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## The Golden Age and the Iron Age of Gold: The Inversion of Paradise in the Cave of Mammon

When Guyon, the Knight of Temperance in book 2 of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, introduces into his debate with Mammon the notion of a perfectly virtuous "antique world" from which "later ages" have fallen through greed, he brings to the foreground a central issue underlying canto 7: the opposing views of paradise which he and Mammon represent.<sup>1</sup> In this speech Guyon locates paradise in the mythic Golden world found originally in Hesiod, popularized by Ovid, and modified by later writers.<sup>2</sup> As "God of the world and worldlings" (8.1), Mammon, too, has an ideal world: an anti-paradise founded upon literal, not figurative gold—the "paradise" of modernity's Iron Age, not antiquity's Golden one.

Guyon's mythic paraphrase, with its correspondence to Guyon's and Mammon's notions of paradise, has not gone unnoticed by the critics. Harry Levin points out the conflict between Guyon's antique, non-economic paradise and Mammon's modern, gold-centered one, but the vast scope of Levin's work precludes an in-depth examination of this single canto. Paul J. Alpers addresses some of the thematic implications of Guyon's speech for Tantalus and Pilate, but he does not extend this discussion beyond the Garden of Proserpina. Similarly, both Patrick Cullen and James E. Phillips make passing reference to the antique world that Guyon affirms and Mammon rejects, but their main concerns lie with other issues.<sup>3</sup> Despite recognition that the passage has connections with the classical myth of paradise and that, as Alpers notes, details found in at least one other part of the canto echo Guyon's speech, the thematic and textual implications of this passage for the canto as a whole have not yet been explored.

Rather, critics—following Harry Berger's lead—have preferred to focus on Guyon, exploring his response to Mammon from a variety of theological, secular, and syncretistic angles (in which Guyon is regarded as everything from a Christ figure who successfully rejects Mammon's temptations,

to a naive idealist who disavows the very things he needs).<sup>4</sup> Yet Guyon is not Spenser's focus. As Carl Robinson Sonn remarks, Guyon is primarily "vehicular"; Spenser has him go into the cave "for the reader's benefit," not his own.<sup>5</sup> And what he and the reader find there verifies Guyon's belief that Mammon and his "later ages" are antithetical to paradise. To emphasize this point, Spenser focuses throughout the canto on the conflict between these opposing visions of paradise (incorporating along the way a third, Christian, view of paradise), and he not only does so at the level of narrative action, but he also weaves these mythic allusions into the very texture of language itself. Guyon's speech on the ideal world, then, is not merely one of two "sententious utterances"<sup>6</sup> peripheral to the passage as a whole; rather it provides the thematic and textual foundation for the entire Mammon episode.

Guyon's speech on the "antique world" and "later ages" takes place within the context of a debate in which Mammon has offered Guyon his vast wealth if Guyon will "deigne to serue and sew" him, and in which Guyon's repeated refusal has met with Mammon's increasingly intensified attacks (9.1). After consistently rejecting service to Mammon, Guyon delivers the speech that should close the argument, the speech showing the destruction of paradise through the pursuit of material riches:

The antique world, in his first flowring youth,  
 Found no defect in his Creatours grace,  
 But with glad thankes, and vnreproued truth,  
 The gifts of soueraigne bountie did embrace:  
 Like Angels life was then mens happy cace;  
 But later ages pride, like corn-fed steed,  
 Abusd her plenty, and fat swolne encrease  
 To all licentious lust, and gan exceed  
 The measure of her meane, and naturall first need.  
 Then gan a cursed hand the quiet wombe  
 Of his great Grandmother with steele to wound,  
 And the hid treasures in her sacred tombe,  
 With Sacriledge to dig. Therein he found  
 Fountaines of gold and siluer to abound,  
 Of which the matter of his huge desire  
 And pompous pride eftsoones he did compound;  
 Then auarice gan through his veines inspire  
 His greedy flames, and kindled life-deuouring fire.

These descriptions of both the "antique world" and the "later ages" originate in Ovid's "grandly rhetorical" version of Hesiod's ancient myth on the Ages of Man.<sup>7</sup> But in Guyon's speech Spenser merely paraphrases Ovid, using only details which will best fit the circumstances of addressing Mammon. Spenser therefore eliminates Ovid's details of life before cities, laws, and wars, and focuses instead on the point most important for an attack on Mammon—that at a time of unlimited natural, unmaterial bounty, all creation found coexistence in truth and natural justice possible.<sup>8</sup> In Ovid's Golden Age,

*ipsa quoque immunis rastroque intacta nec ullis  
 saucia vomeribus per se dabat omnia tellus,  
 contentique cibis nullo cogente creatis  
 arbuteos fetus montanaque fraga legebant  
 cornaque et in duris haerentia mora rubetis  
 et quae deciderant patula Iovis arbore glandes.*

(The earth herself, without compulsion, untouched by hoe or plowshare, of herself gave all things needful. And men, content with food which came with no one's seeking, gathered the arbute fruit, strawberries from the mountain-sides, cornel-cherries, berries hanging thick upon the prickly bramble, and acorns fallen from the spreading tree of Jove.)

