



RUSS LEO

The Species-Life of Worldlings¹

Marx famously derided Edmund Spenser as “Elizabeths Arschkissende Poet,” identifying Spenser as a steward of property at an integral stage in the genealogy of capital. Taking Marx’s comments on labor and species-being as points of departure, this essay examines Spenser’s poetic investigations of work as well as the distinctions among kinds of labor in a world before classes as we know (or knew) them, the class structures proper to capitalist modernity. In Book II of *The Faerie Queene*, for instance, Spenser imagined the Cave of Mammon as a mine, and the fiends as laborers. Drawing upon early modern mining and metallurgical writing—particularly Georgius Agricola’s monumental *De Re Metallica* (1556)—with an eye to later Marxist determinations of human labor—this essay demonstrates that Spenser’s depictions of Mammon’s hoard, together with the sites and processes proper to gold mining, are also detailed treatments of labor. Humanistic studies of mining and metallurgy like Agrippa’s confirm that these laborers are less demonic than they are proletarian, or whatever passes for “proletarian” in an early modern lexicon. Guyon employs the term “worldlings” for the laborers and those who are subject to their labor, an appellation that suggests that they all lack reflexive capacities and that reinscribes their productivity into a moral economy with which Guyon is familiar. It is with this that Guyon establishes anew the relevance of temperance, and Spenser tests terms for life and labor at the “fountaine of the worldes good.” Lastly, the piece assesses the continued relevance of this term “worldling” and demonstrates how Spenser uses it to question the limits and

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ends of the human in a scene of economic accumulation, production, and emergent horrors of the new economy at the end of the sixteenth century.

In a peripheral comment notorious among Spenserians, Karl Marx derides Edmund Spenser as “*Elizabeths Arschkissende Poet*.”² Between 1880 and 1882 Marx undertook a thorough survey of recent ethnological studies at the British Museum, preparing a work of philosophical anthropology not unlike his comrade Friedrich Engel’s own *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (1884). Marx’s studies were preempted by his death in 1883, and Spenserians spared the indignity of a thorough Marxist examination of *A View of the Present State of Ireland*.³ Although he knew Shakespeare’s work intimately, Marx came to Spenser (together with Sir John Davies) only by way of Henry Sumner Maine’s *Lectures on the Early History of Institutions* (1875), in which Maine called Spenser “the least unkind of the English critics of Ireland, though one of the most ruthless in his practical suggestions.”⁴ With this assessment in mind, Marx read *A View of the Present State of Ireland* on his own, pricking at Spenser’s catch-all “remedy for the ills of Ireland, *the employment of large masses of troops ‘to tread down all that standeth before them in foot, and lay on the ground all the stiffnecked people of that land,’*” a violent strategy that Spenser “‘himself had witnessed in the late wars of Munster.’”⁵ These were, for Marx, offensive propositions that nevertheless shaped the deep histories of human community and property. Marx’s readings in ethnology buttress his enduring belief in the “impermanence of property in its particular form as private property,” confirming the transience of august institutions like the monogamous family and the state, rounding out a life-long preoccupation with the vicissitudes of subjectivity as well as human species-life [*Gattungsleben*].⁶ Marx emphasizes the human capacities for work (manual and intellectual alike) and locates this activity (human labor) as the source of the world. In this sense man is something other than an animal, endowed as human beings are with the ability to transform nature and to reflect upon this activity; this is man’s “conscious species-being” [*eines bewußten Gattungswesens*].⁷ Property obscures these human facilities, a process that capitalism accelerates and intensifies. Spenser appears in the margins of Marx’s late notebooks as a steward of property at an integral stage in the genealogy of capital, a genealogy that Marx exposes as one anthropological endeavor among others, only one possible world.⁸

Though he refers solely to *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, Marx recognizes Spenser as a poet. Neither liberal advocates of capitalism nor its most ferocious discontents can so readily incorporate Spenser's poetry into the history of capital. In at least one sense, this essay demonstrates, Marx and Spenser share a common project: they both locate human labor at the source of the world, albeit in markedly different idioms and to divergent ends. Taking Marx's comments on labor and species-being as points of departure, this essay examines Spenser's poetic investigations of work as well as the distinctions among kinds of labor in a world before classes as we know (or knew) them, the class structures proper to capitalist modernity.⁹ Marx's account of human species-being rests on a distinction between man and animal.¹⁰ Like men, "animals also produce...the bee, the beaver, the ant, etc. But they produce only their own immediate needs."¹¹ Humans alone produce beyond their immediate needs; free from necessity, humans create an objective world that they inhabit, contemplate, and transform—"the *objectification of the species-life of man*."¹² But this is the species-life of man only to the extent that he recognizes himself in his creation, consciously, as a laborer and a producer—a consciousness that is denied those who are estranged from their labor and the products of their labor by the endemic privatization of property. Collectivity is also at stake insofar as humans who are conscious of their species-being affirm themselves as a species, not the alienated and estranged laborers competing among themselves for limited resources under capitalism. Human being is in this sense a calculus of attentions and desires inextricable from property and self-interest.¹³ As a species, Marx wagers, this is never necessarily the case.

Human being, for Spenser and his contemporaries, was not primarily defined in relation to the lesser capacities of animals, nor do the majority of early moderns share Marx's anthropological or zoological premises.¹⁴ But Spenser does locate human life in relation to labor and necessity, in the anxious confrontation between Guyon and the laboring fiends in the Cave of Mammon sequence, in Book II, Canto vii of *The Faerie Queene*. The fiends work to extract and refine gold, a crucial resource in Mammon's temptation of Guyon as well as to Spenser's larger investigation of temperance in Book II. As soon as they see Guyon they cease their labor and stare; Guyon, in turn, is dismayed as he bears witness to their toil. Shame keeps him from fleeing, dismay from acting, and his paralysis only ends with Mammon's temptation, as he is interpolated back into an economy of virtue, wrested from a traumatic scene of labor and production. It is a singular encounter for Guyon and the fiends, as the movement of the

poem and the refining process alike stop short. The relationship between Guyon and these subterranean laborers points analogously to Marx's later distinction between man and animal, and a theory of labor and human being takes shape in the confrontation between temperance, the subterranean laborers, and the "worldlings" to whom Guyon refers. The term itself ("worldling") is rare in *The Faerie Queene*, appearing only twice across Spenser's entire poetic oeuvre (both times in Book II, Canto vii, punctuating this very encounter).¹⁵ By way of this term, Spenser draws our attention to the mute exchange between Guyon and the laborers, framing the laboring fiends as liminal creatures that do not participate in the imaginative work of world-making as do the virtues, concepts, and *figurae* operating in multiple registers of complexity and abstraction across the poem. Guyon's dismay, in turn, records a prescient anxiety about the laborers in the mine, their relationship to gold, the power they possess, and the necessity of their subterranean work, beyond the economies of value and virtue that their difficult labor subtends.

In what follows I illustrate, first, the extent to which Spenser imagined the Cave of Mammon as a mine, and the fiends as laborers. Drawing upon early modern mining and metallurgical writing—particularly Georgius Agricola's monumental *De Re Metallica* (1556)—I demonstrate that Spenser's depictions of Mammon's hoard, together with the sites and processes proper to gold mining, are also detailed treatments of labor and risk. On these grounds Spenser delicately distinguishes between Mammon and his laborers in a manner that looks proleptically to theses on class and class antagonism. Spenser certainly invokes classical scenes of metallurgical production—for instance, the work of the Cyclopes in the *Aeneid*—but departs from these depictions in his attempt to represent a more complete process, including extraction and its hazards as well as the participants' varying degrees of reflection on the process.¹⁶ Moving systematically across the brief sequence, from Stanzas 35 to 39, I demonstrate precisely how the fiends differ from Mammon as well as Guyon. Humanistic studies of mining and metallurgy like Agricola's confirm that these laborers are less demonic than they are proletarian, or whatever passes for "proletarian" in an early modern lexicon. Guyon recognizes precisely this, and is dismayed by their dizzying potential. As he returns to his senses, he employs the term "worldlings"—not only for the wide array of worldly men and women who share the laborers' unthinking and alienated relationship to gold but for the subterranean laborers themselves. Guyon tentatively extends the more obvious sense of "worldling," the unreflective creature of the market, to the

laborers, inscribing their productivity into a moral economy with which he is familiar. It is with this that Guyon establishes anew the relevance of temperance, and Spenser tests terms for life and labor at the “fountaine of the worldes good” (II.vii.38.6).

