Scripture and Literature

Joseph A. Galdon

article in the last issue of PHILIPPINE STUDIES on "The Japanese Occupation: the Cultural Campaign." That article gives the historical facts: Gilda Cordero's story gives the facts a concrete life.

There are many excellent stories in Mrs. Fernando's first book of stories. "Sunburn" is a prize-winning story about Filipinos in the United States, who sometimes suffer from, and sometimes also are responsible for, certain forms of racial discrimination against them. "The Eye of a Needle" is the story of a little girl in the grip of a terrible fear. "Hunger"—one of the best stories in the book—is also about a little girl who is always hungry: for bodily food as well as for the attention and affection that she does not get from her parents.

But "People in the War," among her stories, is in a class apart. It belongs to the growing body of literature about the Heroic Age of the Philippines.

MIGUEL A. BERNAD

*Scripture and Literature**

O NE of the chief characteristics of the Church in the 20th century has been the re-emphasis on the Bible, the word of God. Augustin Léonard has written:

Our age seems to have been given the grace to begin anew to listen. with greater attention, to the living and efficacious word of God (Heb. 4:12) . . . . The Word of God is the first and fundamental reality upon which the whole Christian mystery depends . . . . In view of this, it is all the more noteworthy that Catholic theology has scarcely treated or developed all the variations of the theme.[1]

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* THE INSPIRED WORD: Scripture in the Light of Language and Literature. By Luis Alonso Schokel, S.J., translated by Francis Martin, O.C.S.O. New York: Herder and Herder, 1965. 418 pp.

[1] "Towards a Theology of the Word," in *The Word: Readings in Theology*. Edited at the Canisianum. New York: P. J. Kenedy, 1964, pp. 64-66.

Karl Rahner made the same point, though somewhat more poetically:

Alas that there is no theology of the word! Why has no one yet begun, like an Ezechiel, to collect the bones strewn out upon the fields of philosophy and theology, and then to speak the word of the spirit over them so that they rise up a living body?[2]

Luis Alonso Schökel in his latest volume[3] makes no attempt to answer the challenge of Rahner for a complete theology of the word, but he does lay a solid foundation for a greater understanding of one area of the problem. Schökel limits himself to the inspired word, and chooses to discuss this one aspect in "the light of language and literature." It is a task that has long needed doing, and the reflections of the literary man of faith can only help to deepen the understanding of the theologian and the biblical scholar of the depths of the inspired word.

THE BIBLE: HUMAN AND DIVINE

In the case of Scripture, which is the bridge between two worlds, the communication of the divine with the human, we are confronted with a book, which at one and the same time shares in both worlds and exemplifies and chronicles the polar tensions of both the human and the divine. It has been the constant teaching of the Church that God is the author of Scripture,[4] and this is the element which the theologians and biblical scholars have emphasized in the past, driven to this apologetic position by the need of defending the divine inspi-

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[2] "Priest and Poet," *ibid.*, p. 3. Schokel confuses the title of this essay with that of Léonard in his bibliography, p. 46. Schokel's list of studies on the Word in the same bibliography, pp. 46-47, indicates that several other authors have taken up Rahner's challenge.

[3] Luis Alonso Schokel, *The Inspired Word*. New York: Herder and Herder, 1965. 418 pp.

[4] "(The Roman Church) professes that one and the same God is the author of both the Old and the New Testaments, that is, the law, the prophets, and the Gospel, since the holy men of both Testaments have spoken under the inspiration of the same Holy Spirit." Council of Florence, *Enchiridion Symbolorum Definitionum et Declarationum.* 22nd Edition, Herder and Herder, 1963, #1334. There are similar dogmatic definitions in the Council of Trent and in Vatican I. See *Enchiridion Symbolorum,* #1501 and #3006.

ration of Scripture against those who would deny that it has its origin in God. Yet it is equally true, and perhaps so manifestly true that it is beyond the need of proof, that the Scriptures are the work of human authors. Striving towards a deeper understanding of the charism of inspiration, Schökel has chosen to investigate the human nature of the scriptural word in its relation to the divine.