(1.101-6)

Since the virgin earth provided bountifully for her inhabitants, the Golden world was one of trust and truth: "quae vindice nullo,/sponte sua, sine lege fidem rectumque" ("without a law," people of their own accord "kept faith and did the right" [1.89-90]). And as the antique world was in its "first flowering youth," so in Ovid's Golden Age, "ver erat aeternum" ("spring was everlasting" [1.107]).

Spenser's version of this idyllic Golden Age focuses, as Ovid's does, on the relationship between natural bounty and human good, but it does so by first establishing the relationship between the antique world and its creator (the god *it* worshiped). Since in the first line of this speech, "world" is the antecedent for the succeeding masculine pronoun, Spenser has Guyon imply that the whole of creation gave "glad thanks" and embraced the "gifts of soueraigne bountie" (16.1-4). Thus nature is seen as animate, not as inert matter that can be manipulated according to the will of man, as it will be later. Furthermore, creation finds nothing wanting: there is "no defect" in the "Creatours grace" (16.2). With this grace bountifully providing for all (and which all creation—including man—receives

but does not *labor* to get), it is no wonder that the relationship of creation to its creator is one of gratitude nor that creation is truthful rather than deceitful. Ingratitude and deceit become the norm only when man asserts his dominion over nature and hoards her riches for himself, as he will in the "later ages."

The development of material riches brings an end to the spiritual riches of the antique world, and Spenser's version of these later ages focuses (as his Golden Age paraphrase did) on the most appropriate details of Ovid's Iron Age, the age which details this fall. Instead of claiming with Ovid that now "*fugitque pudor verumque fidesque*" ("modesty and truth and faith fled") and that "*in quorum subiere locum fraudesque dolusque/insidiaeque et vis et amor sceleratus habendi*" ("in their place came tricks and plots and snares, violence and cursed love of gain" [1.129-31]), Spenser, in Christian fashion, has Guyon assign the initial violation to pride—from which all these other evils derive (16.6-9). In fact, Guyon's indirect use of Ovid's list allows him to show the progression from the sin of pride to several other of these evils.<sup>9</sup> According to Guyon, pride leads man to abuse nature's plenty, thus bringing about an "all licentious lust" for even more (16.8). No longer satisfied with good, man must now quest for goods. Consequently, he violates the earth in his lust for precious metals, "compound[s]" his pride, succumbs to avarice, and protects his wealth by violence (17.7). As Guyon claims, avarice "kindle[s] life-deuouring fire" (17.9). And though he does not directly state it, we can deduce that avarice leads to the other evils on Ovid's list—to "tricks and plots and snares."

Instead of detailing such facets of Ovid's Iron Age as the felling of trees to build ships for trade, or the division of land to provide for private property, Spenser focuses on the aspect of the Iron Age which bears most directly on Guyon's encounter with Mammon—the mining of the earth for precious metals.<sup>10</sup> According to both Ovid's and Spenser's versions, man once received his sustenance from the earth's bounty; now he repays her by digging into the "*viscera terrae*" (the "bowels of the earth" [Ovid 1.138] and by wounding "the quiet wombe/Of his great Grandmother [earth] with steele" [Spenser 17.2].) Both versions imply that the earth is not the inert matter that man now takes her to be, but rather an organic being, containing bowels and/or a womb. For Ovid man's appropriation of the wealth hidden in the organic earth is an incitement to crime—"inritamenta malorum" (1.140). Spenser's account of the mining agrees with Ovid's, but he has Guyon suggest earth's sacral nature, calling man's dig-

ging in her "Sacredleage." Hence the hand which digs is cursed (17.1-4). For both Ovid and Spenser the mining which destroys the earth is ultimately cursed; it results in avarice, avarice which in turn prompts violence.<sup>11</sup> As Harry Levin remarks, the Golden Age is golden only so long as gold remains underground; once man has dug it up, we have entered the Age of Iron, with its need for iron to dig up and protect its gold.<sup>12</sup> The Iron Age, depending as it does on man's refusal to accept his place as *part* of creation (and on his subsequent manipulation of nature), sees the destruction of all the Golden Age's harmony with nature and among men.

