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The Theology of the Sign: St. Augustine and Spenser's Legend of Holiness

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Book 1 of *The Faerie Queene* is preeminently about language, its use and misuse, its potential and its limitations. It is therefore not inappropriate to study the text from the perspective of modern language theory. Jonathan Goldberg in one such study points out that Redcrosse is named "only through a sign."¹ In this paper I shall even go further and argue that Redcrosse *forms* a sign. Yet what does this explicit semiology mean for our interpretation of the Legend of Holiness? For Goldberg it carries clear poststructuralist implications. Following Jacques Derrida's lead, he draws the conclusion that any meaning in the text is dogged by difference and therefore "endlessly deferred." I believe Goldberg's analysis captures certain aspects of Book 1, but Spenser's own vantage point is forgotten in the process. The poem was after all composed within a context of patristic and humanistic speculation about words and the Word. That context can incorporate certain of Derrida's insights yet within a completely different framework. Our seminal subtexts will instead be St. Augustine's *On Christian Doctrine* (*De doctrina christiana*) and, to indicate the broad Augustinian background to Book 1, *The City of God* (*De civitate Dei*).

I

The structure and plot of *The Legend of Holiness* is saturated with *The City of God*, the most popular Augustinian work

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throughout the Renaissance. As C.A. Patrides puts it, "The mighty panorama in St. Augustine's *The City of God* of the time-bound conflict between the 'cities' of centripetal love and centrifugal self-love became, for Spenser as for Milton, the ultimate foundation of their respective allegorical theologies."² Spenser was in no way novel but simply followed the lead of Ariosto and Tasso. *The City of God*, according to Andrew Fichter, provides "the two cities that oppose each other in Renaissance epic. These are the respective provinces of Agramante and Charlemagne, Solimano and Armida and Goffredo."³ Du Bellay's Roman poetry, translated and imitated by Spenser, was another transmitter of this Augustinian topos. Yet even if Spenser had encountered the topos in a number of other sources, he was almost certainly familiar with its origin as well.

The two cities correspond to the allegorical centers of Book 1: the House of Pride and the House of Holiness (together with its adjunct the new Jerusalem).⁴ As the tower of Babel typifies Augustine's worldly city, so the "loftie towres" (FQ 1.4.4)⁵ of Lucifera's Palace flaunt the pride of its inhabitants. And as Augustine dedicates a large portion of *The City of God* to the history of the worldly city, featuring the empires of Mesopotamia and Rome (the "second Babylon in the West"),⁶ so Spenser fills Lucifera's dungeons with "caytiue wretched thralls," ranging from "that great proud king of *Babylon*" to "the antique ruines of the *Romaines* fall" (FQ 1.5.45-50).

Both the city of man and the House of Pride are transitory, the latter prominently displaying a "Diall" which "told the timely howres" (FQ 1.4.4). If the House itself remains standing throughout the book, its ultimate fall is metonymically portrayed through a series of carefully selected images: Sansloy falls "like the old ruines of a broken towre" (FQ 1.2.20), while Orgoglio collapses like an "vndermined" castle (FQ 1.8.23). Most significant of all, when Redcrosse deals the dragon the final blow, Spenser describes its fall with the same metaphors of highness and weak foundations: "So downe he fell, as an huge rockie clift, / Whose false foundation waues haue washt away" (FQ 1.11.54). This whole stanza with its reiterated "so downe he fell" echoes the great angelic cry in Revelation 18: "It is fallen, it is fallen, Babylon the great citie."⁷ Indeed, both *The City of God* and The Legend of Holiness have their roots in this biblical archetype with its opposing centers of Babylon and the New Jerusalem.

Just as Spenser's "new *Hierusalem*" (FQ 1.10.57) can be espied only from the Mount of Contemplation, so The City of God is ultimately beyond history. Yet "here on earth," Augustine elaborated, "it produces citizens in whom it wanders as on a

pilgrimage through time looking for the Kingdom of eternity" (*City of God* 15.1). Spenser's House of Holiness caters to these wayfaring pilgrims. And as we find the House of Pride metonymically represented throughout Book 1, so Una, wandering the wastelands of cantos 3 and 6, typifies the people of God looking for the promised land.⁸

The City of God represents a major node along the typological development of the two archetypal biblical cities, yet recent developments helped to color Spenser's conception. We have already mentioned Du Bellay and the Italian epics.⁹ Ecclesiastical quarrels provided another node. In the medieval period clamoring voices had identified the papacy with Babylon and the pope with antichrist.¹⁰ The Reformers completed the equation by identifying the Protestant church with the heavenly city. "There be two maner of churches, from the beginning of the world vntill the end," Luther taught, "the which s. Augustyn calleth Cayn, & Abel."¹¹ John Bale then transplanted this dualism to English soil with *The Image of bothe churches* (1548?). The provocative book displays an odd Protestant mixture of Revelation and *The City of God*:

Herein is the true Christen church . . . in her right fashioned colours described. So is the proud church of hypocrites, the rose coloured whore, the paramour of Antichrist, and the sinfull sinagoge of Sathan, in her iust proporcion depainted. . . . And after the true opinion of saint Austen, eyther we are citizens in the new Hierusalem with Jesus Christ, or els in the old superstitious Babilon with antichrist the vicar of Sathan.¹²

It only remained for John Foxe to saturate the English consciousness with this scheme by incorporating it into his *Acts and Monuments*.¹³ Spenser was therefore thoroughly up to date when he made poetic capital of Augustine's two cities: Una typifies not simply the universal church but also its contemporary Reformed incarnation,¹⁴ while Duesse is not just another metonymic extension of the House of Pride but also the papal "rose coloured whore, the paramour of Antichrist."¹⁵

If *The City of God* is an overt subtext for The Legend of Holiness, *On Christian Doctrine* is of equal, if more subtle importance.¹⁶ The opposing cities furnish the book's structural poles, yet it is Redcrosse's love for the two ladies that creates the momentum of the plot. In Augustine we find the link between structure and plot: "Two loves make up these two cities: love of God maketh Jerusalem, love of the world maketh Babylon."¹⁷ Redcrosse's

changing loves propell the plot towards the structural centers: love of Una towards the new Jerusalem, love of Duessa towards the House of Pride. Yet Redcrosse's choices involve more than plot. As we shall see, the two loves were for Augustine intimately connected with his theory of signs. Misdirected love, or lust, is equated with bondage to lower signs. Redcrosse's loss of Una and willful attachment to Duessa ("Will was his guide" [FQ 1.2.12]) demonstrate his fall from *caritas* to *cupiditas*,¹⁸ from The City of God to the city of man. Yet it also indicates his separation from the *Unity* of the transcendental sign and his bondage to the *Duplicity* of postlapsarian language. The larger part of the Legend of Holiness is therefore an investigation of the linguistic havoc created by the Fall. It is no coincidence that the allusions to the Fall and to Babel, glossing Redcrosse's moral and spiritual deterioration, are also key texts in medieval or renaissance discussions of language. The serpent's successful temptation of Eve broke not only the relationship with God, but also the unified sign. And the building of the prideful tower led not only to the scattering abroad of its inhabitants, but to linguistic confusion.

