'To His Booke'

The poem serving as a prologue to *The Shepheardes Calender*, 'To His Booke,' appears on the verso of the title page in the early quartos. The two pages have a close relationship, because they both refer to Philip Sidney: the title page dedicates the book to Sidney, while the prologue refers to him as 'the president / Of noblesse and of chevalree' (3-4). From the outset, Spenser features the relationship between author and patron, poetry and patronage, creating a specific professional frame for the reception of his book. Yet nowhere does Spenser reveal his own name, instead calling the author 'Immerito' at the foot of the prologue, a name that means 'The Unworthy One'. In the fiction of the prologue, however, Immerito makes a sustained address to his 'booke', which introduces a second relationship, between author and work. Together, the two fictions present the author telling his book to seek protection from Sidney.

  The book needs protection for three reasons. First, as an orphan 'whose parent is unkent' (unknown) (2)--Spenser is making his first formal appearance in print and wishes to remain anonymous--the book requires someone in a position of power to provide 'succoure' for it (6). Second, since the book boldly appears in print while being so vulnerable, it needs defense against the 'Envie' that will 'barke' at it (5). And third, because the book is 'base begot with blame', and thus 'takest shame' for its low-class status (14-15), it needs a higher-ranking member of society to license its authority. Immerito relies on the modesty topos, calling his enterprise 'hardyhedde', or arrogant presumption, but the word also draws attention to Spenser's bold ambition: someone who had been a 'sizar' or poor scholar at Cambridge University now publishes a book dedicated to a 'noble' man of letters.

  Beneath the mask of modesty is not just Spenser's social mobility but the very grounds for it: an eighteen-line debut poem in tetrameter tercets—a rare if not original verse form in itself —which relies on such unusual and sophisticated devices for the time as recurrent enjambment, neologism, lucid and polysyllabic diction, and learned allusion to biblical, classical, and native medieval works, all of which command authority. For instance, Immerito asks Sidney for protection 'Under the shadow of his wing' (7), a phrase borrowed from Psalms 36.7, and identifying the English patron with the Israelite David, the shepherd-king who protects his flock with faithful song. Yet the prologue opens with a clear imitation of a native author, Chaucer, who had placed an address to his work toward the end of *Troilus and Criseyde*: 'Go, litel bok, go, litel myn tragedye' (5.1786). Immerito both repeats England's greatest poet of the past and aims to overgo him. Chaucer's address had a healthy afterlife in English poetry, including in Lydgate's *Troy Book* and Skelton's *Garland or Chaplet of Laurel* (see note below). Yet none of these three native precursors formally wrote in pastoral, so scholars have also found Spenser imitating Virgil: 'A shepheards swaine say did thee sing / All as his straying flocke he fedde' (9-10). Here, Spenser scripts a deft accommodation of a classical to a biblical trope for the Christian poet's saving pastoral art. For those who look to Virgil as a model, pastoral anticipates epic. Hence, Immerito gestures to the Virgilian progression of literary forms when identifying Sidney as 'the president / Of noblesse and chivalree': not just the patron but the exemplar of heroic culture and

art. Immerito's concluding lines also offer a Virgilian gesture to future poems: 'Come tell me, what was sayd of mee: / And I will send more after thee' (17-8). Finally, Immerito's interest in his own reputation emerges in line 13 when he raises the prospect that Sidney might wish to 'aske' the author his 'name', providing a glimpse into one of Spenser's singular preoccupations: fame. Here, also, Spenser bids for an ongoing personal relationship with his patron, mediated by the book they share.

Thus, for its metrical and formal innovations, its generic representations, its social, political, and religious topics, and finally its fiction of authorship, patronage, social reception, and renown, 'To His Booke' opens the page of Spenser's 'Calender' to a remarkable index of literary ambition and achievement.

Title Page

The first of four prefatory materials to the 1579 quarto edition of *The Shepheardes Calender*, the title page is important as an object in its own right. It divides into four parts, from top to bottom: the title of the book; its dedication; the printer's ornament; and the printer's imprint. Distinctly missing is a printer's border (around the edges), which distinguishes this title page from those in later *SC* editions, and which gives the page a striking plainness for a book self-consciously announcing its importance (cf. Luborsky 1980: 32-3). The name of the author is missing as well, for the book remains anonymous, signed on the next page by 'Immeritô' (The Unworthy One). Yet two other names do appear: Philip Sidney, the book's dedicatee, marking the first appearance of this figure in Spenser's biography and canon; and Hugh Singleton, the printer, whose name appears in the largest font (also used for the title itself).

The Shepheardes Calender: The title of Spenser's book communicates a double message: on the one hand, the title aligns the book with the tradition of the English almanac; on the other, it aligns the book with the tradition of European pastoral, as signaled by the word 'Æglogues' in the subtitle (for details, see Introduction). Early modern punctuation allows for 'Shepheardes' to be either possessive singular (shepherd's) or plural (shepherds'), and arguments can be made for both (*Var* 7: 235). One recent modernized edition opts for the plural, '*The Shepherds' Calendar*' (Brooks-Davies 1995: 7), which emphasizes the poem's community of shepherds. One of the recognized models for the design of Spenser's book also uses the plural: *The Kalender of Shepherdes* (1st edition 1506; reprinted nearly annually throughout sixteenth century), which E.K. refers to in his dedicatory Epistle. Yet *Januarye* begins with reference to 'A shepeheards boy' (1), and Immerito recurrently features his own personal possessiveness (e.g., 'I have made a Calender' [Epilogue 1]), suggesting that the title straddles the divide of individual and communal production: this is a book about a community of shepherds *and* an individual shepherd's representation of that community.

Epistle

The third of four prefatory materials to *The Shepheardes Calender*, the dedicatory Epistle to Gabriel Harvey is an important document in English letters. Above all, it boldly introduces the author of the pastoral book as the 'new Poete' (dedication title)—a phrase that continues to classify Spenser over 400 years later.

The Epistle divides into several topics: the New Poet's relation with Chaucer and Virgil and a prediction of the author's fame (1-14); his groundbreaking use of language--both his individual words (23-95) and his sentence arrangement (96-111)--to advance the 'Mother tonge' (70), including his triumphant overgoing of 'the rakehellye route of our ragged rymers' (102-3); the program of an author who begins the 'flyght' (123) of his career with pastoral, in imitation of Virgil and other poets (112-36); the poet's 'purpose' (137) in writing *SC* (137-61), 'to mitigate and allay the heate of his passion, or else to warne . . . young shepheards . . . of his unfortunate folly' (140-2); and the evocation of a literary environment in which the book is produced, including its relation to Harvey, Philip Sidney (the book's dedicatee), and the mysterious E.K., who signs the Epistle (161-93).

Probably, E.K. does not refer to Edward Kirke (1553-1613), who had been a sizar with Spenser at Cambridge, even though Kirke's initials match E.K.'s and Spenser mentions 'Mystress Kerke' (either Edward's mother or his wife) in a letter to Harvey written on 16 October 1579 (*Letters* 4.63, 257-8; see Hadfield 2012: 122-3). More likely, Spenser authored the Epistle himself, as well as the General Argument, the prose Arguments prefacing the twelve eclogues, and their detailed glosses, perhaps in collusion with Harvey (Starnes 1944; Schleiner 1990; Waldman 1991; Carroll 2005; McCabe 2010: 465-8). Consequently, readers may more profitably turn away from this 'authorial wild goose chase' to 'question the purpose and nature of [E.K.'s] . . . strange exegetical performance' (Kearney 2011: 143n2). In his performance, E.K. functions as part of Spenser's elaborate fiction about his monumental book (McCanles 1982): not merely does E.K. serve as the presenter of Spenser's literary career but he functions as a 'diagnostic and analytic . . . commentary on, and exploration of, the place of such books in his culture' (Kearney 2011: 114).

As both performance and prolegomena, the Epistle qualifies as a significant document in a history of the book and of English literature (cf. Tribble 1993: 72-87; Slights 2001: 46-52; Cook 2011).

The Generall Argument

The last of four materials prefatory to *The Shepheardes Calender*, '*The generall argument of* the whole booke' does not strictly live up to its title, for nowhere does this second letter by E.K. supply a general argument for Spenser's book (see note below on '*argument*'). Instead, it dilates on three main topics dealing with the genre of pastoral: the etymology of the word 'Æglogues'; the 'division' of the twelve eclogues into 'three formes or ranckes'; and a justification for making January the first month of the year, rather than March (see below for individual notes). While the letter contains pedantry and bombast, it remains important for its overarching idea: the author of the book is a Christian poet who composes his pastoral poem by making learned decisions about its artistic unity and harmony (cf. L.S. Johnson 1990: 25-8).

Januarye

The first eclogue of *The Shepheardes Calender*, *Januarye* is also the first eclogue to feature Colin Clout, Spenser's chief persona. The eclogue especially pairs with the sixth and twelfth eclogues, *June* and *December*, where Colin again appears as a speaker; but it aligns with the fourth and eighth, *Aprill* and *August,* where others rehearse Colin's songs. This structure gives the *Calender* a formal symmetry, centering on the poet's developing career. The central theme of *Januarye* is the poet's inability to

produce his art under the pressure of unrequited love, narrated in the key event at the end: after his beloved, Rosalind, rejects him, Colin breaks his pipe.

Accordingly, the eclogue divides into three parts. In lines 1-12, a third-person narrator (presumably Immerito, named as the author of 'To His Booke') describes Colin leading his emaciated flock from their winter pens into the sun, and then identifies the shepherd as an artist-figure: 'Well couth he tune his pipe, and frame his stile' (10). Then, in lines 13-71 Colin sings a ten-stanza complaint addressed to various figures in the natural world—the Gods and Pan, the barren ground, the naked trees, his feeble flock—before recalling how his sight of Rosalind debilitated his art, and he asks Pan for pity. Finally, in lines 72-8 the narrator records how Colin breaks his pipe and lies down, until nighttime rouses him to take his sheep home. Ingeniously, Spenser deploys a single six-line stanza in iambic pentameter, rhyming *ababcc* (a sixain), to record the voices of both narrator and persona, drawing attention to their interconnectedness.

In focusing on the relation between poetry and desire, the eclogue weds the genres of Virgilian pastoral and Petrarchan lyric, re-dressing Virgil's classical shepherd in the guise of the continental Renaissance lover (as well as the Renaissance lover as a classical shepherd). The key subtexts for Colin's complaint are Virgil's Eclogue 2, which tells of Corydon's frustrated desire for the shepherd-boy Alexis; and Petrarch's *Rima Sparse* 66, which tells of Petrarch's turn to the natural world to contend with his frustrated desire over Laura (cf. *Jan* 63-6n). Consequently, the topic of male friendship intersects with that of male-female sexuality: Colin takes the 'clownish gifts' (57) given to him by Hobbinol and 'gives [them] to Rosalind againe' (60). E.K.'s gloss on Colin's rejection of Hobbinol in favor of Rosalind, which refers to 'some savour of disorderly love, [and] which the learned call paederastice', evokes a longstanding Western conversation about gender identity, despite E.K.'s insistence that this issue is 'gathered beside his [the author's] meaning' (59 [Goldberg 1990]). This transition from adolescent male friendship to traumatic heterosexual desire forms the social dynamic within which Colin produces his youthful art, and it is this transition that Rosalind interrupts when she 'scorne[s]' Colin's 'rurall musick' (64): 'Shepheards devise she hateth as the snake' (65).

