

Open Research Online

The Open University's repository of research publications and other research outputs

Why at all Complain? "Bad" Poetry and Denatured Form in Spenser's *Daphnaida*

Journal Item

How to cite:

Brown, Richard Danson (2020). Why at all Complain? "Bad" Poetry and Denatured Form in Spenser's *Daphnaida*. *Spenser Studies*, 34 pp. 77–110.

For guidance on citations see [FAQs](#).

© 2020 The University of Chicago



<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Version: Version of Record

Link(s) to article on publisher's website:

<http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.1086/706177>

Copyright and Moral Rights for the articles on this site are retained by the individual authors and/or other copyright owners. For more information on Open Research Online's data [policy](#) on reuse of materials please consult the policies page.

oro.open.ac.uk



RICHARD DANSON BROWN

Why at All Complain?: “Bad” Poetry and Denatured Form in Spenser’s *Daphnaïda*

How should we read *Daphnaïda*—as Spenser’s worst poem or as covert advocacy on Spenser’s part for Arthur Gorges? In the light of such divergent recent approaches, this essay considers the poem through its formal choices and the ways in which such framing devices ironize and complicate its protagonist. It begins by rereading the monotonous quality of Alcyon’s long lament, suggesting that Spenser uses devices that critically align Alcyon with poets of the previous age in the choice of a particular line shape. It then explores the ways in which this characterization draws on aspects of contemporary drama in the presentation of him as an affectively problematic figure—in this reading, metrical allusion to the drama contributes to the ironic characterization of the poem’s protagonist. The connection between *Daphnaïda* and contemporary poetry is enhanced by a detailed account of the way Alcyon’s complaint rewrites and “denatures” the famous contemporary sonnet “Like to a Hermite poore in place obscure” before turning to the poem’s complex bibliographical relationship with the *Complaints* volume. Finally, analysis of the stanza reveals it as denatured rhyme royal, designed to frustrate the eloquent tonalities of the original form.

Daphnaïda is the problem child of the Spenser canon. As William Oram remarks in *The Spenser Encyclopedia*, the poem has “found few admirers”; David Lee Miller, in contrast, views it as a comically inept work, to which the appropriate aesthetic response is derision.¹ Yet in a sense the problem with *Daphnaïda* is stated with some authority within the poem by the dying Daphne:

I, since the messenger is come for mee,
 That summons soules unto the bridale feast
 Of his great Lord, must needes depart from thee,
 And straight obay his souveraine beheast:
 Why should *Alcyon* then so sore lament,
 That I from miserie shall be releast,
 And freed from wretched long imprisonment?

Our daies are full of dolor and disease,
 Our life afflicted with incessant paine,
 That nought on earth may lessen or appease.
 Why then should I desire here to remaine?
 Or why should he that loves me, sorie bee
 For my deliverance, or at all complaine
 My good to heare, and toward joyes to see?
 (ll. 267–80)²

The argument is familiar from Christian apologetics and pastoral elegy: If death leads to salvation—a summons to “the bridale feast” of Revelation—why lament “or at all complaine”?³ In a lovely phrase (and parenthetically, it is worth remarking that *Daphnaïda* contains powerful, memorable twists of language),⁴ which poignantly captures the elusive promise of Christian eschatology, Daphne counterbalances her “toward joys” against the “incessant paine” of mortal life.⁵ Or as Colin Clout puts it in the elegy for Dido from the “November” eclogue, “Why wayle we then? Why weary we the Gods with playnts, / As if some evill were to her betight?” (ll. 173–74): from the “happy” perspective of revealed religion, lament is shown to be otiose.⁶ Yet neither poetry nor grief works precisely on the script of this salvationist logic. Daphne’s speech, in its insistent repetitions and critical modulations of Alcyon’s obsessive practice as a complainer, underlines the doubleness that animates this most perverse of poems. On the one hand, *Daphnaïda* need not exist—or need not exist in quite the unremitting form that it does. On the other,

Alcyon incorporates Daphne's rebuke into the fabric of *his* cyclical, unbridgeable mourning that achieves no moment of transcendent equipoise or consolation. In quoting her, he fails utterly to learn from her. The difficulty is knowing what Spenser intended his readers to make of this exercise in "dolor and disease": how seriously we should treat it as a pastoral elegy; the extent to which it was an intervention in the real-life concerns of Arthur Gorges (or indeed the possibly recently bereaved Edmund Spenser); and—the "undersong" of this essay—the devious ways in which it responds to the complaint tradition.⁷ I do not attempt to resolve these conundrums so much as review the scholarly evidence alongside the poem to explore afresh what its formal affiliations tell us about its agendas. This will not rebrand the poem as one of Spenser's greatest hits, nor reform the problem child as prodigal son. But it may help to refocus attention on Spenserian complaint as a category—a difficult, resistant mode to which he was temperamentally prone.⁸

* * *

Modern *Daphnaïda* scholarship turns on whether the poem should be read ironically or literally. Is this a poem that deliberately broadcasts its own limitations, or does it represent a more straightforward response to real-world events connected to the death of Arthur Gorges's wife Douglas Howard in 1590?⁹ The ironic approach is exemplified by Oram's essay, "*Daphnaïda* and Spenser's Later Poetry," which argues that the poem is a deliberate experiment with complaint, one that warns against excessive grief and anticipates the increasingly experimental, self-citational practices of Spenser's later poetry. My own sense of *Daphnaïda* supplements this influential reading: the poem expects its readers to register its extravagancies and to view its protagonists critically. "Gloomy, tenacious, obsessive," and "long-winded" as it may be, Oram demonstrates that *Daphnaïda* uses allusion and rhetorical excess for the purposes of poetic innovation.¹⁰

In contrast, Jonathan Gibson reads the poem literally, in terms of Spenser's relationship with Arthur Gorges, the poem's Alcyon. Gibson rejects ironic readings, arguing that the work intervenes in support of Gorges's protracted legal battle with his father-in-law, Thomas Howard, over the wardship of Gorges's daughter, Ambrosia. For Gibson, *Daphnaïda* aims to raise awareness of Gorges's legal predicament by presenting his grief sympathetically.¹¹ Gibson's essay is a significant contribution to the understanding of Gorges, scrupulously mapping the intertextual links between Spenser and the still underread Gorges. The great originality of this essay is that it suggests that Spenser read and imitated Gorges's own work in writing

Daphnaïda. Much of the “drabness” of Spenser’s poem may be a result of this imitation, since Gorges’s work reproduces the “drab” styles of the 1550s and 1560s.¹² Gorges’s Poem 39, for instance, provides a double analogue for *Daphnaïda*: first, it presents the inset complaint of “A happles man,” who records his mental distress “Unto his lute with heavye tunes.” Second, the man’s complaint has a lamenting sequence, moving from “Witnesse with me yee heavens” through identical apostrophes to his thoughts, eyes, ears, and hand in ways that recall Alcyon’s litany of hatred and despair.¹³

In “Laughing at Spenser’s *Daphnaïda*,” Miller presents an interpretation of the poem that is at once ironic and literal, proposing historical grounds for its swirling paradoxes. Miller writes in direct dialogue with Gibson, accepting his argument that the legal dispute over Ambrosia’s wardship is a key context for the poem but reading Spenser’s engagement with those circumstances very differently. Miller hypothesizes that Spenser wrote the poem in support of Gorges at the behest of Sir Walter Raleigh, and he argues that its verse is made “deliberately bad” to expose both Spenser’s resentment at being charged with this task and his recoil from Raleigh’s “extravagant grief” in the wake of the Throckmorton marriage.¹⁴ Like Timias in Book IV of *The Faerie Queene*, Alcyon is presented critically—the unconvincing poem shows how Spenser was unconvinced by Raleigh’s “cynical posturing” as he tried to get back in royal favor.¹⁵ This element of deliberate aesthetic shortfall helps to explain the poem’s republication together with *Fowre Hymnes* in 1596: the juxtaposition of the *Hymnes* with *Daphnaïda* constitutes “a curious act of mirroring,” which ultimately complicates both texts and warns against the “false posture” of “hatred for the world.”¹⁶ Miller thus establishes an alibi, or rather a pair of alibis, for Spenser: first, *Daphnaïda* witnesses his growing skepticism about Raleigh; second, the republication underscores the critical distance between the *Hymnes* and an earlier work. Rachel Hile’s recent work on Spenserian satire suggests similar possibilities. She argues that the ineptitude diagnosed by Miller is a flag, alerting the reader to the need for a more quizzical, active approach: Spenser satirizes Alcyon and expects his readers to pick up on his purposively “indirect” method, so that the poem becomes “a biting commentary on the danger of *idéés fixes* in the real world.”¹⁷

* * *

As this discussion shows, aesthetics is at the heart of the critical dilemma around *Daphnaïda*: Is its bad poetry a backhanded compliment to Gorges,

or a satirical marker of some kind?¹⁸ Much turns on the reading of Alcyon's lament, and one stanza in particular has been repeatedly singled out to exemplify *Daphnaïda*'s provocative ineptitude. In fact, there is little disagreement among recent critics about the value of this passage as poetry: nobody has a good word to say for it.¹⁹ It is therefore worth quoting again to reconsider the kind of complaint it embodies:

I hate to speake, my voyce is spent with crying:
 I hate to heare, lowd complaints have duld mine eares:
 I hate to tast, for food withholdes my dying:
 I hate to see, mine eyes are dimd with teares:
 I hate to smell, no sweet on earth is left:
 I hate to feele, my flesh is numbd with feares:
 So all my senses from me are bereft.

(ll. 414–20)

Hile's summary is an authoritative statement of its angularity: "The automaton meter, repetitive diction, and clichéd imagery are hallmarks of bad poetry . . . Spenser expects the reader to recognize the excess of the poem, and this extends beyond Alcyon's emotions to the characteristics of his verse: excessively regular, excessively repetitive, and excessively trite."²⁰ I want to offer some caveats to this reading, while not going so far as to suggest this is "straightforward 'good poetry.'"²¹ It is repetitive and (seemingly) automaton, but these features point to contexts previous scholarship has downplayed.