By modeling Guyon's speech on the Golden and Iron Ages of Ovid, Spenser refers his audience to a standard myth which all educated people in the Renaissance could be expected to know in great detail. Not surprisingly, he feels free to make use of details alluding to Ovid's myth throughout the canto, effecting a subtly ironic commentary on Mammon's claims of providing paradise since Guyon's antique world, after all, sets the standard against which we are to measure Mammon's claims. The Iron Age of material riches could, in fact, be termed the "Age of Mammon," since the biblical sources use "mammon" interchangeably with "riches."<sup>13</sup> And despite their being cursed, Mammon establishes his paradise on the very material riches that Guyon insists have destroyed paradise.

Mammon's paradise allows for only one type of riches. When Guyon first rejects Mammon's claims (stating that in preference to Mammon's riches, he will heroically "contend" for "crownes and kingdomes" and take as *his* riches the "Faire shields, gay steedes, [and] bright armes . . . fit for an aduent'rous knight" [10.7-9]), Mammon counters by reminding him that not only can money buy him these riches, but that it can also give him the "crownes and kingdomes" he desires (11.1-5). In offering Guyon an easy, unheroic path to crowns and kingdoms, Mammon focuses on only one meaning of "riches." To be truly rich, Mammon seems to insist, one must live like a king.<sup>14</sup> Mammon's narrow reading of "rich" enables him to avoid seeing the broader possibilities of "riches"; it constrains him to a frame of reference allowing only for kingly riches and compels him to perceive as riches only the wealth and opulence found in "richess" (which is Spenser's English for "mammon") (24.9).

Guyon challenges Mammon's reading. For him, Mammon's Iron Age "richess" leads not to the "worldes blis" but rather to the hellish condition of avarice, in which the "greedy flames" and "life-deuouring fire" coursing through the "veines" of the covetous man evoke a condition simulating hell (17.8-9). The word "veines" also punningly alludes to the

veins of ore which have initially inspired the avarice, thus reemphasizing the baneful effects of metallic riches.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, Guyon's statement rejecting Mammon's "idle offers" of "golden fee" should be read simultaneously as a literal statement that Mammon's bribe of gold cannot buy Guyon, and as an assessment of the cost of serving Mammon (9.7). With the previous line stating that Mammon's "godheades vaunt is vaine" (Mammon has claimed to be "God of the world and worldlings" [8.1]), the sound of "idle" turns into "idol," showing the idolatry of serving riches (9.6-7).<sup>16</sup> Hence Mammon, we see, is no true god but a false one: he is a mere image or idol, with no real power (as indicated also by his initial fear of Guyon [6] and his need to release the knight after three days have elapsed [65.6-66.4]). "Fee," in addition to meaning the literal bribe offered by Mammon, can also refer here to the tribute a subordinate must pay the one he serves. Guyon, then, implies that he would pay too dearly should he offer Mammon his service; the sheer cost of serving an idol, these puns seem to say, outweighs the value of the golden bribe Mammon offers. Mammon's riches (like his "godheades vaunt") are empty; they are "idle." Though Guyon refuses the riches Mammon offers because of their heavy cost, his rejection of Mammon's version of crowns and kingdoms also shows his awareness that "riches" itself has more possibilities than the single, limited definition offered by Mammon.

Since Guyon seeks riches not grounded in Mammon's opulence, he shows that "riches" refers to something more subjective than sheer wealth. It instead becomes whatever a specific value system considers it to be.<sup>17</sup> Though Guyon here redefines riches in terms of his chivalric value system (as "riches fit for an aduent'rous knight" [10.9]), his reference to the un-martial antique world implies an awareness that even the modest riches he seeks are not the perfect riches of the ideal world—that his pursuit of right through martial arms is necessary only because the perfect world no longer exists. And it no longer exists, as we have already seen, because it has been overthrown by the material riches of the Iron Age, by the destructive "richness" which Mammon advocates as the true paradise.

Mammon rejects Guyon's antique world outright, terming it rude and describing its inhabitants as living in a "state forlorne" (18.2-3). Rejecting the "Creatours" bountiful "grace," he offers instead his own "graces":

Riches, renowme, and principality,  
 Honour, estate, and all this worldes good,  
 For which men swinck and sweat incessantly.  
 (8.5-7)

Throughout the canto Mammon claims that his "graces" provide the "worldes blis" (32.7), that they provide all earthly happiness (9.1-5), despite the fact that, in opposition to the "Creatours grace," all must labor "incessantly" for Mammon's bounty (a reality demonstrated throughout the canto, as all the demons at the forge must also "swincke" and "sweat" [36.9], and as Tantalus must "vainely swinke" to reach the golden apples [58.7]).<sup>18</sup> Mammon would have us believe that his material riches are the world's end, that they are the meaning of life, and that he amply provides for the citizens of the modern world (32.7).

