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“Much augmented” and “somewhat beautified”:
Revisions in Three Female Complaints of the 1590s

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The genre of female complaint flourished in the last decade of the sixteenth century, with Samuel Daniel's *The Complaint of Rosamond* (1592), Thomas Churchyard's revised *The Tragedie of Shores Wife* (1593), Anthony Chute's *Beautie dishonoured written under the title of Shores Wife* (1593), Thomas Lodge's *The Complaint of Elstred* (1593), William Shakespeare's *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594), Michael Drayton's *Matilda* (1594), Richard Barnfield's *Cassandra* (1595), John Trussell's *Raptus I Helenae. The First Rape of Faire Hellen* (1595), and Thomas Middleton's *The Ghost of Lucrece* (1600). Several complaints went through many editions, and three of them were printed in revised form within this time span. Taking as its focus the revised complaints by Churchyard, Daniel, and Drayton, this essay examines connections visible in the revisions as indicative of a dialogic process of genre formation.

Churchyard's *Shores Wife* was first printed in William Baldwin's *Mirror for Magistrates* in 1563 but was revised in a 1593 collection titled *Churchyards Challenge*. This poem's transformation tracks the generic history of the late Elizabethan female complaints: they transform the mirrors' lessons of moral and political virtue to ones concerning private, female virtue, with an implicit aim to raise pity and reader sympathy.¹ Daniel's publication of *Rosa-*

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1. For a thorough account of female complaint poetry, see Götz Schmitz, *The Fall of Women in Early English Narrative Verse* (Cambridge University Press, 1990). See also Clark Hulse, *Metamorphic Verse: The Elizabethan Minor Epic* (Princeton University Press, 1981); John Kerrigan, *Motives of Woe: Shakespeare and "Female Complaint"*; *A Critical Anthology* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991); Hallett

mond in 1592 sparked the popularity of the complaint genre, and his choice to print the poem together with his sonnet cycle, *Delia*, can be taken as indicative of the new poetic tastes and fashions. The revised 1594 version was printed together with the sonnets and the *Tragedie of Cleopatra*. Drayton's *Matilda* appeared separately in 1594, but its last three stanzas refer to the addressee of his sonnet cycle *Idea*. The revised 1596 version was published with two other narrative poems, *Robert of Normandy* and *Piers Gaveston*. While the cases of Daniel and Drayton may suggest a preferred thematic or formal context for publication,² the three examples point to the differing publication contexts of the complaints. Some were published with sonnet cycles, while others were printed separately or in other contexts.³ What I mean to suggest in this essay is that Churchyard's, Daniel's, and Drayton's revised versions were "corrected," "augmented," or "beautified" in dialogue with other poems in the complaint group.⁴ While critics and editors have long been aware of verbal echoes between poems in the complaint group, this essay explores the three poems that were thoroughly revised in the 1590s. By tracing the emulative dialogue behind the revisions, we can understand why the revised complaints show certain features and how the genre was shaped in an ongoing dialogue between poets and poems.

Over the last couple decades critical attention has enriched our understanding of the complaints, offering readings from varying perspectives and contexts. For instance, Heather Dubrow draws attention to the central issues of rhetoric and of the abuse of political power. Georgia Brown reads the complaints as offering a complementary perspective on early modern

Smith, *Elizabethan Poetry: A Study in Conventions, Meaning, and Expression* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1952), 102–4. For a detailed description of the group studied in this essay, see Anna Swärdh, "Elizabethan Complaints," in *The Literary Encyclopedia*, <http://litencyc.com>.

2. John Pitcher shows how Daniel's arrangement of poems, including the 1592 and 1594 volumes, yields a "rich flow of internal reference" ("Essays, Works, and Small Poems: Divulging, Publishing and Augmenting the Elizabethan Poet, Samuel Daniel," in *The Renaissance Text: Theory, Editing, Textuality*, ed. Andrew Murphy [Manchester University Press, 2000], 9–10).

3. Daniel's, Lodge's, and Barnfield's poems were published with sonnets; Chute's, Shakespeare's, Drayton's, Trussell's, and Middleton's were published separately; Churchyard's was reprinted in a collection of his poetry. I use italics for all complaint titles in this essay.

4. Churchyard "augmented" and "beautified" his poem in 1593 (*The Tragedie of Shores Wife*, in *Churchyards Challenge* [1593; STC 522099], 135, 126, 127. These are three consecutive pages; the pagination is a muddle). Daniel "augmented" his poem in 1594 (*The Complaint of Rosamond*, in *Poems and a Defence of Ryme*, ed. Arthur Colby Sprague [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1930], 194). Drayton "corrected and augmented" his in 1596 (*Matilda. The faire and chaste Daughter of the Lord Robert Fitzwater*, in *The Works of Michael Drayton*, ed. J. William Hebel, 6 vols. [Oxford: Shakespeare Head Press, 1961], 1:247). Further references to these works will appear parenthetically in the text. Since I compare different editions throughout the essay, I will for sake of clarity also give the year in the parenthetical references, followed by page, stanza or line number, as applicable. When using old-spelling editions I have regularized *u* and *v*, *i* and *j*, and *s* in the quotations.

chronicles, as did Richard Helgerson before her in focusing on the different generic versions of the Jane Shore story.⁵ Jim Ellis places *Lucrece* and a group of epyllia (erotic narrative poems) in the context of the Inns of Court, while Götz Schmitz and William P. Weaver connect the poems to the tradition of judicial rhetoric.⁶ The question of genre has been approached in various ways. Dubrow and Kelly Quinn argue for reader recognition of a generic group (similarly if not identically defined), while other critics make slightly different generic categorizations.⁷ Clark Hulse presents the case for a broader category of “minor epic,” a category that includes complaints as well as the erotic-Ovidian epyllia; he questions whether the division into these two genres “reflects the poets’ own sense of their materials.”⁸

I contend that the complaints were indeed understood as a specific generic group by their authors. The term “dialogue” has been used by Claudio Guillén to describe an author’s relationship with generic models of his time and culture: “This dialogue is active in the sense that the poet does not merely choose among the standards that are accessible to him—he makes possible their survival; and he determines *which* are the preferable or pertinent ‘new’ norms.”⁹ “Dialogue” has also been used by David Fishelov instead of “intertextuality” to describe echoes and references that texts inspire.¹⁰ I understand the concept of dialogue as uniting Guillén’s abstract

5. On rhetoric and power see Heather Dubrow, *Captive Victors: Shakespeare’s Narrative Poems and Sonnets* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987), 143–45. On the relation to historiography, see Georgia Brown, *Redefining Elizabethan Literature* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), chap. 4; Richard Helgerson, “Weeping for Jane Shore,” *South Atlantic Quarterly* 98 (1999): 451–76, and *Adulterous Alliances: Home, State, and History in Early Modern European Drama and Painting* (University of Chicago Press, 2000), 33–56.