To fill in this picture we must now turn to *On Christian Doctrine*, in which Augustine expounds a theory of signs that became hugely influential for the development of medieval and renaissance semiology. Dante and Boccaccio learned from him. So did Ariosto and Tasso. Yet the Legend of Holiness perhaps better than any other renaissance text demonstrates the Augustinian semiology.

II

Part of Augustine's theory is strikingly modern; only with Ferdinand de Saussure did linguistics and semiology catch up with it. In contrast to earlier simplistic descriptions of a two-way relationship between *res*, the thing, and *verba*, the spoken word that points to the *res*, Augustine introduced a third factor: the human subject.¹⁹ The human mind forms a mental concept of the *res*, which it then translates into *verba*. Augustine's sign, like Saussure's, therefore contained two parts: a signifier that is primarily the *spoken* word,²⁰ and a signified that is not the thing itself but a mental concept of the thing.²¹ Along with the human subject, Augustine also posited speech communities and the conventionality of the sign:

all these signs affect the mind according to the arrangements of the community in which each man lives, and affect different men's minds differently, because these arrangements are

different; . . . men did not agree upon them as signs because they were already significant, but on the contrary they are now significant because men have agreed upon them.²²

Although Augustine does not discuss the arbitrariness of the sign in terms of Saussure's *différance*—i.e., that all signs are defined by their differences from other signs within a self-consistent system—he is aware of the practical implications of such a view. "In some languages," he concedes, "there are words that cannot be translated into the idiom of another language" (*OCD* 2.11). Translation, because two different speech communities are involved, is therefore no simple one-to-one equation.²³

For Augustine to have held these empirical views on language is quite surprising considering his otherwise strong leaning towards Neoplatonism. Induced by Plato's dialogue *Cratylus*, classical thinkers had debated the meaning and origin of words. Plato not only initiated the debate but set its boundaries by letting Cratylus speak up for the naturalness and Hermogenes the conventionality of language. Although Socrates does not give his full imprimatur to either of the speakers, the opinions of Cratylus were often taken as Platonic dogma (the name of the dialogue seemed to confirm this). Socrates' own summing up, however—that while the Ideas were permanent, the words that express them were not—comes close to Augustine's position.²⁴

By late classical times the Cratylan view had become something of a commonplace. Aulus Gellius' *Attic Nights*, a second-century collection of geographical and humanist trivia (read by Augustine), touches on the nature of words, "a subject very popular in the discussion of the philosophers." Gellius voices both Neoplatonic and stoic opinion when he explains that "nouns and verbs were formed, not by chance use, but by a certain power and design of nature."²⁵ Augustine's conviction that the sign is conventional was therefore not uncontested. Many Christian (and Jewish) writers asserted that when creating the world God had devised an immutable link between *res* and *verba*. As proof-text they took the Genesis account of Adam naming the animals. Since Adam (they thought) had spoken Hebrew, they saw in this pristine language a natural connection to the *res*, even after the pride of Babel had multiplied the languages of the world.²⁶ In the Renaissance these Neoplatonic theories, mixed with Hermeticism and the Jewish Kabbala, were embraced enthusiastically by Marsilio Ficino and his followers.²⁷ Also Augustine has at times been put in this camp. Yet he did not believe etymology leads anywhere. "Discerning the origin of words," he thought, "is like the interpretation of dreams;

it is a matter of each man's ingenuity."²⁸ Even if the prelapsarian sign had once possessed the stable function described by Cratylus, he believed that Hermogenes was more in step with postlapsarian reality. He thought that Hebrew survived Babel as "the primitive and common language,"²⁹ yet for reasons we shall return to below he did not give it any preeminence in his theory of signs: "The sounds are one thing in Greek, another in Latin; but the things themselves are neither Greek, nor Latin, nor any other language" (my emphasis).³⁰ It is true that writers in the Augustinian tradition did not always follow the Father on this point. Yet whenever the humanists turned to the original sources—and during the Renaissance this happened increasingly—the effect was felt. Some of the linguistic advances made by Lorenzo Valla, for example, can be traced back to Augustine.³¹

Yet if Augustine agrees with Saussure on the conventional nature of the human sign, his emphasis is very different from the acknowledged aim of modern linguistics, determined as it has been to view language in splendid isolation. To Augustine, linguistics is theology; and theology, linguistics. At the center of both stands the transcendental Sign that gives validity to all conventional human signs. Jacques Derrida has perceived the issues clearly by showing that Saussurian language theory is actually closer to Augustine than Saussure cared to admit:

[Saussure] accedes to the classical exigency of what I have proposed to call a "transcendental signified," which in and of itself, in its essence, would refer to no signifier, would exceed the chain of signs, and would no longer function as a signifier.³²

Where Saussure seems unaware of the ramifications, Derrida knows what is at stake: "The sign and divinity have the same place and time of birth. The age of the sign is essentially theological."³³ Augustine and Derrida thus agree on the underlying issues as Derrida point by point tries to expose and sidestep what the Church Father posits. The French iconoclast, seeking to deconstruct the effects of a semiology based on a "transcendental signified," can allow no signifier to exceed the chain of signs and consequently finds no referential "meaning" outside the text. Augustine on the other hand consciously and deliberately builds his system upon the transcendental Sign: it is God who validates the meaning of human discourse. For them both, in their opposing ways, the bond between *verba* and *res* is problematic. But while Derrida, unable to accept metaphysics, must deny the possibility of such a bond, Augustine is free to explore its complex status.

