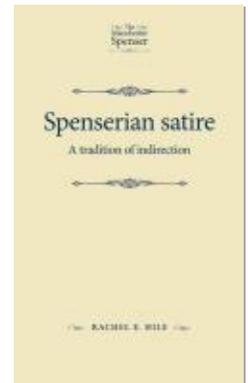# Spenserian Satire

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Spenser's satire of indirection: affiliation, allusion, allegory

The previous chapter provided a preliminary analysis of how indirect satire works to create a sense of an allegorical connection to the real world and real situations and discussed how allusions, symbolism, and analogy prompted allegorical projections that inflected contemporaries' understanding of the message of *Mother Hubberds Tale*, Spenser's best-known satirical work. In this chapter, I will continue analyzing Spenserian indirection in satire, but with an additional concept in play by examining the way that Spenser presents affiliative ties with other poets as part of his own self-fashioning as a satirical poet. Just as, in the 1590s and the early seventeenth century, younger poets affiliated themselves with Spenser in their poetry in order to convey certain messages about their poetic and/ or political values, Spenser, in 1579 and in the early 1590s, needed to define the type of poet he aimed to be with reference to other poets.

To the extent that satire depends upon allegorical processes of meaning-making, theories of allegory can be productively transferred to understanding satire. Maureen Quilligan's comments on the allegorical "pretext"—"the source that always stands outside the narrative … the pretext is the text that the narrative comments on by reenacting" (*Language of Allegory*, 97–98)—can illuminate both Spenser's and younger poets' uses of earlier poets as satirical pretexts. I will discuss in this chapter a number of poetic affiliative ties Spenser emphasizes in *The Shepheardes Calender* to create a sense of his literary genealogy, and all of these contribute to his performance of a poetic identity, but his true allegorical and satirical pretext in the *Calender* is of course John Skelton's *Collyn Cloute.* This book takes the form that it does from my interest not just in the pretexts important to understanding Spenser's satirical writing but also in Spenser's satirical poems *as themselves pretexts* for younger poets. Young Spenser signaled something about the poet he wanted to be by claiming the name Colin Clout as his alter ego and thus linking himself

to Skelton. For other poets, alluding to or modeling work on Spenser becomes a shorthand way of affiliating oneself with a well-defined poetic and even political stance, because of his well-known enmity to Lord Burghley. If Quilligan is correct that the existence of a pretext is a *sine qua non* of allegory, then so, too, of indirect satire, and thus this book becomes a series of backwards mappings: from Spenser to his satirical pretexts, and from younger poets to their Spenserian pretexts.

This chapter will analyze Spenser's satirical uses of pretexts in order to create and display a poetic persona. In *The Shepheardes Calender*, Spenser uses extensive allusions to define himself as the "new poet." Titling his work *The Shepheardes Calender* connects his work with *The Kalender of Shepardes*, the popular sixteenth-century almanac that John Foxe mentions as a work that was "accused & detected" as a Protestant book (Foxe, *Acts*, 808). By naming his poetic alter ego "Colin Clout," Spenser affiliates himself with John Skelton, the "new poet" and "British Catullus" of the early sixteenth century, as a way of signaling how his own poetic preoccupations differ from those of the "old poet" Chaucer, specifically to advertise himself as interested in focused and specific satire, not vague complaint. Twelve years later, in his *Daphnaïda*, Spenser once again pushes against the Chaucerian model by using a Chaucerian pretext, *The Book of the Duchess*, to create a targeted satire that criticizes Arthur Gorges for his excessive mourning for his dead wife.

From affiliative allusion to allegory: becoming Colin Clout

A retrospective view (and selective attention to only some of Spenser's corpus) allows us to see a purposeful, sure arc to Spenser's career, with clear authorial statements from the beginning showing, for example, his plan to model his career on the Virgilian rota or to describe his career in terms of a tradition of avian imagery, according to Richard Helgerson and Patrick Cheney, respectively (Helgerson, *Self-Crowned Laureates*; Cheney, *Spenser's Famous Flight*). But we can also see false starts and uncertainty—the early poems, now lost, that he discusses with Gabriel Harvey in their published letters, for example, or the confusing semiotic superfluity of the presentation of *The Shepheardes Calender* (Halpern, *Poetics*, chapter 5), including the use of three different names to represent or refer to the poet. Helgerson asserts that Spenser "abandon[ed] all social identity except that conferred by his elected vocation. He ceased to be Master Edmund Spenser … and became Immerito, Colin Clout, the New Poet" (Helgerson, *Self-Crowned Laureates*, 63), but this narrative, to

my mind, overstates the definitiveness of the transformation and reads Spenser's later poetic self-confidence backward to 1579.

Later, Spenser would "become" Colin Clout—an allegorical alter ego for the poet himself, freed somewhat from the constraints of his original fictional world—but in 1579 Colin Clout was a fictional character "under [whose] name this Poete secretly shadoweth himself," E.K. tells us (Spenser, *Shepheardes Calender*, 33). That is, in 1579 Colin has not yet become an allegory for Spenser, the poet; despite "shadowing" Spenser, Colin is primarily a character whose name serves as an allusion, an "entry code" that E.K. explicitly connects to John Skelton, whose poem *Collyn Cloute* uses an eponymous rustic figure to criticize and satirize abuses in the Church, with pointed attention to Cardinal Wolsey, and to Clément Marot, who used the name Colin in one of his eclogues.[1] Despite the avowed Marot connection, certainly for a sixteenth-century English audience, the addition of "Clout" to "Colin" would create a strong association with Skelton: *Collyn Cloute* was among Skelton's most popular works throughout the sixteenth century; in 1541, William Barnes named the narrator of his satirical pro-beard treatise "Collyn Clowte" (written in skeltonics), suggesting widespread recognition of this figure as a sort of everyman satirist (Griffiths, "An ende," 717–18).

Thus, although by the end of his career, "Colin Clout" functioned for contemporaries as a poetic cognomen for Spenser himself, this is a phenomenon of the 1590s that can obscure our understanding of the Colin of 1579. Spenser himself begins the process of greater self-identification with Colin in 1591 in *The Ruines of Time*, where he apparently refers to himself as the "Colin Clout" who has not yet commemorated the death of Sidney. This Colin—"his Colin" to the great Astrophel/Sidney (Spenser, *Ruines*, line 225)—and the Colin of *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe* bear more biographical resemblance to Spenser than to the shepherd boy of *The Shepheardes Calender*, and the commendatory sonnet addressed to Colin that precedes the *Amoretti* in 1595 similarly points to the poet Spenser. The idea caught on quickly, so that many uses of "Colin" in literary works by other authors in the 1590s clearly refer to the poet, not the character. Evidence, though, that this conflation of Spenser and

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1 For previous work connecting Spenser's Colin Clout with Skelton's, see McLane, "Skelton's *Colyn*," and Segall, "Skeltonic Anxiety." McLane believes that Spenser alludes to Skelton in order to highlight the significance of Skelton's animus against Cardinal Wolsey to an understanding of Spenser's indirect satire of Lord Burghley; Segall argues that Spenser chooses Colin Clout because Skelton's Collyn exemplifies an anxiety about the role of the poet that Spenser shares. For work connecting Spenser to Marot, see Prescott, *French Poets*, 10–13; and Patterson, "Re-opening."

Colin occurs primarily in the 1590s comes from George Peele's *Arraign-ment of Paris* (published 1584), in which the lovelorn Colin—surrounded by friends Hobinol, Thenot, and Digon—is simply a character: an allu-sion to Spenser, that is, not an allegorical stand-in for him.

