Good that God is might
A full sufficient reason is to me,
Who simple Goodness make the highest Deity.\(^2\)

Bruno is just as certain of his truth about infinity after merely examining the metaphysical side of the argument. Utterly convinced as he is that there can be "no barren waste, or vacancy",\(^3\) he must nevertheless attempt to discuss the physical and mathematical side of the problem. He thus starts a polemic with the Aristotelians in order to raise and answer the relevant physical questions. Both his De L'Infinite and De Immane can, like Crescens' Or Adonai, be read as a strong critique of Aristotle's De Caelo. The structure of his books is, to some extent, unified by its anti-Aristotelian arguments. Knowing the battle is dour, he treats his opponents with the respect they deserve. Seldom does he resort to name-calling as when he refers to

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2. *Democritus Platonissan*, p.204. st.51.
   Cf. Anne Conway, op.cit., p.18: "There is an infinity of Worlds or Creatures made of God ... certainly his Will, Goodness and Bounty, is as large and extensive as his Power."
   Cf. De L'Infinite, II. p.100.
Aristotle as a "beggar" or "miserandus senex" with his dusty books. *De Immenso* ridicules those who conclude there are no more birds in the air than those they see from their own window, arguing that those who rely on the senses alone argue in an absurd way:

De quo asce rationabiliter dubitare quispiam possit, utque qui nos alias per aeres discurrese volucres existimet, quam quas per sibi uniam patentem fenestrum ipsa videt pertransire.3

In *Iemocritus Platonissans*, More attacks those "witless wizards" who insist on using the senses alone as the basis for valid observation:

But here base senses dictates they will fight
With specious title of Philosophie.
And stiffly will contend their cause is right.
From rotten schools of school antiquity
Who constantly deny corporall Infinitie5

just as Hipino had contended that "L'infinito buono certamente è ma è incorporeo".6 Relying on their senses, the Aristotelians had accepted a void7 so huge that in comparison a finite world would be practically annihilated to non-being.

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1 *De L'Infinito*, II. p.35.
2 *De Immenso*, I.i. p.321.
3 I.i. p.345.
4 *Iemocritus Platonissans*, p.196. st.19.
5 ibid., p.193, st.9.
6 *De L'Infinito*, II. p.22.
di sorte che par vituperio il non pensare, che questo corpo, che a noi per vaste a grandissimo ... non sia che un punto, anzi un nulla.¹

We cannot, argues Bruno, accept infinity through the senses, "non è senso che veglia l'infinito".² In fact, "vera sphaera non est sensibilis".³ The feebleness and inadequacy of our organs thus often give the illusion of finitude, but the experience of an ever expanding horizon as we shift our position gives the lie to our senses.⁴ As in Bruno, the horizon in More is pushed ever backwards, and there is no Epicurean or Lucretian "interworld" void to separate one world from another:

For still the azure Orb as she draws nigh
gives back, new stars appear.⁵

Bruno indeed tended not to trust the senses and was inclined to lay more stress on dialectics. Those who rely on sense, he said, become like unhappy Narcissi who can never grasp the shade and must ever be demanding a tenth, eleventh or twelfth infinite sphere ad infinitum.⁶ Bruno had argued that a lazy interpretation

¹ De L'Infinito, II. p.22. Cf. De Immenso, I.i. p.236.
⁷ De Immenso, I.i. p.317. Cf. Psychoncia, p.4. st.11.
of appearances results in error which is then confirmed by
the imagination. He compares Aristotelians to a man of little
wisdom looking at the trees in a forest and thinking that the
most distant ones are all on the same line, although aware that
the trees nearer to him are at unequal distances. Where he sees
unequal distances, they exist; where his sight fails, they no
longer exist. This is the way he put it in De Immanse:

Haud aliter stultus, quem circum sylva coronat
Undique plantarum, septem ex iis ille propinquas
Indicat, imperibus devinctas intervallis,
Namque et apparent: non sic reliqua omin, namque
Non etiam apparent. Neque plus rerum esse, deincept,
Namque apparent: quo finint ommia sensus.

More shows the same distrust of the senses:

Therefore who'll judge the limits of the world
By what appears unto our failing sight
Appeals to sense; reason down headlong hurl
Out of her throne by giddy vulgar might. 2

ften, says Bruno, as in case of the ever expanding horizon
the senses can be proved to be wrong. Recalling the time when
as a boy Vesuvius was the limit of the world for him, Bruno
compares this childish illusion to that of the Aristotelians
who restrict the universe because they cannot see beyond. It
is indeed "against both sense and reason" to assert a finite
void. 3 More is prepared to accept this and puts forward "new
reasons weighed" against Psychatanasia's void, which seem
near to Bruno and Hill.

1 I.i. p. 122.
2 Democritus Platonissans, p. 193. st. 9.
3 De Immanse, I. i. p. 214.
Believing in the homogeneity of space, Bruno argued that space does not change its nature by being empty or full, for the empty can be filled. To Aristotle's assertion that outside the world there exists nothing, Bruno puts a number of very telling questions, trying to reduce the scholastic argument to absurdity.


In De{i}l'Infinito, Bruno borrows an image from Lucretius to demonstrate the impossibility of the void. He uses the same image in De Immenso:

De: Epicurac si cui percurreas ad oras
Extremas liceat, volucrum jacatque sagittam
Margine ab extrema, nonne ad externa feretur?
Seilicet interum validis pro viribus ibit,
Metuque delata uterum sic transilietur
Unde alius specium tibi constitutatur orpetet,
Quod quoque si claudas, parili argumento aperimus.

More adopts the same image from De Borna Natura with minor modifications for exactly the same purpose as Bruno, twisting Lucretius's example to enhance what looks very much like the

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1 ibid., I.i. p.234.
2 ibid., I.i. p.318.
3 De Bora Natura, I.v. 968 ff.
4 De l'Infinite, II. p.4.
5 De Immenso, I.i. pp.227-228.
Stoic continuum theory. Lucretius, as well as the other presocratic philosophers, totally separated atoms from the void, while Bruno held a "plenum" in which hyle and pneuma intermix, forming a dynamic entity:

There is no part of the soul which has no share in the body which contains the soul.

This is Henry More's version in *Democritus Platonissans*:

But yet more sensibly this truth to show
If space be ended set upon that end
Some strong arm'd archer with the Parthian bow,
That from that place with speedy force may send
His fleeter shafts, and so still forward wend.
Where? When shall we want room his strength to trie?
But here perversely subtilly you'll contend
Nothing can move in mere vacuity
And space is nought, so not extended properly.

As opposed to Descartes who equated space with body, More states that "there is a distancy in empty space", and if positive space is denied, one cannot escape the concept of the void with its own particular problems:

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2 *ibid.*, p.44.
3 Bruno's void was not an absolute vacuum but an aether offering no resistance to the local motion of material bodies. See, *Acrutissmus Camogracensis*, l.i. p.135.
4 Alex. Aphrodisiensis, *De Mixtione*, 217.36.
5 *Democritus Platonissans*, p.200. st.37.
6 *The Philosophical Works*, p.259: "In truth, the same extension in length, breadth and depth which constitutes space, constitutes body."
7 *Democritus Platonissans*, p.200. st.39. Cf. *De L'Infinito*, II. p.10. More seems inclined to a different view in *Appendix to Antidote*, p.164: "Distance is not a real or physical property, but only notional."
This infinite voidness as much our mind doth gall,
And has as great perplexities ybrought
As if this empty space with bodies were ybrought.

Nor have we yet the face once to deny
But that it is although we mind it not. 1

As Bruno had written "non possiamo fuggire il vacuo", because
the void is just as difficult to imagine as an infinite
universe 2 and innumerable worlds.

It may seem a paradox that in both Bruno, Hill and More
God's Unity should be celebrated in the concept of innumerable
worlds. Had not More ended Psychozoa, claiming that "The
Good is uniform, the Evil infinite"? 3 And yet in his
Democritus Platonizans, as in Bruno's De L'Infinite and
De Immenso, and Hill's Philosophia Epicurea, "an infinitic
of worlds" seems the only fitting expression of divine unity.

John Wilkins approves of Nicholas Hill's conclusions:

A plurality of worlds doth not take away the unity of the
first mover — mundorum pluralitate non tollitur
Dei unitas — with a Country-man of ours. As the
substantial form, so the efficient cause hath only an
appearing multiplicity from its particular matter ...   
Nic. Hill de Philosoph. Epic. partic. 379. 4


2 De L'Infinite, II. p.20.

3 Psychozoa, p.71. st.71.

4 A. discovery, p.27. Wilkins is really quoting prop. 503 on p.118
of Philosophia Epicurea. Prop. 379 deals with Hill's theory of
evapor emanation from comets which Hill copied almost verbatim
Epicurea, pp.71-72.
Although a distinction is drawn in the very title of De Innumerabilibus immenso et infigurabili, seu de universo et mundis, Bruno did not really separate the two problems of an infinite universe and innumerable worlds. Neither did Hill, nor Wilkins. Neither did More. The one problem became a necessary rider to the other, because they insisted on the homogeneity of space and substance.

To the Aristotelian and Platonist argument that this world is perfect, finite and unique, Bruno replied with the paradox of the world being one and infinite. Both De l'Infinite and De Immanco come to a climax with a beautiful hymn to unity.

Hill's Philosophia Epicurea also ends in this manner:

Data mundorum pluralitate, & Determinatione cum absoluta primieriorum globulorum discontinuatione, tame non tollitur De Unitas.

Bruno, Hill and, agreeing with them, Wilkins aimed no doubt to undermine objections put forward by Aristotelians against infinity of worlds by claiming it impaired God's unity. In Bruno, and his followers

infinite plurality which is inseparable from perfect homogeneity, far from being incompatible with the unity of the formal principle and the material principle is the sole adequate expression of them. Coherence of the system is consequently assured through agreement between a metaphysics and a cosmology.

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1 De Immense, I, ii. pp. 251-254.
Cf. Immense, 34A-B; 34A-B; 59D-D.

2 p. 118.

Bruno adopted these two attributes, unity and infinity, from the traditional concept of the Christian God, so that the universe becomes also "infinitus, unum, immobile". However, because it is not possible to conceive our world as infinite, it being composed of parts, Bruno moves towards an infinity of worlds, and only privation and the void are evil:

Nihil est absolute imperfectum, malum; sed aliquid tantum: omnis substantia absolute est bona.²

An immense homogenous substance extends throughout all, "Spatium unum aethereum immensum",³ possessing life and energy by its being infused by a spirit from within. This dynamic entity is a combination of matter and spirit. In More, there is a similar combination:

So that they're life, form, sprite, not matter pure
For matter pure is a pure nullity.³

Matter then assumes the reality it had lacked in the earlier Plotinian poems. Democritus Platonissans writes confidently of:

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1 Acerbius Cameracensis, I.i. p.119.  
"Dunque l'Universo è uno, infinito, impertibile".

2 De Immense, I.i. p.312.

3 Ibid., I.i. p.372.

4 Democritus Platonissans, p.195. st.16.  
Cf. De Immense, I.i. p.362-364, where Bruno argues there is no such thing as a true man or horse, and no true absolute circle in matter.  
Cf. Antidote Against Atheism, sig. B4: "fully and absolutely perfect, in counterdistinction to such Perfection as is not full and absolute ... suppose of a Lion, Horse or Tree."
A reall infinite matter, distinct
And yet proceeding from the Deity.
Although with different form as then untinct
Has ever been from all eternity.¹

In De Immenso, Bruno had said that

It is necessary that the matter that lies under
all and every single species be infinite —
Materia nempe sub omnibus, et sub singulis
speciebus infinitam esse, necessum est.²

His spiritus universi can work throughout the extent of creation
because of the homogeneity of space and of substance. De L'Infinite
and De Immenso are concerned with specifically rejecting Aristotle's
double physics with its false distinctions between celestial and
sublunar.³ Opposed just as much to the Ionic concept of the
limited 'peras' in an unlimited 'apeiron', similar to the
scholastic closed world, Bruno moved to Democritus and Epicurus,
making important modifications to their theory.⁴ He rejected

¹ Democritus Platonissans, p.208, st.68.
² I.i. p.283.
³ De Immenso, I.ii. p.1-22.
Cf. I.ii. p.284.
⁴ Democritus had written that "there are innumerable worlds
and they differ ... In some there is neither sun nor moon.
They are destroyed by colliding with one another. Some
are devoid of animals, plants and all moisture."
See, Geoffrey S. Kirk and John E. Raven, The Presocratic
their absolute void, and proclaimed "similes mundos in simili spacio", ¹ worlds which can in some way communicate with each other and work in perfect harmony, ² animated in much the same manner and alive. All globes are planets similar to our own, and inhabited in the same manner. ³ This is what makes the universe a unity, More argues:

And what is done in this Terrestrial starre
The same is done in every Orb beside. ⁴

In so far as Bruno lacked the training necessary to evolve a rigorously scientific cosmological system, one can agree with Alexander Koyré that he was "ni astronome, ni savant". ⁵ He often lacked the scientific fact and blundered into the wrong conclusions. But he possessed a keen mind seeking to support metaphysical insights by reference to scientific developments and observations. His method is argumentative rather than empiric, strongly marshalling science to the aid of his philosophy.

He thus praises Tycho Brahe as "nobilissimus atque princeps" ⁶ for his observations in 1572-4 that comets disproved Aristotle's distinction between the celestial and sublunar spheres, destroying

¹ De Immenso, I.i. p.301.
⁴ Democritus Platonissang, p.194. st.13.
⁶ De Immenso, I.i. p.221.
the scholastic prejudice that made planetary orbs impenetrable. ¹ He argued that comets were not a collection of meteors but planets, "cometas nihilo a planetis differre", whose orbits cut across planetary orbs. ² Using Tycho's and Cornelio Gemma's arguments and observations, Bruno denied the spheres, destroying what he called the "fantastic walls" of the world, and started an imaginary journey through space that was later parodied by Bishop Godwin. ³

Henry More also denies the spheres by basing his arguments on the observations of Tycho and Gemma on the supernovas which had occurred incidentally seventy years earlier:

The one espide in glittering Cassiopie,
The other near to Ophiucus thigh. ⁴

Although seemingly accepting the evidence from Galileo's "optick glasse, the greatest argument of all", ⁵ More can still assert, as did Bruno and Hill that "Some comets be but single Planets brent", ⁶ and this belief becomes even more evident towards the

³ Ibid., I.ii. pp.15-16.
⁵ Ibid., p.214. st.91.
Cf. J.L. McIntyre, pp.212-213: "Another of these [Bruno's anticipations or "discoveries"] was his theory of comets which he held to be of the same nature as planets and to move in similar orbits."
end of Democritus Platonissans, where fire is seen to seize "the burning bowels of this wasting ball"¹ in the manner of comets.

In Bruno's De L'Infinito and De Immenseo the "walls of the world" are repeatedly denied.² As More starts on his imaginary journey through space he significantly uses what seems to have been a Brunian image:

For still the azure Orb as she draws nigh
Gives back, new stars appear, the worlds walls 'fore her flie.

And what hath wall'd the world but thoughts unweighed
In freer reason? That antiquate, secure,
And easie dull conceit of corporature ... ³
Hath made this needlesse thanklesse enclosure. ³

The solar system then in Bruno, Hill and More is also significantly similar — an immense number of suns each accompanied by a number of planets, subscribed to neither by the Democritean athests⁴ nor

¹ Democritus Platonissans, p.215. st.98.

² De L'Infinito, II. p.4: "Con l'opra de la fantasia vogliono fabricargli la muraglia," Cf. ibid., II. pp.13; 103: "Rompi e gitta per terra col bombo e turinese di vivaci regioni queste stimate dal cieco volgo adamantine muraglie."

³ Democritus Platonissans, p.192. sts.5-6.

⁴ The ancient Atomists "with all their worlds" (Aristotle) still thought the Earth was central and still kept their worlds enveloped in their shells and "interworld" void. See, F.M. Cornford, Plato's Cosmology.
by Nicholas of Cusa. Rotating on its own axis, each several sun adopts the male central role of impregnating the "cold and dark" planets that congregate around it so that they participate in what Bruno calls "vital heat". Again More's system and vocabulary are close; but this vocabulary is traditionally found in Paracelsus and J.B. van Helmont too.

This is the parergon of each noble fire
Of neighbour worlds to be the nightly starre,
But their main work is vitall heat t'inspire
Into the frigid spheres that 'bout them fare,
Which of themselves quite dead and barren are
But by the wakening warmth of kindly dayes,
And the sweet dewie nights they will declare
Their seminall virtue.

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1 Cusanus never speculated about planets accompanying the fixed stars, but Kepler, Dissertatio cum Nuncio Sidereo, trans. Edward Rosen, p.11, seems to think he did: "Wackher maintained that these new planets undoubtedly circulate around some of the fixed stars (he had for a considerable time been making some such suggestions to me on the basis of the speculations of the Cardinal of Cusa and of Giordano Bruno.)" See ibid., p.64, n.56.
T. Campanella, Apologia pro Galileo (Frankfurt, 1622), pp.9-10 also has this misconception.

2 Psychatanasia, p.160. st.19: "I'll not deny but that he may turn round On his own centre."
Cf. De La Cena, I. p.214: "Si potrebbe concedere che il sole si muova circa il proprio centro."
Cf. De Immenso, I.ii. p.36: "Sic igitur quia se circum convertitur ille, Quae rapidi ex facie tenuarat viribus ignis."

3 De L'Infinito, II. p.66: "freddi et oscuri".

4 ibid., II. p.52: "vital calore".

5 Cf. Ortus Medicinae (1652), p.84.

6 Democritus Platonissans, p.197. st.25.
More definitely takes Bruno's stand against both Kepler and Galileo.

Wherefore every one
Hath a due number of dim Orbs that wend
Around their centrall fire.¹

Against the presocratic philosophers, Bruno argued also for an infinity of suns. Democritus had argued some worlds need no suns, and Epicurus that indeed one sun was enough. Not so Bruno:

perche è impossibile che il calore e lume d'uno particolare possa diffondersi per l'immenso, come potè imaginarsi Epicuro.²

There must be "si numerose lampe"³ or "tanti ... lampade luminose"⁴ to combat the vast darkness. Again more adopts a position similar to Bruno and Hill:

Innumerable numbers of fair Lamps
Were rightly ranged into this hollow hole,
To warm the world and chace the shady damps
Of immense darkness.⁵

¹ Democritus Flatonissans, p.198. st.27.
² De L'Infinito, II. p.53.
³ ibid., II. p.49.
⁴ ibid., II. p.66.
⁵ Democritus Flatonissans, p.195. st.18.
and again:

Nothing finite could put that immense shadow to flight.¹

Bruno argued against Democritus, Epicurus and Cusanus:

Therefore it follows there must be innumerable suns . . . Around these bodies there must revolve earths both larger and smaller than our own.²

Henry More's attitude is not far different. He claimed infinite suns:

That the dull Planets with collated light
By neighbour suns might cheared be in dampish night.³

Having proved that to his satisfaction, he concludes:

But if that infinite Suns we shall admit,
Then infinite worlds follow in reason right,
For every Sun with Planets must be fit,
And have some mark for his farre-shining shafts to hit.