6. On the readership at the Inns of Court, see Jim Ellis, *Sexuality and Citizenship: Metamorphosis in Elizabethan Erotic Verse* (University of Toronto Press, 2003). For the complaints and the tradition of judicial rhetorical, see Schmitz, *Fall of Women*, 235–37; and William P. Weaver, *Untutored Lines: The Making of The English Epyllion* (Edinburgh University Press, 2012). In everything essential, the chapter on *Lucrece* in this volume corresponds to Weaver’s previously published “‘O teach me how to make mine own excuse’: Forensic Performance in *Lucrece*,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 59 (2008): 421–49. See also Kerrigan, *Motives of Woe*, 28–29.

7. Dubrow, *Captive Victors*, 143; Kelly Quinn, “Mastering Complaint: Michael Drayton’s *Piers Gaveston* and the Royal Mistress Complaints,” *English Literary Review* 38 (2008): 439–60. Paul Budra makes no clear distinction between mirrors and the later complaints in “A Mirror for Magistrates” and the De Casibus Tradition (University of Toronto Press, 2000), while Ellis admits to a “slightly idiosyncratic approach” in focusing on epyllia but including Shakespeare’s *Lucrece* and also Beaumont’s *The Metamorphosis of Tobacco* among his primary texts (*Sexuality and Citizenship*, 8).

8. Hulse, *Metamorphic Verse*, 17.

9. Claudio Guillén, *Literature as System: Essays toward the Theory of Literary History* (Princeton University Press, 1971), 128.

10. David Fishelov, *Dialogues with/and Great Books: The Dynamics of Canon Formation* (Brighton: Sussex Academic, 2010). His argument is that canonical “great books” inspire more such dialogues than other texts (46).

generic sense of the term with Fishelov's more concrete intertextual meaning. In this essay I will also employ Thomas M. Greene's concept of "creative imitation," used with regard to what he calls "heuristic" and "dialectical" imitation, which encompasses a sense of competition between text and model or "subtext," a kind of emulative dialogue described in terms of "a two-way current of mutual criticism between authors," or "a conflict whose solution is withheld."¹¹

If we adopt Alastair Fowler's terminology for the categorization of processes of generic change, we could say that "topical invention" (which includes a new topic as well as the development of a topic already within the repertoire) or "change of scale" (of a work or its component parts) could describe several, if not all, of the changes made to the three revised complaints.¹² The following analysis points to differences between the revisions but also shows that they have a number of tendencies in common: all three revised poems are longer than the original versions and all add focus on their heroines through elaborate descriptions of their beauty and added or expanded speeches. The result is heightened drama as well as reader sympathy and more developed characterization. However, in all three cases, we also find the risks of complication and contradiction accompanying the expansions.

SHORES WIFE

Thomas Churchyard's *Shores Wife* tells the story of the historical Elizabeth or Jane Shore (ca. 1445–1527), mistress to Edward IV (1442–83). First printed in Baldwin's 1563 *Mirror*, the poem went through five more editions between 1571 and 1587 before Churchyard revised it in *Churchyards Challenge* (1593), describing the revision as "much augmented with divers new additions" (135). While evaluating the revisions in different ways, critics often agree that Churchyard substantially changed the poem. In Paul Budra's words, Churchyard "beautified, he qualified, he made decorative. He played down political activity in favor of sentiment, and he removed his her-

11. Thomas M. Greene, *The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1982), 45; see also chap. 3. Greene discusses imitation across temporal and geographic distance, and not contemporary imitation, but I still find the terminology useful for such discussions.

12. Alastair Fowler, *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1982), 171–73. For discussions of genre that acknowledge both its protean nature and its relevance within literary studies, see, besides Fowler, Rosalie Colie, *The Resources of Kind: Genre-Theory in the Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973); Amy J. Devitt, *Writing Genres* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2004); Heather Dubrow, *Genre* (1982; repr., London: Methuen, 1995); and Guillén, *Literature as System*.

oine from the context of history.”¹³ Earlier, Hallett Smith had found that “the whole effect of the grim spectacle of the Mirror poem has been softened into pathos and sentiment,” while at the same time the Ovidian influence “curiously enough” resulted in “an anti-erotic, didactic tract.”¹⁴ A reason for this experienced staleness could be that in fact the revisions are not all that revolutionary; Schmitz describes them as “mainly decorative material.”¹⁵ The structure of rise and fall is kept, detailing Mrs. Shore’s background, her rise to status of kingly mistress with influence over the ruler, her troubles with Richard Gloucester after the king’s death, and her state as outcast and beggar before her death. Stanzas are simply added to existing sections, often having the air of commonplace maxims. The two versions of Churchyard’s poem are best described as hybrid texts, resting in between the two groups of mirror and complaint.¹⁶ The revisions were almost certainly made with an eye on Daniel’s *Rosamond*. Churchyard adds an intertextual signal that has strong generic significance, and, in line with Budra and Smith’s claims, he softens and beautifies in a way that pushes the poem generically closer to Daniel’s complaint. While the result is a much-extended chance to sympathize with Mrs. Shore, we shall see that the revisions also create contradictions.

The most significant changes, I would argue, are the addition of a reference to Daniel’s poem in the opening section of Shore’s narrative and the removal of an address to “Baldwin” (the editor of the *Mirror* collection). These changes revise the poem’s generic status. John Kerrigan, who charts a broader and longer tradition of complaint writing and therefore does not see the complaint vogue as specific to the 1590s, still notes that in the last two decades of the sixteenth century “the pace of complaint-writing was such that . . . poets began to opt for initial stanzas in which figures wondered why, when others had been noticed, they were not yet themselves immortalised.”¹⁷ Quinn too describes how “royal mistress complaints” often “explicitly refer to others in the group” and indicates that similarities, echoes, and references among them “suggest that readers had a sense of them as a group.”¹⁸ I want to stress the authors’ awareness of such a group. More emphasis can be placed on the significance of “initial stanzas” like those in

13. Budra, “*Mirror for Magistrates*,” 69.

14. Smith, *Elizabethan Poetry*, 111.

15. Schmitz, *Fall of Women*, 115.

16. See Anna Swärdh, “From Hell: *The Mirror for Magistrates* and the Late Elizabethan Female Complaint,” in *Narrative Developments from Chaucer to Defoe*, ed. Gerd Bayer and Ebbe Klitgård (New York: Routledge, 2011), 97–115.

17. Kerrigan, *Motives of Woe*, 29. Kerrigan covers different genres in his study, spanning medieval texts to Alexander Pope.