But before he "became" Colin Clout, Spenser was the "New Poet" and, briefly, "Immerito." Although Lynn Staley Johnson correctly distinguishes the Colin of the 1570s from the Colin of the 1590s and wisely cautions against "view[ing] Colin Clout as simply a pseudonym for the poet" in the 1579 *Shepheardes Calender*, she errs, I think, in seeming at times to transfer that role to Immerito, repeatedly referring to the authorial voice in the work by the name of "Immerito" (Johnson, *Shepheardes*, 8). Following in Johnson's path, Jennifer Richards continues the conflation of Immerito with Spenser but with a more pointed analytical perspective, building an argument based on the contrast between the voice of "its supposed author 'Immerito' (Spenser's persona)" with those of the other characters, including "Colin (Immerito's persona)" (Richards, *Rhetoric*, 140). Thinking of Colin and Immerito in relation to one another adds nuance to our understanding of these two as fictional characters, but considering them both also in relation to the poet's other moniker as "the New Poet" can provide a sharper sense of how Spenser is using these three names to create a satirical auto-genealogy through allusion.

What does Spenser mean by having E.K. refer to the author of the work as "the new Poete," and how does this designation connect with Colin Clout and Immerito? We can easily answer the question "new in comparison to what?" E.K. clearly identifies the Old Poet as Chaucer: in the first paragraph of the Epistle he mentions "the olde famous Poete Chaucer" and refers to Pandar in the work of "that good old Poete" (*Shep-heardes Calender*, 13). John King has argued that, in paying homage to Chaucer, Spenser aims to connect himself to the "Reformation tradi-tion of the radicalized Chaucer," making of himself "the heir and peer of Chaucer. To do so means that he dons the disguise of the Reforma-tion satirist" (King, "Spenser's *Shepheardes Calender*," 378, 379). Spenser's admiration of Chaucer is undeniable, but he creates himself as the "new" poet partly in *contrast* to Chaucer's "old," not simply in homage. The Protestant "tradition of the radicalized Chaucer" finds proto-Protestant ideas in his poetry, but certainly the manner in which Chaucer expresses his criticisms of the Church is milder than the manner in which John Skelton made similar critiques. In *Shepheardes Calender*, Spenser clearly connects his project to the work of Chaucer, but he also contrasts himself to Chaucer by aligning himself with an earlier "new poet": Skelton. I

believe he means this contrast to emphasize his own more aggressive and satirical stance in using poetry to comment on abuses. Thus, answering the question "what is a New Poet?" provides a fine example of Spenser's allusive practice and gives a sense of the importance of satire, and especially Skelton, to the role he envisioned for himself in 1579.

Three times in the Epistle to *The Shepheardes Calender*, E.K. refers to the author of the work as the New Poet. More than a decade later, the 1591 *Complaints* volume featured the identification "Ed. Sp." on the title page, but William Ponsonby, in "The Printer to the Gentle Reader," invites the reader "graciouslie to entertaine the new Poet" (Spenser, *Complaints*, 224). In non-Spenserian texts, we find William Webbe in *A Discourse of English Poetry* (1586) referring to the author of *The Shepheardes Calender* four times as "the new Poet," perhaps because he did not know Spenser's real name. Regardless, the reference to him as the new poet rather than Immerito or Colin Clout reminds us that this epithet was equally important to the public's identification of the resolutely anonymous author of *The Shepheardes Calender*, who suppressed his name not only from the first edition of 1579, but also from subsequent editions of 1581, 1586, and 1591.

Before Spenser claimed the moniker "new poet" (through E.K., presumably because it would be unseemly to nominate himself, and thus he instead refers to himself as "Immerito"), England had another "new poet" in Skelton. In a commendatory poem included in the 1568 edition of Skelton, Thomas Churchyard tells his readers not to scorn "the works and sugred verses fine / Of our raer poetes newe" (Churchyard, "If slouth," A3v).[2] This appellation, offered after Skelton's death in a new edition of his works, would perhaps be insignificant except for the fact that it may allude to an even earlier "new poet," Catullus, with whom Skelton had compared himself—immodestly as usual—as the "British Catullus" in his *Garland of Laurel*:

> Skeltonis alloquitur librum suum
> Ite, Britannorum lux O radiosa, Britannum
> Carmina nostra pium vestrum celebrate Catullum!
> Dicite, Skeltonis vester Adonis erat;
> Dicite, Skeltonis vester Homerus erat.
> Barbara cum Latio pariter jam currite versu;
> Et licet est verbo pars maxima texta Britanno,
> Non magis incompta nostra Thalya patet,
> Est magis inculta nec mea Caliope.
>
> (Skelton, *Garlande*, lines 1520–28)

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2 For details on Spenser's knowledge of and debts to Churchyard, see Scott Lucas, "Diggon Davie," 164n24.

Skelton speaks to his book. Go, shining light of the Britons, and celebrate, our songs, your worthy British Catullus! Say, Skelton was your Adonis; say, Skelton was your Homer. Though barbarous, you now compete in an equal race with Latin verse. And though for the most part it is made up of British words our Thalia appears not too rude, nor is my Calliope too uncultured. (Skelton, *Garlande,* 512n1519–32)

Whereas scholars such as James McPeek and Jacob Blevins have interpreted Skelton's self-identification with Catullus as "referring to the fame that Catullus enjoyed as an uninhibited lyric poet" (McPeek, *Catullus*, 95),[3] Juan Manuel Castro Carracedo argues that Skelton means to emphasize his own innovations, both formally and in the use of the vernacular, in line with Catullus's well-known status as a "neoteric" or "new poet."[4] According to Carracedo, "Skelton feels that his work is different from everything written before, even different from his contemporaries… . By calling himself the 'British Catullus' he demands the label of *New Poet,* he wants to be, for the English letters, what Catullus meant in his time" (Carracedo, "*Pium Vestrum*," 13–14). Certainly the *Garland of Laurel* passage quoted above focuses on innovation, specifically linguistic innovation in developing English as a poetic language, but there is evidence that Skelton also thought of Catullus as a satirical poet, not just an erotic one.

Carracedo argues that Skelton did not think of Catullus as a satirist, because Catullus does not appear in the list of "poettes saturicall" that Skelton provides in *Agenst Garnesche*, a list that includes "Persius and Juvynall, / Horace and noble Marciall" (Skelton, *Agenst Garnesche*, section v, lines 139–41; Carracedo, "*Pium Vestrum*," 6). Still, in Skelton's other reference to Catullus, we find evidence connecting him to the Latin satirists. In *A Replycacion*, after quoting Jerome's comparison of the psalms of David to the work of secular poets ("David, inquit, Simonides noster, Pindarus, et Alceus, Flaccus quoque, Catullus, atque Serenus, Christum lyra personat, et in decachordo psalterio ab inferis excitat resurgentem"), Skelton translates and expands upon Jerome's text, including "Flaccus nor Catullus with hym [i.e., David] may nat compare" (Skelton, *A Replycacion*, line 336). By quoting and expanding upon Jerome's linking of Catullus with "Flaccus"—that is, Quintus Flaccus Horatius, that is, Horace, who *is*

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  3 See also Blevins, *Catullan Consciousness*, 20–21.
  4 These descriptions, the Greek "neoteric" in Cicero's *Letters to Atticus* and "poetae novi" in his *Orator*, are, as Julia Haig Gaisser notes, "used by Cicero in disgust and by modern critics in approbation," and this approval of Catullus as an innovator characterized his Renaissance reception as well (Gaisser, *Catullus*, 4).

included in Skelton's list of "poettes saturicall"—Skelton provides evidence
for my argument that both Catullus's innovative practices *and* his harsh,
even insulting poetic criticisms of his political and poetic enemies served
as inspiration to Skelton, leading him to style himself the British Catullus.