Augustine's basic query is how signs can have epistemological validity, and his famous solution is the theory of divine illumination. God's "inner word" provides the human mind with the epistemological foundation for making judgments about propositions and sense impressions.³⁴ The nonvocal nature of the divine speech is the reason Augustine can be so casual about the conventional nature of the vocal sign:

A thought that is formed from a thing that we know is a word that we say in the heart. It is neither Greek nor Latin nor any other language, but when we need to bring it to the notice of those to whom we speak, a sign is picked with which to signify it.³⁵

The "inner word" transcends all language, and cannot be recovered through a search for linguistic origins. The prelapsarian Adam had had direct access to the divine speech and had not needed Hebrew or any other human language in order to communicate.³⁶

Indeed, language as we know it is a divine concession to our fallen nature:

God alone can operate on rational souls, not through a body, but through Himself. But such is the state of sin that souls are allowed to act upon souls . . . by natural signs [such] as look or nod, or by conventional signs [such] as words.³⁷

Humanity is vitiated not only spiritually but intellectually, with linguistic and moral error going hand in hand (as the serpent's use of words to deceive our first parents had made abundantly clear). Language, originating at the Fall, is therefore subject to "the shifting nature of the present time, in which there is nothing substantial, nothing lasting [*nihil solidum, nihil stabile*]" (*City of God* 20.3).

In his efforts to account for the deficiencies of language, Augustine acknowledges its theological roots, yet such is his holistic vision that he also turns the tables, describing the redemptive drama in linguistic categories. At the center of this drama stands the transcendental Sign.

This transcendental Sign is the subject of *On Christian Doctrine*. The work divides into four books, of which the first three deal with the interpretation of the Scriptures, and the fourth with the dissemination of the biblical message. The first three books are then further divided into two parts, the first book dealing with the *res*, the message contained in the Scriptures,³⁸ and books two and

three with the signs that express the *res*. Yet the *res* of Book 1 is not just a compendium of Christian dogma: it is God himself. And more is at stake in the effort to get to the *res* through the *verba* than simply to understand the words of the Scriptures. The goal is nothing less than man's union with God.

Augustine begins by dividing the *res* into three sub-categories: "There are some things, then, which are to be enjoyed, others to be used, others still [i.e., humans] which enjoy and use" (*OCD* 1.3). The human subject, able to enjoy or use the things of the two other categories, itself constitutes the third category. The distinction between "enjoyment" and "use" refers to the fundamental Augustinian tenet that only in God does all human desire find its ultimate satisfaction ("enjoyment"). Our love ("use") of all aspects of God's creation, however necessary and laudable, must not become an end in itself. By "things to be used," Augustine therefore means all created things, while the category of "things to be enjoyed" contains only one member: God. All other things, signs included, should only be a means of enjoying God. Indeed, the whole category of things to be used should function as signs pointing to the one member of the other category: "We have wandered far from God; and if we wish to return to our Father's home, this world must be used, not enjoyed, so that the invisible things of God may be clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made" (*OCD* 1.4). Human life, in short, consists in the quest for the transcendent referent in a world of slipping signifiers.

Yet how can any human sign even attempt to express this ultimate *res*? Augustine's initial efforts peter out in silence:

Have I spoken of God or uttered His praise, in any worthy way? Nay, I feel that I have done nothing more than desire to speak: and if I have said anything, it is not what I desired to say. How do I know this except that God is unspeakable? . . . Thus there arises a curious contradiction of words, because if the unspeakable is what cannot be spoken of, it is not unspeakable if it can be called unspeakable. And this opposition of words is rather to be avoided by silence than to be explained away by speech.

(*OCD* 1.6)

Derrida is proven right with a vengeance: we seem to be left with endless slippage. If God is unspeakable, and all signs are made to point to Him, then no sign is possible: only silence remains. This *différance* between the transcendental signified and any conceivable signifier is so absolute that the one envisioned by the poststructuralists is only a game (*jeux*) in comparison.³⁹

What signifier can express the Unspeakable? If man-made signs are powerless to reach the absolute *res*, Augustine rests on Scriptural testimony for his answer. That answer, according to the opening of St. John's Gospel, is logocentrism: "In the beginning was the Word, . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among vs." Since human words could not reach the Unspeakable, the Unspeakable reached down and spoke with human voice:

All other things may be expressed in some way; He alone is ineffable, Who spoke and all things were made. He spoke, and we were made; but we are unable to speak of Him. His Word, by Whom we were spoken, is His Son. He was made weak, so that He might be spoken by us, despite our weakness.⁴⁰

To describe how God could become man while remaining Himself, Augustine uses a bold linguistic metaphor:

Just as when we speak, in order that what we have in our minds may enter through the ear into the mind of the hearer, the word which we have in our hearts becomes an outward sound and is called speech; and yet our thought does not lose itself in the sound, but remains complete in itself, and takes the form of speech without being modified in its own nature by the change: so the Divine Word, though suffering no change of nature, yet became flesh, that he might dwell among us.

(*OCD* 1.13)⁴¹

If God the Father is the transcendental signified, the divine *res*, then Christ is the transcendental signifier, the *verbum*⁴² (*logos* in Greek), which translates God's unspeakable essence into human speech (and action). The Holy Spirit, the third member of the Trinity, communicates this Sign to humankind, both through the general illumination of the human mind and, as a special instance of this illumination, through the written Word. In this divine Sign there is no arbitrariness or slippage, and in it all human signs have their referent.

So the Word is both Christ and the Holy Scriptures. The relationship between the two, set out by the hermeneutics of *On Christian Doctrine*, is far from casual. The chain of signifiers within the written Word leads to Christ, the living Word and the transcendental signifier. Not only is He the obvious focus of the New Testament (NT), but the OT anticipates and prepares for His

coming. Augustine sees the historical panorama delineated in the Bible as centering on Christ. In the OT the stage is set by the Fall—the reason for His coming—and continues with the history of the people chosen to give birth to Him, while in the NT the focus is on Christ's words and actions, and on the Church, which is His body and therefore "the corporate extension of the Word into the present."⁴³ The forward-looking signs of the OT include typological signs foreshadowing His mission, the elucidation of which takes up so much of Augustine's hermeneutical effort, while the NT Church is augmented by two powerful "supersigns" that look back to Christ's death and resurrection: baptism and communion.⁴⁴ All these signs, on their various levels, have the Logos as their Signifier; and through Him, God the Father as their Signified.⁴⁵