18. Quinn, “Mastering Complaint,” 441–42.

Churchyard's revision as important generic markers. Emulative references of this kind swiftly become something of a trademark of the complaints.

In the earliest version of Churchyard's poem, Mrs. Shore does make an emulative remark, but of a kind found in many mirrors where the reference is to other unnamed speakers in the tradition: "Among the rest by Fortune overthrowen, / I am not least, that most may wayle her fate."¹⁹ In the 1593 version, this very general "the rest" is replaced by a specific naming: "The Damaske rose, or Rosamond the faire, / . . . / For beauties boast, could scarce compare with me" (1593: 129). In his dedication, Churchyard explicitly points to Daniel's poem as his reason for revising: "because Rosimond is so excellently sette forth (the actor whereof I honour) I have somewhat beautified my Shores wife, not in any kind of emulation, but to make the world knowe, my device in age is ripe & reddie, as my disposition and knowledge was in youth" (1593: 126). While Churchyard forswears "emulation," these references can be discussed in terms of an active generic dialogue: Churchyard was responding to the opening lines of Daniel's successful poem, in which Rosamond had attacked Churchyard's heroine in a competitive outburst:

No Muse suggests the pittie of my case,
Each penne dooth overpasse my just complaint,
Whilst others are preferd, though farre more base:
Shores wife is grac'd, and passes for a Saint;
Her Legend justifies her foule attaint;
Her well-told tale did such compassion finde,
That she is pass'd, and I am left behinde.

(1592: lines 22–28)²⁰

Daniel contrasts Mrs. Shore with Rosamond's more praiseworthy character but simultaneously compliments Churchyard's skill in creating a "well-told tale" that succeeded in passing off an adulteress as a saint. On the level of literary careers (a system itself linked to that of genre), we can connect these signals to the self-presentation that Helgerson defines as central to the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century system of authorial roles and generations.²¹ The element of competition is clear from the degrading phrases in

19. Thomas Churchyard, *Shores Wife*, lines 1–2, in *The Mirror for Magistrates*, ed. Lily B. Campbell (Cambridge University Press, 1938).

20. Sprague, *Poems and a Defence of Ryme*, prints the 1592 text and also includes the 1594 amendments in a variant readings section, numbering the lines in each added section from 1.

21. Richard Helgerson, *Self-Crowned Laureates: Spenser, Jonson, Milton and the Literary System* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), esp. chaps. 1 and 2. Hulse defines the minor epic as a "genre for young poets," placed as it is "on a stage above the pastoral or sonnet and below the epic" in the *gradus Vergilianus* (*Metamorphic Verse*, 12).

relation to Mrs. Shore ("farre more base" and "foule attaint"); the situation can usefully be thought of in terms of Greene's creative imitation, with its stress on struggle and conflict between text and model. Churchyard's and Daniel's texts both signal their source but leave room for difference and distinction, thus providing a very tangible example of the process of "mutual criticism" mentioned earlier. Through these competitive references, we can see how Daniel's selection of a specific mirror heroine for praise and contrast, a move in turn repeated by Churchyard, helps solidify a new generic form as well as signal the generic context of a specific poem.

The significance of Churchyard's addition is further strengthened by the more elaborate intrageneric reference found in Drayton's *Matilda*, published in 1594. By that time Anthony Chute's poem on Shore's wife, *Beautie dishonoured*, and Thomas Lodge's *Elstred* had been added to the complaints of Churchyard and Daniel, and Shakespeare's *Lucrece* probably also antedates Drayton's poem by a few months. Early in the complaint, Drayton's *Matilda* refers to these heroines:

Faire *Rosamond*, of all so highly graced,
Recorded in the lasting Booke of Fame,
And in our Sainted Legendarie placed,
By him who strives to stellifie her name,
Yet will some Matrons say she was to blame.
 Though all the world bewitched with his ryme,
 Yet all his skill cannot excuse her cryme.

Lucrece, of whom proude Rome hath boasted long,
Lately reviv'd to live another age,
And here ariv'd to tell of *Tarquins* wrong,
Her chast deniall, and the Tyrants rage,
Acting her passions on our stately stage,
 She is remembred, all forgetting me,
 Yet I as fayre and chast, as ere was she.

Shores wife is in her wanton humor sooth'd,
And modern Poets, still applaud her praise,
Our famous *Elstreds* wrinckled browes are smooth'd,
Call'd from her grave to see these latter daies,
And happy's hee, their glory high'st can raise.
 "Thus looser wantons, still are praised of many,
 "Vice oft findes friends, but vertue seldome any.

(1594: lines 29–49)

Like Churchyard's Mrs. Shore, *Matilda* uses the other heroines to set off her own excellence while inscribing her complaint in their tradition. We again find the emulative imitation noted above, in the criticism of the models provided by *Rosamond*, Mrs. Shore, and *Elstred*, the latter's "wrinckled

browes" in all likelihood carrying the sense of "moral stain or blemish."²² In the references to Rosamond, there is again a note of commending the poet's "skill," but the commendation is simultaneously undercut by the reference to bewitching by poetry. Matilda can allow herself such harsh emulative criticism since she, unlike these heroines, remains chaste. Again, the intertextual reference occurs early in the poem, an important place for generic communication. Fowler stresses that the "generic markers that cluster at the beginning of a work have a strategic role in guiding the reader."²³ This would be all the more important for a noncanonical genre that is still finding its feet, in which, to use Jean R. Brink's phrasing, "the author had to adopt an identifiable and coherent stance in relationship to the reader."²⁴ In other words, Churchyard adds a signal with strong generic significance to his 1593 poem. Critics have found the desire for fame expressed in passages like the ones quoted above suspicious, arguably rendering the heroines' purity questionable.²⁵ But these passages should be understood primarily as generic markers that highlight the emulative dialogue between authors.

The rest of Churchyard's 1593 revisions are of the softening and beautifying kind briefly noted by Smith and Budra. These revisions push the poem generically closer to Daniel's complaint and away from the mirror context. Churchyard adds twenty-one stanzas to the original fifty-six. The reader is forced to dwell on sections focused on the heroine; the additions seem to be designed to increase reader sympathy. For instance, Mrs. Shore's beauty is described at much greater length; twenty-eight lines are added to the original five describing her looks, with imagery that centers on light ("torch," "lamp"), and whiteness ("snow," "Lily"), and with descriptions of Mrs. Shore's figure ("body small," "faire forme and port," "No part amisse," "in due proportion rare" [1593: 129–30]). While these are commonplace descriptions of beauty, it is still relevant to point to Daniel's similarly long section on Rosamond's beauty. Given the other connections between Churchyard's and Daniel's texts, Churchyard's expanded description may well be modeled on Daniel's section on beauty, imitating its length if not its verbal details, and designed to increase Mrs. Shore's likeability. No doubt, this is also the desired effect of several other expansions: on Mrs. Shore's rhetorical powers, focusing on singing, fancy, and concord; on how she rules the

22. *OED Online*, s.v. "wrinkle," n.¹, def. 4a, <http://www.oed.com>.

