

A Chivalric Hero or Not? The Disarming Knight in Book 2 of *The Faerie Queene**

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1

Among the titular knights in Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (1590, 1596), the protagonist of book 2, Sir Guyon, is a quite special figure. His willing descent into the cave of Mammon, his subsequent fainting following this adventure, and his ungovernable rage in the Bower of Bliss have been extensively discussed by critics. What's more, Guyon is the only knight without his horse throughout most of his journey. After Guyon's encounter with Amavia in the green wood in canto 1, he loses both his horse and his spear. Hamilton notes that "From now on Guyon acts outside the chivalric tradition" (173n). His comment views the horse as an emblem of chivalry because chivalry is basically the skill of armed force on horseback. Later, when Guyon falls into a deadly trance after his adventure with Mammon, he is stripped of his shield and his helmet by Pyrochles and Cymochles (2.8.17). Subsequently, his sword is handed to Prince Arthur by the Palmer during Arthur's fight with the Pyrochles brothers (2.8.40). As a consequence, when Guyon awakens from his stupor, he finds himself in an awkward predicament:

By this Sir *Guyon* from his traunce awakt,
Life hauing maystered her sencelesse foe;
And looking vp, when as his shield he lakt,

And sword saw not, he wexed wondrous woe. (2.8.53.1-4)

Here Guyon becomes a knight without his armor nor his horse, right before the allegorical center of this book, the episode of the house of Temperance (2.9). Canto 10 is a record of the chronicles of Britain kings and Elfin Emperors that Arthur and Guyon read respectively in the house of Temperance. Canto 11 is distributed to Arthur's battle with Maleger. What remains for Guyon in book 2 is the last canto about the destination of his journey—the Bower of Bliss (2.12). However, not until book 5 does the suddenly reappearing hero find his horse under Braggadocchio, who steals his horse and spear and flaunts with them throughout the books. Although the timelines in different books may overlap or coincide, it is clear that prior to canto 9, that is, for most of book 2, Guyon undergoes a process of gradually losing his armor, first his horse and spear, then his shield, helmet, and sword.

If as Hamilton puts it, losing the horse is a sign of Guyon acting against the chivalric code, what does this whole disarming experience mean? What does armor mean to Guyon and how does he behave against the chivalric tradition? How does the disarming process contribute to the construction of allegory of book 2? Critical articles concerning armor in *The Faerie Queene* predominantly focus on the details of Prince Arthur's armor, which is very specifically described, or Spenser's possible sources when depicting the various armor and blazons in the poem. In "Blazonings in *The Faerie Queene*," for example, Ruth Berman offers a prominent model by providing a vivid discussion of almost all the major heraldic representations in all the books. However, few critics raise the issue of Guyon's disarming and its influence to the protagonist's characterization.

This paper examines Guyon's disarmament by focusing on his behaviors and characteristics opposite to chivalric convention depicted in book 2. I suggest that chivalric symbols and romantic chivalric motifs are

employed in expression of Spenser's moral allegory, but in Guyon, some part of the normal chivalric heroes' features is missing. By considering Guyon as an "anti-chivalric" hero, we may reassess the motif of missing armor and the limitation of Guyon's virtue in book 2, thus grasping a more complete understanding of the heroic figure of book 2 and of the virtue of temperance.

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First, it is evident that Spenser was aware of chivalric tradition and of chivalric emblems. Ivan L. Schulze has convincingly showed that chivalric practices were quite popular during the reigns of Henry VIII and Elizabeth, and "[t]raining in the elements of chivalry was an important part of the education of every young nobleman" in Spenser's time (150). One historical parallel suggested by Schulze is that "those who share most largely in the poem, Leicester, Grey, Essex, Sidney, Raleigh, were all friends or patrons of Spenser, and, with the exception of Sidney and Raleigh, Knights of the Garter" (157). Similarly, Richard C. McCoy indicates that "[t]he Earls of Leicester and Essex and Sir Philip Sidney rushed to the battlefields of Ireland and the continent to vindicate their country's honor, and Spenser celebrated their exploits" (149). Therefore, Spenser, as a government official and an observer of Elizabethan court life, should not have been far from the chivalric practices either as an ideology or as a monarchic propaganda in his time. Furthermore, with the "antiquities" (bk. 2, proem 1.9) and "antique ymage" (bk. 2, proem 4.9) in his mind, with Arthur as his model of a perfect knight, Spenser was surely influenced by traditional chivalric romances. Guyon bears a shield decorated by "that fayre ymage of that heauenly Mayd" (2.1.28.7). Through his words, we know that he belongs to the "Order of *Maydenhead*" (2.2.42.4), likely patterned on the Elizabethan Order of the Garter (101n). Therefore, Spenser intended to portray Guyon as a chivalric knight, and that is why

Guyon's disaccord with this idea deserves attention.