The shortest of the twelve eclogues at 78 lines, *Januarye* nonetheless raises important questions at the outset about Spenser's presentation of his persona figure. Does Spenser criticize Colin as a 'failure', because the shepherd both misgoverns his sheep (Durr 1957: 71) and locates his faith in the world of nature rather than in divine grace, as represented by his invocation of Pan, a pagan nature god (MacCaffrey 1969: 121-2; Moore, 1975)? Or does Spenser focus less on Colin's religious faith and ethical action in society and more on poetry itself, whether Colin's use of poetic song to form a human art operative in the world (Alpers 1972: 353, 362) or a narcissistic song of misplaced artistic ambition (Berger 1988: 325-46)? By raising such questions, *Januarye* sets the problem that the rest of *SC* will take on: the role of erotic social courtship (Montrose 1979) in the personal religious faith that underwrites the poet's public art (P. Cheney 1993: 77-110, 2001: 79). Rosalind's judgment that Colin's youthful art is snakelike is especially damning, intimating that Spenser here represents an immature poetry that is dangerous, deceptive, and demonic, particularly with respect to female integrity.

Curiously, E.K.'s glosses provide a different, or complementary, paratextual lens—not strictly artistic, erotic, religious, or ethical but political. E.K.'s references to Sir Thomas Smith's treatise on English government, *De Republica Anglorum*, to John Skelton's biting satires against Henry VIII's chief advisor, Cardinal Wolsey, and to Clément Marot, France's Protestant poet of exile speak to the poem's political agenda—perhaps resonant in the phrase about Colin's sheep, 'ill government' (45 and note)--in which Spenser in the late 1570s joins the Leicester-Sidney circle in its disaffection from Queen Elizabeth and her proposed marriage to the French Catholic Duc d'Alençon (McCabe 1999: 520).

The woodcut, the most individualized of the twelve, reverses the trajectory of the poet's 'failure'

in the eclogue narrative (cf. Luborksy 1981: 24-9; Patterson 1987: 123-4*). Colin stands near the center, a broken bagpipe at his feet (symbolizing the art of frustrated desire), in the shadow of a tree (symbolizing Virgilian royal patronage from Eclogue 1). Colin's disorganized sheep graze behind him, and behind them stands a house, perhaps the shepherd's or perhaps Rosalind's (see *Aug* 161, 181). Yet Colin faces away from this pastoral scene, toward a hilltop city, marked as Rome by the pointed towers and the Colosseum, in a clear evocation of the Virgilian (and even Petrarchan) poet who writes pastoral beckoning to epic.

Januarye, then, is important for its complex narrative evoking questions about the power of desire (erotic and ethical, political and religious) to affect the role of the poet in England during the late 1570s (cf. L.S. Johnson 1990: 104-14; Kinney 2010).

Februarie

Februarie is notable for its verse achievement in poetic narrative. In 1586, William Webbe first admired the 'Sheepeheardes homelyst talke' (*Var* 7: 253), and the admiration continued in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries, with William Hazlitt calling the inset fable of the Oak and the Briar 'as splendid a piece of oratory as any found in the records of the eloquence of the British senate' (Friedland 1954: 224). Yet Hazlitt's political metaphor from the Roman Republic also speaks to the particular way that Spenser harnesses poetic eloquence here: on behalf of a 'British' nation committed to free debate.

Spenser's oratory divides into three parts: 1) lines 1-101 feature a sometimes rancorous debate between the younger shepherd Cuddie and the older Thenot on the topic of youth and age; 2) lines 102-238 present Thenot telling Cuddie a fable of the Oak and the Briar about the arrogance of youth undercutting the authority of age, only to destroy itself; and 3) lines 239-46 show Cuddie's biting rejection of the moral utility of Thenot's fable.

To accomplish such a 'homely' narrative, Spenser relies on rugged tetrameter couplets with an often coarse and archaic diction. The lines vary from eight to ten syllables, and the baseline iambic meter frequently modulates through anapests (two unstressed syllables followed by a stressed one). By writing so many lines having four beats with stresses tending to fall on the heavy alliteration, the poet evokes the medieval tradition of *Piers Plowman* and the pseudo-Chaucerian *Plowman's Tale,* important to the Protestant reform movement. This helps explain the first appearance in *SC* of 'Tityrus', the shepherd whom Thenot cites as the inventor of the fable, and whom Cuddie admires, bringing to their rancor an unusual moment of accord. Tityrus, we learn, is Chaucer, and the reference allows *Februarie* to record Spenser's own budding genealogy as England's national poet.

The shepherds' debate evokes several controversies taking place in mid-Elizabethan culture: about the merits of youth and age as a social problem (Cullen 1970: 34-41); about court patronage, in which warring factions at the Elizabethan court vie for power, the younger generation vying for authority with the older one (Hoffman 1978: 92-7; Montrose 1981; Bond 1981; Patterson 1991: 59-61, 88-9); about Protestant attacks on both old Catholic faith and young Protestant radicalism (Hume 1984: 43-4; J.N. King 1990: 34); and about opposing Elizabethan poetics (Berger 1988: 425; Halpern 1991: 176-214; Pugh 2005: 30-4), including the two major poetics of the 1570s: Cuddie's courtly 'amateur' art, which features delightful love stories without an ethical end; and Thenot's older 'humanist' art, which insists on moral instruction (P. Cheney 2002). Not just good storytelling, *Februarie* packs in a wide spectrum of cultural conversation.

The central subtext for the eclogue's showpiece, the fable of the Oak and the Briar, is Aesop's *The Bush and the Aubyer*, in which a tree persuades a woodsman to cut down a rival tree, although Spenser superimposes onto this a poem from the reign of Edward VI, *The Hospitable Oake*, which uses Virgilian allusions to represent powerful patrons as vulnerable shade trees (Patterson 1991: 60-1). Yet in the background is likely Gascoigne's *Princely Pleasures of Kenilworth Castle* (1576), in which Queen Complacida (she who pleases everyone) metamorphoses an oak of Constancy and a briar of Contention (Friedland 1954; Watson 1993), in an allegory featuring Queen Elizabeth's favoring of the earl of Leicester, patron of Gascoigne (and later, Spenser). Perhaps also applicable is the first fable in *The Seven Ages of Rome*, a medieval romance popular in the sixteenth century (Roberts 1950). These subtexts gesture to the social, political, and religious issues resonating in *Februarie*.

The woodcut is impressively done, and gestures to these issues as well, with the two debating shepherds standing in the center, their hands nearly touching in accord, balanced by their flocks standing behind them (Thenot, sheep; Cuddie, bullocks). To the right, behind Cuddie, are the emblems of the fable: a husbandman cuts down a tall tree, while a briar stands in its shadow—curiously being eaten by one of the bullocks. To the left, behind Thenot, are some buildings, which evoke the institutions of church and state.

Both the content of *Februarie* and its archaic prosody link it with the ecclesiastical eclogues, *Maye*, *Julye*, and *September*, and, together with *October*, they form what E.K. calls the 'moral' eclogues (see note below on Arg 'morall'). Morevoer, *Februarie* stands out from the eclogue it follows, *Januarye*, which has featured a smoother poetic surface and a solo artist, Colin Clout. Not merely splendid narrative, then, *Februarie* is among the most sophisticated of the eclogues, relying self-consciously on rugged poetic meter to air—rather than simply 'moralize' (*FQ* I.pr.1.9)--social, religious, political, and finally poetic debates. Indeed, Spenser's ability to contain cultural debate within a verse narrative that balances resonance with restraint demonstrates his emerging authority as a leading voice in 'the British senate'.

March

March is unusual for its attempt to 'English' the classical (and continental) pastoral of Cupid: the eclogue takes an ancient tradition of eros and naturalizes it, bringing it home to the English countryside. The eclogue divides into two symmetrical parts, carefully balanced: in lines 1-60, two young shepherds, Willye and Thomalin, discuss the nature of erotic desire; and in lines 61-117 Thomalin tells the story of his encounter with Cupid, god of love, who has wounded him in the Achilles' heel, while Willye recalls the story of his father, who also encounters the deity.

The topic of the eclogue, the awakening of sexual desire in adolescent boys, conjoins with *Januarye*, the story of Colin Clout's youthful unrequited love for Rosalind, and with *Februarie*, with its eclogue structure divided between a dialogue and a fable. *March* also anticipates *Aprill*, with its springtime topicality evoking the predicament of Queen Elizabeth, confronting a French marriage with the Duc d'Alençon.

Spenser's attempt to naturalize the originary erotic classical myth on English soil shows him engaging in an ancient topic, however successful artistically (cf. Bush, *Var* 7: 268 versus Palgrave, *Var* 7: 266-7). Specifically, Spenser rewrites Bion's *Idylls* 4 and Ronsard's 1556 ode, *L'Amour oiseau* (Spitzer 1950), the two key subtexts (Spenser may have known Bion through Angelo Poliziano's 1512 Latin translation). Bion tells how, one day, the boy Ixeutas goes out hunting for birds, only to encounter Eros. Shooting all his arrows but missing the god, the boy turns to an old ploughman, who had taught

him the art of hunting in the first place: the tutor counsels patience, for one day the god will return to hunt *him*. Ronsard adapts the story to emphasize both the beauty of the bird and the pessimism of the tutor, an old fortuneteller, in a design that features the simple disparity between innocence and experience. Spenser, in contrast, shows two boys actually experiencing desire, and talking about it, free of the interference of adult wisdom.

March thus constitutes 'an inimitable *poetic description of puberty*' (Sptizer 1950: 499; his emphasis), a phrase that usefully sustains both erotic and poetic valence. On the one hand, the eclogue offers 'a comic portrayal of man's initiation and perennial re-initiation into the sexual rites of spring' (Cullen 1970: 100), in which 'Adolescent psychology and budding eroticism are Spenser's interests' (Hoffman 1977: 82). On the other, the eclogue's spring landscape refers 'primarily to the *topoi* and symbols of previous literature and only secondarily to objects and figures in "nature"': 'the intent is to imitate and signify poetry'—specifically, to undercut 'the wisdom of the literary elders, their vision of love as folly', and to 'show . . . what is wrong with it' (Berger 1988: 364, 370).

The seemingly light-hearted eclogue also has a political valence, exposed briefly in the curious reference to the shepherdess 'Lettice' in line 20, alluding to the earl of Leicester's secret marriage to Lettice Knollys, which angered the queen (see Hadfield 2012: 128-31); and in the spelling of 'gall' in Thomalin's emblem, 'Gaule' (France), punning on the bitterness of her proposed French marriage. Perhaps the eclogue also evokes the politics of desire in lines 49-50 in the image of an 'Unhappye Ewe' wearing a 'clout' (or bandage) on her 'legge' and falling 'headlong into a dell'. Using such 'markes and tokens' (as E.K. calls them in the Argument), the eclogue creates a tension between a simple narrative surface in which boys talk about sex and the depth of an intertext that analyzes an entire tradition of love--all situated within international court politics.