The first point arises from Hile's observation of "automaton meter." This is in fact both a highly traditional manipulation of the iambic pentameter line and an unusual realization of the form for Spenser in the virtual exclusion of all other metrical patterns. The line shape used in the first six lines is what I have called elsewhere "the 4/6 line": a regular pentameter where the caesura is heavily marked after the fourth syllable, following the influential counsel of George Gascoigne.²² The decasyllabic line with a heavy pause after the fourth syllable lends itself readily to anaphoristic structures and was common in French poetry: Marot uses this pattern on many occasions.²³ Although this stanza of *Daphnaïda* underlines the line shape through punctuation, the presence of a comma after the fourth syllable is not essential to trigger the expected pause pattern: Chidioc Tichborne's self-elegy uses the 4/6 pattern throughout, but the designating comma is often missing, as in the first line "My prime of youth is but a frost of cares."²⁴ As Gibson

implies, “Alcyon’s monotonous lists” connect *Daphnaïda* not just with the verses of Arthur Gorges but with the earlier practice of the “drab” age; poets like Gascoigne and Churchyard have several texts where the 4/6 pattern overbears all other realizations of the iambic pentameter line.²⁵

The context in the history of meter is worth bearing in mind: the subordination of syntactic pattern to the simple yet firm exigencies of the 4/6 template guaranteed that poets could produce regular ten syllable iambic lines, in contrast to the more chaotic scansions of Sir Thomas Wyatt a generation earlier.²⁶ Of course, a succession of 4/6 lines remains monotonous. Consider the opening of Churchyard’s “Thomas Wolsey”:

Shall I looke on, when states step on the stage,
 And play theyr parts, before the peoples face:
 Some me[n] liue now, scarce four score yeares of age,
 Who in time past, did know the Cardnalls grace.
 A gamesom worlde, when Byshops run at bace,
 Yea, get a fall, in striuing for the gole,
 And body loase, and hazard seely sole.²⁷

For the modern reader, such writing is striking for its methodical cack-handedness, as the subordination of word to meter eliminates rhythmic nuance or variation of emphasis. Yet as George T. Wright has observed, the “obsessional design . . . the two-step move to the pause, then the three-step sweep to the line’s end . . . evidently gave distinct pleasure to Elizabethan listeners.”²⁸ These pleasures are distantly visible in the antithetical energy of “Yea, get a fall, in striuing for the gole,” or Alcyon’s “I hate to tast, for food withholdes my dying”: you hear the start, and then you know what’s coming.²⁹ Tichborne’s elegy is a vivid testament to the force of such writing; it is a durable anthology piece not only because of the grisly circumstances of its composition (he was executed for his part in the Babington plot in September 1586, and the poem is plausibly dated to the last days of his life) but because of the repetitive intensity of its plangent effect: “And nowe I liue, and nowe my life is donn.”³⁰ Spenser learned much from such writing, but mercifully—from the point of view of the modern reader—avoided long passages of the same pattern in sequence. The final stanza of “December” features four lines out of six that conform to the 4/6 shape in a syntactic context of elaborate anaphora, but this is an exception rather than the rule.³¹ As I have shown elsewhere, 4/6 lines are discernible on almost every page of *The Faerie Queene*, but they are almost invariably paired with—and juxtaposed

against—lines with different caesural patterns, thus avoiding the “metrical arthritis” of Churchyard’s poem.³² In the Cave of Despayre, the insinuating voice of the abstract principle latches onto the almost narcotic qualities of the 4/6 line to advance its deadly argument. In the climactic discussion, Despayre and Redcrosse trade 4/6 lines as their voices irresistibly merge: “Sleepe after toyle, port after stormie seas”; “Nor leaue his stand, vntill the Captaine bed”; “Are written sure, and haue their certain date”; “The lenger life, I wote the greater sin, / The greater sin, the greater punishment”; unsurprisingly, Una’s assertion of “heauenlie mercies” has its own 4/6 line: “Where iustice growes, there grows eke greter grace” (I.ix.40–43, 53). Yet pervasive as the metrical pattern is in this passage, such lines are always played off against contrasting caesural patterns and rhythmic inflections—audible of course in the almost spondaic onset of “Sleepe after toyle.” Spenser learned from Churchyard’s monotony how to write differently. This same mingling of line shapes is visible in this section of *Daphnaïda*: though the 4/6 predominates, it is not the only line used. In the stanza immediately before the “I hate to speake” stanza, “I hate the darknesse and the drery night” suggests a pause after the fifth syllable. Such a pause is a common variant of the 4/6 line, especially when a trochaic word shape like “darknesse” fills this position; compare “Unto the *many*, that provoke them might,” and “So all my *senses* from me are bereft” (ll. 409, 326; my emphases). “But as a speedie post that passeth by” (l. 413) in contrast wittily demands no pause at all.³³

The unusualness of this marked metrical design in Spenser’s 1590s work suggests that he intended readers to recognize that he was playing variations on a traditional tune. The “obsessional” nature of the design and its deviation from Spenser’s normal practice underline the case for an ironic reading of Alcyon: his recursion to “drab” metrical norms characterizes him as a stylistic fossil, a poet who is incapable of keeping up with the present; as he says in the previous stanza, “I hate all times, because all times doo flye / So fast away, and may not stayed be” (ll. 411–12). Such attention to *Daphnaïda*’s meter doesn’t reveal a different reading from that of other scholars who view Alcyon ironically so much as to prompt related reasons for being suspicious of him. Of course, all metrical patterns are on one level agents of control; at the extreme, they are tools that subject linguistic usage to predetermined norms.³⁴ Yet the combination of a highly restrictive form with a distinct pedigree and Alcyon’s hyperbole forces the reader to a critical perspective on the poetry under inspection. In this light, it is not simply that the verse is robotic—apparently stuck in a locked groove of unmodulated anaphora—as that Spenser’s employment of these devices constitutes a

technique of characterization, intended to make the reader differentiate Alcyon from the narrator and from other less one-note complainants like Verlame in *The Ruines of Time*.

* * *

The second caveat about our oft-derided stanza is that such writing was not confined to poetry: contemporary drama has many examples that are just as formulaic and monotonous as this passage, yet that use these devices to innovative effect. As Wolfgang Clemen described long ago, the dramatic lament is a major component of pre-Shakespearean tragedy.³⁵ In all likelihood, practice in dramatic verse influenced nondramatic verse, as well as vice versa. The tendency to harder distinctions between poetry and drama typical of modern literary studies was not a Renaissance way of thinking, and a reader as sophisticated as Spenser—who may himself have been a dramatist of some kind³⁶—is unlikely to have viewed genre parochially.³⁷ Though it is difficult to be precise about Spenser's knowledge of the drama, because of his residence in Ireland and the paucity of unequivocal references in his work, he was certainly aware of Sackville and Norton's *Gorboduc* (1570).³⁸ *Gorboduc* though is very much a drama that is stylistically "drab," so I juxtapose *Daphnaïda* with the more adventurous work of a younger alumnus of Merchant Taylors school, Thomas Kyd.³⁹ Most authorities date *The Spanish Tragedy* to the late 1580s, so it is conceivable that Spenser could have seen this extraordinarily popular play during his return to London.⁴⁰ Reread in this light, Alcyon's tirade is not unlike the kind of elaborate rhetoric Kyd deploys for Hieronimo, as in the celebrated speech, "O eyes, no eyes, but fountains fraught with tears" (3.2.1–23). The use of anaphora and the 4/6 line for dramatic pathos finds a direct parallel in the play's penultimate scene, as Hieronimo reveals Horatio's body and the reason for his revenge:

(*[Draws the curtain and] shows his dead son.*)

See here my show, look on this spectacle.
 Here lay my hope, and here my hope hath end;
 Here lay my heart, and here my heart was slain;
 Here lay my treasure, here my treasure lost;
 Here lay my bliss, and here my bliss bereft.
 But hope, heart, treasure, joy, and bliss,
 All fled, failed, died, yea, all decayed with this.

(4.4.88–94)⁴¹

Clemen offers a still useful account of the change of sentiment and idiom that is visible in the transition from *Gorboduc* to *The Spanish Tragedy*. As he comments about the former, the dramatists' legal training meant that "emotional speech remains a derivative product, a linguistic structure organized by the intellect and not a spontaneous expression of the feelings."⁴² Hieronimo's many complaints are also insistently rhetorical, yet as Clemen demonstrates in his analysis of the "O eyes, no eyes" speech, rhetoric for Kyd is a means to a different end: "Kyd's handling of the arts of rhetoric . . . may add considerably to the effectiveness with which Hieronimo voices his feelings, provided that we are willing to be guided by the standards of late sixteenth-century taste, and not by present-day tastes."⁴³ This is an important caveat: the change within late sixteenth-century drama is not a move from legalistic rhetoric to realism; it is rather a sophisticated appreciation that traditional poetic tools (including both Senecan rhetoric and the dominant metrical patterns of the 1570s) could be put to fresh use in the framing of character. That is what happens in this speech, as Hieronimo's anaphora-fest repeats the devices he had used in his earlier soliloquy: through a highly controlled form of recapping, the subjects of his anaphora clauses produce the climactic statement of the rhyming couplet with its significantly heavier realization of the iambic pentameter line as the script dictates that the actor must slow down both for tragic emphasis and grammatical coordination. As Clemen observes, "The grief-stricken old man . . . must with his very strange manner and speech have produced an uncanny effect on the stage."⁴⁴ The effect of these overlapping antithetical 4/6 lines is ideally one of profoundest pathos as Hieronimo stages the unveiling of the murdered Horatio on stage; Kyd's "drab" techniques enable a new kind of dramatic writing.