Analysis of references to the hero's equipment makes it difficult to believe that changes in that of Guyon do not contribute to the construction of Spenser's allegorical structure in book 2. In "Guyon the Wrestler," Susan Snyder refers to the etymological meaning of Guyon's name to interpret him as a wrestler, thus explaining his occasional but necessary bare-handed fighting. Yet I find it insufficient to link the wrestling concept with the motif of disappearing armor in book 2. The disarming knight is a commonly used motif throughout the entire poem of *The Faerie Queene*. There is some persistent power that continuously tempts the knights to remove their armor or lay down their weapons. This happens to the Red Cross Knight at the enfeebling fountain (1.7.2), to Artegall when he yields to Radigund's beauty (5.5.13), to Calidore when he flings himself into the shepherds' world (6.9), and to Cymochles in Phaedria's island (2.6.14) and Verdant in the Bower of Bliss (2.12.79-80). In these cases, the knights fail to resist the temptation of disarming to enjoy a moment of recreation. Indeed, disarming frees them from their missions and chivalric duty, but the idle mode also presents the extreme danger of losing themselves.

Unlike these characters, Guyon is famous for his self-imposing abstinence. Concupiscence is a lure, but he never degenerates to the level of being controlled by it, partly because he has the Palmer always guiding him when he displays any forestate of deviation. However, when dealing with the Idle lake alone without the Palmer, Guyon does not show any interest in Phaedria or her advice to "[w]ithdraw from thought of warlike enterprize,/And drowne in dissolute delights apart,/Where noise of armes, or vew of martiall guize/Might not reuiue desire of knightly exercize" (2.6.25.6-9). Guyon has a "constant hart" (2.6.25.5) and never voluntarily disarms himself. He does not try to escape from his assignment. Moreover, he speaks highly of "praise-worthie deedes" (2.7.2.5) and pursues them too far, thus to receive Mammon's invitation.

As to the references to his appearance at the beginning of book 2, Guyon is literally “[a] goodly knight” (2.1.5.8). Unlike other protagonists in the poem, Guyon’s problem does not lie in the divergence from any mission. However, due to his virtue, he does not belong to the realm of a romantic chivalry knight. This is represented by the loss of his armor. In addition, the missing equipment becomes a trigger for his further distancing from a chivalric life.

Although few critics have questioned his qualification as a chivalric knight, Hamilton’s note suggests that Guyon’s titular virtue may not correspond to his expected position as a chivalric hero at the first place:

He [Archimago] appeals to Guyon as the traditional heroic (and classical) warrior, a role denied him by the virtue of which he is the patron, e.g. he binds an old woman (iv 12), kills Pyrochles’s horse (v 4), and sets out on a quest to bind a naked woman. He is the only hero who does not kill anyone. (160n)

By this clue we come to the first reason why Guyon is an outsider of chivalric acts; Guyon does not kill. In book 2, all the pagan enemies—the Pyrochles brothers and Maleger—were destroyed by Arthur. When Guyon is about to kill Furor, he is stopped by the Palmer immediately (2.4.9–10). Later, when Guyon has the chance to kill Pyrochles, he responds by rather advising Pyrochles to be temperate:

Liue and alleagaunce owe,
To him, that giues thee life and liberty,
And henceforth by this daies ensample trow,
That hasty wroth, and heedlesse hazardry
Doe breede repentaunce late, and lasting infamy. (2.5.13.5–9)

However, this attempt of persuasion is futile. Pyrochles still becomes a problem later and must be slain. This is undertaken by Prince Arthur.