I. MAMMON’S MINE

Mammon’s house is, among many other things, a mine.¹⁷ But Mammon is a miner only to the extent that he resembles the ideal miner or *metallicus* exemplified in Agricola’s *De Re Metallica*—that is, an administrator responsible for “the knowledge of every portion of the metallic arts [*omnes artificij metallici partes*] which are involved in operating mines [*metalla*].”¹⁸ Agricola’s *metallicus* does not labor, he oversees the labor, exercising intellectual mastery over metallurgy, visiting the mine often to “personally superintend everything he has ordered to be done.”¹⁹ Mammon and Agricola’s *metallicus* both spend ample time at the mine, even if (Agricola insists) a mine “is no habitation for the idle and luxurious [*non sit mansio desidiosa & mollis*].”²⁰ In this sense, Mammon is different than Merlin who, after setting his “cruell Feendes” to work erecting a “brasen wall” protecting his lair below Cairmardin, leaves the site to pursue the Lady of the Lake (III.iii.8.9, 10.3).²¹ But Mammon, like Agricola’s *metallicus*, also avoids the actual sites of labor, opting to remain at the entrance to the mine rather than in the pit or at the furnace or bellows. This is where Guyon first espies him, in a “gloomy glade” surrounded by “heapes of gold” in various stages of extraction and refinement—some of “rude owre, not purified/ Of *Mulcibers* deuouring element”; others “new driuen, and distent/ Into great Ingoes, and to wedges square”; “Some in round plates withouten moniment,” coins ready for the mint; but most already stamped, coins bearing the images of “kings and kesars straunge & rare,” ready for circulation (II.vii.3.1, 5.2–9).²² Guyon is presented here with an object lesson in metallurgy from the perspective of Agricola’s *metallicus*, the gold before him arranged in a manner that lays bare the mining process, from beginning to end.²³ Mammon’s hoard bears the traces of labor, but the laborers are absent.

Mammon introduces himself and leads Guyon past the Gates of Pluto into his house, a cave “Embost with massy gold of glorious gift,/ And with rich metal loaded every rift,/ That heauy ruine they did seeme to threat”

(II.vii.28.4–6), so abundant in mineral wealth that the veins of gold portend physical danger to Mammon and his guest alike. The gold does not glitter or sparkle. It threatens to overwhelm the visitor, a claustrophobic scene familiar to modern cinematic audiences, looking forward to films like Neil Marshall's *The Descent* (2005) as Spenser contracts the expansive underworlds of *The Odyssey* and *The Aeneid*. The prolific and intimidating rifts and veins confirm that Guyon has entered a mine; the bones and "vile carcases now left vnburied" (II.vii.30.9) compel the reader to consider why the mine was abandoned in the first place.²⁴ The ores are indeed unmanned, and the precious metal adorning every surface of the cave awaits extraction and refining, "ouergrowne" as it is "with dust and old decay,/ And hid in darknesse, that none could behold/ The hew thereof" (II.vii.29.2–4). Guyon follows Mammon through this shaft on his way to Mammon's store, the rifts made visible only by "faint shadow of vncertain light" (II.vii.32.9, 29.6). And there Guyon declines "to take thereof assay" (II.vii.33.4)—that is, he patently refuses Mammon's offer of inordinate wealth.

Mammon's next move is to reveal to Guyon the very "fountaine of the worldes good"—a temptation that is not substantially different from the first save for the fact that here Mammon reveals the heretofore-absent laborers:

Therein an hundred raunges weren pight,
 And hundred fornaces all burning bright;
 By euery fornace many feends did bide,
 Deformed creatures, horrible in sight,
 And euery feend his busie paines applide,
 To melt the golden metall, ready to be tride.

One with great bellowes gathered filling aire,
 And with forst wind the fewell did inflame;
 Another did the dying bronds repaire
 With yron touns, and sprinckled off the same
 With liquid waues, fiers Vulcans rage to tame,
 Who maistring them, renewd his former heat;
 Some scumd the drosse, that from the metall came;
 Some stird the molten owre with ladles great;
 And euery one did swincke, and euery one did sweat.
 (II.vii.35.4–36.9)

Mammon lays bare another process of production and refinement. Large-scale extraction has already taken place; these “feends” are not preparing the ore for the furnaces, breaking it with tools, transporting it or laundering it; they are rather refining the gold, smelting it, boiling out [in Latin, *excoquo*] or extracting the impurities so that “the dross may be purged away and the metal made pure” [*ex ipsis a recremento purgatis metalla pura confici possint*].²⁵ A canny reader and poet, Spenser deliberately eschews a crucial step in his depiction of the refining process. The fiends are not shown assaying or testing the gold [in Latin, *experior*], they are not “trying” the gold in the fire, nor do they seem to employ any “methods of assaying ores” [*uenarum experiendarum rationes*].²⁶ Rather, they are already smelting it on a Cyclopean scale, at work across a hundred ranges and a hundred furnaces. While “assay” occurs frequently across Book II, meaning “to try” or “to make trial of,” it is also a metallurgical term related to mining: to “assay” is to test an ore in order to discern its composition, “to determine the degree of purity of one of the precious metals.”²⁷ There is no initial assay described, nor do they test the metal’s strength (or “try” it in another critical sense) after it is smelted. Their role in the process is clear: “To melt the golden metall, ready to be tride.” The early assaying stage, moreover, is crucial to profitable mining. Agricola admonishes those misguided miners who “are not particular to employ assays [*experiendi rationem... utuntur*],” warning them not to “smelt the metal away from the ore with a loss or sometimes without any profit.”²⁸ It is more prudent to test first, and to proceed carefully. Mammon and his laborers risk profit in smelting at such a scale, and Spenser underscores Mammon’s superfluity and recklessness. As the laboring fiends are not at all involved in the assay, Spenser also directly inverts the sense of I Peter 1:7. The fiends’ “busie paines” are “applied” to a depraved project rather than to the “trial” of faith “much more precious then golde that perisheth (though it be tryed with fyre).”²⁹ In the New Testament epistle, it is the assaying process that matters, and the “gold” that is lost in the process is far less valuable than the experience itself, however painful or difficult the trial of “faith” is. It is a trial that Mammon eschews, and a trial the fiends are denied. In light of Agricola’s Latin account of the process, Spenser’s is a subtle pun *in absentia*. To assay, in a Latin register, is to experience [*experire*] and thus these laborers do not *experience* the gold, even as a temptation. Guyon is given the instructive and formative opportunity to do precisely this, tempted as he is “to take thereof assay.”

The fiends are given to labor instead, and Spenser communicates the difficulty and intensity of their labor as well as their suffering: “euery one

did swincke, and euery one did sweat”—a direct echo of Mammon’s introduction in Stanza 8, as “God of the world and worldlings,” the source of all wealth “For which men swinck and sweat incessantly” (II.vii.8.1, 7). But the subterranean scene of production transforms the earlier sense. Mammon initially told Guyon that

Riches, renowme, and principality,
Honour, estate, and all this worldes good,
For which men swinck and sweat incessantly,
Fro me do flow into an ample flood,
And in the hollow earth haue their eternall brood. (II.vii.8.5–9)

The veins of gold in Mammon’s mine are inexhaustible, intemperate desires cannot be satisfied, but men still “swinck and sweat incessantly” in pursuit of wealth, power and fame. Mammon seems to describe a way of inhabiting a world. Spenser initially suggests that these “worldlings” who “swinck and sweat” are the men and women of the surface world, driven by irrational desires and market forces. This is the most obvious and intuitive sense of the term. After the description of the fiends’ labor, however, the line takes on new meaning. As the fiends work incessantly to produce “this worldes good,” they make possible a world and a political economy and an expansive morality (where temperance is imperative) in which they do not participate. Mammon points to a scene of production, to the subterranean fiends’ painful and exasperating creation of a world, an endless work performed by the miners who nevertheless do *not* inhabit this world, do not experience “Mammon” in the broadest allegorical sense by way of trial or assay. This rare term “worldling” marks a gap between activity and comprehension of that activity. The worldlings of worldly markets participate in a dynamic economy that they do not understand as such, just as the laborers below lay the basis of a world in which they do not participate, and which they certainly do not understand. Spenser invites readers to identify the laborers with the worldlings above, all of whom “swinck and sweat” in an enterprise from which they are nonetheless alienated.