Yet Mammon's appearance and actions undercut his claim that he is a god who gives his bounty to all. In his initial appearance Mammon's "vn-couth, saluage," "vnciuile," "griesly," and "fowle ill fauour'd" demeanor labels him more demon than god (3.4-5).<sup>19</sup> Even the incessant "s" alliteration running through stanza 3 suggests the subtly serpentine, perhaps demonic nature of this figure. And despite his claim of providing plentifully, Mammon actually has no intention of providing anything. Instead, at first sight of Guyon, he fearfully pours his "pretious hills" of gold "through an hole full wide" (6.3-4), thus exhibiting all the "disquietnesse" that Guyon will later say riches create and clearly signalling his deceptive character (12.2).<sup>20</sup>

This deceitfulness is played out throughout the canto, as Mammon relies on the "tricks and plots and snares" which Ovid assigns to the Iron Age. Though Mammon claims that Guyon can have wealth in return for his service (9.1-5), Guyon's visit to Mammon's abode indicates otherwise: for the duration of the visit an "vgly feend, more fowle then dismall day" follows Guyon, ready to "do him dye" should he sleep, eat, or display any desire for the very things that Mammon claims to be offering him (26.7, 27.7).<sup>21</sup> In stanza 30 the "sculs" and "dead mens bones" scattered throughout the room with the "yron chests and coffers strong" indicate that many have perished here, perhaps at the claws of this very fiend. The "exceeding store" in the following stanza has never before been seen by human eyes (31.4-5), while the demons at the forge have never seen a human being (37.4-5), indicating that Mammon's tricks have previously been successful: all other prospective "guests" have met with destruction long before they reached the sights that Guyon is now being shown. The plenty Mammon pours out, then, he surrounds with deceit and death. Having no true intention of giving of his plenty (of offering his "graces"), Mammon instead seeks only to entangle the unsuspecting victim in a quest for riches which, as Guyon has said, will ultimately destroy him.<sup>22</sup>

Mammon's deceptive tactics clearly label him a denizen of the Iron Age. Similarly, the way to Mammon's abode introduces us to the Payne, Strife,



Reuenge, Despight, Treason, Hate, Geolosie, Feare, Sorrow, Shame, Hor-  
 rour, and Care which belong to the Age of Iron (21-5). While Patrick Cul-  
 len correctly connects these personifications with Mammon's initial reaction  
 to Guyon's presence (when with fear, suspicion, and hostility, he seeks to  
 hide his wealth), these personifications correspond also to the forms of  
 "disquietnesse" that Guyon associates with the procurement and protection  
 of riches (12.2-9).<sup>23</sup> Within this allegorical context, iron appears to be the  
 metal of choice. Of the allegorical personifications lining the highway to  
 the "house of Richesse" (24.9), Payne has in hand an "yron whip" (21.5,  
 7), while Horroure beats "yron wings" (23.1-2); similarly, Disdayne, the  
 guardian of the court of Philotime, holds an "yron club" and in the 1590  
 edition was "all of yron mould" (40.6).<sup>24</sup> In Guyon's antique world men  
 were as happy as angels, but Mammon's realm is a far descent from that  
 Golden world. In that paradise there was no place for "infernal" Payne or  
 his knife-wielding mate, "tumultuous" Strife, to threaten life by violence  
 (21.5, 9). Horroure was non-existent in a world which lived in gratitude for  
 the absolute bounty of nature. Disdayne could arrive only with the advent  
 of pride; the grateful inhabitants of the antique world had no place for  
 Disdayne. The names and iron imagery in the allegory identify Mammon's  
 kingly riches with the ultimately impoverishing riches of the Iron Age.

Throughout the passage Spenser's imagery also connects Mammon's  
 gold with the Iron Age. Guyon originally sees Mammon wearing an "yron  
 coate all ouergrowne with rust," which "vnderneath [was] enueloped with  
 gold" (4.1-2); he sits in the midst of "Great heapes of gold, that neuer  
 could be spent" (5.2). Since the Iron Age of material opulence gets its  
 name from the need for iron to protect gold and other kingly riches, we  
 can assume that Mammon's iron coat both protects him (as "richesse") and  
 gives him the means to protect his pile of gold. But the iron coat itself con-  
 tains gold underneath, showing the intrinsic relationship between mined  
 gold and the iron needed to protect it. At the same time the gold is under-  
 neath the iron, reminding us, perhaps, that the Iron Age (which places  
 gold under iron rather than leaving it underground) has supplanted the  
 Golden Age. Similarly, the kingdom Mammon shows Guyon is filled with  
 images of iron combined with images of gold. In the "house of Richesse"  
 (where the "roofoe, and floore, and wals were all of gold" [29.1]), the  
 chests protecting a small portion of the wealth and the door behind which  
 the "exceeding store" is hidden are both made of iron (30-1). In his pas-  
 sage on Disdayne, Spenser changes iron for gold. As mentioned earlier,  
 Disdayne, in the original 1590 edition, wields an "yron club" and is made  
 of "yron" mould; in the 1596 edition Disdayne's club is still of "yron,"

but his form is now "golden" (40.6-7). By making this change, Spenser creates still another iron/gold pairing. Such pairings seem to suggest that where gold is, there will iron be also. And the transformation of Disdayne from iron to gold indicates that iron and literal, metallic gold are qualitatively interchangeable.<sup>25</sup>