But if he shine all solitarie, alone,
What mark is left? what aimed scope or end
Of his existence? wherefore every one
Hath a due number of dim Orbs that wend
Around their centrall fire.⁴

¹ ibid., p.197. st.26.
³ Democritus Platonissans, p.197. st.23.
⁴ ibid., pp.197-198. st.26-27.
Although More had read and been influenced by Galileo, Kepler and Descartes, he adopts a bio-cosmology similar to Bruno's and Hill's and a celestial mechanics radically alien to that of Copernicus, Galileo and Descartes. More holds with the Platonists, especially Origen and Plotinus, that heavenly bodies are the most perfect sacred animals\(^1\) that can move their mass with ease \([\text{facilimo appulse}]\) towards their objective, knowing and feeling without the use of such special organs as the eyes, wings or feet that lesser beings need. More asks:

But if't be so, how doth Psyche hear or see
That hath nor eyes nor eares? She sees more clear
Then we that see but secondarily ...
The worlds great soul knows by Protopenathie
All what befalls this lower sprite, but we ...
Cannot see hers in that perfection.

Animism is as closely linked with atomism in More as in Bruno and Hill. More will not separate matter and spirit as Descartes had done, reducing even living beings to automata.\(^3\) Bruno had adopted the atomism of the presocratics, discarding their 'impious elements' that extolled matter in motion acting through chance:


\(^3\) Henry More, Epistolae Quatuor ad Renatum Des-Cartes, sig. Z5V-Aa2V.
Sed non propterea rationis carpo elementa
Impia, Democriti adstipulatus sensibus, atqui haec
Mentem alta agnosco moderantem cuncta peternam.¹

"Mentem alta agnosco" points to Bruno's aim of reconciling
the atomism of Democritus to the theology of Plato.² This
is also specifically Henry More's intention, and the title-
page of his poem preaches a Democritean infinity of worlds
"out of Platonick principles".³ In the earlier Psychatanasia,
which C.A. Staudenbaur reads as a "Ficinian signum" to
reinforce a Platonic point of view,⁴ there were already signs
of the reconciliation of matter and spirit that animates
More's later poetry and prose.

In Democritus Platonissans, More's God is very close
indeed almost having "immediate contact" with atoms as More
claimed he had in correspondence with Descartes.⁵

For in each atom of the matter wide
The totall Deity doth entirely won,
His infinite presence doth therein reside
And in this presence infinite powers do abide.⁶

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¹ De Immano, I.i.i. p.126.
² Felice Tocco, op.cit., p.270. n.2.
³ Democritus Platonissans, p.186.
⁵ First letter, 1648, Epistolae Quatuor.
⁶ Democritus Platonissans, p.208. st.69.
Cf. Philosophia Epicurea, p.61.
Indeed as in Bruno and Hill, life seems to radiate from an infinite number of centres and not just the one centre. If each monad is thus alive, the macrocosmic "monads" or earths must likewise be alive and inhabited. In De Immenso's journey to the moon, Bruno asserted that among the lunar valleys, woods and mountains "there surely exist men, snakes, cattle, fowl and fish". This idea attracted the attention of Spenser, Hill and Kepler, who used it in his Somnium. Also that of Campanella, Burton and Wilkins. Galileo was strongly opposed to having such habitable earths in the universe, because although I do not imagine that these are dead and lazy places, I do not believe that they possess movement and life, and much less that they can generate plants, animals or other things similar to ours.

Henry More had no such qualms about the habitability of other planets. After giving "A glance at Copernicus opinion, as at theirs also that make the fixt starres so many Sunnes, and all the Planets to be inhabited," More takes a Brunian position. A. O. Lovejoy argues that, unlike Descartes and Pascal, More did not dwell on infinity because it belittled and humiliated man but because it filled him with exhilaration:

1 The Philosophical Poems, p.423.
3 The Faerie Queene, II. st.3. of Introduction.
In England Henry More became for a time the most zealous defender of the infinity of worlds. His adoption of the theory apparently owed something to Descartes' recent example. Lovejoy argued Descartes supported 'Brunonian' theories, though More steeped both in Plotinus and in the Scholastic philosophers, needed no other sources to provide the grounds of his argument... In Bruno, the idea of the infinity of things, in extent, in number, and in diversity, gives rise to an intense aesthetic admiration and enjoyment; he seems to expand emotionally with the magnitude of the objects upon which he expatiates. This mood passes over into a mood of religious adoration, but it is usually an essentially cosmical pietv, finding its object in the creative energy manifested in the sensible universe. The same is, in the main, true of Henry More.\(^1\)

In *Insomnium Philosophicum* then he emulated Kepler's and Bruno's moon journey:

Free as in open Heaven more swift then, thought
In endless spaces up and down I flie,\(^2\)

and saw the moon similarly alive:

Hills, Valleys, Woods, themselves did plainly shew,
Towns, Towers, and holy Spires to Heaven born,
Long winding rivers, and broad foaming Seas.
Fair chrystal springs fierce scorching thirst t'appeased.

And all bespread were the huge Mountains green
With Fleecy flocks and eke with hairy goats.
Great fields of corn and Knee-deep grasses were seen,
Swine, Oxen, Horses.\(^3\)

The same abundance that exists in Bruno's and Hill's planets re-occurs in *Democritus Platonissaens*:

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*Cf. De Immenso*, I, ii, pp. 16-23 ff.
And several kinds of plants therein do grow, grasses, flowers, herbs, trees... Which also's done in flies, birds, men and beasts; add sand, pearls, pebbles, that the ground do strow, leaves, quills, hairs, thorns, blooms, you may think the rest. Their kinds by mortall penne cannot be well exprest.

More accepted this habitability not only in the excitement and latitude of poetry, but also in the colder atmosphere of prose. This had also been accepted by Campanella and Wilkins.

The habitability of innumerable earths raised some doubts as to the validity of Christian dogma, which Bruno, Hill and Wilkins did their best to answer. Why did God plant man on this earth? Why did God send His only-begotten Son to free this man on this earth from original sin? Were the inhabitants of other planets also redeemed by Christ's crucifixion? Bruno's solutions to these problems were inherent in his metaphysical bias in his cosmology and his monadology.

First, he made the vast expanse of the infinite universe, not just this earth, belong to man:

*Intrepidus spaciurn immensum sic fenderu pennin Exorior.*

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1 Democritus Platonissans, p.199. st.31.
2 Conjectura Cabbalistica, p.49: "And God placed all these sorts of lights in the thin and liquid Heaven, that they might reflect their rays eue upon another, and shine upon the inhabitants of the World, dwelling in their respective earths."
4 De Immense, I.i. p.201.
Secondly, Bruno preached that salvation was in reality something we should really not be worried too much about, because in a world of flux, ¹ man was himself undergoing change, not disintegra-
tion but new permutations of monads — in other words, metempsychosis. This is more tricky for a man of More’s temper who believed in an orthodox Heaven and Hell. ² Even Hill refused to follow Bruno in this. ³ In his later Divine Dialogues More will strongly reject metempsychosis, and show how Christ’s salvation can redeem all earths, but in Democritus Platonissans he argues:

So do these Atomes change their energies
Themselves uncharged into new Cenreities ...
But from their inmost Centre they project
Their vitall rayes. ⁴

This permutation, however, seems to account only for the material strata although "men" are included in this mutation of monads:

which the impartiall knife
Of all-consuming Time still down doth gow
And now again doth in succession show. ⁶

In 1647, More again took up this problem, arguing that:

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¹ De L’Infinite, II. p.51: "Non sta, si svolge e gira
Quanto nel cielo e sotto il ciel si mira,
Ogno cosa discorre."

² Antipsychopannychia, p.250. st.37.

³ Philosophia Epicurea, p.111.

⁴ Divine Dialogues (1668), pp.520-539.


⁶ ibid., p.199. st.31.
Although I do not contend ... that this opinion of the 
praexistency of the Soul, is true, but that it is not 
such a self-condemned Falsity.

Indeed, he believed that pre-existence, which he linked to 
metempsychosis, would dispose of many arguments against the 
soul's immortality:

A praexistency of souls entire, 
And due returns in courses circular
This course all difficulties with ease away would bear. 2

This the same kind of argument that had been adopted by Bruno 
and Hill. 3 Although Bruno believed in eternal flux, there is 
a basic ambiguity in De Immenso and other works. Three times 
in De La Cena, 4 Spaccio 5 and Eroici Furori, 6 Bruno refers to 
the millenium and the Great Platonic Year which he links to 
the end of the world. Man and gods are shown to be living in 
the dregs of time and must wait a return of better times when 
a radical reform will be effected. Two chapters in De Immenso 
are devoted to a refutation of the cycle theory and eternal 
recurrence of Origen:

1 The Praexistencia of the Soul, p. 234.

2 ibid., p. 279, st. 98.
Cf. Antidote Against Atheism, sig. C2-3; Conjectura Cabbalistica, 

3 De Minimo, p. 17.
Cf. Philosophia Epicurea, p. 78.

4 De La Cena, I, p. 196.

5 Spaccio, II, p. 124.

Prossequitur propositum De Vanitate Ciscolorum et annii illius Mundani Phantasia Platonica et Aliorum.\(^1\)

Bruno ridicules this concept\(^2\) by introducing the burlesque dialogue of a bug and a flea, the one consoling the other about approaching death by devoutly confirming that after thousands of years they will return and be able to resume their conversation.\(^3\) Bruno seemed to believe that the concept of a world eternally renewing itself along Origen's cycles was incompatible with a Universe incessantly changing its every part: "Vos quidem dissolubiles estis, nequaquam vero dissolvemini."\(^4\) But in De Immense, it is gradually realized that this earth may come to an end although the vaster universe is eternal like a tree that sheds its leaves to renew them,\(^5\) or as More puts it:

Renewing still the faint decayed creature
Which would grow stark and drie as aged tree.\(^6\)

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1 De Immense, I,i. p.367. Cf. The Immortality of the Soul, p.225. "Two ways to destroy it, by Water or by Fire, which, say they, does as naturally happen in a vast period of Time, which they call Annus Magnus, as Winter and Summer doe in our ordinary Year."

2 Cf. Psychatanasia, p.183. st.37: "And though this hope by many surly Sages Be now derided."

3 De Immense, I,i. pp.367-368. Cf. The Immortality of The Soul, p.229, where More also makes fun of this return: "Veniit iterum qui nos in lucem reponet dies, quem multi recusarent, nisi oblitos reduceret. If nos, how oblitos? If oblitos, how nos? For we are not we, unless we remember that we are so."


5 De Immense, I,i. p.272.

6 Democritus Platonissame, p.217. st.105.
Hill had written that Nature progresses with a certain regression.¹

Bruno's study of comets in Tycho and Gemma led him to speculate that the eternity of the universe was not a guarantee for the indestructibility of planets. Planets will be destroyed through the combined effort of floods and ecpyrosis, the flame finding nourishment in water:

Quo igniti virtus duplicata hinc, inde rigoris
Excessu absamet lympharum pabula, ut ita³
Vadant undae igneisque extrema sparsa ruina.³

In Bruno's De Rerum Principiis, the apocalyptic vision of our world being destroyed is also highlighted:

Ita si terrae globus universus igne absametur
ut igne absesumendum plerique arbitrantur... numerum,
quod post combustionem subsideret aridum.⁴

Bruno argues that all worlds will not probably be simultaneously destroyed as in a Heraclitean conflagration,⁵ nor are worlds destroyed by colliding one with another as in Democritus.⁶ They are destroyed by the elements within them, fire and water. Life will then renew itself gradually, not through the "impious elements" of Democritus working through chance but by the divine organizing principle of spiritus universi:

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1 Philosophia Epicurea, p. 39.

2 Editorial addition by F. Fiorentino, Jordani Bruni Nolani, I.ii. p. 126.

3 De Immense, I.ii. p. 126.
Cf. I.ii. pp. 35; 37.
Cf. ibid., I.i. p. 274.
Cf. The Immortality of the Soul, p. 225.

4 III, p. 529.

5 See, Geoffrey S. Kirk and John E. Raven, op.cit., p. 411: "They are destroyed by colliding with one another."

6 Ibid.
Either Nature does not exist or it is a divine force working inside matter, imposing perpetual order everywhere.  

For a time the earth is covered over Terram obrueret by ashes and dew, alternating in its heat and cold Frigisque calorque until life returns to its original splendour.

In Psychatanasia, More had pointed to total destruction in a Heraclitean conflagration, and the subsequent return of pure souls to their divine source:

And though this hope by many surly Sages Be now derided; yet they'll all be gone In a short time, like Bats and Owls yflone At dayes approach. This will hap certainly At this worlds shining conflagration.

In Democritus Platonissans, published four years later, More approximated to Bruno. He now believed in the indestructibility of matter, as well as infinite worlds existing from and to eternity:

Wherefore at once from all eternity The infinite number of these Worlds He made, And will conserve to all infinitie ... Ne must one mite be minish'd of the summe, Ne must the smallest atom ever fade, But still remain though it may change its room.

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1 De Immense, I.ii. p.193.
2 ibid., p.192.
3 ibid., p.193.
4 ibid., p.201.
5 Psychatanasia, p.183. st.37.
6 Democritus Platonissans, p.208. st.70.
Cf. De L'Infinito, II. p.76.
And possibly through partially regarding comets as disintegrating planets, More became convinced of the imminent destruction of this earth, again through water and fire, the one feeding the other as in Bruno:

For as the seas
Boyling with swelling waves aloft did use,
And meet with mighty showers and pouring rain
From Heavens spouts, so the broad flashing skies
With brimstone thick and clouds of fiery bain
Shall meet with raging Etna's and Vesuvius flame.

The burning bowels of this wasting ball
Shall gallup up great flakes of rolling fire,
And belch out pitchie flames, till over all
Having long rag'd, Vulcan himself shall tire
And (th'earth an asheap made) shall then expire.

This is the same kind of destruction visualized by Bruno, who incidentally uses much the same imagery and the same proper names:

Hinc Thermae, hinc calidi fontes, hinc sunt freta salsa,
Sulphurei hinc montes; hinc est bitumen amaran, ...
Hinc celebris Siculis praeruptus histibis Asthna, Cinerel hinc montes, vidui partusqui Vesaevi, Vulc.

In Bruno, there is a calm surety that universal life would again resume through the influence of an organizing principle and not through some happy combination, born of chance, as Democritus would have it:

1 Cf. De Immense, I.ii. p.213.
   Cf. Jan Edouard du Monin, L'Uranologie ou le Ciel, (Paris, 1583) where it is also maintained that a comet is a star.

2 Democritus Platonissans, p.215, st.97-98.
   Cf. De Immense, I.ii. p.24: "Flamma etenim lympha, non sese vocitatur ipsa."

3 De Immense, I.ii. p.200.
Ergo si quae sors destruat unum
E mundus, plureisve simul, vel si lubet omnis,
Quod sans haud rerum patitur sine fine potestas,
Extensusque vigor, sors non eademque locorum,
Qui ad fatum innumeriter nequeunt tractarier unum,
Vita recursabit, naturaque materiei,
Hoc ipso instaurata, suo dat cuncta resecu.
Sed non propter us rationis carpo elementa
Impia Democriti adstipulatus sensibus, atqui haec
Mentem alta agnosco moderantem cuncta paternam. 1

Matter is then seen to return to a primitive chaos to start
a process of renewal:

For nought can e'er consume that centrall power
Of hid spermatick life. 2

The millennium is thus shown to be possible on earth:

O happy they that then the first are born,
While yet the world is in her vernall pride:
For old corruption quite away is worn ...
For all the while her purged ashes rest
These relics dry suck in the heavenly dew,
And reoccid manna rains upon her breast ...
A green soft mantle doth her bosomstrew
With fragrant herbs and flowers embellished,
Where without fault or shame all living creatures bed. 3

1 ibid., I.ii. p.126.

in esse, conservat in esse, & quae generant conservat, sanguine
non transeunte in formam carnis nisi mediante forma spermatica."

3 Democritus Platonissans, p.216. st.99-100.
Cf. De Immense, I.ii. p.201:
"Spiritus et vita e materno fonte recepta,
De quo viventes inuisit producier omnem
Ille epifex animam; quia princeps est anima illi,
Et princeps illa est animal, venerabile numen,
Fortunatum astrum, splendescens, incola coeli,
Author laudes decantans, etque ministrans."
More reads the renewal of the earth in the traditional myth of the phoenix that rises out of its ashes:

"Witness that uncouth bird of Arabia
Which out of her own ruins doth revive
With all the exploits of skilfull Chymistrie
Such as no vulgar wit can well believe,"

and ends *Democritus Platonissans* in the same manner that Bruno ends his *De Immense*, glorifying the goodness of God:

"Now urging the uncouth strange perplexitie
Of infinite Worlds and Time, then of a new
Softening that harsher inconsistency
To fit the immense goodness of the Deity."

It seems to me that these "correspondences", point to the fact that many of Giordano Bruno's theories and ideas had gradually filtered down to Henry More.

Failing More's own acknowledgement of this source, it can be argued that many of these ideas could have been borrowed "seriatim" from other sources — from Plato, Plotinus, Cusanus, Galileo, Descartes and of course Democritus and Epicurus, as well as others.

It seems to me, however, that in his argument for infinity, More put forward what is essentially the hypothesis expressed in Bruno's *De Immense* and Hill's *Philosophia Epicurea* — an infinity of worlds similar to our solar system, where the stars

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1 *Democritus Platonissans*, p.211, st.102.
Cf. W. Charleton, *Physiologia Epicuro-Cassendae-Charltoniana* (1654), p.10: "that this present world, Phoenix-like, sprung from the ruins of another precedent; and that the Ashes of this shall produce a Third ... of this persuasion were Plato, Heraclitus and all the Stoicks."

2 *Democritus Platonissans*, p.217, st.106.
are as many suns, worlds which "communicate" with each other because there is no "interworld" void (as in the presocratics), all standing on the confines of other systems so that man can feel free to range throughout the illimitable expanse. In More too, plurality of worlds is first presented as a logical possibility, then as a physical possibility derived from the infinity of space and linked specifically with the heliocentric theory, and finally as a metaphysical possibility that is translated into reality through the infinite power and goodness of God in whom liberty and necessity coincide, so that in each case the coherence of the system is maintained through the dovetailing of metaphysics and cosmology.

One could suggest there is a hidden reference to Bruno or Hill when More refers to "this new old opinion here defin'd of infinite worlds". More's title pays tribute only to the old sources. Which were the new which More refused to name except but vaguely? Copernicus, Galileo and Descartes were all uncommitted to infinity. Kepler was positively frightened by the concept. The only "new" philosopher of note who dared to assert infinity was Giordano Bruno. In this he was copied by Nicholas Hill, and cautiously supported by Burton and Wilkins. A.C. Lovejoy, N.H. Nicolson and Marie Boas as well as a host of other researchers of the period regard Bruno as the principal

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and strongest representative of the decentralised "infinite and infinitely populous universe." It was Bruno who made a strong case on which the grounds of infinity could be established:

Indeed Bruno was probably the only philosopher who really comprehended the possibilities inherent in the idea of infinity. Bruno's works, embodied in an anti-Aristotelian framework, were a forceful unrelenting attempt at forging into a unity the disparate elements of Democritus and Plato, a synthesis acceptable to Hill, Wilkins and also to Henry More.

However, truth can be a "divine ventriloquist", and Henry More could possibly have effected his own synthesis. More could not, however, help knowing that Bruno had established it before. Most other contemporaries and friends of More, such as Kepler, Mersenne, Burton and Wilkins, knew this for a fact. Is it probable that Henry More himself, an omnivorous reader and an erudite scholar of Christ's, could be so apparently unaware of the fact? The parallels established above suggest otherwise. Time and again, More is found using characteristically Brunian arguments in support of both the new science and the new philosophy. His adoption, after a hasty rejection, of the idea of an infinity of worlds links him unmistakably to Bruno and Hill. As Marjorie Hope Nicholson said:

1 The Great Chain of Being, p. 116.

More had accepted nearly all the premisses from where Bruno reached his conclusions — the Copernican hypothesis, the neo-Pythagorean and neo-Platonic conception of plenitude ... within a short space of time he carried the premises to their conclusion. 1

The grapevine could have run like this. Bruno, we know, greatly influenced the Londoner Nicholas Hill. Robert Burton and John Wilkins were, in turn, influenced by both Bruno and Hill. Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy* and Wilkins's *A Discovery*, selling like hot cakes in 1638, influenced Henry More who a few years later wrote *De doce Platonissans or An Essay upon the Infinity of Worlds out of Platonick Principles*.  