Compared with Guyon, Arthur makes a quick decision when Pyrochles deserves a fatal punishment:

Wroth was the Prince, and sory yet withall,
That he so wilfully refused grace;
Yet sith his fate so cruelly did fall,
His shining Helmet he gan soone vnlace,
And left his headlesse body bleeding all the place. (2.8.52.5-9)

It is an inevitable outcome for Guyon that when he learns to master his power out of the virtue of temperance, he is unable to kill his enemies anymore. When Arthur fights Pyrochles and Cymochles, who represent “wrathfulness” and “sensuality” respectively (Webster 574), Guyon lies unconscious on the ground as a corpse during the whole battle. The fact that Guyon is stripped of his armor by Pyrochles and Cymochles further shows that temperance, as a defensive virtue, lacks the power to destroy its enemies.

Guyon’s killing of Pyrochles’s horse (2.5.4) is another behavior that violates the chivalric convention, since in jousts, it was considered a disgrace to harm the opponent’s horse. Considering this point, in the second volume of *A Critical Inquiry into Antient Armour*, Samuel Rush Meyrick presents part of the content from a folio book that is considered to have been created in the reign of Queen Elizabeth:

. . . if any man strike a horse with his speare, he shalbe put out of the itorneye without any favour incontinent, and if any slaye an horse he shall paye to the owner of the said horse, an hundred crownes in recompence, also yt is not to be thought that any man will strike an horse willingly, for if it do, it shalbe to his great dishonor. (183)

In the knights’ battles, it is acceptable to ground the rival, but striking the

horse, although unintentionally, brings great humiliation. Thus, Pyrochles's censure on Guyon—"Disleall knight, whose coward corage chose/To wreake it selfe on beast all innocent" (2.5.5.3-4)—partially makes sense.

Previously, I have analyzed the external signs of Guyon's characteristics as an unqualified knight. Based on these facts, Guyon's intense pursuit of honor and glorious deeds that leads him into the cave of Mammon seems like an irony of himself and of the decadent chivalric idea as well. To carefully examine this, we must analyze the disappearance of Guyon's horse, which inevitably brings us to an unexpected key character, Braggadocchio.

Braggadocchio is generally considered as a comic character in book 2 (Bayley 109-10), yet his role in establishing the allegorical meaning in book 2 is important. In his first appearance, in canto 3 of book 2, Braggadocchio is described as a character that "to bountie neuer cast his mynd,/Ne thought of honour euer did assay/His baser brest, but in his kestrell kynd/A pleasing vaine of glory he did fynd" (2.3.4.2-5). After he succeeds in running away with the stolen horse and spear,

Now gan his hart all swell in iollity,
 And of him selfe great hope and help conceiu'd
 That puffed vp with smoke of vanity,
 And with selfe-loued personage deceiu'd,
 He gan to hope, of men to be receiu'd
 For such, as he him thought, or faine would bee:
 But for in court gay portance he perceiu'd,
 And gallant shew to be in greatest gree,
 Eftsoones to court he cast t'aduance his first degree. (2.3.5.1-9)

With the stolen horse and spear, Braggadocchio's attempt to achieve knighthood in the court just parodies Guyon's search for knightly adventures and deeds. In the cave of Mammon, facing Mammon's

temptation with “[h]onour, estate, and all this worldes good” (2.7.8.6), Guyon declares:

Faire shields, gay steedes, bright armes be my delight:
Those be the riches fit for an aduent’rous knight. (2.7.10.8–9)

This stand is ironic because, later, Guyon loses all of what he mentions here—his shields, steeds, and armor—at the conclusion of this adventure. In the cave, Mammon calls Guyon—“Vaine glorious Elfe” (2.7.11.1)—echoing Braggadocchio’s “pleasing vaine of glory” (2.3.4.5). In this way, Guyon’s overconfidence degenerates him to the level of Braggadocchio’s boasting and belligerent pride. Consequently, he falls into a state of unconsciousness at the end of this episode. The stupor makes him unable to defend himself against his enemies anymore and reliant on the salvation of God, represented by the appearance of the guardian angel and Prince Arthur.