If Mammon is a god, then he is a god of the Iron Age. His selfish godhead is an inversion of the antique world's selfless Creatour; his graces and "worldes blis" destroy the antique paradise. But Spenser shows Mammon's assumed godhead inverted in yet another way: by alluding to the Judeo-Christian God, Spenser shows his presumably Christian readers the extent to which Mammon opposes the grace offered in the New Testament. Though the "bliss, the end, and the grace Mammon offers are a parody of Christian devotion,"<sup>26</sup> these terms also have their counterparts in Guyon's speech on the not-overtly-Christian, Ovidian antique world. The assimilation of other New Testament phrases to Mammon offers an even clearer sense of how his "godhead" inverts the Judeo-Christian notion of God.

By pairing "broad" and "strait" (on the first occasion by punning off the sound of "streight"), Spenser alludes to the spiritual destruction inherent in worshipping Mammon. In Mammon's realm we are twice confronted by this broad/strait pairing: during the descent into Hell, Guyon sees "a beaten broad high way . . . /That streight did lead to *Plutoes* griesly raine" (21.3-4), while on the way to the court of Philotime, Guyon passes "through a darksome narrow strait, /To a broad gate, all built of beaten gold" (40.1-2). Though "streight" (i.e. "straight") and "strait" have different literal meanings, their identical sounds, combined with "broad" in this context, allude to Christ's statement that only by entering in at the "streicte gate" can one find life, "for it is the wide gate, and the broad way that leadeth to destruction."<sup>27</sup> Mammon's "broad high way," and "broad gate, all built of beaten gold" become, then, the antitheses of this "streicte gate," clearly showing that Mammon's "broad way" leads only to destruction.

The consummate image of the inverted nature of Mammon's "godhead," however, finds its form in his inverted paradise, the Gardin of Proserpina. In this garden we see recapitulated many of the themes which have run throughout the canto. In addition to reminding us of the poisonous nature of Mammon's realm, its deadly "hearbs and fruits" imply the Iron Age poisons which Ovid says stepmothers mixed (51.5-9): "lurida terribiles miscent aconita novercae" ("murderous stepmothers brewed deadly poisons" [l.147]). Its golden apples substitute economic wealth for the riches of the Golden Age's natural bounty (54-5).<sup>28</sup> Since the sun never

enters this underworld, the "open heat" from which Proserpina must "shroud" herself apparently refers to the heat of Hell which has pervaded the canto (53.4-5). If we still question that avarice not only simulates Hell but that Mammon's way "leadeth to destruction," we have only to observe "greedie *Tantalus*," the "fortune" of whose "present fate" has resulted from his quest for the "fortune" of Mammon (60.1-2).

Paul J. Alpers has remarked that the Gardin of Proserpina's unnaturalness "connect[s] it with the unnaturalness of Mammon."<sup>29</sup> Indeed, its images encapsulate much of what we have already learned in Mammon's realm. Yet in its correspondence to Eden and its golden tree's correspondence to the forbidden tree, we find here, according to Patrick Cullen, "a further exposition of Guyon's account of the origins of avarice and the decline of man from paradise"—in both its Edenic and Golden Age forms.<sup>30</sup> Actually, the garden seems more concerned with the results of the avarice Guyon describes than with its "origins." But Cullen's point is well taken: throughout the canto avarice has become the original sin, since the fall from the Golden world into the "later ages" results from the desire for material wealth—or rather, from the prideful rejection of the "Creatours grace" and bounty, concluding in the overwhelming desire for material riches.<sup>31</sup> Thus Eden (another paradise from which man has fallen by asserting his will and rejecting the "Creatours grace") becomes a perfect image here for Spenser's purposes. Eden is both a spatial and temporal image; because of its compact, spatial location, it is not as diffused as a merely temporal paradisaical age would be. Mammon's destructive inversion of the Golden Age has been evident throughout the canto; but here, by using an antitype of Eden, Spenser is able not only to recapitulate his themes in a single set of images but to imply, by its opposite, the paradise lost through the baneful influence of Mammon. The Gardin of Proserpina with its poison, its economic nature, and its proximity to the punishments of Cocytus/Hell, is the paradise that Mammon has to offer.