23. Fowler, *Kinds of Literature*, 88; see also chap. 6. Dubrow similarly speaks of a "generic contract" between author and reader, set up especially in the opening lines of a poem where title, meter, and familiar topoi send signals to the reader (*Genre*, 31).

24. Jean R. Brink, *Michael Drayton Revisited* (Boston: Twayne, 1990), 33.

25. See, e.g., Dubrow, *Captive Victors*, 145–46.

king by love; and on her good deeds. These additions change the poem's balance, giving more space to the happy time Mrs. Shore enjoyed with the king, thus setting her off in a more positive light. The strengthened reader sympathy is, as already indicated, in line with the generic differences between mirrors and complaints.²⁶

However, with the added lines a contradiction in the 1563 version gets more space too. Budra draws attention to how, in the revised version, "Shore uses her power as a form of self-serving insurance,"²⁷ pointing to three added lines: "I did good turnes, whiles that I was a height: / For feare a flawe, of winde would make me reele, / And blowe me downe, when Fortune turnd her wheele" (1593: 134–35). There seems to be a contradiction between, on the one hand, Shore's assertions that she filled "no chests" for old age and never sold her favor for bribes (1593: 135) and, on the other, the explanation given in the quoted lines. Still, in view of the veritable flood of contradictory statements in the 1563 poem, this does not change Shore's character much.²⁸ The nine stanzas added in 1593 to the section describing Mrs. Shore's troubles after the king's death offer a stylistically more delicate example. Again the expansion occurs in an emotional section of the poem, showing Mrs. Shore's exposed state. But its impersonal tone makes it rather unsuccessful. Although the passage deals with topics relevant to Mrs. Shore's situation—her cast-out and forgotten state, her fall, her poverty—it does so in the tone of a commonplace lament about the uncertainty of existence, including a depiction of fading flowers and an instance of Mrs. Shore referring to herself in the third person (1593: 138–40). Thus, instead of bringing us closer to the heroine, the effect is an increasing detachment.

Shores Wife is thus transformed in 1593 through a number of revisions that place the poem generically closer to Daniel's *Rosamond*, but Churchyard does not seem to have spent much effort on his "augmented" version: the new stanzas are not especially inventive, nor has the original text been changed to integrate them. The revisions do indicate the author's awareness of what was different and also attractive about Daniel's poem, and therewith his intention to emulate his emulator. When we turn to Daniel and Drayton, we find poets who differ from Churchyard in skill and care but whose revisions indicate a similar generic sensitivity.

26. The differences between the revised version and the original recall those between Thomas Lodge's complaint, *Elstred*, printed in 1593, and John Higgins's 1574 mirror *Elstride*, Lodge's model. Like Churchyard, Lodge adds length and increases focus on the heroine, her beauty, happiness, and sadness. See Swärdh, "From Hell," 105–8.

27. Budra, "Mirror for Magistrates," 69.

28. There are "contradictions on almost every level of the poem" (Schmitz, *Fall of Women*, 119). For a discussion of how generic conventions, subject matter, and author sympathy contribute to these contradictions, see Swärdh, "From Hell," 100–103.

ROSAMOND

Samuel Daniel's 1592 *The Complaint of Rosamond* started the complaint vogue of the 1590s, and, as noted, its reference to Churchyard's *Shores Wife* indicates its main model for imitation. But, to quote Arthur Colby Sprague, "to set the two poems side by side is to become conscious of the wonder-working advances of those thirty years"; while *Shores Wife* seems "stiff and archaic" to modern readers, Daniel's poem "suggests Marlowe and the Ovidians."²⁹ Daniel's poem tells the story of Rosamond Clifford (ca. 1140–76), who became the mistress of King Henry II (1133–89). In 1594 Daniel published a second version of the poem, which maintains the clear structure of Rosamond's rise to fame, seduction, and fall, but adds two speeches—a brief speech by the queen and Rosamond's death speech.³⁰ Changes are made to the lines following the additions, thus making them more integrated than those in Churchyard's revision. Dramaturgically and structurally, the queen's haughty and cruel attitude serves to contrast the two women, her words providing motivation for Rosamond to justify her actions before she dies, and the added death speech balances and responds to the earlier speech of the matron who helped seduce Rosamond. Besides expressing repentance, placing blame, and cursing, Rosamond directs warnings at court ladies in her speech. The warnings against unequal marriage and women bed-brokers are given extended space and focus, referring with renewed weight to specific situations found earlier in the poem. But while the result of Rosamond's death speech is a heightened emotionality and stronger focus on her, again we find a slightly jarring note that risks working against the effect of intensified pity and understanding.

The topos of unequal lovers occurs in two complaints printed between Daniel's 1592 and 1594 versions: Churchyard's augmented *Shores Wife* and Chute's version of the same story, *Beautie dishonoured written under the title of Shores Wife*. It is my suggestion that Daniel revised his poem in creative imitation of these two texts published in 1593. In Churchyard's and Chute's poems, the topos concerns the inequality of Mrs. Shore and her much older

29. Sprague, *Poems and a Defence of Ryme*, xvii–xviii.

30. This version was reprinted again in 1595, 1598, 1599 and six more times up to 1623. The 1595 version lacks 16 stanzas (8–15, 64–71). This is probably an accidental omission, since the stanzas would have been printed on the same sheet (in 1595, E[1] and E[8] are missing). No amendments have been made to the text to indicate an intentional cut and the gap between stanzas 7 and 16 makes little sense. Sprague records the omissions in the 1595 Huntington Library copy (*Poems and a Defence of Ryme*, 215). Yet another stanza was added by Daniel in the 1601 version, on how weak and frail Beauty cannot stay unconquered when assaulted (ibid., 194–95). For a discussion of the contents of Daniel's various volumes, including *Rosamond's* place in them, see Pitcher, "Essays, Works, and Small Poems."

husband. Churchyard, following Thomas More's account,³¹ uses the conjugal mismatch to explain Mrs. Shore's adultery. He does not develop this passage in the expanded version, but it is there. In Chute, the disappointment resulting from the discrepancy in age between Mrs. Shore and her husband takes up more than a third of the poem. It is repeatedly made clear that the "discord," the "unwilling" or "unkind" bed, is a result of the husband's age and impotence: "He could no more of love, his dayes were don: / Crookt old, and cold, his yeares deny'd him this." Mrs. Shore asks herself "how can I, how can all woemen brooke this, / [That] Decrepite yeares from pleasure should restrayne them?"³²