Yet Guyon does not witness both God’s salvation and Arthur’s battle with his enemies because when he awakes, the climax has passed, and everything is over. Guyon’s sleep is akin to death. In canto 8, Guyon is frequently depicted as a dead body. Probably for protecting Guyon’s body from the pagan brothers’ vengeance, when the Palmer finds that “life not yet dislodged quight” (2.8.9.7) from Guyon’s body, he tries to convey the message that Guyon is dead:

Certes, Sir knight, ye bene too much to blame,
Thus for to blott the honor of the dead,
And with fowle cowardize his carcas shame,
Whose liuing handes immortalizd his name. (2.8.13.2–5)

On hearing this, during the following debates over Guyon’s body, Cymochles and Pyrochles both treat Guyon as dead:

Bad therefore I him deeme, that thus lies dead on field.

.....

I will him reauē of armes, the victors hire,

And of that shield, more worthy of good knight;

For why should a dead dog be deckt in armour bright? (2.8.14.9, 2.8.15.7-9)

Even the Palmer repeatedly attempts to persuade the intemperate pagan brothers not to “spoil the dead of weed” (2.8.16.4), for it is “sacrilege, and doth all sinnes exceed” (2.8.16.5). Still, he cannot stop the brothers from disarming Guyon until Arthur’s appearance:

With that, rude hand vpon his shield he [Pyrochles] laid,

And th’other brother gan his helme vnlace,

Both fiercely bent to haue him disaraid;

Till that they spyde, where towards them did pace

An armed knight, of bold and bounteous grace. (2.8.17.1-5)

In the remainder of this canto, Guyon is continuously described as a “dead seeming knight” (2.8.27.4), “carkas” (2.8.27.8), “dead carrion” (2.8.28.6), and “the dead” (2.8.29.7). Therefore, Guyon’s awakening from this deadly trance can be regarded as a rebirth with the aid of God’s love. A rebirth without the arms makes sense. When being asked where all his armor has gone, the Palmer addresses to Guyon:

Fayre sonne, be no whit sad

For want of weapons, they shall soone be had. (2.8.54.4-5)

In later cantos and later books, Guyon gradually has his equipment returned. Accordingly, Guyon’s whole adventure and his personal growth are bound with the process of arming and disarming. Because his virtue is embodied only in his capability in defending himself, losing his armor

makes him physically vulnerable to outer attacks. Because Guyon's virtue requires him not to attack, but to resist all kinds of intrusions and sustain his selfhood, armor is an outward sign of his self-possession and self-awareness. Therefore, we never catch Guyon abandoning his armor voluntarily for any reason.

This leads to another problem—Guyon's intense passion manifested in destroying the Bower of Bliss at book 2's conclusion. If the virtue of temperance requires him only to defend himself, why is it necessary to destroy the garden? What does Guyon so violently detest when he wreaks havoc on the garden? Why cannot his virtue make peace with the Bower? In the next section, I interpret the feature of the exotic garden and seek its relationship with the disarming knight as a commonly used chivalric romantic motif.

3

The power the Bower of Bliss represents is among one of the central discussions of the virtue of temperance. In Spenser's "Letter to Raleigh," he declares that his source for "the twelue priuate morall vertues" is Aristotle's doctrine of private virtues (715). Aristotle, in book 3 of *Nicomachean Ethics*, analyzes temperance as an ethic with relation to "bodily pleasure" (364). The Bower of Bliss, with its "sweet and holesome" (2.12.52.1) air, "riper fruit" (2.12.56.2), "most melodious sound" (2.12.70.1), "chearefull shade" (2.12.71.1), "lewd loues, and wastfull luxuree" (2.12.80.7), does represent excessive physical pleasure and enticement of erotic love, which is a violation of the principle of temperance. Because Guyon is not allowed to act outside the scope of temperance, which is a manner of moderation, he is kept outside of the realm of erotic life. This further highlights his contrast to other chivalric heroes in this poem.

Except Guyon, all of the heroes in the poem have a love life. The Red Cross Knight has Una. Britomart has Artegall. Cambell has Cambina.