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Henry More’s Concept of Matter

Basic to the philosophy of Bruno, Hill and More is the concept of a dynamic atomism amalgamating disparate elements in Platonic idealism and Democritean materialism, the Averroistic concept of ‘minima’ and the thought of Avicebron. Straying early from the Platonic camp, Bruno temporarily joined forces with the mechanical atomists. But in *De La Causa*, he acknowledged

... dei geni di sustanza; l'uno, ch'è forma; e l'altro ch'è materia. Per che è necessario, che sia un' atto sustanzialissimo, nel qual è la potenza attiva di tutto, et ancora una potenza et un soggetto, nel quale non sia minor potenza passiva di tutto; in quello è potestà di fare, in questo è potestà di esser fatto. ¹

This hardly departs from the Aristotelian dualism of matter and form and, granting Bruno’s declared anti-Aristotelianism, could only be transitional.

Especially through Albert the Great and Aquinas, many philosophers had come in contact with the suspect materialistic concepts of David of Dinant and Avicebron’s *Fons Vitae*, and it is through them as well as through Averroes and naturalists of southern Italy that Bruno arrived at his concept of matter. Although differing on points of detail, many agreed on the existence of what the Ancients called prime matter. Thus Cardan in *De Subtilitate* argued that

¹ *De La Causa*, I, p. 251.
What remains constant in all generation is that which we call prime matter or hyle.\(^1\)

This classical definition is also adopted by Ficino:

> It is necessary that there should exist a simple matter. And this simple matter which helps support the form of the elements is called prime matter.\(^2\)

Disparities and divergencies occur once one starts discussing the origin and function of matter — the most hotly debated point being whether matter itself is eternal or created in time. Cardan argued that matter existed before generation and cannot be destroyed by corruption.\(^3\) Such an audacious opinion was adopted without difficulty in Bruno's works. Whereas in the work of Plotinus and Ficino there is little importance given to material nature, in Cardan there is a strong attempt at forging a dialectic of matter:

> Compared to the form, matter is in potency, but in itself it is in act. In the same manner that the foetus, in so far as it is not completely developed, is an infant potentially, but in so far as it is foetus it is so in act.\(^4\)

In *De La Causa*, Cardan's image is adopted for the breaking forth of matter,\(^5\) but Bruno's originality lay in linking a strong critique of the Aristotelians with a rehabilitation of

\(^1\) (Nuremberg, 1550), p.3.

\(^2\) *Theologia Platonica*, II, p.63.

\(^3\) *De subtilitate*, p.3.

\(^4\) ibid.

\(^5\) I, p.274.
prime matter which he claimed to be divine. Against Aquinas, he specifically defended David of Dinant, and maintained "la materia come cosa eccellentissima et divina." 

In his analysis of prime matter, Bruno refers continually to the Plotinian demonstrations regarding the impossibility of attributing determinations to matter because of its fleeting form so that it becomes a sort of non-being, "Authentic Non-Existence", but this paradoxically makes his concept of matter and body richer. Bruno's prime matter, because it possesses no attributes, does not exclude them but contains them all. In De La Causa, Bruno moves to an individual position in which matter and form become two principles of one and the same substance transcending either: "Non dico il composito, ma il semplice". Bruno's system assumes a flexible naturalistic monism preaching a non-mechanical organic universe in which soul becomes the point of union of all existents. Having said that, however, it must be

1 H. Vedrine, La Conception de la Nature chez Giordano Bruno, p.274.

2 De La Causa, I. p.207.

3 Enneads, p.122.


6 De Magia, III. p.408.
pointed out that in Bruno matter tends to assume ever greater importance. Matter is looked at in two ways—as the subject of mutation and as potenza, the latter "comune al mondo intelligibile e sensibile", and indeed knowable only through the intellect because "la materia della natura non ha forma alcuna assolutamente".¹

In De La Causa, Dicson argues that matter even as vulgarly understood, what Philotheo calls "artificiale",² is the root of all, and everything must refer back to it. He insists that it would be impossible to separate form from matter, and in any close union, even this secondary matter can be seen to monopolize the formal element as well. Philotheo, however, insists against the errors of Dicson and Avicebron. Matter has a divine origin but it is wrong to conclude that forms are merely "accidents and circumstances of matter." Indeed there is the intermediary spirit of the universe interposed between matter and the Deity.³

The distinction becomes somewhat blurred in De Minimo's statement, "Deus est monadum monas",⁴ where God has a more direct and immediate contact with matter. This is perhaps best seen in his original concept of the three minima. He

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¹ De La Causa, I. pp.260-264.
² Ibid., I. p.252.
³ Ibid., I. pp.257-258.
⁴ De Minimo, p.17.
blamed Aristotelians for failing adequately to discuss *anima*, or spirit, as a real substance — treating it merely as logical but not natural.¹ In the Latin treatises and poems he attacks both Aristotle and Plato² and makes a more direct connection between spirit and matter, patterned on that of David of Dinant.³ His three *minima* are God, soul and atom. The latter is the substratum of all material existents, the soul is the central power organizing matter, and God is the supreme reality, the Monad of Monads from whom emanates all, and in whose bosom the infinitely great and the infinitely small coincide.⁴ But the bridge linking God to the world of existents is the spirit of the universe, inhabiting the vast expanse, permeating and integrating all matter into a harmony:

Ergo cluit constans in cunctis, et super haec qui
Claudit finitum, infinitum permeat amplum,
Efficiens, nectens, integrans atque propagans
Quidquid compositum, et simplex quocumque creatur
Immenso a seclo pendens.⁵

As opposed to Plotinus, Cusanus, Palingenius, Ficino, Scipione Capece and others, Bruno did not accept this through a rejection of atomism. Only a thorough study of matter in *De La Causa*

¹ *De La Causa*, I. p.256.
⁴ *De Minimo*, p.7.
⁵ ibid., I.ii. lines 18-22.
and a specific assessment of the minima corporalia in De Minimo confirm its existence. And in confirming it, Bruno's atom becomes essentially different from the "elementa impia" of Democritus and Epicurus, being simultaneously a material substratum and centre of energy, an inescapable link of body and soul. Lasswitz believed that Bruno adopted the term 'monad' to strengthen the metaphysical base and differentiate it from the geometric point and physical atom. The result is a dynamic atomism, conserved by the spirit of the universe, distinct from, but closely united to matter, like Hill's "plastici principij vigor." The close unity of this spirit of the universe to matter implies, against Plato, Plotinus and Ficino, that it forms matter from within and is not an external principle. If proof were needed that the evolution of life comes from within, it is enough, says Bruno, to consider the wonderful behaviour of insects such as the ant, the swallow and the bee.

In De La Causa, Bruno distinguishes his spirit of the universe from the Platonic concept of Anima Mundi that seeks to withdraw from matter after it has formed it; and again his stress falls on "from within":

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1 De Immenso, I.ii. p.126.
3 De La Causa, I. p.238.
4 Philosophia Epicurea, p.77.
Questo è nominato da Platonici fabbro del mondo ... Plotino lo dice padre e progenitore, per che questo distribuisce i semi nel campo de la natura, et è il prossimo dispensator de le forme. Da noi si chiama artefice interno, per che forma la materia e la figura da dentro, come da dentro del seme o radice manda et esplica il stipe, da dentro il stipe caccia i rami, da dentro i rami, forma le brance, da dentro queste ispiega le gemme, da dentro forma, figura et intesse, come di nervi, le frondi, li fiori, li frutti, eda dentro a certi tempi richiama li suoi umori da le frondi e frutti a le brance, da le brance a li rami, da li rami al stipe, dal stipe a la radice.¹

This is close to the position adopted by the Van Helmonts, Henry More and Ralph Cudworth. Also important in this connection is Bruno’s reiterated view that this spirit of the universe is extended, and "because it is extended" can communicate its perfection to all its parts. Its extension, however, is not dimensional but metaphysical and spiritual.² Because of this, no body or matter is without spirit. All things possess life,³ and every motion occurs through the design and 'magical' sympathy of the spirit of the universe, and that includes "action at a distance", magnetism and gravity, tides and winds, diurnal and seasonal variations, and so on.

¹ De La Causa, I. p.236.
Cf. Spaccio, II. p.112.

² De La Causa, I. p.243-246.

³ ibid., I. p.240.
Henry More had adopted just such a view in his early poetry, but as he embarked on the prose treatises he was more cautious as to the kind of claims he could put forward. After 1640 he was strongly influenced by Descartes, Hobbes whose works circulated widely in manuscript, and later by the works of Gassendi, Charleton, Malebranche and Spinoza. While a study of their influence is outside the scope of this study, it is useful to note that some of More's ideas developed in direct opposition to Hobbes, Descartes and Spinoza, polemic forcing More to adopt a synthesis of Renaissance neo-Platonic thought. This chapter is therefore also concerned with the development of More's basic tenets as they relate to Descartes and Hobbes.

Although More was among the first to adopt and teach Cartesianism in England, he never saw eye to eye with the French philosopher. Ward relates that Descartes himself frequently said

"yet he knew no person who more thoroughly understood his philosophy than one More of England."

but even as early as 1648-49, More's position is often diametrically opposed to Descartes'. More's insistence on God's having "immediate contact" with matter and his repugnance of the doctrine of the beast-machine, immediately marks his independence. Encouraged by Hartlib and Cudworth, whose

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importunity overcame "my naturall rusticity and averseeness from affecting acquaintances and correspondercyes with men of great fame". More set out his basic differences in four letters which show that he did indeed have a lot to "controvers" with Descartes. Although expressing sympathy and admiration with parts of Descartes, More argued that it was a mistake to equate body with extension in three dimensions "God or angel, or any self-subsistent thing being also extended". More was also specifically against Plotinus here. On 5 February 1649, Descartes denied that any "true extension" could accompany any substance that is not body. He warned More that some indeed "confuse the notion of substance because of false prejudices" that nothing can exist without being intelligible as well as imaginable, and is genuinely surprised that More, "otherwise so perspicacious", prefers to say

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1 Henry More to Samuel Hartlib, 11 December 1648, Hartlib Papers, Sheffield University Library. Quoted by permission of Lord Delaware.

2 More still taught Descartes' Dioptrics even after his 'break' with Cartesianism. See M.H. Nicolson, Newton Demands the Muse (1963), p.7.

3 Epistolae Quatuor ad Renatum Descartes, p.67. incorporated in A Collection of Several Philosophical Writings of Dr. Henry More, 2nd ed. (1662).

4 Enneas, p.525: "Extension is of Body; what is not of Body, but of the opposed order must be kept free of extension."

5 Epistolae Quatuor, p.67.
that divine extension fills the space in which there are no bodies, rather than to admit that there can be no space without body.¹

More replied that spirits were not extended in the sense of being tangible and impenetrable, and held out for a true extension of the spirit world.² He also believed like Bruno, Hill, Hariot and Basso, that the atom, although extended, was not infinitely divisible. Here he is in total disagreement with Descartes,³ although he seems to think this is not the case (nulla inter nos est controversia).⁴ Descartes maintained that it involves a contradiction that any atoms can be conceived as extended as well as indivisible, "indeed I agreed in article 3⁴ that this infinite division of parts of matter at times actually takes place".⁵ More held, on the other hand, that matter could only be reduced to the basic indivisible, atom or monad, itself alive "with a

¹ ibid., pp.67-68.

² ibid., p.73.
³ The Philosophical Works of Descartes, ed. Haldane and Ross (1931), I, p.264: "That from this may be demonstrated the non-existence of atoms."

⁴ Epistolarum Quatuor, p.74.

⁵ ibid., pp.68-69.
stupid and drunken life" that rules out the mechanization of Nature. Possibly this close relation of soul to body could be found in Enneads where, however, association is regarded as evil, and where also possibility of atoms is denied. It may also be linked to the Paracelsian concepts of J.B. Van Helmont's Ortu Medicinac although this was only just recently published in 1648. Descartes rejected More's animism outright, calling it mere "fine phraseology" (suavita) that hinders a true investigation of reality:

This occurs when we imagine something and later take enjoyment in our fictions; as you do in your corporeal angels, your shadow of the Divine essence and such like.

Descartes admits that any discussion of motion is fraught with theological dangers:

I did not want to discuss it fully in my writings. I was afraid of seeming inclined to favour those who considered God as a world-soul united in matter.

Descartes had of course discussed motion at some length in Principia Philosophiae, stating specifically:

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1 ibid., p.105.

2 Enneads, pp.531-532.

3 ibid., p.109.

4 Epistolae Quatuor, p.105.

5 ibid.
I do not accept or desire any other principle in Physics than in Geometry or abstract Mathematics, because all the phenomena of nature may be explained by their means, and sure demonstration be given of them.

This is where More, Cudworth and the van Helmonts strongly disagreed with Descartes. Like Bruno and Hill, they urged a spiritual causative power that could bridge the illimitable expanse of Cartesian dualism between res cogitans and res extensa. More indeed would unite them both in res extensa and propound a spirit-matter continuum, an extended spirit of the universe that, in vital union with matter, directs its motion from within by an unconscious energy; this was against Cartesian physics, which

rejecting all Flastick Nature ... derives the whole system of the corporeal universe from the necessary motion of matter only divided into particles insensibly small and turned round in a vortex, without the guidance or direction of any understanding nature.²

For a time More had seemed to accept Descartes' doctrine of substances, and his allegiance to the concept of spiritus naturae was driven into the background. This occurred partly through his involvement in controversy with Thomas Vaughan, who had published Anthroposophia Theomagica and Anima Magica Abscondita. Using animistic atomism, Vaughan argued that,


2. Ralph Cudworth, I. p.175.
of itself, matter has no motive faculty but is linked to an
"Intrinsically inward Principle", Bruno's "principio interiore
... intrinseco", which in turn links it to Anima Mundi.

The general tone of the book is so "enthusiastic" that
Jonathan Swift refers to it as

a piece of the most unintelligible Fustian
that, perhaps, was ever publish'd in any language.

Henry More castigated Vaughan as a member of the Rosy-Crucian
Brotherhood, "a most Christian and famous society". In an
age not chary of name-calling, the More-Vaughan controversy
stands out for its strong language. Besides tainting Vaughan
with Popery, More attacks him for literally making every¬
thing in the world animated, every cheese and every bellows.
He scorns him for indulging in an over-literal interpretation
of the world's animism. Some of the concepts in Anthroposophia
Theomagica, though driven to extreme, bore a strong kinship to
his own:

1 *Anima Magica Abscondita* (1650), pp.9-10.
2 *De La Cena*, I, p.166.
3 *The Prose Works of Jonathan Swift*, ed. H. Davis (Oxford,
1939), I, 79.
or Freemasonry" with Bruno.
5 *Observations upon Anthroposophia Theomagica* (1650), p.76.
6 *The Second Lash*, pp.74-77.
7 *De La Causa*, I, p.240.
For you pretending the same way that I seem to be in ... they might yoke me with so disordered a companion as yourself. Reasoning thus with themselves; Vaughan of Jesus in Oxenford holds the pre-existencie of the Soul, and other Platonic Paradoxes, and we see what a pickle he is in: What think you of More of Christ's that writ the Platonicall Poems?

Vaughan, in his turn, accused More of rejecting the doctrines enthusiastically supported in The Philosophical Poems. More, however, defended himself strongly, asserting his Plotinian bias:

Now you will say that I am become so great a Cartesian that I begin to thinke but meanly of Platonisme! A wise inference! As if divine and natural knowledge were inconsistent ... nor am I become cold to my own poems. For I say that divine spirit and life that lyes under them is worth not only all the Magick that thou pretendest to, but all that thou art ignorant of beside, yea and Descartes his philosophy to boot.

More is at pains to show that although he had attacked Aristotelians for making the world soulless, his definition of the world as a sacred animal should not be taken too literally. One need not put forward the world as some sacred animal that feels or understands to praise the

1 ibid., pp.35-36.
2 Observations upon Anthroposophia Theomagica, p.89.
4 ibid., p.83.
wisdom of an omnipotent God — wherever one looked about
one, 'signatures' proclaimed a Deity. Vaughan's vitriolic
attack scorned this "Moor" as a mouse "nibbling at the
margins of my Booke", counter-accusing him of misunder-
standing

the Doctrine of Signatures, and this appears by
thy foolish answer, which hath no more brains,
than the pulp of a Wall-nut.

This controversy forced More to take a long hard look
at his concept of Anima Mundi. Some tacit concessions are
made to corpuscularianism so that in The Second Lash of
Alazonomastix, the tides and the loadstone, which More had
attributed to the magical influence of Physis, are now as
in the 1647 Notes, explained by Cartesian physical theory.

At one point Vaughan had highlighted the importance of
matter in the same way as Dicson in De La Causa: "To thinke
that God creates anything ex nihilo in the work of generation
is a pure Metaphysicall Whymsey". This particular problem

1 The Second Wash or the Moore Scour'd Once More (1651), p.6.
3 The Second Lash, p.151.
4 Anthroposophia Theomagica, p.55.
recurs in the earliest correspondence More had with Anne Conway, (as yet unpublished),\(^1\) four letters of which help to throw some light on the development of his thought. A substantial part of this correspondence deals with first and second notions and the innate idea of a perfect God. In this section, especially in the letter of 9 September 1651, More defends Descartes against what he considers misinterpretations on the part of Anne.\(^2\) Two other letters, those of 5 May and 17 November 1651, deal more specifically with the problem of matter, vacuum and space. Possibly influenced by the Cartesian correspondence, Cassendi's Animadversiones and the Vaughan controversy, More sought to re-think the pantheistic monism and infinity of matter which he had accepted in Democritus Platonissans:

\[
\text{A real infinite matter, distinct } 3
\]
\[
\text{And yet proceeding from the Deity.}
\]

By a series of arguments, involving geometrical demonstrations and a diagram,\(^4\) More argued that an empty space implied no

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\(^2\) B.M.Add.MS.23216.f.1.

\(^3\) Democritus Platonissans, p.208. st.68. Cf. *De Immenso*, I.i. p.283: "Materiam nempe sub omnibus, et sub singulis speciebus infinitam esse, necessum est."

\(^4\) B.M.Add.MS.23216. ff.302-303\(^v\).
contradiction, and that Descartes' "superstitious supposition of the impossibility of a vacuum does ipso facto make the matter infinite." Arguing against Descartes that "Therefore there is length or distance in Emptiness ... That there may be distance in Vacuo," More adopted a divine extension that seems to have a close connection to Bruno's "etero infinito," which is spiritual as well as material:

Omnia in uno eodemque aethereo spacio, coelo, campo, firmamento non aliter quam Tellurem consistere visimus, et ponderibus librata propriis consistunt.

Bruno's infinite universe is indeed composed of the plenum and the void in seeming agreement with the presocratic atomists but, specifically against Democritus and Leukippus, Bruno maintains that the Void is not thus mere nullity — nor is it Descartes' plenum. The "interworld" void of the Epicureans is transformed into a spiritual ether infinitely extended, and distinct from matter:

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1 B.M.Add.MS.23216.f.302.


3 Epistolae Quatuor, p.69: "You imagine some divine extension which goes further than bodily extension — sed praeterea etiam divina quandam extensionem imaginari, quae latius patent quam corporum extensio."