To accomplish this maneuver, Spenser uses a version of 'tail-rhyme': a six-line stanza, rhyming *aabccb*, which divides into two units, each consisting of three lines (a tetrameter couplet followed by a single trimeter line), with both units using the same 'b' rhyme. Although Spenser begins by assigning each shepherd a six-line speech, he goes on to efface this stanzaic design. Willye's second speech, for instance, consists of a single twelve-line stanza, while Thomalin's second speech consists of just three lines, with his tale being a single forty-two line stanza. Paradoxically, *March* uses an idyllic-sounding representation of youthful spring desire to present a 'somewhat sour' attitude toward 'love' (McCabe 1999: 527).

Hence, the woodcut ominously shows the boys standing in the center surrounded by the myth of Cupid. Behind them on the left is an image of Cupid caught in a fowler's net from Willye's story of his father, which evokes the Homeric myth of Ares (Roman, Mars) and Aphrodite (Venus) caught in the act of adultery before the gods on Mt. Olympus (March is named after Mars; hence Aries or the Ram is its zodiacal sign, centered at the top of the woodcut). On the right is the image from Thomalin's story of his encounter with Cupid. 'Maybe one of the points of the woodcut is that harmony is the opposite of what Protestants expected from the union of Elizabeth and Alençon' (Brooks-Davies 1995: 55).

Of all the eclogues, *March* best displays Spenser's skill at lading a simple and ancient classical myth with wide and fresh national import.

Aprill

Aprill is the second of six Colin Clout eclogues (with *Jan*, *June*, *Aug*, *Nov*, *Dec*), and centers formally on the role of the poet in the nation. Whereas *Januarye* has presented Colin's private, amorous courtship of Rosalind, *Aprill* presents his professional, political courtship of Queen Elisa, identified in

the Argument as a representation of Queen Elizabeth (Montrose 1979: 39). The relationship between poet and monarch comes front and center, emphasizing their reciprocity in the *making* of each other: poetry shapes monarchy; monarchy shapes poetry (Montrose 1986).

Yet Spenser represents this relationship through a complex three-part structure. In lines 1-36, two shepherds who have appeared previously, Thenot and Hobbinol, engage in a dialogue about Colin: whereas Hobbinol weeps that his friend has turned away from him to Rosalind and now has abandoned his art, Thenot cheerfully asks to hear one of Colin's songs. In lines 37-153, Hobbinol then 'recorde[s]' (Arg and line 30) Colin's 'laye / Of fayre *Elisa*, Queene of shepheardes all' (33-4). Finally, in lines 154-61 Thenot and Hobbinol agree that Colin has been foolish to sacrifice his art to unrequited love.

To offset the inset-lay from the dialogue, Spenser modulates prosody intricately. The dialogue proceeds through a four-line stanza (or quatrain) of often rough-sounding alliterative verse (the opening line reads, 'what garres thee greete?') in a generally iambic pentameter line, rhyming *abab*. In contrast, Colin's lay proceeds through an elaborately devised thirteen-stanza unit with each stanza having nine lines, rhyming *ababccddc*, alternating long and short lines: the first, third, fifth, and sixth are generally in iambic pentameter; the second, fourth, seventh, and eighth, generally in iambic dimeter; and the ninth, generally in iambic tetrameter. It is a remarkable premonition of the nine-line stanza of *The Faerie Queene* (known as 'the Spenserian stanza'), and is original to English literature. The effect of the eclogue's full metrical design is to draw attention to the superiority of the poet—both Colin and Spenser--in the presence of his peers (and sovereign).

Clearly, then, the showpiece of the eclogue is Colin's lay of Elisa. The lay had a substantial contemporary reception, discussed, e.g., by Abraham Fraunce in his 1588 *The Lawiers Logike* (sig. Jiii^r^-Jiiij^v^) and anthologized in the 1600 *England's Helicon* (sig. Cb). In the 1586 *Discourse of English Poetrie*, William Webbe discusses the lay and curiously turns it into Sapphics (sig. Jii^r^-Jiiij^r^), while in his Lay to Beta, on Elizabeth (Eclogue 3), Samuel Daniel offers a clear imitation. Milton, too, was attracted to *Aprill*, as revealed by both *Lycidas* and *Arcades* (*Var* 7: 280). Indeed, Colin's lay qualifies as 'one of the chief beauties of the *Shepheards Calender*, and of Elizabethan verse at large' (Herford, *Var* 7: 275). Further, the 'blazon of Elisa in the "April" eclogue has become one of the most famous of all the poetic images of the Virgin Queen. But retrospect has made it hard to remember that the cult of Elizabeth as maiden goddess was still a relatively new phenomenon' (Norbrook 2002: 74). In particular, the lay joins Colin's *August* sestina on Rosalind and Colin's elegy on Dido in *November* in 'stand[ing] out as staking an English claim in the poetry of the European Renaissance' (Alpers 1996: 182).

Colin's lay is the first version of what will recur famously throughout the Spenser canon: a detailed masculine representation of the female body (cf. Micros 1993), indebted to European traditions of the blazon, which here traces to the Song of Solomon and to Petrarch's *Rime Sparse* (e.g., 90, 157, 200). Yet Spenser's specific precedents for celebrating a monarch come from classical pastoral, Scripture, and continental pastoral: the praise of a ruler in Theocritus, *Idylls* 17, the 'Encomium to Ptolemy'; the celebration of the princely Roman babe as the herald of the return of the Golden Age in Virgil, *Eclogues* 4 (the so-called 'Messianic eclogue', because Christians interpreted the babe as Jesus); the lovely description of the beloved's female body in the Song of Solomon; and the lament for the death of a beloved sovereign in Marot's *Complainct de Madame Loyse*. As the scriptural subtext hints, Colin's lay, while formally a praise poem, owes to the tradition of the wedding hymn or ode, known as the epithalamium. Yet the eclogue's double structure of dialogue-and-song suggests a compound model about the poet in relation with the monarch. On the one hand, *Aprill* tells a triumphal story about Colin's use of his art to praise his sovereign, depicting an idealized poet-monarch relation, which presumably becomes useful to Spenser in advertising his address to the queen and important to the leadership he offers to other poets. On the other hand, *Aprill* tells a disastrous story about the poet's

unrequited love for Rosalind impeding this very model, and thereby tempers the idealization through lament.

Is *Aprill*, then, a praise poem (Cain 1978: 14-24), or a poem of 'resistance' relying on 'the "doubleness"' of 'camouflage' (Norbrook 2002: 78-80)? For that matter, is the subject of the eclogue Elizabeth as 'queen of England and head of the English church', with 'the panegyric ode . . . the closest *The Shepheardes Calender* comes to expressing a complete and idyllic unity of nation and church' (Halpern 1991: 205); or does *Aprill* present the political leader as 'a personification of pastoral poetry', with Spenser emphasizing 'Elizabeth's status as an ideal image created by the poet' (Montrose 1979: 40-1)?

The woodcut emphasizes the latter. It presents the queen standing in the center, surrounded by ten dancing ladies holding musical instruments, suggesting the classical Muses, while Colin stands off to the left, facing the dance and playing his pipe, his smaller scale suggesting that he conjures up the vision with his art. Above Colin, in the background, are Thenot and Hobbinol, with their sheep in front of them and the house to which they return at the end behind them (160). Yet even further in the background, toward the middle and on a hill, stands an imperial city, reminding viewers that '"Aprill" serves to predict the heroic poem that was already being composed' (Cain in Oram 1989: 69). At the top and centered is the zodiacal sign of Taurus, the Bull, a reference to the myth of Jupiter disguising himself as a bull to carry off the beautiful girl Europa, which Ovid uses to tell how '"majesty and love" do not go well together', a warning to Elizabeth about the dangers of marrying the French Duc d'Alençon (McCabe 1999: 530, quoting *Met* 2.846-7; see Brooks-Davies 1995: 64).

For its complex artistic design, its bifurcated representation of a relationship at the heart of sixteenth-century literature, and its importance within a long reception history, *Aprill* commands attention as a major inset piece of *SC* and of English poetry.

Maye

Maye is the first of three ecclesiastical eclogues, to be followed by *Julye* and *September*; but it has affinities with the 'moral' dialogue-and-fable structure of *Februarye*, the family narrative of *March*, and the holiday-dance atmosphere of *Aprill*. These four features—church politics, courtly ethics, family life, artistic holiday—open up the resonance of *Maye* considerably.

Without question, the eclogue focuses on church politics, as indicated by E.K. in his Argument and his glosses but also by the dialogue between two middle-age shepherds, Piers and Palinode, who use key ecclesiastical language to evoke contemporary religious debates. Their dialogue divides into three parts. In lines 1-173, the shepherds advance cases for radically different pastoral 'perspectives' on 'the role of the priest in the world' (Cullen 1970: 41): Palinode, for the care-free pleasure of May Day festivals as acceptable acts of conduct; Piers, for austere pastoral discipline prohibiting such conduct. Then, in lines 174-305 Piers tells an Aesopian fable about the Fox and the Kid, featuring the Kid's vulnerability to the wiles of the Fox, despite the care of the Kid's mother. Finally, in lines 306-17 the two shepherds amicably discuss the social utility of the fable and go home for the night.

The shepherds' dialogue replays debates familiar from such Henrician, Edwardian, and Marian polemicists as William Turner and John Bale, and in particular the Elizabethan Anthony Gilby's *Pleasant Dialogue* (composed 1566, published late 1570s), between a zealous Protestant and a worldly chaplain (Norbrook 2002: 57; see Hume 1984: 20-5; J.N. King 1990: 37). In the background, as well, lies *A Theatre for Voluptuous Worldlings*, which presents Jan van der Noot's commentary on the history of the slow collapse of the Church, drawing heavily on Bale's *Image of Both Churches*. The work of

situating the present in a history of the Church, a history carefully articulated to bring it in accord—or into various accords—with the prophetic idioms of the biblical books of Daniel and Revelation is not only Bale's project but also the historical vision of John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*. Piers' fable adapts Aesop's story of the Wolf and Kid, turning the Wolf of Catholic evil into a deceptive Fox, in accord with Protestant polemic against Church of England clergy (Brennan 1986). Moreover, in the background is Psalm 23, 'The Lord is my shepherd,' and John 10:14, Christ as the Good Shepherd; but also the tradition of ecclesiastical satire emerging in the eclogues of Petrarch, Boccaccio, and Mantuan. Combining continental, biblical, classical, and historical materials, *Maye* thus offers a rich meditation on the role of the Elizabethan pastor in matters of church government, focusing primarily on the behavior of the episcopate, the acceptability of their wearing vestments, and the threat of the Jesuit Mission infiltrating England (undercover priests meeting secretly with the Catholic faithful). The dialogue format ensures that Spenser's own perspective remains concealed. Milton famously indicted Palinode as 'that false Shepheard' who figures 'our Prelates, whose life is a recantation of their pastorall vow' (*Animadversions upon the Remonstrants Defence against Smectymnuus*, in *Prose Works* 1953: 1.722), but Palinode does appear as a sympathetic, even affable figure (Cain 1988: 86; Chamberlain 2005: 49).

 Maye also has a social dynamic that focuses on the importance of 'care', a word that appears five times (48, 77, 96, 180, 215), more than in any other eclogue. Not merely pastors but parents and the sovereign herself are pressed to engage in a social duty committed to self-sacrifice, modeled on the teachings of 'Algrind' (a figure for Edmund Grindal, Archbishop of Canterbury [see 75n]), who encourages his flock to 'care for their heire' (75-7): the common people, children, and the people of the nation as a body politic (cf. Lane 1993: 101,109). The concept of care is tied to work, and indicates Spenser's interest in signaling a shift from a classical ideal of pastoral otium (leisure) to a medieval ideal of agrarian labor: in short, from Virgil's *Eclogues* to Langland's *Piers Plowman* (Little 2013: 143-56).