To turn from Hieronimo to Alcyon is not a radical change of focus, despite differences of genre. Kyd's emotive, rhetorically informed verse provides a template that Spenser critically adapts in *Daphnaïda*. Yet Spenser's poem is not in any simple way a reading of Kyd's play; rather, the facets of "bad" writing that critics have diagnosed in the poem have exact correspondences in the play that suggest both Spenser's informed stylistic appreciation of contemporary drama and his appropriation of techniques from the stage to his own literary purposes. Once again, Alcyon's style emerges as a characterizing device: drawing on the poetry of the 1570s and contemporary drama, Spenser utilizes a familiar pattern to underline Alcyon's excesses. Unlike Hieronimo—whose runaway success made him a cultural template of grief—Alcyon's "lowd plaints" are intended to "dul" the reader's

ears as much as his own (l. 415); Spenser copies Kyd to stress the distance between his emotionally self-involved character and Hieronimo's more universal appeal.⁴⁵

Steven Mullaney's recent work on "affective irony" gives a related way of analyzing *Daphnaïda* in terms of contemporary drama. On the basis of close readings of *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Titus Andronicus* act 2, scene 4, where Marcus interprets the mutilated Lavinia through the tropes of Ovidian poetry, Mullaney suggests, "If 'dramatic irony' is what we call a situation when a character is left in the dark but the audience is in the know, 'affective irony' seems an appropriate name for situations like this one, when a character's expressed feeling or 'sympathy'—Marcus's Ovidian, narcissistic grief—is an object of irony for the audience rather than a model for its own sympathies."⁴⁶ As he goes on to note, this technique "is not limited to this play or genre."⁴⁷ Though *Daphnaïda* lacks the metatheatric devices of *Andrea and Revenge* as a play-within-a-play frame, or Lavinia as "a boundary crosser and an uncanny presence, occupying a space she should no longer occupy,"⁴⁸ it does respond to Mullaney's sense of affective irony as a means of forcing the reader to confront the limitations of Alcyon's perspective. Thus Alcyon's recitation of Daphne's speech to him (quoted above) transgressively stages the object of the lament as a resistant participant in that text—Daphne crosses boundaries that Alcyon will not. Similarly, through the narrative frame, the reader overhears Alcyon by means of the narrator's sympathetic, quasi-dramatic presentation. Yet this frame is in numerous ways unsatisfactory and provocative. As Marcus falsely interprets Lavinia, so the narrator fails either to comfort or even interpret Alcyon, with the obvious difference that the latter is articulate where Lavinia is brutally muted. If Marcus's Ovidian commentary alienates the audience from his flawed interpretation, similarly the *Daphnaïda* narrator's "pittie" and empathetic "teares" do not lead to any convergence of perspective (ll. 171–72). The ending of the poem suggests the futility of the narrator's gestures of friendship ("But by no meanes I could him win thereto" [l. 561]) as the frame itself becomes questionable in its failure to conform to the traditional decorum of pastoral elegy. As most commentators register, Alcyon feels too much, feels in excess, and thus makes it difficult for readers to empathize with his sense of his own deprivation. Section 5 of his lament underlines this alienating logic: "I hate to feele . . . So doo I live, so doo I daylie die, / And pine away in selfe-consuming paine" (ll. 419, 435–36). As audiences are expected to "recoil from Marcus's sympathy," readers are intended to resist Alcyon's self-serving numbness, a numbness that explicitly marks his chosen social and emotional isolation.⁴⁹ If this

suggests a moralizing approach to Alcyon, that is chiefly in the sense that Spenser constructs him as a dramatic character for readers to evaluate, much as Shakespeare expects audiences to evaluate Marcus's response to Lavinia; the difference is one of perspective. Alcyon is psychologically and aesthetically limited, yet through the device of the narrative frame Spenser withholds any categorical framework for judging him.⁵⁰

* * *

Thus far, I have considered metrical and dramatic contexts for the ironically limited perspective and poetry of Alcyon's lament. Spenser seems to have expected his audience to read *Daphnaïda* as a cultural sampler of complaint, with multiple and sometimes contradictory echoes. This becomes especially clear if we examine one of Alcyon's favorite tropes in the light of a neglected intertext. Section 4 of the lament recaps the image of Alcyon as a pilgrim that the narrator used at the beginning of the poem (see ll. 41–42):

For I will walke this wandring pilgrimage
 Throughout the world from one to other end,
 And in affliction wast my better age.
 My bread shall be the anguish of my mind,
 My drink the teares which fro mine eyes do raine,
 My bed the ground that hardest I may finde;
 So will I wilfully increase my paine.

(ll. 372–78)

Alcyon returns to related imagery at the end of section 6: "I will withdraw me to some darksome place, / Or some deepe cave, or solitarie shade" (ll. 486–87). Pilgrimage gives way to a complete withdrawal from the sociability that Alcyon finds so oppressive; the "toylsome trade[s]" of other men are replaced with a monotonous soundtrack of complaint: "There will I sigh and sorrow all day long, / And the huge burden of my cares unlade" (ll. 485–89). As Gibson has noted, Spenser paraphrases a popular sonnet, later attributed to Raleigh, that has close links with Gorges's work.⁵¹ This poem was itself a translation of a sonnet by Phillippe Desportes, beginning "Je me veux rendre hermite et faire penitence," and was first translated by Thomas Lodge into archetypally "drab" fourteeners in 1589.⁵² Yet it is the second version that caught Spenser's attention:

Like to a Hermite poore in place obscure,
 I meane to spend my daies of endles doubt,
 To waile such woes as time cannot recure,
 Where none but Loue shall euer finde me out.

My foode shall be of care and sorow made,
 My drink nought else but teares falne from mine eies,
 And for my light in such obscured shade,
 The flames shall serue, which from my hart arise.

A gowne of graie, my bodie shall attire,
 My staffe of broken hope whereon Ile staie,
 Of late repentance linckt with long desire,
 The couch is fram'de whereon my limbes Ile lay,

And at my gate dispaire shall linger still,
 To let in death when Loue and Fortune will.⁵³

The connections between *Daphnaïda* and the English poem are clear: Spenser's "My bread shall be the anguish of my mind, / My drink the teares which fro my eyes do raine" mimic lines 5–6 above, while "My bed the ground that hardest I may finde" echoes the end of the third quatrain; more distantly, "My staffe of broken hope whereon Ile staie" anticipates Alcyon's "*Jaakob* staffe in hand devoutlie crost" (l. 41) at the beginning of the poem.⁵⁴ Throughout, Spenser revisits the trope of the hermit's withdrawal into a kind of atrophied or literalized complaint; rather than being just a mode you perform, complaint is at the heart of Alcyon's identity and is underlined by his performance and adaptation of this intertext.

Though "Like to a Hermite" did not appear in print until 1591, there is evidence that it circulated in manuscript during the 1580s;⁵⁵ whoever wrote the translation, Spenser is likely to have recognized it both as a clever, and in many ways superior, adaptation of a French source. As well as its fondness for anaphoristic structures ("My foode . . . My drink"; "My staffe of broken hope whereon Ile staie . . . The couch is fram'de whereon my limbes Ile lay") the English poem is marked by a deeper melancholy than the French original. Consider the endings: Desportes concludes with a conventional assertion of Petrarchan fealty to a displaced beloved—"tousjours, pour prier, devant mes yeux j'auray / La peinture d'Amour et celle de ma dame."⁵⁶ In contrast, the English poem substitutes a sharper and more

hysterical image of the speaker at the mercy of a sequence of quasi-allegorical personifications of “dispaire,” “death,” and “Loue and Fortune.” Where the French speaker anticipates the self-denying pleasures of the hermitage, the English speaker almost passively forecasts his own extinction—“when Loue and Fortune will”—while largely expunging the image of a lady. As Desportes’s speaker is characteristically “languissant”—languishing for his inaccessible mistress—the English speaker is more purposive in his abjection; this is legible in the terrific second line “I meane to spend my daies of endles doubt,” which has little warrant in the original.⁵⁷ The gesture of a cultivated pastoral withdrawal that animates the poem substantially informs Alcyon’s lament. Anne Lake Prescott notes that “Desportes’s sonnet is a worldly poem about isolation and refuge, readily borrowed and readily understood”; Alcyon’s lament, however, follows “Like to a Hermite” in the single-minded, almost monomaniac quality of the seclusion it envisages.⁵⁸

“Borrowing” is too neutral a term for what happens to this poem in *Daphnaïda*: Spenser’s version is a critical adaptation of the English text, immersed in its hyperbolic atmosphere of “broken hope” and “late repentance.” When the motifs of the sonnet are recontextualized in the fictive context of Alcyon’s lament, they become something more than what Arthur Marotti calls “A courtier’s disingenuous announcement of his retirement from the field of political competition.”⁵⁹ Instead, Spenser synthesizes a well-known poem to underline the limitations of Alcyon’s self-presentation. One word reveals Spenser’s strategy: “So will I wilfully increase my paine” (l. 378). The annotating adverb gets to the heart of how *Daphnaïda* presents Alcyon: where the rest of the stanza inhabits the same milieu as “Like to a Hermite,” “wilfully” suggests a discriminating editorial presence who doesn’t want his readers to accept Alcyon at face value. Parallel uses of this word in *The Faerie Queene* suggest Alcyon’s problematic kinship, as when Scudamour “wilfully him throwing on the gras, / Did beat and bounse his head and brest full sore” outside of the House of Busirane (III.xi.27).⁶⁰ As we shall see, Scudamour at the end of Book III is an analogue to Alcyon both in his impotence and his repeated prostration. In my view, this intertext shows Spenser denaturing a text of the moment for his own purposes. By “denature,” I mean that through the strategy of paraphrasing “Like to a Hermite” into *Daphnaïda*, Spenser changes the properties of the original poem almost out of recognition: the revision rewrites the conceit of a courtly fantasy of seclusion to provide a covert commentary on the complainant.⁶¹ What interested Spenser about “Like to a Hermite” was that it was a complaint text he could absorb and modify into his own extreme version of complaint.

As with his adoption of “drab” sources and his use of techniques from contemporary drama, Spenser uproots texts, tropes, and patterns of imagery from a range of sources to complicate how we respond to them in the hard new ground of *his* poem. This process of denaturing is also at work in his reshaping of the rhyme royal stanza.

* * *

Daphnaïda is thus neither disinterested advocacy for Arthur Gorges nor an unaccountable example of Spenserian ineptitude; rather, it is a poem that is conscious of its status as complaint and of its multiple dialogues with overlapping literary pasts—with Ovid, with Chaucer, with the poets of the 1570s, with contemporary drama, and also with Spenser’s own back catalog.⁶² This is what I turn to now: *Daphnaïda* as a continuation of the concerns of the *Complaints* volume. As Miller underlines, one of the most puzzling aspects of *Daphnaïda*’s publication history is its reappearance in the *Fowre Hymnes* quarto. Ponsonby may have included *Daphnaïda* as an extra to fill out what would otherwise have been a relatively meager volume: the *Hymnes* occupy forty-five pages of the 1596 quarto, which is increased to seventy-one by the inclusion of the earlier poem.⁶³ Recent research suggests that this is an issue for both the poem’s second *and* the first editions: *Daphnaïda* is from the outset something of an extra, a kind of bonus track.