4 De L'Infinite, II. p.39.

This concept of a spiritual ether, "a kind of spiritual body", capable of being filled, is extended in De Immenso where the identification of ether as divine extension is made even more specific. Distinguished from air, it is linked to the divine ineffability of God. Like Henry More's spirit, it really exists, is extended, and, as opposed to body, offers no resistance.

More's Democritus Platonissane had preached both an infinite space and an infinite matter, the latter necessarily arising out of the former, as in Bruno and Hill. But More was never content for long to follow any of his "sources" slavishly. We therefore find him driving a wedge between infinite space and infinite matter. Having proved the existence of infinite space, he distinguished it from body, which is not extended, but is confined within the limits of space, and which, as opposed to body, offers no resistance.

1 De Minimo, I.ii. p.10.
2 Cf. Acrotismus Cameracensis, I.i. p.177: "Inter haec ingenereabile, incorruptibileque est aer immensus, utpote corpus spirituale." 
3 De Immenso, I.ii. p.76.
4 De Immenso, I.ii. p.80: "sedes deorum est aether seu caelum;"
5 ibid., I.ii. p.84: "Sphaerae per aetheream regionem ab anima propria moventur facilemius impulsi ... tum quia ex parti spacii nullum est resistens, nullum impedimentum."
space, Bruno and Hill had shown the "convenience" of infinite worlds because this homogeneous space could not frustrate God's power.

This is the kind of stand for created matter that Anne Conway, who most probably inherited a copy of one of Bruno's Italian dialogues, was apparently putting forward for discussion in her lost letter to More where, perhaps because of the delicacy of the subject discussed, she urged More to "secrecy". By now, More's views on matter had slightly altered. He had been reading the works of Pierre Gassendi, and although he told Hartlib that "Gassendus is too tedious a philosopher for me", he had read Gassendi's adverse critique of Bruno's infinity of worlds in Animadversiones.

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1 De L'Infinite, II. p.20.


3 See Above, p.307.

4 B.M. Add. MS. 23216 f.307: "The secrecy you command me shall be very religiously observed by me."

5 Sheffield University Library, Hartlib Papers, More to Hartlib, 5 November 1649: "If you can procure me out of France with any tolerable speed a Copy of Gassendus his Epicurean Philosophy, I will willingly pay what it shall cost."

6 Ibd., More to Hartlib, 20 December 1649.
In discussing the unity of the universe and pluralist hypotheses, Gassendi gave more importance to Bruno than to either Plutarch or Epicurus, and in Syntagma Philosophicum, 1 sought to expose the day-dreams and "fictions pure and simple." 2 of an infinite universe that had been inspired by the Copernican system and which Gassendi specifically attributed to Giordano Bruno. 3

An infinite space, admitted by Gassendi himself in Animadversiones proves only the possibility of a plurality of worlds that God could have created, but not the necessary, or even convenient, existence of such worlds. 4 Bruno's reasons for their actual existence, Gassendi argued, lack any real weight. When these Moderns (Recentiores) imply infinity of matter from the omnipotence and immeasurable bounty of God, they are at fault because God's virtues cannot be measured in a way similar to ours. 5

In his letters to Anne Conway, More argues in similar fashion:

1 Opera Omnia (Lyons, 1658), I. 139b-140a.

2 ibid., 144b.

3 ibid., 140a; marginal gloss: "ut Iord. Brun. in quaest Plat."


5 ibid., 142a.
My contending for a true infinite distance in space, in my Infinity of Worlds is only to facilitate the possibility of that infinity.¹

More also agrees with Gassendi, against Bruno, Hill and Anne Conway, that space is not impenetrable.² Six months later, although not expressly against infinite matter, he is certainly against the uncreated and eternal matter of Dicoson in De La Causa. Urged by Anne's objections, More marshalls a series of arguments that he later uses against "Spinozium Atheismi"³ and against F.W. van Helmont in Fundamenta Philosophiae sive Cabbalae Aeto-paede-melissaeae.⁴ Matter and infinity, he argued, are just not on the same level, and if one were to admit the independence of an eternal matter, one would have to put forward a polytheistic universe lacking in harmony and certainty. Because this letter is not otherwise available, I quote its second half fully:

To the second which is a supposal that matter is uncreated, I answer that that seems to me not so rationally. For then, there will be some thing independent of God, who is as absolutely perfect as the minde of man can frame without a contradiction, and if matter may be independent, why may not immaterial beings be also independent, suppose angels and souls of men. Nay if we can admit, that any thing may be of itself uncreated of the first most perfect being, we may as well admit, that there are more Gods then

³ Henry More, Opera Omnia (1675-79), pp. 615-635.
⁴ ibid., pp. 523-527: "the childish doctrine of many gods."
one independent, that may war one with another, and againe be at peace, and when the toy takes them in
the head, to fling the bodyes of the Planets at one
another, as lads do snow-balles, and to be able to
quash all speeces in sport or peevishness. So that
there will be nothing fixed in the Universe, but all
cast upon uncertainty by reason of the fortuitous
tuggings of these mighty immense and independent
deities. Secondly, if the matter be uncreated, it
is because God has no power to create, which emplyes
a contradiction to the idea of God, who is perfectly
powerfull, and therefore must be able to do all things
wch the minde of man is able to conceive without a
contradiction. And it is no contradiction for a substance
to be produced entirely, or wch there was nothing before.
And therefore I conceive that God can as easily call forth
a real substance into being, as our minde can an ordinary
phantasme or imagination. And if God can not create, he
cannot create a soul or spiritt, and therefore all soules
and spiritts are independent of him for being; but that I
intimated before. But if you will say, that God can
create matter, but he can not create it unless he
create it infinite, as he can make a man, but not so but
by putting together of the parts of the man, head, heart,
lungs, etc., I answer matter in itself is an homogeneall
thing, and wants no such conformation of parts as the
body of an Animal dos. And therefore any part of it may
exist alone, as any piece of lead may be lead, though
cutt of from the rest of the lump. But any part of the
Animal, head or heart, can not be an animal cutt of from
the rest of the parts, the fitt conformation of all wch
makes up the body of the animal. But now it is easie for God to create in an instant
as to create at all, and to annihilate as to create, and
therefore all holds good that I sayd.  

This "our old controversie whether there be a vacuum" which
More defended with "more reason ... then I thought the thing
capable of", is re-echoed in Antidote Against Atheism which he
published in 1652. Some of the arguments mentioned in these

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1 Cf. De La Causa, I. p.244.


3 Cambridge University, Christ's College MS. Bb.6.7, f.1.
letters re-occurs in this treatise, fittingly dedicated to "The Right Honorable, The Lady Anne, Viscountess Conway and Kilulta", aimed at winning "full assent" for the existence, omnipotence and goodness of God. More argued that there exists no absolute perfection in the material universe as established by the senses, that it is through divine reason that men acquire the notion of the perfect circle or triangle:

This accuracy either in the Circle or the Triangle cannot be set out in any material subject: therefore it remains that she hath a more full and exquisite knowledge of things in herself then the Matter can lay open before her.  

These ideas are found in Bruno and Hill, but go back to Plato and the Aristotelians.

Having established the existence of relative notions, More plunges into a discussion of matter. As opposed to Hobbes and Descartes, he can not accept that the "fortuitous tuggings" of matter and motion can account for the "varieties of appearance" that exist in Nature.

Of necessity we shall be cast upon a God, or at least a spiritual substance actuating the matter.  

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1 Antidote Against Atheism, sig. A2.
2 ibid., p.10.
3 ibid., p.13.
4 ibid., p.33.
This turns out to be the spirit of the universe which is ever working invisibly within matter. Bruno had written that worlds were endowed with sense and intelligence, and in *De La Causa*:

"Credete, disse Nundino, che sii sensitiva quest anima? Non solo sensitiva, rispose il Nolano, ma anco intellettiva; non solo sensitiva, come la nostra, ma forse anco piú."

Hill had said the world possessed "sense and intellect, not human, but simpler and better." More writes pointedly, refusing to define his secondary agent:

"but whether simply Spemtical, or *Sensitive also* and Intellectual, I'll leave to the disquisition of others, who are more at leisure to meddle with such curiosities."

In *De La Causa*, which together with *De Minimo*, influenced Hill's concept of matter and spirit, Bruno suggested that, though intellectual, the spirit of the universe works

"con certo prefisso ordine, senza atto di cogitazioni" but there is such a dynamic organic harmony that all mechanical atomism is excluded. One characteristic description of the soul's invisible activity is that of the snail's horn which expands and contracts, but which is ever present:

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1 *De Immenso*, I.i. Iii. p. 316.
2 *De La Causa*, I. p. 166.
3 *Philosophia Epicurea*, p. 20.
4 *Antidote Against Atheism*, p. 39.
5 I. pp. 238–239.
Proxima formatrix anima est, vis intima cuique,
Atque ut materies ipsam esse ipsa gubernat,
Internum, ut limax, pulsu se extendit, in arctam
Semet conglomerat molem, nullamque figuram
Interdum facit esse sui, mox fronte redire
Cornua parva jubet, caput exerit, oraeque mittit,
In speciemque, agili exprorecto corpore, vermis
Procedit, veluti, facta exglomeratio centri

an image that More used in a similar context:

And that particular Loves that be yborn
Into this world, when their act doth dispear,
Do cease to be no more then the snails horn
That she shrinks in because she cannot bear
The wanton boys rude touch, or heavie cheer
Of stormy winds.

In Buno, Agrippa, Vaughan and other Paracelsians the
smallest insignificant object as stone, straw, mineral or
heliotrope is animated. More had accepted animism in
Psychatanasia, but after castigating Vaughan's excesses
he scorns "the most ridiculous Figments" that can be
imagined:

... that the stones in the street are grinded
with pair when the Carts goe over them: that
the Heliotrope eyes the sun, and really sees
him, as well as turns round about him.

1 De Immense, I.ii. p.313.
Cf. Ibid., I.i. pp.88-89.

2 Psychatanasia, p.104. st.5.

3 De La Causa, I. p.186.

Cf. Spaccio, II. p.225.
However, a careful examination of phenomena, asserts More, proves that matter and motion cannot account for harmony. The perpetual parallelism of the earth's axis, the phenomenon of gravity, the "laws of Day and Night"¹ are, together with countless others, examples of God's wisdom, and moreover argue the existence of a *spiritus naturae*.² Matter and motion, said More, can account only for "some petty inconsiderable effects".³ Three chapters later, More concludes that though the mere fortuitous motion of matter "may do something, yet it will not amount to the production of Plants and Animals".⁴ The tides and the loadstone are still accountable through matter and motion, but the fact that the loadstone "might have lain so low in the Earth as never to have been reached by the Industry of Man" also argues some new guidance in matter.⁵ When in 1662 More published the third edition of *Antidote Against Atheism*, "the petty effects" previously attributed to mechanism are

¹ ibid., p.40.
² ibid., p.57.
³ Title of Book II, chapter II of *Antidote Against Atheism*, 1st ed. (1653).
⁴ *Antidote Against Atheism*(1653), II.v.
⁵ ibid., p.49.
linked with "Ridiculous Sophistry of the Atheist." More also added four folio pages based almost exclusively on experiments made by Boyle to prove that there exists

a spiritus naturae (or what you will) which is the Vicarious Power of God upon this great Automaton, the World.

Insofar as the world is now a great automaton, Descartes' mega-machine, this is a concession to mechanism, but Henry More is at pains to prove the existence of that spiritus naturae which Descartes refused to consider. As in Bruno, Hill and J.B. van Helmont this universal spirit is teleological, working in such a manner that this world is the best possible. Bruno and Hill stressed that evil is only relative:

Nihil est absolute imperfectum, malum ... optima enim quaque ordaliter in iis, quae ajectissimae vilissimaque consentur, inexistunt.

In More, the whole second book of Antidote Against Atheism stresses the usefulness of nature. In the third book, More indulges in spiritism and miraculous manifestations such as are found in Helmont's Ortus and Charleton's translation of it to combat atheism. Even the Pied Piper and fairy circles

1 ibid., p.42.
2 ibid., pp.44-47.
3 Robert Boyle, New Experiments Physico-Mechanical touching the Spring of Aire and its Effects (1660).
5 De Immenso, I.i.p.312; Cf. Philosophia Epicurea, pp.2567.
6 Antidote Against Atheism, p.100.
7 ibid., p.121.
are adduced for the existence of spirit, while stories about witches' sabbaths, incubi and succubi abound. More even tries to explain why women who had allegedly lain with the devil should invariably report cold semen.¹ Stories from Cardan, Wierus, Psellus, Bodinus and others are reported and used against the growing scepticism of the age to "undeceive the half-witted World".²

The indulgent Anne Conway assured More that

the obstinate Atheist cannot but confesse, I thinke, if he carefully peruse your booke, that there are sufficient reasons to enforce him to a contrary beleive.³

After seeing Antidote through the press, More was at work on Conjectura Cabbalistica in which he "interpreted the mind of Moses"⁴ in the first three chapters of Genesis. Dedicated to Ralph Cudworth, Conjectura involves three separate interpretations, "Literal, Philosophical, Mystical".⁵ More is concerned with showing how the discoveries of the moderns had been adumbrated by Mosaic tradition. This had already been attempted by Wilkins.⁶ Quoting Plutarch's Vita Numae,

¹ ibid., p.125.
² The Letter of Dr. Henry More to Mr. J.G. about the Daemon of Tedworth, prefixed to Joseph Glanvill's, Saducismus Triumphatus, 2nd ed. (1682), p.10.
³ Cambridge University, Christ's College MS.Bb.6.7. f.2.
⁴ Conjectura Cabbalistica, sig. Ddd5.
⁵ ibid.
⁶ A Discourse, p.17.
More shows that, long before Copernicus, Numa Pompilius had asserted heliocentricity. Before doing so, he traces the usual connection of Numa to "Judaical tradition", through Pythagoras who "was either a Jew himself, or at least received his doctrine from the Jews". More accepts Plutarch's report of a report and asks, "What can be more plain than these testimonies?" Earlier, he had drawn a distinction between

the Actual spiritual creation and the dim possibility of the material or outward world ... for the Active and Passive principles are not two distinct substances, the one Material, the other Spiritual.

In the discussion that follows, More adduces a large number of authorities to support his "new conception" of matter, but he admits to Anne Conway that though many of the ideas be most what my own, yett I do what I can in my Defense to gette Godfathers all along to these births of my own braine, and so to lessen the odium of these inventions by alledgeing the Authority of Ancient Philosophers and Fathers.

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1 ibid., p.127. 

2 ibid., p.129.

3 ibid., p.17. Cf. ibid., p.75.

4 B.M.Add.MS.23216. f.42.
Despite this, More expounds a conception of matter that often looks like a combination of Bruno's and Descartes' theories of substance. Unlike Bruno or Hill, More does not venture to assume when it was that God created the Universe,\(^1\) but he asserts the creation of a real matter:

And God thought again, and invigorating his thought with His Will and Power, created an immense deal of real and corporeal Matter, a substance which you must conceive to lie betwixt the foresaid fluid possibility of Natural things and a Region of Seminal forms.\(^2\)

God, said More, then created stars and earths to fill the liquid ethereal expanse:

As a primary Planet in respect of its reflexion of light is rightly called a Planet, so in respect of its Habitablenesse it is as rightly termed an Earth.\(^3\)

He refers to

infinite numbers of sundry sorts of Lights, Suns and Planets, which God's Wisedome and Power, by union of fit and active principles drawn from the World of Life, made of this Aethereal Matter; whose usefulness is plain in Nature ... Which implies that there are Planets everywhere through the whole Heavens allotted to the Suns.\(^4\)

Like Bruno and Hill, More stressed the harmony and "mutual communication" that exists among all stars and habitable earths:

\(^1\) *Conjectura Cabbalistica*, p.22.


\(^4\) *Conjectura Cabbalistica*, pp.18-19.
And God placed all these sorts of Lights in the thin and liquid Heaven, that they might reflect their rays one upon another, and shine upon the inhabitants of the World, dwelling on their respective Earths ... And the universal dark Aether being thus adorn'd with the goodly and glorious furniture of those several kinds of Lights, God approved of it as good.  

Bruno or Hill, of course, are never given as sources. "To lessen the odium of these inventions", More attributes infinity to Moses through Pythagoras, who must have held, if Democritus had all his Philosophy from his Writings or Traditions, That there are infinite Worlds, and that they are generable and corruptible, but that Matter is unperishable. That there are infinite numbers of Atomes or Particles, different in magnitude and figure ... and that they are moved in the Universe after the manner of Vortices.

There is here a very definite attempt to link Democritean atomism with Descartes' physics, but there is also a dynamic animism that is completely alien to the mechanical world-picture of both Descartes and Democritus, and yet firmly based in atomism.

More also attacks those — and they include Aristotle and Descartes — who "make God a Finite Being" by their care to place him out of the stink of this terrestrial Globe, that he may sit, and so confine him to Heaven.

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2 The Conway Letters, p.83.

3 Conjectura Cabbalistica, p.103.

4 ibid., "Let us consider out of the Dogmata of Democritus, and see how all together sute with those of Cartesius." Descartes, of course, was never an atomist.

Omnipotence and omnipresence were, in More's view, necessarily and logically linked.¹ In this book, More is loth to accept even the most diluted dualism of spirit and matter. Although indeed Descartes admitted minimal interaction in human beings through the special function of the pineal gland, More asserted that one can hardly posit interaction between heterogenous substances, and in Conjectura Cabbalistica drew closer to the idea of a continuum of being ranging from the purely spiritual to extended matter:

Wherefore this Matter was actuated and agitated forthwith in the very creation thereof by that hand that made it, and was guided and moderated by some Universal Spirit, yet part of the World of Life, whence it became very subtile and Aethereal.²

Where Descartes had located extended matter in a space-time continuum, More felt, despite his obvious admiration of parts of the Cartesian philosophy, that unless the spiritual was also accorded extension it was in danger of being edged out into nothingness. In More's opinion it was safer to assert extension as a necessary attribute of all existence and then demonstrate spirit was also extended:

¹ Conjectura Cabbalistica, p.63.