Triamond has Canacee. Scudamour has Amoret, and Calidore has Pastorella. Prince Arthur seeks for Gloriana. Because they follow romantic chivalric heroes' normal pattern, not only do they have a decent lady to serve, they also sometimes fall into erotic traps set by villains such as Duessa and Radigund. The Red Cross Knight and Artegall both abandon their weapons for the sake of passion, resulting in their mortal danger. Calidore temporarily abandons his armor and leaves behind his secular duty for Pastorella's beauty, but his pastoral life is simply courtly love played out on a different stage. Only Guyon is immune to such jeopardy of deviation. Guyon is the only protagonist not accompanied by a lady. Considering the meaning of temperance as a classical virtue, Guyon's attribute follows the very Aristotelian principle:

The temperate man occupies a middle position with regard to these objects [pleasure and delight]. For he neither enjoys the things that the self-indulgent man enjoys most—but rather dislikes them—nor in general the things that he should not, nor anything of this sort to excess, nor does he feel pain or craving when they are absent, or does so only to a moderate degree, and not more than he should, nor when he should not, and so on. . . . (365)

Aristotelian temperance is a status between excess and deficiency. A temperate person does not like pleasant and delightful things and thus does not crave their excess.

What deserves our attention here is that this feature runs counter to the idea of romantic love. In the episode of Phaon, because his passionate love causes “[w]rath, gelosy, grieffe” (2.4.34.9) and finally results in his tragedy, the Palmer cautions against love and advises that it should be removed and made decay:

Wrath, gealosie, grieffe, loue do thus expell:
Wrath is a fire, and gealosie a weede,

Griefe is a flood, and loue a monster fell;
 The fire of sparkes, the weede of little seede,
 The flood of drops, the Monster filth did breede:
 But sparks, seed, drops, and filth do thus delay;
 The sparks soone quench, the springing seed outweed,
 The drops dry vp, and filth wipe cleane away:
 So shall wrath, gealosity, griefe, loue die and decay. (2.4.35.1-9)

Therefore, when Guyon shows interest in the fountain nymphs in the Bower, “[h]is stubborne brest gan secret pleasaunce to embrace” (2.12.65.9), but his Palmer promptly stops him and “rebukt those wandring eyes of his” (2.12.69.2). Being unable to deviate and indulge in bodily pleasure, only his eyes wander. As a result, there is hardly a chance for Guyon to fall into a victim of love passion. Whenever Guyon displays any form of anormal behavior, the Palmer eradicates the sprout of passion at the earliest stage.

Although this exclusion of emotional attachment does prevent Guyon from aberration, it does not conform with the heroic image in chivalric convention and the common form of chivalric romance. In the fifth chapter of *The Waning of the Middle Ages*, J. Huizinga claims that romantic love was an integral aspect of medieval chivalry's military existence:

... the complex of aspirations and imaginings, forming the idea of chivalry, in spite of its strong ethical foundation and the combative instinct of man, would never have made so solid a frame for the life beautiful if love had not been the source of its constantly revived ardour.

These very traits, moreover, of compassion, of sacrifice, and of fidelity, which characterize chivalry, are not purely religious; they are erotic at the same time. . . .

The knight and his lady, that is to say, the hero who serves for love, this is the primary and invariable motif from which erotic fantasy will always start. It is sensuality transformed into the craving for self-sacrifice, into the desire of the male to show his courage, to incur danger, to be strong, to suffer and to bleed before his

lady-love. (76)

Maurice Keen's study also shows evidence of the close connection between chivalric life and erotic love. In addition, this connection is found in literature as well as in reality: "Arthurian romance became in consequence a chief vehicle of that teaching which harnesses to the idea of chivalrous adventure the erotic force of sexual love, to act as the motor of endeavour for the knightly hero" (116). Therefore, erotic force provides a motive power for chivalric knights to seek honor and love, but in Guyon, such element of romance is apparently missing.

The Bower of Bliss sets the greatest romantic trap in book 2, but Guyon refuses to become its victim. As a lineal heir of Circe, Acrasia, like Armida in *Gerusalemme Liberata* and Alcina in *Orlando Furioso*, diverts knights from their missions and transforms them into monsters. However, Homer's Circe in the *Odyssey* is a goddess who hospitably serves food and wine. In answer to Odysseus's demand, she liberates his companions, and they become taller and younger in the island (10.395–96). In contrast, Acrasia's sufferers lose their vitality and are unable to return to their previous state. Although the Palmer reinstates them to their human form, "[y]et being men they did vnmanly looke,/And stared ghastly, some for inward shame,/And some for wrath, to see their captiue Dame" (2.12.86.3–5). Acrasia's power is destructive, and its consequence is irreversible. By surrendering to this power, one's individuality and humanity are severely damaged. Finally, one is reduced to being a wanderer with "vnmanly looke" (2.12.86.3).