 When Piers criticizes 'faitours' that 'caren little' for their 'flocke' (39-49), he uses a metaphor that Spenser first applies to himself in his role as poet ('To His Booke' 9-10). Hence, *Maye* includes details that extend the dialogue to the role of art and poetry in the world (Montrose 1983: 451-2; Alpers 1985: 94)--in particular, to the difficulty that those who lack art (and by extension, poetry) have when trying to care for their flock (Berger 1988: 304; see Chamberlain 2005: 45; L.S. Johnson 1990: 77-9; Herman 1992: 19-20). Such artistic details emerge first in the Argument, when E.K. says that Piers and Palinode '*represent . . .* two *formes* of pastours or Ministers' who 'give too much credit to their *colourable* and *feyned* goodwill', with Piers pausing to '*tell . . . a tale*' to Palinode (2-7; emphasis added). Palinode's depiction of May Day 'mask[ing]', with its 'merimake' (2, 15) of 'shepheardes . . . singing', 'play[ing]', 'pyp[ing]', and 'daunc[ing]' to 'fetchen home May with their musicall' (20-8), formally versifies poetic art. At one point, Spenser's willingness to implicate himself as a poet appears especially daring, for the colorable and feigning Fox has a 'hinder heele . . . wrapt in a clout' (243)—the word 'clout' nominally meaning bandage but inescapably evoking Colin Clout, as Spenser's pun in *November* makes available. There, Queen Elisa gives her shepherds 'clouted Creame. / O heavie herse, / Als Colin cloute she would not once disdayne' (99-101; see note, and *March* 50n). The artistic details are so pervasive that we may well see the eclogue as 'an allegory about allegory, or about the imperative for allegorical reading' (Halpern 1991: 210 on the fable; see 182, 208-11). Intriguingly, Spenser presents the instrumentality of poetic narrative itself when, at the end, Palinode ask Piers, 'let me thy tale borrowe' (308), the word 'borrowe' evoking the process of imitation, of putting art to work in society. In *Maye*, that work is the mark of valuable 'pastours': clergy, politicians, heads of family, authors.

Remarkably, the woodcut features an artistic reading, exiling the debating shepherds to the upper-left corner, breaking the fable into three parts scattered around the block, and bringing Palinode's May Day festival front and center: eight figures (and one standing figure) dance around a wagon carrying a man and a woman ('the Lord of Misrule and his lady' [Luborksy 1981: 35]), pulled by two winged horses, evoking Pegasus, symbol of poetic inspiration and artistic fame (Cain in Oram 1989: 86), perhaps with the symbolic firepower of Plato's winged horses of reason and desire in the *Phaedrus* (cf. Borris 2014; see *Dec* 63-4n).

The verse of *Maye* consists of a varying meter of a tetrameter line in couplets, divided between Piers' 'rugged tetrameters' that evoke 'the moral ethos of [work in] *The Plowman's Tale'* and Palinode's 'infectious music' evoking May Day sport (McCabe 1999: 534), as well as contrasting two models of time, one largely artistic, the other finally religious: Palinode's classical '*carpe diem* attitude' and Piers' Christian attitude toward history leading to the 'account' (51, 54) of the Last Judgment (Snyder 1998: 34).

Easily the longest of the eclogues at 321 lines, *Maye* assumes a central position in *The Shepheardes Calender*—indeed in the Spenser canon—for 'represent[ing]' a compelling interplay of church, state, and family in the realm of English poetry.

June

June is the *central* eclogue of *The Shepheardes Calender*. Structurally, it appears at the midpoint of the twelve eclogues. As the first eclogue in which Colin Clout appears in dialogue with another shepherd (Hobbinol), it rehearses the topic that organizes the work: the poet's career and his role in society. The 120 lines (the same number as *October*, the other eclogue on the poet's career) evoke the 'maximum human life span between the Fall and the Flood' (Brooks-Davies 1995: 102, citing Gen 6:3), bringing the 'course' of Colin's career (33)—and specifically 'the half-way topos of classical pastoral' (Bernard 1981: 316)--front and center.

The dialogue itself is unusually complex, and its trajectory difficult to follow, filled not merely with 'inconsistencies' that baffle narrative expectations (cf. Hoffman 1977: 61-9; Berger 1988: 435-7) but with segments disjointed by apparently failed rhetorical transition. Nonetheless, the dialogue can be divided into three main parts. First, in lines 1-64 Hobbinol tempts the dejected Colin, who suffers from unrequited love over Rosalind, to abandon his high aspiration for the 'hilles' and 'to the dales resort' (19-21), while Colin rejects such a return to 'carelesse yeeres' because he has reached 'ryper age' (33-6), and Hobbinol persists, praising Colin's youthful art for its Orphic potency to attract the dazed attention of 'Calliope', Muse of epic (57-64). Second, in lines 65-112 Colin refuses to 'presume to Parnasse hyll', preferring to 'pype lowe in shade of lowly grove' (70-1): he rejects 'flying fame' (75), praises 'Tityrus' for using his art to 'slake / The flames' of 'love' in his community of shepherds (85-6), and vaunts that, if he himself possessed Tityrus' Orphic power to 'teache the trees' to cry (96), he would target Rosalind, who has betrayed his faith by taking up with the shepherd Menalcus. Finally, in lines 113-20 Hobbinol records that Colin's art has affected *him,* and invites the disconsolate Colin 'home' to avoid the 'stealing steppes' of 'night' (119).

The primary subtexts of *June* are Virgilian: Eclogue 1, which presents the dialogue between Tityrus, the poet figure who sits serenely in his pastoral landscape, and Meliboeus, the disaffected shepherd who has had his land dispossessed by the Roman authorities; and the *Aeneid*, which presents the hero Aeneas, lover of Queen Dido, as an exile wandering toward his epic destiny (cf. Lindheim 2005: 34). Yet in making Colin a hybrid figure of both Virgilian pastoral and epic, Spenser makes three

adjustments to his precursor. First, he reverses the pastoral role that Virgil had assigned to his own poet-figure, the serene Tityrus, giving that role to Hobbinol, and making Colin the exiled Meliboeus, a poet of disaffection (cf. Bernard 1989: 57). Second, Spenser changes the rationale for the disaffection: not the politics of Roman land-displacement but the trauma of unrequited love. And third, Spenser evokes an epic role for a shepherd-poet who precisely abandons his epic destiny because of unrequited love. In particular, when Colin imagines his poetry vengefully to 'pierce' Rosalind's 'heart' (100), Spenser may glance at Petrarch's *Rime Sparse* 239 (one of only two of Petrarch's nine sestinas on poetry), where the poet imagines *facendo a lei ragion ch' a me fa forza* (9 'bringing her [Laura] to account who overpowers me'): *'n quante note / ò riprovato umiliar quell'alma!* (14-15 'in how many notes / have I attempted to humble that soul!').

How do we interpret the poet-persona's Petrarchan rejection of the literary forms making up the Virgilian progression that the *Calender* itself advertises for its author? The question is complicated, because 'Spenser's lines and phrases'—which tend toward positive evocations of an important national literary project—'detach themselves from their sentences' (Alpers 1985: 89), and this detachment helps advance the doubleness that has characterized *Aprill* (see headnote).

The difficulties of *June* thus raise important questions. First, does Colin 'forsake the pastoral Paradise for a dedicated life' (Hamilton 1968: 37), or does Colin 'do . . . no such thing' but instead simply reject Rosalind (Durr 1957: 284)? Second, does the eclogue rehearse a debate about the poet but refuse to resolve the issue (cf. Cullen 1970: 83-90; Hoffman 1977: 61), or does it critique certain features of Elizabethan society: its courtly poetry, with its commitment to delight, valuing instead the native tradition of Chaucer and Skelton, with their plain poetry of social complaint (Lane 1995: 152-8); or perhaps society's misguided commitment to a 'paradise principle', in which Hobbinol's naïve longing for paradise is as limiting as Colin's putatively mature rejection of such escapism (Berger 1988: 432-41)? How, finally, are we to read Colin's refusal to take Hobbinol's advice: does Spenser use the 'topos of inability or affected modesty' as 'an indirect tactic of self-assertion' to 'predict . . . Colin's transformation into a poet of epic' (Cain in Oram 1989: 107-8); or does Spenser feature the poet's growing alienation from the society that the epic poet is meant to serve (cf. McCabe 1995: 21, 1999: 540; Nicholson 2008)?

One possibility is that *June* is central because it features a new Petrarchan space for the author's Virgilian career. If looked at closely, the eclogue's strange narrative disjunctions air a new idea for the English poet, one that is original to Spenser: that the Petrarchan erotic complaint can form a bridge between low pastoral and high epic (cf. P. Cheney 1993: 92-8). The role of love in the eclogue is indeed central. In the eclogue's first part, Colin fails to sing songs because of Rosalind, and he refuses Hobbinol's advice to abandon the epic hills for the pastoral dales, preferring a third space that forms a place apart. In this space (33-48, 65-80), Colin both turns away from lowly pastoral 'pleasure' (36) and rejects the epic presumption of 'Parnasse hyll' (70), choosing instead to 'pyp[e] . . . lowe in shade of lowly grove': 'I play to please my selfe' (71-2). Spenser deftly exchanges the communal Virgilian shade of the pastoral beech tree from Eclogue 1 for the consummate place of Petrarchan solitude and inward musing in the *Rime Sparse* (e.g., Song 129.1-3, 14-29). Accordingly, in the eclogue's second part Colin celebrates Tityrus' success in using erotic song to slake desire: Tityrus alone solves the Petrarchan problem. Yet the doubleness of the representation—Colin's private failure as a love poet; Tityrus' public success--pinpoints a structural key to *SC*: Colin fails to use love poetry to carry out his career as a Virgilian author of pastoral preparing for epic; but Spenser himself succeeds Chaucer in his self-defining role as a national love poet. In *October*, Spenser will return to this three-genre model of the English courtly poet (see headnote).

The woodcut draws attention to the centrality of the poet's role in society, but does not make clear which figure is Colin and which Hobbinol. On the right, a figure appears shrouded in the pleasure

of the *locus amoenus*, standing contentedly under a shade tree, beside a stream, with sheep resting peacefully and with birds flying overhead; at his feet lies a broken pipe. This last detail seems to identify the figure as Colin; however, the figure's position in the pleasure garden corresponds to the role of Hobbinol in the eclogue proper. In the center, a second figure gestures beyond the harvesters of summer working amid their haycocks to a steep hill with a city topping it. The topos of dale and hill corresponds to a lower pastoral leisure and a higher epic duty to the nation. In the eclogue, Hobbinol does this gesturing, but he directs Colin to turn from hill back to dale. The woodcut thus offers a counterpoint to the eclogue.

