The Artificial Life of Rhyme

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THE ARTIFICIAL LIFE OF RHYME

BY COLLEEN RUTH ROSENFELD

> To begin by writing and then to find yourself in speech, can be the difference between death and life for any poem, and rhyme, along with other intelligible repetitions of sounds, is often the symptom or indication that the poem is quickening.
>
> —Susan Stewart, "Rhyme and Freedom"[1]

In his *Defence of Poesy*, Philip Sidney wrote that "the chief life" of modern verse "standeth in that like sounding of words, which we call rhyme."[2] His chief point in doing so was to distinguish the modern accentual-syllabic line from the quantitative measure of classical verse but his distinction also implies that this looser measure requires something more to strengthen its hold on its parts. Rhyme, he suggests, is the *sine qua non* of modern vernacular verse—the thing without which a poem is dead. This is not Sidney's most prophetic moment. Histories of the iambic pentameter line tend to take William Shakespeare's blank verse as climax and ideal, the thing towards which the broken lines of Thomas Wyatt worked, and you can almost hear a piece of criticism break into applause as it cites the claim, added to John Milton's *Paradise Lost* in 1668, that the poem is "an example set, the first in English, of ancient liberty recovered to heroic poem from the troublesome and modern bondage of rhyming."[3] What I find most striking about Sidney's claim, however, is not the emphasis that subsequent generations might have thought misguided but instead, the explicit attribution of life to verse, the idea that verse might be vital and that rhyme might confer this vitality on a poem, might transform it from form to life form. What does it mean for verse to have "life" and what does it mean for this life that it lies in "rhyme"?

Sidney's claim that verse itself has life is rather rare among early modern theories of poetry. More regularly, verse might represent a person's life, it might praise a person's life, and it might waste a person's life. Poetry and especially its "harmony" might even be said, as by George Puttenham in *The Art of English Poesy*, to bring "the rude and savage people to a more civil and orderly life," but the

attribution of vitalism to poetry, the kind of vitalism that will be the signature of Romanticism and its conception of organic form, is not a common way of talking about poetry in the early modern period.[4] In his *Defence of Rhyme*, Samuel Daniel suggested that "before the world will feel where the pulse, life and energy lies" in quantitative measure, such verse will have to have a tradition in the vernacular, "the approbation of many ages." The "world" will have to know where to look for such life. In current verse, however, "we are sure where to have" such "pulse, life and energy": it is "in our rhymes, whose known frame hath those due stays for the mind, those encounters of touch as makes the motion certain, though the variety be infinite."[5] For Daniel, the "life" of poetry lies in the listener's knowledge of its form, a form that turns back upon that knowing mind by pacing it. What Daniel calls "the pulse, life and energy" of a poem lies in rhyme's capacity to confirm what the listener already knows: this is the ideology of form that underwrites Puttenham's account of the civilizing power of harmony. The life at stake would seem, finally, to be that of the listener's rather than the poem itself.[6]

But if we take Sidney's attribution literally (if only for the space of an essay), then we have to entertain the possibility that poetry has a "life" that "standeth in" rhyme, a curious verb that recasts the more commonplace orientation towards origin—when does life begin?—as a question of residence—where is life (however, whenever it got there)? The question of where presupposes the possibility that we might locate the life of a poem in a discrete device, like rhyme, and departs from what will become the basic tenet of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's organicism and the New Critical appropriation of that organicism. Where the life of a poem is reducible to a single device, it militates against the idealization of the whole.[7] If "rhyme" is the "chief life" of verse, then verse is "organic" in the ancient rather than the modern sense of the term, where organic means something like instrumental and refers more often to organs, to body parts, than to the body as a whole.[8]

Coleridge, by contrast, understood life as irreducible: the "internal copula" or "the *power* which discloses itself from within as a principle of *unity* in the *many*."[9] The absence of the poet's laboring hand is thus, for Coleridge, among the primary differences between "organic" and "mechanic" forms. He writes, via Schlegel, the following in his lecture notes on Shakespeare:

> The form is mechanic when on any given material we impress a pre-determined form, not necessarily arising out of the properties of the

material, as when to a mass of wet clay we give whatever shape we wish it to retain when hardened. The organic form, on the other hand, is innate; it shapes as it develops itself from within, and the fullness of its development is one and the same with the perfection of its outward form. Such is the life, such the form.[10]

Coleridge's distinction between mechanic and organic forms rehearses the two poles for what Raymond Williams describes in his *Key Words* as the spectrum of approaches to the concept of form: at one end of this spectrum, form describes "an essential shaping principle"; at the other end of this spectrum, form describes "a visible or outward shape."[11] If rhyme is an innate structure, then it might correspond to the "organic"; Coleridge for one seemed to think that the quality of Shakespeare's plays decreased in direct proportion to the increased frequency of his rhymed couplets.[12] If rhyme is an imposition, then it might correspond to the "mechanic" and the life of poetry would therefore look something like the artificial life of an automaton.[13]

A mechanical understanding of the "chief life" that Sidney claimed "standeth in" rhyme suggests that verse provides—not a philosophical or a scientific explanation of what life is—but instead, a model of life, a model akin to Stéphane Leduc's experiments in synthetic biology in the early twentieth century.[14] As a model (rather than an explanation) of life, early modern rhyme requires that we shift our critical interest from a preoccupation with *mimesis* and representation to an exploration of *poiesis* and productivity.[15] In *Making Sense of Life*, Evelyn Fox Keller suggests that it is in the judgment of whether or not such a model is "good" that "models in science and art most clearly depart." "The value of a scientific model," she writes, "is judged, first and foremost, by its utility" with the result that "the issue is rarely one of any absolute degree of resemblance (however that might be measured) but whether or not what resemblance it does bear is close enough in ways that make it possible for the model to be scientifically productive."[16] Where, however, art trades in the work of *mimesis* and representation for the work of *poiesis* and making, our criteria for judging the aesthetic model verges toward this standard of utility. Such a theory of poetic device is teleological and is probably best represented in literary criticism by the Russian Formalists Peter Steiner has called "mechanistic." As Steiner writes, where the poem is understood as "the result of an intentional human activity in which a specific skill transforms raw material into a complex mechanism suitable for a particular purpose," our measure for evaluating that mechanism takes the form of a question: does the poem succeed in that particular purpose?[17]

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For formalists such as Victor Shklovsky, the gauge or measure of a literary model's productivity, the *telos* of art, is defamiliarization: "A work is created 'artistically,'" he writes, "so that its perception is impeded" a difficulty that he uses to define poetry as "*attenuated, tortuous* speech" or "*formed speech*."[18] Puttenham similarly described ornamentation as "the fashioning of our maker's language and style to such purpose as it may delight and allure as well the mind as the ear of the hearers with a certain novelty and strange manner of conveyance."[19] Early modern theorists, however, were less interested in perception as such. Poetic figures, for Puttenham, do not so much liberate listeners from habits of perception as provide a systematic method for getting into and shaping those habits, a shaping that Puttenham often calls "alteration."[20] In his *Garden of Eloquence*, Henry Peacham introduces "figures of consultation" that "seeme to consult and deliberate with the hearers" (such as *interrogatio*, or the posing of questions) and he suggests that such figures are "the principall motion and life" of an oration because "they quicken the dulnesse of the hearer, they cause attention, and do urge the hearer to the consideration of the answere, or to the expectation thereof."[21] Such figures constitute "the principall motion and life" of an oration but they also, Peacham suggests, cause life insofar as they "quicken" the listener. This is a strange model of life, predicated on neither immanence nor self-sufficiency: "the principall motion and life" of a composition is evidenced by its mechanistic ability to produce artificial life in its listeners.

For Romanticism, the mechanical life of the literary model would signal the failure to achieve an organic whole, whether at the level of the text or at the level of society. It is in this sense that Denise Gigante has glossed Schiller's characterization of modern society as the return of the living dead. "Instead of living form," she paraphrases, "we wind up with an assemblage of parts that do not add up to organic unity in multëity—an awkward creature clanging along at its own spiritually debilitating pace. We are, so to speak, the living dead."[22] Poetry's "chief life" may thus constitute a kind of heresy. To return to Daniel's sense that rhyme paces the "motion" of the mind by providing "due stays for the mind," rhyme's model of life might assert its mechanical existence onto the listeners of verse, remaking their rhythms (and the "harmony" to which they belong, Puttenham's "orderly and civilized life" of society) in the image of mechanical life. Under this model, the iterations of rhyme do not fold into the beating heart so much as act as defibrillator and pacemaker in one: rhyme "makes the motion certain" rather than erratic.[23] Under this model, the reader finds "pulse, life and energy" in rhyme as in a kind of life support.[24]

This essay considers Sidney's proposition that the "chief life" of verse "standeth in" rhyme through a reading of a single episode in Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, an episode that, I will argue, aligns the poem's history of artificial production, a history that turns on the conspicuous presence of the poetic maker's laboring hand, with the narrative of resurrection that it depicts. In book 2 of *The Faerie Queene*, just outside the House of Alma, Arthur does battle against a foe who refuses to die for good: Arthur is able to kill Maleger but, once his body hits the earth, Maleger comes back to life. While Spenser's allegory explicitly names "th'Earth" as the source of Maleger's incessant resurrections, I will suggest that Spenser's stanza tells a different story: rhyme acts as the engine of this iterative, heretical life.[25] A peculiar twist on the myth of Orpheus underwrites this move. The Orphic voice's ability to animate inert matter in the natural world—stones and trees—turns on the literalization of *prosopopoeia*: rather than simply speaking of the natural world as if it were endowed with life, the Orphic voice presupposes, as Leah Knight has suggested, that poetry is "a propulsive force with material efficacy in the world."[26] Spenser's poem pulls Orpheus's strategic *prosopopoeia* apart: the life, artificially produced, belongs to Maleger while the "lowly playne" is narrative's word for the poetic plaint (2.11.43.4).