This is the case as the swinking, sweating fiends are conspicuously moved as soon as they are aware of Guyon’s presence.

But when as earthly wight they present saw,
Glistring in armes and battailous aray,
From their whot worke they did themselues withdraw

To wonder at the sight: for till that day,
 They neuer creature saw, that came that way.
 Their staring eyes sparckling with feruent fire,
 And vgly shapes did nigh the man dismay,
 That were it not for shame, he would retire,
 Till that him thus bespake their soueraigne Lord & sire. (II.vii.37)

Upon seeing Guyon “Glistring in armes and battailous aray,” the fiends “withdraw” from their hot work to “wonder at the sight.”³⁰ The reflexive “did themselues withdraw” suggests that they cease their work. But Spenser employs “withdraw” to articulate something like alienation as well, as if Guyon’s glistening arms seem more appropriate to their work than their own labor. In turn, the fiends withdraw themselves—that is, they remove or abstract themselves from their work—in “wonder.” They do not necessarily understand their situation. On the contrary, wonder is, as Jeff Dolven affirms, “the open-mouthed, exhilarating blankness of confronting something for which we have no categories.”³¹ In certain circumstances, wonder may indeed give way to understanding, but here in the Cave the fiends are left only to wonder. We are not privy to any transformation or understanding, and nothing in the text suggests that we can expect this of the fiends. Guyon is struck in turn by “Their staring eyes sparckling with feruent fire”; it is unclear whether the fiends’ sparkling eyes communicate some rich and revealing interior experience or whether Guyon merely sees the reflection of the “hundred furnaces all burning bright” in the fiends’ otherwise blank stares. We only know that they “wonder.” Either way, Guyon is immobilized, suspended between “dismay” and “shame” at the sight of these “vgly shapes” staring in his direction. Overcome with a sense of peril or danger, he is inclined to flee, to “retire,” but is nevertheless too ashamed to do so. It is only when Mammon, “their soueraigne Lord and sire,” speaks to him that he is drawn from his paralysis. The fiends’ gaze is arresting.

II. MAMMON’S MINERS

It is difficult to discern what these fiends are. Spenser describes them only as “vgly shapes” and as “Deformed creatures, horrible in sight.” Besides this, we only know that they are laborers, that they swink and sweat. Both

David Read and Maureen Quilligan insist that this sequence is a detailed meditation on the gold and silver of the Spanish New World, its extraction overseen by conquistadors and colonial administrators as well as its inordinate value in Old World contexts and locales.³² The industrial processes Spenser describes, over which foul Mammon presides (and through which Mammon, as “richesse,” enters the world), were illuminated in key accounts of New World labor and resources available to Spenser’s generation.³³ Quilligan duly collocates the “demonic labor” depicted in the Cave of Mammon with contemporary visions of New World slavery—for instance, the modes of production described and illustrated in Theodorus de Bry’s *America* (1596). Perhaps these are sources Spenser had in mind as he crafted the sequence in Book II, Canto vii. The fiends may be slaves, the scene reminiscent, as Quilligan intimates, of the striking accounts of New World slavery: “naked workers surveyed by armed knights” overseeing the extraction and refinement of precious metals.³⁴

This is, however, not necessarily the case. There were other depictions of miners and laborers available to Spenser and his generation, thorough humanistic studies of alchemy, mining, and metallurgy that emerged in tandem with the development of a productive Central European mining industry in the fifteenth century. Native European silver and gold mines proved profitable resources in the hundred years prior to the influx of precious metals from Africa and the Americas. Indeed, gold and silver from the New World arrived in droves only as European mining operations stagnated, drastically changing the coordinates of the European economy, shifting the centers of political and economic influence.³⁵ This is, in a sense, the Continental prehistory of the New World mining operations explored by Read and Quilligan. As Tara Nummedal explains, intrepid princes focused attention on mining, at home and abroad; they promoted the development of mining technologies and practices, attracted merchant capital to fund and sustain their metallurgical enterprises, and created administrative positions for experts charged with overseeing the extraction and refinement of precious metals and other valuable subterranean resources.³⁶ This in turn shaped what Pamela O. Long calls “the great age of mine and metallurgical literature both in terms of quantity and originality,” producing works like Vannoccio Biringuccio’s *De la Pirotechnia* (1540), Lazarus Ercker’s *Beschreibung der Allervornehmsten Mineralischen Erze und Bergwerksarten* (1580), and Agricola’s *De Re Metallica* (1556).³⁷

Agricola’s work in particular proved influential to a wide variety of readers, few of whom had concrete investments in the mining industry. In *De*

Re Metallica, together with companion works *De Subterraneorum Ortu et Causis* (1546), *De Natura Fossilium* (1546) and *De Animantibus Subterraneis* (1549), Agricola surveyed the natural history of the region below the surface of the earth in unprecedented detail. Spenser no doubt found *De Re Metallica* compelling, as Agricola outlined a classical history of metallurgy with reference to Ovid, Vergil, Diogenes Laertius, Plutarch, Pliny and Horace, among others. Agricola appraises ancient and modern techniques and instruments across a variety of European cultures. Moreover, he investigates the moral dimensions of mining and metallurgy, giving historical depth to prodigious Elizabethan events like the 1568 incorporation of the Company of Mineral and Battery Works as well as the 1568 decision in favor of Elizabeth and the Mines Royal in the significant “Case of Mines.”³⁸ Against those who argued too broadly that gold is wicked and that “all men in all times and places have considered [gold and money] dishonourable and criminal,” Agricola responds succinctly: “Money is good for those who use it well” [*pecunia est bono, qui ea bene utuntur*].³⁹ In this, he sounds suspiciously like Spenser’s Mammon insofar as he too disparages the “the rudeness of that antique age” before money and precious metals, acknowledging that those who “lieue in later times, must wage/ Thy works for wealth, and life for gold engage” (II.vii.18.2, 4–5). Moreover, Agricola roundly dismisses those critics who claim that “mining is a perilous occupation to pursue, because the laborers [*metallorum fossores*] are sometimes killed by the pestilential air which they breathe; sometimes their lungs rot away; sometimes the men perish by being crushed in masses of rock; sometimes, falling from the ladders into the shafts, they break their arms, legs, or necks; and it is added that there is no compensation which should be thought great enough to equalize the extreme dangers of safety to life.”⁴⁰ While news of such accidents inspires “terror and peril” in those who hear of them, Agricola nevertheless assures his readers that “things like this rarely happen, and only insofar as workmen [*fossoribus*] are careless.”⁴¹

Agricola attends to “the ailments and accidents of miners” [*malis & morbis metallicorum*] as well as the techniques and instruments which make mining a safer enterprise.⁴² Winds, flooding, rockslides, cave-ins, poor ventilation, noxious fumes, and venomous ants make the work exceptionally dangerous, so much so that Agricola concedes that “a reckoning has to be made with Orcus [*cum Orco*], for some metalliferous localities, though such are rare, spontaneously produce poison and exhale pestilential vapour”—that is, laborers are advised to accept the risks their work entails, as the subterranean world is unpredictably perilous.⁴³

Laborers are also advised to beware more menacing creatures, “demons of ferocious aspect” [*daemones...aspectu truci*], “fierce and murderous” [*truculentus & homicida*] creatures which, “if they cannot be expelled, no one escapes from them.”⁴⁴ Drawing upon reports from German laborers and classical sources alike, Agricola elaborates on the variety of demons in *De Animantibus Subterraneis*—for instance, he describes one kind of demon, allegedly “bearing the elongated neck and savage eyes of a horse” [*Equi enim specie habentis procerum collum & truces oculos dicitur uisus*], a creature with the ability “to send forth wind from its mouth” [*Flatum uero emittebat ex rictu*].⁴⁵ Agricola suggests that these fabulous subterranean demons “which are by nature injurious and reprobate” [*qui nocentes sunt, & natura improbi*], are both “stupid and devoid of reason” [*brutos & rationis expertes*].⁴⁶ Thus the subterranean demons of *De Re Metallica* and *De Animantibus Subterraneis* are quite distinct from the rational (even sympathetic) devils of the German *Faustbuch* published by Johann Spies in 1587 or the celebrated English tragedy it inspired. Even Spenser’s Mammon evinces a cunning and acumen denied the subterranean *daemones montani*.