Finally, as if to accentuate the centrality of *June*, Spenser invents an eight-line stanza rhyming *ababbaba*. The second set of four lines reverses the order of the first four, creating two quatrains that mirror each other, with a heavy emphasis at the midpoint on the 'b' rhyme—an intriguing anticipation of the nine-line stanza of *FQ* (*ababbcbcc*). The success of such a 'difficult' rhyme may be debatable (*Var* 7: 308, 310), but long ago Thomas Warton called *June* 'one of the most poetical and elegant of the Pastorals' (*Var* 7: 308). Indeed, its virtuoso effect competes with one of the high-water marks of *SC*, Colin's *August* sestina (Brooks-Davies 1995: 102). Through heightened verse accomplishment, *June* accrues significance, not because it clarifies a new idea of an English literary career, but because it troubles it.

Julye

With *June*, *Julye* occupies 'the central position in the *Calender*', and is thus 'closely connected to it', especially through the topos of hill and dale: the two speakers of a debate between high and low, Morrell and Thomalin, enact the two sides of 'Colin's divided mind' (Snyder 1998: 37), 'aspiration versus retirement' (Berger 1988: 305).

As the second of three ecclesiastical eclogues (with *Maye* and *September*), *Julye* specifically stages a debate on important matters of church politics. In the woodcut, the goatherd Morrell sits on a hill, with his goats scattered along its slopes, while Thomalin stands below, his sheep ordered obediently. Since the woodcut depicts Morrell as tonsured, it is easy to identify him with Catholicism, and thereby to identify Thomalin with Protestantism--or what E.K. terms in the Argument to *Maye* 'Ministers' who are 'protestant and . . . Catholique'. In these terms, the dialogue appears as a simple Protestant condemnation of Catholic aspiration for worldly ambition in church hierarchy, and, correspondingly, a defense of the lowly life of inner Protestant faith. Yet E.K. in his Argument is perhaps more accurate when he says that the eclogue honors 'good shepeheardes' and dishonors 'proud and ambitious Pastours', which suggests a debate within the English church itself.

The shepherds' dialogue divides into three parts (Cullen 1970: 56). In lines 1-56, Thomalin and Morrell debate the merits of low and high; in lines 57-124, they delineate particular hills and dales with historical and mythological significance; and in lines 125-232 they discuss the fate of the shepherd Algrind, who has been knocked off his hill by a female eagle who has accidentally dropped a shellfish on his head.

The underlying biblical text is Isaiah 40:4: 'Everie valleie shalbe exalted, and everie mountaine and hill shalbe made low'. Yet the key pastoral subtext is Mantuan's eighth eclogue, which introduces the locale of hill and dale in a debate about the value of each. Spenser imitates Mantuan's landscape but emphasizes its symbolic associations, and he transposes the debate to Reformation England (Renwick, *Var* 7: 325).

Hence, Spenser adopts a verse-form associated with Protestantism, a divided 'fourteener': a single line of fourteen beats breaks into a second line after the eighth beat, but thus features a longer

line followed by a shorter one, which George Turbervile had used in his 1567 translation of Mantuan (Cain in Oram 1989: 120). On the surface, *Julye* may seem 'impossible' to 'consider felicitous' (Palgrave, *Var* 7: 323)—'in a literary sense the less distinguished of the Eclogues' (Herford, *Var* 7: 323)—yet the jaunty rhythm of the alternating lines lends the eclogue a sense of playfulness, one that comes across in another way in the shellfish allegory, despite the seriousness of its ecclesiastical politics.

Indeed, *Julye* handles the historical milieu of the debate deftly, making it difficult to determine just what Spenser does with 'perspective' (Anderson 1970). Does he 'dramatiz[e] . . . a conflict of pastoral perspectives, neither of which is without merit' (Cullen 1970: 61); or does he rely on 'disguise' as a device of 'self-protection' (J.N. King 1990: 41-2), thereby aligning himself with a particular social, political, and ecclesiastical faction, or perhaps simply to air controversial events (Norbrook 2002: 54, 62-3; Hume 1984: 28-33)?

The most obvious event is the notorious fall of 'Algrind', representing Archbishop Grindal, who fell from the queen's favor in 1577 for refusing to suppress the so-called 'prophesyings', private gatherings of clergy who interpreted Scripture outside the boundaries of prescribed homilies and sermonizing (Hadfield 2012: 136-8). At stake here, then, is whether Spenser is an 'Anglican' (Whitaker 1950; Wall 1988), a 'Puritan' (Hume 1984), or simply a 'progressive Protestant' (J.N. King 2006: 71, 1990: 233-8; cf. Norbrook 2002: 55). In any case, Spenser displays shrewdness in characterizing both Morrell and Thomalin with sympathy and insight, representing a complex meditation on the nature of religious identity: 'If Thomalin locates the dark side of aspiration in Morrell's pride, Morrell in turn points to the negative, withdrawing side of Thomalin's humility' (Snyder 1998: 39).

The ecclesiastical debate also extends to social and political issues of hierarchy and class, including questions over labor: between upper-class idleness and lower-class work (Lane 1993: 114-31), featured in the background of the woodcut, where summertime harvesters contrast with Morrell sitting on his hill and with Thomalin standing by.

Yet *Julye* is finally 'central' because it relates church and state to poetry, as intimated by the implied comparison with Colin Clout from *June*, as suggested by Morrell's reference to the 'Muses' dwelling on Mount Parnassus (45-8), and as documented by the two other classical myths emerging in the dialogue, both identified as taking place on Mt Ida (but see note on [59]): Endymion and Phoebe (57-64) and Paris and Helen (145-52; see Stewart 1988). In fact, the eclogue presents here not merely a model of the familiar Renaissance humanist project of relating classical to biblical, but a sophisticated fiction about the merits and dangers of doing so: Thomalin 'objects to the indiscriminate conflation of biblical and classical imagery which informs Morrell's argument. For him, Mount Olivet [sacred to Christ and his teaching] and Mount Ida are distinct. . . . As in *Maye*, the two speakers inhabit conflicting imaginative, as well as moral, worlds. Accordingly, they read the pastoral landscape differently. From Thomalin's viewpoint, Morrell appropriates the spiritual significance of mountains in support of social climbing. From Morrell's viewpoint, Thomalin distorts the traditional symbolism of valleys in order to denigrate legitimate social eminence' (McCabe 1999: 544).

Spenser's evocation of his own poetic art during a debate having more overt ecclesiastical and social resonance may also work doubly: he subtly underscores Elizabethan courtly poetry's implication in England's political difficulties of the 1570s, represented especially by the myth of Paris and Helen (the origin of the Trojan War) but perhaps also by the myth of the sleeping Endymion (the lover of an Elizabeth-like virginal moon goddess, Cynthia), whose 'cave' becomes the source of an Adamic 'fall' (63-7); and, simultaneously, Spenser gestures to his own poetry in helping to solve such difficulties, as the specific artistic locale of Colin Clout throughout *SC* suddenly comes into view (see *Apr* 35-6 and note): 'And they that con of Muses skill, / sayne most what, that they dwell / (As goteherds wont) upon a hill, / beside a learned well' (45-8).

August is unique in *SC* for its formal complexity--in structure, rhyme scheme, tone, and thus in function and significance. It becomes not merely the 'ultimate comic distillation of Vergilian pastoral in *The Shepheardes Calender*' (Bernard 1989: 68) but more precisely the book's register for the genre of pastoral itself, unfolding the poet's skilled authority before the nation.

The eclogue consists of four main parts: 1) in lines 1-52, Perigot and Willye engage in a dialogue over Perigot's debilitating love for a 'bouncing Bellibone' (61) and select Cuddie as their judge for a singing contest; 2) in lines 53-124, the two shepherds engage in the singing contest, with Perigot voicing his suffering and Willye offering a response; 3) in lines 125-50, Cuddie then awards the prize to both shepherds and offers to 'rehearse' (194) Colin Clout's song of unrequited love for Rosalind; and 4) in lines 151-95, Cuddie records Colin's song, followed by Perigot's 'admir[ing]' response (191) and Cuddie's call for the shepherds to go 'home' (194).

Each of the four parts has its own rhyme scheme. The opening dialogue redeploys the six-line stanza of *Januarye* (*ababcc*), with its iambic pentameter line, although it orchestrates the layout of the rhyme scheme quite differently and with considerable complexity: in lines 1-24, Willye speaks the quatrain and Perigot the couplet; in lines 25-42, Willye speaks the six-line stanza twice and Perigot once; and then in lines 43-52 the shepherds alternate two-line units, until Cuddie concludes by voicing the stanza's last two lines. The roundelay sung during the singing contest—arguably pastoral's defining event—relies on a tetrameter line and consists of thirty quatrains rhyming *abab*, with Perigot singing the 'a' lines' and Willye the 'b'. The follow-up conversation awarding the prizes and leading up to Colin's song redistributes the six-line stanza, with Cuddie singing all the quatrains but one and with the other two shepherds singing the couplets. Colin's song, the showpiece of *August*, is an English sestina, using an unrhymed, iambic pentameter line spread across six stanzas, concluded with a three-line envoy. The sestina traces to Arnaut Daniel, Dante, Petrarch, Sannazaro, and the French Pléiade, with Spenser and Sidney (in 'Ye goteheard Gods') vying for the title of English inventor, although Spenser's sestina is the first to appear in print (cf. Shapiro 1980). The placement of a six-stanza poem with six lines in each stanza is appropriate to an eclogue about the sixth month of the year, according to the old calendar, which begins in March (Brooks-Davies 1995: 128). Yet it was Petrarch in the *Rime Sparse* who had featured the number six in his sestinas as a 'particularly clear example of a cyclical form expressing the embeddedness of human experience in time': the 'recurrence of the six rhyme-words expresses the soul's obsession with its inability to transcend time' (Durling 1976: 17).

Nonetheless, as E.K. points out in his Argument, the key subtexts for *August* are the singing contests in Theocritus and Virgil, *Idylls* 5 and 6 and *Eclogues* 3 and 7. While the singing contest, known as 'amoeboean song', was 'destined to become a hallmark of the bucolic poetry of Theocritus and his imitators' (Halperin 1983: 178), it forms an unusually precise model for the imitative methodology of pastoral poetry. For the fiction of two singers competing with each other in rivalry for a prize models the way that pastoral poets produce their art in rivalry with preceding poets, the way Theocritus does with the epics of Homer (Halperin 1983: 170-89, 223-30, 237-43, 250-3). E.K. encapsulates this model—scripting a precise mimesis identifying imitation with representation--when he calls the singing contest 'a delectable controversie, made in imitation of that in Theocritus: whereto also Virgile fashioned his third and seventh Æglogue' (Arg 1-3).

The Theocritean link of pastoral with epic appears in displaced form in the singing contest, which notably replaces war with art, and often resolves the competition peacefully. The generic paradigm appears on one of the traditional prizes of the contest, the drinking cup, which constitutes a miniature ekphrasis (one that, for Theocritus, originates in the famed decorated shield of Achilles in the *Iliad*, Book 18): the self-conscious artifact of the cup represents not merely pastoral as an art form (cf.

Halperin 1983: 185-7) but the agonistic epic dynamic of pastoral. Thus the 'mazer' that Willye offers contains two scenes, each representing a version of the epic dynamic of Spenser's pastoral. The first depicts an ivy vine taming the 'fiers warre' of 'Beres and Tygres' (28)—'fiers warre' to appear in Spenser's programmatic phrase for epic in the opening stanza of *FQ*: 'Fierce warres and faithfull loves shall moralize my song' (I.pr.1.9). The second scene depicts a 'shepherd swayne' stepping in to 'save' a 'Lambe in the Wolves jawes', an act of pastoral bravery evocative of the epic heroes of Scripture, David and Christ. When Spenser says that his cup is fit for 'any harvest Queene' (36), he gestures to the public utility of his pastoral for Elizabeth (see 25-36n).