² ibid., p.18.
That it may be conceived to be some real Being and true Substance and not a vain Figment such as is everything that has no amplitude and is in no sort extended.\footnote{The Basie True and Genuine Notion and Consistent Explication of the Nature of a Spirit, inserted in Joseph Glanvill’s Saducismus Triumphatus, 2nd ed. (1682), p.150. Cf. Enchiridion Metaphysicum (1671), p.393.}

But More refused to accept either the Hobbesian body-substance or the Cartesian body-extension identification, and substituted instead impenetrability and atom indivisibility as the formal principles of body.\footnote{Epistolae Quatuor, p.63. Cf. De Immenso, I.ii. p.30. Cf. Philosophia Epicures, p.15.} According to More, spirit is "indiscerpible", its extension differing from material extension because it has a metaphysical or a "fourth dimension".\footnote{The Immortality of the Soul, p.41. Cf. Enchiridion Metaphysicum, p.384.} Spirit did not lose its original extension after the creation of the world of existents, and is still intimately united to matter in the production of life.\footnote{Conjectura Cabbalistica, p.76.} Matter shaped by \textit{spiritus naturae} is compared to a developing foetus:

the external framing of the World in all the parts of it being immediately or instrumentally performed by it \textit{omnis Spiritualis substantiae}, as the Faetus is in the wombe.\footnote{ibid., p.81.}
This image had been invoked by both Cardan and Bruno. More’s concept of matter and spirit is aligned towards the new monadology — against Aristotle, Plotinus, Democritus, Ficino and Descartes. More considers that the Platonists "strip Matter more naked than she really ought to be";¹ that Aristotle and Descartes are wrong in supposing matter to be infinitely divisible; and that Democritus and other presocratic atomists are wrong to assert completely "mechanical" atoms.² Indeed it is clear that his "new supposition concerning Hyle, as if it were an actual material Substance", though More claims it is original, finds a close parallel in Bruno’s De La Causa and De Minimo, and Hill’s Philosophia Epicurea. It is no doubt also influenced by the concepts of minima of the Averroists, Nifo, Scaliger, Sennert and Kenelm Digby. This is how More describes matter:

It is one and simple, that is to say, exactly uniform everywhere, and indivisible into any parts that are of a different nature ... it consisting of actual perfect Parvitudes and of nothing else, which are so many Physical Monads, and utterly indivisible in themselves.³

These "perfect parvitudes", globular as in Bruno, are everywhere, so that even what seems an empty space or "a mere Vacuum" is alive with them. Again, these monads transform

¹ ibid., p.137.
² ibid., p.103.
the vacuum into ether which is "a middle Term betwixt those two extremes, the Physical Hyle and the World of Life", through which roams the universal spirit of Bruno, Hill or J.B. van Helmont so that

though the World be a Machina, yett the Mechanick or Arteficer is not matter, but some other Principle in the World of Life.¹

Although More later refers the idea that the soul is a "perfective Architect" to the Enneads,² he now takes on both Plotinus and Aristotle:

The very nature of the Soul, as it is Soul, is an aptitude of informing or actuating a Body; but that it should be always an organized Body, it is Aristotle's saying of it, he does not prove it. But for mine own part, I am very prone to think that the soul is never destitute of some vehicle or other, though Plotinus be of another minde, and conceives that the Soul at the height is joyned with God and nothing else, nakedly lodged in his arms.³

The concepts and vocabulary here are reminiscent of Bruno and Hill:

Tutta la forma è accompagnata da la materia. Così, come già sicuramente dico de la materia, non esser parte, che a fatto sia destituita da quella, ecetto compresa logicamente, come da Aristotele, il quale mai si stanca di dividere con la ragione quello, ch'è indiviso secondo la natura e verità.⁴

¹ ibid., pp.141-142.
³ ibid., p.167.
Sometimes, the distinction between form and matter seems to evaporate, and More can entertain the idea of "corporal angels, the shadow of the Divine essence and such like".  

To the second edition of Antidote Against Atheism More added an important Appendix, where he stresses the link between spirit and matter, stating that substance, whether spiritual or material, cannot perish without a miracle.  

Like Bruno and Hill, More argued that if matter is indestructible, the soul is even more so. Then More discusses the problem of space as distinct from matter and comes to the conclusion that if after the removal of corporal matter out of the world, there will be still space and distance in which this very matter, while it was there, was also conceived to lye, and this distant space cannot but be something, and yet not corporal, because neither impenetrable nor tangible; it must of necessity be a substance incorporeal necessarily and eternally existent of itself: which the clearer Idea of a being absolutely perfect will more fully and punctually inform us to be the self-subsisting God.

If More starts on his way to a partial acceptance of a God immersed in space and the universe, this represents only one aspect of his deity. By its side, there is the image of the Plotinian transcendent God and that of the old Testament who is often evoked in his letters to Lady Anne

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1 Epistole Quatuor, p.105.

2 Appendix to the Foregoing Antidote, p.181. Cf. De Minimo, p.13: "Est et immortalitatis nostrae validissimum ex eo principio argumentum, quod individua quae aedificat, agglomeret exglomeratique ordinet, vivificat, movet, intexit et ut mirabilis opifex tanto operi est praefecta substantia, minime deterioris debet esse esse conditionis ... quam corpora quae agglomerantur ... quorum vere est aeterna."


3 Appendix to the Foregoing Antidote, p.165.
Conway at this very time\(^1\) and the tension between immanence and transcendence provides interesting matter for argument.

In 1659, partly in reply to Charleton's "Antidote Against Ignorance", *Physiologia*, More embarked on a major project to prove the existence of spirit through a detailed study of the phenomena of motion. He told Lord Edward Conway, to whom *The Immortality of the Soul* is dedicated, that the system he was introducing, was completely original:

... the Reasons and Arguments comprised in this Book, whether for Confutation or Confirmation, is the genuine result of my own anxious and thoughtful Mind, no old stuff purloined or borrowed from other writers.

In *The Immortality of the Soul*, More refuses to espouse Descartes' doctrine of substances, and constantly hits at Hobbes, "the confident exploder of immaterial substances".\(^2\) Hobbes is taken as the representative atheist, and More unremittingly attacks the impious elements in *Leviathan*.\(^4\) His quarrel with Hobbes and Descartes centres around extension. Again he insists that not "trinall dimension" but

\(^1\) B.M. Add. MS. 23216. ff. 30; 34; 40.

\(^2\) The Immortality of the Soul, sig. Gg. This is partly a hit at Charleton who translated J.B. van Helmont and Gassendi.

\(^3\) ibid., p. 5.

\(^4\) ibid., p. 43. See, ibid., pp. 37 ff; 65-77.
impenetrability constitutes body. This is also Bruno's and Hill's view. The immediate property of spirit is activity and even atoms are penetrated by it. This "inmost centre of life", around which other physical atoms congregate, is axiomatically "to be purely indivisible" and can never be destroyed.

This idea of an inmost psychic centre which integrates all others is found in Hill and in several works of Bruno, the minimal realities being again the soul and the atom, both of which are indestructible:

Ergo animus circum minima adglomerando tomodorum Corpora, se velut involvit caec-co ordine in illis, Carcree fatali tanquam sibi membra figurans, Ut max se totum hoc corpus diffundat in omne, Rursumque ex omni ac toto resopitu remigret Spiritus expanso de atamine concitus in cor.

It is in fact the indestructibility of atoms that is Bruno's and Hill's main argument for the immortality of the soul. Where in Bruno we have "congrua produzione", and in Hill we are told that "actum divinum in homine tanquam congruo & bene disposito organo" in More we have "vital congruity",

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1 ibid., p.42.
3 The Immortality of the Soul, p.32. Cf. De l'Infinito, II. p.32: "questo spirto...penetra dentro tutti, e viene insito in ogni cosa."
5 De Minimo, I.iii. lines 50-55.
6 De La Causa, I. p.235.
8 The Immortality of the Soul, p.120.
established by the spirit of the universe. Stretched between a spirit-matter continuum, More, Hill and Bruno see it as "doppia sustanza, altra spirituale, altra materiale." As it is material, it can act on, and be acted upon, by matter. As it is spiritual it can influence the soul, and possibly be influenced by it. It is the middle term between two extremes, and that is both its strength and its weakness.

Although refusing to accept a "middle mixture of corporeal and incorporeal substance", More proclaimed, against Aristotle and Descartes, that one need never assert a complete dichotomy between spirit and matter, mind and body. Here he seems close to Bruno, Hill and Van Helmont:

that a firm union of Spirit and Matter is very possible, though we cannot conceive the manner thereof ... So say I that in the Union of Matter and Spirit, the parts of the Matter receiving from the Spirit just such a velocity of motion as the Spirit exerts, & no more, they both rest in firm Union with one another.

Not surprisingly, More follows Bruno and Hill in saying that even after death, the "Soul is united vitally with...

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2 The Immortality of the Soul, p.22.

some Matter or other".  

When More descends to a discussion of matter proper, he again seems to be in substantial agreement with Bruno, Hill and Gassendi against Descartes, Aristotle and Hobbes. Bruno and Hill had spoken against those who persist in further dividing the indivisible. Similarly, More argued that, although intellectually divisible, matter consisted of infinitely small atoms and that

Physically and really it is not divisible in infinitum ... For to take away all Extension, is to reduce a thing to a Mathematical point, which is nothing else than pure Negation or Non-entity; and there being no medium betwixt Entity and Non-entity, it is plain that if a thing be at all, it must be extended. And therefore there is an Essential Extension belonging to these indiscernible particles of Matter, which was the other property that was to be demonstrated. I know unruly Fancy will make mad work here, and clamour against the Conclusion as impossible.

Bruno and Hill had drawn a distinction between the absolute and the relative minimum, the minima and the terminus, a distinction discarded by those who, denying parts to the minimum, went on to assume that a composition of minima resulted in a sum of zeros or non-entities. If the finite

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3 The Immortality of the Soul, p.27.

4 Cf. Enchiridion Metaphysicum, p.304, where this "essential spissitude" becomes the property of spirit.

5 The Immortality of the Soul, p.3.


7 ibid., I.xi. lines 14-20.
mass is divided, one necessarily reaches the minimum, just as when infinite number is divided one reaches the monad.\(^1\) Bruno's main aim is to prove that the minimum or "last part" exists before division, and attacks the opinion of the "vulgar" that one can never reach "parts that are without parts".\(^2\) It is an illusion of miserable spirits that supposes that the whole continuum can be infinitely divided because each "smallest part" has "integral" parts which bear further division:

\[\text{Ast miseram turpis cohibet deceptive mentum,}
\text{Quando ita continui reputat se integra secare,}
\text{Excursu sine fine tomarum numerando; nec illud}
\text{Aspicit, ut numerum adponens sine fine procurrat,}
\text{Non autem a magno magnum sic eximat idem.}\(^3\)

Minima and termini are not on the same plane:\(^4\) "Terminus ergo est qui nulla est pars, et per consequens neque minima pars."\(^5\) This is similar to the argument adduced by More:

\[\text{De Minimo, p.18.}
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\[\text{ibid., p.20.}
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\[\text{ibid., pp.20-21.}
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\[\text{ibid., p.48: "Minima & terminus non sunt in eodem genera quantas."}
\]
\[\text{ibid., p.29: "The terminus, or limit, is that which has no parts, but which nevertheless is not the smallest part."}
\]
What some would object from Reason, that these perfect Parvitudes being acknowledged still intellectually divisible, must still have parts into which they are divisible, and therefore still be discernible; To this it is answered, That division into parts does not imply any discernibility, because the parts conceived in one of these Minima Corporalia (as I may so call them) are rather essential or formal parts then integral.  

It seems to me that More is trying to make the distinction adopted by Bruno between terminus and minimum, a distinction insisted upon by his 'disciple' Nicholas Hill, two editions of whose book were available in Cudworth's library. Bruno had maintained that unless the concept of the minima as integral was accepted it would be impossible to maintain any kind of true measurement — indeed mentiri would take over from metiri. The minima existed before division, attracting others to them to form ever greater quantities — the minimum expanding into the maximum. Bruno visualised the minima as an infinitely small circle around which congregate six others of equal radii tangential to it and to each other to form a larger circle, which again aggregates to it six other circles to form a still larger circle, and so on in ever expanding circles. It is indeed

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1 The Immortality of the Soul, p.30. More's italics.
2 See Above, pp.178-179.
3 De Minimo, III.ii. lines 3-7.
difficult to visualize the **minima** on their own without having many of them united in one conglomerate. Bruno's example here is with light and optics. Light itself, he maintained, irradiates from a lucid point. Our sight, however, is such that it often sees the ray, or innumerable rays forming a luminous cone, but not the lucid point of origin:

*Ita stat ergo lucem punctalem esse visibilem, sed non sub punctalitatis ratione vel natura, sed sub diffusione.*

The central circle then, uniting the rays on its circumference, is the **minima**. But when the universe is considered as an infinite sphere, the centre cannot really be determined because it is everywhere:

*Interea sensum protoplasten stultitarum
Inde vide centrum, cui nulla est sectile parte.
At fluxus omnes de gyro terminat unum,
Tendat in immensum quantumvis fimbria campi.
Ergo infinito minimum neque terminus esse
Terrai poterit moles, neque terminus ullus
Esse potest velut id est conclusum margine nulla.*

So that every **minima** is at the same moment the maximum, because each monad is seen as expanding and aggregating to itself an infinite number of others. The monad which controls all others, in which minimum and maximum coincide, the *monadum monas*, is nothing else but the Deity:

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1 ibid., p.39.

2 ibid., III.iv. lines 1-7.

3 ibid., I.iv. p.17.
Deus est monas, omnium numerorum fons, simplicitas omnis, magnitudinis et compositionis substantia et excellentia super omne momentum, innumerabile, immensum.¹

Henry More seems to adopt some of these concepts. He asserts that the purely indivisible minima are not merely a sum of non-entities² for "Magnitude cannot arise out of Non-Magnitudes", and "as little as it is the repetition of it will amount to considerable magnitude".³ These constitute two of More's "axioms", and lead on to the expansion from the minimum to the maximum:

Nor need we wonder that so full an Orbe should swell out from so subtil and small a point.⁴

Bruno's example with rays and light is also taken over:

But we will reduce the matter to one lucid point, which, according to the acknowledged Principles of Opticks, will fill a distance of space with its rays of light: Which may be reverberated back towards their Centre by interposing some opaque body, and so this Orbe of light contracted ... This inmost Centre therefore of life is something, and something so full of essential vigour and virtue, that though gradually it diminish, yet can fill a certain sphere of Space with its own presence and activity, as a spark of light illuminates the duskish aire.⁵

¹ ibid., I.1. p.7.
³ ibid., p.27. Cf. W. Charleton, Physiologia, p.86.
⁴ ibid., p.29.
⁵ ibid., pp.25-26. Cf. De Minimo, p.55: "In hoc ubi sumus genere, magnitudine despicabile, modicum, minimum est virtute maximum ... veluti scintilla urentis ignis, si materia subliciatur et operatio non interruptur, in infinitum se propagare valet, nihil oiusdem impediente potentiam."
More goes on to suppose that this example helps sufficiently to "set out to the Imagination how Extension and Indiscernibility may consist together", thus aiding his case for the extension of spirits. Indeed in his 1655 Appendix More had already used the lucid point image as a "Symbole or Hieroglyphick" to represent the property of spirit:

Suppose a Point of light from which rays out a luminous Orb ... This Orb of light does very much resemble the nature of a Spirit, which is diffused and extended, and yet indivisible. For we'll suppose in this Spirit the Centre of Life to be indivisible, and yet to diffuse itself by a kind of circumscrib'd omnipresency, as the Point of light is discernible in every point of the Luminous sphere. And yet suppose that central lucid point indivisible, there is nothing divisible in all that sphere of light.

Despite this symbolic approximation of the monad to the Deity, and despite the definition "of God to be a circle whose centre is everywhere and circumference nowhere", More does not accept the notion of God being a monad among monads, Bruno's "Deus est monadum monas". God should not be seen as only immanent in matter; he must retain the personality of the Biblical God, and a strong transcendental element as well. More therefore strongly attacks what he considers a basically atheistic formula found in David of Dinant and Avicebron, but pushed to its 'logical' extent in an atomistic framework by Bruno:

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1 ibid., p.25.
2 op. cit., p.150.
3 ibid., Cf. De La Causa, I. p.246.
4 The Immortality of the Soul, p.24.
The utmost evasion the wit of man can possibly excogitate is that Figment of a certain Divine Matter dispersed in the World, which some conceit to be the onely Numen thereof ... They seem very absurd in imagining this to be the Numen of the World or God himself, it being so inconsistent with the Personality and the Unity of the Godhead to be made up of an infinite number of inter¬spersed Atoms amidst the Matter of the World: For this cannot be one God in any sense; nor a single Divine Atome an Entire Deity. From whence it would follow that there is no God at all.

There is a strong assertion of Plotinian bias as More hits at those who "make God himself a mode of matter." Although later seeming to accept the circularity of atoms, as he had done earlier in Conjectura Caballistica, More now refuses to accept the Brunian shape for these "Minima Corporalia, as I call them". Bruno had maintained:

Simpliciter minimi simplex est una figura
Circulus atque globus, fiet quippe omne rotundum
Cornibus abiectis, quod non facit angulus esse huc,
Pyramis et trinquetrum, sunt quae plasmum atque globosum
Primum composita, in suneque extenuata feruntur.
At vero solum, quaequeque in cornua surgit,
Cornibus exemptis potis es cogitare minorem
Etque figurati species servata rotunda
Omnis ad extremum; minimum ergo est rotundum.

So that the six circles tangential to themselves and to the central circle form triangular, or pyramidal, empty spaces between:

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2 Enneads, p.105, 115.

3 The Immortality of the Soul, p.62: "Suppose some very small round ones."

4 p.142.

5 The Immortality of the Soul, p.30.

6 De Minimo, I.xii. lines 1-9.
Pyramis est solidis elementum, et sphaera creandis.
Et multi ut possunt cycli concurrere in unum
Atigui, triquetra est latere interiecta recurve
Tree inter species, inieetque pyramidalis
Est inter sphaeras totidem.¹

To my knowledge, Bruno was the only atomist who insisted on these triangular or pyramidal interstices. The ancient atomists had insisted on void spaces important for the local motion of bodies. J.B. van Helmont had also spoken of interstices between atoms.² In each case, however, because atoms were of various shapes, the interstices were not triangular. Other atomists then like Basso, Gorlee, Magnenus, Cassendi and Charleton insisted on a variety of figures in atoms. Because Bruno insisted on the circularity of atoms, he asserted triangular intervals arising from the round protuberances:

At vero melem, quaecunque in cornua surgit,
Cornibus exemptis potis est cogitare minorem,
Estque figurati species servata rotunda
Omnis ad extremum; minimum ergo est omne rotundum
In quod naturae vel census ordo resolvit.³

More, however, agrees with Descartes on this point,⁴ and speaks disparagingly of these fictitious triangular empty spaces. They are nothing more than

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¹ I b i d., l.xii. lines 16-20.
² Ortus Medicinae, pp.68-69.
³ De Minima, p.45.
⁴ See, A.G. van Heijn, From Atoms to Atom, pp.95-98.
spurious suggestions or representations from the Phansy, as if these perfect Parvitudes were Round bodies, and that therefore there would be Triangular intervals betwixt, void of Matter; they are of no moment in this case, she always representing a Discernible magnitude instead of an Indiscernible One ... Wherefore Phansy being unable to exhibit the Object we consider, in its due advantages, for ought we know these perfect Parvitudes may lye so close together, that they have no intervals betwixt; nay it seems necessary to be so; For if there were any such intervals, they were capable of particles less then these least of all; which is a contradiction in Reason, and a thing utterly impossible.¹

Bruno's doubtful geometry had gone on to assert that such curvilinear intervals are not really empty:

 nihil simpliciter vacuum praeter spacion intra coentium trium in plano, et quatuor in solido, atomorum concursum intermediam.²

There is thus no basic disagreement with Bruno. Indeed it is paradoxical that More often seems to use examples and arguments in De Minimo to prove his point; although his concept is also indebted to the minima naturalia of the Averroists.

But if we should gratifie Phansy so far as to admit of these intervals, the greatest absurdity would be that we must admit an insensible Vacuum, which no faculty will be able to confute. But it is most rationall to admit none, and more consonant to our determination of our Minima Corporalia, as I call them, whose largeness is to be limited to the least real touch of either a Globe on a Plane, or a Cone on a Plane, or a Globe on a Globe: if you conceive any real touch less then another, let that be the measure of these Minute Realities in Matter. From whence it will follow they must touch whole sides at once, and therefore can never leave any empty intervals.

Nor can we imagine any Angulosities or Round Protuberances in a quantity infinitely little, then we can in one infinitely great.³

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These minima corporalia are then considered as the "Inmost Centre of Life", assuming the spiritual energy of Bruno's and Hill's monad. Then More expounds a concept of spiritus naturae which, in England, became the characteristic concept of the Cambridge Platonists, especially of More and Cudworth.