The essence of the scriptural message, according to Augustine's continued exploration of the *res* in *On Christian Doctrine*, can be reduced to Christ's words: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself; but, 'Thou shalt love God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind'" (Matthew 22: 37-39, as quoted in *OCD* 1.22). For Augustine the message of the Word, not surprisingly, boils down to the quest for the transcendental Signified. Human love parallels (or is simply a different name for) the use of signs: only the Creator is to be enjoyed/loved for his own sake, while creation should be used/loved for the Creator's sake:

Now he is in bondage to a sign who uses, or pays homage to, any significant object without knowing what it signifies: he, on the other hand, who either uses or honors a useful sign divinely appointed, whose force and significance he understands, does not honor the sign which is seen and temporal, but that to which all such signs refer [i.e., God].
(*OCD* 3.9)⁴⁶

Sin, in this system, is to be "in bondage to a sign," to find the final meaning in one of the lesser signifiers by loving it for its own sake. When this linguistic fall takes place, lust replaces our love for God:

I mean by charity [*caritas*] that affection of the mind which aims at the enjoyment of God for His own sake, and the enjoyment of one's self and one's neighbor in subordination to God; by lust [*cupiditas*] I mean the affection of the mind which aims at enjoying one's self and one's neighbor, and other corporeal things, without reference to God.
(*OCD* 3.10)

The existential quest for the transcendental Sign, as Augustine establishes at great length in *The City of God*, has far-reaching ethical and political ramifications. The two loves of *On Christian Doctrine* create two cities, the city of man and The City of God, the former containing those lost among the signifiers and the latter those whose quest leads them towards the transcendent Signified. In the final analysis, both ethics and politics are simply adjuncts to Augustine's theology of the sign.

III

Jonathan Goldberg, in his poststructuralist study of *The Faerie Queene*, claims that Redcrosse "enters the poem clothed as another; the 'bloudie Crosse he bore' (2.1) names him only through a sign." I would argue, however, that he is not simply "a sign of someone else,"⁴⁷ but that the young man and the "mightie armes" together form the two halves of the sign "Redcrosse." I also would suggest that it is Una, as "Truth," that holds the sign together, vouching for its epistemological validity. It is she who unites the "clownishe younge man,"⁴⁸ an untried and therefore empty signifier, with the armor, an exacting signified.

The young knight initially views himself as a *natural* sign, a signifier immutably united with its concept, but his quest shows that a signifier in a fallen world remains a vagrant thing. Even with Una by his side he faces difficulties. Within a few stanzas of the first canto the two stray among "loftie trees yclad with sommers pride" (*FQ* 1.1.7), a first oblique allusion to Babel. Redcrosse soon fights an uneven battle with Error, whose vomit is "full of bookes and papers" (*FQ* 1.1.20), the dregs of language. Although Una rescues him for the moment, she is no guarantor of Redcrosse's linguistic and existential unity. A veil, which she has worn ever since her parents lost Eden, dims the brightness of her radiance. An emblem of her fallen condition, the veil will not be removed before the celebration of her apocalyptic marriage to Redcrosse. Even if that marriage is not "endlessly deferred," as Goldberg would have it,⁴⁹ its consummation will not take place until all lower signs have found rest in the transcendental Sign. Till then the world of *The Faerie Queene* remains one "of fissures, of losses, of disconnections,"⁵⁰ and Una herself, like T.S. Eliot's "Word in the desert," will be assailed by "Shrieking voices / Scolding, mocking, or merely chattering."⁵¹

If Una's veil is an emblem of the intellectual fog brought about by the Fall, at Archimago's hermitage Redcrosse experiences his own personal fall. Archimago, hating Una "as the hissing snake"

(*FQ* 1.2.9), acts the archetypal tempter when he separates Redcrosse from her:

The guilefull great Enchaunter parts
The Redcrosse Knight from Truth:
Into whose stead faire falshood steps,
And workes him wofull ruth.

(1.2.argument)

From now on Redcrosse, and the narrative with him, is jostled along slipping signifiers, a postlapsarian (even poststructuralist) world where nothing is what it *seems* (a favorite Spenserian expression). Words of deception play an increasingly important function, leading up to Despair's devilish rhetoric.⁵² Verbal labels no longer have stable meanings as Duessa masquerades as Fidesa, Archimago as Redcrosse, and—most crucial—Redcrosse himself step by step severs the (never very stable) connection with his name. At his nadir in Orgoglio's dungeon the sign is finally broken as the knight, in exchange for Duessa's caresses, has lost not only Una but his armor. As an abandoned signifier he is contained in the prison house until Una and Arthur return the armor and reconstitute him as a sign.

United to Duessa, Redcrosse not only becomes a false sign himself, but he simultaneously forfeits his ability to interpret other signs. Meeting his *doppelgänger* Fradubio, he is completely blind to the pointed references to his own situation, even after the true name and nature of his consort have been revealed.⁵³ Increasingly misjudging the words and labels of those around him, Redcrosse is drawn deeper into the vortex of Babel, and at the House of Pride its curse fully enters the Spenserian discourse. Babel, as Genesis taught and Augustine noted, meant linguistic confusion: "Therefore the name of [the city] is called Confusion; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth" (*City of God* 16.4). The confusion of signs and minds was a punishment for the building of the "celebrated tower":

The sounds of the voice are made visible to the eye, not of course as sounds, but by means of certain signs. It has been found impossible, however, to make those signs common to all nations owing to the sin of discord among men, which springs from every man trying to snatch the chief place for himself. And that celebrated tower which was built to reach heaven was an indication of this arrogance of spirit; and the ungodly men concerned in it justly earned the punishment of

having not their minds only, but their tongues besides, thrown into confusion and discordance.

(*OCD* 2.4)

This pandemic confusion implicates not only the protagonists within Spenser's fiction but also us as readers of the fiction. When the poet sounds a warning at the start of canto 7, it is directed not just at Redcrosse but at us:

What man so wise, what earthly wit so ware,
As to decry the crafty cunning traine,
By which deceipt doth maske in visour faire,
And cast her colours dyed deepe in graine,
To seeme like Truth, whose shape she well can faine,
And fitting gestures to her purpose frame,
The guiltlesse man with guile to entertain?
Great maistresse of her art was that false Dame,
The false *Duessa*, cloked with *Fidessas* name.

(*FQ* 1.7.1)

The Duessan influence is ever-present in the language of the poem, as indeed in all human discourse.