Mammon has consistently opposed Guyon's antique world throughout the canto, and he indirectly opposes the Edenic and heavenly paradises of Judeo-Christian tradition. By having Mammon invert each of these varied images of paradise, Spenser can show how truly vile Mammon's concept of paradise is. And yet Spenser is not content to have Mammon undermine only traditional versions of paradise. Instead, through the irony of his language, Spenser signals still another inverse paradisaical image, an image which does not correspond directly to any other idea of paradise found in the canto. On the side of the "broad high way" leading to Mammon's destructive abode, the hellish personifications of "Cruell Reunge," "ran-

corous Despight," "Disloyall Treason," and "hart-burning Hate" sit "in one consort" (22.1-3). Since "consort" implies accord and harmony, the obviously intentional irony of having these figures of discord sitting together in concord further demonstrates Mammon's skewed, inverted perspective.<sup>32</sup> For him, as this image indicates, discord is concord; hatred and betrayal are the "worldes blis."

Spenser, then, thoroughly demonstrates, through all the poetic devices at his command, that Guyon's initial objection to Mammon is correct: the cost of following Mammon is too great. Mammon's Iron Age riches, as Guyon states, are actually no riches at all. Instead of joy, they bring only destruction; instead of paradise, they lead to a poisoned anti-paradise; instead of dignity and honor, they ultimately lead to degradation in a pigsty kingdom filled with skulls, bones, cobwebs, and rust. Thus Mammon, in his infinite godhead, provides bountifully a paradise full of deceit, hatred, and death.

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#### NOTES

1. Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A. C. Hamilton, Longman Annotated English Poets Series (London: Longman Group Limited, 1977), 2.7.16.1, 6 (meaning book 2, canto 7, stanza 16, lines 1 and 6). All subsequent references to *Faerie Queene* 2.7 will be cited in text by stanza and line numbers.

2. Harry Levin, *The Myth of the Golden Age in the Renaissance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1969), 19.

3. Levin, 100-1; Alpers, *The Poetry of The Faerie Queene* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967), 272-5; Cullen, "Guyon *Microchristus*: The Cave of Mammon Re-examined," *Journal of English Literary History* 37 (1970): 159-60; Phillips, "Spenser's Syncretistic Religious Imagery," *Journal of English Literary History* 36 (1969): 126-30.

4. The meaning of Guyon's actions in this canto has long been a matter of debate. Harry Berger, Jr., opened the recent round of this debate by arguing, in his 1957 study of *Faerie Queene* book 2, that by merely going into the Cave of Mammon and opening himself up to Mammon's temptations, Guyon sins (as exemplified by his faint) and thus does not fulfill his potential in the canto as a Christian hero ("The Hero Faints," in *The Allegorical Temper: Vision and Reality in Book II of Spenser's Faerie Queene* [Yale Studies in English, vol. 13, New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 1957], 3–38). Responses to Berger's reading include Frank Kermode's ("The Cave of Mammon," in *Shakespeare, Spenser, Donne: Renaissance Essays* [London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971], 60–83). Kermode offers a somewhat syncretistic reading of the passage, but he also uses Augustinian theology in order to focus on Mammon's "total temptation" of Guyon (hence paralleling Guyon with Christ [68]). Paul J. Alpers tries to correct both Berger and Kermode, at one point claiming that Kermode's reading is a "resolute attempt" to depart from the "ostensible subject" of the canto: "the use and abuse of riches" (245). Alpers himself nevertheless focuses on Guyon, not riches, and claims that Spenser's primary interest is in "human heroism, not in problems of riches alone" (248). (See "Interpreting the Cave of Mammon" in *The Poetry of the Faerie Queene*, 235–75.) Patrick Cullen's essay, "Guyon *Microchristus*," modifies Kermode's "total temptation" reading along more explicitly Christian lines and regards Guyon most emphatically as a Christ-figure who successfully withstands Mammon's temptations. These are a few of the better known stances in the debate over this canto. What these critics share is a tendency to emphasize Guyon, often to the exclusion of other issues present in the canto.

5. Sonn, "In the Cave of Mammon," *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* 1 (1961): 22–3. Alpers similarly states that "Spenser's attention is focused on the reader's mind and feelings and not on what is happening within his fiction" (5). Both these critics concur in spirit with Maureen Quilligan's reading of allegory, in which the reader's "quest" is of at least equal importance to the protagonist's (or for Quilligan, of more importance than the protagonist's): it is "the quest of understanding the poem, of right reading" (*The Language of Allegory: Defining the Genre* [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1979], 230). Though I think that Spenser intends the reader's quest to be more moral or spiritual than simply intellectual, "right reading" (and hence looking carefully at Spenser's language—particularly at his imagery and puns) is still necessary in order for the reader to appreciate Spenser's multi-dimensional approach to the evils of Mammon. My article, then, assumes that Spenser has Guyon go into the Cave primarily to show the reader the true nature of worldly riches, not merely to prove how heroic or unheroic, how Christ-like or un-Christ-like, Guyon can be.