Once more teleology comes to the fore. It is against reason, argues More, to suppose that the fortuitous action of matter and motion can produce a world in which design is uppermost:

For this vital Fabrication is not an artificial Architecture when an external person acts upon Matter; but implies a more particular and near union with that matter it thus intrinsically shapes out and organizes ... My opinion is therefore, That the Soul, which is a Spirit, and therefore contractible and dilatable, begins within less compass at first in Organizing the fitly-prepared Matter, and so bears itself in the same tenour of work till the Body has attained its full growth; and that the soul dilates itself in the dilating of the Body, and so possesses it through all the members thereof.

The image of contraction-dilation as a symbol for the soul appears in Bruno under various forms, but it is highlighted in the first book of De Minimo:

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1 ibid., p.26.


3 Cf. the image of the snail's horn in De Immense, I.ii. p.313. Cf. Psychatanaea, p.104. st.5.
Ut centri in magnum exglerat se expanso gyru, 
Conlectis atomis circum undiq, spiritus archi-
Tectus se infuso moderatur, adusq,
Tempus quo exactis numeris, vel stamine rupio 
Corpora, in centrum redimat se, & inde per ampli 
Recens se insinuet mundum ... 
Ergo animus circums minima adglomerando temorum 
Carcere fatali tamquam sibi membra figurane, 
Ut nux se totum hoc corpus diffundat in omne; 
Nursumq, ex omni ac toto resopitu remigret 
Spiritus expanso de stamine concitus in cor. 1

This is repeated:

Undea per nativitatem & adolentiam spiritus architector 
expanditur in hanc ous consistimus molem, & a' corde 
diffunditur2

where birth becomes "an expansion of the centre" and death 
a "contraction into the centre". 3 This is taken over by 
Hill who also asserts that in life and in death, there is 
a close union between spirit and matter. 4 This is reflected 
 microcosmically in the soul that is never quite destitute of 
some material figure or other, 5 and macrocosmically in the 
spiritus univeral 6 which is highlighted in Book III of More's 
The Immortality of the Soul. This has a different emphasis 
from World-Soul of the Platonists the existence of which

1 pp.11-12. 
2 ibid., p.13. 
3 ibid., Verbatim in Philosophia Epicurea, p.10. 
4 Philosophia Epicurea, p.9. 
5 De La Causa, I. p.270. 
Cf. Divine Dialogues, p.537. 
6 De Magia, III. p.408.
More doubts.  

When More spoke of *spiritus naturae*, he put in no corrective clauses throwing doubt on its existence. For him, it is never the Plotinian third hypostasis per se. Physical theory caused him to modify the lower orders of the Ogdoad — Physis, Tasis, Hyle — such that *spiritus naturae* is far more intimately connected with matter, as in Helmont, Hill and Bruno. Although Charleton argued this concept was used as a catch-all for the inexplicable and the mysterious, More defended it grimly, and not without some success. Many accused him of introducing an obscure principle, "the infatuating opium of Ignote qualities," before a competent search could be made to determine phenomena. Against this More argued that his *spiritus naturae* was not so much introduced by me, as forced upon me by the inevitable evidence of Reason.  

Whereas the methodical ideal of Descartes, Gassendi and Charleton conceived of *rebus extensa* as intelligible in terms of mechanics, More refused to accept this completely. He often either rejected Cartesian physics or injected it

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1 Preface to *The Immortality of the Soul*, p.9. "Wherefore we may generally conclude, that if there were an Universal Soul ..."

2 *Physiologia*, p.342.

3 *The Immortality of the Soul*, p.11.
with a dose of animism that tended to lessen or grow stronger in time. More posited a causative spiritual power that organized force and matter and life itself. Although, however, this is similar to Hill's "plastici principij vigor" and to Bruno's "spiritus architector" it probably ultimately owes its origin to Plotinus's "perfective Architect". Where Descartes is happy to rely on the ontological proof for God's existence, More reads the universe teleologically:

it can never be contrived into that Order it is without the super-intendency of a God.

Where Descartes and Plotinus stress God's transcendence, and Bruno God's immanence, More stresses God's transcendence while claiming he has "immediate contact" with matter. Where in Descartes and Hobbes matter becomes self-subsistent and acts in its own right, in More it is linked to a spiritual agent. Discussed indeed within the wider context of immortality, More's spiritus naturae is the spiritual causative power of all existents. This "great Quarter-master General", is again derived from a close study of

1 Philosopha Epicurea, p.77.
3 Enneads, pp.565-566.
4 Chapter heading, Antidote Against Atheism (1653), II.i.
5 The Immortality of the Soul, p.203.
matter and bears some affinity to Bruno's "spiritus architect", Van Helmont's "Universall Pander" and similar neoplatonist notions. In De La Causa Bruno had written of this "efficient fisico universale" and had gone on to explain that

Sia pur cosa quanto piccola e minima si voglia, ha in sua parte di sostanza spirituale, la quale, se trova il soggetto disposto, si stende ad esser pianta, ad esser animale, e riceve membri di qual si voglia corpo, e che comunemente si dice animato; per che spirto si trova in tutte le cose, e non è minimo corpuscolo, che non contenga cotal porzione in sè, che non inanimi. 1

In De Minimo, spiritus universi, lower than the Platonic Anima Mundi, is concerned with the continuity, birth and coalescence of all things. 2 More's spiritus naturae is

A Principle that is of so great influence and activity in the Nascenty, as I may so call it, and Coalescency of things: And this not only in the production of Plants, with all other Concretions of an inferior nature, and yet above the more Mechanicall lawes of Matter; but also in respect of the birth of Animale whereunto it is preparatory and assistent. 3

Bruno's definition of this concept is rather significant:

1 ibid., I. p.241.

2 De Minimo, p.10.
   Cf. De Magia, III. p.408.

3 The Immortality of the Soul, p.200.
L'anima, dunque del mondo è il principio formale costitutivo de l'universo e di ciò che in quello si contiene. Dico che, se la vita si trova in tutte le cose, l'anima viene ad esser forma di tutte le cose; quella per tutto è presidente alla materia e signoreggia nelli composti, affettu la composizione e consistenza de le parti ... Questa intendo essere una di tutte le cose; la qual però, secondo la diversità delle disposizione della materia e secondo la facoltà de principi materiali attivi e passivi, viene a produr diverse facultadi, alla volte mostrando effetto di vita senza senso, talvolta effetto di vita e senso senza intelletto, talvolta per ch'abbia tutte le facoltadi soppresse e reprimute o dalla imbecillità o da altra ragione de la materia. Così, mutando questa forma, sedie e viessitudine è impossibile che se annulle, perché non è meno subsistente la sustanza spirituale che la materiale.¹

More's definition bears some similarity to this:

The Spirit of Nature therefore, according to that notion I have of it, is a Substance Incorporeal, but without Sense and Animadversion, pervading the whole matter of the Universe, and exercising a Plastical power therein according to the sundry predispositions and occasions in the parts it works upon, raising such phenomena in the world, by directing the parts of Matter and their Motion, as cannot be resolved into mere Mechanical powers.²

More's "according to the sundry predispositions" recalls Bruno's "se trova il soggetto disposto", and exactly echoes his "secondo la diversità de le disposizioni de la materia", besides again implying Bruno's animism in matter.³ But

¹ De La Causa, I. p.242.
Cf. De Immenso, I.ii. p.312.

² The Immortality of the Soul, p.193.

³ De La Causa, I. p.242.
such similarities can be misleading. This type of animism was not the sole prerogative of Bruno or Hill. Van Helmont’s "Universall Pander of all Sympathy" seems closer than any to More’s concept.¹ Lack of animadversion differentiates and firmly separates More’s spiritus naturae from the Platonic Anima Mundi — which approximates and is finally equated to the Holy Spirit of the Christian Trinity and "therefore in no wise creatural, but purely Divine";² his spiritus naturae is so far from being God "that it scarce has any perception but only an Omnipotent Plastic power".³

Bruno is at pains to point out in his major works that this spirit of the universe is the perfect internal artist, so far above art, that it has no need of animadversion or intellectual reasoning. In De La Causa the formation of matter through spirit occurs "senza atto di cogitazione".⁴ In De Immenso the distinction between Art and Nature is emphasized:

Ars operando discurrat, cogitat. Natura sine discursu promptissime operatur. Ars tractat materiam alienam, natura materiam propriam; ars circa materias est, natura interior materiae, quinimo et ipsa est materia.⁵

¹ See, A Ternary of Paradoxes, p.78.
³ Ibid.
⁴ De La Causa, I, p.232.
⁵ De Immenso, I.ii, p.312.
Lack of animadversion ensures in both Bruno and More that *spiritus universi* will act on matter in the same manner in similar situations like a vast programmed computer else in a pet she might easily leave the body without either hanging, drowning or stabbing.\(^1\)

As opposed to the "variable divine decrees" mentioned by Zimmerman,\(^2\) More's *spiritus naturae* is almost equated to the laws of matter and motion, which just stop short of being mechanical. The influence of J.B. van Helmont is very strong here.

Indeed each event, each interaction, no matter how basically 'mechanical', is brought within the framework of *spiritus naturae*. Thus "those Experiments of Sympathetic Pains, Asswagments and Cures",\(^3\) the vibration of the air,\(^4\) argue the existence of *spiritus naturae* as well as

that notable example of the Vines working when the Vines are in flower ...\(^5\)

\(^1\) Preface to A Collection of Several Philosophical Writings, p.xvi.
\(^4\) ibid., Cf. A Ternary of Paradoxes, p.78.
\(^5\) The Immortality of the Soul, p.194. Cf. A Ternary of Paradoxes, pp.36-37. W. Charleton who translated Van Helmont later repudiated these ideas.
Because spiritus naturae permeates all, it also creates Mundane Sympathy and More sets out to enlist the support of the "notablest examples" which abound in histories more uncertain and obscure. For this spiritus naturae, argues More, quoting Van Helmont and Digby, is very closely linked to the imagination, the latter being sometimes so strong that it can overpower the plastic faculty and effect strange events:

For these signatures of less extravagance and enormity are frequent enough, as the similitude of Cherries, Mulberries, the colour of Claret-wine spilt on a woman with child

More then enters the domain of physics. His gradual movement away from Descartes is noted when discussing the loadstone: More introduces a corrective to his previous acceptance of Cartesian theory during his controversies with Petty and Vaughan. Descartes, More argues, has only explained the immediate cause, but he should have probed further:

But how the efformation of these particles is above the reach of the mere Mechanicall powers in Matter, as also the exquisite direction of their motion ...

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1 The Immortality of the Soul, p.170.
   Cf. A Ternary of Paradoxes, pp.70-71.

2 Sheffield University Library, Hartlib Papers, XVIII.

3 The Immortality of the Soul, p.196.
   Cf. A Ternary of Paradoxes, pp.74-75.
Chapter 13, Book III of *The Immortality of the Soul* takes on a more scientific tone. Again More agrees with Descartes as to the immediate cause of gravity, but argues for an Inferior Soul of the World, that must direct the motions of the Aethereal particles to act upon, these grosser bodies to drive them towards the Earth. Then he tackles Hobbes' notions about gravity and in three paragraphs fraught with non sequiturs and irrelevant geometric figures gives an "ocular demonstration" of the absurd consequences of Hobbesian theories.  

More switches to biology and botany, stating for example that since he could not adduce any proof that plants have particular souls his *spiritus naturae* is the efficient cause. More excepts only men and beasts and gives them particular souls, although where animals are concerned *spiritus naturae* is involved in areas previously assigned to instinct which becomes some kind of indeterminate "whispered Divine inspiration". In Bruno, the realm of natural instinct is taken over by his *principio intrinseco* which is responsible for

1 ibid., pp. 196-197.
2 ibid., p. 198.
3 *The Immortality of the Soul*, p. 199.
the swallow making its nest, the ants their cave, the spiders their webs or nets, in one way only, than which they could not make them more admirably or suitably.

These examples from natural instinct could of course be found in Aristotle and the works of "Flinie, Cardan and Nierembergius", but they are not linked as in Bruno, Hill and More with spiritus universi. More writes:

I know not whether I may entitle it also to the guidance of Animals in the chiepest of those actions which we usually impute to natural Instinct.

Later More is sure that it is spiritus naturae which is responsible for the harmony and artifice that is found in the animal world:

The Swallow, how indocil she is, and yet how admirable in framing her little mansions of mudd ... This spiritus naturae suggests to the Spider the fancy of spinning and weaving her Web, and to the Bee of the framing of her Hony-combs, but especially to the Silk-worm of conglomerating her both funeral and natal Clue.

The discussion then ends by More's attempting another definition of spiritus naturae:

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1 Trans. J. L. McIntyre, p. 219.  
   Cf. Philosophia Epicurea, p. 90.

2 The Immortality of the Soul, p. 201.

3 ibid., p. 200.

4 ibid., pp. 201-203.  
   Cf. De Immenso, i. ii. p. 314.  
   See, Above, p. 362. n. 2.
This is that which we have styled the Spirit of Nature, which goes through and assists all Corporeal Beings, and is the Vicarious power of God upon the Universal Matter of the World ... the great Quartermaster-General of Divine Providence, but able alone, without any under Officers, to lodge every Soul according to her rank and merit whenever she leaves the body: and would prove a very serviceable hypothesis for those that fancy the Praexistence of humane Souls.\

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Plenitude, Infinity and Space

After the publication of The Immortality of the Soul, there are signs that More was being driven into orthodoxy. His Explanation of the Grand Mystery of Godliness (1660), and A Modest Inquiry into the Mystery of Iniquity (1664) are partly concerned with effecting a compromise with the Church of England, whose doctrine he "must not thwart, contradict or openly gainsay". Ralph Widdrington and Joseph Beaumont were undermining his position, and More feared that he might be dislodged from Christ's College for alleged violation of the statutes:

But some friends have been so busy lately with their might and spight... The first they did in that infamous pamphlet, the second they attempted in this mischievously meant assault. But the Archbishop, as I am informed, has suppressed this designe... So that I keep the saddle yet, though not in a journey to Ragley.

More had indeed forestalled Beaumont's "might and spight" by muting some of his controversial views and introducing a new tone of submissiveness:

1 The Apology of Dr. Henry More (1664), p. 560.

2 Probably Joseph Beaumont's, Some Observations upon the Apologie of Dr. Henry More for his Mystery of Godliness (Cambridge, 1665).

I lay it down as a Principle, That no mans conscience is obliged to make profession of any Philosophical Speculations, though they seem to him of Mathematical certitude, against the good liking of his Superiours; That I onely do avow the fitness and applicableness of those Theorems ... as namely the Prae-existence of the Soul, the Motion of the Earth about the Sun, &c) to Moses his text, but as to the truth of the Theorems themselves, I do deliberate and suspend my Assent.¹

It is to be expected, then, that when in 1668 More published his Divine Dialogues more palinodes should follow. Reluctantly, More's allegiance to the doctrine of infinity is muted and finally abandoned, and a valid critique established.

Divine Dialogues, which has close connections with the Conways,² bears a strong resemblance in argument and structure to Bruno’s De L’Infinito, possibly available at the Conway library in Ragley.³ Both works are in the form of dialogues, discussing the "attributes of God and his Providence in the World".⁴ One should not read much into names; but it is interesting that as Philotheo expounds the Nolan philosophy in De La Cena, De La Causa, and De L’Infinito, Philotheus is the faithful expounnder of More's philosophy.

¹ The Apology, pp. 488-489.
³ See Above, p. 307.
Bruno's Philotheo argued against materialistic mechanism, all things
are animate according to the principle and a sort of primordial activity of animation and life.
repeatedly stressing that life and motion cannot proceed(da qualità puramente materiale, ma necessariamente si riferiscono a principio simbolico vitale et animale.
More's Philotheus adopts this stoic principle:
that the Primordials of the World are not Mechanical, but Spermatical and Vital ... from some Universal Principle of inward Life and Motion containing in it the seminal forms of all things.²

At times, in Divine Dialogues More seems to borrow arguments and imagery from Bruno. Thus in De Monade,
God becomes a painter wisely alternating light and shade to avoid monotony, uniformity and mediocrity;³ in De Immenso "lux et tenebra concurrunt",⁴ and the darkest colours must not be despised:

ut in pictoris pixide colores contemnuntur, qui mox in ordinem picturae explicati, momentum illius praecipium cum efficiente continuere videbuntur.⁵

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² Divine Dialogues, pp.37-38.
³ De Monade, I.ii. p.327.
⁵ ibid., I. i. p.312.
In a similar context, discussing the evil of the world, More's Philoteus adopts similar imagery and reasoning:

... as the Art of Painting requires dark colours as well as those more bright and florid in a well drawn picture. Therefore I say the nature of things, Sin onely excepted, is but less good, not truly evil or malignant.

In Bruno's Cantus Circaeus, Circe assures her handmaid Moeris that though humans disclaim against the harm caused by wild animals, they often adopt animal attitudes. This idea is repeated in Erck Furori:

E tra gli uomini si può vedere il simile, secondo che altrì sono più simili a una specie di bruti animali, altrì ad un' altra: questi hanno del quadrupedo, quelli volatili, e forse hanno qualche vicinanza, ia qual non voglio dire, per cui sono trovati quei, che sono affetti a certe sorte di bestie.

More's Bathynous says that all Unregenerate persons are as arrant Brute Animals as these very animals they thus vilify and contem ... the general Mass of Mankinde was grown such an Herd of wicked animals, that is, Beasts, what repugnancy to Providence is it that one Beast invades another for their private advantage? But yet Providence sent in such secret supplies to these Beasts in humane shape that seemed otherwise worse appointed for sight than their savage animals armed with Cruel Teeth, and Stings, and Horns, and Hoofs and Claws.

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2 II. p.194.

3 II. p.350.

Despite this, More maintains, mainly against Lucretius, that God's creation is such that all conspires to a greater harmony, often through a reconciliation of opposites; but this idea had become quite traditional by the middle of the seventeenth century.

In De L'Infinito, God is mainly concerned with the conservation of the species. Individuals cease to exist without loss to the species:

> salvare eterna la sustanza de l'universo, per che medesimo numero a medesimo numero sempre si convertano. ¹

Again this idea is taken over by Hill:

> God shows Himself ... not through any one particular species, but by the whole. ²

In Divine Dialogues, Philotheus stresses this eternal recurrence and change, through death and destruction:

> What therefore could Providence doe better, then to make their Species immortal by a continued Propagation and Succession? For that is the infirmity of our particular nature to dote upon Individuals: But the Divine Goodness, which is Universal, is of a more released and large nature; and since Individuals will thus be fading and mortal, concerns herself onely in the Conservation of the Species. ³

¹ II. p.13. Cf. De La Causa, I. p.283:


³ p.216.
In discussing the hostility of the elements, Bruno's Philotheo had put forward the image of the ever-expanding fire that ravishes all matter that lies in its path:

Come si vede nel foco, il quale, come ognuno concede, s'amplificarebbe in infinito, se gli avvisinasse materia et esca.

In Eroici Furori, this fire is ambivalent, a sacred symbol, and the heroic enthusiast lies in its path though it destroys him:

ma vien guidato da un sensatissimo e pur troppo oculato furore, che gli fa amare piu quel fuoco, che altro refrigero, piu quella piaga, che altra sanità, piu quei tagami, che altra libertade. Per che questo male non è assolutamente male, ma per certo rispetto al bene, secondo l'opinione, e falso; quale il vecchio Saturno ha per condimento nel divorar, che fa de' propri figli; per che questo male assolutamente ne l'occhio de l'eternitade è compreso per bene.

In Divine Dialogues, Philotheus reasons in similar fashion; the image of the raging fire reappears, while that of Saturn's swallowing his children is transformed:

As the fire will burn if it take hold, though to the consumption of a whole Forest, notwithstanding the Wood never did the fire any hurt, that it should use it so; so every Animal would satisfie its own craving appetite, though it were by devouring of all the world beside.