Even more so than the monikers "Colin Clout" and the "New Poet,"
which connect Spenser to the past, but to a specific poetic lineage, titling
his work *The Shepheardes Calender* connects him to the folk wisdom of
the medieval past, but with a playful twist. The title *Shepheardes Calender*
is self-consciously allusive, given that E.K. refers to it in the "Epistle" as
"applying an olde name to a new worke" (Spenser, *Shepheardes Calender*,
19). *The Kalender of Shepherds*, translated from the French, was extremely
popular in sixteenth-century England, going through nineteen editions
between 1503 and 1631 (Driver, "When is a miscellany," 200), but Spenser
scholars have found "little connection between that heterogeneous
handbook of kitchen astrology and Spenser's sophisticated eclogues"
(Heninger, "*Shepheardes*," 645). The form and content of the book differ
substantially from Spenser's work, so Spenser clearly did not look to the
Kalender for literary inspiration (however, see Shinn, "Extraordinary,"
139–41, for discussion of some thematic connections). However, he
might well have chosen to link his book to the *Kalender* not only because
it, like the name Colin Clout, suggested a homely source of communal
wisdom but also because of its reputation as a proto-Protestant book, as
highlighted by John Foxe in his *Acts and Monuments*.

In a list of hundreds of names in a table in the *Acts* titled "Persecution
in the Dioces of Lincolne," covering records for the year 1521, Foxe singles
out "*The Shepheardes Kalender*" in the column "parties accused" for going
"agaynst the bodely presence," "Because the same [John] Edmundes sayde
that hee was persuaded by this booke, readynge these woordes: that the
Sacrament was made in the remembrance of Christ" (Foxe, *Acts*, 808).[5]
These persecuted Protestants, Foxe notes, were not "learned, being
simple laborers and artificers, but as it pleased the Lord to worke in them
knowledge and vnderstandyng, by readyng a few Englishe bookes, such
as they could get in corners" (Foxe, *Acts*, 809), and they learned about the
doctrine of consubstantiation "partly out of Wickliffes wicket, partly out
of the Shepehardes Calender" (Foxe, *Acts*, 810).

Interestingly, however, although religion is clearly an extremely impor-
tant part of the overall message of the work (Driver, "When is a miscel-

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5 Immediately thereafter, spanning both the "Parties accused" and "Crime objected"
   columns, Foxe notes "The booke of William Thorpe likewise was muche complayned of
   both by thys Iohn Edmundes, and diuers other" (Foxe, *Acts*, 808).

lany," 211), there is not a great deal of evidence to support viewing *The Kalender of Shepherds* as espousing strongly Protestant views. The poem for October focuses on the month as the time for vintners to press wine, some of which will become sacred as "The blessed body of Christ in fleshe and blode / Which is our hope, refection and fode" (Copland, *Kalender*, B2v). Similarly, a passage on the Lord's Prayer explains the request for daily bread thus: "Here we aske of God to be susteyned with materiall breade for our bodyes, and spiritual bread for our soules, that is the bread of lyfe, the body of Iesu Christ, the whiche we receaue by faith, in mynde of hys passion" (Copland, *Kalender*, F4r). In brief, a person who finds the doctrine of consubstantiation in *The Kalender of Shepherds* is either a person already so thoroughly converted to Protestantism that she finds its theology in every book she reads or a person playfully trying to divert his Catholic persecutors on to a false scent.

We find this second interpretation in two texts from the second half of the sixteenth century, in which "finding it in the *Shepherds Kalender*" seems to be an idiomatic expression that means "making things up." The Anglican bishop John Jewel, in a contentious mid-century print debate with the Catholic priest and apologist Thomas Harding, mocks Harding's interpolation of a tale of shepherds who accidentally consecrated bread and wine and then were immolated—every one—by fire from an angry God in heaven. If all the shepherds were killed, Jewel wonders, what angel or other divine messenger told the tale; without any reference to the source of the story, Jewel believes that Harding's reader "wil suspecte, M. Hardinge founde it in the Shepeheardes Calendare" (Jewel, *A Replie*, 552). The phrase receives a similarly fantastic connotation in the work of John Harvey, brother of Gabriel Harvey, in his treatise against prophecies: "Neither shal I therfore néede to ransacke *Pierce Plowmans* satchell; nor to descant vpon fortunes, newly collected out of the old shepherds *Kalender*" (Harvey, *A Discoursiue Probleme*, 62).

Thus, we find in both the title and the monikers for the poet contained therein allusions that would push a reader in 1579 to look for indirect satire. If *The Kalender of Shepherds* had a double meaning—both a dangerous (to Catholics) book that was labeled a "part[y] accused" in Foxe and a fantastic source of whatever ideas someone wishes to read into a book—then naming Spenser's own book *The Shepheardes Calender* would both prod the reader to read searchingly *and* provide a playful cover of deniability. Likewise, E.K.'s reference to the "New Poet," coupled with the creation of a character named Colin Clout, doubly ties Spenser to Skelton and connects him to Catullus as well, creating a satirical auto-genealogy

(see Falco, *Conceived Presences*, 51). Neither of these earlier poets shied from directly attacking their enemies in verse: in 16, Catullus offers to rape Furius and Aurelius, who say his verses are impure (Catullus, *Poems*, 22);[6] Skelton's flyting poems lack some of the shock value of Catullus, but, like Catullus, he names and directly insults his enemies.

Considering the "New Poet" and *The Shepheardes Calender* with reference to their namesakes would have prompted the contemporary reader of E.K.'s comment on the "Moral" eclogues, "which for the most part be mixed with some Satyrical bitternesse" and his explanation that there are a few of the eclogues "whose speciall purpose and meaning I am not privie to" to look for indirect satirical meanings. A reader thus primed would be alert to the numerous anagrams, nicknames, or actual names that appear in the *Calender*—Morrell, Algrind, Roffy, Lowder, Diggon Davy, Lettice, and so forth—and perhaps more likely to read them as intentional and allusive. Spenserian scholars' acceptance of such names as satirical entry codes is unambivalent, even when the specific interpretation is either unrecoverable or debatable centuries later. My project in this book is to extend attention to such indirect entry codes both to Spenser's works that have not been fully considered as having satirical meanings and to works by other authors that use Spenserian pretexts to create indirect satire. I begin with Spenser's *Daphnaïda*, a mostly unliked poem that I argue can be improved by reading it as a satire.

Spenserian indirection and readerly ingenuity: a reading of *Daphnaïda*

In Spenser's *Daphnaïda,* critics meet with the problem of accounting for what David Lee Miller calls "the poem's deliberate badness" (Miller, "Laughing," 245), the many features—from drearily repetitive poetry in Alcyon's too-long lament to the generic transgressions of a pastoral elegy in which the mourner refuses any possibility of consolation other than death—that have made the poem Spenser's least-loved work. Historical approaches to the poem seek interpretive help from information derived from the historical context; formal approaches look at issues of genre and intertextuality, but no one can agree on what Spenser was trying to accomplish with this poem. The dividedness of critical opinion on this poem indicates its slipperiness, serving to remind us of the importance of the *reader* in Spenser's satirical works. Readers who approach the work "straight," that is, as a serious attempt at pastoral elegy, provide us with one

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6 The Loeb edition modestly translates only part of the poem.

set of interpretations;[7] readers open to ironic or playful readings, on the other hand, find diametrically opposed readings. Significantly, however, the poem allows either kind of reading, straight or satirical, and this is characteristic of indirect, Spenserian satire. Instead of viewing this work as a failed pastoral elegy, in this section, I argue for reading *Daphnaïda* as an intentional satire: through his caricature of the mourner Alcyon, Spenser creates not so much a reasoned critique of excessive grief as a vision of mourning or sorrow so extreme that it crosses from elegy into satire by means of allegory.