All along, the reader has to an extent shared the hero's interpretative difficulties. We no more than Redcrosse are led to initially suspect the "aged Sire" of the "little lowly Hermitage," lovingly situated next to "a Cristall streame" (*FQ* 1.1.29, 34). Yet Spenser in the next stanza separates the reader from the hero's limited perspective by hinting that things are not what they appear. A hermit that can "file his tongue as smooth as glas" is not to be trusted; and when the hermit begins to tell "of Saintes and Popes," Spenser's Protestant readers have their suspicions aroused, and then confirmed when Archimago's true self is revealed. For a while the dramatic irony is maintained. Redcrosse misreads his signs while we are given enough authorial guidance to reach sounder conclusions. This double perspective, however, gets blurred as we get closer to the House of Pride, and once inside, we are as likely to be fooled by fair-seeming words, including those of the narrator, as Redcrosse himself. Both poem and reader, Spenser pointedly demonstrates, share the effects of the Fall.

The interpretative confusion comes to a head with the first stanza of canto 5:

The noble hart, that harbours vertuous thought,
And is with child of glorious great intent,

Can neuer rest, vntill it forth haue brought
 Th'eternall brood of glorie excellent:
 Such restlesse passion did all night torment
 The flaming corage of that Faery knight,
 Deuizing, how that doughtie turnament
 With greatest honour he atchieuen might;
 Still did he wake, and still did watch for dawning light.

The first four lines might possibly be construed as voicing Redcrosse's "restlesse passion," but this cannot be maintained for the stanza as a whole. Rather, the voice of the narrator blends with Redcrosse's in praise of the "glorie excellent" to be achieved in the "doughtie" fight against Sansjoy. A number of critics have joined the chorus of praise, but surely, are they not as misled as Redcrosse and the narrator? To say with the narrator, "So th'one for wrong, the other striues for right" (FQ 1.5.8 and 9), is clearly to be afflicted with Redcrosse's myopia. Let us not forget that Redcrosse is still within the House of Pride, a place he should never have entered in the first place. As Douglas Brooks-Davies stresses: "What Lucifera and her palace signify for Redcrosse is summed up in his fight there with Sansjoy for the shield of Sansfoy."⁵⁴ The "victors glory" (FQ 1.4.39) he fights for is not the shield of faith but that of Sansfoy, its very opposite. It is symptomatic that he wins the battle because he misconstrues Duessea's call of encouragement, aimed at Sansjoy: "The conquest yours, I yours, the shield, and glory yours" (FQ 1.5.14). The glory may be his but it comes at the cost of a continuing fealty to Duessea.

The confusion of Babel, particularized through Redcrosse's interpretative blindness, manifests itself in the devious use of the word "glory," so central to *The Faerie Queene* as a whole.⁵⁵ Again, the Augustinian context provides a clue. "*The City of God*," explains Peter Brown, "is a book about 'glory.' In it, Augustine drains the glory from the Roman past in order to project it far beyond the reach of men, into the 'Most glorious City of God.'"⁵⁶ The city of man, like Redcrosse in the House of Pride, "seeks the glory of men" and "exalts itself in self-glory," while the heavenly city glories "in God" (*City of God* 14.28). When we overhear Redcrosse's confession during his vision of the New Jerusalem, we know a radical change has taken place: "Vnworthy wretch (quoth he) of so great grace, / How dare I thinke such glory to attaine?" (FQ 1.10.62). This clearly is not the glory of Duessea. The change in Redcrosse, of course, has taken place within the House of Holiness, and it is here that we find Spenser's (and the traditional Christian) response to the curse of Babel.

After Una, once again united with her knight, has rescued Redcrosse from Despair's "vaine words" (FQ 1.9.53), she takes him to Caelia, the heavenly guardian of "an auntient house," "Renowned throughout the world for sacred lore, / And pure vnspotted life" (FQ 1.10.3). What is immediately striking is how the erratic signs we have met earlier in the book have their true counterparts within the house. While Abessa represents false piety, Caelia's "bidding of her bedes" is a true inward reflection of her outward "good and godly deedes" (FQ 1.10.3). Similarly, the old hermit on the Mount of Contemplation is a sign in which signifier and signified form a meaningful unity, in contradistinction to Archimago's hypocritical hermit. And most important, while Fidessea was a cover-up for Duessea, the very symbol of linguistic duplicity, Fidelia ("Faith") shows Redcrosse a way out of the labyrinth. Duessea had deceived the knight through the misuse of words; Fidelia now restores him through the use of the Word.⁵⁷

Spenser operates within a tradition stretching beyond Augustine back to the NT when he makes Fidelia enter with "a booke, that was both signd and seald with blood" (FQ 1.10.13). The two theological meanings of the Logos—Christ and the Scriptures—are here conflated. Fidelia's book contains the written Word of God, which is "both signd and seald" by the blood of the Son of God, the living Word. Human intellect and language being confused, the words of the book are "darke" and "hard to be vnderstood," but solving this difficulty is Fidelia's role. What the "weaker wit of man" can "neuer reach," her "words diuine" reveal: "she him taught celestiall discipline, / And opened his dull eyes, that light mote in them shine" (FQ 1.10.18-19). As Christ the Savior is the theological bridge from alienation to wholeness, so Christ the Word, dispensed by Fidelia, is the linguistic bridge from confusion to comprehension. Or seen from the human perspective, Redcrosse's understanding of the words of the Scriptures leads him to the Word, the transcendent Signifier, which in turn provides the basis for his deciphering other linguistic and existential signs.⁵⁸

Of Fidelia's four (very Augustinian) themes, "Of God, of grace, of iustice, of free will," Spenser has already given allegorical prominence to the second. Prince Arthur, and in particular the shield he carries, is a vehicle for the saving grace needed to free Redcrosse from Orgoglio, the overt manifestation of the knight's own *cupidity*. The shield, sharing important features with Una, carries linguistic significance. Its chief stone shines as brightly as Una's countenance, and like her face it "all closely couer'd was, / Ne might of mortall eye be euer seene" (FQ 1.7.33).⁵⁹ Both represent God's illuminating light, burning away the fog of

confusion. Una's presence, even when she is covered with the veil, saves Redcrosse from his worst interpretative blunders, while the shield exposes even the "bloudie wordes" of Archimagean deceit:

No magicke arts hereof had any might,
Nor bloudie wordes of bold Enchaunters call,
But all that was not such, as seemd in sight,
Before that shield did fade, and suddeine fall.

(FQ 1.7.35)

All through the poem Spenser has warned the reader that in a fallen world many signs are not what they *seem*. The divine Word, however, exposes false significations and establishes interpretative bearings.