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1 De L'Infinito, II. p.31.
   Cf. De Minimo, p.55.

2 II. p.331.

3 p.239.
   Cf. Spaccio, II. p.197.
And he adds that it is manifest according to the most true and Philosophicall apprehension, to impute no more wickedness to devouring Brutes then to swallowing Guls of the Sea or devouring Fire ... that there is no such malignant heat as is supposed in Fire, but all is sound and sacred, if it be in due measure apply'd.  

At one point, More seems to echo Spaccio especially when he discusses the illusory nature of 'evil' within the context of "the wrath of beasts". This immediately follows the instances, already quoted, from dark colours in painting, the expanding fire, and ravenous hunger that occur in Bruno. In Spaccio, Fortuna argued a case for the necessary mutability of fate and consequent relativity of evil:

che lei non era men buona, che altri buoni, e che le fusse tale, non era male; per che quando il fato dispone, fatto è bene.  

Fortuna points out that the viper, the dragon, the lion, the bear are harmless to their own species:

Oltre che nessuna cosa è assolutamente mala; per che la vipera non è mortale e tossicosa a la vipera, ne il drago, il leone, l'orso a l'orso, al leone, al drago ma ogni cosa è mala a rispetto di qualch' altro.  

a point that Bruno reiterates later in connection with the aspiration of the species or kind:

1 Divine Dialogues, p.241.  
2 Spaccio, II, p.178.  
3 ibid.  
Cf. De Minimo, I.iii., p.272.
La mente non può desiderare se non quanto l'è vicino, presso e noto e familiare. Così il porco non può desiderare esser uomo; ama più <br>svolgersi per la luta, che per un letto di bissino, ama d'unirsi ad una acrofa, non a la più bella donna, che produca la natura, per che l'effetto <br>seguita la ragion de la specie.1

In a couple of pages at the heart of Divine Dialogues, More's sequence and sequaciousness in argument parallel Bruno's. More first argues that nothing is absolutely evil; secondly he uses "Bruno's" four dangerous animals, among which the mythical dragon, putting special emphasis on the poison theme prevalent in Spaccio; thirdly he states that these creatures are not dangerous to their own kind; fourthly that they possess their own capability for enjoyment; so that fifthly they can propagate their species:

Therefore I say the nature of things, even all of them, Sin onely excepted, is but less good here, not truly evil or malignant ... But the power of God indeed seems more barely set out in these fierce Beasts of prey, such as the Lion, Bear and Tiger, and is yet more terrible in huge scaled Dragons and Serpents. But if these kinds of creatures bear any mischief or poison in their tails or their whole bodies, that poison is nothing but disproportionality of particles to the particles of our own or other animals bodies ... those poisonous Creatures are not poisonous to their own kinde, and are so far from mutual abhorrency, that they are joyned in the nearest link of love that can be, whereby they propagate their Species. Therefore these objects of so terrible an aspect are not evil in themselves, being capable of the delights of Animal life as well as any other.2

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2 Divine Dialogues, pp.243-244.
More's ethics are, however, like Plotinus's, more soundly based than Bruno's. When More makes an exception in the case of sin, Bruno's Fortuna urged an ethical relativism that makes nonsense of any absolute morality. In this context, More reads the "wrath of beasts" as a great enrichment to the History of Nature, which would be defective, did it not run from one extreme to another. For every variety of sweet things cloy and there is no remedy so good as the mixture of sharp, bitter and sour.

In Spaccio, right at the start, Bruno's Sophia preached the ethical and psychological convenience of the doctrine of contraries, anticipating More's reasoning and imagery:

Attesso che fastidioso e triste è il stato de la fame; dispiacevole e grave è il stato di sazieta ... non è dilettazione senza mistura di tristezza ... il frequentar un cibo, quantunque piacevole, e cagione di nausea al fine; tanto che la mutazione da uno estremo a l'altro per li suoi partecipi, il moto da un contrario a l'altro per li suoi mezzi viene a soddisfare.

However, despite this similarity, More in his two last major works withdraws his allegiance to infinity of worlds. Indeed, long before 1668, More had felt uncomfortable as the defender in England of the doctrine of infinity. In 1651,

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1 Enneads, pp.170; 183.  
2 Spaccio, II. pp.178-179.  
4 II, pp.121-122.
he had voiced his doubts to Lady Anne Conway. Now, under pressure, More refused to support the doctrine he had preached in **Democritus Platonissans**. In his "Advertisement" to Glanvil’s *A Whip for the Droll* More even argues against his colleague, who maintained that since one could not prove that matter was not infinite and eternal one could not prove the existence of God except "by supposing the main thing in question".2

More maintained that only God existed *ab aeterno*,3 against all other atomists who, he said, believed matter uncreated ("Materiam increatam crediderunt").4 Indeed in Bruno’s published works the concept of creation tends to be driven into the background. In *De L’Infinite*, Philotheo barely countenances the concept of creation.5 Though arguing, in *De Immense* that space was anterior to body, Bruno stated that epistemologically one cannot imagine space without body,6 so that space being eternal body can

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1 Henry More to Anne Conway, B.M.Add.MS.23216. f.302.

2 _sii_, *Ana2*.


5 II. pp.24-26.

6 I.i. p.232: "non sic possimus corpus abstrahere a spatio; cogitatione, sicut a corpore spaciun".
almost be seen to be eternal. In Divine Dialogues, More, like Gassendi and Charleton, strongly refutes this argument and opts for a finite world created in time. When Hylobares asks why the world was not created "sooner" and infinite, he is accused of being "hugely over-curious in such Inquisitions". ¹ Echoing Gassendi's critique of Bruno, Philotheus argues that such concepts arise from the "groundless enlargements and expansions of wanton and busy Phancies". ²

In De L'Infinite, Bruno had refused to restrict an infinite God within the "narrow limits" of a finite creation. ³ Hill and Wilkins had accepted this. More's Bathynous asks why, granted the infinite goodness and power of God,

does the effects thereof should be so narrow and finite as commonly men conceit; if there be no Incapacity in the things themselves that thus straightens them.

while Hylobares directly asks

Whether the Universe be Finite, or Infinite. For if it be Finite, it is infinitely defectuous, if it may be infinite. ⁵

This reasoning patterns that of De Immenso where the recurrent motif is

Potentia infinita non est nisi respectu infiniti possibilis. ⁶

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¹ p.514.
³ II. p.22.
⁴ Divine Dialogues, p.516.
⁵ ibid., p.520.
and

Deus infinita potens et finita faciens, infinite esse inviduus, finite bonus.1

In Bruno and Hill, God's liberty, will and necessity coincide.2 Necessity is posited as a norm of divine will, which can neither be limited ab intrinseco through the auto-limitation of power, nor ab extrinseco through the power of matter to frustrate it.3 More is caught in a dilemma, seeming to argue both ways. Stating the universe is "as immense as it can be", his last word is against infinity:

When you have phantasied the World as infinite as you can, you must be infurcated still to conclude it finite;4

— a judgement which More repeats in Enchiridion Metaphysicum:

Not infinite, but merely indefinite, as Descartes, said somewhere, reserving infinity for God alone.5

Philothaeus makes further inroads against Bruno's and Hill's cosmology. Hylobares puts forward the view that all suns must be accompanied by inhabited planets "which

1 De Immense, I.i1. p.295.
4 Ibid., p.521.
I suppose will not be deny'd". But Philotheus, like Kepler, Gassendi, Charleton and Rosse, disputes even this:

Philotheus: But how do you know, Hylloares, that there is such an infinite number of Earths? For you covenanted at first not to bring in mere Suspicions and Surmizes reproachfully to load Providence withall.

Hylloares: But if that innumerable company of fixed Stars have no planets dancing about them, that is to say, habitable Earths, that will be a real reproach to Providence indeed, as if Divine Goodness were infinitely defectuous in that Point.

Philotheus's reply contrasts strongly with the views expressed in Democritus Platonissans about the essential goodness of all creation. This shows More returning to the orthodox concept of a sublunar world being corruptible through sin, as distinct from the immutable heavens, so driving a metaphysical wedge into the physical concept of homogenous matter which More never disputed. At one time, More ridicules the notion that the moon may be inhabited by having Cuphophron go into raptures over the possible

1 Divine Dialogues, p.523.
3 pp.203-206, st.50-60.
4 Divine Dialogues, p.529.
contact earth-men might have with Lunars. He refers to the "Gansas" which flew Domingo to the moon in Bishop Godwin's skit on Bruno's theories. But Philotheus takes the problem seriously enough. He is prepared to "suppose" that other planets may be inhabited. How then are they saved? Do they need another crucifixion and resurrection?

The solution here hinges on the ubiquity of spirit and God's essential link, through the spirit of the universe, with the world of matter ranging in infinite space. This solution is endemic in Plotinus and Renaissance neo-Platonism, but the wording is again uncannily close. In Spaccio, God is certainly

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\text{la natura de la natura, et è l'anima dell' anima se non è l'anima stessa?}
\]

In More, God is "Anima animorum, Naturarum natura" and we are told that

one and the same spirit penetrates and possesses the whole matter at once.

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1 ibid., p.531.
D.W. Singer, p.183.

Cf. J. Wilkins, A Discovery (1638), p.105.

3 II. p.228.

4 Enchiridion Metaphysicum, p.37.

5 ibid., p.399: "unus vero idemque indiscerpibilis Spiritus totam Nateriam simul penetrat ac posidet".
This argument is recurrent in Bruno's works. In De L'Infinite, we read that

questo spirito ... non solamente è circa questi corpi, ma ancora penetra dentro tutti, e viene insito in ogni cosa.

Philotheus's solution, however, bears a closer parallel to the thought of Campanella and Wilkins:

He /Campanella/ cannot determine whether they were men or rather some other kind of creatures. If they were men, then he thinks they could not be infected with Adam's sin; yet perhaps they had some of their own, which might make them liable to the same misery with us; out of which it may be they were delivered by the same means as we, the death of Christ. And thus he thinks that place of the Ephesians may be interpreted where the Apostle says: "God gathered all things together in Christ, both which are in earth, and which are in the heavens" ... Campanella's second conjecture may be more probable, that the inhabitants of that world are not men as we are, but some other kind of creatures which bear some proportion to our likeness.

More also argues that inhabitants on other planets, if they are men such as we are, are saved in the same manner:

Lapsed Souls, where-ever they are, that recover into Sincerity, are saved as we are saved, by the Divine Humanity, or Humane Divinity, of the Son of God ... For the Spirit of the Lord passes through the whole Universe, and communicates this Mystery to all Souls where-ever they are, that are fitted to receive it ... This I think the most sober solution of the present Difficulty, upon supposition that there are any men properly so called that inhabit those Planets or Earths you speak of. Which, whether there be or no, is uncertain to us.

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1 II. p.32. Cf. Acrotismus Cameracensis, I.i. p.177: "Deus sit infinitus spiritus omnia penetrans, comprehensend atque vivificans".

2 A Discovery, pp.105-106.

3 Divine Dialogues, pp.535-536.
The illimitable extension of spirit re-occurs when More re-states his concept of space, matter and motion in *Enchiridion Metaphysicum* (1671). It is significant that More's conclusions, though in some ways a valid critique of Nolan philosophy, as when he dissociates himself from the tenets of "those that hold Infinity of worlds at once, and infinite matter", ¹ should approximate those of Bruno and Hill and run counter to the more orthodox theories of Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Ficino and Descartes. The Greek philosophers maintained that matter existed in itself, making matter equal to place.² Descartes, and later Leibniz, spoke of space merely as the relation of bodies. More rejected the notion of space as a mode of body³ and accorded it a superior kind of extension. His Internal Place is essentially different from the Aristotelian and Cartesian place because, like Bruno's and Hill's, it is absolute and independent of body. But whereas Bruno's dialectic is put at the service of infinity, More's is at the service of spirit. More's

¹ John Norris, The Theory and Regulation of Love, to which are added Letters Philosophical and Moral between the Author and Dr. Henry More (Oxford, 1688), p. 154.

² De Immenso, i.i. p. 233.

³ *Enchiridion Metaphysicum*, p. 58.
distinction between space and matter is more frequently and more sharply drawn than Bruno's who tends to efface the difference between the two concepts so that his imprecise language allows commentators unjustifiably to make his space corporeal,¹ which it never is in any of his works. Bruno had suggested that one cannot imagine body without space, nor a space without body,² but had not said that space could not exist without body. The contrary is true. According to Philotheo, space is not the localized place of things. It is, in some ways, homogenous to matter, otherwise it cannot contain it. It is not yet the divine spirit or God, nor is space bounded by divinity — otherwise divinity itself would be space under another name. There is, however, a gradual "divinization" of space. It becomes the place where God's ideas are unfolded, the point of union between God and his creation, between the spiritual and the material. Space is not a mode of body but "a certain nature distinct physically and really from body". This distinction prevails in De Immenso which represents Bruno's maturest judgement on space:

¹ Luigi Cicuttini, Giordano Bruno (Milan, n.d.), p. 110.
² De Immenso, I.i. p. 232.
Spacium vero non est corporis cujuscunque spaciun, sed natura quaedam a corporibus, corporumque partibus, et accidentibus, physice et realissime distincta, quam oportet ante, extra, et post corpora quaecunque definita, intelligere.^

It is this view of space as "an Immoveable Substance distinct from Matter" that allows More "reluctantly" to reject the eternity and infinity of worlds. More's distinction, we find, is similar to Bruno's in direct opposition to Descartes:

Quod immensus Locus Internus, sive Spatium à Materia realiter distinctum quod animo concipimus.

Bruno's space is spiritual and can never be a part of matter. It exists before matter, is intimately linked to God, and does not change its nature by being empty or full. As distinct from place, which turns out to be a transitory spatio-temporal determination, it is an absolute reality.

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1 De Immenso, I.i. p.299.
2 Divine Dialogues, p.466.
3 Enchiridion Metaphysicum, p.74.
4 De Immenso, I.i. p.295:
"Sum contentus ego, mihi dum quoque confiteare Ne possit spaciun, quiddam quoque corporis esse."
5 ibid., I.i. p.231.
6 ibid., I.i. p.234.
7 Acrotismus Cameracensis, I.i. p.126.
There can be no place without body, but absolute space can exist of itself \( \text{per se existens} \). Indeed Bruno's "nomen absoluti" seems to be the prototype for Hill's, More's, Newton's and Raphson's concepts of space. More's theory, however, derives also from Gassendi's and Charleton's critique of Bruno, where space is a necessary, infinite and incorporeal reality of three dimensions. However, Gassendi and Charleton never linked space with animism or the *Spiritus universi*. Their Epicurean system, abhorred by More, remained almost as rigidly mechanistic as that of Hobbes, Descartes and Leibniz.

More attained the religious basis for infinite space through attacking mechanistic hypotheses. He rejected the view that the concept of location is irrelevant to God, and claimed that God is literally omnipresent. This essential omnipresence constitutes space, which thus becomes the "internal place" not only of localized bodies but of the infinite divine spirit, which Bruno moved towards in *De Immenso*.

More castigates Descartes for his "jocular Metaphysical Meditations", which insist that spirit and the Deity are

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1 ibid., I.i. p.123.
2 ibid., I.i. p.109.
3 *De Immenso*, I.i. p.231.
4 Sheffield University Library, Hartlib Papers, More to Samuel Hartlib, 20 December 1649.
"nowhere". Descartes distorted "the rational faculties ... by his counterfeit and prestigious ability"\(^1\) and, together with Hobbes, completely refused to accept a distinction between metaphysical and material extension because of a mind "lime-twagged with ideas and properties of corporeal things".\(^2\) More believed that unless spirit was accorded extension there ensued disastrous theological dilemmas.\(^3\)

In *Divine Dialogues*, More demonstrates the reality of space by asserting that "Motion has also an intrinsicall Extension of its own"\(^4\) distinct from body. After the mental experiment of the arrow shot perpendicularly upwards which, because of the earth's diurnal motion, "must also have described in some sense a circular or curvilinear line",\(^5\) More puts forward his original "conicum" theory, which proves that there ever was, is, and ever will be an Immoveable Extension distinct from that of Moveable Matter.\(^6\)

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2. ibid., pp.382-383.
3. ibid., p.393.
4. p.100.
5. ibid., p.102.
This agrees with Bruno's and Hill's concept of space; but More now believes, with Gassendi and Charleton, in the relativity of matter. He had gradually exorcised infinite matter from his system. Believing his Deity was omnipresent, he was forced to assert a space, complete and independent as well as uncreated. For if space had a beginning in time, where was the eternal God of Christian theology before he had created it? This space, however, is not now almost equated with the "self-subsisting God" as it had been, albeit grudgingly, sixteen years earlier. If it were "convenient" that this world exists, there was sufficient reason for an infinity of worlds. The Divine presence was immanent as well, but matter must also be seen to be infinitely extended.

1 Appendix to the Foregoing Antidote, p.165. See Above, p.141.n.3.

2 De L'Infinite, II. pp.18-19.

Contrary to Democritus Platonissane, More now argued that 'empty' space can be filled with spirit:

Essentialis praesentia divinae, quatenus a' vita atque Operationibus praeceditur.¹

But the necessity of infinite space is strongly supported:

Ergo necesse est ut reale aliquod Subjectum huic subsit Extensioni, cum fit Attributum reale.²

Although a reading of the Cabala influenced Bruno, Hill and More, their concept of space is essentially different from that of either Sepher Iezira, the Book of Creation, or "Luria's cabalistic notion of the Zimzum, the divine self-concentration, creating space by self-restriction",³ which incidentally appeared six years after Enchiridion Metaphysicum.⁴ A.A. Wolf suggests that More's conception of space must be sought in Jewish mystical

1 Enchiridion Metaphysicum, p.74.

2 ibid., p.68.


4 The second part of Christian Knorr von Rosenroth's Kabbala Denudata contained some contributions from More himself. After the publication of Enchiridion Metaphysicum, More apparently became conversant with Isaac Luria's ideas through von Rosenroth. See, More to Anne Conway, 5 February 1672: B.K.Add.MS.23216. f.118.
literature, in which "God is described as the space of the world ... filling the whole world as the soul fills the body."\(^1\) Aharon Lichtenstein argues that such pious statements in the Midrash and the Talmud express little more than a belief in divine immanence "which is not to be confused with divine extension".\(^2\) It seems to me that although More himself refers casually to the Cabala\(^3\) his position is closer to Bruno's, Hill's and Cassendi's. Leibniz indeed indirectly linked More's theory of divine space with Bruno's and Raymond Lull's:

Utrum sit Ens reale, aeternum, infinitum, Deo distinctum ... Henrici More Lullii quod Deus sit spatium Utrum mundus sit infinitus vel indefinitus Jordanus Brunus de infinito.\(^4\)

The list of attributes that More allows space bears a close parallel to that found in Bruno's Italian and Latin works. Thus in *De Immense*:

Est ergo spaccium ... immixtum, simplex, abstractum, immobile, per se, immensus ... immiscibile, impene-trabile, non formabile, illocabile, extra et omnia corpora comprehendens, et incomprehensibiliter ... divisio est impossibilis ... primo necessarium ... immobile ... rerum efficiendarum, seu quacunque sorte producendarum, potentiam tum activam con-comitatur omnino ... et sic coelum dicimus vere inalterabile, impassibile, ingenerabile, incorruptibile, immobile ...\(^5\)

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\(^1\) *A History of Science, Technology and Philosophy in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, 2nd ed. (1950), p.666.


\(^3\) *Enchiridion Metaphysicum*, p.74.