The most influential recent interpretations of the poem place varying degrees of emphasis on either text or context, with Donald Cheney's largely ahistorical reading of the poem as musing about the nature of poetry serving as an outlier to more typical attention to links between the poem and the historical situation of Arthur Gorges, the death of whose first wife, Douglas Howard, led Gorges into numerous legal battles with her relatives regarding inheritance (see Cheney, "Grief," for the former and Gibson, "Legal context," for the latter). Although Spenser does not here explicitly identify Gorges with Alcyon and Douglas Howard with Daphne, he invites speculation upon the connection by describing the work on the title page as "an Elegie vpon the death of the noble and virtuous Douglas Howard, *Daughter and* heire of *Henry* Lord *Howard, Viscount Byndon, and wife of* Arthure Gorges *Esquier*" (486). The dedication to the Marchioness of Northampton, Gorges's aunt, makes more compliments to Gorges and his deceased wife but again without explicitly connecting them to the characters portrayed in the poem itself. Although later, Spenser suggests in *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe* (dedicated 1591, published 1595) a one-to-one correspondence between Alcyon and Gorges and Daphne and Douglas Howard by referring to "Alcyon" and "Daphne" and identifying Alcyon as the author of Gorges's *Eglantine of Meriflure*, he avoids making such direct connections in *Daphnaïda* (*CCCHA*, lines 384, 386, 389).

Thanks to the litigiousness of Douglas Howard's relations, who tried to block both Gorges and their daughter Ambrosia from inheriting from Howard, the richness of the historical record vis-à-vis Gorges's marriage—Douglas Howard's death, Ambrosia's life and early death—has provided

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7 Efforts to find in *Daphnaïda* a successful pastoral elegy have tended to seek consolation in numerological analyses of the poem's structure. See, for example, Røstvig, *Hidden Sense*, 82–87; and Kay, *Melodious Tears*, 49–52. Kay writes that "Spenser uses structure as a species of consolation, as a demonstration of the capacity of art to suggest meaning, order, and purpose" (52). The lack of consolation at the level of word and image seems to me a problem in approaching this work as a sincere pastoral elegy.

ample information on which to base interpretations of the poem with reference to the Gorges situation. William Oram finds in Spenser's fictional Alcyon a critique of excessive mourning directed at the real man Gorges by his friend and well-wisher Spenser (Oram, "*Daphnaïda*"). Jonathan Gibson finds in Alcyon's bathetic sorrow the image of a man out of his mind with grief and hypothesizes that Spenser intended the poem to serve as something of a character witness in Gorges's ongoing legal squabbles with the Howard family—this grief-stricken widower bears no resemblance to the calculating gold-digger that Douglas Howard's uncle saw when he looked at Gorges (Gibson, "Legal context"; see Hadfield, *A Life*, 284–88, for details of the friendship between Spenser and Gorges). David Lee Miller sees in Alcyon a parody of the sort of histrionic emotional performance perfected by Sir Walter Raleigh, friend of both Spenser and Gorges, and speculates that Spenser, disgusted by such shows, involved himself poetically in Gorges's legal battle at Raleigh's instigation and protested by making Alcyon/Gorges look ridiculous (Miller, "Laughing").

In addition to these comparisons between poem and history, other scholars compare *Daphnaïda* to its source-text, Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*, to Chaucer's source-text in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, or to Spenser's own poetry (Cheney, "Grief"; Harris and Steffen, "Other side"; Steinberg, "Idolatrous idylls"). My own reading will focus on intertextuality, but with an emphasis not so much on what Spenser knew but on what he could expect his readers to know, because of the importance of providing just the right amount of information to enable one's reader to make a connection and read for satire. In addition to the interested parties who might have read this poem in 1591—such players as Gorges, Raleigh, the Marchioness of Northampton, or others involved with Gorges's legal battles—Spenser published *Daphnaïda* with a larger audience in mind. I will consider the poem with this imaginary 1591 reader in mind, paying attention to the expectations the text raises and the specific words and images that may have called other texts and other ideas to mind for this reader.

Spenser advertises the poem on the title page as an "Elegie"; in the dedicatory letter he refers to it as a "little Poëme" and a "Pamphlet" (pp. 486, 492, 493); later, in *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe*, Colin says that he "complaine[d]" (line 511) *Daphnaïda* to Mansilia, the shepherdess who represents Helena Snackenborg, the Marchioness of Northampton and Gorges's aunt. In the poem itself, Alcyon blames Daphne's death on "a cruell *Satyre* with his murdrous dart" (Spenser, *Daphnaïda*, 156). These words are not all mutually exclusive (and of course "complaine" is inad-

missible as part of the experience of our hypothetical 1591 reader), but, taken together, they suggest an intentional generic instability, a sense that strengthens with the generically bizarre opening invocation. Spenser's more typical contributions to the English pastoral elegy—the "November" eclogue, *Astrophel*, and *The Doleful Lay of Clorinda*—indicate his familiarity with classical and continental models and certainly form part of the English tradition of this mode.[8] The beginning of *Daphnaïda*, however, jars against the reader's expectations of elegy. Instead of invoking a Muse such as Melpomene, as he does in "November," or avoiding invocation altogether, as befits a pose of rustic simplicity, as he does in *Astrophel*, Spenser banishes "the sacred Sisters," because "their heavie song would breede delight" (lines 11, 13). Instead, he invokes "those three fatall Sisters, whose sad hands / Doo weave the direfull threds of destinie" (lines 16–17).

David Lee Miller sees in this invocation a banishing not only of the Muses but also of Horatian *dulce et utile*, such that Spenser creates a "deliberately unpleasing" poem (Miller, "Laughing," 244). Glenn Steinberg tries to render this banishment less strange by arguing that Spenser's repudiation of the Muses here functions as Protestant iconoclasm, because he sees the Muses as "idolatrous symbols of art and beauty" ("Idolatrous idylls," 130). Spenser's devotion to the Muses elsewhere in his work makes this argument a hard sell, and it also ignores the invocation just a few lines later to the alternative muses of the Fates. The weirdness of this opening passage, however, becomes less weird when considered in light of the generic expectations regarding style and inspiration that readers brought to satires in the sixteenth century. John Skelton's "ragged" rhymes in *Collyn Cloute* (line 53); George Gascoigne's stated plan in *The Steele Glas* to win fame not through poetic merit but with "rymelesse verse, which thundreth mighty threates" ("The author to the reader," line 14); and Spenser's own "No Muses aide me needes heretoo to call; / Base is the style, and matter meane withall" in *Mother Hubberds Tale* (lines 43–44)— these denials of poetic merit develop by the late 1590s into aggressive satirical anti-invocations: John Marston's assertion that he "prostitute[s] his] muse, / For all the swarms of idiots to abuse" (Marston, "In lectores," lines 61–62); Everard Guilpin's image of the "wits [who] haue got my Muse with Tympanie" and the "loose tayld penns" who will lance her swollen abdomen ("Satyre preludium," lines 96, 97); and Thomas Middle-

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8 For a full recent discussion of Spenser's knowledge of and work within the tradition of pastoral elegy, see Kay, *Melodious Tears*. See also O'Connell, "*Astrophel*," for his argument that in *Astrophel* and *The Doleful Lay of Clorinda* Spenser exemplifies the two forms that consolation takes in elegy: poetic immortality and Christian apotheosis.

ton's promise to drink up the "devilish venom" of his detractors and then "belch" it up into their "throats all open wide" (*Micro-cynicon*, "The Author's Prologue," lines 28, 33). Spenser's banishing of both the Parnassian Muses and readers who find sense in pleasure or take delight in "this wretched life," and his promise of "no tunes, save sobs and grones" in "this dolefull teene," seems part of this same continuum of satirists advertising the ugliness of their verse (Spenser, *Daphnaïda*, lines 8, 9, 14, 21).