Bonus tracks are integral to the marketing strategies of record companies as they seek to resell music in increasingly lavish formats to consumers in a market where digital platforms are making physical products increasingly redundant.⁶⁴ Though such strategies for fleecing music lovers may seem remote from the book trade of the 1590s, Adrian Weiss’s research on the watermarks of the *Complaints* and *Daphnaïda* quartos suggests that there is nothing new under the commercial sun: publishers and record companies exploit different formats to stimulate interest and attract buyers. It seems that the *Complaints* volume was frequently broken into discrete sections and sold accordingly: “the distribution of the nine verse texts into four bibliographical units with first-leaf recto title-pages could have been a deliberate marketing strategy.”⁶⁵ We have known for a long time that *Mother Hubberds Tale* was still available as a separate, more expensive text after its “calling in” in the early 1590s, but Weiss’s work suggests that the nine-poem “complete” *Complaints* was often sold discretely from the outset: “each section could have been tied up and marketed as a separate book, or all four could have been purchased for binding into a

complete set.”⁶⁶ Weiss further establishes that the dating of Spenser’s dedication on January 1, 1591, to Helena Snackenborg, Marquess of Northampton, is new style by showing “that exactly the same papers were used in both *Daphnaïda* and *Complaints*.”⁶⁷ He thus demonstrates the physical proximity of the two publications, even positioning Spenser in Orwin’s printing shop in January 1591.⁶⁸ Physical proximity implies aesthetic proximity, or at least a continuity of creative endeavor. Though only three copies of the 1591 *Daphnaïda* survive, one (now at the Huntington Library) seems to have been bound with the *Complaints*.⁶⁹ As Weiss suggests, it was possible for customers to assemble a unified *Complaints* and *Daphnaïda*—a “collector’s edition” of Spenserian complaint.

Seen in this light, *Daphnaïda* was something of an extra in both 1596 and 1591. Weiss rightly stresses the separation between *Complaints* and *Daphnaïda* as bibliographical units, noting that *Daphnaïda* starts with a new set of signatures despite the common provenance of the paper.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, this putative collector’s edition suggests ways of reading *Daphnaïda* in terms of *Complaints*. The buyer who had the two quartos bound together would have turned from the closing sections of *The Visions of Petrarch* (hereafter cited as *VP*), and the weary eschatology provoked by the death of Laura, to a rescripting of that scenario in *Daphnaïda*. The move from Laura’s death (“Wherewith she languisht as the gathered flour” [*VP*, l. 79]) and the narrator’s contemptus mundi (“I wish I might this wearie life forgoe” [*VP*, l. 89]) anticipates Alcyon’s mourning for Daphne: “O that so faire a flower so soone should fade, / And through untimely tempest fall away”; “to dye must needes be joyeous, / And wishfull thing this sad life to forgoe” (ll. 237–38, 451–52). The continuity of feeling between the close of *Complaints* and *Daphnaïda* is remarkable: Spenser is copying his own work, and in doing so ventriloquizing both the Petrarchan tradition and his own back catalog, albeit in a different context and with a more complex narrative frame.⁷¹ The analogy with the *Visions of Petrarch* helps to locate the mood of the later poem. While at one level, the *Visions* sequence is juvenilia Spenser had recast for the purposes of the *Complaints* volume, at another these are serious and inventive poems in their own right, which prefigure and participate in the skills of the mature poet.⁷² To imitate them again in *Daphnaïda* shows the ongoing usefulness of these lamenting modalities.

The conflation of different texts and congruent moments of mourning may account for a puzzling slip in *Daphnaïda*, as Alcyon mistakes “faire *Eurydice*” for Proserpina when he resolves to travel in imitation of the grieving Ceres “Throghout the world, with wofull heavie thought” (ll. 463–65).⁷³ The

mistake has puzzled commentators because it is the kind of error a reader as learned as Spenser should not have made. But if he was remembering the old Petrarchan poem he had recently revamped for the *Complaints* volume, the choice of name is more explicable. The death scene in *The Visions of Petrarch*—and the woodcut from *A Theatre for Worldlings*—conflate the death of “so faire a Ladie” with that of Eurydice: “Above the waist a darke clowde shrowded her / A stinging Serpent by the heele her caught; / Wherewith she languisht as the gathered floure” (VP, ll. 77–79); as Robert Durling notes, “this vision reenacts the death of Eurydice.”⁷⁴ As Oram’s notes indicate, the use of Eurydice in *Daphnaïda* is more of a mythic clustering than a mistake, in which Spenser uses one name to trigger memories of two myths, positioning Alcyon—never, it must be said, a modest speaker—as both Orpheus and Ceres.⁷⁵ Understood in this expanded bibliographical context, the voice we hear in lines like “She fell away against all course of kinde: / For age to dye is right, but youth is wrong; / She fel away like fruit blowne downe with winde” (ll. 242–44) is a *mélange* of Petrarch via Marot, der Noot, early Spenser, and the complaint tradition.

* * *

Finally, I turn to what may be the oddest thing about *Daphnaïda*: its stanza. Oram aptly characterizes its distinctiveness: an *ababcb* variant of rhyme royal that “typically avoids the neat chime of a final couplet, and integrates the last rhyme more fully into the structure of the whole.”⁷⁶ As Steven May and W. A. Ringler’s epic work of bibliography demonstrates, the *Daphnaïda* stanza is extremely unusual: they list just nine examples, including Spenser’s poem, two of which are later than 1591; there are only five poems that follow the same pattern of an *ababcb* stanza with decasyllabic lines, and nothing that offers a functional equivalent to *Daphnaïda* in terms of length and complexity.⁷⁷ This underlines the singularity of Spenser’s poem: in a culture where rhyme royal was the dominant seven-line form, Spenser’s modification is all but unprecedented. During the later sixteenth century, rhyme royal was associated with Chaucer and *The Mirror for Magistrates*; as Puttenham notes, it was “the chief of our ancient proportions used by any rhymer writing anything of historical or grave poem.”⁷⁸ By the 1590s, its persistence is largely in texts that look back to *The Mirror*—Daniel’s *Complaint of Rosamund*, Drayton’s *Legends*, even Shakespeare’s *Lucrece*. Elsewhere, I have made two related suggestions about this shift: first, that by the 1590s rhyme royal had become outmoded and almost antiquarian—it is the perfect stanza for *The Ruines of Time*; second, that the

variable syntaxes mandated by rhyme royal underlie the Spenserian stanza.⁷⁹ Why then did Spenser disrupt this form for *Daphnaïda*?

The easiest way to answer this is to compare *Daphnaïda* with a congruent poem. *The Ruines of Time* is the obvious candidate, both because it is the single rhyme royal text in *Complaints* and because of the intertextual connections between the two. Both ventriloquize lament for the vanished past as a precursor to contemptus mundi, and both frame experimental laments in the context of solitary strolls by the poet-narrator. In terms of the 1591 “collector’s edition” of *Complaints*, the inclusion of *Daphnaïda* would have given to that collection a powerful sense of circularity, as laments for the depredations of time and the elegies for the Dudley and Sidney families anticipate the melancholy tonalities of the later poem. Rhyme royal is well suited to the different elements of *The Ruines of Time*, ranging from its assertion of the “eternizing” powers of poetry to its mourning of cultural evanescence:

For deeds doe die, how ever noblie donne,
 And thoughts of men do as themselves decay,
 But wise wordes taught in numbers for to runne,
 Recorded by the Muses, live for ay;
 Ne may with storming showers be washt away,
 Ne bitter breathing windes with harmfull blast,
 Nor age, nor envie shall them euer wast.

(RT, ll. 400–406)

This stanza demonstrates the propensity of rhyme royal to fall into two unequal portions: an *abab* quatrain followed by a *bcc* tercet. The fourth line—like the fifth line of the Spenserian—determines whether the stanza emphasizes this organization or whether it foregrounds the double couplet climax. In this case, the connection between lines four and five is predominantly periodic or syntactic, by which I mean that Spenser promotes the grammatical turn at the start of the fifth line, “Ne,” above the sonic link between the *ay*: *away* rhyme; that Spenser is writing on the basis of a final tercet is clearly legible in the heavy pause at the end of the fourth line and the linked connectives “Ne/Ne/Nor” of the next three lines.⁸⁰

Rhyme royal is equally suited to maximizing the rhetorical embellishment afforded by the double couplet, as in Verlame’s initial lament:

I was that Citie, which the garland wore
 Of *Britaines* pride, delivered unto me

By *Romane* Victors, which it wonne of yore;
 Though nought at all but ruines now I bee,
 And lye in mine owne ashes, as ye see:
Verlame I was; what bootes it that I was,
 Sith now I am but weedes and wastfull gras?
 (RT, ll. 36–42)

The syntax—cued by the emphatic punctuation of the 1591 quarto—demands a strong pause after “yore” (all the stronger for the heavy enjambment from the second to the third line), while the following line features a new clause of qualification and extension that develops into an independent, exemplary statement of lament as *Verlame* points at herself as *the* ruin of time.⁸¹ Spenser wants us to hear *Verlame*’s heart-wringing changes, which means that syntax yields to the dominating form of the double couplet close. In this permutation, rhyme royal derives its poetic energy from its nimble ability to shift from the interwoven form of its first “half” to the more conclusive shape afforded by the second “half.” As with the Spenserian stanza, rhyme royal is at once formally restrictive and syntactically permissive, enabling the skillful poet to manipulate it seemingly at will.⁸²

By the simple revisionary strategy of swapping the rhymes in the fifth and sixth lines, *Daphnaïda* disables such euphony. Consider the second most often-cited stanza in *Daphnaïda*, in which the narrator reveals his own melancholy and that has been connected with Spenser’s own bereavement:⁸³

There came unto my minde a troublous thought,
 Which dayly dooth my weaker wit possesse,
 Ne lets it rest, untill it forth have brought
 Her long borne Infant, fruit of heavinesse,
 Which she conceived hath through meditation
 Of this worlds vainnesse and lifes wretchednesse,
 That yet my soule it deeply doth empassion.
 (ll. 29–35)

Though the first half of the stanza preserves the *abab* structure of rhyme royal, what happens after goes in a different, less emphatic direction. That is not to say that through devices like anaphora, Spenser cannot manipulate the *Daphnaïda* stanza into the recursive, reiterative frameworks that *Alcyon* employs; nevertheless, this new stanza form seems designed to slacken the marriage of syntax and rhyme characteristic of rhyme royal. Rather than juxtaposing the big gloomy phrases of “fruit of heauinesse” and “lifes

wretchednesse” in the way rhyme royal would, the stanza frustrates rhyming conjunction in favor of a more languid, prose-like syntax, evident in grammatical connectives like “*Which she conceiued*”; “*That yet my soule*” (my emphases). Where rhyme royal, like the Spenserian stanza, mixes inwoven lines with couplet climaxes, the *Daphnaïda* stanza artfully eliminates the latter, with consequences for the way it functions poetically. And it may well be that this imbricated, less emphatic stanza fits the depression the narrator describes: “a troublous thought / Which dayly dooth my weaker wit possesse” demands such an attenuating discursive structure.