While it is tempting to read the swinking, sweating fiends of Book II, Canto vii as brute demons of this kind, such an easy identification obscures their labor at the furnaces and bellows, their productivity and as well as their technical knowledge (albeit limited) of metallurgical processes. The fiends do not impede work in the mine. It is they who are interrupted. Rather than casting his fiends as demons, Spenser asks his readers to consider the relationships and antagonisms among these diverse creatures in the mine, recalling Agricola’s own articulation of the division of labor. The “perfect miner” [*perfectus metallicus*] of *De Re Metallica* is a humanist ideal, a scholar for whom labor in the mine is far less important than piety and a thorough knowledge of various arts and sciences related to mining.⁴⁷ As such, Agricola draws subtle distinctions throughout the work between the miner or *metallicus* and the workmen [*mercenarii, fossores, and operarii*] who labor for the *metallicus*.⁴⁸ *De Re Metallica* is a work addressed to the former class, offering practical administrative advice to the *metallicus*, instructing him to “praise diligent workmen” and “rebuke the idle”; only in rare circumstances should the *metallicus* “undertake actual labor [*aliquos labores suscipere*],” and then only “in order to encourage his workmen [*mercenarios*] by his own diligence, and to teach them their art,” lest he degrade himself with excessive work.⁴⁹

This distinction between the miner or *metallicus* and the laborers—in Agricola’s Latin, the *mercenarii, fossores, and operarii*—is particularly

evident in a woodcut from Book V (Fig. 1) illustrating “the method by which fire shatters the hard veins,” allowing for excavation and extraction.⁵⁰ This method is difficult and dangerous, more so than mining with pick and trowel alone, as laborers employ fire in an effort to soften the rock and make it more malleable, easier to break—a method used by Hannibal who, Agricola affirms, “overcame the hardness of the Alps by the use of vinegar and fire.”⁵¹ In the illustration a laborer sits at a table shaving a log of wood into thin pieces that will catch fire easily, used to keep the subterranean fire stoked.⁵² He works under the direction of the *metallicus* or the *magister metallicorum*, leaning on a pick, conversing with another laborer in a manner that suggests a fraternity appropriate to the early modern republic of letters. Perhaps he is reminding the laborers of Hannibal’s precedent, directing them to appropriate passages in Livy’s *Ab Urbe Condita*. Below the surface, however, an imperiled laborer, trowel [*rutrum*] in hand, covers his face on the way to the passage to the surface [*cuniculus*]; “the heated veins and rock,” Agricola informs his readers, release “a foetid vapour” [*halitum uirosum*], a noxious gas that threatens to “affect their health,” if not “actually kill them.”⁵³ The woodcut registers a remarkable asymmetry, the abiding humanist miner above calmly overseeing his enterprise offset by the laborer below, face in hands, rushing headlong for his life.

Mammon’s fiends are closer to Agricola’s *mercenarii*, *fossores*, or *operarii* than they are to the demons of *De Re Metallica*. Instead of shielding their faces from danger, Mammon’s laborers gaze collectively at Guyon. To this point the perils of the mine are apparent, if not to Guyon then to Spenser’s readers who are acutely aware of the corpses strewn about the shaft leading to the store. Once Guyon encounters “Their staring eyes sparckling with feruent fire,” he is overcome with dismay, followed immediately by shame. Mammon speaks, informing him that they are in the very place “whence all the wealth late shewd by mee,/ Proceeded,” revealing to Guyon “the fountaine of the worldes good” (II.vii.38.4–5, 6)—another line that directly echoes his introduction in Stanza 8, where he claims that “all this worldes good,/ For which men swinck and sweat incessantly,/ Fro me do flow.” To which Guyon responds indignantly,

Suffise it then, thou Money God (quoth hee)
 That all thine idle offers I refuse.
 All that I need I haue; what needeth mee
 To couet more, then I haue cause to vse?



Fig. 1: From Georg Agricola, *Georgii Agricolae De re metallica libri XII* (Basileae: Froben, 1561), 80. Rare Book Division, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

With such vaine shewes thy worldlings vile abuse:
But giue me leau to follow mine emprise. (II.vii.39.1–6)

Guyon denies Mammon again, countering his offers of “surplusage” (II. vii.18.7) with restraint and temperate wisdom. He does not disparage wealth per se, but rather Mammon’s “idle offers” of inexhaustible wealth beyond his needs. Here temperance is a matter of use as Guyon rejects the principles of excess that inform Mammon’s economic practices, the hoarding and stockpiling on display across the sequence. It is only here that Guyon addresses the laborers’ dismaying gaze that we have every reason to believe is still fixed on him in his moment of temptation. Guyon reproves Mammon: “With such vaine shewes thy worldlings vile abuse.” He at once censures Mammon and those worldly creatures which are susceptible to his wiles, those thoughtless participants in a market economy who are compelled and distracted by “vaine shewes” of wealth and power. This is the obvious sense of “worldlings” at work here. But again Spenser invites another, less familiar reading of the term. The fiendish laborers also rank among Mammon’s “worldlings,” he “their soueraigne Lord and sire.”

His “vaine shewes” are the excessive set pieces of the mine, the abundant unmanned rifts and veins of gold, the scene of extraction and refinement on a scale far beyond anything “That liuing eye before did euer see” (II. vii.38.2), the exasperating and dismaying labor performed by the fiends. The Latinate sense of “abuse” is salient here, from the deponent verb *abuso*: not only to misuse, insult, and exploit, but also to use up or consume entirely. With “worldlings” Spenser does not draw our attention to any particular market or industry, in lands Faerie or mundane. Rather, the term describes an unreflective comportment to activity, common to the larger market in which myriad men and women participate unthinkingly as well as to the withdrawn laborers who sustain it. In this sense, the term “worldlings” is as appropriate to those countless humans “off-site” (for whom Mammon’s “vaine shewes” are impressive and effective) as it is to the fiendish laborers in the mine.

However “vile” they may be, Guyon admonishes Mammon, a reckless *metallicus*, for abusing the hideous laborers, for setting them to work to such a purpose. It would be a mistake, however, to reduce Guyon to some OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) officer inspecting the mine, citing Mammon for various safety violations and occupational hazards. It’s also not clear that he would cite Mammon, if this were the case—only that he expects Mammon not to abuse *him*. Guyon is at best ambivalent about the fate of the laboring fiends. But the labor Guyon bears witness to, the very labor that he found so dismaying, is obscured once again if we refuse the local reading of “worldlings.” With this term Guyon overcomes his dismay and reinscribes the fiendish labor into the virtual economy of the poem. “Worldlings” is *his* term.