The strange invocation prompts the reader to question the genre of the poem, and Spenser also alludes to the source-text early in the poem, activating intertextual reading habits, by naming the main character in the first stanza. The reference to "sad *Alcyon*" might recall to the reader's mind either Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess* or Chaucer's source-text in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*; both recount the same story of Queen Alcyone, who dies from grief over the death of her husband, King Ceyx. Reader recognition of the Chaucerian source-text would obviously be more germane, and it is more likely as well, because the names Seis and Alcione were part of the title of the work we now call *The Book of the Duchess*. In the second half of the sixteenth century, publishers referred to the work as "The Dreame of Chaucer, otherwise called the boke of the Duches, or Seis and Alcione, with a balade to his master Buxton." A search of Early English Books Online indicates that most uses of the words "Alcyon" or "Alcyone" referred to the halcyon or kingfisher, or the associated "halcyon days" of winter—uses that emphasize the Ovidian metamorphosis of human into bird and thus a happy ending—but several refer to Alcyone in her human form as an exemplar of a mourning spouse. Lexicalization of eponymous terms (that is, the tendency for the source of a word in a story or name to be forgotten over time) means that, for some readers, the name "Alcyon" would call to mind a bird and nothing more, but, for most readers, the name would put in play ideas and expectations about mourning, specifically excessive grief.

After this introduction, which identifies the main character as Alcyon, banishes the Parnassian Muses, and engages the inspiration of the Fates as muses, the narrator begins his story. Oppressed in spirit by his own sorrow, he walks out into the fields one evening, but he doesn't get far before he encounters another person:

> I did espie
> Where towards me a sory wight did cost,
> Clad all in black, that mourning did bewray:
> And *Jaakob* staffe in hand devoutlie crost,
> Like to some Pilgrim come from farre away.

His carelesse locks, uncombed and unshorne
Hong long adowne, and beard all over growne,
That well he seemd to be sum wight forlorne;
Downe to the earth his heavie eyes were throwne
As loathing light: and ever as he went,
He sighed soft, and inly deepe did grone,
As if his heart in peeces would have rent.

<div align="right">(Spenser, Daphnaïda, lines 38–49)</div>

Again, something is strange here, something that jars with generic conventions. The narrator has placed the scene in a pastoral landscape: "open fields, whose flowring pride opprest / With early frosts, had lost their beautie faire" (lines 27–28). Both the fields and the pathetic fallacy represent typical generic conventions of pastoral, as does indicating the time of day with reference to the sun: "the wearie Sun / After his dayes long labour drew to rest" (lines 22–23). Eventually, after the initial description just quoted, the narrator recognizes the figure as Alcyon, "the jollie Shepheard swaine, / That wont full merrilie to pipe and daunce / And fill with pleasance every wood and plaine" (lines 54–56), and this brings us back to typical imagery and language of pastoral. But the intervening lines quoted above do not fit the genre; instead, they echo the ways that Spenser introduces allegorical personifications in the first three books of *The Faerie Queene*, which, published less than a year earlier, Spenser could expect his readers to know.[9] Although allegorical *meaning* appears frequently in pastoral, as both Puttenham ("in rude speeches to insinuate and glance at greater matters"; *Art*, 128) and Sidney aver (poets "under the pretty tales of wolves and sheep" speak to larger concerns; *Apology*, 127), finding a *Faerie Queene*-like allegorical figure in a Spenserian pastoral poem is unusual. Although the narrator has named Alcyon early in the poem, in this description Spenser follows his typical practice in *The Faerie Queene* of delaying identification, using ekphrastic clues that focus on symbolic imagery before closing off identificatory speculation by providing a name. During the initial description, the reader does not know that this is Alcyon, the protagonist named in the first stanza; in

9 Adrian Weiss, by analyzing the paper and watermarks of various copies of *Daphnaïda* and the *Complaints* volume, has proved that *Daphnaïda*'s dedication date of January 1, 1591 is new style, not old style, and thus less than a year after the publication of the first installment of *The Faerie Queene* and in the same time period as the printing of *Complaints* (Weiss, "Watermark evidence"). Other critics have briefly noted the connections with allegory in the character of Alcyon: William Oram states that Alcyon "embodies with almost allegorical clarity the desire to grieve" ("*Daphnaida*," 143), and Glenn Steinberg writes that Alcyon "becomes almost an allegorical figure for 'lifes wretchednesse,' a projection of our own—and the narrator's—fear" ("Idolatrous idylls," 140).

light of this ambiguity, a reader might employ reading strategies developed through encountering the personifications in *The Faerie Queene.*

Such a reader would look for iconographic details that might help identify the figure and would also notice descriptive words that convey evaluative information. The figure wears black and carries a "*Jaakob* staffe" that makes him look "Like to some Pilgrim come from farre away" (lines 41–42). These details might link him to the Palmer in *The Faerie Queene*, whose name connects him with pilgrims; the Palmer goes "clad in black attyre" and uses a staff (*FQ* 2.1.7.2, 4). But another character in *The Faerie Queene* also wears black, looks like a pilgrim, and carries a staff: Archimago, whose staff is explicitly a "*Iacobs* staffe" (*FQ* 1.6.35.7; see 1.1.29.2 for the detail of his black clothes)—Archimago's and Alcyon's Jacob's-staffs are the only occurrences of the word in the works of Spenser. The reference to the Jacob's-staff is striking—it is an unusual word and a multivalenced one that deserves more scrutiny than Renwick's somewhat dismissive note "The *Jacob-staffe* was a navigating instrument, but Spenser here means simply a pilgrim-staff" (Renwick, *Commentary*, 176n41).[10] The *Oxford English Dictionary* lists three distinct meanings for the word current in the second half of the sixteenth century: the word can refer to a pilgrim's staff, an instrument for measuring celestial or terrestrial distances and heights, or a staff that conceals a dagger (s.v. "Jacob's staff, n."). A search of Early English Books Online for the keyword indicates that the majority of uses before 1600 refer to the Jacob's-staff's technical meaning for astronomy and surveying and that the unusual spelling "Jaakob staffe" occurs nowhere else. Indeed, the spelling "Jaakob" for the name "Jacob" appears *only* in biblical contexts during this time period. The word suggests rich possibilities for interpretation, to which I will return later.

The iconographic details of black clothing and the staff in the first stanza of description leave it unclear what emotional reaction Spenser expects his reader to have, but the unappealing description in the second stanza pushes the reader more strongly in the direction of a rejecting response to the figure. In *The Faerie Queene*, unkempt, unattractive figures represent or exemplify negative moral states, such that physical ugliness serves as shorthand for moral ugliness (Hile, "Disabling allegories"). The *Daphnaïda* figure's "carelesse locks, uncombed and unshorne, / [That] hong long adowne, and beard all over growne" connect him to unappealing *Faerie Queene* personifications such as Despair and

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10 Oram et al. quote Renwick's interpretation of this word in the Yale edition (*Daphnaïda*, 495n41).

Occasion, both of whom have ugly hair hanging in front of their faces. Despair's "griesie lockes, long growen, and vnbound, / Disordred hong about his shoulders round, / And hid his face" (*FQ* 1.9.35.4–6), and Occasion's "lockes, that loathly were and hoarie gray, / Grew all afore, and loosly hong vnrold" (*FQ* 2.4.4.5–6). Andrew Escobedo's pithy summary of what "character" means in the Renaissance—"a category of narrative resource, not an individualized interior" (Escobedo, "Daemon lovers," 205)—aids in thinking about the incongruity of this figure in this poem. Spenser creates broad categories or types of character to populate the worlds that he creates, such as "negative allegorical personifications" and "simple shepherds." When Spenser creates a character who doesn't fit the world of the work he or she inhabits, as in the case of the figure described in these two stanzas in *Daphnaïda*, who is kin to *The Faerie Queene*'s allegorical personifications instead of Spenser's shepherd characters, he also creates irony. This irony of undermined expectations—the distance between what we expect and what Spenser provides—is a key method of creating satirical meaning.