One way of emphasizing the oddness of the *Daphnaïda* form is to try to rearrange stanzas back into the rhyme royal pattern. Naturally, not all stanzas are amenable to such transposition; the one I’ve just quoted uses a periodic syntax that develops from line to line—reorder its fifth and sixth lines and you are left with nonsense, elevating the object-qualifier phrase ahead of the subject-verb phrase. However, Alcyon’s lament—by virtue of its obsessive stylization—does yield stanzas that can be rearranged:

Yet whilest I in this wretched vale doo stay,
 My wearie feete shall ever wandring be,
 That still I may be readie on my way,
 When as her messenger doth come for me:
 Ne will I rest my feete for feeblenesse,
 Ne will I rest my limmes for frailtie,
 Ne will I rest mine eyes for heavinesse.

(ll. 456–63)

The repeated “Ne will I rest” formula facilitates a seamless rhyme royal palimpsest:

Yet whilest I in this wretched vale doo stay,
 My wearie feete shall ever wandring be,
 That still I may be readie on my way,
 When as her messenger doth come for me:
 Ne will I rest my limmes for frailtie,
 Ne will I rest my feete for feeblenesse,
 Ne will I rest mine eyes for heavinesse.

This experiment does not suggest that Spenser wrote *Daphnaïda* as rhyme royal and then “decomposed” it into the new form. My point is rather that the relatively minimal semantic differences between the two stanzas draw

attention to the larger dissonance between the *Daphnaïda* stanza and rhyme royal. Although the transposition of lines makes little difference to overall meaning—Alcyon either claims he won't rest his "feete" or "limmes" first—aesthetically, the difference between Spenser's stanza and the new version is significant and audible. My stanza is wrong precisely because it achieves the euphonious climaxes that Spenser avoided. Particularly in Alcyon's lament, *Daphnaïda* signals rhyme royal but is deliberately thwarted from achieving that pattern. In other words, my rearrangement is how Alcyon *wants* to sound—he gestures to the emphatic and authoritative style of a Verlame or a Troilus whose lament commands sympathy—but that is precisely how Spenser *frustrates* him from sounding. As with the 4/6 line and the allusions to contemporary drama, the *Daphnaïda* stanza frames the poem's protagonist for the purposes of distancing the reader from his "outrageous" claims (l. 555).⁸⁴

The eccentricity of *Daphnaïda*'s stanza form has implications for its broader failure to conform to the conventions of pastoral elegy. The poem is notorious for its withholding of the consolation that Colin Clout provides in "November," and this refusal of literary decorum highlights a further innovation: that of complaint overwhelming narrative. *Daphnaïda* is structured around a sequence of repeated failures: the narrator tries to establish an emotional rapport with Alcyon, which the latter serially refuses (see ll. 57–91, 169–96, 540–67). Indeed, the "affective irony" of the poem is enhanced by a dissonance Spenser hardwires into his poem: on the one hand, the narrator repeatedly presents Alcyon as an object of sympathy, but on the other, Alcyon's words and actions deny that sympathy. This approach contrasts with *The Ruines of Time*, where the narrator's voice merges with that of Verlame, and the later sequence of visions that closes the poem.⁸⁵ If the rhyme royal stanza of that poem offers a place in which the "mourning melodie" of various complainants may be successfully combined for the purposes of visionary reflection (*RT*, l. 596), in contrast, the "meditations" of the narrator and Alcyon produce no comparable harmony—Alcyon's note remains "the huge burden of my cares," a resistant and ultimately antisocial "undersong" that the narrator struggles to join. Consider the penultimate stanza:

Tho when the pang was somewhat overpast,
 And the outrageous passion nigh appeased,
 I him desirde, sith day was overcast,
 And darke night fast approached, to be pleased

To turne aside unto my Cabinet,
 And staie with me, till he were better eased
 Of that strong stownd, which him so sore beset.
 (ll. 554–60)

There is something peculiar about Spenser's stanzaic writing here. Despite the presence of emphatic, trisyllabic rhymes on "overpast" and "overcast," both of which suggest conclusiveness, the syntax is more strongly enjambed than is Spenser's usual practice, or certainly more than Paul Alpers's influential model of the sovereign, individual line in *The Faerie Queene* would predict.⁸⁶ Despite the quarto's punctuation, there are enjambments after the second, fourth, fifth, and sixth lines; sense hurries on and the verse refuses to make its habitual line-end half pauses as the narrator is involved with Alcyon's unavailing grief. The same thing happens in the final stanza: "he foorth did goe / With staggering pace and dismall looks dismay, / As if that death he in the face had seene" (ll. 563–65) is as close as Spenser gets to breathless. The stanza form is thus best understood as denatured rhyme royal, whose rhyme scheme disrupts the reader's expectation and ironizes Alcyon's heavy-handed grief. As Spenser denatures "Like to a Hermite" in Alcyon's lament to subvert the romance of hermetic seclusion, so through the strategy of changing the placement of the third line in the b-rhyme, he rewires the properties of the seven-line stanza form; the revision undoes how rhyme royal usually works for the purposes of frustration and qualification. If we find *Daphnaïda* an aesthetically half-hearted and alienating experiment, that was baked into the stylistic challenge Spenser set himself: to rework the brilliantly fluid and malleable rhyme royal stanza in such a way that it loses those characteristics while at the same time invoking the assumptions of post-Chaucerian rhyme royal complaint.

In the oeuvre of a poet who is already famously "difficult," a poem of "The heaviest plaint that ever I heard sound" (l. 541) is perhaps not likely to win sympathetic readers: it remains a resistant, almost antisocial poem. Yet the reasons for heeding its unconventional frequencies have never been more compelling as we come to understand Spenser more as an innovator and experimenter and less as a social and artistic conservative. *Daphnaïda* shows Spenser's continuing engagement with complaint, extending that mode in unexpected ways. If texts like *The Ruines of Time*, *The Teares of the Muses*, and the *Visions* that close the 1591 *Complaints* volume suggest a poet too comfortable with the conservative aspects of the complaint tradition, *Daphnaïda*'s radical aesthetic offers a corrective:

Spenser complains because of the critical space the mode affords for distancing and discrimination.⁸⁷ Indeed, the later poem partly counters the accumulated weight of the complaint tradition in the figure of Alcyon. Though Spenser remains deeply fascinated by this state of mind, the poem's final gesture of the narrator's failing to follow Alcyon's "staggering pace and dismall lookes dismay" (l. 564) hints at the parting of the ways between the critical poet and the self-involved subject. More broadly, the poem's ironic techniques both at the level of form and intertextual play are relevant to any reading of *The Faerie Queene*. In the comparatively brief space of this poem, Spenser showcases the ways in which his manipulation of traditional materials underpins the complex work of allegorical characterization.

Yet Spenser never altogether escapes from complaint. Consider the proximity between *Daphnaïda* and the revised ending of Book III of *The Faerie Queene*, first published in 1596. The 1590 passage, and in particular the hermaphrodite image, has been discussed extensively and remains one of the fundamental cruxes of Spenser scholarship.⁸⁸ The revised ending, because it is plainer, more transactional—and more *Daphnaïda*-like—has had less commentary:

But he sad man, when he had long in drede
 Aweyted there for *Britomarts* returne,
 Yet saw her not nor signe of her good speed,
 His expectation to despaire did turne
 Misdeeming sure that her those flames did burne;
 And therefore gan aduize with her old Squire
 Who her deare nourslings losse no lesse did mourne,
 Thence to depart for further aide t'enquire:
 Where let them wend at will, whilest here I doe respire.
 (III.xii.45 [1596])

"Sad" is something of a signature adjective in *Daphnaïda*—the Fates have "sad hands"; care, death, balefulness, and life are sad; saddest of all is Alcyon himself—"the wofulst man alive; / Even sad *Alcyon*" (ll. 6–7). Though it is a common epithet, in the context of the previous canto and Britomart's repeated failure to get Scudamour off the ground (Alcyon and Scudamour are both sufferers of the falling sickness, a neat signature of masculine abjection), a *Daphnaïda* note is audible in the downturn of the revised ending with its postponement of the distracting plenitude of

the original.⁸⁹ What we see in both *Daphnaïda* and the revised Book III ending is a deliberate experiment with complaint that overwhelms, or disables, narrative. Oram suggests that *Daphnaïda* anticipates the greater prominence of the narrator in Spenser's later poetry: he "becomes the subject of his poetry," particularly in *Amoretti*, *Prothalamion*, and the *Hymnes*.⁹⁰ We might also think of the passages like the Aemylia's lament in Lust's cave, the Book V proem, and the romance narratives of Book VI, where complaint no longer knows its place. It, too, threatens to become the poetry, and Spenser is increasingly preoccupied with telling "the dolefull dreriment, / And pittiful complaints" of heroines like Pastorella, Serena, and Mirabella at the expense of finishing their stories (VI.x.44). One of the tacit messages of *Daphnaïda* is that the longer and more self-absorbed the lament, the harder it is for readers or audiences to remain patient with them. Spenser didn't write *The Teares of the Muses* for nothing. Yet the sense we make of these laments as readers remains disconcerting. To reapply David Lee Miller's characterization of Spenser's allegorical poetics, such complaint texts constitute "a sort of internalized iconoclasm that makes the poetry a perpetually self-displacing mode of discourse."⁹¹ Complaint, in other words, keeps returning to Spenser as the shadowy twin of allegory. That displaced, lamenting, unidealized self is never altogether out of his discursive—much less poetic—reach.

The Open University

NOTES

This essay owes much to my friends David Lee Miller and Jonathan Gibson: I am indebted to their published and unpublished work on the poem and their encouragement in taking my thinking in new directions. I would also like to thank Mark Rasmussen for his careful reading of the essay, which has been much improved by his suggestions.

1. William A. Oram, "Daphnaïda," in *The Spenser Encyclopedia*, ed. A. C. Hamilton et al. (1990; repr., Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 208; David Lee Miller, "Laughing at Spenser's *Daphnaïda*," *Spenser Studies* 26 (2011): 241–50.