III. WORLTLINGS

“Worldling” is a complex word and, by my account, a sixteenth-century invention. While Spenser only employs the term twice across his corpus of work, bracketing this crucial sequence in Mammon’s Cave, outside of his oeuvre “worldling” is by no means a rare word. Before the 1540s it appeared infrequently (if ever) in English but by 1582 Spenser’s tutor Richard Mulcaster could include “worldling” in his list of English words “which we commonlie use in our hole speche.”⁵⁴ Its provenance, if incomplete, is

extraordinary. In the English translation of Erasmus's paraphrase of the Epistle of Jude, John Old renders the Latin "*animales*" as "worldelinges." The Latin adjective *animalis* (related directly to *anima*) can mean "living" or "animate" as well as "consisting of air" or "aerial"; moreover, *animales* (a substantive adjective) are animals in the Aristotelian sense—creatures endowed with life and sensation but not reason. Old's English captures the complexity of Erasmus's Latin, the profound distinction between men "that lyve after the spirite of Christe" and those which "stiere up dissencions, because they bee worldelinges [*animales sint*], and gevyng them selues in to the service of worldly affectes [*obseruientes mundanis affectibus*], and voyde of the spirite [*uacui spiritu*], they hunt after voluptuous pleasures, seke to reigne aloft, and scrape after lucre."⁵⁵ By the outset of Elizabeth's reign, the meaning of the word had become precise or, at the very least, distinct from those nouns modified by the adjective "worldly"—"worldly" men, "worldly" wisdom, "worldly" cares, for instance—the likes of which are very common in Middle English as well as among Spenser and his early modern contemporaries. "Worldlings" engage in a depraved form of economic life. Worldlings serve Mammon, just as the term "worldling" is bound with the Scriptural Mammon (of Matthew 6 and Luke 16).⁵⁶ Cipriano de Valera, a Fellow at Magdalene College, Cambridge who translated Calvin's *Institutio Religionae Christianis* into Spanish, paraphrases the parable of "the rich worldling" in Luke 16, the lesson being that "You can not serve God and riches" (Luke 16:13)—or, in both the 1535 Coverdale Bible and the 1611 Authorized Version: "Ye can not serve God and Mammon."⁵⁷ The preacher at Kingston-upon-Thames John Udall asserts that "we proceede securely in our owne iniquity, and as all worldlings doo, think our owne wayes to be right and honest" before "we see how great is our debt that we haue unpaid, howe many be our Sinnes that we have committed, and how vain our former conversation hath beene"; preoccupied with wealth the worldling, in short, shows great "carelesnes toward the service of god."⁵⁸ Moreover, no less an authority than the eminent preacher and theologian William Perkins affirms that "he which is no Christian is under the power of darknes having Sathan for his Prince and God...and his whole conversation is nothing else but a perpetuall obedience to Sathan"—a fact that, "If Atheists, & worldlings & carnal gospellers were perswaded of the truth of this (as it is most true) it would make them howle & cry, though now they live at ease without feeling any prick of conscience for sinne."⁵⁹

In these theological registers, "worldlings" are unreflective creatures, driven by desires that would be considered depraved in a more refined

language of virtues and vices. But worldlings do not know these languages; they are like animals, living creatures dependent upon their sensitive faculties alone, partaking neither in the community of believers nor in the exercise of reason outlined in the Gospels and across varieties of moral philosophy, ancient and modern. In this sense “worldling” retains the sense of Erasmus’s Latin *animales*. It is not merely that worldlings are sinners (they are, of course) or that they participate in a market economy at odds with the Gospels (they do), but that they are unaware of their behavior as such, bound as they are to a world that is markedly distinct from the providential vision of human being appropriate to Christianity at large. Worldlings are thus endowed with a misguided confidence that comes with a complete lack of Pauline fear and trembling.

This is confirmed in those rare instances where “worldling” takes a neutral meaning. In *The Lawiers Logike* (1588), for example, Abraham Fraunce gives a clear definition of “worldling” as he describes the importance of dialectic by way of an elaborate market metaphor. In an effort to explain how dialectic relates to preaching and theology Fraunce explains that “one and the same man may purchase ground, measure ground, and also reason of the same ground, but hee purchaseth it by one Art, measureth it by another, and reasoneth of it by a third, *hee purchaseth it as a worldling, measureth it as a Geometer, reasoneth of it as a Logician.*”⁶⁰ Avoiding morality entirely, Fraunce’s “worldling” is merely an inhabitant of a market economy, a creature that buys and sells without any particular reflection on their activity or technical knowledge pertaining to their purchase. John Rainolds confirms this definition in *Th’Overthrow of Stage-Plays* (1599). As a man “purchaseth” property “as a worldling,” so does he exploit others by means of said property—not because he intends to do wrong but precisely because he does not reflect upon his rote behaviors, habits, and desires. After Rainolds defines “worldlings” in a moral sense (as “The covetous engrossers of wealth & slaves of Mammon”), he elaborates in more neutral terms: worldlings are unreflective men “who ioyne house to house, and lay field to field, till there bee no place; whose hope is their gold; whose godlines their gaine; whose meditation, *what shall I doo? I will pull down my barnes and build greater, and therein will I gather all my fruits and my goods; and I will say to my soule, Soule, thou hast much goods laid vp for many yeares; liue at ease, eate, drinke, and be mery.*”⁶¹ In this sense the use of “worldling” is not limited to the English Reformers. The Jesuit Robert Parsons describes how “a riche man or worldling, attending with all his industrie to heape riches (as the fashion is,) can not attende, (nor euer doth,)

to that for which he came into this world.”⁶² Again, the worldling is not conscious of its abuses. Rather, it “can not attende, (nor euer doth,)” to the providential dimensions of mundane life. The worldling, if not thoughtless, is devoid of the reason grounded in Scripture that should inform Christian life. As such worldlings are effectively unaware of institutional and pedagogical approaches to virtue, of the expressed project of *The Faerie Queene* itself.

The laboring fiends are worldlings in some senses of the term. First, they toil for Mammon—hardly a neutral labor in the poem. They create the material with which Mammon tempts Guyon, with which Richesse assays Temperance. But they are not aware of its uses, nor do they experience the gold or the markets it subtends as it is obviously intended. The gold does not seem to appear as wealth for the fiends, or as an object of labor—hence their wonder. Indeed, the more the ore becomes intelligible as wealth, status, or power in the Cave of Mammon, the more withdrawn, alienated, and distant these laborers stand from it. They are absent from Mammon’s hoards and stores. More to the point, when they gaze upon Guyon we learn that “till that day,/ They neuer creature saw, that came that way,” his “armes and battailous aray” bearing the traces of metallurgical work not unlike their own, but his “Glistring” of a fundamentally different sort than their “molten owre” and “hundred furnaces all burning bright.” The fiends, integral as they are to a larger worldly economy of goods and services, do not participate in the same way Guyon does. As such, they lack access to the complex forms of early modern commerce and credit explained by Craig Muldrew, dependent as these networks are upon reputation, trust, and virtue.⁶³ It’s not that they are vicious or untrustworthy, just that they are not assigned any particular moral value whatsoever.

Guyon is arrested by their gaze, “nigh” overcome with dismay. To the letter, it is “Their staring eyes sparckling with feruent fire,/ And vgly shapes did nigh the man dismay,” a strange reaction considering the host of adversaries and marvels Guyon has met to this point in the poem, and the fact that there is no indication that these laborers intend him any harm. He is nevertheless too ashamed to retreat. Dismay and shame are coupled once again, a pair that Guyon felt together before, in Canto v: “Exceeding wroth was *Guyon* at that blow” delivered by Pyrochles, “And much ashamd, that stroke of liuing arme/ Should him dismay” (II.v.7.1–3). In Canto vii, moreover, as Guyon follows Mammon through the gate, Spenser notes that “Ne darkenesse him, ne daunger might dismay” (II.vii.26.4), a description that holds true across the scene. Guyon is not dismayed by “darkenesse” or

“daunger” but by their “staring eyes” and “vgly shapes” of these “Deformed creatures,” features that Spenser collocates here with labor. The encounter is traumatic, these laborers who are at once integral to the creation of our reality and the world of *The Faerie Queene*, who produce the wealth Guyon refuses, a refusal which is nonetheless crucial to his identity as Temperance. It is paradoxically Mammon who wrests Guyon from his paralysis, who keeps him from fleeing in shame or falling fully into dismay. It is, once again, the trial that saves Guyon, the opportunity to assert that he is something other than these laborers for whom even gold has no meaning save for its metallurgical properties particular to their work.