Moving from this introduction into the plot, such as it is, of the poem, Spenser continues to undermine the reader's expectations of genre and character … and even of poetic merit. Some scholars have tried to redeem the poetry of Alcyon's lament; for example, Ellen Martin argues that critics who dislike the poem, or see it as inferior to *The Book of the Duchess*, create subjective assessments based on temperament, taste, and consistency (Martin, "Spenser"). But critical attempts at recuperating *Daphnaïda* as straightforward "good poetry" tend to focus on big-picture issues—numerological interpretations of structure, for example, as in Røstvig and Kay, or Martin's ideas of genre in relation to mourning and melancholia—and do not address directly the most obvious source of critics' distaste for the poem: the poetry of Alcyon's lament, which David Lee Miller bluntly calls "inexplicably bad" and which Duncan Harris and Nancy L. Steffen allude to politely by stating that the poem "depends … heavily for its effect on the reader's ability to recognize excess" (Harris and Steffen, "Other side," 27). Indeed. Alcyon's "intemperate complaint against everything in the universe" (Gibson, "Legal context," 24–25) includes a thirty-five-line summary of all the things Alcyon hates, such as the senses:

> I hate to speake, my voyce is spent with crying;
> I hate to heare, lowd plaints have duld mine eares;
> I hate to tast, for food withholds 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.
>
> (Spenser, *Daphnaïda*, lines 414–20)

The automaton meter, repetitive diction, and clichéd imagery are hall-marks of bad poetry—as Harris and Steffen note, 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. As I argue throughout this book, the satirist who writes in an indirect mode expects and demands more of the reader than the writer of more direct satire. Spenser creates in Alcyon a poet bad enough, he hopes, to enable a reader to have the confidence to judge that the acclaimed poet of *The Shepheardes Calender* and *The Faerie Queene* has put bad poetry into the mouth of this character, and to wonder why.

But the poetry is not just bad technically—we might call Alcyon's poetry, with its excessive, compulsive allegorizing, *ontologically bad*, because his poetry serves to distance him from reality. Leigh Deneef argues that Alcyon's most important characteristic is his status as poet, and that Spenser suggests the dangers of false poetry through Alcyon's stubborn misreadings of metaphor as literal truth: Daphne's *contemptus mundi* soliloquy, for example, or the pastoral cliché of nature's decline read as metaphor for human life (Deneef, *Spenser*, 48–49). However, the mirror image of this literalizing approach to metaphor is Alcyon's equally pronounced tendency to use metaphor and allegory to the near exclusion of literal statement; in this, he illustrates an extreme version of the stereotypical Renaissance love poet, who is also, not coincidentally, a figure of the bad poet. Shakespeare's speaker of Sonnet 130 mocks the clichéd metaphors of sonneteers by emphasizing the reality of his love's embodiedness, contrasting and privileging her fleshly imperfections against the idealism of the "false compare." The message is straightforward, with the wit arising from the cleverness of the contrast between reality and poetic idealizing; with Alcyon, the wit is in the creation of a parody, and the reader's pleasure comes from speculating on the rhetorical and satiric purposes of the parody.

Alcyon's metaphorizing and allegorizing impulses call to mind well-worn poetic tropes and imagery that Shakespeare mocks in Sonnet 130. Initially, she is a white lioness—a heraldic allusion to the Howard family—that Alcyon tamed "and brought away fast bound with silver chaine," after which she helped him to tend to his sheep (Spenser, *Daphnaïda*, line 119).

The narrator feels sympathy for Alcyon but confesses that he does not understand: "Yet doth not my dull wit well understand / The riddle of thy loved Lionesse" (lines 176–77). Deneef forgives the narrator for his frank confusion at the fable, noting, "This is not the naïve obtuseness of Chaucer's comic narrator: Spenser's narrator is totally cut off from Alcyon's meaning because he is given only a metaphoric vehicle; he does not, and cannot, know its tenor. He is led to assume, therefore, that the lioness is not metaphoric at all" (Deneef, *Spenser*, 45). Where Chaucer's narrator seems foolish for not recognizing that the Man in Black's reference to a game of chess with Fortune in which he lost his "fers" (i.e., the queen piece in medieval chess sets) is an extended metaphor, Spenser's Alcyon provides no such clues as the Man in Black's reference to "Fortune," which points Chaucer's reader to the presence of figurative language. But note the distinction between what Spenser's reader knows and what the narrator knows: whereas the reader can recognize the allegory because of the heraldic allusion, previous experience with beast fables' allegorical tendencies, and subtle echoes of Thomas Wyatt's "Whoso List to Hunt" (and his source in Petrarch's *Rime 190*)—because of extratextual and intertextual knowledge, that is—the reader does not expect the narrator, who after all lives in the pastoral world as an ignorant shepherd, to recognize this as allegory. Even more sustained than Alcyon's commitment to allegory, though, is his use of metaphors to describe Daphne, more of which I will discuss below. He describes Daphne with so many plant-themed metaphors as to be ludicrous. She is a "Primrose," "a flower," a "blossome," and "fruit blowne downe with winde" that still had green leaf, fresh rind, and a branch with blossoms (lines 233, 237, 252, 244).

In addition to suggesting Alcyon's weakness in poetic invention, his excessive metaphors for his lost love create a depersonalizing effect, especially when considered in contrast to Spenser's source-text, *The Book of the Duchess*, where the Man in Black provides a detailed portrait of his wife, White (i.e., John of Gaunt's deceased wife, Blanche), that conveys a sense of her human characteristics. Instead, Alcyon describes his Daphne in nonhuman terms—animal, plant, angel—and resists pursuing references to her as human; after the narrator's incomprehension forces him to explain his lioness allegory—"*Daphne* thou knewest … / She now is dead" (Spenser, *Daphnaïda*, lines 183–84)—he faints. After he revives and begins his formal complaint, he begins with a description of her as human—she excelled "In pureness and in all celestiall grace / That men admire in goodlie womankinde" (lines 211–12)—but then shifts immediately to comparing her to an angel ("seem'd of Angels race / … like Angell

new divinde" [lines 213–14]) before moving into the series of plant meta-
phors quoted above.

Later, after repeating what Daphne said to him before her death,
Alcyon moves to metaphorical descriptions of her words as weapons and
allegorizations of her dead body. Not only are the words of her deathbed
speech "piercing words / … / … like swords"; even the words she spoke
at the beginning of their courtship "conquerd and possest" Alcyon's soul,
extending the martial metaphor backwards and figuring Alcyon as Daph-
ne's victim (lines 295–97, 300; military metaphors for love in sonnetry are
of course commonplace: Alcyon's metaphors in general lack freshness).
Contemplating the image of Daphne's face after death, Alcyon complains
that "sad death his pourtraicture had writ" in her cheeks and "ghastly
night did sit" on her eyes (lines 303, 305). Immediately after this, Alcyon
spends a stanza describing her dancing among the other shepherdesses;
this passage, along with the brief reference to "*Daphne* thou knewest"
and Daphne as a paragon of womanhood (lines 183, 211–13), are the
only references to her as a human. Later, when explaining why he shuns
women, Alcyon veers away from describing Daphne in human terms,
instead describing her as the "Starre" (line 424) of women. He recoils
from remembering his wife as a woman, but, by doing so, he dehuman-
izes her through metaphor and allegory, and his inability to remember
her in human terms serves as an index of his oft-noted lack of acceptance
of his situation.

In contrast, the Man in Black's reminiscences of White in *The Book of
the Duchess* show a change in his ability to deal with his loss. Although he,
like Alcyon, distances himself from his loss by starting his conversation
with the narrator with allegory and the extended chess metaphor in which
Fortune has reft him of his fers, he eventually progresses to descriptions
of a real person, creating a portrait of a flesh-and-blood woman with
an actual personality. The 237-line passage in which the Man in Black
describes White and recounts the story of their love includes details of
her appearance, her mind, her virtues, and her personality. He occasion-
ally uses metaphors to describe her (her throat, like the throats of so many
other women celebrated in poetry, "Semed a round tour of yvoyre," line
946, but we can perhaps forgive Chaucer for writing this two hundred
years before the sixteenth-century rage for sonnets wore it out), but these
are rare, especially when considered as a proportion of the entire long
narration. More typical is careful, detailed description that emphasizes
the humanity and specificity of White, as in the following:

Ryght faire shuldres and body long
She had, and armes, every lyth
Fattyssh, flesshy, not gret therwith;
Ryght white handes, and nayles rede,
Rounde brestes; and of good brede
Hyr hippes were; a streight flat bak.