In the 1592 version of *Rosamond*, the inequality of the lovers is referred to: we read of "th'incompatible blood / Of age and youth," and how age has "worne [the king's] pleasures out of date" (1592: lines 185–86, 179); the matron tells Rosamond that "Cold age dotes most" (1592: line 298); and the king builds the mazelike palace for Rosamond out of jealousy attributed to old age (1592: lines 458–69). Yet the relationship is consummated. Two stanzas, highly complex like all descriptions of sexual encounters in the complaints, depict Rosamond's contradictory experience. A certain dissatisfaction is indicated: "But soone his age receiv'd his short contenting, / And sleepe seald up his languishing desires" (1592: lines 442–43). Still, the focus of the passage is on Rosamond's complicated feelings of guilt; coming to a "loathed bed," "Enforc'd th'unproved bitter sweete to prove," she "joyde [her] Lover not [her] Love" (1592: lines 435–41). The oxymoronic rhetoric (with the typographical uncertainty regarding "bitter sweete" in the 1592 printing—one word or two?) would indicate that the encounter was not entirely disappointing physically, an impression strengthened by Rosamond's ensuing introspective discovery of her own sin (1592: lines 442–55).

With the added death speech in the 1594 version, however, the problem of unequal lovers is given more stress, changing our impression of the relationship. Four of the seventeen stanzas that constitute Rosamond's speech admonish court ladies to choose their men wisely; two stanzas specifically advise them to choose equal loves, partners of their own age, or they will find themselves married to ghosts:

For see how many discontented beds,
Our owne aspyring, or our Parents pride

31. Thomas More tells the story of Mrs. Shore in *The History of King Richard III*. For the relation between More's prose text and Churchyard's poem, see, e.g., Esther Yael Beith-Halahmi, *Angell Fayre or Strumpet Lewd: Jane Shore as an Example of Erring Beauty in 16th Century Literature*, 2 vols. (Universität Salzburg, 1974); Barbara Brown, "Sir Thomas More and Thomas Churchyard's 'Shore's Wife,'" *Yearbook of English Studies* 2 (1972): 41–48.

32. Anthony Chute, *Beautie dishonoured written under the title of Shores wife* (1593; STC 5262), 14–16, 20.

Have caus'd, whilst that ambition vainely weds
Wealth and not love, honor and nought beside:
Whilst married but to titles we abide
As wedded widdowes, wanting what we have,
When shadowes cannot give us what we crave.

(1594: lines 78–84)

This stanza thus makes explicit something that is only hinted at earlier in the poem, and in the 1592 version. While the suggested models of imitation cannot be ascertained, they seem likely: the topos exists in Daniel's first version, albeit somewhat subdued; it is more outspokenly dealt with by Churchyard; Chute dwells on the inequality of the lovers and the resulting disappointment at length; and, finally, in Daniel's revision, it receives further emphasis through its rehearsal in the heroine's added death speech. To use Dubrow's terminology on generic adaptability, the conventions associated with a literary form "represent not merely an injunction to adopt certain topoi but also an invitation to adapt those topoi to the aesthetic and social conditions of one's age and to the predisposition of one's own temperament"; here Daniel seems to have expanded on a topos associated with the complaint form at this time.³³ Perhaps the author hoped to depict a more pitiable heroine in his revised version, but, as with some of Churchyard's expansions, there is also a complication here, since Rosamond complains about sexual dissatisfaction in this sequence. Doing so, she risks coming across as less virtuous in the revised poem, especially given the placement of the section.

The other passage of Rosamond's speech that stands out for its length is the five-stanza section on female bed-brokers, women who misuse their trust (as women and as old and wise) to help seduce other women. Jason Lawrence has pointed to Tasso and also Battista Guarini as offering models for the older female coseducer.³⁴ The "seeming Matron" plays a central part in Rosamond's seduction in the poem. In eleven stanzas, she lists a number of arguments to persuade Rosamond: the happy opportunity will lead to advancement and gold; Rosamond's youth and beauty will both fade, as did those of the matron, and she now regrets missed opportunities; pleasure and nature constitute excuses; it is always possible and more important to seem chaste than to be so; rumor should be disregarded as an idle voice (1592: lines 225–301). The return to bed-brokers in the added speech is thus justified internally, but as in the case of the previous topos discussed, I would again suggest that the extended focus on the topos of female bed-

33. Dubrow, *Genre*, 14.

34. Jason Lawrence, "Samuel Daniel's *The Complaint of Rosamond* and the Arrival of Tasso's Armida in England," *Renaissance Studies* 25 (2010): 659–62.

brokers in the revised version is an instance of creative imitation, in this case indebted to Shakespeare's *Lucrece*.

Lucrece's apostrophes to Night, Opportunity, and Time are notorious for their high-strung tone and their length, and they were highly influential on several complaints.³⁵ The connections between *Lucrece* and Daniel's addition are rhetorical. Rosamond's description of the female bed-brokers, the "Monsters of our sexe," consists of a list of epithets:

Hatefull confounders both of blood and lawes,
Vilde Orators of shame, that pleade delight:
Ungracious Agents in a wicked cause,
Factors for darknes, messengers of night,
Serpents of guile, divels, . . .

(1594: lines 100, 113–17)

Repetitive listings are again found in Rosamond's description of the results of the bed-brokers' activities:

By you, have beene the innocent betrayd,
The blushing fearefull boldned unto sin,
The wife made subtile, subtile made the mayd,
The husband scorn'd, dishonored the kin:
Parents disgrac'd, children infamous been.
Confus'd our race, and falsi-fied our blood,
Whilst fathers sonnes, possess wrong Fathers good.

(1594: lines 127–33)

Such listings, often with a strong caesura break in the middle of the lines, are found repeatedly in Shakespeare's poem. For example, Lucrece's verbal attacks on Night and Time contain lists of epithets:

O comfort-killing Night, image of hell,
Dim register and notary of shame,
Black stage for tragedies and murders fell,
Vast sin-concealing chaos, nurse of blame,

35. William Shakespeare, *The Rape of Lucrece*, lines 764–1015, in *The Poems: Venus and Adonis, The Rape of Lucrece, The Phoenix and the Turtle, The Passionate Pilgrim, A Lover's Complaint*, ed. John Roe, New Cambridge Shakespeare (Cambridge University Press, 1992; updated ed., 2006). Further references to this work will appear parenthetically in the text. Critics have noted echoes in Richard Barnfield's *Cassandra*, John Trussell's *The First Rape of Faire Hellen*, and Thomas Middleton's *The Ghost of Lucrece*. See, e.g., George Klawitter, ed., *Richard Barnfield: The Complete Poems* (Selinsgrove, PA: Susquehanna University Press), 238 n. 410; M. A. Shaaber, ed., "The First Rape of Faire Hellen by John Trussell," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 8 (1957): 407–20; Joseph Quincy Adams, ed., *The Ghost of Lucrece*, by Thomas Middleton, Folger Shakespeare Library Publications (New York: Scribner's, 1937).