Central to my consideration is the claim that poetic artifice is generative of a particular kind of life that organicism does not explain: the following reading of Spenser's *Faerie Queene* is therefore meant to be suggestive of an alternative genealogy for the vitality of poetic form in literary studies.[27] I argue that rhyme, an index to *The Faerie Queene*'s own history of composition, enters into and intervenes in the causal world of the poem where it becomes the generative organ for an iterative, heretical life.[28] The particular vitality attributed to rhyme in this episode of *The Faerie Queene* may be informed by but is not reducible to this or that ancient or early modern philosophical approach to the problem of life—say, the Aristotelian tripartite soul frequently called upon to help explain the allegory of book 2.[29] Instead, I turn to early modern poetic theorists who regularly worried over the regulation of rhyme, concerned that if a rhyme word returned too frequently or too soon, it would "glut the ear."[30] *The Faerie Queene* experiments with rhyme at this threshold of excess and departs from the ideal of a "masculine, temperate body" (an ideal of which book 2, "The Book of Temperance," is already wary).[31]

Implicit to the progress of this essay and its almost exclusive attention to a single episode of *The Faerie Queene* is an evidentiary claim:

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with respect to certain kinds of arguments in literary studies, one is enough of something. Part of the work of this essay is therefore the accumulative detailing of what distinguishes those kinds of arguments from the sort that are asked in view of the large data sets collected by the digital humanities, the procedures of distant reading, or even historicism's slightly older but nonetheless influential call for less theory and more facts.[32] Such approaches tend to conflate quantity of evidence with explanatory power because they practice an art of generalization with the aim of producing conclusions for which the primary question a reader might ask is, "is this true?" The central impediment to this method of interpretation, recently described by Andrew H. Miller as "conclusive" criticism, is merely that a given data set is currently and may continue to be (but is not necessarily) incomplete.[33] This essay, by contrast, is an experiment in what Miller has described as "implicative" criticism, a method that turns away from the spatial orientation of surface, deep, close, and distant reading and toward the temporal distinction between "finished writing and unfinished writing."[34] It is not that "implicative" criticism is unconcerned with either truth or history; it is, instead, that when success is measured by "response" and "reply" rather than conclusions and conclusiveness, the primary evidentiary standard shifts from the quantity of evidence required to establish a fact to the quality of evidence required to implicate the reader in its own imaginative process. It is through this process of implication (Miller also thinks of it as an "enfold[ing]") that literary criticism most closely approximates the category of fiction itself with its attendant modality and knowledge claims.[35]

* * * * * *

Among the primary cautions voiced by classical and early modern theorists of eloquence is the warning that makers might deploy poetic ornaments too much (too frequently and for too long). Forensic oratory, for example, advised against the use of figures of speech in *narratio*—that part of the speech in which the orator lays out the facts—because such figures draw attention to the artifice of the very temporal sequence that should seem natural.[36] If some figures are allowed "to relieve tedium," one figure is especially forbidden by Quintilian (it is, Quintilian implies, both artificial and tedious): "[W]e shall avoid repeating the same terminations," he writes, warning against the figure that classical rhetoricians called *homoioptoton* or *similiter cadens*, a figure that was routinely conflated with *homoioteleuton* or

similiter desinens in classical and early modern rhetorical theory.[37] Likewise, in his discussion of *similiter cadens*, Peacham warns that "too great affectation of copie must bee shunned, lest it cause excesse" and he offers a similar admonition in his discussion of *similiter desinens*, warning "that excesse and too great affection be shunned."[38] Where *similiter desinens* describes a similarity in word endings, *similiter cadens* describes a repetition in case endings: early modern theorists regularly understood rhyme as the vernacular version of these two figures.[39] This constellation of devices constituted the extreme version of a threat that was nonetheless perceived to be pervasive to figures of speech at large: the capacity for interminable iteration.

In response to such a threat, theorists registered departure from decorum and its ideal of proportion under the sign of superfluity and excess; they tend to illustrate such departure by recourse to the grotesque—a body that is not an ideal of proportion but a deformity or a disformity, weak at its ill-conceived joints.[40] "And now," writes Thomas Wilson in his *Art of Rhetoric*, quoting Quintilian, "I would not have all the body to be full of eyes, or nothing but eyes, for then the other parts should want their due place and proportion."[41] For Thomas Campion, however, in his *Observations in the Art of English Poesie*, rhyme is only recognizable as such by virtue of this excess:

> By Rime is understoode that which ends in the like sound, so that verses in such maner composed yeeld but a continual repetition of that Rhetoricall figure which we tearme *similiter desinentia*, and that, being but *figura verbi*, ought (as *Tully* and all other Rhetoritians have iudicially observ'd) sparingly to be us'd, least it should offend the eare with tedious affectation.[42]

According to Campion's definition of rhyme as the "continual repetition" of a figure of speech that ought only "sparingly to be us'd," rhyme is always excessive because our ability to recognize it as such signals a violation of decorous proportion. For Campion, the incessant repetitions of rhyme breed not only "tedious" sound, but also poets: "[T]he facilitie and popularitie of Rime," he writes, "creates as many Poets as a hot sommer flies," and he describes these poets as "enemies" who are "very expert and ready at their weapon, that can if neede be extempore (as they say) rime a man to death."[43]

In book 2 of *The Faerie Queene*, Spenser pits the incessant repetitions of rhyme against both the causal sequence of his narrative and the putative meaning of his allegory. The House of Alma, a castle that is also an impossibly self-sufficient body, is under attack by a legion of

a "thousand villeins" (2.9.13.2) initially introduced with an emphasis on their sheer quantity, likened to "a swarme of Gnats at euentide / . . . That as a cloud doth seeme to dim the skies" (2.9.16.1, 2.9.16.5). When the poem turns to describe the individual components of this mass of bodies, we learn that they are all "fowle misshapen wightes" (2.11.8.2)—"[d]eformed creatures, in straunge difference" (2.11.10.3) who combine the heads of some animals with the beaks and wings of others. These images cast the excessive numbers of the group as a whole as a corporeal problem for each individual within the group, each part of that whole. Like the chimera with which Horace opens his *Ars Poetica*, each of these bodies departs from the principle of unity, a principle that underwrites the mimetic *telos* of art, and *The Faerie Queene* suggests that they are deformities in body because their excessive numbers threaten to disform the poem itself.[44]

In an effort to protect the House of Alma, Arthur identifies the leader of this attacking army:

> Full large he was of limbe, and shoulders brode,
> But of such subtile substance and vnsound,
> That like a ghost he seem'd, whose graue-clothes were vnbound.
>
> $\qquad$ (2.11.20.7–9)[45]

After a lengthy pursuit, Maleger gains the upper hand and has Arthur pinned so that he requires the assistance of his squire, Timias. "So greatest and most glorious thing on ground," the poem assures us, "May often need the helpe of weaker hand" (2.11.30.1–2). Arthur's need of assistance is, then, a sign of man's condition:

> So feeble is mans state, and life vnsound,
> That in assurance it may neuer stand,
> Till it dissolued be from earthly band.
>
> $\qquad$ (2.11.30.3–5)

Raised from the ground by Timias's "weaker hand" and with renewed force, Arthur attacks Maleger "and him so sore smott with his yron mace, / That grouelling to the ground he fell, and fild his place" (2.11.34.8–9). Whose place or, which place? Maleger now occupies the spot previously taken up by the struggling Arthur, which would suggest that Arthur is the referent of "his place," but, as A. C. Hamilton notes, the "phrase may refer to each man's place in the ground"—that proverbial place, returned to its literal origins.[46] Indeed, Arthur seems to think his foe dead; he betrays no small amount of surprise when Maleger's resurrection cuts his own self-congratulations short:

> Wel weened hee, that field was then his owne,
> And all his labor brought to happy end,
> When suddein vp the villeine ouerthrowne,
> Out of his swowne arose, fresh to contend,
> And gan him selfe to second battail bend,
> As hurt he had not beene. Thereby there lay
> An huge great stone, which stood vpon one end,
> And had not bene remoued many a day;
> Some land-marke seemd to bee, or signe of sundry way.
>   (2.11.35.1–9)

This encounter establishes a conceit that it takes Arthur some time to understand: Maleger can die but once he hits the earth, he comes back to life. Arthur has not yet deciphered this riddle but is, instead, surprised that the "end" of his "labor" is coterminous with the revival of his foe. This stanza announces the start of the "second battail" at the precise moment in which the Spenserian stanza trades in on its second life: the medial couplet. William Empson understood the fifth line of Spenser's stanza as "crucial" because it "must give a soft bump to the dying fall of the first quatrain, keep it in the air, and prevent it from falling apart from the rest of the stanza."[47] What Empson calls a "bump," Puttenham called a "band," warning poetic makers that longer stanzas are always threatening to fall into pieces: "sometime," he writes, "ye are driven of necessity to close and make band more than ye would, lest otherwise the staff should fall asunder and seem two staues."[48] In this stanza, the "soft bump" that intervenes in the "dying fall" of the quatrain coincides with Maleger's second entrance into battle, a second entrance that is predicated on erasing all of Arthur's labor—"[a]s hurt he had not beene." Maleger enters this battle as if he had not been hurt in the first battle, as if operating in a poem other than the one in which Arthur landed that fierce blow with his "yron mace." In the subsequent stanza, Arthur will lift that curious "huge great stone" and throw it at Maleger but its emergence in the poem as a sign of a lost place or a lost direction points up the erasure of this previous narrative. The stone, a "signe of sundry way," becomes a material artifact of the first battle, which now appears as if it never even happened: all Arthur can do is throw that artifact in Maleger's direction.