The key lesson Redcrosse learns from his encounter with the Word is self-knowledge. He began his quest with a grandiose opinion of himself as a natural sign, but the House of Holiness teaches him humility. The sign "Redcrosse" has validity only to the extent that its meaning is provided by an *other*: the divine Logos, who alone is worthy to carry the name and the armor. This is the crowning lesson *Contemplation* teaches the "man of earth" (FQ 1.10.52), as the young knight's real name is revealed to be:

Thence she [a fairy] thee brought into this Faerie lond,
And in an heaped furrow did thee hyde,
Where thee a Ploughman all vnweeting fond,
As he his toylesome teme that way did guyde,
And brought thee vp in ploughmans state to byde,
Whereof *Georgos* he thee gaue to name.

(FQ 1.10.66)

It is true that as the dragon-slayer he is *Saint George*, but that is still in the future. For now he is reduced to earth, a Piers Plowman or an Adam, needing to "put . . . on the Lord IESVS CHRIST" (Romans 13:14). My use of Pauline language is deliberate. The biblical passage provides the key to our interpretation of the knight's armor and to the last cantos of the book.⁶⁰ Only when George puts on the armor of Christ can he defeat the dragon and deliver Una's parents. Only when the sign "Redcrosse" is anchored in the transcendental Logos does it have the necessary validity.

The "putting on of Christ" also carries clear sacramental connotations. The sacraments of baptism and communion are intimately connected with Redcrosse's quest; it is not by coincidence that the knight is strengthened by the well of life and

the balm from the tree of life during his dragon-fight.⁶¹ And as we saw earlier, the sacraments were for Augustine "supersigns" that linked the believer to the Logos. This was indeed the context in which most Elizabethans encountered discussions about signs. "Concerninge that whiche wee call signe," Theodore Beza commented on the communion, "wee meane not by that word a bare signe, naked and emptie, . . . but wee vnderstande of signes which represente to vs most great and excellent thinges, declared effectuallye in the liuely word of God."⁶² Protracted altercations between Catholics and Protestants (or within the Protestant fold) on how to view the "signs" of bread and wine ensured the topic's perennial interest. That Redcrosse initially views himself a natural sign takes on new significance if seen from a Reformed vantage-point. Unlike the papists (argued Beza) who confuse the bread and wine with Christ, "wee confound not the signes with the thing signified, nor abolish the substaunce of the signes, but make a distinction of that which is conioyned."⁶³ Beza's point is analogous to the lesson learned on the Mount of Contemplation: Redcrosse is an earthly signifier "conioyned" to a heavenly Signified, while what Beza considered the papist view of the sign parallels Redcrosse's initial sacrilege. Obliterating the distinction between the earthly and the heavenly components of the sign, the proud knight becomes an easy prey to the wiles of the Roman Duesse.⁶⁴

IV

If the readers are implicated in Redcrosse's linguistic alienation, they are also urged to follow him in his pursuit of wholeness, or holiness. Words, the confused reminders of the Fall, are at the same time the only road to the Word.⁶⁵ Spenser's allegorical method is simply an extension of the basic reading of signs. As the signifier "indicates" the signified, so the allegorical figures indicate mental constructions, and the two halves form the allegorical sign, a "*signum translatum*," to use Augustinian vocabulary.⁶⁶ As we have seen in the case of Fidesse, these signs, like the ordinary verbal sign, may be erratic. Yet, as Augustine takes pains to demonstrate in *On Christian Doctrine*, allegory and typology are important hermeneutical tools. There can be no doubt that Spenser designed The Legend of Holiness, immersed as it is in biblical allusions,⁶⁷ to be a vessel for the Word. He urges the reader to join Redcrosse in the quest for the transcendental Sign.

NOTES

¹Jonathan Goldberg, *Endlesse Worke: Spenser and the Structures of Discourse* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1981), p. 7.

²C.A. Patrides, "Spenser: The Contours of Allegorical Theology," *CentR* 26, 1 (Winter 1982): 27.

³Andrew Fichter, *Poets Historical* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1982), p. 11.

⁴The similarity between Augustine's cities and Spenser's houses is pointed out but left undeveloped in A.C. Hamilton, *The Structure of Allegory in "The Faerie Queene"* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), p. 67; John Erskine Hankins, *Source and Meaning in Spenser's Allegory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 114; Douglas Brooks-Davies, *Spenser's "Faerie Queene": A Critical Commentary on Books I and II* (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1977), p. 42; and Isabel Rivers, *Classical and Christian Ideas in English Renaissance Poetry* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1979), p. 62. See also *The Spenser Encyclopedia*, ed. A.C. Hamilton et al. (Toronto and Buffalo: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1990), pp. 299 ("Fall and restoration of Man"), 303 ("Fathers, Latin"), and 441 ("Lucifera").

⁵All quotations from Spenser are taken from *The Faerie Queene*, ed. Thomas P. Roche, Jr., and C. Patrick O'Donnell, Jr. (New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press, 1978), with references to book, canto, and stanza given in the text.

⁶Augustine, *The City of God* 16.17, trans. Marcus Dods, *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 1st series, vol. 2 (rprt. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988). References to this work will hereafter be given in the text by book and chapter. Spenser follows Augustine almost verbatim in a sonnet prefixed to *The Commonwealth and Government of Venice*: "The antique Babel, Empresse of the East, / Upward her buildings to the threatened skie: / And Second Babel tyrant of the West, / Her ayry Towers upraised much more high" (*The Yale Edition of the Shorter Poems of Edmund Spenser*, ed. William A. Oram et al. [New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press, 1989], p. 776).

⁷All biblical quotations are taken from the 1560 Geneva Bible.

⁸The parallel to the Old Testament (OT) wanderings of the people of Israel is of course deliberate. Elizabethan Protestants placed the genesis of the Church, like Augustine's good city, not at Pentecost but in Eden. Una is therefore the daughter of the king and queen of Eden and the dragon-fight typifies both the redemption of the Church through Christ's triumph at Calvary, the centripetal point of history, and the final eschatological victory over Satan, leading to the marriage of Christ with his Church and to the New Jerusalem.

⁹The three Saracen brothers of Spenser's epic, for example, are a remnant from the Italian models, in which the city of man was occupied by Moslems. (The Ottoman Turks remained a serious threat to Christian Europe throughout the sixteenth century.)

¹⁰See Marjorie Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969). Consult "Babylon" in her *General Index*.

¹¹Martin Luther, *The chiefe and pryncypall articles of the Christen saythe* (London: 1548), sig. C iii^v.