<div align="right">(Chaucer, Book, lines 952–57)</div>

If we think of the Man in Black's narrative mode as indexing the trajectory of his emotional response to his loss, the move from allegory (which I will discuss in a moment) to extended metaphor (the chess game with Fortune) to straight narrative and description suggests acceptance of loss and a willingness to allow memory to salve mourning. I believe that Spenser expects his reader to contrast Alcyon with the emotional trajectory of the Man in Black and to notice that Alcyon begins as an allegory and remains allegorical, permanently disconnected from reality by his stubborn commitment to grief.

At the beginning of the Man in Black's conversation with the narrator, he speaks allegorically through personifications, most interestingly personifying himself as sorrow: "For whoso seeth me first on morwe / May seyn he hath met with sorwe, / For y am sorwe, and sorwe ys y" (Chaucer, *Book*, lines 595–97). As already noted, he moves from this mode to the extended chess metaphor, and then to straightforward narrative. Alcyon, on the other hand, begins by appearing with the descriptive hallmarks of a Spenserian allegorical personification already discussed. In light of the Man in Black's self-allegorization in Spenser's source-text, Oram's observation that Alcyon "embodies with almost allegorical clarity the desire to grieve" can be pushed farther: both the narrator's description and Alcyon's own words support an identification of the abstract quality personified in Alcyon as "sorrow." But whereas we read the Man in Black's self-allegory metaphorically, if you will, Spenser "literalizes" it, in the sense that what is in Chaucer a verbal flourish becomes in *Daphnaïda* a shift of genre that underscores Spenser's serious ideas and critique about grieving, and allegorical interpretation thus becomes the key to reading this poem satirically. In this sense, then, to the extent that Spenser here mimics his own strategies for creating personifications in *The Faerie Queene*, requiring his readers to use interpretive strategies they learned by reading his allegorical epic the previous year, we can view *Faerie Queene* as one of the allegorical pretexts of this satirical poem.

Despite Chaucer's Man in Black's self-description as "sorwe," he finds consolation. Spenser's sorrowful Alcyon finds none, and in this we can

see connections to another allegorization of Sorrow, Thomas Sackville's representation of Sorrow in his "Induction" to *The Mirror for Magistrates*. *Daphnaïda*'s opening scene presents a similar situation to that of Sackville's "Induction"—in both poems, a man walks out into the fields at day's end, brooding over troubling thoughts, and meets a figure in black. This is not remarkable, given the frequency with which medieval and early modern poems begin in a similar manner. Important, however, to a consideration of Spenser's oddly unconsolatory pastoral elegy is the fact that Sackville's Sorrow inhabits a thoroughly pagan fictional space: "Sorrowe I am, in endeles tormentes payned, / Among the furies in the infernall lake: / Where Pluto god of Hel … / Doth holde his throne" ("Sackville's Induction," lines 108–11). She moans for the victims of Fortune and summarizes the trouble of life thus: "no earthly ioye may dure" (line 119). In the pagan hell to which she leads the narrator, no heavenly joy serves to compensate for the transience of earthly joy. Here we find another generic incongruity, in that the fall-of-princes trope does not require a Christian worldview, but Spenser's poem would seem to.

I suggest that we find in Alcyon and in *Daphnaïda* not so much allegorical satire as allegory *as* satire, a biting commentary on the dangers of *idées fixes* in the real world, with the pastoral world here standing as Spenser's literary representation of the real world, and the allegorical personification intruding, incongruously and indecorously. If allegory, then, is key to the satirical reading I advance in this chapter, what might have been Spenser's aims in making of Alcyon, that shepherd's swain, an allegorical personification who spouts allegories and metaphors compulsively?

Allegorical personifications are strange, but one becomes stranger still in the pastoral landscape: theoretical considerations of how such personifications work become intensified when considering one outside its natural habitat. The sense that the various actors in play in allegory represent the interaction of abstractions makes even the encounter between the narrator and Alcyon potentially meaningful. Linda Gregerson's distinction between "exemplary" and "catalytic" personifications—with an exemplary personification understood as one that "directly bodies forth the psychic or material condition for which it is named" and catalytic personifications functioning "as the precipitating cause or occasion of the condition for which it is named"—thus complicates our understanding of the meeting between the sorrowing narrator and a figure who in some ways personifies sorrow (Gregerson, *Reformation*, 55–56). This reading illuminates Oram's comment that "Alcyon surely embodies at one level

an impulse within the narrator: the juxtaposition of his appearance with the narrator's brooding melancholy suggests an allegorical dimension to the character," just as "the Redcrosse Knight comes across Sans Joy when he is feeling neglected in the House of Pride" (Oram, "*Daphnaida*," 154).

Alcyon's dual function as both exemplary and catalytic complicates his identity, because it suggests the sort of shifting relevant to Spenserian personifications who share this doubleness, such as *The Faerie Queene*'s Malbecco and Despair, both of whom appeared in the first installment of the work and thus were part of Spenser's recent publishing past at the time he composed *Daphnaïda*. Gregerson argues that Malbecco functions both exemplarily and catalytically (Gregerson, *Reformation*, 56); Despair does as well, as suggested by James Nohrnberg's comment that "In hanging himself … [Despair] moves in the opposite direction from Malbecco, that is, from human Despair to a despairing man" (Nohrnberg, *Analogy*, 99). Gregerson and Nohrnberg have slightly different foci, but both their comments highlight that sense of the capacity to shift, to change from human into ossified personification (or vice versa), which suggests here the narrowing of freedom illustrated through the figure of Alcyon. Escobedo notes that "Personification expresses the sense that the necessity imposed by the order of nonfictional ideas has gotten inside the character, shifting adjective to noun, imbuing her with an essence that compels behavior from within as well as without" ("Daemon lovers," 210). He is interested in choice and free will among Spenserian characters, but his comment, with its description of the shift along a continuum from "human" to "personification," can also inform our understanding of characters such as Malbecco and Despair who makes these shifts.

My overarching argument in this section is that the initial description of Alcyon imports the allegorical mode into this otherwise pastoral world, calling on the reader to exercise the same reading strategies he or she would bring to *The Faerie Queene.* Alcyon, as Sorrow, is a "character" in the Renaissance sense of a caricaturish personality type, and Spenser invites the reader to laugh at him just as audiences and readers were later to laugh at the satiric character portraits of the formal verse satirists and epigrammatists of the 1590s, Ben Jonson's humours comedies at the turn of the century, or Sir Thomas Overbury's *Characters* in the seventeenth century. Whereas the reader's pleasure with those later incarnations of the one-note character depended upon the wit and verbal brilliance (or outrageousness) of the author, Spenser's early version of the same preoccupation with the dividing line between human and caricature grows out of his own work in allegory. For the reader of *Daphnaïda*, the pleasure

depends on the irony and incongruity of a personification within the sheep-fields and on bringing allegorical reading strategies to bear in an ostensibly pastoral poem.