Hamilton offers a third explanation for the poem's description of Maleger's initial fall: Maleger may occupy the "place" shared by all men (in which case he's dead); Maleger may occupy the "place" recently occupied by Arthur (in which case, Maleger is a double for

Arthur and "the helpe of weaker hand" that allowed Arthur to rise again is here invisible); or, Hamilton writes, "the phrase"—that additive clause, syntactically superfluous to a sentence that could have ended with out it, "and fild his place"—"may be the common rhyming tag, for the writing" he explains "as evident in the repetition and internal echoes, is weak."[49] I want to suggest that this final alternative, the idea that Spenser nods and produces the very excess against which early modern theorists warned, is actually entangled with the first two: the conspicuous display of artifice that characterizes the subsequent stanzas is a kind of metonymy for the "weaker hand" that raises Maleger from the ground. That "hand" belongs to the poet.

After the next killing, Spenser's stanza suggests that the cause of Maleger's resurrection—his iterative, heretical life—is the rhyme that ensures its own existence. Like the earth that it names a "playne," pulling in the homonym of a poetic *plaint*, Spenser's rhymes give life to Maleger:

> Twixt his two mighty armes him vp he snatcht,
> And crusht his carcas so against his brest,
> That the disdainfull sowle he thence dispacht,
> And th'ydle breath all vtterly exprest:
> Tho when he felt him dead, adowne he kest
> The lumpish corse vnto the sencelesse grownd,
> Adowne he kest it with so puissant wrest,
> That back againe it did alofte rebownd,
> And gaue against his mother earth a gronefull sownd.
>
> As when *Ioues* harnesse-bearing Bird from hye
> Stoupes at a flying heron with proud disdayne,
> The stone-dead quarrey falls so forciblye,
> That yt rebownds against the lowly playne,
> A second fall redoubling backe agayne
>
> (2.11.42–43.1–5).[50]

If we were expecting rebirth what we get is physics: thrown hard from above, anything—body, bird—rises again. After a series of self-contained lines closed off by the forceful end-stop of delayed verbs, Maleger's "ydle breath" leaves his body as it also leaves our own. With the loose coordination of that additive "And," the fourth line is a syntactical reach, an overextension from "brest" to "exprest," and this stanza could expire here with Maleger. The enjambment of the medial couplet, however, initiates a downward propulsion, "adowne he kest / The lumpish corse," that picks up speed with its own repetition,

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"Adowne he kest it," until it comes up fast and hard against the result clause of the eighth line and the painful echo it produces: "That back againe it did alofte rebownd, / And gaue against his mother earth a gronefull sownd." As the second stanza begins the fall again with a simile, the rhyme of the medial couplet describes the bouncing body—"yt rebownds against the lowly playne, / A second fall redoubling backe agayne"—and anticipates the final resurrection. (Though Arthur "felt him dead," Maleger comes back to life again.)

More than anticipation, we might even say that this medial couplet brings Maleger back to life: the iterative structure of its form—the very excess that, for Campion, marks rhyme as such—sets the terms for the incessant repetition that Arthur faces as he does battle. As Maleger "rebownds" "agayne" and "against" the "playne" that is also a *plaint*, Spenser's rhymes act as an engine in a nightmarish battle against an enemy who refuses to die for good. Rhyme and Arthur work, here, at cross-purposes and rhyme acts to recall what Arthur seeks to move beyond. Identifying Maleger with Arthur's melancholy, James Nohrnberg suggests that this foe is "obsessively before" Arthur because "something analogous is behind him in time."[51] As the language of "rebownds" and "redoubling" suggests, rhyme shares with allegory this essential belatedness; in this battle, rhyme's iterative activity insists on the temporal rift that allegory is always attempting to conceal.[52] By locating rhyme as the cause of Maleger's iterative, heretical life, Spenser's poem backs itself into a rather tight corner where its own rhyme is on the wrong side of its allegory. Killing Maleger (for good) seems, for a moment, to be coterminous with ending the generative capacity of Spenser's rhymes, of defeating his stanza and putting a stop to his poem.

Arthur will, finally, defeat Maleger when he suddenly remembers that he knows exactly what to do, recalling knowledge that the poem has already insisted he could not have. If, as the poem suggested, "Like did he neuer heare, like did he neuer see" (2.11.40.9), then how, exactly, can Arthur have "then remembred well, that had bene sayd" (2.11.45.1)? How can Arthur remember that the earth is the source of Maleger's resurrection if he has neither heard nor seen anything to this end? Somehow, he does remember. Arthur crushes his enemy with ease and makes his way to a stagnant lake into which he drops the body. If Maleger is a figure for mortality, he only comes to embody that mortality upon his extinction and the reiterative existence for which Spenser's rhymes acted as cause constituted a resistance to this act of allegoresis.[53] Arthur's ability to remember what he never knew is the

poem's way out of the Gordian Knot that bound the poem's existence to the heretical longevity of Maleger.

I understand Maleger to be something like "the war machines" that Jessica Wolfe has described in *Humanism, Machinery, and Renaissance Literature* (2004)—Talus, "made of yron mould, / Immoueable, resistlesse, without end," being the best known (5.1.12.6–7). Where, however, early modern machines were useful metaphors for *sprezzatura* because, as models of precise and yet easy composure, they also kept their inner workings enclosed, Spenser's poetics open Maleger up for display.[54] The technology that drives Maleger is rhyme: Spenser's poem shares this organ with Arthur's foe. It is significant, of course, that Spenser did not incorporate the causal account I outline into the narrative of his allegory. According to the causal sequence of his allegory, it is the "playne" that gives life to Maleger (*that* is what Arthur conspicuously remembers) rather than the poetic *plaint*. I would like to briefly turn, however, to an illustrative counterpoint, a poem that suggests what it might have looked like if Spenser *had* incorporated rhyme's causal work into the temporal sequence of his allegory. In Charles Aleyn's *Historie of that Wise and Fortunate Prince*, Henry rouses his troops with an oration: where Richard's soldiers might flee, "*you*," he insists, "Are in a certeine desperatenesse betweene / *Conquest* and *death*" and he concludes his speech with a closing couplet that is also an imperative command—"you must not doubt to dye / Though Fortune doubts to give the *Victory*." Aleyn then proceeds to describe how Henry's closing word animates his soldiers:

> That word pronounced *last*, impression made:
> (So the *last* sounds result most forcibly.)
> Lost in the mazes of their eares it play'd
> Till they were ravish'd into valiancie.
>   For valour was infus'd at this *Oration*,
>   As at a *Fiat*, or some new *Creation*.

Henry's final word closes off his speech and the stanza's couplet but the poem then follows that sound as "Lost in the mazes of their eares it play'd" until the soldiers cry out in unison—their "shouts breathing forwardnesse"—and "one might sweare / They did such motions to their Armour give, / That *Iron breathed*, and that *steele* did *live*."[55] The poem then contrasts their reanimation with a broken automaton:

> *Albert*, whose speaking statue with a stroke
> Of *Aquin* fell: *A worke of Art* (cryed out)
> *Of thirty yeares is broke*: but here were broke
> Workes, which ev'n *Nature* was as long about
>   Blows to their Principles resolve agen,
>   *Naturall* statues, *artificiall* men.[56]

Henry's final word reassembles "broke / Workes" by turning them into "*artificiall* men" and Aleyn's poem suggests that this ability to reanimate lies not with the meaning of the word "*Victory*" but, instead, the playful, errant materiality of rhyme: "*last* sounds result most forcibly." Not all words affect the listener equally but a word's peculiar power turns on the position that it occupies at the end of a line rather than its semantic value. It is "*last* sounds" that "result most forcibly" where the verb "result" suggests "to rise again" ("result": from the classical Latin *resultare*, "to rebound," and from post-classical Latin, "to rise again").[57] A resurrection of the sound that it also exceeds, "*Victory*" transforms the soldiers into "*artificiall* men" because it offers the possibility of a gift just beyond the end that the poem guarantees: "you must not doubt to dye / Though Fortune doubts to give the *Victory*."