Acrasia's weapon is erotic love, yet, as highlighted in classical and romantic epics, erotic love is only a medium. Etymologically, the word "paradise," as applied by following generations to make reference to a garden with the acme of pleasure, derives from "the Old Persian word *pairidaēza*—formed on *pairi* (around) and *diṣ* (to mould, to form) which meant the royal park, enclosure or orchard of the Persian king." Through

the Greek and the New Testament writers' adaptations, the word developed into three meanings: "a park or royal garden, the celestial paradise or Heaven, and—most important of all—the earthly paradise or garden in Eden" (Giamatti 11-13). The romance garden is sometimes considered as Islamic and thus a counterpart of Christianity due to its eastern origin. Because the East was consistently associated with gardens of joy, in Italian precedents that eulogize the Crusade, a sorceress whose objective is to distract Christian knights from their missions with an exotic garden full of bodily pleasure is a common motif. The ultimate purpose of such seduction is, through an irresistible exotic power, to divert the heroes from their missions and from themselves, thus conquering a cultural Other.

Verdant's sleeping in the Bower is a vivid example of a disarmed knight submitting to its power:

His warlike Armes, the ydle instruments
 Of sleeping praise, were hong vpon a tree,
 And his braue shield, full of old moniments,
 Was fowly ra'st, that none the signes might see,
 Ne for them, ne for honour cared hee,
 Ne ought, that did to his aduauncement tend,
 But in lewd loues, and wastfull luxuree,
 His dayes, his goods, his bodie he did spend. (2.12.80.1-8)

Hamilton notes here that these lines utilize a common motif of classical or romantic heroes "who laid their arms aside to lie in their mistress's arms" (284n). Acrasia's victims' state of disarming and sleeping and finally losing their selfhood is a real warning to Guyon because their circumstance evokes his disgrace at losing his weapon and armor. When he falls into a deathlike slumber after his adventure in Mammon's cave, he undergoes a similar situation of being disarmed. Guyon here is not a simple outsider.

The “sleeping praise” of Verdant’s “ydle instruments” correlates with Guyon’s experience with his armor. It used to cover him “from his head no place appeared to his feete” in “harnesse meete” (2.1.5.8–9), but until canto 8, it is partly stolen, partly divested, leaving the knight defenseless in an allegorical death. Guyon’s look of “sorrowfull demayne/And deadly hew,” “whose dead face he [Arthur] redd great magnanimity” (2.8.23.7–9) is another version of Verdant’s sleeping in the Bower of Bliss: “A sweet regard, and amiable grace,/Mixed with manly sternesse did appeare/Yet sleeping, in his well proportiond face” (2.12.79.5–7).

Guyon learns his lessons. He knows well the destructive outcome of losing armor. As a result, when in the Bower of Bliss, Guyon finds the ultimate temptation to disarm and thus deprive the knighthood of a young man, he vents his anger on the garden. Greenblatt expounds in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*: “Self-fashioning. . . involves submission to an absolute power or authority situated at least partially outside the self.” “Self-fashioning is achieved in relation to something perceived as alien, strange, or hostile. This threatening Other . . . must be discovered or invented in order to be attacked and destroyed” (9). As the destination of the knight’s journey in book 2, the Bower of Bliss verifies Guyon’s personal growth as the titular knight of temperance. The “tempest of his wrathfulness” (2.12.83.4) keeps things “in sober gouernment” (2.9.1.4). The knight requires a menacing Other. By fiercely denying it, he can secure his authority and realize self-protection. From an etymological perspective, the word “tempest” (2.12.83.4) shares the same Latin origin as the word “temperance”—*tempus*, meaning “a time, a season” (“Tempest”). The appropriate timing of his adventure in the Bower—after all his lessons accompanied by the loss of his equipment—may also contribute to Guyon’s success in resisting its temptation.