However instructive it may be to think of Alcyon's resemblances to satirical "characters" or "humours"-driven figures, Spenser's preference for indirect satirical meaning-making leads to less obvious judgments than those more directly judgmental works. Reading Alcyon—like reading with attention to the possibility of satire in the Fox, Verlame, the Gnat, the oak and the briar, Diggon Davy, Duessa, and so on and so forth—involves sensitivity to unusual words, out-of-place images, and passages that call to mind other texts, that is, the same reading strategies prompted by allusion, symbol, and analogy's clues to read allegorically that I discussed at length in the first chapter. In this chapter so far, I have argued that Spenser includes things that don't fit the genre of pastoral elegy, such as invoking the Fates instead of the Muses and introducing a shepherd in the same way he introduces negative allegorical personifications such as Despair and Occasion; that Alcyon's poetry and thinking are both bad; and that Spenser's invention of this character may have begun with Chaucer's Man in Black's statement "y am sorwe, and sorwe ys y." In the remainder of the chapter, I will return to a consideration of Spenser's introductory description, connecting this figure to the Wandering Jew and the Old Man of Chaucer's *Pardoner's Tale.* I believe that reading the description of Alcyon emblematically and allegorically like this helps to tie together the whole poem, leading to an interpretation of Alcyon as not just one who sorrows, but one who sorrows without faith, one who sorrows culpably and thus brings on himself the same punishment of restless wandering and long life suffered by the Wandering Jew and Chaucer's Old Man.

I have already discussed the description of Alcyon with reference to other figures created by Spenser, and those connections, with their negative evaluative words, help the reader to know immediately not to admire the figure described thus. However, the fuller meaning of other details of the description do not become apparent until later in the poem, and thus the reader attempting to interpret the description of Alcyon iconographically, particularly his "*Jaakob* staffe," has to wait until more details emerge. I mentioned above the rareness of the spelling "Jaakob," which occurs, other than this use, only in Biblical contexts referring to the patriarch Jacob, or Israel. To spell the already unusual word "Jacob's-staff" as "*Jaakob* staffe" is strangely Hebraicizing, a choice that makes sense only later in the poem, when Alcyon describes his perpetual wandering:

> 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.
>
> But as the mother of the Gods, that sought
> For faire *Eurydice* her daughter deere
> Throughout the world, with wofull heavie thought;
> So will I travell whilest I tarrie heere,
> Ne will I lodge, ne will I ever lin,
> Ne when as drouping *Titan* draweth neere
> To loose his teeme, will I take up my Inne.
>
> (Spenser, *Daphnaïda*, lines 456–69)

Although he does expect to die eventually, given that he instructs later pilgrims to mourn at his grave (lines 532–38), his constant references to his desired, delayed death convey a stronger impression of unwelcome immortality: "cruell death doth scorne to come at call, / Or graunt his boone that most desires to dye" (lines 356–57); "Why doo I longer live in lifes despight? / And doo not dye then in despight of death" (lines 442–43).

An unkempt man wandering endlessly with a staff matches the literary and iconographic details salient to the legend of the Wandering Jew, a medieval tale that gained new legs, if you will, in the early modern period when Matthew of Paris's *Chronica Majora* was published in London in 1571, leading to a new and more strongly anti-Semitic incarnation of the tale that began with a German version of 1603 (Anderson, *Legend*, 16–21, 60–66).[11] Spenser, however, presumably draws on the medieval version, told in Matthew of Paris's chronicle and adapted, perhaps, by Chaucer in his portrait of the deathless wandering man in *The Pardoner's Tale*. Despite changes in the interpretations accorded to the Wandering Jew story over time, serving to illustrate either a miracle of Christianity or the perfidiousness of the Jews, iconographically there is a great deal of similarity over time, with the unkempt beard and walking staff generally appearing in representations from the medieval and early modern period; Eszter Losonczi notes as well a frequent conflation of Wandering

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11 For the version of the tale most likely to be familiar to Spenser, see Matthew Paris's *Matthaei Paris, monachi Albanensis, Angli, historia maior* (470–71 [from chronicle year 1228] and 1138 [from chronicle year 1252]).

Jew iconography with pilgrim iconography, relevant here to the pilgrim imagery used by Alcyon and the narrator (Losonczi, *Visual Patterns*, 46, 54, 58).

If Spenser considered the Old Man of the *Pardoner's Tale* as an iteration of the Wandering Jew legend,[12] this may help to make sense of Alcyon's puzzling conflation of the Orpheus/Eurydice and Ceres/Proserpina myths. Alcyon plans to do "as the mother of the Gods" when she searched the world for "faire *Eurydice* her daughter deere" (lines 463–65), an odd mixing and metamorphosing of relationships and sexes that emphasizes, as Donald Cheney notes, "the travel and the travail" of the search ("Grief," 130). It also oddly mirrors the mother–child imagery introduced by Chaucer's Old Man when he describes his efforts to be allowed to die:

> Ne Deeth, allas, ne wol nat han my lyf.
> Thus walke I, lyk a restelees kaityf,
> And on the ground, which is my moodres gate,
> I knokke with my staf, bothe erly and late,
> And seye "Leeve mooder, leet me in!
> Lo how I vanysshe, flessh, and blood, and skyn!
> Allas, whan shul my bones been at reste?"
>
> (Chaucer, *Pardoner's*, lines 727–33)

The image of the earth as a mother who denies the Old Man admittance reverses the mother–child relationship of Ceres and Proserpina, where the mother seeks the lost child who is in the earth, adding to the confusion of parent read as lover and wife confused with daughter; overall, reading Alcyon's conflated myth with reference to the Old Man's wandering and quest to be allowed to enter the earth, his mother, creates a jumbled and overdetermined set of relationships among artist and beloved, parent and child—the one clear thing that emerges from this reading, however, is an emotional effect of irremediable longing and suffering.

But how does Spenser expect the reader to respond to this suffering? Not with sympathy, I believe. In this chapter, I have read *Daphnaïda* with reference to several intertexts that Spenser's original audience would have known well: *The Faerie Queene*, *The Book of the Duchess*, the legend of the Wandering Jew, and *The Pardoner's Tale*. Many other scholars have examined the poem in relation to *The Book of the Duchess* and to

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12 For an early statement of the argument connecting *The Pardoner's Tale* to the legend, see Bushnell, "Wandering Jew." George K. Anderson initially rejected the hypothesis ("Wandering Jew," 241n16) but later came to support this interpretation (*Legend of the Wandering Jew,* 31–32). Of course Chaucerians differ on how best to interpret the Old Man; for a summary of the multiplicity of interpretations of this figure, see Benson, "Explanatory notes," 905.

Spenser's more generically conforming examples of pastoral elegy, such as "November" of *The Shepheardes Calender* and *Astrophel.* There is general critical consensus that Alcyon is less appealing than Chaucer's Man in Black and that the deviations from the generic norms of pastoral elegy raise questions. I have argued here that Spenser connects Alcyon descriptively to negative allegorical personifications, which pushes the reader in the direction of a judgmental response to the character. Connecting him to the Wandering Jew, punished with eternal wandering for his lack of compassion to Jesus on the day of the Crucifixion, emphasizes Alcyon's lack of faith (which becomes over the course of the poem something like idolatry of Daphne, as Oram notes; "*Daphnaida*," 147).

Alcyon *is* sorrow, and sorrow is he, but he is supposed to be a man, or perhaps the pastoral equivalent, a "jollie Shepheard swaine." More so than the critical portraits of character types found in the formal verse satires of Joseph Hall, Thomas Middleton, John Marston, and others, Spenser's criticism of "the excessive mourner" seems to target a particular individual, Arthur Gorges. Yet the point he makes by reducing a putatively human character to a figure so "flat" that he resembles Spenser's allegorical personifications has applicability as general as the study of virtues found in *The Faerie Queene.* Read in this way, *Daphnaïda* becomes a more interesting work, an example of Spenser's allegorical and allusive satire that requires an active reader. Spenser provides some clues to the work's generic nonconformity, such as the invocation of the Fates rather than the Muses and the nonpastoral style of the initial description of Alcyon. Alcyon's bad poetry serves as another clue, given the narrator's comment that Alcyon, in former days, "wont full merrilie to pipe and daunce, / And fill with pleasance every wood and plaine" (lines 55–56). *Daphnaïda*, tedious as pastoral elegy, becomes a good game when read through the lens of satire.