Rhyme reanimates these soldiers because it drives a wedge between the material word and its semantic value, suggesting that the significance of that word lies in its causality—its ability to produce artificial life in its listeners. (The intransitive verb "result" treats this causality as something of a given—where "*last* sounds" rise again, they bring about themselves—but it also contains this causality in a self-enclosed loop where the only results that "*last* sounds" can bring about are themselves again.) According to the dominant histories of early modern poetic theory (especially those which take Horace's *ut pictura poesis* as axiomatic), poetry works to bring about a thing that is like life, a thing that is lively, rather than life as such; it does so through a peculiar combination of *energeia* (energy or vitality) and *enargeia* (vividness).[58] Frequently conflated in both the early modern rhetorical tradition and modern criticism, the vitality of *energeia* is understood to manifest within the vivid, visible pulse of *enargeia* precisely because the liveliness of a poem, the quality by which one might measure its likeness to life, operated within a visual epistemology—an odd if nonetheless functional fulcrum between what Joseph Campana has described as the "iconic clarity" of a moral certainty characteristic of Horace's didactic poetic theory and the emergent empiricism of Baconian science.[59] Thus, as late as his 1715 introductory essay to Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, John Hughes would describe the poet's ancient process of "Invention" as

"the Power of raising Images or Resemblances of things, giving them Life and Action, and presenting them as it were before the Eyes." This essentially mimetic understanding of the poetic process "was thought," Hughes adds, "to have something in it like Creation."[60] As Campana has argued, however, Spenser's poetics departs from this Horation tradition precisely by disentangling the vital from the visual and by imagining for *energeia* and "the pleasures of poetry" that stimulate an affective transmission between text and reader "a form of resistance to an ethos of aggressive moralistic heroism, a way of activating the sensuous capacities of the body and an invitation to consider how from the texture of aesthetic experiences arises ethical dispositions rooted in common corporeality."[61] This is how the Spenserian stanza, for Campana, with its "seemingly idle but thematically significant rhymes," operates in those sensuous spaces like the bower of bliss (the place to which Guyon has taken off, leaving Arthur behind to face Maleger on his own).[62] Rhyme, paradigmatic among the "properties of poetry . . . sensuous, infectious, erotic, and potentially compromising," was the way in which the aesthetic might be confronted "as a physical and affective vulnerability, an openness, to others."[63] I am not so sure, however, that in the instance of Spenser's Maleger or Aleyn's "*artificiall* men," rhyme presupposes a "common corporeality" to which it plays aesthetic seductress. Insofar as rhyme relates to a "common corporeality," it is the relation of cause to effect: in these instances, rhyme produces the corporeality from which affective theories of the aesthetic would have it proceed and the corporeality that it produces is closer to that of an automaton—"*Iron*" and "*steele*"—than human flesh. When you look inside Maleger, what you see is rhyme.

* * * * *

In *The Faerie Queene*, the conspicuous display of artifice characteristic of rhyme betrays the hand of the maker behind the narrative temporal sequence on display. Rhyme threatens to drive the poem away from its allegory until Arthur remembers knowledge that the poem has already claimed he could not have. In his *Certayne Notes of Instruction*, George Gascoigne responds to this kind of threat by subordinating rhyme to the teleology of a poet's "Invention." Gascoigne warns the novice poet that "your rime leade you not from your firste Invention." He worries that "many wryters, when they have layed the platforme of their invention, are yet drawen sometimes (by ryme) to forget it or at least to alter it."[64] Gascoigne thereby inscribes the lesser

value of rhyme relative to invention into a paradigmatic account of the compositional process. According to this paradigm, rhyme will not disrupt the logic of invention if the necessities it imposes upon a poem's lexicon are consistent with, rather than a departure from, the "platforme" with which the poet begins. But this episode in *The Faerie Queene* does not simply betray the hand of the poet, revealing—against the imperative of *sprezzatura*—the labor of making.[65] Instead, that hand enters into the world of the poem: the rhyme with which Spenser crafts his poem exerts a causal force in his narrative. Rhyme brings back what the allegory seeks to move beyond and threatens to trap Arthur (and the poem) in endless battle where "labor" could not be brought to "happy end" unless *The Faerie Queene* were ready to proceed in blank verse or prose. Spenser takes the commonplace fear that conspicuous artifice gives the lie to the apparently natural temporal sequence on display and then he transforms exposure into intervention: as a metonymy for his own laboring hand, Spenser's rhyme raises Maleger from the ground. If the "weaker hand" of Timias lifts Arthur from "his place" on the ground, the poet's hand enters into the causal world of his poem and resurrects Maleger.

The causal sequence with which rhyme is most concerned is thus neither the narrative temporal sequence (to which Quintilian would have it subordinate) nor the "platforme" of invention (to which Gascoigne would have it subordinate). According to the first, the conspicuous artifice of rhyme disrupts the plausibility of a given work because it suggests that the putatively natural sequence on display is, in fact, an artificial production.[66] According to the second, what Amanda Watson has called the "distraction" of rhyme compels the poet to surrender reason to rhyme with the result that, as Francis Bacon so famously pronounced, men "hunt more after . . . the sweet falling of the clauses, and the varying and illustration of their workes with tropes and figures: then after . . . the soundnesse of argument, life of inuention, or depth of judgment."[67] In the Maleger episode of *The Faerie Queene*, however, rhyme renders legible an alternative system of causation, one which organizes a text's own history of production. If, that is, we are to understand rhyme as something other than a threat to the plausibility of a given work, as the "chief life" of a work rather than the chief disrupter of that work's life-likeness, it is according to a text's own narrative of becoming. Within this narrative, rhyme acts as a cause, the thing within which the "life" of a text "standeth" because it brings that text into existence.

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Rhyme acts as a cause of the poetic text in at least two senses: the material and the formal. In his treatise on dialectic entitled *The Lawiers Logike*, Abraham Fraunce writes (via Aristotle) that, "the matter is the cause of the which a thing is made."[68] When Fraunce provides examples of the material cause from Spenser's *Shepheardes Calender*, he turns to the "honny Bee" from the *December Eclogue*, "Woorking her formall roomes in waxen frame."[69] Fraunce also includes a description of a cup: "So in August Willy sheweth what matter his cup was made of, thus: Then lo, *Perigot*, the pledge which I plight, / A mazer ywrought of the maple warre."[70] In both of these examples, the means of production—wax, maple—are also the material preconditions for artistic creation. As a material cause, rhyme drives a wedge between the word and the thing to which that word refers, suggesting that what is most important about that word is not its capacity to refer but its instrumentality to composition. Rhyme makes matter for the poetic maker to work with and work over.[71] Repetition, Sigurd Burckhardt suggests, "tears the words out of their living linguistic matrix" so that one is "left with nothing but a vile phonetic jelly."[72] Once words (or eyes) are separated from the teleology of meaning (or seeing), they "restore" to themselves "the corporeality which a true medium needs."[73] As material cause, rhyme inscribes a history of production into a given composition and the causal sequence that it defines is that of becoming.[74] It is in this sense that Puttenham compared the poetic maker who works with rhyme to a "mason" who "in buildings of stone and brick . . . giveth a band . . . to hold in the work fast and maintain the perpendicularity of the wall."[75] It also provokes a method of interpretation aligned with the early modern mechanical arts: "a maker's knowledge."[76] As material cause, rhyme reveals the history of poetic craft and suggests that perceiving this history is a way of coming to know the composition as a made thing.

Rhyme also acts as a formal cause: "The forme," Fraunce wrote in his *Lawiers Logike*, "is a cause by the which a thing is that which it is."[77] Returning to Willy's cup, Fraunce's example for the formal cause includes a lengthy description of the scene that cup displays with an emphasis on the undeniable singularity of that scene: "Tell me, such a cup hast thou ever seene?"[78] The formal cause is thus the basic principle of differentiation—"whatsoever is, by the formall cause it is that which it is, and is different from all other things that it is not."[79] Singularity, however, is not synonymous with either necessity or inevitability. If the formal cause is the principle according to which a poem is what it is, then rhyme does this work of differentiation with a peculiar clarity.

As Susan Stewart writes, "When any artist sets to work, various forces of contingency and necessity are at play. . . . Until such a mark or note is struck, and then the next and the next, the form is replete with any number of choices, and each choice then exercised is dense with its relation to what otherwise could have been."[80] Rhyme, she suggests, is especially paradigmatic of this dynamic: rhyme makes legible the traces of possible words that could have been (but were not) used and therefore raises the specter of the poems that might have been.[81] Rhyme sets the parameters of possibility for a given composition and these parameters cast what the poem is as one among a finite set of possibilities.