6. Berger, 19.

7. See n. 2 above.

8. The passage to which Spenser does not refer reads:

nondum caesa suis, peregrinum ut viseret orbem,  
montibus in liquidas pinus descenderat undas,

nullaque mortales praeter sua litora norant;  
 nondum praecipites cingebant oppida fossae;  
 non tuba directi, non aeris cornua flexi,  
 non galeae, non ensis erant: sine militis usu  
 mollia securae peragebant otia gentes.

(Not yet had the pine-tree, felled on its native mountains, descended thence into the watery plain to visit other lands; men knew no shores except their own. Not yet were cities begirt with steep moats; there were no trumpets of straight, no horns of curving brass, no swords or helmets. There was no need at all of armed men, for nations, secure from war's alarms, passed the years in gentle ease).

Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, The Loeb Classical Library, trans. Frank Justus Miller (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1951), 1.94–100 (meaning book 1, lines 94–100). All subsequent references to *Metamorphoses* will be cited in text by book and line numbers. Throughout the article I use the translation found in this edition.

9. For pride as the source of evil elsewhere in *The Faerie Queene*, see book 1, canto 4. In addition, Arthur Golding, in his 1567 translation of Ovid, lists pride among the Iron Age evils, though (unlike Spenser) he does not make it the primal sin:

then Fayth and Truth were faine  
 And honest shame to hide their heades: for whom stept stoutly in,  
 Craft, Treason, Violence, Envie, Pryde and wicked Lust to win.

*Shakespeare's Ovid: Being Arthur Golding's Translation of The Metamorphoses*, ed. W.H.D. Rouse (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1961), book 1, lines 146–8.

10. Cf. n. 9. The Ovid which Spenser eliminates reads:

vela dabant ventis nec adhuc bene noverat illos  
 navita, quaeque prius steterant in montibus altis,  
 fluctibus ignotis exsultavere carinae,  
 communemque prius ceu lumina solis et auras  
 cautus humum longo signavit limite mensor.

(Men now spread sails to the winds, though the sailor as yet scarce knew them; and keels of pine which long had stood upon high mountain-sides, now leaped insolently over unknown waves. And the ground, which had hitherto been a common possession like the sunlight and the air, the careful surveyor now marked out with long-drawn boundary-line).

(1.132–6)

11. While for Ovid labor leads man to his fall from paradise, in the biblical account man is cursed to labor as a result of the Fall (see n. 18).

12. Levin, 23. Though my reading of the Ages of Gold and Iron is derived from Ovid's text in conjunction with Spenser's, I am certainly indebted to Levin's informative and sophisticated analysis of this passage (Levin, 22-3).

13. In translating Mt. 6:24, both the *Wiclif* and *Geneva* bibles use "riches" where the *Tyndale* and *Cranmer (Bishop's)* bibles use "mammon" (*The English Hexapla, Exhibiting the Six Important English Translations of the New Testament Scripture* [London: Samuel Bagster and Sons, n.d.]). The *Wiclif Bible*, in fact, spells the word "ricchesse," an obsolete form which the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines as "wealth, opulence" (*The Oxford English Dictionary*, ed. James A. Murray, et al. [1933; reprint, London: Oxford University Press]). Subsequent references to this dictionary will be cited as *OED*.

14. That Mammon associates his riches with kingship is evident, as he rhetorically asks Guyon: "Do not I kings create, and throw the crowne/Sometimes to him, that low in dust doth ly?" (11.6-7). If Maureen Quilligan is correct in her claim that allegorical action often concerns itself with unraveling the implications of a word, with determining (through puns and etymological wordplay) whether or not a word means what it says (Quilligan, 33), then this connection between riches and kingship is at least a curious one, for "rich" and "king" are related words. "Rich" derives ultimately from the base \**rīk* as seen in Goth. *Reiks*, "a ruler," in turn is "cognate with the Celtic base \**rīg-*, as in Gaulish *rīx*, a king," though at least one philologist has suggested that *rich* may be "borrowed from the Celtic *rīx* [for \**rēx*]" (Walter W. Skeat, *An Etymological Dictionary of the English Language* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910; repr. 1958]: 517). According to Quilligan's theory of allegory, this etymological connection between "rich" and "king" would provide Mammon with a linguistic basis for associating "riches" only with kingly wealth, for the connection is embedded in the language regardless of how conscious Spenser is of the etymological history. Guyon's task, from Quilligan's perspective, would then be to show that Mammon is not reading rightly, that his historically accurate reading of "riches" is narrow and insufficient.

15. These implied veins of ore later reappear as the "rich metall [that] loaded every rift" (28.5)—with "rift" referring literally to the fissures in the earth, and (through pun) to these rich metals' riving apart of human society.