2. All quotations from *Daphnaïda* and other shorter poems are from William A. Oram et al., eds., *The Yale Edition of the Shorter Poems* (New Haven, CT: Yale

University Press, 1989), with line numbers given parenthetically in the text and subsequently abbreviated as *Yale*. All quotations from *The Faerie Queene* are from Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A. C. Hamilton et al. (2001; Harlow: Pearson, 2007). Citations refer to the 2007 edition, with parenthetical references to Book, canto, stanza, and (where appropriate) line. Quotations from early printed books are all from Early English Books Online, except where noted.

3. See Revelation 19.7 and the Geneva Bible note: “God made ye bridegrome of his Church at the beginning, and at the last day it shalbe fully accomplished when we shal be ioyned w[ith] our head,” in Lloyd E. Berry, ed., *The Geneva Bible: A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007), Hhh1r.

4. Patrick Cheney, “Dido to Daphne: Early Modern Death in Spenser’s Shorter Poems,” *Spenser Studies* 18 (2003): 143–63, registers similar resistance to the idea that *Daphnaïda* is an aesthetic failure, revaluing it “an Elizabethan minor epic in the tragic mode” (155).

5. Spenser clearly enjoyed the possible collocations the adjectival “toward” gave him. Consider two lines from the 1590 *Faerie Queene*: “He either enuying my toward good” (II.iv.22.2), and, with an elaborate doubling, “His toward peril and vntoward blame” (III.i.9.7).

6. For the theoretical background on elegy and “the work of mourning,” see Peter Sacks, *The English Elegy: Studies in the Genre from Spenser to Yeats* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 21–26, and 41 for *Daphnaïda*’s failure to conform to this model. Glenn Steinberg, “Idoltrous Idylls: Protestant Iconoclasm, Spenser’s *Daphnaïda* and Chaucer’s *Book of the Duchess*,” in *Refiguring Chaucer in the Renaissance*, ed. Theresa M. Krier (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998), 128–43, sees *Daphnaïda* as a Calvinist rewriting of the *Book of the Duchess* and views Daphne’s lament as further evidence of the “unredeemed suffering of this world” (135, 142n15). Steinberg’s reading depends on rather selective quotation, omitting the second half of the second stanza quoted above.

7. For the connection between the speaker’s grief and Alcyon’s, see ll. 29–38; William A. Oram, “*Daphnaïda* and Spenser’s Later Poetry,” *Spenser Studies* 2 (1981): 141–58, particularly 154, 158n21; and Andrew Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 288. Alternatively, W. L. Renwick connects this stanza with the tonalities of the *Complaints* volume and its parallel publication in *Daphnaïda and Other Poems* (London: Scholartis, 1929), 176.

8. See David Scott Wilson-Okamura, *Spenser’s International Style* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 198: “Spenser was a complainer, not a quitter. He was always a complainer, and the complaining was always about the Blatant Beast,” i.e., Envy. My own view is that Spenserian complaint is even more capacious than Wilson-Okamura suggests; see Richard Danson Brown, *The New Poet: Novelty and Tradition in Spenser’s “Complaints”* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999).

9. In addition to the contributions discussed here and in previous notes, see Maren-Sofie Røstvig, *The Hidden Sense* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1963), 82–87, for a numerological reading, in which an underpinning number-based schema suggests Alcyon’s ultimate “spiritual illumination” (84); Dennis Kay, *Melodious Tears: The English Funeral Elegy from Spenser to Milton* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), 49–52, offers a parallel reading. Duncan Harris and Nancy L. Steffen, “The Other Side of the Garden: An Interpretive Comparison of Chaucer’s *Book of the Duchess* and Spenser’s *Daphnaïda*,” *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 8 (1978): 17–36, explores the intertextual relationship with Chaucer’s poem. This aspect is developed in Ellen E. Martin, “Spenser, Chaucer and the Rhetoric of Elegy,” *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 17 (1987): 83–109, which offers a Freudian reading of the *Book of the Duchess* and *Daphnaïda* that opposes moralizing readings of Alcyon’s excesses. A. Leigh DeNeef, *Spenser and the Motives of Metaphor* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1982), 41–50, views Alcyon as an exemplum of a failed Sidneyan poet. Donald Cheney, “Grief and Creativity in Spenser’s *Daphnaïda*,” in *Grief and Gender: 700–1700*, ed. Jennifer C. Vaught (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 123–31, considers the connections between *Daphnaïda* and traditional poetry, from Ovid to the *Complaints* volume. Also worth mentioning here are pieces in recent critical companions: Mark David Rasmussen, “*Complaints* and *Daphnaïda* (1591),” in *The Oxford Handbook of Edmund Spenser*, ed. Richard A. McCabe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 218–36, an alert overview of trends in recent criticism; and Andrea Brady, “Funeral Elegy,” in *A Companion to Renaissance Poetry*, ed. Catherine Bates (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell, 2018), 353–64, who sees Alcyon as a pathological mourner in her sociological approach to the broader mode of elegy.

10. Oram, “*Daphnaïda* and Spenser’s Later Poetry,” 141.

11. Jonathan Gibson, “The Legal Context of Spenser’s *Daphnaïda*,” *RES* 55, no. 218 (2004): 24–44. See further Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser: A Life*, 284–88, who largely accepts Gibson’s conclusions.

12. Gibson, “Legal Context of Spenser’s *Daphnaïda*,” 32. “Drab” is a problematic term, deriving from C. S. Lewis’s *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century Excluding Drama* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1954), 1, 222–71, and in particular 64, where he claims that the “drab”/“golden” antithesis is not evaluative. For recent commentary, see Matthew Woodcock, “Thomas Churchyard and the Medieval Complaint Tradition,” in *Medieval into Renaissance: Essays for Helen Cooper*, ed. Andrew King and Matthew Woodcock (Cambridge: Brewer, 2016), 123, rightly querying Lewis’s “progressivist literary history”; and David Scott Wilson-Okamura, “Catherine Nicholson, Uncommon Tongues: Eloquence and Eccentricity in the English Renaissance,” *Spenser Review* 45.1.11 (Spring–Summer 2015), <http://www.english.cam.ac.uk/spenseronline/review/item/45.1.11>. Wilson-Okamura notes that the

“drab” remains “a lump,” which recent theories have failed to digest. For economy, I use “drab” throughout, though like Wilson-Okamura, I am uncomfortable with Lewis’s dated assumptions. New work on the plainer styles of poetry in the later sixteenth century is needed to reassess both the work of writers like Gascoigne and Churchyard and more celebrated writers like Raleigh and Herbert who partly followed this tradition.

13. Sir Arthur Gorges, *The Poems*, ed. Helen Estabrook Sandison (Oxford: Clarendon, 1953), 45–46, particularly ll. 9–29 of this poem. Though Gibson is right to connect this and other poems with Alcyon’s liking for “monotonous lists” (“Legal Context of Spenser’s *Daphnaïda*,” 31), the difference in verse forms underlines the differences in feeling and technique. Where Gorges writes in more or less mechanistic poulter’s measure (lineated in quatrains), even in this passage Spenser’s more flexible forms—and consequent modulation of readerly attention—are evident.

14. Miller, “Laughing at Spenser’s *Daphnaïda*,” 241, 246.

15. *Ibid.*, 250.

16. *Ibid.*, 246, 242. See Edmund Spenser, *Fowre Hymnes* (London: William Ponsonby, 1596), 47–71, for the second printing of *Daphnaïda*; and Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser: A Life*, 351. For full bibliographical data, see Francis Johnson, *A Critical Bibliography of the Works of Edmund Spenser Printed before 1700* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1933), 31–32.

17. Rachel Hile, *Spenserian Satire: A Tradition of Indirection* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), 46–63, at 58. Hile’s reading views Alcyon as a quasi-allegorical personification in the manner of *The Faerie Queene* and as a modern type of the Wandering Jew. Hile’s questioning of Alcyon—“Spenser creates in Alcyon a poet bad enough . . . to enable the reader to have the confidence to judge that the acclaimed poet of *The Shepherdes Calender* and *The Faerie Queene* has put bad poetry into the mouth of this character, and to wonder why” (54)—chimes with my approach.

18. DeNeef’s reading is relevant here too (see n. 9) in his sense that the poem is a warning of what happens when poetry is not used correctly (i.e., in the Sidneyan terms of DeNeef’s wider thesis as a metaphoric agent of moral reformation); see esp. *Spenser and the Motives of Metaphor*, 47–49.

19. Compare Harris and Steffen, “The Other Side of the Garden,” 27; Gibson, “The Legal Context of Spenser’s *Daphnaïda*,” 31; Miller, “Laughing at Spenser’s *Daphnaïda*,” 243; and Hile, *Spenserian Satire*, 54. Oram, “*Daphnaïda* and Spenser’s Later Poetry,” 148, makes the point that the obsessive quality of the writing “dramatizes Alcyon’s state of mind.”

20. Hile, *Spenserian Satire*, 54.

21. *Ibid.*, 53.

22. Gascoigne, *Certayne Notes of Instruction (1575)*, in *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, ed. G. Gregory Smith, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1904), 1:54: “in a verse of tenne [the caesura] will be best placed at the end of the first foure sillables.” For commentary, see

Richard Danson Brown, *The Art of "The Faerie Queene"* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019), 74–82; and Carlo M. Bajetta, "Raleigh's Early Poetry in Its Metrical Context," *Studies in Philology* 93, no. 4 (1996): 390–411, who argues that the 4/6 line is particularly associated with poets connected to the Inns of Court.

23. See, e.g., "Les Tristes Vers de Philippes Beroalde, sur le Jour de Vendredy Saint," ll. 161–64, which are structured around a first hemistich beginning "S'il est ainsi," in Clément Marot, *Oeuvres Complètes*, ed. François Rigolot, 2 vols. (Paris: Flammarion, 2007), 1:73. See also Anne Lake Prescott, *French Poets and the English Renaissance: Studies in Fame and Transformation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1978), 1–36, 282n2.

24. In Richard S. M. Hirsch, ed., "The Works of Chidioc Tichborne," *English Literary Renaissance* 16 (1986): 303–18, at 309.

25. Gibson, "Legal Context of Spenser's *Daphnaïda*," 31.

26. For the broader metrical context, see Brown, *Art of "The Faerie Queene,"* 48–102; John Thompson, *The Founding of English Metre* (1962; repr., New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 15–87; Susanne Woods, *Natural Emphasis: English Versification from Chaucer to Dryden* (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 1984), 69–135; and George T. Wright, *Shakespeare's Metrical Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 1–74.

27. Thomas Churchyard, "How Thomas Wolsey did arise with great authority and gouvernement, his maner of life, pompe, and dignity, and how hee fell downe into great disgrace, and was arested of high treason," in *The Mirror for Magistrates* (London: Henry Marsh, 1587), Mm1v.