By this account, the formal cause is a principle according to which we understand the contingency rather than the necessity of what a poem is and thus, this understanding of the "formal cause" cuts against form's associations with teleology and immanence.[82] It is with the language of "formal cause," for example, that R. S. Crane described the relations of part and whole as essential in his *Language of Criticism and the Structure of Poetry*. For Crane, the formal cause is a "shaping cause of structure" that sets the coordinates of the possible, distinguishing what the author "must or could do" from what the author "need not or ought not to do" with the result that a composition achieves "organic wholeness."[83] Where Crane understood the formal cause as the source of the vitality of the "organic," however, Gascoigne suggests that, from the perspective of rhyme, access to this finite set of possibilities was a thoroughly work-a-day event in early modern England. Gascoigne details the following exercise to "help" the novice poet "a little with ryme (which is also a plaine young schollers lesson)":

> [W]hen you have set downe your first verse, take the last worde thereof and coumpt over all the wordes of the self same sounde by order of the Alphabete : As, for example, the laste woorde of your firste line is *care*; to ryme therwith you have *bare*, *clare*, *dare*, *fare*, *gare*, *hare*, and *share*, *mare*, *snare*, *rare*, *stare*, and *ware*, *etc*. Of all these take that which best may serve your purpose, carrying reason with rime : and if none of them will serve so, then alter the laste worde of your former verse, but yet do not willingly alter the meanyng of your Invention.[84]

Novice poets might, then, not realize a form latent within a given composition but generate form through a routine exercise that situates such form as one among many possibilities within a closed system determined by a finite set of rhyme words. While Gascoigne is ultimately concerned with reining poetic production in under the

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telos of "reason" and "Invention," the parameters of possibility for a given composition are set by a lexicon of rhyme words that is always in danger of driving a maker away from his invention, of substituting its own sense of what is possible for the sense developed by "the meanyng of your Invention."

The Maleger episode in *The Faerie Queene* takes this kind of worry seriously—the concern that rhyme will distract the poet from his invention—but it does this by way of a peculiar literalization of the problem. Where Gascoigne imagines this distraction as a problem of meaning, that by using a word like "end" (for example), the poet may then be compelled, against the "reason" of his "Invention," to use words like "contend" and "bend," Spenser's poetics recast the digressive potential of rhyme as a problem of narrative causation: rhyme enters into *The Faerie Queene* as an engine of warfare, resurrecting what was already dead. Spenser nonetheless flags rhyme as a problem for invention and the contingency of narrative: if not for the causal work of his rhyme words, his poem might have been something other than what it is. At the moment in which rhyme intervenes in the causal world of the poem, that "huge great stone" emerges, recasting Arthur's initial defeat of Maleger as a "sundry way." Rhyme becomes, in *The Faerie Queene*, a force of contingency and thus compels us to take another look at the pithy maxim the poet offered as both a distillation of the condition of mortality and an explanation of Arthur's rather unheroic dependency on his squire:

> So greatest and most glorious thing on ground
> May often need the helpe of weaker hand;
> So feeble is mans state, and life vnsound,
> That in assurance it may neuer stand,
> Till it dissolued be from earthly band.
> (2.11.30.1–5)

This medial couplet is the closest that *The Faerie Queene* comes to telling us that the very stuff that brings Maleger back to life is also the stuff of rhyme (the one acts as modifier to the other): "earthly band." Spenser's medial couplet becomes, by this account, a formal emblem of the "band" that ties man to earth, preserving his "life vnsound" while also guaranteeing the contingency of that "life" (as opposed to its "assurance"). If, as Sidney suggested, the "chief life" of verse, "standeth in that like sounding of words, which we call rhyme," it is, Spenser suggests, a "life vnsound," an account that yokes the sick, the diseased, the unhealthy, to a denial of the very substance that distinguishes the

"life vnsound" from death. In *The Faerie Queene*, rhyme binds man to earth, as if rhyme were an extra limb or organ (one that man may not even know he has).

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Around 1599, William Scott—a student of law at the Inner Temple—drafted his *Model of Poesy*, a commentary on Sidney's *Defence* that is also a poetic treatise in its own right; in that treatise, Scott provides the following rule for rhyme: "[T]hat your rhyme be not of the same words or consonants but like sounding only or agreeing in the vowels (which are the life of sound)."[85] Scott's own echo of Sidney's text is discernible not only in that parenthetical phrase but in his earlier definition of rhyme, with its emphasis on the word that we moderns use to name the device that the ancients called something else: that "like sounding of the last words or ends of our verses which we call *rhyme*."[86] When Scott clarifies his rules for rhyme by describing vowels as "the life of sound," we are witnessing a moment in which Scott thinks through a claim by Sidney by inhabiting the shape or the form of that claim and applying it to an altered but related subject. If rhyme is the "chief life" of modern, vernacular verse, vowels "are the life of sound," the thing by virtue of which rhyme itself is made possible. To borrow an important word from Scott's own theoretical lexicon, the relationship of these nesting dolls is that of the "model" where the one provides a scaled structure, proportional to the other, even as the designation that vowels "are the life of sound" admits for no rivals (unlike Sidney's adjective "chief"). By describing them as "the life of sound," Scott may be referring to the independence of vowels—to the vowel's ability, as Ben Jonson describes it in his *English Grammar*, to "be pronounced by it selfe."[87] Or, Scott could be alluding to the flexibility of vowels, their protean capacity to sound differently (as Jonson describes it, to be "sounded doubtfully").[88]

The idea that vowels "are the life of sound" identifies that grammatical unit by which sound is made possible while also maintaining that rhyme words can repeat only those particular units: other units—words, consonants—can only be "like." Only the vowel can remain a constant. In this sense, Scott could also be invoking, à la Plato's *Cratylus*, the idea that vowels allow us access to the essential (rather than the merely conventional) relationship between a word and the thing that it names (the residue of which theory can be felt in modern criticism every time a scholar notes the uncanny quality of the meaning forged

by rhyme words).[89] This essence, in turn, can reshape the speaker of such vowels, as in Hermogenes's claim that we speak of "Solemnity" with "broad sounds that make us open our mouths wide when we pronounce them. We are thus forced by the nature of the words themselves to speak broadly."[90] Vowels may be the "life of sound" but they also do things to the mouths and minds of those who sound them, manipulating their lips and compelling them to speak of what they might not otherwise have spoken. This is not so much the image of sound following sense or even sense following sound; the image turns, instead, on the instrumentalization of a human body in the service of a life that originates in language and is located in those units (vowels) that remain the same across different rhyme words.

In his study *After Life*, Eugene Thacker describes the problem of life in post-Aristotelian Scholastic philosophy as a question of the relation between "Life"—Aristotle's *psukhe* as a "vital principle" or "the-life-that-forms"—and "the living"—those beings within which *psukhe* is manifest but to any single attribute of which it is not reducible ("life-forms" rather than "the-life-that-forms").[91] Between the twin poles of theological transcendence and biological reductionism, Thacker argues that philosophy's explanation of the relation between "*that-by-which-the-living-is-living*" and "*that-which-is-living*" is always refracted through a series of displacements: the relation becomes a problem of "time and temporality," "form and finality," or "spirit and immanence."[92] Each of these explanations is itself constituted by a set of contradictions that emanate from, or take their conceptual cause as, one fundamental contradiction: the separation of "Life" from "the living" necessarily entails that "Life" cannot in itself become subject to empirical verification. For Thacker, Sidney's claim that the "chief life" of modern verse "standeth in rhyme" would actually constitute a denial of the very life-principle it would seem to pin down because "*vitalism is always undermined by an ontology of discrete localization*."[93] If, however, philosophy's answer to the question of the relation between "Life" and "the living," its explanation of a principle that cannot in itself be apprehended by empiricism, is "a set of fundamental contradictions inherent in the concept of life, contradictions that are logically coherent, and yet ontologically necessary," this essay would suggest that poetry mediates between theology and biology differently from that discipline with which it was so frequently paired, and against which it was so frequently defined, in early modern defenses.[94] In order to take Spenser's rhymes seriously, we have to begin by distinguishing them not only from scientific and religious explanations of life but also, from philosophical explanations of life.

In the Maleger episode of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, rhyme is poetry's response to the question of the relation between life and the living but this response is closer in form to what we might expect from an engineer or an architect than from a philosopher. As Gordon Teskey has suggested, "traditional, constructive, propositional thinking, which works according to method" assumes that "the remotest conclusions are implied in, and follow necessarily from, the original premises. That at least is the ideal. But it is an ideal," he continues, "of absolute closure and reversibility." By contrast, *The Faerie Queene* performs a kind of thinking in which the relations it draws, or the relations by which it draws things together, are unexpected discoveries because they are the side-effect or even the by-product of poetic craft: "while the poet is concentrating on various deliberate mental actions—among which is the complex, Spenserian stanza—he is moving instinctively, though on purpose, deeper into the problem he raises."[95] What Teskey understands as a property of instinct, this essay has argued is the process of artifice or technique (the image, then, is one of Spenser's stanza working away at him rather than the other way around). The poem posits a piece of machinery that allows it to proceed as if rhyme constitutes its "chief life" and then, it details for us the consequences of this counterfactual vision. By positing, or *supposing*, rhyme as poetry's answer to the question of the relation between Life and the living, *The Faerie Queene* makes rhyme special: it privileges this one device for its defining commitment to iteration.[96]

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NOTES

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[1] Susan Stewart, "Rhyme and Freedom," in *The Sound of Poetry/The Poetry of Sound*, ed. Marjorie Perloff and Craig Dworkin (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2009), 29.