Neither Guyon nor Spenser readily dismiss the laborers as inhuman or infernal. Spenser invites us to read theirs as blank stares, the fire in their eyes a reflection of their furnaces, but insists at the same time that they wonder. Wonder is not comprehension or reason but it is nevertheless a comportment or affect that these strange subterranean figures share with Guyon. It may be the only thing they share, if instances of confusion or disorientation are comparable. Guyon himself wonders often—for instance, when contemplating whether the “Babes bloudie hands” can be cleansed (II.ii.3.9) or, again, when he and Arthur arrive at Eumnestes’s library and see him performing the “endlesse exercise” of memory (II.ix.59.2). Moreover, Guyon admits to Arthur that the “beautie,” “bountie,” and “imperiall powre” of the Faerie Queen herself inspires a wonder poised to “your thoughts deuoure./ And infinite desire into your spirite poure!” (II.ix.3.5–9). Wonder is also the appropriate response to the rare divine intervention in the poem, as the Palmer meets the angelic figure guarding Guyon (again in “dismay”) with mute “fear and wonder” (II.viii.7.2, 5). Wonder arises in disorienting circumstances, when unfamiliar ideas or events test the terms and limits of our understanding. With the encounter between Guyon and the fiends in mind, Guyon’s own wonder before the Gates of Pluto in Canto vii seems precarious. We learn that it is “with wonder all the way” that Guyon “Did feed his eyes, and fild his inner thought” (II.vii.24.3–4), and this instance of “wonder” immediately precedes the fiends’ “wonder” in Stanza 37, as Spenser refuses to tell us more about the inner life of Mammon’s laborers. We are invited, rather, to trace Guyon’s own wonder as he encounters fundamentally unfamiliar creatures in the mines, at work in a spectacular and disorienting scene of production. Guyon extends this appellation “worldlings” to the fiends because they swink and sweat in an activity they perform unreflectively. But this is also a term that Guyon employs to understand their labor; if the fiends are “worldlings” their labor is legible in

its relationship to the moral economy of the poem, making their activity legible to Guyon if not to themselves. Paradoxically, Guyon employs this rare term “worldling” to understand the fiends’ activity, to disparage that activity as unreflective, and to locate their work in relation to the economy that their work subsidizes, from which they themselves are estranged—an economy in which Guyon participates and emerges temperate. His ability to forsake wonder for understanding in the Cave, and to assay or experience the gold as an integral part of a material and moral economy, rests on their constitutive inability to do the same.

Worldlings are an unreflective species in *The Faerie Queene*. When Mammon and Guyon employ this rare term, they expose an abiding continuity, integrating the fiendish laborers—alienated from their industry, stupefied in their encounter with Temperance—into the thoughtless irrational activity of men and markets above ground. In the face of these subterranean laborers, Guyon is dismayed and ashamed, and Spenser acutely aware of the foundational antagonisms and disparities that occasion Guyon’s affective crisis. What does Guyon owe these subterranean creatures? What capacities, as humans or virtues, do they hold in common, which might explain Guyon’s shame? To what extent are these laborers foundational to Guyon’s own moral and romantic enterprises, and his appellation “worldling” an expression of his dismay? The species-life of worldlings precludes consciousness of their activity. As Guyon echoes Mammon’s identification of worldlings, it is unclear whether he is merely describing what the fiends are already doing or justifying his complicity in the economy they make possible.

Princeton University

NOTES

1. Many thanks to Ayesha Ramachandran and Melissa Sanchez for their guidance on this piece, to Leon Grek for help with Agricola’s Latin, and especially to Jeff Dolven for his unfailingly thoughtful and thorough advice. This essay initially took shape as a footnote to my own “Medievalism without Nostalgia: Guyon’s Swoon and the English Reformation *Descensus ad Inferos*,” *Spenser Studies* 29 (2014): 105–47.

2. Karl Marx, *The Ethnological Notebooks of Karl Marx: Studies of Morgan, Phear, Maine, Lubbock*, ed. Lawrence Krader, Second Edition (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1974), 305. Cited by David Norbrook, *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance*, Revised Edition (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 124n. See also Editors and Anthony W. Riley, “Marx & Spenser,” *The Spenser Encyclopedia*, ed. A. C. Hamilton, et al. (Toronto, Buffalo, and London: University of Toronto Press and Routledge, 1990), 457–58.

3. On Marx’s late career see David McLellan, *Karl Marx: A Biography*, Fourth Edition (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); and Kevin B. Anderson, *Marx at the Margins: On Nationalism, Ethnicity, and Non-Western Societies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 196–236.

4. To my knowledge, these are Marx’s only references to Spenser; these notes at least prove that he read *A View of the present State of Ireland*, referring as he does to sections that are not cited in Maine’s work. See Henry Sumner Maine, *Lectures on the Early History of Institutions* (New York: Henry Holt, 1875), 20.

5. Marx, *Ethnological Notebooks*, 305. Marx cites both Irenius and Eudoxus here. See Edmund Spenser, *A View of the State of Ireland: From the First Printed Edition (1633)*, ed. Andrew Hadfield and Willy Maley (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 93–94, 101.

6. Marx, *Ethnological Notebooks*, 6; and Karl Marx, “Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts (1844),” *Early Writings*, trans. Rodney Livingstone and Gregor Benton (London: Penguin, 1975), 327.

7. Marx, “Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts (1844),” 328–39.

8. See Richard Halpern’s formative account of early modern literary practices and transformations related to emergent capitalism: Richard Halpern, *The Poetics of Primitive Accumulation: English Renaissance Culture and the Genealogy of Capital* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), esp. 61–100.

9. I bracket the larger question of class and the relevant transformations in late Capitalism or postmodernity. See Ernest Mandel, *Late Capitalism* (London and New York: Verso, 1978), 177–183; Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991), 318–331; Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century*, 25th Anniversary Edition (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1998), esp. 175–310; Guy Standing, *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014).

10. Indeed, Marx’s early anthropological accounts of labor and species-being are often dismissed as “humanist” or “anthropocentric” remnants of his Hegelian youth, revised in his later scientific works (Althusser); or derided as vestigial traces of western metaphysics (Heidegger). Alternatively, Sartre cited Marx’s anthropology as precedent for a Marxist humanism. See Louis Althusser, “On the Young Marx: Theoretical Questions” and “Marxism and Humanism,” *For Marx*, trans. Ben Brewster (London: Verso, 1969), 51–86, 221–46; Martin Heidegger, “Brief über den Humanismus,” *Wegmarken* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann,

1976), 313–364; Jean-Paul Sartre, *Search for a Method*, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Vintage, 1963), 3–34.

11. Marx, “Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts (1844),” 329.

12. *Ibid.*, 329.

13. Albert O. Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism before Its Triumph* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977).

14. Laurie Shannon, *The Accommodated Animal: Cosmopolity in Shakespearean Locales* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 8–10.

15. Although he contributed poetry to the English edition of Jan van der Noot’s *A Theatre wherein be represented as wel the miseris & calamities that follow the voluptuous Worldlings, as also the greate joys and plesures which the faithfull do enjoy* (1569)—in short, *A Theatre for Worldlings*—the title is almost certainly not his. In the English title of van der Noot’s *Theatre for Worldlings*, “Worldlings” replaces the Dutch “*den werelts gesinden*”—that is, men who are “predisposed to the world.” The French title offers a closer analog: “*mondains*.” Jan van der Noot, *Theatre for Worldlings*, ed. William A. Jackson and Louis S. Friedland (New York: Scholars’ Facsimiles and Reprints, 1939); Jan van der Noot, *Het Theatre oft Toon-neel, waer in ter eender de ongelucken ende elenden die den werelts gesinden ende boosen menschen toecomen: ende op dander syde tgheluck goet ende ruste die de ghelououighe ghenieten, vertoont worden* (London: John Day, 1568); and Jan van der Noot, *Le Theatre auquel sont exposés & monstrés les inconueniens & miseris qui suiuent les mondains & vicieux, ensemble les plaisirs & contentemens don’t les fideles jouissent* (London: John Day, 1568). See also J. A. van Dorsten, *The Radical Arts: First Decade of an Elizabethan Renaissance* (Leiden and London: Leiden University Press and Oxford University Press, 1970), 77–78.

16. Virgil, *Aeneid*, trans. Frederick Ahl (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 197–98 [VIII.407–53].

17. Several compelling studies explore Spenser’s interests in mining and metallurgy in the Cave of Mammon sequence. See Walter M. Kendrick, “Earth of Flesh, Flesh of Earth: Mother Earth in the Faerie Queene,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 27.4 (1974): 537–41; Todd A. Borlik, *Ecocriticism and Early Modern English Literature: Green Pastures* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 158–60; Aaron Kitch, *Political Economy and the States of Literature in Early Modern England* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), 26–36; and David Landreth, *The Face of Mammon: The Matter of Money in English Renaissance Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 59–70.