Blind muffled bawd, dark harbour for defame!
 Grim cave of death, whisp'ring conspirator
 With close-tongued treason and the ravisher!

(Lines 764–70; cf. lines 925–29)

The stylistic effect here as in *Rosamond* is to give the passage a tense, breathless quality. Thematically, both passages concern seduction and its results. Shakespeare's Night, Opportunity, and Time are defined as bawds and seducers of virtue (lines 768, 886, 928); more than Rosamond, Lucrece dwells on the wider circles of shame resulting from sexual trespass (lines 883–93), but also, like the passage in *Rosamond*, specifically related to uncertainty regarding offspring—"The branches of another root are rotted" (line 823); "hateful cuckoos hatch in sparrow's nests" (line 849). Their restless tone, their lists of epithets and repetitions, their thematic focus on pandering and its far-reaching effects bring the passages together. It can be added parenthetically that Cleopatra's death speech in Daniel's 1594 play contains none of these rhetorical features, indicating that the author adapted expression to situation and genre.

Placed toward the end of the poem, the topoi of unequal lovers and female bed-brokers gain sympathy, even if the expansion, as noted, also contains elements that might work against this effect. Rosamond's speech manages to strike a balance through its increased self-awareness and remorse. The troubling fact that her sin will be revealed, while her repentance will remain hidden from the world, finds its solution in solitary confession:

Yet breathe out to these walls the breath of mone,
 Tell th'ayre thy plaints, sith men thou canst not tell.
 And though thou perrish desolate alone,
 Tell yet thy selfe, what thy selfe knowes too well:
 Utter thy grieffe where-with thy soule doth swell.
 And let thy hart, pittie thy harts remorse,
 And be thy selfe the mourner and the Corse.

(1594: lines 36–42)

This and other passages help present Rosamond as a more trustworthy and sympathetic character than, for example, Churchyard's Mrs. Shore, despite the existence of complicating issues. But structural consistency is an important factor too. Like Mrs. Shore, Rosamond accepts blame at the same time as she places it with other entities and characters (beauty, youth, family and friends, unequal lovers, bed-brokers, the court), but Daniel devotes more time to each instance, focusing on one thing at a time. This is true of the whole poem and of the added speech discussed here; orderliness seems to lessen the impression of a self-contradictory heroine.

MATILDA

Drayton's *Matilda*, printed in 1594, tells the story of the legendary Matilda or Maud Fitzwalter and her refusal of King John (1166–1216). The structure of Drayton's poem is, like Daniel's, clear. Despite the difference in plot (Matilda does not lose her virginity), the poem falls into two sections, the turn coming when Matilda flees the court only to be more thoroughly persecuted by the king, leading to her death. In 1596, *Matilda* was reprinted together with the legends of Robert, Duke of Normandy, and Piers Gaveston, *Matilda* and *Gaveston* both expanded from their earlier versions. In his epistle to the reader Drayton explains that he has "taken some paine in them both to augment and polish them,"³⁶ and compared to the other two poems so far examined, Drayton's *Matilda* is thoroughly revised. The additions, twenty-six stanzas in all, are of varying length, dispersed throughout the poem after stanza 66, and appearing in various characters' speeches. Many take the form of the oxymoronic rhetoric associated with Petrarchan sonnetting. Drayton seems to have drawn on this mode to strengthen the case for his virtuous heroine in the growing group of complaining women. The 1596 addition of a prose argument, including the line "MATILDA, for her beauty named the faire; A second Lucretia,"³⁷ signals a general indebtedness to Shakespeare's *Lucrece* of which critics and editors have been long aware. This is also true of the revisions. As we shall see, they add complexity to characters and situations and strengthen the poem's presentation of Matilda as a saintly figure. But as with Churchyard's and Daniel's revisions, Drayton's expansions also carry with them the risk of undesired complication.

In the revised *Matilda*, oxymoronic rhetoric appears in elaborations that dwell on a situation but at times complicate the message. The revisions to *Piers Gaveston* show similar tendencies, with similar results.³⁸ Oxymoronic rhetoric does occur in complaints to express emotional complexity and bewilderment, but much less persistently than in Drayton's 1596 text.³⁹

36. Hebel, *Works*, 1:251.

37. Kathleen Tillotson and Bernard H. Newdigate, eds., *Variant Readings and Notes*, vol. 5 of Hebel, *Works*, 35.

38. As in *Matilda*, the additions in *Piers Gaveston* occur throughout the poem, and several added stanzas contain language similar to that discussed here. The editors comment: "All of the additions are irrelevant to the narrative and indeed have very little content of any kind" (Tillotson and Newdigate, *Variant Readings*, 161). Drayton revised and rewrote much of his material to such an extent that the variant readings constitute a whole volume of the Hebel edition of his works. Brink similarly notes that Drayton "experimented with a series of related genres, including the pastoral, the sonnet sequence, and the minor epic" between 1591 and 1597, and that "his efforts in these genres were related" (*Michael Drayton Revisited*, 24).

39. See, e.g., Daniel, *Rosamond*, 1592: lines 498–504, 652–58; 1594: lines 34–35; Barnfield, *Cassandra*, lines 271–76, 319–24, 343–48; Trussell, *Hellen*, lines 169–74, 271–76, 811–22, 859–64. Smith briefly notes the Petrarchan influence on complaints and epyllia (*Elizabethan Poetry*,

The exception is *Lucrece*, whose use of paradox and oppositional pairings throughout has led Dubrow to comment that the poem “contains enough oxymora to satisfy even a sonneteer.”⁴⁰ For this reason, Drayton’s additions place the revised *Matilda* stylistically close to *Lucrece*, and some of the expansions may constitute attempts to complicate characterization in a similar way, as in the following example:

In going on, goe back, forward, retire,
Flie that which followes, follow but to flie,
Keepe thee far off, now thou approachest nier,
Stoop to the ground when mischiefe mounts on hie,
Fore-sight far off doth daunger soone espie.
Ah love, if wounded once with thine own Dart,
Thou hate, hate love, transformd by your own art.