[2] Philip Sidney, "Defence of Poesy," in *The Major Works*, ed. Katherine Duncan-Jones (1580; Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1989), 248.

[3] John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Alastair Fowler (Harlow: Longman, 1968), 55. The representation of rhyme as bondage was popular in the period: see also Thomas Campion, "Observations in the Art of English Poesie," in *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, ed. G. Gregory Smith, 2 vol. (1602; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1904), 2:331–32 and Ben Jonson, "A Fit of Rime against Rime," in *Ben Jonson*, 8 vol. ed. C. H. Herford, Percy Simpson, and Evelyn Simpson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1947), 8:183. For an example of a progressive history of the prosodic line, see George T. Wright, *Shakespeare's Metrical Art* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1988), 38.

[4] George Puttenham, *The Art of English Poesy*, ed. Frank Whigham and Wayne Rebhorn (1589; Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 2007), 96. This account of the ideological

work of poetic form belongs to eloquence more broadly conceived, including not only poetry but also the figures of rhetoric: see, for instance, Henry Peacham, *The Garden of Eloquence* (London, 1593), AB[3r]. See also Wayne Rebhorn, *The Emperor of Men's Minds* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1995), esp. 23–132.

[5] Samuel Daniel, "A Defence of Rhyme," in *Sidney's 'The Defence of Poesy' and Selected Renaissance Literary Criticism*, ed. Gavin Alexander (1603; London: Penguin, 2004), 213.

[6] Aaron Kunin has read Milton's "On Shakespeare" as a (literally) astonishing version of this project: where "the world has become a monoculture in which no one can say or do anything that has not been written in 'the leaves of [Shakespeare's] unvalu'd Book,'" as in Milton's poem, "Shakespeare does not need a tomb for his bones because he has turned the entire human population into tombs" ("Shakespeare's Preservation Fantasy" *PMLA* 124 [2009]: 102).

[7] For an overview of Coleridge's organicism, see M. H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1953), 167–77; 218–25. For the presence of organicism in the central documents of New Criticism, see Cleanth Brooks, "Irony and 'Ironic' Poetry" *College English* 9 (1948): 232, 237. For a more recent reevaluation, see Susan J. Wolfson, *Formal Charges* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1997), 1–30, as well as her important discussion of how Coleridge's own poetic practices depart from this ideal (63–99).

[8] G. N. Giordano Orsini, "The ancient roots of a modern idea," in *Organic Form: The Life of an Idea*, ed. G. S. Rousseau (London: Routledge, 1972), 10.

[9] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "On the Definitions of Life Hitherto Received," in *Miscellanies, Aesthetic and Literary*, ed. T. Ashe (London: George Bell and Sons, 1885), 384–85. For "multiformity uniform" as an aesthetic ideal in early modern poetics, see Puttenham, 109. See also Rayna Kalas, *Frame, Glass, Verse: The Technology of Poetic Invention in the English Renaissance* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 2007), 136–38.

[10] Coleridge, *Shakespearean Criticism*, 2 vol., ed. Thomas Middleton Raysor (London: Constable, 1930), 1:224. See also 1:231, 242–44.

[11] Raymond Williams, *Key Words*, rev. ed. (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1983), 138.

[12] Coleridge, *Shakespearean Criticism*, 1:146.

[13] For an account of automata and related simulations of life in the early modern period, see Jessica Wolfe, *Humanism, Machinery, and Renaissance Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2004) and Wendy Beth Hyman, ed., *The Automaton in English Renaissance Literature* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2011), especially Hyman's suggestive "'Mathematical experiments of long silver pipes': The Early Modern Figure of the Mechanical Bird," 145–61.

[14] My distinction between explanation and model is indebted to Evelyn Fox Keller, *Making Sense of Life* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 2002), esp. 15–49.

[15] For a helpful discussion of *mimesis* and *poiesis* with respect to work at the intersection of philosophy of science and literary analysis, see Jacqueline Wernimont, "Discovery in *The World*: The Case of Descartes," in *The Invention of Discovery, 1500–1700*, ed. James Dougal Fleming (Burlington: Ashgate, 2011), 109–124. For *mimesis* and simulations of life in Shakespeare's theater, see Henry S. Turner, *Shakespeare's Double Helix* (London: Continuum, 2007). For an introduction to the range of meanings invoked by "model" in the sixteenth century, see Gavin Alexander, introduction to William Scott, *The Model of Poesy* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2013). "[M]odel," Alexander writes, makes an "affinity" between "Scott's method as a theorist" and "the poetic procedures he describes and theorizes: parallel activities of model-making (*poesis*)" (lxix).

[16] Keller, *Making Sense of Life*, 46.

[17] Peter Steiner, "Russian Formalism," in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: From Formalism to Poststructuralism*, 8 vol., ed. Raman Selden (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1995), 8:18.

[18] Victor Shklovsky, "Art as Technique," in *Russian Formalist Criticism*, trans. Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Reis (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1965), 22–23.

[19] Puttenham, 221.

[20] Puttenham, 243–45.

[21] Peacham, Q^v–r. Though rhyme does not take the explicit form of an interrogation, it turns on a listener's expectation; Puttenham describes rhyme as "verses answering each other" (169).

[22] Denise Gigante, *Life: Organic Form and Romanticism* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2009), 26. Gigante is glossing Schiller: "Out of the piecing together of innumerable but lifeless parts, a mechanical kind of collective life ensued" (*On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, ed. and trans. by Elizabeth M. Wilkinson [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967], 35, quoted in Gigante, 26).

[23] Thinking of Thomas Hardy's claim that he carried Algernon Charles Swinburne's *Poems and Ballads* (1866) in his breast pocket, "just over the heart," Stephen Arata writes: "It might strike us, too, that over the heart is just the right place to wear a poem, an emblem of the way that poetry's rhythms insinuate themselves into our bodies, working sometimes with, sometimes against, the pulses and rhythms of those bodies" ("Rhyme, Rhythm, and the Materiality of Poetry: Response," *Victorian Studies* 53 [2011]: 518).

[24] Kunin describes lyric's immortality project as creating a "quasi-human space" that singles out a synecdoche of the beloved—like beauty—for preservation (95). I want to suggest that the second, heretical life of rhyme generates an alternative understanding of the "quasi-human space" of early modern poetics where the project is less one of preservation than of perpetuation. The central differences between these two versions of the "quasi-human" may turn on genre: where Kunin reads lyric, I read romance.

[25] Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, rev. 2nd ed., ed. A. C. Hamilton (1590; Harlow: Longman, 2001), book 2, canto, 11, stanza 45, line 2. Hereafter cited parenthetically by book, canto, stanza, and line number. On the generative capacity of Spenser's stanza, see Jeff Dolven, "The Method of Spenser's Stanza," *Spenser Studies* 19 (2004): 17–25; Kenneth Gross, "Shapes of Time: On the Spenserian Stanza" *Spenser Studies* 19 (2004): 27–35.

[26] Leah Knight, "Orpheus and the Poetic Animation of the Natural World," in *The Automaton in English Renaissance Literature*, 80. For the myth of Orpheus in Renaissance poetry, see also Heather Dubrow, *The Challenges of Orpheus: Lyric Poetry and Early Modern England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2008).

[27] This essay is in sympathy with studies of vitalism and early modern poetics, including Garrett Sullivan, *Sleep, Romance, and Human Embodiment: Vitality from Spenser to Milton* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2012); Joseph Campana, *The Pain of Reformation* (New York: Fordham Univ. Press, 2012), esp. 107–159; and Katherine A. Craik, "'The Material Point of Poesy': Reading, Writing and Sensation in Puttenham's *The Arte of English Poesie*," in *Environment and Embodiment in Early Modern England*, ed. Mary Floyd-Wilson and Garrett Sullivan, Jr. (New York: Palgrave, 2007), 153–69. Craik details the "vigorous, energetic and powerfully creative exchange between the substance of poetry and the minds and bodies of those who encounter it" (160), arguing that theorists such as Puttenham carefully policed the "series of transactional

relationships between material language and the material bodies of readers and writers" (156) by coupling an ideal of poetic decorum with a "masculine temperate body" (161). Campana, by contrast, describes rhyme as among Spenser's instruments for generating *energeia*, the vital energy of affect with which *The Faerie Queene* critiques an idea of temperance (and of poetry) that turns on the iconic and moral clarity of *enargeia*, or vividness (see esp. 134–35 and 157–59). For discussions of early modern vitalism more generally, chiefly with regard to affect, see Gail Kern Paster, *Humoring the Body* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2004); Bruce Smith, "Hearing Green," in *Reading the Early Modern Passions*, ed. Gail Kern Paster, Katherine Rowe, and Mary Floyd-Wilson (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 147–68.