\(^5\) I.i. pp.231; 305.
Such attributes previously reserved for God alone, can also be found appropriated by Bruno's space in De L'Infinito, De La Causa, Sigillus Sigillorum and Acrotismus Cameracensis. 1 They are also found verbatim in Hill's Philosophia Epicurea. 2 These attributes to space connect it intimately to God, so that if one dropped Bruno's and Hill's insistence on infinite plenitude, one must necessarily visualize space as divine spirit, the emanative effect of the Deity:

Caelum caelorum et maximum immensum spatiun...sedes decorum est aether seu caelum. Sedes vero Dei est universum ubique totum immensum caelum, vacuum spatiun cuius est plenitud~: p[iter lucis comprehendentis tonsbras, ineffabillis. 3

More had certainly read Gassendi and Charleton who influenced his rejection of infinity of worlds, but he still believed that space itself was an ens, independent and existing in and for itself. More adopted many of Bruno's and Hill's "Deo tribuunt" for space:

Cujusmodi sunt quae sequuntur, quaeque Metaphysici Primo Enti speciatim attribuunt. Ut Unum, Simplex, Immobile, Aeternum, Complectum, Independens, A se existens, Per se subsistens, Incorruptibile, Necessarium, Immensum, Increatum, Incircumscripum, Incomprehensibile, Omnipraesens, Incorporum, Omnia permeans & complectens, Ens per Essentiam, Ens actu, Turus Actus. Non pauciores quam viginti Tituli sunt quibus insigniri solet Divinum Numen, qui infinito huic Loco interno, qua in rerum natura esse demonstravimus, aptissime convenient. 4


2 p.65. See Above, p.186.

3 I.ii. p.80.

4 Enchiridion Metaphysicum, p.69.
It will be seen that except for "impenetrabile", which is deliberately excluded,\(^1\) Bruno's attributes are adopted. More follows Gassendi and Charleton in making space penetrable.\(^2\) Bruno's reasons for space being impenetrable may appear surprising. How can this attribute coexist with his repeated statements about the transmission of light rays and the easy movement of planets? What looks at first a problem inherent in Bruno's "hurried composition"\(^3\) seems to resolve itself when one considers Bruno's "divinization" of space. Can one really state that God is penetrable? Penetrability itself implies corporeality, and though Bruno's space does not offer resistance, (nullum est resistens, nullum impedimentum),\(^4\) he continues to state it is impenetrable. He argues that because it is impossible to think of bodies without dimension, they cannot exist "on the same level" with space, which is neither measurable nor comprehensible. In effect, space, like God, remains different from bodies because it lacks

\(^1\) Cf. More to Anne Conway, 5 May 1651. B.M. Add. MS. 23216. f.303.
\(^3\) Luigi Cicutti, p.192.
\(^4\) De Immense, I.ii. p.84.
all the determinations proper to finitude, figure, form or mass. Its impenetrability is essentially distinct from that of bodies, assuming the same relation to body that transparent rays have to the crystal:

incomprehensum, quia non ita est intus ut comprehendetur, sed ita ut exaeque propria dimensionibus aliena, sicut diaphanitatem dicimus in crystallo, exaequativa.

Although space can thus be related to matter, it remains essentially different to localized place. Like More's Internal Place, Bruno's and Hill's Space is a spiritual reference in which all material and spiritual phenomena occur. More's "Divinum Numen", Bruno's "Absoluti Numen", underlies both spirit and matter and is intimately linked to their concept of spiritus universi, which More describes as

a plastick spirit which acts on all matter as a vital force, moves it, and transmits to it certain vital laws or ideas essentially bound up in this spirit ... preserving or changing, causing or perfecting ... not intellectually but vitally.

1 ibid., I.i. p.232.
2 De Immense, I.i. p.232.
3 Enchiridion Metaphysicum, p.69.
4 Acrotismus Camoeracensis, I.i. p.126.
5 Opera Omnia (1675-79), p.348.
This spirit of the universe possesses similar functions in Bruno as in More, being the exact antithesis to the external moving forces of the old natural philosophy. Can one really find any difference between Bruno's "contiene e penetra ogni cosa ... e si chiama spirito" and More's "one spirit penetrates and possesses the whole matter at once"? Yet, this similarity in phrasing can be misleading. More looks up to Plotinus:

"This opinion therefore of Plotinus is neither irrational nor unintelligible, That the Soul of the World interposes and insinuates into all generations of things, while the Matter is fluid and yielding."

In Bruno, everything happens through a "principio intrinseco" which assumes the nature of law. This animates and guides everything that

nulla è grave o lieve assoluta-, ma rispettivamente; dico al riguardo del loco, verso al quale le parti diffuse e disperse si ritirano e congregano." Time and again in De L'Infinito and De Immenso, Bruno insists that nothing is heavy or light absolutely. That is why, he argues

References:
2 De L'Infinito, II. p.99.
3 Enchiridion Metaphysicum, p.399.
4 The Immortality of the Soul, p.172.
6 ibid., II. p.50.
particles from the circumference of the moon and of other planets similar to ours seek to unite in the centre of their own globe as though impelled by their own weight.\textsuperscript{1}

And that is why a jar of water suspended in the air feels, and is, heavy, while divers never feel oppressed by the weight of a greater mass of water:

\textit{ogni moto naturale, ch'è da principio intrinseco... Cosi l'acqua sospesa a l'aria è grave; non è grave nel proprio loco. Pero a li sommersi tutta l'acqua non è grave, e picciolo vaso pieno d'acqua sopra l'aria fuor de la superficie de l'arida aggrava.}\textsuperscript{2}

More seems to take all this over virtually unchanged but the influence of Wilkins is very discernible. More repeatedly stresses that everything moves naturally to a convenient place; "Elementa gravitarent in propriis locis",\textsuperscript{3} says Enchiridion Metaphysicum, and in Divine Dialogues we read that this occurs because there is a principle that has a Prospection for the best that rules all.\textsuperscript{4}

Like Bruno's \textit{principio intrinseco} and Hill's "plastici principij vigor", More's "principium hylarchium" is a half-way force between \textit{spiritus universi} and mechanical laws, working within matter, contrary to all other corpuscularian theories, and sometimes cancelling

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\textsuperscript{1} ibid., II. p.95.
\textsuperscript{2} ibid., Cf. De La Cena, I. p.188.
\textsuperscript{3} p.151.
\textsuperscript{4} p.34.
\end{flushleft}
the Mechanicall Laws for the common good. Else how could any creatures live in the Air or Water? the weight of these Elements would press them to death.

It is this principle which forces the particles from the circumference of the Earth and similar planets towards their own centre:

particulis Terrestribus ac Planetariis quae ad centrum Terrae & cucursae Planetae tendunt. 2

It is again this principle which stops divers from feeling any pain from the great pressure of the water:

Ex eo quod Urinatores nullum dolore, sentiunt sub aqua marina constare quod particulae aqueae non gravitent inter se. 3

And immediately following this, More puts forward his experiment of a "summa vasis aquis repleti" 4 which seems to be a complex variation on Bruno's "vaso pieno d'acqua sopra l'aria" 5 tending to the same conclusion that:

vero particulae aqueae absque hoc Principio incorporeo non possunt junctim omnes, intermediis non gravitantibus, in fundum Situlae gravitare. 6

It is significant that these examples used in More's Enchiridion Metaphysicum could be found in one page of Bruno's De L'Infinito, and in that order.

2 Enchiridion Metaphysicum, p.151.
4 ibid., pp.150; 160-165.
5 De L'Infinito, II. p.95.
6 Enchiridion Metaphysicum, p.163.
"Lapsus Cartesianae" are discussed at length when More sets out to prove the existence of *principium hylarchiun*. By restricting his God to metaphysics, says More, Descartes had produced God

from the most remote corners of the mind, or rather, let me say, he incarcerates himself in a blind workhouse without doors for vision.\(^1\)

A study of phenomena led More to adopt, for religious purposes, the experimental method which he distinguishes from the mechanical philosophy. He praises the heuristic method of the Royal Society,\(^3\) and himself indulges in experimentation with F.M. van Helmont at the Conway seat in Egley. More than any other of his works, *Enchiridion Metaphysicum* is concerned with scientific theories, their investigation and interpretation. Oldenburg thought it fit to include among *The Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* because it dealt mostly in "Physical, Mathematical and Mechanical Matters."\(^4\)

More's infinite spiritual space is closely associated with matter — all material and spiritual events occur within its realm. His *principium hylarchiun* is closely

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\(^2\) ibid., sig.A2.

\(^3\) ibid., sig. B2.

\(^4\) *The Philosophical Transactions* (1671), sig.End4.
associated with the laws of motion. Space and this intrinsical principle then respectively become the spiritual 'boundary' and medium wherein, and through which, phenomena take place, so that, as Anderson says of More's system,

the whole order of nature came to be looked upon as the divine order incarnate in material form.¹

or as Bruno had put it, "esplicare l'eccellenza divina incoporea per modo corporeo".² As this happens, More approximates the material to the spiritual: "they are really but one thing". Spirits achieve extension, becoming almost material,³ and many of the laws of motion, wanting adequate explanation through mechanical hypotheses, receive the support of principium hylarchium, which becomes all-inclusive. Those who complain that More's concept is "a convenient catch-all for the inexplicable"⁴ are only partly right. Correctly interpreted, More's principium hylarchium includes the explicable as well.⁵ The "occult" or "ignote" especially "action at a distance" is only highlighted to show the non-apodictic nature of mechanical interpretations.

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² De L'Infinite, II. p.22.


⁵ Opera Omnia, p.348: "acts on all matter as a vital force... and transmits to it certain vital laws."
Gravity, magnetism, Boyle's "spring of air" and various hydro-statical experiments are re-interpreted to prove More's thesis that

species intentionalis, non est in materia globulorum, sed in Mundanu spiritu.¹

More records a series of experiments such as the pressurizing of butter and marbles, and others involving water, valves and pails, mercury and magnetism, and concludes that even clouds, rain, hail, thunder and lightning are the result of his principium hylarchium.² More's method is transparently simple. He accepts data collected by scientists but interprets it in the light of his principium hylarchium and "those hydrostatick laws vitally and essentially included in it".³ He accepts Matthew Hale's "very notable experiment" of a tube filled with mercury and stopped at one end with one's finger as scientifically valid, but disputes Hale's interpretations,⁴ and concludes that the scientist who carefully studied phenomena would find

shroud insinuations ... that matter is ranged according to the laws of the Spirit of Nature.⁵

¹ Enchiridion Metaphysicorum, p.270.
² ibid., pp.141-144; 155-164; 173; 272ff.
³ Henry More, Remarks Upon Two Late Ingenious Discourses: (1676), pp.88-91.
⁴ ibid., p.93.
⁵ ibid., p.180.
The formation of plants and their various uses to man, the structure of animals such as the mole, birds, fish and the marvellous contrivance of the peacock's tail, all argue "un principium aliquod incorporeum". 1

After relating a number of spiritual occurrences in the same manner as Antidote Against Atheism and The Immortality of the Soul, More defines spirit as an immaterial substance intrinsically endowed with life and motion, and after examining various theories of matter and motion triumphantly concludes that the notion of spirit here defended is countenanced and confirmed by the common suffrage of all adversaries. 2

More was being too optimistic. His principium hylarchium, though supported by Ralph Cudworth and John Ray, 3 was hotly contested even by those who fully believed in the existence of spirit. He had a running battle with the new orthodoxies of contemporary corpuscularians such as Matthew Hale, Robert Hooke, Baxter and Boyle. The latter's attack is typical.

Boyle had written books against Hobbes and Linus to defend his "hydrostatical paradoxes", but feared that More's

1 Enchiridion Metaphysicum, pp.307-315.
2 ibid., p.401.
discourse "if unanswered, might pass for unanswerable". He defends Descartes against More's slur of "atheist, hypocrite and weakhead", but is mainly concerned with rejecting the unscientific interpretation of his "physico-mechanical experiments touching the spring and weight of air". Mechanical philosophy, argued Boyle, was not a "bare hypothesis, but a truth made out by divers experiments", explainable through "the mechanical affectations of matter" such as motion, bigness, gravity and shape. Boyle, in turn, dismisses More's principium hylarchium as an irrelevant hypothesis, impossible to verify:

our hydrostaticks do not need it. Nor do I think it necessary for the doctor's grand and laudable design ... of proving the existence of incorporeal substance.

To the end, More attempted to link biology, psychology, mathematics, physics and epistemology within the all-embracing framework of metaphysics, and in this he was partly successful. Despite their frequent claims to the contrary, Boyle, Descartes, Hobbes and Hooke could produce only workable hypotheses, not apodictic irrefutable proofs. More thus refused Hooke's advice that he ought to restrict his principium hylarchium to

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1 Robert Boyle, An Hydrostatical Discourse, p.596.
2 ibid., III. p.598-608.
3 ibid., III. p.627.
subjects we less perfectly understand, as from generation, nutrition, vegetation ... there one may baddly assert strange things of this Hylarchick Principle without fear of controll or contradiction, and from whence possibly it may never be within the power of Reasoning to banish him.¹

More firmly entrenched the roots of his metaphysics not only in biological fact and life, but persisted in roping in the laws of motion as well. S.T. Coleridge, looking back, thought that More should have stuck to orthodox Christianity. It was a mistake to combat atheism by shoring what looked at best doubtful metaphysics with pseudo-scientific theories.² Coleridge suggested that the Cambridge Platonists failed to stem the tide of materialism because they lacked the scientific fact itself:

... the ignorance of Natural Science, their Physiography scant in Fact and stuffed out with Fables, their Physiology entangled with inapplicable logic and a misgrowth.

Despite this, More's concepts of spiritual space and principium hylarchium remained an integral part of the intellectual milieu of the age. Accepted as a useful buffer against exclusive materialism, they forced open a channel of intellectual influence in philosophy, literature and science.

¹ Robert Hooke, Lampsas (1677), p.41.
In philosophy, some of More's ideas were taken up and expanded by Ralph Cudworth, Anne Conway, Raphson, Berkeley, William Law and Locke. Similarities between More's criticism of Hobbes and Kant's criticism of Hume have been noted, and Claude Howard states that More and the other Cambridge Platonists anticipated all the important results of Kant's critical philosophy.

In literature, Joseph Beaumont's *Psyche*, Benlowes' *Theophila* and Traherne's *Centuries* seem to bear the influence of Henry More's *Psychodia Platonica*. Coleridge's idealism, his theory of mini-nature interanimation and the fusion of subject and object, despite its close links with German transcendentalist thought, is also partly derived from Bruno and Henry More, both of whom he diligently studied.

Wordsworth was loth to acknowledge any debt to books, but *The Prelude* and other poems suggest partial inspiration from More. Coleridge himself compares three stanzas from More's *The Preexistence of the Soul* and sees them pre-

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figuring "in coarser clay, indeed, but yet excellently"
the same theme in Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey*.\(^1\) Closer to
our time, W.B. Yeats, who had read Bruno's *Eroici Furori*\(^2\)
and used a basically Brunian pantheism as a backdrop to
his magic, early realized the poetical potential of
*spiritus naturae*.\(^3\) He spoke of

> Anima mundi described ... by Henry More, which has a
memory independent of embodied individual memories, though they constantly enrich it with their thoughts.

In science, the eminent Nicholas Hartsoeker and John
Ray approved of More's *principium hylarchium* and Cudworth's
'plastic nature', adding further support from plant growth
and animal behaviour.\(^5\) Isaac Newton rejected *principium
hylarchium*,\(^6\) but his anti-Cartesianism partly derives from
Henry More.\(^7\) He also agreed that the concept of location

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Yeats to his sister Lily, 26 December (1894): "Is there a book called The Heroick Enthusiasts
lying about belonging to York Powell?"


Second Coming" with Bruno's Sonnet in *Eroici "Goi pensier ... et ei rubello, qual girfalco inanuo."* II. p. 342.


7. J.E. McGuire, "Body and Void and Newton's De Mundi
Systemate: Some New Sources," *Archive for the History
of Exact Sciences*, 3 (1966), 206-248.
is eminently applicable to God,\(^1\) and from there posited his notion of absolute space which owes much to More.\(^2\) Today, however, even the "conceptual monstrity of absolute space" has been eliminated,\(^3\) and Bruno's and More's most characteristic concept apparently rejected by the scientific method.

Their emphasis on teleology, however, was not just a step back into darkness and superstition. In discussing More's relation to Bacon and Descartes, Charles E. Raven may have been too generous in adding "the accuracy of observation and coherence of interpretation" of British science to More,\(^4\) but his "spiritual" physics seems to be partly vindicated by modern developments in science:

There is no such Demokritean basis about contemporary wave-mechanics. The physicist's fundamental units are no longer 'bricks'; they are new dynamic units. Thus the principles underlying matter-theory today are neither teleological alone, nor mechanical alone. Instead they are architectural, and combine both.\(^5\)

--- what Bruno, Hill, Wilkins and More had maintained centuries earlier.

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3 Ernst Mach, quoted Max Jammer, p.141.


Their *principio intrinsco* has been, since the acceptance of Newton's universal gravitation,\(^1\) condemned to obscurity, but before Newton the only partial solution was that of Leibniz's "windowless monads" and pre-established harmony, and that itself, failing to account for "action at a distance", was partly derived from Bruno and More.\(^2\)

Because of the flux of scientific theory in mid-seventeenth century England, More could still forcefully combine biology, physics and metaphysics. It is significant that, like Bruno and Hill it is through the concepts of infinite space and the *principium hylarchium* that More attempted to seize the totality of experience.

Today More is very much an obscure polymath, a forgotten poet and philosopher. Yet a study of his prose and poetry, extremely valuable in itself as one of the earliest and fullest expression of Plotinian thought in England, provides the key to wider perspectives on seventeenth century literature and philosophy. His ideas are often 'hooked' onto the scientific and philosophic controversies of his age. While some of his ideas were derivative of Cardanus, Kepler, Galileo, Wilkins, Descartes, Hobbes, Cassendi, Boyle and others, the strongest most pervasive single influence on his works remains the *Enneads* of Plotinus. But, at times, it was the way he opposed Bruno's or Hill's thought to Descartes and Hobbes that makes him stand out among the Cambridge Platonists.

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2 Leibniz, *De ipsa natura*, ed. Dutens (1693), II, p.49.
Appendix I

The most comprehensive description of Bruno's works is V. Salvestrini's second edition of Bibliografia delle opere di Giordano Bruno (Florence, 1958). This can be supplemented by John Hayward's "The Location of the first editions of Giordano Bruno," (The Book Collector, V. 1956. 152-157; 381-382) and Joseph G. Fucilla's "Aggiunte all'ultima bibliografia bruniana," (Filologia Romana, VI. 1959. 333-336). Bruno's books are relatively rare. Twelve works have been lost altogether. In the early nineteenth century A.S. Norov, statesman and bibliophile, remarked in his copy of De Monade that Bruno's first editions are rarer to find "than a white crow". To date, just over 460 copies have been recorded, and of these 183 are owned by British libraries. The best collection of Bruno's first editions is that of the Lenin State Public Library in Moscow, which includes the famous "Norov" section previously owned by the Rumyantsev Museum. Other very good collections are found in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, the Bodleian and the British Museum. The latter possesses the only surviving copy of Centum et Viginti Articuli de Natura. Of the seven books that were printed in England, 126 copies have survived and well over half of them are owned by British libraries. In the following list, square brackets denote the number of copies found in Britain.

1. De Umbria Idearum (Paris, 1582). 46 copies [167]
2. Cantus Circaeus (Paris, 1582). 24 copies [107]
3. De Compendiosa Architectura (Paris, 1582). 14 copies [77]
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A comprehensive description of the surviving manuscripts of Bruno is found in Appendix III of D.W. Singer's, *Giordano Bruno, His Life and Thought* (New York, 1950), pp. 219-222.
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