(1596: stanza 76)⁴¹

Appearing between a stanza in which the king realizes he must eliminate Matilda’s father in order to get access to her, and one in which the king sets this plan afoot, causing the father to be accused of treason, this passage adds little to the narrative. But it does contribute to a general complication that characterizes the revised text and, as concerns King John, justifies Drayton’s editors’ description of the king as “a wooer as plaintive as any sonneteer.”⁴² It is very likely that Drayton looked at Shakespeare’s Tarquin when revising. For a writer in the complaint genre, Shakespeare places unusual focus on his central male character; Tarquin spends no less than twenty-five stanzas battling internally before setting out to rape Lucrece (lines 127–301). Dubrow, in her discussion of Shakespeare’s poem, focuses on the rhetorical figure of *synechiosis* (a linking of opposites) and explores how the internal tensions in such tropes correspond to tensions in characters; both Tarquin and Lucrece are found to be divided against themselves.⁴³ Drayton’s expansion of the King John passages has the same effect. King John becomes more complex, more conflict ridden. I am not denying a Petrarchan influence on revisions such as these but rather suggesting a further source of imitation in Shakespeare and his use of the mode.

103); and Hulse stresses the “reciprocal relationship between minor epic and sonnet” and the Petrarchan influence (*Metamorphic Verse*, chap. 2).

40. Dubrow, *Captive Victors*, 81.

41. The Hebel edition prints the 1594 text of *Matilda*, and the added 1596 stanzas in vol. 5, retaining the stanza numbers of the 1596 edition (Tillotson and Newdigate, *Variant Readings*, 35–37).

42. Tillotson and Newdigate, *Variant Readings*, 32.

43. Dubrow, *Captive Victors*, chap. 2. One example of *synechiosis* would be “captive victors.” Dubrow’s analysis of the trope shows that “the poem is characterized . . . less by a pleasure in poetic adornment per se than by a preoccupation with the moral and psychological issues expressed through—or even raised by—such adornment” (*Captive Victors*, 84).

The additions in the various characters' speeches similarly elaborate on the given situation and develop the poem's characters, but they also contribute to strengthening an already significant religious theme. For instance, on his way to France, Matilda's exiled father complains about John's tyranny, about Matilda being left as a prey to him, and about being forced himself to go unrevenged to his grave (1594: lines 596, 598). Here the four stanzas added in 1596 again make the narrative less tight and focused but add poetic and spiritual complexity. We find a beautiful stanza on Pity's last tear-drop (1596: stanza 90); a version of the oxymoronic relation between life and death often found in complaints (1596: stanza 92);⁴⁴ apostrophes to Hate, Woe, Passion, and Death (1596: stanza 94); and finally the division of Fitzwalter's body going into exile and his soul remaining with his daughter (1596: stanza 96). Through the focus on pity, death, and the soul in these added lines, the concrete level of the narrative is complemented with what can be described as a spiritual echo or counterpoint. The general complication noted above, the penchant for oxymoronic expression, is thus in this instance closely woven together with content, but as in the previous example, one result is added complexity of character.

A messenger is sent by the king to Matilda with a bottle of poison and an ultimatum; the additions in his speech function to consolidate the situation in the 1594 version; they fit the context very well, and elaborate on existing arguments. Matilda's refusal to enjoy all that her senses can offer is in 1596 presented as an offence against nature (1596: stanza 120), and her religion is more thoroughly mocked in connection to her coyness, both described in terms of "cunning" and "seeming" (1596: stanza 128). In Matilda's reply to the messenger's speech, though, the additions subtly change their dialogue and her ensuing monologue. The original 1594 opening of Matilda's reply gives three stanzas to kingship, two of which specifically describe John as a good king: "I know my Lord is kinde and gracious," she says; his thoughts are spotless and "Hee is wisdom, honour, valure, chastity / . . . / Hee's Vertues right superlative degree" (1594: lines 815, 821–24). Since both speaker and reader are aware of John's acts and plans through the retrospective narrative, this praise reads as ironic and as such forms a critique of the king. The messenger's reaction supports this reading (he is enraged), as does Matilda's following description of John as a tyrant (1594: line 853). In 1596 two added stanzas complicate or muddle the ironic reading through their more general comments on kingship. In one, Matilda explains how the king "should" be able to rule his affections as he rules his subjects (1596: stanza 131), and in the other she notes that "Empire even like the Sunne doth draw all eyes," implying that any fault will be noted and should there-

44. See, e.g., *Rosamond*, 1592: lines 673–86; Chute, *Beautie*, 52–54 (stanzas 189–97); Middleton, epilogue to *Ghost* (ed. Adams), lines 8–56.

fore be avoided (1596: stanza 134). While extending the speech on kingship, the additions weaken Matilda's previously rather sharp undermining of the king's character. Whereas in 1594 two of three stanzas focused on John, in 1596 two out of five do so. Consequently, the balance is shifted from a specific and ironical depiction of John to general maxims on kingship. Again, the 1596 text is pushed toward a softer mode, in line with the expanded Petrarchism and the complication of character noted above.

The toned-down critique also agrees with the increased stress on Matilda's saintly character, greatly strengthened by the revisions to her death speech and the revised ending of the poem. Schmitz describes how Drayton's poem stresses specifically spiritual beauty and how Matilda is presented as an "ideal woman in a Christian world": "Matilda is in a state of grace all her life" and this life "runs along the lines of a saint's *vita*."⁴⁵ Here too Shakespeare's poem is a model for imitation. Within the limitations of her Roman context, Lucrece is an "earthly saint, adored" by the "devil" Tarquin (line 85), and throughout the poem she is described in terms of a saintliness that even has Marian connotations.⁴⁶ As Matilda dies and the poison takes effect, the king is all her "joy" and "glory," "the tuch by whom [her] gold is tryed"; by him her death and life "sanctified" (1594: lines 894–96, 900). She prays for her tears to preserve him, and the final addition to the passage focuses on saving contrition and faith, the poison having become a "potion," an oxymoronic "phisick":⁴⁷

And thou my carefull kind Phisition,
For phisick now thy patients patient be,
Appeale to heaven with true contrition,
And in thy conscience glasse thy foule sinne see,
To thee I'le be, as thou hast beene to mee.
This potion take, to rid thee from dispaire,
Even as thy potion, shall rid me of care.

Faith finds free passage to Gods mercy seat,
Repentance carries heavens eternall kayes,
The greater sinnes bewept, mercy more great,
A hartie will makes straight th'offenders wayes,
Heaven rings for joy when once a sinner prayes,
Of these sweet simples is my drink compounded,
Which shall cure both our soules, both deeplie wounded.

(1596: stanzas 150–51)

45. Schmitz, *Fall of Women*, 135–36.

46. See Anna Swärdh, *Rape and Religion in English Renaissance Literature: A Topical Study of Four Texts by Shakespeare, Drayton, and Middleton* (Uppsala University Library, 2003), 136–62.