[28] This reading stands in contrast to Katherine Bootle Attie's recent discussion of rhyme in Shakespeare's plays where she suggests, attending especially to the formal closure of the couplet, that "like a life, and like a play, a rhyme moves consciously toward an end, and the end will come. Of that, at least, we can be certain" ("Passion Turned to Prettiness: Rhyme or Reason in *Hamlet" Shakespeare Quarterly* 63 [2012]: 422). In detailing, instead, rhyme's commitment to endlessness, this essay's work on *The Faerie Queene* proceeds from Jonathan Goldberg's *Endlesse Worke* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1981) which, as he explains in his "Forewords," does "not aim at interpretation or fulfillment, but, rather, at describing the narrative principles that induce frustration, that deny closure, but that also produce the disturbed and disturbing narrative procedures of Spenser's text" (xii).

[29] For an exemplary instance of this approach to the problem of forms of life in early modern literature, see Sullivan's study of the influence of the Aristotelian tripartite soul (esp. 1–46). For Sullivan, poetic forms—in his study, genres—are "*vital*" insofar as "they model ways of thinking relations between forms of life and are animated by Aristotelian vitality" (2). The vitality of poetic forms therefore remains, for Sullivan, figurative (or, what he calls "fanciful"):

> [T]his study considers genre, to put it somewhat fancifully, as *vegetative*. Genre is a generative site, a fertile collection of formal, narrative and thematic possibilities, each with its own ideological resonances. In particular, epic and romance offer distinctive conceptual resources for pondering what it is (or is not) to be human, resources that derive from the doctrine of the tripartite soul. (25)

[30] Puttenham, 172.

[31] Craik, 161. See also Campana, 107–59.

[32] Daniel Shore's "plural reading" of the digital archives provides one example, in which we concern ourselves less with the words on the page of a single text than with the words on myriad pages of myriad texts. Instead of reading a hundred sentences that make up a single work, we would read a hundred analogous sentences in a hundred different works. Instead of a thousand clauses strung together one after another, we would read a thousand clauses scattered throughout the entire history of a discourse. ("WWJD? The Genealogy of a Syntactic Form," *Critical Inquiry* 37 [2010]: 24)

Along similar lines, David Scott Kastan suggests that "in exposing the mystifications that have dominated our categories of literary analysis, theory has now brought us to the point where we must begin to respond to its significant challenges, not by producing more theory but more facts" (*Shakespeare After Theory* [New York: Routledge, 1999], 31). See also Franco Moretti, *Graphs, Maps, Trees* (London: Verso, 2005).

[33] Andrew H. Miller writes:

> Much recent criticism aims, reasonably enough, to establish facts, convey information, or make judgments, and one feature of such writing is that it seems to ask for no continuation from its readers. I've called this modality of criticism "conclusive" to suggest that ending, however difficult an achievement in this or that case, presents no necessary or intrinsic problems for it. To the contrary, ending is its end, its goal: conclusions are what it drives towards in argument. The ending justifies what precedes it. To the extent that it imagines the responses of a reader, it imagines them defined by verification or refutation. ("Implicative Criticism, or The Display of Thinking," *NLH* [2013]: 347)

See also Shore, "WWJD?," 18.

[34] Miller, 353.

[35] Miller, 347. Insofar as the "replies" imagined by "implicative" criticism are "elicited . . . through the performance or display of thinking," Spenser Studies contains a long history of such work (Miller, 347). This is especially true of those who detail *The Faerie Queene*'s own "moments" or "models" or "methods" of thinking and demonstrate the ways in which those procedures transform the mind of the reader, including (most recently), Gross, "Green Thoughts in a Green Shade," *Spenser Studies* 24 (2009): 355–71; Dolven; Gordon Teskey, "'And Therefore as a Stranger Give It Welcome': Courtesy and Thinking," *Spenser Studies* 18 (2003): 343–59; and "Thinking Moments in *The Faerie Queene*," *Spenser Studies* 22 (2007): 103–125. Teskey, for example, distinguishes Renaissance "*scientia*" or "the open project of explaining the *things* of this world," a project that admits that all "the things of this world have not been explained" but believes "they will be explained or at least theoretically they can be explained, in the future" ("And Therefore as a Stranger," 345), from what he calls "noetic circulation":

> *The Faerie Queene* is thinking enacted as a creative, a poetic event. This event of thinking does not occur on the model of what would become the classic situation for early modern philosophy, in which the subject contemplates a surrounding world of unconscious objects. . . . The place of the subject, of thinking consciousness, is not in the author, or not exclusively in the author. There is a circulation of conscious energy, a noetic circulation, which passes through the author into the work and through the work back into the author as the work of composition proceeds . . . Instead of "grasping" a thought or a problem, the model of thinking we encounter in Spenser is an approach to the other which yet leaves the other alone, in its own space. ("And Therefore as a Stranger," 348)

[36] See Lorna Hutson,"Forensic Aspects of Renaissance Mimesis," *Representations* 94 (2006): 80–109 for a discussion of artifice and the construction of dramatic plausibility. In his *Institutio Oratoria*, Quintilian writes: "[T]he great orator" establishes "an absence of haste and premeditation . . . by the use of the ordinary language of everyday speech and a careful concealment of his art. Had he spoken otherwise, his words would by their very sound have warned the judge to keep an eye on the advocate" (trans. H. E. Butler [Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1921], 4.2.58; cited by Hutson, 106n44).

[37] Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, 4.2.118; cited by Hutson, 106n44.

[38] Peacham, I³ᵛ–I⁴ʳ. For a similar critique of the overuse of these figures, see Sidney, "Defence of Poesy," 247 and Thomas Wilson, *The Art of Rhetoric*, ed. Peter E. Medine (1560; University Park: Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 1994), 226–27.

[39] For a discussion of the relationship between *homoioteleuton*, *homoioptoton*, and rhyme, see Peter Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press,

2002), 96–97. For the similarities between *homoioteleuton* and *homoioptoton*, see *Rhetorica Ad Herennium*, trans. Harry Caplan (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1954), 4.20.28; Richard Sherry, *Treatise of Schemes and Tropes* (London, 1550), D⁶ᵛ; Peacham, I³ᵛ–I⁴ʳ. For rhyme as the vernacular version of these figures, see Wilson, 226–27; Puttenham, 167, 258; and Campion, 330. W. K. Wimsatt, by contrast, distinguishes between rhyme and *homoioteleuton*: where rhyme offers "parallels of sound which do not inhere in some parallel meaning of the words themselves," having the effect of "alogicality, if not excess and artificiality," with *homoioteleuton* "each has the same meaning, or is the same morpheme, and each supports the logic of the sentence by appearing in analogous places in the structure" ("One Relation of Rhyme to Reason," *Modern Language Quarterly* 5 [1944]: 324). See also Hugh Kenner, "Rhyme: An Unfinished Monograph," *Common Knowledge* 10 (2005): 383.

[40] If "*Bewtie*," Della Casa's old man insisted in the *Galateo*, "would consist but of *one*, at the moste," then "*Deformitie* contrarywise, measured her selfe, by *Many*" (*Galateo*, trans. Robert Peterson [London, 1576], O⁴ᵛ). In this quantitative sense, deformity means not only "misshapen" (from the Latin, *de-forma*) but also "difformity" from the Medieval Latin *dis-forma* meaning "of diverse forms" (OED, s.vv. "deform, *adj*.," "difform, *adj*.").

[41] Wilson, 194.

[42] Campion, 330.

[43] Campion, 329–30.

[44] Horace writes:

> If a painter chose to join a human head to the neck of a horse, and to spread feathers of many a hue over limbs picked up now here now there, so that what at the top is a lovely woman ends below in a black and ugly fish, could you, my friends, if favored with a private view, refrain from laughing? Believe me, dear Pisos, quite like such pictures would be a book, whose idle fancies shall be shaped like a sick man's dreams, so that neither head nor foot can be assigned to a single shape. (*Ars Poetica*, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough [Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1926], 451)

[45] For a theologically nuanced reading of this "haunting, memorably spectral figure," one whose significance lies in "the contradictory, negating *inextricability* of sin, death, and body" see Judith Anderson, "Body of Death: The Pauline Inheritance in Donne's Sermons, Spenser's Maleger, and Milton's Sin and Death," in *Rhetoric of Bodily Disease and Health in Medieval and Early Modern England*, ed. Jennifer C. Vaught (Surrey: Ashgate, 2010), 179.

[46] Hamilton, ed., note to *The Faerie* Queene, 2.11.34.9, page 266.

[47] William Empson, *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (New York: New Directions, 1947), 33.

[48] Puttenham, 178.

[49] Hamilton designates stanzas 36–40 as "weak" though his standard, "repetition and internal echoes" is also, as my reading will show, a feature of subsequent stanzas (note to *The Faerie Queene*, 2.11.34.9, page 266).

[50] Debra Fried considers (via Stephen Booth) how "rhyme can even enable us to hear a pun when the punning words are not there at all" ("Rhyme Puns," in *On Puns*, ed. Jonathan Culler [Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988], 92).