16. Mt. 6:24 focuses on the idolatry of following Mammon, as Jesus tells his disciples that they "can not serue God, and mammon" (*The Holie Bible: Conteyning the Olde Testament and the Newe*, pref. Thomas Cranmer, late Archbishop of Canterbury [London: Richard Iugge, 1568]). Subsequent references to this translation will be under the title *Bishop's Bible*. See also Lk. 16:13 (and n. 13 above).

17. In Mt. 6:20-1 true riches consist of "treasures . . . in heauen, where nether the mothe nor canker corrupteth, and where theues nether digge through, nor steale. For where [one's] treasure is, there wil [his] heart be also" (*The Geneva Bible: A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition* [Madison: University of Wisconsin Press,

1969]. This translation will be the source of scriptural quotes, unless otherwise noted).

18. The labor and sweat inherent in Mammon's realm parallel the labor and sweat inherent in the postlapsarian world. After the Fall God curses Adam, saying

cursed *is* the earth for thy sake: in sorowe shalt thou eat of it all the dayes of thy life. Thornes also, and thystles shal it bring forth to thee, and thou shalt eat the herbe of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, til thou returne to the earthe: for out of it wast thou taken, because thou art dust, and to dust shalt thou returne.

(Gen. 3:17-19)

19. In Spenser foul physical appearance virtually always signals a foul, often demonic, character. For example, see 2.4.4-11 and 2.11.8-13. Evil may also take a fair shape, as in the Bower of Bliss (2.12), but a foul shape generally indicates evil. Mammon's actions, of course, verify that his shape corresponds to his nature.

20. While Berger claims that Mammon's appearance and frightened actions in these early stanzas are "play acting" intended to attract Guyon's curiosity (18-19), Spenser clearly intends them to verify, for the audience, Guyon's rejection of Mammon.

21. See also 34.1-2; 64.

22. Madelon S. Gohlke apparently ignores this fact in claiming that Guyon "rejects . . . precisely what he needs: food and rest" ("Embattled Allegory: Book II of *The Faerie Queene*," *English Literary Renaissance* 8 [1978]: 129). Spenser, as we have seen, clearly indicates that Guyon's very survival depends on his rejection of *everything* offered him in Mammon's realm—including food and rest.

23. Cullen, "Guyon *Microchristus*" (see n. 3): 157-8. See also Alpers on the relationship of the allegory to Guyon's speech on the "disquietnesse of riches" (258).

24. Hamilton's note to 40.7 reads: "golden] yron 1590." Kellogg & Steele's edition uses the 1590 "iron" version of this line ([*Books I and II of The Faerie Queene, the Mutability Cantos and Selections from the Minor Poetry*, ed. Robert Kellogg and Oliver Steel [New York: The Odyssey Press, Inc., 1965]).

25. Ovid, too, establishes this relationship when he writes that in the Iron Age, "iamque nocens ferrum ferroque nocentius aurum/prodierat" ("and now baneful iron had come, and gold more baneful than iron" [1.141-2]). Gold and iron here are both noxious metals and are both subjects of the single verb, "prodierat."

26. Sonn, "In the Cave of Mammon" (see n. 5): 18. See also Cullen on the parodic references to "grace" throughout the canto (168-9).

27. Mt. 7:13-14. The *Geneva Bible's* "streicte" reads "strayte" in the *Bishop's Bible*—both of which are alternate spellings of Spenser's "strait" (*OED*).

28. Berger, 25. Berger notes earlier that throughout the passage, "inedible things" are given the "quality of edibility," while "edible things are shown as inedible" (23). This notion fits in well with the whole movement from edible wealth,



which is also spiritually satisfying (i.e. the Creator's natural bounty in the Golden Age), to Mammon's artificial, inedible wealth, which is spiritually destructive.

29. P. 244.

30. P. 165. Several critics have made the connection between this garden and the Garden of Eden. Cullen and Kermode, of course, draw the parallel—with Cullen even stating that "everyone realizes" that these two gardens and their central trees are "counterparts." Kellogg and Steele's notes to 53.6–54.4 indirectly make this connection as well.

31. By making avarice the original sin, Spenser illustrates St. Paul's exhortation that "the desire of money is the roote of all euil." And the horrors of Mammon's realm show that Mammon's followers have indeed "perced them selues through with many sorowes" (I Tim. 6:10).

32. In its initial Latin form, "consort" is related to "*consors*, one who shares property with others, a brother or sister, in Late L. a neighbour, also a wife" (Skeat, 131. See n. 14, above). This implied sharing is entirely foreign to Mammon's Iron Age, in which siblings and spouses do not share but rather murder each other for monetary gain and protect their private goods by using the vicious means indicated by these same allegorical personifications who are sitting "in one consort."