47. I am indebted to Åke Bergvall for observing the play on poison/potion.

Elsewhere I have argued that these words constitute an address to John,⁴⁸ offering him contrition and thus salvation through Matilda's death (of which he is guilty), but it is possible that Matilda is speaking to the messenger. Regardless of addressee, the lines give Matilda intercessory power, her prayer and sacrifice promising to save two souls, thus carrying through the promise of the 1594 sanctification.

Matilda is the most saintly of all complaint heroines. Her death speech has a triumphant quality that finds an intriguing parallel in the death speech of Cleopatra in Daniel's play, a speech that similarly contains the alchemical imagery of testing.⁴⁹ This serves as a reminder that the field of creative imitation is always larger than one genre, but it also indicates the difference between Matilda's situation and that of Rosamond and Mrs. Shore. Like Cleopatra, Matilda speaks from a position of control and certainty at the end of her life. The 1596 revision more strongly criticizes complaint heroines such as Rosamond, Mrs. Shore, and Elstred (the ones competitively challenged in the opening stanzas discussed earlier in this essay), by further distancing Matilda as sanctified heroine from their false claims to sainthood.

The revised ending of the poem further strengthens the impressions discussed so far. With Matilda's death, King John is indeed transformed. Like many fallen women in complaints (we noticed earlier how Rosamond reacted this way), John imagines his sin reflected everywhere (1596: stanza 177). In a vision-like section, Matilda's blood, "exhal'd from earth unto the skye," hangs like a meteor above him, while her soul shrieks before the gates of heaven, her tears a flood, "increasing [his] offence" (1594: lines 1072, 1094). The biblical reference to blood crying out to God signals the scope and nature of John's crime.⁵⁰ After a final addition on the oxymoronic situation of her fame and his shame, her good and his ill (1596: stanza 183), King John vows to go on a pilgrimage and spend the rest of his days as a hermit, attending to alms and prayer. Again, rather than the hardheaded seducer or potential rapist, a more nuanced character is figured forth. With

48. See Swärdh, *Rape and Religion*, 199.

49. Cleopatra "receives the deadly poisoning touch, / That touch that tryde the gold of her love pure, / And hath confirm'd her honor to be such, / As must a wonder to all worlds endure" (Samuel Daniel, *Delia and Rosamond augmented. Cleopatra* [1594; second ed., STC 6243.4], sig. N4v).

50. Discussing Lucrece's mentioning of blood in Shakespeare's poem, Weaver points to a tradition in early modern Christian thought of the persuasive power of (references to) blood in legal testimony. He quotes William Perkins's 1607 paraphrase and comment on the Genesis story of Abel and Cain as providing theological justification for the use of blood in criminal investigations. In the biblical story Abel's blood cries out to God and tells him of the crime. Weaver stresses how Perkins connects divine witness and justice to a series of secret crimes perpetrated by the strong or tyrannical. See Weaver, *Untutored Lines*, 140–42.

the last three stanzas of the 1594 version cut, instead of turning away from Matilda's story and addressing Idea, the revised version ends in Matilda's voice, confirming King John's monthly pilgrimage to Dunmow, "Washing [her] Tombe, with his repentant teares, / And being wet, yet dried it with his hayres" (1594: lines 1112–13). The image of the male Magdalene-like figure weeping repentant tears at Matilda's grave gives Matilda an almost Christlike power to convert and save, thus forcefully concluding the 1596 version.

The stronger presence of the religious theme in the revised version, and especially in the representation of Matilda, can help explain some of the other changes discussed above. The critique of the king might seem inconsistent with a saintly woman's thoughts, so that toning it down would better agree with her wish to save and convert the king expressed at the end of the poem. Also the spiritual counterpoint added to Fitzwalter's speech, and indeed the general addition of a oxymoronic layer to the poem, would make sense as a meditative, thoughtful facet of its increased religious focus. In line with Churchyard's and Daniel's revisions, but more successfully, Drayton's expansions result in strengthened and more complex characters, more focus on the heroine and on emotionality, with the assumed intention of heightening reader sympathy. In the increased complication of John's character, this is perhaps where the revisions start working against themselves, again similarly to the previously discussed poems. With a more nuanced opponent, the sharpness of conflict is weakened, and the change of character at the end of the poem, King John's religiously tinted conversion into repentance, equally reduced. Almost a decade later, in 1605, Drayton removed the additions and significantly shortened his poem, a transformation that made it "less a love poem, more a straightforward story of threatened chastity."⁵¹ It is as if, with some distance, the poet felt a need to return to an earlier understanding of the complaint genre. But in 1596 Drayton sprinkled his poem with paradox, probably modeled on Shakespeare's *Lucrece*, hoping that increased interior confusion and uncertainty, together with an even more saintly heroine, would strengthen Matilda's (and his own) case and position in the emulative dialogue between complaint heroines and poets.

51. Tillotson and Newdigate, *Variant Readings*, 156. Tillotson speaks of the 1605 versions of the Legends in terms of a "loss" (xiii), and suggests that some omitted material may have found its place in the verse epistles of King John and Matilda in Drayton's *England's Heroical Epistles* published in 1597 (156). Hulse, whose focus is the larger category of minor epic, also detects a change in form under the Stuarts, a simplification of cause and tone: "Erotic narrative changes to the simply lascivious or the simply passionate. . . . Chronicle poems . . . revert to the simpler pattern of the mirror, stripped of mythological imagery and reduced to sober, detached narration" (*Metamorphic Verse*, 33).

CONCLUSION

Mrs. Shore's competitive boasting of her beauty, Rosamond's warnings against the miseries of marrying an older man, and Matilda's oxymoronic rhetoric are some features that were expanded when Churchyard, Daniel, and Drayton revised their complaints in the last decade of the sixteenth century. Disparate as the examples may seem in isolation, I have in this essay shown how they can still be described, using Fowler's terminology, as developing or changing the scale of a topic already existing in the repertoire of the female complaint genre. I have argued for an emulative dialogue at work in the revisions, where complaints serve as important models of creative imitation for each other, indicating a strong generic awareness on the part of the poets. On a general level, the revisions seem designed to increase reader sympathy and thus strengthen the cases for the individual complaint heroines. At times, though, some additions contribute to the self-contradictory characteristic of many complaints, a characteristic that ultimately stems from the inevitable weakness of arguing more or less impossible cases. The exception that proves the rule is Matilda, the chaste heroine whose saintliness is almost complete in Drayton's 1596 text. In concluding, I return to Claudio Guillén and his suggestion that we ask ourselves in generic studies whether "the norm under consideration [is] a model that could have affected the writer (exerted an influence upon the work in progress)," or whether the generic norm is "a critic's 'afterthought' and an a posteriori category (though liable as time passes to become an a priori model)."⁵² This essay has shown that the complaint was indeed a genre—a "model"—that affected several writers whose reactions in turn helped transform that genre.

52. Guillén, *Literature as System*, 147.

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