[51] James Nohrnberg, *The Analogy of The Faerie Queene* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1976), 315. Nohrnberg suggests that belatedness structures Arthur's encounter with Maleger. "Created," he writes, "out of the almost pure ecktoplasm of allegorical 'otherness,'" Maleger becomes a figure for allegory itself: he is "the presentation of

absence, the substantiation of shadow, the embodiment of loss, the animation of death" (321).

[52] See Teskey, *Allegory and Violence* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1996), 1–31.

[53] For Maleger as a symbol of mortality, see James W. Broaddus, "Renaissance Psychology and the Defense of Alma's Castle," *Spenser Studies* 19 (2004): 135–57.

[54] Wolfe, 56–87.

[55] Charles Aleyn, *Historie of the Wise and Fortunate Prince, Henrie of the name the seventh* (London, 1638), C[3r].

[56] Aleyn, C[4v].

[57] *OED*, s.v. "result, *v.*"

[58] As Campana has argued, the perceived collaboration of *energeia* and *enargeia* and the subsequent conflation of liveliness with the visible is at least in part indebted to a history of mistaken readings of the terms (see esp. 107–128).

[59] Campana, 107.

[60] John Hughes, "An Essay on Allegorical Poetry," in *Penguin Critical Anthologies: Edmund Spenser,* ed. Paul Alpers (London: Penguin, 1969), 80. Also quoted in Campana, 110.

[61] Campana, 159. See also 129–59 more generally.

[62] Campana, 137.

[63] Campana, 134, 140.

[64] George Gascoigne, "Certayne Notes of Instruction" (1575), in *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, 1:51–52. See also Campion, 331.

[65] "To foreground the technologies of language," as Rayna Kalas writes, "is to demonstrate that the materiality of language is always an index of language as labor" (64).

[66] Hutson has shown how dramatic narratives of the early modern period generated an audience's perception of likelihood by "the imbuing of an apparently natural temporal sequence with a heightened sense of causality" and how conspicuous artifice was a problem for this project (86).

[67] Amanda Watson, "Off the subject: Early modern poets on rhyme, distraction, and forgetfulness," in *Forgetting in Early Modern English Literature and Culture*, ed. Christopher Ivic and Grant Williams (London: Routledge, 2004), 84; Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning*, ed. Michael Kiernan (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 22.

[68] Abraham Fraunce, *Lawiers Logike* (London, 1588), E[4v].

[69] Fraunce, E[4v]. For Spenser's verse, see Edmund Spenser, "Shepheardes Calender," in *The Yale Edition of the Shorter Poems of Edmund Spenser*, ed. William A. Oram, Einar Bjorvand, Ronald Bond, Thomas H. Cain, Alexander Dunlop, and Richard Schell (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1989), lines 67–68.

[70] Fraunce, E[4r]. Spenser, "Shepheardes Calender," 25–26.

[71] My sense of the materiality of early modern poetics is largely indebted to Anderson, *Words that Matter* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1996).

[72] Sigurd Burckhardt, *Shakespearean Meanings* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1968), 29.

[73] Burckhardt, 24.

[74] In her account of "framing" in the early modern period, Kalas writes, "[F]raming described a thing *in potentia* coming into presence as matter. To frame something was to index a thing in its becoming, instead of its directness or completion" (8).

[75] Puttenham, 178.

[76] "A maker's knowledge," Turner writes, suggests that "the subject knows a thing not by observing it, collecting it, or formulating logically true statements about it, but

because he is instrumental in the process of its coming to be" ("Nashe's Red Herring: Epistemologies of the Commodity in Lenten Stuffe (1599)," *ELH* 68 [2001]: 544). See also Patricia Parker's discussion of "artisanal crafts" in "Rude Mechanicals" in *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture*, ed. Margreta De Grazia, Maureen Quilligan, and Peter Stallybrass (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996), 43–82.

[77] Fraunce, G3v. Craig La Drière framed a distinction between "form" and "style" as that between product and process: "[W]hat is a formal element in an object from the point of view of analysis of the constitution of that object may be an element of style from the point of view of analysis of a process in which the object is involved" ("Form," in *Dictionary of World Literature*, ed. Joseph T. Shipley [New York: Philosophical Library, 1953], 170). By suggesting, however, that rhyme is an index to the act of differentiation, I follow a recent call by Turner to understand "form" as a verb rather than a noun ("Lessons from Literature for the Historian of Science (and Vice Versa): Reflections on 'Form,'" *Isis* 101 [2010]: 5). As a verb, "form" collapses La Drière's distinction.

[78] Fraunce, G3r.

[79] Fraunce, G4r.

[80] Stewart, 30.

[81] Stewart, 30. See also Fried: "[W]e may suspect that the well-crafted couplet, even as it fosters the fiction of rhyme as echo to the sense, runs the risk of awakening echoes of all the lurking phonetic cousins of the rhyming word designed to seem the only possible fitting choice" ("Rhyme Puns," 84). John Hollander suggests that "in tight pairs of rhymes, a "fictional" or hypothetical morpheme . . . is invoked, and if possible a linguistic field of other carefully selected rhyming words welling up in the reader's consciousness from the corpus of possibles" (*Vision and Resonance*, 2nd ed. [New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1985], 121).

[82] This account of formal cause is therefore in sympathy with Timothy Morton's attempt to "revise formal causation while unplugging it from teleology": "Poems," he writes, "are records of causal-aesthetic decisions" and a poem's "shape," as with blown glass, "is the trace of what happened to it" ("An Object-Oriented Defense of Poetry," *NLH* 43 [2012]: 219–20).

[83] R. S. Crane, *The Language of Criticism & The Structure of Poetry* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1953), 140–41. Crane continues,

> Here then—in the artist's intuition of a form capable of directing whatever he does with his materials in a particular work—is an essential cause of poetic structure, the most decisive, indeed, of all the causes of structure in poetry because it controls in an immediate way the act of construction itself. Without it, no poetic whole; with it, a poetic whole of a certain kind and emotional quality, which will be excellent in proportion to the intrinsic possibilities of the form the poet has conceived and to his success in doing with his materials in his medium all that it requires or permits him to do if its full possibilities, as a form of a certain kind, are to be realized. (143)

[84] Gascoigne, 52. Kenner offers an account similar to Gascoigne's, locating the appearance of immanence as an effect of studied mechanical practice:

> Rhyme on any scale therefore, rhymed verse with any pretense to substantiality, is sure to be a pencil-and-paper exercise. There will be lists of possible rhymes to use; there will be strike-outs and second thoughts; blanks will be filled in later, parts will get rearranged, and the poet who understands his job will not leave off till the product of all this contrivance looks as though it could not conceivably have been done otherwise, perhaps even as though it might have been spontaneous. (378–79)

[85] Scott, 64. For Scott and Sidney, see Alexander, introduction to *Model of Poesy*, esp. li–liv.

[86] Scott, 63. Scott also writes, "that answerableness of the ends of our verses in likeness of sound which we call *rhyme*" (60).

[87] Ben Jonson, *English Grammar* (1640), in *Ben Jonson*, 8:468.

[88] Jonson, *English Grammar*, 8:468.

[89] Thinking of *Cymbeline*'s funeral dirge ("Golden lads and girls all must, / As chimney-sweepers, come to dust"), Kenner writes: "Like anything done with pencil and paper, the pursuit of rhymes has a certain air of research, and whoever first noticed that in English speech the *dust* to which men return rhymes with the *must* that obligates them did something akin to what a research chemist does" (380).

[90] Hermogenes, *On Types of Style*, trans. Cecil W. Wooten (Chapel Hill: The Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1987), 22.

[91] Eugene Thacker, *After Life* (Chicago: Chicago Univ. Press, 2010), 17. See also 1–24.

[92] Thacker, *After Life*, 10, xii–xiii.

[93] Thacker, "Thought Creatures," *Theory, Culture & Society* 24 (2007): 316. "Against mechanism," Thacker explains,

> vitalism argues that what makes the living living is nothing material or measurable. Vitalism thus argues that the living cannot simply be reduced to the non-living. This—*the irreducibility of the living*—implies a non-material, non-discrete quality to the living that cannot be discovered in any of the material components or parts of the organism. However, the idea of the irreducibility of the living can be taken to its extreme, where 'life' is simply that which escapes the ability to describe 'life' in language or in thought. In this case the irreducibility of the living becomes the ineffability of the living, its non-reduction to language and thought itself. The discussion of the living becomes an evocation of silence, a muteness of thought before life. (314)

[94] Thacker *After Life*, xiii.

[95] Teskey "And Therefore as a Stranger," 349.

[96] Thinking about the suppositions of poetry (from *supponere* or 'to place under') also compels us to take another look at what the philosopher does when, as Miller writes, he asks us "to suppose or to *consider* something—by telling us to think in these ways." Sometimes, the suppositions "are more intrusive, the supposition's we're to entertain longer, more elaborate—so elaborate, in fact, that it becomes natural to call them fictions. Philosophy thus approaches—not without some distress—the literary" (349). By making rhyme "special," I mean that the particular vitality that *The Faerie Queene* attributes to rhyme resists the flat ontology characteristic of new materialism or new vitalism (or speculative realism) and its attendant, universalist approach to agency and affect. See Jane Bennett's influential *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 2010).