18. Georgius Agricola, *De Re Metallica*, trans. and ed. Herbert Clark Hoover and Lou Henry Hoover (New York: Dover, 1950), 25; Georgius Agricola, *De Re Metallica Libri XII* (Basel: Hieronymus Froben, 1556), 19. See also Christoph Bartels, “The Administration of Mining in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe (fourteenth to eighteenth centuries),” *Mining, Monies, and Culture in Early Modern Societies*, ed. Nanny Kim and Keiko Nagase-Reimer (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 115–132.

19. Agricola, *De Re Metallica* [trans. Hoover and Hoover], 25; Agricola, *De Re Metallica* [1556], 19.

20. Agricola, *De Re Metallica* [trans. Hoover and Hoover], 26; Agricola, *De Re Metallica* [1556], 19.

21. Merlin ordered his fiendish laborers to continue their work in his absence—he left “Them bownd till his retorune, their labour not to slake” (III.iii.10.9)—and because he never returned to Cairmardin, their labor continues. Presumably, they will continue to labor there forever, or at least until the wall is completed. This fascinating scene bears comparison to Mammon’s Cave, as the earlier scene sets key aspects of the work below Cairmardin in relief. First, none of the chief characters actually see the activity below Cairmardin; Spenser mediates his description with the qualifying “some say” (III.iii.10.1). Second, Spenser implies that these fiends have a degree of agency as “workemen” (III.iii.10.8). Although they are “bownd till his return,” and “may not their work forbear,” it is not clear whether they are kept in bondage, as if by Merlin’s magic, or if they work because “So greatly his commandement they feare” (III.iii.10.9, 11.4–5). In other words, Spenser suggests that they are motivated by fear—a base motivation, but one that is nonetheless indicative of volition. Third, there is an end to this project. The fiends “there doe toyle and traueile day and night,/ Vntill that brasen wall they vp doe reare” (III.iii.11.6–7).

22. Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A. C. Hamilton, rev. 2nd ed., ed. Hiroshi Yamashita and Toshiyuki Suzuki (Harlow, England: Pearson Longman, 2007). All references appear by Book, Canto, Stanza, and Line/s.

23. Landreth, *The Face of Mammon*, 59–60; David Read, *Temperate Conquests: Spenser and the Spanish New World* (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 2000), 66–67.

24. Agricola explicitly counsels miners to consider why a given mine was abandoned before revisiting or reopening it. Agricola, *De Re Metallica* [trans. Hoover and Hoover], 217–18; Agricola, *De Re Metallica* [1556], 173–74.

25. *Ibid.*, 219; Agricola, *De Re Metallica* [1556], 174.

26. Agricola, *De Re Metallica* [trans. Hoover and Hoover], 219; Agricola, *De Re Metallica* [1556], 174.

27. “assay, v.” Oxford English Dictionary Online. December 2014. The OED entry is misleading insofar as it eschews critical sources available to Spenser which employ this term in this technical sense, in relation to mining and metallurgy. In other words, the technical meaning of “assay” is more prominent in sixteenth-century English than the OED suggests. See, for instance, Richard Eden’s translation of Vannoccio Biringuccio’s *De la Pirotechnia*: Peter Martyr d’Anghiera, “Of the generation of metalles and their mynes with the maner of fyndinge the same: written in the Italien tounge by Vannuccius Biringuczius in his booke cauled Pyrotechnia,” *The Decades of the Newe Worlde or West India Conteinyng the Navigations and Conquestes of the Spanyardes*, trans. Richard Eden (London: Guilhelmi Powell, 1555), 326^v–343^r [STC (2nd ed.) / 647].

28. Agricola, *De Re Metallica* [trans. Hoover and Hoover], 220–21; Agricola, *De Re Metallica* [1556], 175.

29. “That the trial of your faith, being muche more precious then golde that periseth (thogh it be tryed with fyre) might be founde unto your praise, & honour and glorie at the appearing of Jesus Christ.” See also Revelation 3:18: “I counsel thee to bide of me golde tryed by the fyre, that thou maiest be made riche, & white raiment, that thou maiest be clothed and that thy filthie nakednes do not appeare.” *The Bible and Holy Scriptures Conteyned in the Olde and Newe Testament* (Geneva: Rowland Hall, 1560), 108^v, 115^v.

30. Wonder and amazement as forms of passivity, fundamental Spenserian experiences, have received much deserved critical attention. See Harry Berger, Jr. *The Allegorical Temper: Vision and Reality in Book II of Spenser’s Faerie Queene* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1957), ; William A. Oram, “Spenserian Paralysis,” *Studies in English Literature* 41 (2001): 49–70; and Giulio Pertile, “And all his senses stound’: The Physiology of Stupefaction in Spenser’s *Faerie Queene*,” *English Literary Renaissance* 44.3 (2014): 420–51.

31. Jeff Dolven, *Scenes of Instruction in Renaissance Romance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 168.

32. Read, *Temperate Conquests*, 65–82; and Maureen Quilligan, “On the Renaissance Epic: Spenser and Slavery,” *South Atlantic Quarterly* 100.1 (2001): 15–39.

33. For instance, Richard Eden’s *The Decades of the Newe Worlde or West India Conteynyng the Navigations and Conquestes of the Spanyardes* (1555), based on Peter Martyr d’Anghiera’s *Décadas* published in eight installments between 1511 and 1525 and collected as *De Orbe Novo* in 1530; the 1581 translation of Bartolomé de las Casas’s *Brevísima Relación de la Destrucción de las Indias* (1542); and Thomas Nicholas’s 1578 translation of Franciso López de Gómara’s *Historia General de las Indias* (1552).

34. Quilligan, 22–23.

35. Tara Nummedal, *Alchemy and Authority in the Holy Roman Empire* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 73–85.

36. Nummedal, 78.

37. Pamela O. Long, “The Openness of Knowledge: An Ideal and Its Context in 16th-Century Writings on Mining and Metallurgy,” *Technology and Culture* 32.2, Part 1 (1991), 320. In an expanded account of this article, Long points to the military applications of mining; see Pamela O. Long, *Openness, Secrecy, Authorship: Technical Arts and the Culture of Knowledge from Antiquity to the Renaissance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 175–76, 192–209.

38. In the Case of Mines, the advocates of the Mines Royal successfully argued (against the earl of Northumberland) that “the queen now, by reason of her prerogative royal, is intituled to have and enjoy, and ought to have and enjoy to her own proper use all and singular mines and ores of gold and silver...with all things concerning them, which may or can be found in any lands, tenements, or hereditaments within this realm of England...as in the lands and soil of any of her subjects.” M. B. Donald, *Elizabethan Monopolies: The History of the Company*

of *Mineral and Battery Works from 1565 to 1604* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1961), 4–14, 71–85; Edmund Plowden, “The Pleadings in the Case of Mines,” *The Commentaries or Reports of Edmund Plowden* (Dublin: H. Watts and W. Jones, 1792), 3D2^r [†310]. Plowden himself cites Agricola in the commentary appended to the report of the judgment, 3H5^v–3H7^v.

39. Agricola, *De Re Metallica* [trans. Hoover and Hoover], 16–17; Agricola, *De Re Metallica* [1556], 12.

40. Agricola, *De Re Metallica* [trans. Hoover and Hoover], 6; Agricola, *De Re Metallica* [1556], 3. I alter the translation to make the distinctions among laborers clear.

41. Agricola, *De Re Metallica* [trans. Hoover and Hoover], 6; Agricola, *De Re Metallica* [1556], 3.

42. Agricola, *De Re Metallica* [trans. Hoover and Hoover], 214; Agricola, *De Re Metallica* [1556], 172.

43. Agricola, *De Re Metallica* [trans. Hoover and Hoover], 214–217; Agricola, *De Re Metallica* [1556], 172–73.

44. Agricola, *De Re Metallica* [trans. Hoover and Hoover], 217, 218; Agricola, *De Re Metallica* [1556], 173, 174.

45. Georgius Agricola, *De Animantibus Subterraneis Liber* (Basel: [Hieronymus] Froben, 1549), 76–78; Agricola, *De Re Metallica* [trans. Hoover and Hoover], 217; Agricola, *De Re Metallica* [1556], 173.