¹²John Bale, *The Image of bothe churches* (London: 1548?), sig. A ii^v and iii^v. See also Paul Christianson, *Reformers and Babylon* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1978), pp. 13-46.

¹³See Rivers, pp. 60-61 and 68.

¹⁴In canto 3 especially, Spenser's polysemous text forces his (attentive) readers to make agile mental jumps from the universal Church, particularly in its OT form, to contemporary religious controversy.

¹⁵For the iconographical background to Duesse as the Roman whore, see D. Douglas Waters, *Duesse as Theological Satire* (Columbia: Univ. of Missouri Press, 1970) and John N. King, *Tudor Royal Iconography* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1989), pp. 201-11, as well as his *Spenser's Poetry and the Reformation Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1990), p. 91.

¹⁶Patrick Grant, in *Images and Ideas in Literature of the English Renaissance* (London: Macmillan, 1979), also uses *On Christian Doctrine* (together with *The Confessions*) as the starting point for a study of Redcrosse's shield (pp. 33-60). We approach Book 1 with similar aims but while Grant focuses on the image of the cross, I will look at "Redcrosse" as a sign. For additional support of the linking of Augustinian semiology to Redcrosse's quest, see King, *Spenser's Poetry*, p. 212.

¹⁷Augustine, *On the Psalms* 65.2, ed. A. Cleveland Cox, *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 1st series, vol. 7 (rprt. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989). See also *The City of God* 14.28.

¹⁸See Zailig Pollock, "The Dragon, the Lady and the Dragon Lady in Book I of *The Faerie Queene*," *ESQ* 7, 3 (Fall 1981): 270-81, 272.

¹⁹See R.A. Markus, "St. Augustine on Signs," *Phronesis* 2 (1957): 60-83, 72; B. Darrell Jackson, "The Theory of Signs in St. Augustine's *De doctrina christiana*," *REA* 15 (1969): 9-49, 22-23; and Robert H. Ayers, *Language, Logic, and Reason in the Church Fathers* (Hildersheim: Georg Olms, 1979), pp. 69-71.

²⁰Saussure, however, further distinguishes between the spoken word and its mental sound-image, which together with the concept form the sign. The written word Augustine, following Aristotle, saw as a sign of a sign. The priority of spoken over written language is, pace Derrida, not hard to establish (see John M. Ellis, *Against Deconstruction* [Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1989], pp. 18-25). Saussure agrees with Augustine: "Language and writing are two distinct systems of signs; the second exists for the sole purpose of representing the first" (*Course in General Linguistics*, ed. Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye, trans. Wade Baskin [1959; rpt. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966], p. 23).

²¹See Saussure, pp. 65-70 and 111-22. Charles Sanders Peirce and Edmund Husserl made analogous distinctions. Augustine's terms were *dicibile* and *dictio*: "Now that which the mind not the ears perceives from the word and which is held within the mind itself is called a *dicibile*. When a word is spoken not for its own sake but for the sake of signifying something else, it is called a *dictio*. The thing itself which is neither a word nor the conception of a word in the mind, whether or not it has a word by which it can be signified, is called nothing but a *res* in the proper sense of the name" (*De dialectica*, ed. and trans. B. Darrell Jackson [Dordrecht: Reidel, 1975], p. 89). Augustine's authorship has been questioned, but Jackson proves the attribution convincingly. *De dialectica*, furthermore, was included among the authentic works in the great renaissance editions of Augustine's *Opera omnia*.

²²Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine* 2.24, trans. J.F. Shaw, *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 1st series, vol. 2 (rprt. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988). References to this work (abbreviated *OCD*) will hereafter be given in the text by book and chapter.

²³See Eugene Vance's important *Merveulous Signals: Poetics and Sign Theory in the Middle Ages* (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1986), pp. 34-50. Vance's "metaphysics of the Word" (p. 39) corresponds to my "theology of the sign."

²⁴Marcia L. Colish believes Augustine was familiar with the dialogue, see *The Mirror of Language* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1968), p. 66.

²⁵Aulus Gellius, *The Attic Nights*, trans. John C. Rolfe, 3 vols. (London: Loeb, 1927), 2:229.

²⁶See S.K. Heninger, Jr., *Sidney and Spenser: The Poet as Maker* (University Park: Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 1989), pp. 116-19. See also his "Words and Meter in Spenser and Scaliger," *HLQ* 50, 3 (Summer 1987): 309-22, and "Spenser, Sidney, and Poetic Form," *SP* 88, 2 (Spring 1991): 140-52 (a foretaste of his forthcoming book *Proportion Poetical: The Subtext of Form in the English Renaissance*). Our approaches, however different in detail and emphasis, share many basic premises. Yet while Professor Heninger tends to restrict his discussions of the Logos to numerical form, what I would term *formal* logocentrism (a position perfectly valid, and spelled out by Augustine in the early dialogues *De ordine* and *De musica*), I pursue the equally important Augustinian emphasis on *verbal* logocentrism, Logos as the Word (as delineated in *On Christian Doctrine*).

²⁷See Allison Coudert, "Some Theories of a Natural Language from the Renaissance to the Seventeenth Century," *Magia Naturalis und die Entstehung der Modernen Naturwissenschaften*, ed. Albert Heinekamp and Dieter Mettler (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1978), pp. 56-118. Ficino, for example, taught that "a name, as the Platonists say, is nothing else than a certain power of the thing itself" (Coudert, p. 75), while for Johannes Reuchlin "the speech of the Hebrews is simple, pure, uncorrupted, holy, brief and constant," and therefore discloses "the innate property of every word" (Coudert, p. 80). And John Dee, a contemporary of Spenser and acquaintance of Sidney, in the *Monas hieroglyphica* (1564) purported to describe a "holy language" that set forth "that which is" rather than merely "that which is said" (Nicholas H. Clulee, *John Dee's Natural Philosophy* [London: Routledge, 1988], p. 86).

²⁸*De dialectica*, p. 93.

²⁹*The City of God* 16.11.

³⁰Augustine, *The Confessions* 10.11, trans. J.G. Pilkington, *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 1st series, vol. 1. In *The Confessions* 11.3 Augustine stresses that he would not assent to the truth of Moses' teachings because of their Hebrew dress any more than if they had been uttered in Greek or Latin. For reading the OT, he in fact thought more highly of the Greek Septuagint than the Hebrew original. See Vance, p. 41.