Spenser's insertion of the sestina into an eclogue with a singing contest is original in the pastoral tradition, and demonstrates his competitive overgoing of the very tradition he imitates, modeled in the way that the sestina triumphs over the roundelay of Willye and Perigot. Yet it is not clear how the two songs finally relate. Do they 'occur in the same eclogue because they work out two extremes of the pastoral assumption that love suffering is appeased or stabilized by song' (Alpers 1985: 92)? Or do they form evidence of Spenser's critique of such a paradise principle: 'erotic obsession' may be 'the means to poetic expression', but '[m]isogyny is the dark side of recreative narcissism' (Berger 1988: 393). However construed, the eclogue does create a counterpoint on the Petrarchan theme of unrequited love as it affects the poet's art: between the 'light-hearted . . . mock-tragic' tone of the roundelay, characterized by Perigot's naïve lovelorn-ness and Willye's splendidly barbing cynicism, and the 'serious . . . tragedy' of the sestina (Cullen 1970: 106-7). Whereas Perigot can be spurred into song by Willye, Colin has abandoned his art, and thus his song can only be rehearsed (see Hoffman 1977: 84). The 'grief becomes something of a performance art' (McCabe 1999: 549), but that art reveals something unexpected: embedded in time amid the isolated world of the forest, Colin suddenly sympathizes with Rosalind, whose 'voyces silver sound' (181) inspires his verse, which, unlike in *Januarye* or *June*, now recognizes the 'misdeede, that bred her woe' (186).

Unlike the woodcut for *June*, the woodcut for *August* is relatively straightforward, though impressively detailed. In the center are the three shepherds involved in the singing contest, shrouded by the shade of a tree amid leafy foliage, while in the foreground are the prizes of a 'spotted Lambe' (37) and a maplewood cup or 'mazer ywrought' (26). To the left is Venus holding the 'golden Apple' that0.25" E.K. identifies in his gloss on Willye's reference to the Judgment of Paris (137-8). Since Paris had awarded the fruit to the love goddess rather than to Juno or Athena, causing the Trojan War, the reference lets a tragic tenor intrude into the narrative. Likely, Spenser alludes to the marriage between Queen Elizabeth and the French duc d'Alençon, since August is the month of Virgo (as the woodcut displays) and thus of the Virgin Queen: the depiction of the danger of desire in the woodcut, as well as in the dialogue, roundelay, and sestina, warns Elizabeth against marriage in favor of virginity (Brooks-Davies 1995: 128-9). Yet one detail is especially striking. In the upper-left corner, a male figure walks toward a building; presumably, the figure is Colin Clout, returning to the 'house' from which Rosalind 'did part' (161).

The detail suggests that *August* is important partly because it includes the second of three inset-songs sung by Colin, joining the *Aprill* lay of Queen Elisa and the *November* elegy on Queen Dido; thereby, it makes apparent a central question raised by the *Calender*: how does the 'authour' of the 'book' deploy his own self-image within the eclogue-fiction? If Colin in *August* is a 'failed Orpheus' (Brown 1972-3: 15), Spenser's own virtuoso performance of an Orphic sestina suggests that his poetry functions as a 'transformative . . . art' (McCabe 1999: 550), one that builds a bridge between the individual's faith in nature from earlier eclogues (e.g., *Januarye*) and a transcendent vision of the divine in *November* (P. Cheney 1993: 98-100). Colin's sympathy with Rosalind forms that bridge, represented metaphorically in his identification with Philomela, who has been raped by her brother-in-law, Tereus, but who produces piercing song out of pain: 'Hence with the Nightingale will I take part, /

That blessed byrd, that spends her time of sleepe / In songs and plaintive pleas' (183-5; see notes to 180-6). Remarkably, Colin feels sympathy for Rosalind despite the fact that—or perhaps because--his love for her remains unrequited: it is a stunning breakthrough in Petrarchan poetry, although it has a precedent in Petrarch's discovery, voiced imaginatively after Laura dies, when she assumes status as an angel in heaven: *pur per nostro ben dura ti fui* (*RS* 341.13: '"still for our good was I cruel to you"').

Finally, the sophisticated artistry of *August* illustrates Spenser's competitive worthiness to address the nation of Queen Elizabeth on the relation between eros and art.

September

September is the third and final ecclesiastical eclogue, following *Maye* and *Julye*. It features two shepherds, Hobbinol and Diggon Davie, in a format of dialogue-and-fable first established in *Februarie*, which had used pastoral dialogue to distinguish between the merits of youth and age. Here, the conversation distinguishes between Hobbinol's contentment with his pastoral retreat in the paradise of an Arcadian landscape and Diggon's bitter return to this locale after his sojourn to a foreign country. At issue, then, is the pastoral protection of a sacred place, and the shepherd's role in it.

The eclogue divides into four parts: 1) in lines 1-24, the shepherds greet each other and establish the terms of their different experiences; 2) in lines 25-171, Diggon dilates on his disillusionment over his trip, while Hobbinol provides consolation; 3) in lines 172-241, Diggon tells a tale that confirms his grim experience, in which the shepherd Roffy and his dog Lowder war against a crafty wolf; and 4) in lines 242-59, Diggon rejects the idea of catharsis that telling a tale can bring, while Hobbinol offers friendship in his cottage at home.

Two key subtexts inform the dialogue: Mantuan, *Eclogues* 9, which contrasts praise of the good shepherd with the corruption of the Roman curia; and Virgil, *Eclogues* 1 and 9, which tell a combined story about Roman land dispossession, exile, and wolves. The intersection here of Arcadian and Mantuanesque pastoral (Cullen 1970; see introduction), figured respectively in Diggon and Hobbinol, constitutes a 'special achievement', for Spenser both tempers 'Mantuan's tone' and recovers 'Virgilian pastoral': he fuses ecclesiastical harshness and classical otium (Lindheim 1994: 18). Yet Diggon's name derives more directly from Davy Diker (one who builds dikes, a digger) in Thomas Churchyard's *Davy Dycars Dreame* (c. 1552) and, before him, the 'radical ploughman' from Langland's *Piers Plowman*, 'Dawe þe Dykere' (B 5.320), in a tradition of radical reform (Brooks-Davies 1995: 141; see J.N. King 1990: 25). Diggon may even function as a Langlandian figure for Churchyard himself, whose biography resembles Diggon's, and who controversially used poetry to indict public leaders obliquely (Fleay, *Var* 7: 353; see Lucas 2002: 157-8). Yet Diggon differs from his specifically literary ancestors in both Churchyard and Langland in that 'his fall into poverty is not the result of others' actions, namely the greed of lords and the clergy', but rather his own bewitchment through their guile (lines 74-5; Little 2013: 159).

Recalling *Maye* and *Julye*, *September* thus takes as its primary topic the spiritual life of the pastor in the face of ecclesiastical corruption. At issue historically is 'the way in which prelatical or powerful secular patrons oppress lower clergy by means of financial exactions against which there is no appeal' (Hume 1984: 37), as well as the threat of the Jesuit Mission (Cain in Oram 1989: 150). Yet once again it is not clear whether the 'forrein costes' (28) under scrutiny target Rome or England, and specifically Wales (J.N. King 1990: 44), or what Spenser's own ecclesiastical polity might be, and whether he belongs to the Puritan or progressive Protestant faction (Hume 1984 vs King 1990). Equally at issue is the role that the poet plays in rehearsing the debate: is he ambivalent (Cullen 1970: 62-8), or

does he express an agenda siding with the mournful Diggon (Hume 1984: 39-40)? Complementing the ecclesiastical concerns is a social dynamic regarding Elizabethan economics, including 'such controversial issues as vagrancy, poverty, class exploitation, and internal security' (Lane 1993: 132), but also, more particularly, the idea of a basically virtuous British 'laborer' becoming 'bewitcht' by the prospect of becoming 'enricht' (74-5)—in other words, of becoming inwardly complicit in his own outward 'poverty', and thereby advancing a distinctly Reformation emphasis on the inward life (Little 2013: 156-61).

More directly than any other eclogue, '*September* is . . . concerned with the failure of communication. . . . With its emphasis on saying and missaying, *September* paves the way for the *October* discussion of poetry. . . . [Diggon and Hobbinol] tend toward extreme positions of black-world invective and green-world idyllism' (Berger 1988: 309, 313). As such, the eclogue gives extreme articulation to the oppositions of religio-political engagement and pastoral withdrawal, preparing for the discussion of the responsibilities (and irresponsibilities) of poetry in the next eclogue. Finally, then, *September* qualifies as 'a virtual primer for any future author of protest poetry: a work that exemplifies more clearly than any other poem of its time the most efficacious protective strategies available for poets who wished to voice publicly their opinions on dangerous subjects while minimizing the threat of punishment for those opinions' (Lucas 2002: 161).

Metrically, *September* deploys the same rugged tetrameters in couplets as *Julye*, inflected with a dialect aiming to be Welsh but in reality more indebted to Northern and Scots idioms (Brooks-Davies 1993: 141).

The woodcut is among 'the least specific of all the cuts', as well as the most straightforward (Luborksy 1981: 35). Hobbinol stands to the left with the comfort of his fenced house behind him, while to the right Diggon (identifiable by the scrip or pouch at his waist) sits sprawled on the ground, a shade-tree and foliage behind him. Although the flock of sheep outside Hobbinol's house could be his, their depleted nature suggests that they are Diggon's. Of all the other woodcuts that feature two speakers (*Feb*, *March*, *June*, *Oct*, *Nov*, to an extent *Maye*), *September* joins only *Julye* in distinguishing between a shepherd who stands and one who sits. Unlike Thomalin and Morrell, however, who each use their hands to gesture to each other, here Hobbinol alone makes the gesture, while Diggon keeps his hands at his side, one firmly holding his sheep-hook, his head looking up: there is separation and loss, yet a beckoning toward union, and steadfastness amid misfortune.

At 259 lines, *September* is the second longest of the eclogues (after *Maye*), and is notable for its use of verse, dialect, narrative, and fable to reflect subtly on the poet-pastor's use of free speech to write about matters of ecclesiastical and social concern in the developing Elizabethan state.

October

As the only eclogue in *The Shepheardes Calender* formally on 'the state of Poete' (97), *October* is, perhaps unsurprisingly, 'the most difficult' (Lane 1995: 158). The pastoral dialogue here is indeed challenging, as two shepherds from previous eclogues, the younger Cuddie (*Februarie*, *August*), and the older Piers (*Maye*), debate the highest stakes for poetry in 1570s England: the 'place' of 'pierlesse Poesye' both in 'Princes pallace' (79-80) and in 'Heaven' (54, 60, 84).