4

Compared with other protagonists who wander in the wilds and fall into passionate traps, in Guyon, the element of romance is mostly missing. This makes the character more confusing because the love for romance is a mark for Elizabethan England. As Roy Strong states: “The Elizabethans were obsessed by romance. It carried all before it; even classical allusion stemmed from the traditions of early Renaissance romantic antiquarianism (159). Thus, “Sidney and Spenser intended that their work should be governed by the Aristotelian unities. . . yet on to a central story they graft innumerable incidents and subsidiary episodes of a moral, martial or amorous nature (161). As discussed, Spenser followed the trend of his time to set the stage of the poem in high antiquity; he was well aware of chivalric custom. But in treating only the hero of temperance, the common romantic motif of his time seems impracticable. The hero does not disarm voluntarily, but is passively deprived of armor, so conquests of pagan enemies evade him. The exotic garden is something he needs to destroy, but what he resists there is actually part of the world to which he belongs.

In Harry Berger’s famous argument about Guyon’s adventure in the cave of Mammon, he comments on Guyon’s relation with Christian Everyman and thus interprets temperance as a Christian virtue (3–38). Yet from the comic interlude of Braggadocchio’s episode, we find some common awkwardness in the two characters regarding their attitudes toward knighthood. Both are obsessed with the vain glory that lacks a solid base—an apparent mockery of excessive pursuit of knightly deeds. Their sharing of horse and spear further strengthens their connection. Irrespective of Guyon’s motive for accepting Mammon’s invitation, by doing so, Guyon causes a chain of events that finally complete his education, and that education is continuously accompanied by the doffing of his armor during the process.

For most of book 2, Guyon appears to be a hero so patiently virtuous and chivalric that he lacks the power to destroy his enemies. His violent rage at the conclusion of the Bower episode also shows the limitation of his virtue. It is in this regard that his chivalry exposes itself unsuitable for the reality of life.

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Synopsis

A Chivalric Hero or Not? The Disarming Knight in Book 2 of *The Faerie Queene*

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In Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (1590, 1596), the protagonist of book 2, Sir Guyon, is a special figure compared with the other titular knights of the poem. Despite being the knight of temperance, Guyon spontaneously descends into the cave of Mammon, and falls into a deathlike trance subsequently. Besides that adventure, scholars have extensively discussed his ungovernable rage in the Bower of Bliss. Moreover, Sir Guyon's disarmament seems to question the entire chivalric code and tradition. This paper examines Guyon's disarming process by focusing on his behaviors and characteristics in contrast to the chivalric convention depicted in book 2. I suggest that chivalric symbols as well as romantic chivalric motifs are employed in expression of Spenser's moral allegory, but in Guyon, some of the chivalric features are missing.

Specifically, Guyon's "anti-chivalric" behaviors are consistently associated with the loss of his knightly equipment. After he loses his horse, he slays that of Pyrochles during a fight with him—an apparent violation of the chivalric convention. In the cave of Mammon, Guyon tells Mammon that all his delight lies in warlike amor, a good shield, and a good warhorse. This is sarcasm in that Guyon does not then have his horse and will later lose his shield and sword. Such impudence reduces his previous virtue to similarity with Braggadocchio's boasting and belligerent pride. Moreover, Guyon's allegorical death at the end of canto 7 is the turning point of book 2. In canto 8, Guyon is treated as a corpse, rendering him incapable of defending himself against his enemies. During this process, he is stripped of his shield and helmet. Then, his awakening at the conclusion of canto 8 is more like a rebirth. In the Bower of Bliss, he furiously attacks the exotic garden. Because his virtue is embodied only in his ability to defend himself, losing

his armor makes him physically vulnerable to external attacks. Therefore, his armor is an outward sign of both self-protection and self-awareness. Consequently, when Guyon encounters the Bower's temptation to disarm and thus deprive men of their knightly selfhood, as in the case of Verdant, he fiercely denies the garden as a threatening Other. By doing so, he can secure his authority and self-possession.

By reconsidering Guyon as an anti-chivalric hero, we may reassess the motif of missing armor and the limitation of Guyon's virtue in book 2, thus grasping a more complete understanding of book 2's heroic figure and the virtue of temperance.