28. Wright, *Shakespeare's Metrical Art*, 45.

29. See Tichborne's Lament "writen with his owne hand in the Tower before his execution," which is the occasion of Wright's remarks, in *Verses of prayse and ioye* (London: John Wolfe, 1586), A2v. See also Hirsch, "Works of Chidioc Tichborne," 309–10. It has long been speculated that the "T.K." who wrote the mocking poem against Tichborne in *Verses of prayse and ioye* (A3r) could have been Thomas Kyd, yet the evidence is largely inconclusive; see Lukas Erne, *Beyond "The Spanish Tragedy": A Study of the Works of Thomas Kyd* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 220.

30. Hirsch, "Works of Chidioc Tichborne," 309, and see 305–6, for the poem's date. For the poem as an anthology piece, see, e.g., Helen Gardner, ed., *The New Oxford Book of English Verse, 1250–1950* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 59.

31. See "December," ll. 151–56, on the pattern of the first line of the stanza, "Adieu delightes, that lulled me asleepe." Other relevant passages include *The Ruines of Time* (hereafter cited as *RT*), ll. 190–96, where again anaphora dominates ("I saw him die"; "Scarse anie left").

32. See Brown, *Art of "The Faerie Queene,"* 79–82, 94–97, for discussion with examples. For "metrical arthritis," see Wilson-Okamura, *Spenser's International Style*, 31.

33. Nevertheless, the 4/6 line is the ground bass in sec. 5 of the poem (ll. 393–441), cued typographically in twenty-seven of forty-nine lines. For completeness, the lines are: 397, 400–402 (“heaven” as monosyllabic in 400), 404–8, 411–12, 414–19, 421, 424–28, 432, 434–35, 439. I have checked Oram’s text against the 1591 quarto; see Edmund Spenser, *Daphnaïda* (London: William Ponsoby, 1591), C1v–C2v. Even where the pattern isn’t marked typographically, it is often audible: “Of fleshly slime and fraile mortalitie”; “My wearie daies in dolor and disdaine” (ll. 403, 440). Spenser affords some relief both in the varied caesuras noted above and in metrical substitutions like “Leaving behind them nought but griefe of minde” and “Like a Mill wheele, in midst of miserie, / Driven with streames of wretchednesse and woe” (ll. 398, 432–33). In the poem as a whole, caesura pattern mirrors Spenser’s practice in *The Faerie Queene* with its tendency to variety; consider “Let those three fatal Sisters, whose sad hands,” or “I, since the messenger is come for mee” (ll. 16, 267). My point is not to defend the poem so much as to register the complexity of its effects: Spenser’s styles signal the “drab” but do not fully embrace that aesthetic.

34. As is observed by Michael Drayton: “all Stanza’s are in my opinion but Tyrants and Torturers, when they make inuention obey their number,” in *Poems* (London: Printed by W. Stansby for John Swethwicke, 1619; Menston: Scolar, 1969), A3v. See further Brown, *Art of “The Faerie Queene,”* 67.

35. Wolfgang Clemen, *English Tragedy before Shakespeare: The Development of Dramatic Speech*, trans. T. S. Dorsch (London: Methuen, 1961), 211–86. Though Clemen largely ignores poetry, his account still gives the best overview of the ubiquity of complaint forms in the early drama alongside a sympathetic approach to dramatic rhetoric.

36. For Spenser’s *Nine Comedies*, see *Spenser’s Prose Works*, ed. Rudolf Gottfried (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1949), 471, where Harvey compares them with Ariosto’s comedies. For commentary that explores the extent to which either of these works may have been incorporated into published texts, or were planned but never written, see Jack B. Oruch, “Works, Lost,” in Hamilton, *Spenser Encyclopedia*, 737–38; and Joseph L. Black and Lisa Celovsky, “‘Lost Works’, Suppositious Pieces, and Continuations,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Edmund Spenser*, ed. Richard A. McCabe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 353–54. For older commentary, see Edmund Spenser, *The Minor Poems: Part Two*, ed. Charles Grosvenor Osgood and Henry Gibbons Lotspeich (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1947), 516–18.

37. See Sir Philip Sidney’s *Defence of Poetry*, which includes discussion of drama under the broader rubric of poetry, in *Miscellaneous Prose*, ed. Katherine Duncan-Jones and Jan Van Dorsten (Oxford: Clarendon, 1973), 95–97, for the general principle, and 112–13, for *Gorboduc*.

38. Dedicatory Sonnet 11 to Sackville alludes to his writings: “Whose learned Muse hath writ her owne record, / In golden verse, worthy immortal fame” (ll. 3–4). Though this is usually taken as a nod to Sackville’s “Induction” to the 1563

Mirror for Magistrates (see Hamilton's notes in *The Faerie Queene*, 732), Spenser, like Sidney, is likely to "have seen," or read, *Gorbodoc* as well; Sidney, *Miscellaneous Prose*, 113.

39. See Clemen, *English Tragedy before Shakespeare*, 253–57, for the styles of *Gorbodoc*. See Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser: A Life*, 108–9, for stylistic connections between Spenser and Kyd as former pupils of Richard Mulcaster.

40. For the dating of Kyd's play, see *The Spanish Tragedy*, ed. Clara Calvo and Jesús Tronch (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 13–14, who place early performances in the period 1584–89, probably before the Spanish Armada in 1588 (all quotations from *The Spanish Tragedy* are from this edition); and Erne, *Beyond "The Spanish Tragedy,"* 55–59, who opts for 1587 as "the likeliest date of composition" (58). For Spenser in London in 1589–90, see Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser: A Life*, 231–64. Though as Hadfield notes, "it is implausible to imagine Spenser spending most of his time socializing," given his prodigious output during this period, it is hard to believe he would not have found some time for contemporary theater (238). For speculation about Spenser's awareness of contemporary drama at the end of his life, see Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser: A Life*, 392, citing James Shapiro, *1599: A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare* (London: Faber & Faber, 2005), 70–71.

41. For the first edition (which is identical in terms of caesural markings), see *The Spanish Tragedy* (London: Edward White, 1592), K4r.

42. Clemen, *English Tragedy before Shakespeare*, 257.

43. *Ibid.*, 273.

44. *Ibid.*, 111; see also 272–73, analyzing the "O eyes, no eyes" as a demonstration of Kyd's successful "subordinating [of] the arts of rhetoric to the requirements of the spoken word" (273).

45. See Erne, *Beyond "The Spanish Tragedy,"* 95, for the story (from seventeenth-century accounts by Richard Brathwaite and William Prynne) of the young woman on her death bed crying out "*Hieronimo, Hieronimo; O let me see Hieronimo acted.*" It is perhaps hard to imagine a similar reader calling out for *Daphnaïda* on her death bed.

46. Steven Mullaney, *The Reformation of Emotions in the Age of Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 74. William Shakespeare, *Titus Andronicus*, ed. Jacques Berthoud and Sonai Massai (London: Penguin, 2001), 108–9.

47. Mullaney, *Reformation of Emotions in the Age of Shakespeare*, 65–75, at 75.

48. *Ibid.*, 72.

49. *Ibid.*, 74.

50. See Martin, "Spenser, Chaucer, and the Rhetoric of Elegy," 84–99, for a Freudian challenge to moralistic responses to Alcyon and the argument that *Daphnaïda* is ultimately a form of "poetic therapy" (99).

51. Jonathan Ralf Dehany Gibson, "Sir Arthur Gorges (1557–1625) and the Patronage System" (PhD thesis, University of London, 1998), 151–52, 184. Gibson notes that Gorges borrows from "Like to a Hermite" in "Retire from me yow

pensive thoughts awhile” in the line “Where none but love shall knowe to fynd me oute,” a close echo of line 4 of the English poem, “Where none but Loue shall euer finde me out,” 151–52; see further Gorges, *Poems*, 8–9, 186. As far as I am aware, Gibson is the first scholar to notice this intertext. It is not picked up by Yale, 485–515; Renwick, in *Daphnaïda and Other Poems*, 172–79; the *Variorium* editors, in *The Minor Poems: Part One*, ed. Charles Grosvenor Osgood and Henry Gibbons Lotspeich (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1943), 429–46; or Richard McCabe, in *The Shorter Poems* (London: Penguin E-book, 1999). I am grateful to Dr. Gibson for sight of his unpublished work.

52. See the Desportes text and Lodge’s translation in Hyder Edward Rollins, ed. *The Phoenix Nest (1593)* (1931; repr., Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969), 170–71. The poem begins “Je me veux rendre hermite et faire penitence / De l’erreur de mes yeux pleins de temerité” (“I would like to become a hermit and do penance for the error of my eyes full of temerity”). For the “drabness” of Lodge’s version consider its final lines in comparison with the more famous version: “My mistris picture plac’t by loue / shall witness what I say.”

53. Rollins, *Phoenix Nest (1593)*, 77, 167–71. See also Sir Walter Raleigh, *The Poems: A Historical Edition*, ed. Michael Rudick (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1999), 135–36, 178–79, and *The Poems*, ed. Agnes Latham (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1951), 11, 104–8. Since my argument is that *Daphnaïda* alludes to and reprocesses a well-known poem, this is not the place for a full discussion of the poem’s authorship. In brief, Rollins, Latham, and Gibson see the poem as Raleigh’s because of its placement in *The Phoenix Nest* with other poems that are known from other sources to be by Raleigh: “Like to a Hermite” nestles between “Praisd be Dianas faire and harmless light” and “Like truthles dreames, so are my ioyes expired” in the 1593 volume. Rudick notes that the poem was not attributed to Raleigh until the 1640s, some sixty years after its composition; see also Michael Rudick, “The ‘Raleigh Group’ in *The Phoenix Nest*,” *Studies in Bibliography* 24 (1971): 131–37, at 135–36.

54. See Renwick’s note in *Daphnaïda and Other Poems*, 176: “The *Jacob-staffe* was a navigating instrument, but Spenser here means simply a pilgrim-staff.” Hile connects the staff with the well-established iconography of the Wandering Jew in *Spenserian Satire*, 61–62.

55. Rudick, “‘Raleigh Group’ in *The Phoenix Nest*,” 136n18; Gibson, “Sir Arthur Gorges (1557–1625) and the Patronage System,” 184.

56. A literal translation would be: “Always, when praying, before my eyes I will have the picture of Love and that of my lady.”