As with *June*, the difficulty results from failed, or obscure, narrative transitions among the topics that the shepherds discuss. These topics may be divided into four main parts. 1) In lines 1-36, Cuddie complains that he has written poetry to delight the youth but failed to secure the material gain required to continue writing, while Piers reminds him that the poet should strive for 'glory' rather than

'gayne' (20): that Cuddie should use poetic delight for ethical education, on the model of Orpheus's rescue of his wife Eurydice from Hades--a proposal that Cuddie rejects: 'But who rewards him ere the more for thy' (33). 2) In lines 37-78, Piers suggests that if Cuddie really wants to secure 'reward' he should write the kinds of poetry that meet the needs of powerful patrons: he should turn from pastoral to epic but also (as *June* has intimated) he should include love lyric as a mediating form. This advice reminds Cuddie of the 'Romish Tityrus' (55), Virgil, who secured patronage from Maecenas to pursue a career of pastoral, georgic, and epic in service of Augustan Rome--a model, Cuddie adds, that no longer applies in England, where patronage, heroism, and poetic achievement are absent. 3) In lines 79-97, Piers thus raises the central question about the place of poetry at court, and suggests that Cuddie may need to write poetry that 'flye[s] backe to heaven apace' (84). This final advice prompts Cuddie to recall Colin Clout's potential to complete such a 'famous flight' (88), if Colin's love for Rosalind did not ground him. Cuddie's recollection, nonetheless, leads Piers to identify Colin as a model for such a glorious ascent. 4) In lines 98-120, Cuddie then rejects the serene possibility of high flight on the wings of love—'All otherwise the state of Poet stands' (97)—and outlines a more violent model for poetic loftiness, a Horatian reliance on wine to write 'stage' tragedy (112), even though Cuddie concludes by admitting his own inability to do so. At the end, Piers offers Cuddie consolation by promising to award him a 'Kidde' (120).

In these complex modulations, Spenser represents three basic career models available to the patron-seeking poet in mid-Elizabethan England: *amateur*; *professional*; *laureate* (Helgerson 1983). Cuddie's youthful poetic model of the poet delighting his audience with pleasant ditties corresponds to an amateur model, because he sees poetry as merely a youthful pastime. Cuddie's dramatic model, in which tragedy allows the poet to 'compasse weightye prise' (103), corresponds to the professional writer, who writes primarily to make a living. And Cuddie's reference to Virgil's career corresponds to the laureate model, in which the poet serves the nation in the context of eternity: 'So as the Heavens did quake his verse to here' (60). Yet Piers' insertion of love poetry into the laureate model (presumably, as a substitute for georgic, which did not yet exist in England [A. Fowler 1982: 240]) is revolutionary, showing Spenser finding a 'place' for the Petrarchan lyric in the career of the aspiring poet: 'Of love and lustihead tho mayst thou sing, . . . / So mought our Cuddies name to Heaven sownde' (50, 54). Moreover, Piers' suggestion that the poet should return to heaven when he fails to find a place in 'Princes pallace' indicates that Spenser envisions an Augustinian-based hymn as an endpoint for the poet's career. Thus the dialogue dilates on the most influential classical model of a literary career available to English poets and shows Spenser adapting Virgil in light of both an Augustinian Christianity and Petrarchism. Yet the shepherds' dialogic pattern of proposal and rejection leaves the state of poet open-ended.

Accordingly, *October* 'explores the stark contrast' between 'the material needs of the poet' and 'the sublime aspirations of poetry' (McCabe 1999: 559). For all the shepherds' worldly discussion of practicality, career, and money, they recurrently turn to a heighted discourse of poetic sublimity—a discourse that also characterizes the glossarial language of E.K. Spenser here taps into the late sixteenth-century experimentation with four principal forms of 'aesthetic extremes': 'wonder', 'Christian ecstasy', Neoplatonic '*furor*', and the 'sublime' (Sedley 2005: 9, 157n17). Longinus, whose *On Sublimity* saw seven continental editions published before 1579 (Weinberg 1950), including two copies of the Portus edition in a 1578 Cambridge bookshop (Leedham-Green, personal communication), links sublimity with all three aesthetic extremes, but shows the sublime to be distinctive for its commitment to confusion, ignorance, and breakdown: 'Sublimity tears everything up like a whirlwind' (1.4, in Russell and Winterbottom 1972: 144). Thus this heightened poetics proceeds through metaphors of the whirlwind but also of earth-quaking lightning; it locates poetic excellence in a lofty style of poetry; it valorizes the emotions of rapture and rage, beyond reason, intoxicated; and it

makes both poet and audience gods, not simply citizens (see Introduction). *October*'s discourse recurrently expresses the sublime, which Longinus finds in Plato but which cannot be equated with Platonism (or Neoplatonism) because of its willingness to enter into the dangerous space of irrationality: e.g., in the dialogue, such language as 'soule of sence bereave . . . quake his verse to here . . . climbe so hie . . . the ryme should rage . . . troublous tydes'; and, in E.K.'s gloss, 'make men immortall . . . astonied and as it were ravished . . . ravished with Poeticall furie'. E.K.'s gloss on Cuddie's emblem summarizes the sublime succinctly, from Longinus to Kant to Lyotard: 'Poetry is a divine instinct and unnatural rage passing the reache of comen reason'.

Spenser's formal subtexts for *October* are the two cited by E.K., Theocritus' *Idylls* 16, a pastoral complaint about the niggardliness of the tyrant Ptolemy; and Mantuan's *Eclogues* 5, a dialogue about the difficulty of writing poetry in an age devoid of patrons, heroes, and successful poets. Specifically, Spenser may depend on Barclay's adaptation of Mantuan's eclogue, published in 1570 in Barclay's posthumous *Certain Eclogues* (although written earlier in the sixteenth century), and Turbervile's translation of Mantuan in 1567 (cf. Hoffman 1977: 11-29). Yet the passages on Virgil's career, Neoplatonic love, Horatian wine, and Senecan tragedy ('lavish cups and thriftie bittes of meate' [105]) shows Spenser suturing pastoral to a wide 'webbe' (102) of literary and philosophical intertexts.

Within such a web, where is the 'place' of Edmund Spenser? Is *October* a 'personal manifesto, a declaration of his own aims' (Renwick, *Var* 7: 374), a 'climactic hymn to poetry' (King 1986: 397), and the 'articulation of . . . a theory . . . [that] combines neoplatonism and traditional Horatianism along with a Christian emphasis on divine inspiration' (Waller 1993: 44)—in all of which the author can be seen to identify with Piers and with E.K? Or does the author side more with Cuddie and his fraught social embeddedness, disparaging Piers' Neoplatonic transcendence as escapist (Lane 1995: 158-67), since the Spenserian gold standard surely lies in a 'poetry of virtuous action-in-the-world' (Montrose 1979: 49)? Alternatively, does Spenser critique both Piers and Cuddie, who share a naïve 'golden-age sensibility': 'Cuddie withdraws in defeat while Piers converts to a gesture of escape' (Berger 1988: 314)? Finally, then, does Spenser present the poet as transcendent or contingent, writing for this world or the next, promoting citizenship or godhood? *October*'s potency may lie in its complex use of pastoral dialogue to represent this very question.

A version of the question arises in the woodcut, indicating once again how the complexity of the poet either baffled the eye of the artisan or liberated it. Standing in the foreground closest to the center is a figure marked as a wise and successful older poet: he is bearded, wears a garland, and holds out a panpipe, his sheep at his feet. To his right is a younger shepherd with one arm reaching out and the other holding a crook, his sheep also near him. Behind the younger shepherd, an indistinct hill looms on the horizon, a small tree at its base, while behind the older shepherd are two scenes: in the first, a figure walks up the steps of an imposing edifice that is part temple and part palace, and is overlooked by a leafy tree; and in the second, to the left, another figure walks toward a group of people standing beside the building. Most directly, 'The woodcut depicts the Virgilian paradigm by showing an aged Piers as Virgil crowned with laurel and offering Cuddie the pastoral oaten reeds. On a hill behind Piers-Virgil is an empty classical temple and an Italianate palace (cf. "Princes palace," 80 and 81). Several figures admire the temple, but one moves resolutely toward it and another climbs its steps. . . . Cuddie rejects Piers's offer by pointing out the figure approaching the temple. . . . Obviously, the figure ascending to the temple of fame is Colin' (Cain in Oram 1989: 167-8; see Luborsky 1981: 36-9; Brooks-Davies 1995: 158). Yet the shepherd wearing the laurel garland may also be Cuddie, since E.K. identifies him as 'the perfecte paterne of a Poete' (Arg), one who has 'turned his back on the halls of power. . . , [and who] retains the crown of laurels, the sign of public status and influence' (Lane 1995: 163, 166, 228n37). Irrespective of which figure is which, it remains difficult to determine whether the laurel poet supports or rejects a public poetry of epic in favor of a private poetry of pastoral: is the

laurel poet pointing the way to the Virgilian model or turning away from it (cf. McCabe 1999: 559)?

As if to highlight the complexities of both the woodcut and the dialogue, *October*'s verse form remains paradoxically clear and simple. Cuddie and Piers, for all their differences, share a six-line stanza adapted from *Januarye*, now rhyming *abbaba*.

The achievement of *October* has long rivaled that other pinnacle of Spenserian pastoral authorship, *November*, which E.K. finds 'farre passing . . . all other the Eglogues of this booke' (*Nov* Arg). Yet in his *October* gloss, E.K. says that the 'style' in this tenth eclogue is 'more loftye then the rest' (for agreements, see Craik, *Var* 7: 366; Herford, *Var* 7: 368; Cory, *Var* 7: 369). Rather than solve the problem of the poet's 'place' in the world, *October* presents a verse prism that refracts it. In the end, Spenser represents, rather than reveals, the sublime 'state' of poetic truth in 1570s England.

November

E.K. is the first to assign special status to *November*, saying in the Argument that Spenser 'farre pass[es] . . . his reach, and in myne opinion all other the Eglogues of this booke'. *November* is indeed 'the grandest poem in the sequence' (Alpers 1972: 367): it features the 'sacred mystery of death and rebirth', as Spenser 'reevaluat[es] . . . the whole enterprise [the poet's career] in the light of eternity' (Montrose 1979: 51-2).

Structurally, the eclogue divides into three parts. In lines 1-52, the shepherd Thenot asks Colin Clout to sing one of his famous songs, whether a love song to Rosalind or a hymn to Pan; but Colin refuses because the autumnal season 'nis the time of merimake' (9); Thenot agrees, and requests a song on the death of the recently deceased Queen Dido--a request that Colin grants. In lines 53-202, Colin then delivers a fifteen-stanza funeral elegy, in which he mourns the tragedy of Dido's death but then suddenly witnesses her ascent into the afterlife: 'I see thee blessed soule, I see, / Walke in the Elisian fieldes so free' (178-9). Finally, in line 203-8 Thenot praises the 'doolfull pleasaunce' of Colin's song (204), and awards Colin a lamb.

November relates to previous Colin Clout eclogues: to *Januarye* and *August*, for reprising a song about desire, thereby connecting Dido with Rosalind; to *Aprill*, for presenting a tragic version of the epideictic celebration of a maiden queen, connecting Dido with Elisa; and to *June*, for offering a heightened meditation on the poet's career. Yet *November* also joins *October* and *December* in forming a three-eclogue conclusion to *SC*; together, they present 'Spenser's trilogy . . . on poetry and its present state' (Bernard 1989: 75).