46. Agricola, *De Animantibus Subterraneis*, 77–79. Agricola also discusses a mild or gentle [mites] sort of mountain daemon [*daemones montani*]—kobolds [Cobalos], trolls [Trullis], and the friendly *Gutelos*, for instance— mischievous creatures that imitate and tease the miners but pose no real threat. Indeed, while “they occasionally irritate the laborers with little stones, they very rarely harm them. Nor do they ever do harm unless they have first been derided or provoked with an insult [*interdum glareis lacessunt operarios, rarissime tamen eos laedunt. Nec laedunt unquam, nisi prius ipsi cachinno fuerint aut maledicto lacesseti*].

47. Agricola, *De Re Metallica* [trans. Hoover and Hoover], 25; Agricola, *De Re Metallica* [1556], 19.

48. Agricola, *De Re Metallica* [trans. Hoover and Hoover], 26; Agricola, *De Re Metallica* [1556], 19.

49. Agricola, *De Re Metallica* [trans. Hoover and Hoover], 26; Agricola, *De Re Metallica* [1556], 19–20. I alter the translation slightly here.

50. Agricola, *De Re Metallica* [trans. Hoover and Hoover], 101; Agricola, *De Re Metallica* [1556], 71.

51. Agricola, *De Re Metallica* [trans. Hoover and Hoover], 119–120; Agricola, *De Re Metallica* [1556], 80.

52. Agricola, *De Re Metallica* [trans. Hoover and Hoover], 120; Agricola, *De Re Metallica* [1556], 81, 80.

53. Agricola, *De Re Metallica* [trans. Hoover and Hoover], 152; Agricola, *De Re Metallica* [1556], 110.

54. Richard Mulcaster, *The First Part of the Elementarie which Entreateth Chefelie of the Right Writing of our English Tung* (London: Thomas Vautroullier, 1582) 225, 163. I have not been able to find any instances of the term in Middle English.

55. Old uses the term again in his translation of Erasmus's paraphrase of the Epistle of James. Describing the "riche man" [*diues*] who is humbled and brought low, Old affirms that he might "rejoyce to him selfe in thys behalfe, that where as he was muche set by amonge worldlinges [*apud mundi cultores*] for the false goodes of thys worlde, nowe for the professing of Christe he is despised and contemned" but also made "rich in true goodes [*ueris bonis ditescat*] with God." Here "worldlinges" replaces the Latin "*mundi cultores*"—the inhabitants, cultivators, even worshippers of the world. In both instances Old emphasizes lucre, worldly wealth, "the false goodes of thys worlde" and the attendant "pryde [that] made [the rich man] hyghe stomaked before by reason of hys vayne goodes [*ante tumidum inanibus bonis fastus agitabat*]." See Desiderius Erasmus, "The paraphrase of Erasmus upon the Epistle of Saincte Jude," trans. John Olde, *The Seconde Tome or Volume of the Paraphrase of Erasmus upon the Newe Testament*, ed. Miles Coverdale (London: Edwarde Whitchurche, 1549), xxiii^v–xxiiiⁱⁱ, xxviⁱ; Desiderius Erasmus, "The paraphrase of Erasmus upon the Epistle of Saincte James," trans. John Olde, *The Seconde Tome or Volume of the Paraphrase of Erasmus upon the Newe Testament*, ed. Miles Coverdale (London: Edwarde Whitchurche, 1549), xxviⁱ; Desiderius Erasmus, *In Universas Epistolas Apostolorum ab Ecclesia Receptas . . . Paraphrasis, hoc est, Liberior ac Dilucidior Interpreta*, ed. Johann Froben (Basel: Johann Froben, 1522), Bb8^v, Cc7^r. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, this is the earliest recorded use of "worldling"; "worldling, n." *OED Online*. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/230271?redirectedFrom=worldling> (accessed January 25, 2015).

The English translations of Erasmus's *Paraphrases* were popular (even compulsory) reading for cleric and layman alike, works that exercised great influence over several generations of sixteenth-century readers. In an equally popular and important work, the Geneva Bible translators also employed the term "worldling" in influential ways. First, they praise Queen Elizabeth in the introduction as a steadfast Reformer working against "foreyn adversaries" and "domestical enemies, as false Prophets, craftie worldlings, faint hearted soldiers, and oppressors of their brethren, who aswel by false doctrine and lyes, as by subtil counsel, cowardies, and extortion, discouraged the heartes almoste of all." And while "worldling" does not appear in the English translation of Scripture itself, it is crucial to the commentary. For instance, the headnote to Psalm 123 identifies the poem as "A prairer of the faithful, which were afflicted ether in Babylon or under Antiochus by the wicked worldelings and contemners of God," which were subject to "the mocking of the welthie, & of the despitefulnes of the proude." In his 1547 injunctions Edward VI required every parish to purchase the *Paraphrases* and make them available to a variety of readers. See John Craig, "Forming a Protestant Consciousness? Erasmus'

Paraphrases in English Parishes, 1547–1666,” *Holy Scripture Speaks: The Production and Reception of Erasmus’ Paraphrases on the New Testament*, ed. Hilmar M. Pabel and Mark Vessey (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 317–322; Geneva Bible, ii^r, 264^r.

56. See Anne Lake Prescott, “Mammon,” *The Spenser Encyclopedia*, ed. A. C. Hamilton, et al. (Toronto and London: University of Toronto Press and Routledge, 1990), 451–52.

57. As the Lawyer Edward Hake affirms in his translation of the *Imitatio Christi*, “worldlings are incyted with many pleasures, and obeye their owne will or sensualitie,” just as the faithful learn to refuse “that gladnesse which the Covetous worldling hath of his ryches and hourdyng vp of money.” Cipriano de Valera, *Two Treatises: The First, Of the Lives of the Popes, and their Doctrine. The Second, of the Masse* (London: John Harison, 1600), 232; Geneva Bible (1560), 37^r; *Biblia the Byble, that is, the Holy Scripture of the Olde and New Testament, faithfully translated in to Englyshe*, ed. Miles Coverdale (1535), xxxv^r [STC (2nd ed.) 2063.3]; Thomas á Kempis, *The Imitation or Following of Christ*, trans. Edward Hake (London: Henry Denham, 1568), 72^v [incorrectly printed 74^v]; “A Short and Pretie Treatise Touching the Perpetuall Reioyce of the Godly Even in This Lyfe,” *The Imitation or Following of Christ*, trans. Edward Hake (London: Henry Denham, 1568), Svi^r. Compare this with the fifteenth-century translation which reads “Pei haue...many delectations and they folowe her owne delectations” (III.xiii). *The Imitation of Christ: The First English Translation of the ‘Imitatio Christi’*, ed. B. J. H. Biggs, Early English Text Society 309 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 81.

58. John Udall, *Peters Fall: Two Sermons upon the Historie of Peters Denying Christ* (London: John Windes, and Thomas Judson for Nicholas Lyng, 1584), Fv^r–Fv^v, Fvi^r–Fvi^v.

59. William Perkins, *A Treatise Tending unto a Declaration Whether a Man be in the Estate of Damnation or in the Estate of Grace* (London: R. Robinson, for T. Gubbin and I. Porter, 1590), 107–08.

60. Abraham Fraunce, *The Lawiers Logike, Exemplifying the Praecepts of Logike by the Practise of the Common Lawe* (London: William How for Thomas Gubbin and T. Newman, 1588), Biiii^r. My emphasis.

61. John Rainolds, *Th’Overthrow of Stage-Plays* (Middelburg: Printed by Richard Schilders, 1599), 58.

62. Robert Parsons, *A Christian Directorie Guiding Men to their Salvation* (Rouen, 1585), 116 [STC (2nd ed.) 19354.1].

63. Craig Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England* (Hampshire and New York: Macmillan and St. Martin’s, 1998), 123–95.