57. “Languissant” appears in line 12: “D’un espoir languissant mon baston je feray” (“I shall make my staff of languishing hope”), corresponding to line 10 of the English poem. When the latter was first printed (in the compilation *Brittons Bowre of Delights* [1591]), the second line appears as “I meane to spende my dayes in endlesse doubt.” This is it seems to me a weaker formulation than *The Phoenix*

Nest text, more in keeping with Desportes's poem, as the preposition suggests a kind of affectation ("I mean to spend my time *in the appearance of* endless doubt"), whereas the later version intimates that the speaker's "daies" are already composed "of endles doubt": he inhabits the melancholy his French counterpart simply anticipates (my emphases); see Rollins, *Phoenix Nest* (1593), 167.

58. Prescott, *French Poets and the English Renaissance*, 155, see also 143–44.

59. Arthur F. Marotti, *Manuscript, Print and the English Renaissance Lyric* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), 53.

60. Spenser uses "willfully" seven times in *The Faerie Queene*: see also II.i.15.2 on Amavia ("She willfully her sorrow did augment"); II.v.1.9 (on Pyrochles); II.vi.17.3 (on Phaedria); II.viii.52.6 (Pyrochles's "wilfully" refusing Arthur's "grace"); IV.vii.40.2 (Timias); and IV.viii.58.7 (Placidus's tale); see further Richard Danson Brown and J. B. Lethbridge, *A Concordance to the Rhymes of "The Faerie Queene" with Two Studies of Spenser's Rhymes* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 422. Spenserian willfulness is seldom fortunate and is rightly picked up by some of *Daphnaïda*'s commentators, as when Oram writes of "Alcyon's wilful misvaluation of his world," in "*Daphnaïda*," 208. Finally, consider *The Troublesome Reign of John* (ca. 1589–90), part 1, ll. 287–88, "Thyself has lost / By wilfulness thy living and thy land," in George Peele, *The Troublesome Reign of John, King of England*, ed. Charles R. Forker (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), 131.

61. See *OED Online*, s.v. "denature, v.," <http://www.oed.com.libezproxy.open.ac.uk/view/Entry/49926?redirectedFrom=denatured>, accessed March 28, 2019. *OED*'s definitions 2a and 2b are both relevant: "To alter (anything) so as to change its nature"; "To modify (a protein) by heat, acid, etc., so that it no longer has its original properties."

62. My thinking here is indebted to Judith Anderson's work around Spenserian self-citation; see, in particular, "Chaucer's and Spenser's Reflexive Narrators," in *Reading the Allegorical Intertext: Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 27–41.

63. See Johnson, *Critical Bibliography of the Works of Edmund Spenser*, 31–32. An alternative explanation is suggested by Andrew Hadfield: the republishing of *Daphnaïda* "makes the volume look even more like an advertisement of the poet's skill" as it includes two contrasting works "written to order for aristocratic patrons"; *Edmund Spenser: A Life*, 351. See further Richard A. McCabe, *Ungainefull Arte: Poetry, Patronage, and Print in the Early Modern Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 206, 217.

64. See Simon Reynolds, *Retromania: Pop Culture's Addiction to Its Own Past* (London: Faber & Faber, 2011), 86–128, 160–61. As Reynolds observes, box sets often create an "audio glut" of outtakes, where the resultant object is both "indigestible" and "repellent": box sets "don't seem to be actually made for listening purposes but for ownership and display, as though testaments to elevated taste

and knowledge" (161). *Daphnaïda* is of course not an outtake, nor an alternative version. The main point of the analogy is to underline the commercial advantages of additional, out-of-the-way material. That only three copies of the 1591 quarto of *Daphnaïda* have survived points to its likely scarcity by 1596; see Johnson, *Critical Bibliography of the Works of Edmund Spenser*, 24.

65. Adrian Weiss, "Watermark Evidence and Inference: New Style Dates of Edmund Spenser's *Complaints* and *Daphnaïda*," *Studies in Bibliography: Papers of the Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia* 52 (1999): 129–54, at 130.

66. Weiss, "Watermark Evidence and Inference," 131. For the availability of *Mother Hubberds Tale* as a separate, expensive unit in 1596, see Josephine Waters Bennett, "A Bibliographical Note on *Mother Hubberds Tale*," *ELH* 4 (1937): 60–61.

67. Weiss, "Watermark Evidence and Inference," 134.

68. *Ibid.*, 152.

69. *Ibid.*, 131, 148. See further Johnson, *Critical Bibliography of the Works of Edmund Spenser*, 23–24.

70. Weiss, "Watermark Evidence and Inference," 148.

71. Spenser's translations were largely based on Marot's versions, "Des Visions de Petrarque, de Thuscan en François," with some consulting of the original: see *Minor Poems: Part Two*, 273–74, 611–12. The final section of Spenser's sequence, beginning "When I beheld this tickle trustles state," is a new poem, worked up from the *envoys* in the texts of Petrarch and Marot. The line quoted above, "I wish I might this wearie life forgoe," is a Spenserian expansion of hints in the Italian and French; cf. with Petrarch's "an fatto un dolce di morir desio" ("have made a sweet desire for death") and Marot's "donnent ung doux desir / De briefvement soubz la terre gesir" ("give a sweet desire of shortly lying below the earth"). Petrarch, *Petrarch's Lyric Poems: The "Rime Sparse" and Other Lyrics*, trans. and ed. Robert M. Durling (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976), 504–5 (translation slightly adapted); Marot, *Oeuvres Complètes*, 1:340 (my translation).

72. For Spenser's revisions of the *Theatre for Worldlings* texts in *Complaints*, see *Minor Poems: Part Two*, 414–15, and *Yale*, 451–52. In the case of this section, Spenser corrects conjunctions and smoothens the meter in one line ("That in thinking on hir I burne and quake" becomes "That thinking yet on her I burne and quake") while adding a closing couplet to the new poem to make a sonnet; see *Yale*, 456, 469.

73. See Spenser, *Minor Poems: Part One*, 445–46; and Cheney, "Grief and Creativity," 130.

74. In Petrarch, *Petrarch's Lyric Poems*, 504. Petrarch's version (and Spenser's) recalls Virgil, *Georgics* IV.457–59, and Ovid, *Metamorphoses* X.23–24; in Virgil, *Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid I–VI*, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough, rev. G. P. Goold

(Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 250–51; and Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, vol. 2, trans. Frank Justus Miller (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 66–67.

75. See *Yale*, 511.

76. *Ibid.*, 491.

77. Steven W. May and William A. Ringler Jr., *Elizabethan Poetry: A Bibliography and First-Line Index of English Verse*, 3 vols. (London: Continuum, 2004), 3:2153. Of the printed poems, the majority are single stanza translations or summaries. The most interesting texts are, first, the fifteenth-century poem “La Belle Dame sans Mercy,” a translation of an Alain Chartier poem, by Richard Roos, which was included in the Chaucer folios. This poem may have influenced Spenser, with its focus on a speaker whose beloved has died. However, only the first two stanzas of his *envoy* follow the *ababcbc* pattern; the rest of the poem is either in eight-line ballade stanza—*Monk’s Tale* stanzas—rhyming *ababbcbc*, or the rhyme royal Roos uses for his first four introductory stanzas. In the best manuscript copies, these two *ababcbc* stanzas are ballade stanzas, which suggests another point of origin for Spenser’s form in truncated, textually corrupt eight-line stanzas. See Chaucer, *The Works, 1532 with supplementary material from the editions of 1542, 1561, 1598 and 1602*, ed. D. S. Brewer (Ithaca: Scolar, 1976), Ddd4v–Eee3v; and Dana M. Symons, ed., *Chaucerian Dream Visions and Complaints* (Kalamazoo, MI: Teams, 2004), 240–41, 273. The second example is Mary Herbert’s version of Psalm 106, which may have been influenced by *Daphnaïda*; see *The Sidney Psalter: The Psalms of Sir Philip and Mary Sidney*, ed. Hannibal Hamlin, Michael G. Brennan, Margaret P. Hannay, and Noel J. Kinnamon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 204–8.

78. George Puttenham, *The Art of English Poesy: A Critical Edition*, ed. Frank Whigham and Wayne A. Rebhorn (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007), 155.

79. Brown, *Art of “The Faerie Queene,”* 165–67.

80. See *ibid.*, 161–65, for further discussion of the syntax of rhyme royal; and Martin Stevens and T. V. F. Brogan, “Rhyme Royal,” in *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, ed. Alex Preminger and T. V. F. Brogan (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 1065–66.

81. See Edmund Spenser, *Complaints. Containing sundrie small poemes of the worlds vanitie* (London: William Ponsonbie, 1591), B1v. *Yale* follows the quarto’s punctuation.

82. See Brown, *Art of “The Faerie Queene,”* 176–84, for Spenser’s crucial decision to follow rhyme royal in giving *The Faerie Queene* stanza an odd number of lines.

83. See n. 7 above.

84. A Chaucerian intertext may underlie the line “And the outrageous passion nigh appeased”: at the beginning of “The Tale of Melibee,” Prudence cautions

Melibee, "But though attempree wepyng be ygraunted, outrageous wepyng is deffended" (ll. 989–90), suggesting again a critical perspective on Alcyon's excesses. See Chaucer, *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry Benson et al. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987), 217; and Chaucer, *Works*, 1532, R1v.

85. See Brown, *New Poet: Novelty and Tradition in Spenser's "Complaints,"* 125–31.

86. Paul J. Alpers, *The Poetry of "The Faerie Queene"* (1967; repr., Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1982), 77–95. A related peculiarity is line 555, which demands a stress on the definite article, a line shape Spenser generally avoids.

87. See Brown, *New Poet: Novelty and Tradition in Spenser's "Complaints,"* 254.

88. For influential commentary, all with a focus on the problematics of the 1590 ending, see Kenneth Gross, *Spenserian Poetics: Idolatry, Iconoclasm, and Magic* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985), 170–74; David Lee Miller, *The Poem's Two Bodies: The Poetics of the 1590 "Faerie Queene"* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 282–87; and Harry Berger Jr., "Busirane and the War between the Sexes: An Interpretation of *The Faerie Queene* III.xi–xii," in *Revisionary Play: Studies in Spenserian Dynamics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 191–94.

89. For Scudamour on the ground, see III.xi.7–8 and III.xi.27, quoted above. See Brown, *Art of "The Faerie Queene,"* 136–37, for the rhymes of the 1596 ending.

90. Oram, "*Daphnaïda* and Spenser's Later Poetry," 150–56, at 153.

91. Miller, *Poem's Two Bodies*, 12.