In particular, *November* shows Spenser writing in the pastoral tradition of funeral elegy. This tradition begins with Theocritus, *Idylls* 1, an elegy on the dead shepherd Daphnis, in a tradition that goes on to include both Bion's elegy on the dying Adonis and Moschus' elegy on Bion. But Spenser's two key subtexts are Virgil, *Eclogues* 5, and especially Marot's elegy on the death of Queen Louise of France, mother to Marot's patron, Francis I, *Eglogue sur le Trespas de ma Dame Loyse de Savoye* (1531) (Hoffman 1977: 53-61; for details on Marot, see Reamer 1968/9). Petrarch, Boccaccio, and Sannazaro had all written elegies as part of their pastorals, helping to Christianize the form that Marot and Spenser inherit. As a tradition, these elegies combine a rich philosophical and religious mythology of pastoral, poetry, and politics, and they follow a similar two-part structure: initial grief over loss of a beloved person, followed by consolation through the person's apotheosis (Sacks 1985; Pigman 1985; Kay 1990; see P. Cheney 2003).

To accomplish his 'grand' goals, Spenser uses three sets of verse forms: for the opening dialogue, an eight-line stanza rhyming *ababbcbc*; for Colin's song, a ten-line stanza alternating four

kinds of lines—alexandrine, pentameter, tetrameter, dimeter—with four interlocking rhymes, *ababbccdbd*; and for Thenot's coda, a sixain, rhyming *ababcc*. Of the most spectacular of the three forms, Colin's song, Herford writes, this 'admirable strophe of his own invention . . . conveys the expression of a recurring access or wave of emotion, marked at the outset (in a highly original manner) by the energetic and resonant Alexandrine, then gradually subsiding through verses of diminishing compass, until just before the close it rises in one expiring palpitation' (*Var* 7: 397).

 Despite this *tour de force*—or perhaps because of it—*November* is difficult to gauge. Does Spenser's commitment to 'transcendence' substantiate the Christian poet's wisdom—his use of art to express faith in the truth of a scriptural heaven (MacCaffrey 1969: 127-9, 132-3; Moore 1982: 113-4)— or is such transcendence 'escapist' (Montrose 1979: 50-4; Berger 1988: 399, 409, 414-5)? Alternatively, does the center of *November* lie elsewhere, not in the 'image' of 'Dido in heaven' but rather in 'Thenot's words of thanks to Colin' at the end—that is to say, in Spenser's attention to community, contingency, and song, as the poet directs his gaze at this world, not the next (Alpers 1972: 363)? To the extent that the eclogue valorizes transcendence, it serves the 'Augustinian' goal of a 'celestial pastoral', fulfilling 'the function of funeral rites' in society (Cain in Oram 1989: 185-6); but to the extent that *November* seeks a 'performance' goal in a 'pastoral of power', it advertises contingency in the politics of Spenser's unfolding career (Montrose 1979: 51).

 Significantly, the woodcut supports the latter possibility, for it pushes the funeral procession marching to the church bearing the bier of Dido into the background, and centers rather on Thenot's crowning of Colin with the laurel garland. Hence, the poet plays his pipe, with his sheep grazing before him, while behind him stands a building representing the court.

 In such a courtly, vocational setting, who is Dido? The name derives from the tragic Carthaginian queen of Virgil's *Aeneid*. While Spenser's Dido may represent someone in the family of Robert Dudley, earl of Leicester, as evoked through reference to 'the greate shepheard *Lobbin*, how great is thy griefe' (113) (*Var* 7: 395-402), inescapably the 'mayden of greate bloud' (Arg 1-2) evokes Queen Elizabeth: in this veiled political allegory, she would be dead to Leicester and Protestant England if she married the Catholic Duc d'Alençon (Parmenter, *Var* 7: 402; McLane 1969: 47-60; McCabe 1999: 565-6; Prescott 2010: 620-2). The allegory about the death of a queen may also gesture to violations of the 1571 statute that illegalizes attempts on the queen's life: Elizabeth's 'divine status is subtly but definitively reserved for her death' (Lane 1993: 24). Yet the elegy's 'celebration of Dido's life' (Cullen 1970: 92n29) does not square with such a grim political critique. Dido may refer less to Virgil's tragically passionate heroine than to an alternate tradition of a chaste queen devoted to her dead husband's memory (Bono 1984: 67-9; see D. Cheney 1989: 155): 'Spenser's interest [is] in recuperative interpretations of Virgil's female characters. He introduces Dido in "November" not to subvert his earlier tributes to Elizabeth but to suggest another way of representing relationships between the sexes in Virgilian poetry' (Watkins 1995: 79-80).

 What is striking about November, then, is its interplay between the ominous political allegory, on the one hand, and, on the other, its sublime intertextual fiction of both chaste communal desire in this life and Christian transcendence in the next—as well as one inescapable fact: in 1579, Spenser boldly presents his pastoral persona as the creator of this interplay.

December

In *December*, Spenser ends *The Shepheardes Calender* as he began it: with an eclogue about the solitary figure of the poet Colin Clout. As in *Januarye*, Spenser tells a two-part story, with an opening

frame spoken by a narrator (this time, one stanza instead of two), and giving way to a long lament sung by Colin himself (the number of lines for the eclogue doubles, from 76 to 158). As in *Januarye* as well, Spenser uses a sixain stanza in both the narrative frame and the song, rhyming *ababcc*, in generally iambic pentameters—a conjunction that once again draws attention to the interconnectedness between author and persona. The return to the form and format of *Januarye* sets the terms for genuine complexity: does the artistic principle of recursion show Colin trapped within the calendric cycle of nature, taking him down the path to death? or does it show the poet released into the perfect circle of immortality? An answer to this question is important for the *Calender* as a whole.

Primarily, the question results because Spenser juxtaposes a fiction about Colin's maturation from the spring to the winter of his life with a second fiction, told by 'Immerito', which emerges in the 12-line Epilogue printed after the Glosse (see note below on Epilogue). The author of the book proclaims to have written an immortalizing 'Calender for every yeare', one that 'shall continue to the worlds dissolution': 'That steele in strength, and time in durance shall outweare . . . / . . . if I marked well the starres revolution' (1-4). The claim of the Epilogue is the grandest that poetics can make, for 'the master topos of post-classical European literature [is the] unprecedented union . . . of subjective vision and objective fact' (Braden 1999: 60). In this topos, on display from Dante to Milton, the poet presents his poem as an artifact in the shape of the cosmos; he compares his own 'poetic production' with 'that of the creator of the universe' (Curtius 1953: 400; see 379). In *December*, the key becomes whether to interpret Colin's song in and of itself, as its own artifact, exhibiting the poet's failure on the road to death, or to place Colin's song within the larger frame of Immerito's work, in which poetry qualifies as a cosmological art having a cosmological function. For a conclusion to Spenser's inaugural publication, the juxtaposition of a fiction of death with a fiction of immortality should hardly be surprising. Spenser makes it clear that he throws down the gauntlet, to England, to the international community, and to Western poetry, about poetry's vital role in time and beyond it.

Yet it proves challenging to interpret the double-fiction. In the eclogue fiction, is Colin in a moribund state of 'despondency' (Cullen 1970: 79-81) singing an 'elegy for himself' (McCabe 1999: 570; see McCabe 1995: 39-40) modeled on Ovid's myth of Narcissus (Johnson 1990: 109-14); or is Colin in a mature state of resignation before he dies (Montrose 1979: 62; Moore 1982: 112-5; Shore 1985: 94-102; Cain in Oram 1988: 201-2)? From the perspective of the Epilogue, how does Spenser as an author relate back to Colin as a character? Does Spenser use Colin with his 'pathological pleasure in the rhetoric of self-pity' to transact a 'metapastoral critique' of a failed art (Berger 1989: 387, 379); or does Spenser 'transform . . . what might have been a despairing epitaph into a celebration of artistic achievement': instead of showing Colin dying in despair, the author of the book asserts 'the triumph of art over time' (McCabe 1999: 571).

In the eclogue proper, Spenser imitates Marot's *Eglogue au Roy soubz les noms de Pan et Robin* (1539). On the one hand, Spenser borrows the French poet's basic narrative conceit, the poet's review of his life as the passing of the four seasons, as well as considerable detail for each season (see individual notes below). On the other hand, Spenser once more changes Marot considerably (see 1-18n). For instance, the French persona figure, Robin, directs his song to his patron, Pan, in order to address Francis I, who at the close of the eclogue gives the poet royal patronage. In this way, *Eglogue au Roy* transacts a successful model relating poet and sovereign, showing the poet to be a monarchical dependent, and the sovereign willing to advance that dependency (Marot barely mentions Robin's love-life). In contrast, Colin does not address Queen Elizabeth, who has no formal role in his song; instead, Colin relieves Rosalind of blame and engages in 'self-reliance', lending 'semi-divine status' not to the monarch but to the poet (McCabe 1995: 39).

How, then, are we to read the politics of poetry in *December*, with its 'greene cabinet' (17) as at once the Elizabethan cabinet of government and the artifact of this cabinet made by the poet (see 17n)?

Are we to 'translate . . . a personal explanation of Colin's melancholy into a national one', seeing *December* as 'a pastoral of state' addressing 'those in power' but offering 'two versions of nationalism, that which could be expressed in whole-hearted appreciation of Elizabeth, and that which admitted the anxieties of the Protestant activists grouped around Sidney, Leicester, and Walsingham' (Patterson 1987: 124, 119, 121); or are we to see 'Colin less as Spenser's mouthpiece than as his target', since Spenser writes 'a political critique of paradisal poetics', with its misguided yearning for Edenic repose (Berger 1988: 386)? Perhaps we are to turn the formulation around: 'it is the private dimension of public grief that is characterized in Colin's melancholy' (McCabe 1995: 40).

      The woodcut suggests this latter reading, because it features a 'portrayal of personal desolation, a stark image of the despondent "ego" that haunts Arcadia' (McCabe 1995: 40). In particular, the woodcut shows Colin sitting in his signature locale, beside a stream and under a shade tree, with his flock scattered before him. Yet directly behind him is a tall mountain, from which the sun radiates brightly; *December* is only one of three woodcuts to include the sun (the others are *Aprill* and *Maye*), and it is the only woodcut to place the orb directly in the center of the picture. The mountain is arguably Mount Parnassus, the place of higher poetry, especially epic. Three other notable features appear. First, to the far left is a path leading from Colin and his sheep to a small building, which may be the 'home' referred to at the conclusion of ten of the twelve eclogues (but not *December*), or perhaps the 'house' of Rosalind in Colin's *August* sestina (161; see 181). Second, a 'water tank' sits in the right foreground, beside Colin, with its 'leonine gargoyles . . . suggest[ing] . . . a diminishing of the monarchical lion inherited by the Tudors from Aeneas's descendent Brutus' (Brooks-Davies 1995: 188), a political detail noticeably absent in the eclogue itself. And third, equally curious, is a broken pipe lying on the ground near Colin's feet, similarly contrasting with the eclogue's fiction, which shows Colin hanging his pipe in a tree.

      This last image—which is the crowning action of the eclogues—epitomizes *December*'s complexity, because it leads in different directions (see 141n). At the end, does Colin renounce his career as a public poet, or does Spenser renounce his career as a pastoral poet in order to move on to epic? The Epilogue suggests the latter, for it is 'written in "epic" hexameters and describing . . . [Spenser's] accomplishment as if it were already a canonical text' (Kinney 2010: 163). In *December*, then, as especially in *June* and *October*, Spenser both complicates a Virgilian career and transacts it. More accurately, perhaps, Spenser uses pastoral to heighten the drama around Immerito's fitness to become England's new poet.