³¹To contrast the radical nature of Valla's achievement with the alleged backwardness of the Augustinian tradition, as Richard Waswo does in *Language and Meaning in the Renaissance* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1987), is simply to be uninformed. Waswo provides a cursory and shallow assessment of Augustine's views, which nevertheless have to serve as a dummy for everything he deems reactionary during the Renaissance.

³²Jacques Derrida, "Semiology and Grammatology: Interview with Julia Kristeva," *Positions*, trans. Alan Bass (London: Athlone Press, 1981), pp. 19-20.

³³Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1976), p. 14.

³⁴This is why Augustine can repeat the Socratic dictum that a person never learns anything from somebody else. Not, as Plato had thought, because the soul remembers what it had already learned before birth, but through God's direct illumination. See *The Confessions* 10.10 and the early Augustinian dialogue *The Teacher*.

³⁵Augustine, *On the Trinity* 15.10.19, as translated in Christopher Kirwan, *Augustine* (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 56. See also Vance, pp. 43-44.

³⁶See Augustine, *De Genesi contra Manichaeos* 2.4-5, 21 (*Saint Augustine on Genesis*, trans. Roland J. Teske, *The Fathers of the Church*, vol. 84 [Washington, DC: Catholic Univ. of America Press, 1991], pp. 98-100 and 127-28). See also Mary C. Preus, *Eloquence and Ignorance in Augustine's "On the Nature and Origin of the Soul"* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985), p. 27.

³⁷Augustine, *On Music*, trans. Robert Catesby Taliaferro, in *The Fathers of the Church*, vol. 4 (New York: Fathers of the Church, 1947), p. 365.

³⁸There is some slippage in the use of the term *res*. In a rhetorical context the *res* is conceptual, the thought to be clothed in words, not physical as in Augustine's definition of the sign. (For the latter usage see *OCD* 1.2 or *De dialectica* 89, quoted in note 21 above.)

³⁹Derrida and Augustine of course build their systems on mutually exclusive ontologies. Derrida starts with language, whose *différance* excludes God (or any other nontextual "reality"), while Augustine starts with God, whose silence would mean the extinction of human communication (and indeed of humanity itself, since it came into being as a result of God's creative speech). ⁴⁰*Expositiones on the Psalms* 99.6, as cited by Colish, p. 35.

⁴¹*OCD* is not the only work in which Augustine uses this illustration. For a more detailed investigation of this favored comparison, see chap. 3 of *Faith and the Creed (De fide et simbolo)*.

⁴²Or *sermo* (speech), as Erasmus, stirring up the learned community of the early sixteenth century, translated the *logos* of John 1. See Marjorie O'Rourke Boyle, *Erasmus on Language and Method in Theology* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1977). Erasmus, according to Boyle, built his "theological methodology" on the Word.

⁴³Colish, p. 60.

⁴⁴In *OCD* 3.9 Augustine argues that while the typological and ritual signs of the OT (such as the law and the offerings) spoke to the patriarchs and prophets about Christ, the present-day Christian, living *after* Christ's death and resurrection, needs only a few easy signs, such as baptism and communion, "most majestic in their significance." (In this wider discussion of signs, we should remember that the *linguistic sign* was for Augustine just a special category within semiology.)

⁴⁵Even though God had "inspired" (literally "breathed") the Bible, it was still made up of conventional signs. There were no inherent advantages to the languages used, Hebrew and Greek. See note 30 above.

⁴⁶The context of this quotation is Augustine's discussion of the sacraments. ⁴⁷Goldberg, p. 7. As we shall see at the end of this study, Goldberg is correct about the *other*, if in ways he has not anticipated.

⁴⁸As Spenser describes him in the Letter to Raleigh, quoted in *The Faerie Queene*, p. 17.

⁴⁹Goldberg, p. 7.

⁵⁰Goldberg, p. 173.

⁵¹"Burnt Norton," lines 153-55. Cf. Abessa's "hollow howling, and lamenting cry, / Shamefully at her [i.e., Una] raving all the way" (*FQ* 1.3.23).

⁵²Despair, writes James Nohrberg, is "a manipulator of words unmatched anywhere else in the poem" (*The Analogy of "The Faerie Queene"*, 2nd edn. [Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1980], p. 152).

⁵³On Redcrosse (and Fradubio) as a second Adam, see Nohrberg, pp. 159-66.

⁵⁴Douglas Brooks-Davies, in the *Spenser Encyclopedia*, p. 441.

⁵⁵Spenser in the Letter to Raleigh (p. 16) states that by Queen Gloriana, and thus metonymically *The Faerie Queene* as a whole, "I meane glory in my generall intention."

⁵⁵Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (London: Faber, 1967), p. 311.

⁵⁷To these examples we may add John King's observation that "Errorr's 'bookes and papers' parody the Bible carried by Fidelia, a figure for true faith," while Fidelia's sacramental cup filled with "wine and water" has its counterpart in Duessa's cup of "secret poyson" (*Spenser's Poetry*, pp. 85 and 92; see also pp. 130-31).

⁵⁸See *OCD* 2.5.

⁵⁹The radiance from both is compared to the sun (cf. 1.3.4 with 1.7.34), and both Arthur and Una are associated with grace. In the first stanza of canto 8 it is not clear whether the "heavenly grace" of line 3 refers to Una (mentioned in lines 5-9) or to Arthur (mentioned in line 9).

⁶⁰See Darryl Gless's entry on "armor of God" in the *Spenser Encyclopedia*, p. 62.

⁶¹See John King's entry on "sacraments" in the *Spenser Encyclopedia*, p. 623.

⁶²Theodore Beza, *A briefe and pithie Summe of the Christian faith*, trans. Robert Fyll (London: 1572), sig. 57r. The Augustinian context of the section on the sacraments is underlined by numerous marginal references to the Father's works.

⁶³Beza, sig. 60r.

⁶⁴For further explorations of the theological dangers of the "natural sign," see King, *Spenser's Poetry*, p. 68, and David Norbrook, *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984), pp. 35-36. See also Ernest B. Gilman, *Iconoclasm and Poetry in the English Reformation* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1986), pp. 38-39.

⁶⁵See Michael Edwards, *Towards a Christian Poetics* (London: Macmillan, 1984), which has been a general influence throughout this essay.

⁶⁶Colish, p. 60.

⁶⁷See Naseeb Shaheen, *Biblical References in "The Faerie Queene"* (Memphis: Memphis State Univ. Press, 1976), pp. 61-100.