Is it possible for God really to speak in human words? Schökel affirms that He must, if He is to speak to us as men. God might certainly cause the air to vibrate according to certain frequencies. He could form sentences with these vibrations and the man who heard the vibrations would hear human words. But they would not be spoken through men. It is also true that God could have an angel speak to men, or God could act directly on the nervous system and produce an effect equivalent to speech. He could also form images directly in the imagination. "All this," Schökel says, "might be called human language, but it would not have been spoken by men."[5]

> God has wished to speak to us in words which are fully human, and which are spoken by men—"through the prophets." And this means that He selected a determined language, either Hebrew or Greek, and has chosen certain men: Jeremiah or Paul. In these words, in Hebrew or Greek, written by these authors, God is speaking to me. But how is this possible? Jeremiah speaks, pouring out his soul, and it is God who is speaking. St. Paul speaks with all his vibrant emotion, and it is God who is speaking. Something mysterious must happen within St. Paul or Jeremiah, so that when they speak, God speaks.[6]

In attempting to come to an understanding of this mysterious biblical word which is at once both human and divine, the patristic tradition has made use of various analogies. The most common comparison was that of a musical instrument. The human author was a musical instrument, a harp or a lyre, on which God played with the Plectrum of the Holy Spirit.[7] Or "the Spirit used the human author as a flute player blows through his flute."[8] The analogy was often extended to that

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[5] Schokel, *op. cit.,* p. 44.

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] See, for example, "Exhortation to the Greeks," Migne, *Patrologia Graeca,* 6: 256.

[8] St. Athenagoras, *Patrologia Graeca,* 6: 904, 908.

of an instrument in general. The human writer of the biblical narratives, for example, was a pen in the hand of a scribe, writing what God dictated.[9] The biblical author was sometimes compared to a man carrying a message from another, and this image is common in the books of the Bible themselves.[10]

The fourth analogy used in the patristic tradition to describe the mysterious relationship of the human and the divine author in the composition of the Scriptures is that of an author and the character he creates. This analogy, though it occurs but rarely in the tradition, Schökel finds most attractive.[11]

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[9] St. Jerome, Migne, *Patrologia Latina,* 22: 627; St. Gregory, *Patrologia Latina,* 75: 517; St. Augustine, *Patrologia Latina,* 34: 1070. The scholastics took up the idea of instrumentality and elaborated it according to the Aristotelian categories of causes: efficient, formal, material and final. See the summary of this discussion in Schokel, *op. cit.,* pp. 63-66. The notion of dictation adds another level to the consideration of the strict instrumentality of the pen or quill in the patristic tradition. The Latin word *Dictare* was common among the Latin Fathers to describe the mysterious action of the Holy Spirit in the writing of the Scriptures. St. Jerome, for example, says: "The whole of the Epistle to the Romans requires an interpretation and is so fraught with difficulties that in order to understand it, we need the grace of the Holy Spirit Who dictated all this through the apostle." *Patrologia Latina,* 22: 997. See also St. Augustine, *Patrologia Latina,* 34: 1070 and St. Gregory, *Patrologia Latina,* 75: 517. The Council of Trent uses the formula *Spiritu Sancto dictante. Enchiridion Symbolorum,* #1501.

[10] The prophets are the messengers of God, as are the Apostles in the New Testament. The concept of messenger indicates the complexities of the problem of inspiration, for a messenger could simply hand over a sealed letter without saying a word, or he could deliver an oral memorized message, or in some cases, acting on the general instructions of the man who sent him, a messenger was empowered to deliver the message according to the circumstances. In the first instance, the messenger is little different from the instrumentality of a pen, while in the latter case he acts much more as a "secondary author" of the message to be delivered.

[11] St. Justin seems to be one of the few who makes this comparison. See *Patrologia Graeca,* 6: 385. This last analogy is a particularly slippery one and this may account for its rarity. Literary critics are quick to point out the dangers of attributing the words of a character in a literary piece directly to the author, since this involves the whole notion of the author's *persona.* The problem is obvious when two char-

None of us can forget the soliloquies of Hamlet or of Henry IV, the anguish of Ivan Karamazov, the bitter reveries of Segismund . . . . The words of these characters belong to them and come somehow from within them, yet, and this is the other half of the truth, they are also the words of the author. There is no doubt that Calderon is reflecting on life's dream as Segismund speaks, or that Ivan gives voice to the fullness of suffering experienced by Dostoievski, and we hear Shakespeare musing in the monologue of Henry IV. Shakespeare, Cervantes, or Dostoievski can lay claim to every word spoken by the characters they have created.[12]

These analogies are an attempt to express in human terms the fact of inspiration, the mystery of a book which is both human and divine. Since the humanity of the book has been all too obvious, the Church for centuries has had to emphasize the divine nature of the Scriptures, their inspiration, inerrancy, canonicity, the fact that they have God for their author. Few biblical scholars and fewer scholastic theologians have approached the Bible from its more human side, through the aspect of language and authorship in its human dimensions. They have seldom had the skill in linguistics or literary theory and practical criticism. The result is that they have often, therefore, failed to develop the literary sensibility necessary for a full understanding of the literary basis of communication which is implicit in all the Scriptures. But, as Schökel maintains, the time has come for the pendulum to swing in the other direction, and for theologians to study the Scriptures from their human side.

LITERARY IMPLICATIONS IN THE INSPIRED WORD

This is precisely what Schökel attempts to do in the present volume, to "penetrate more deeply into the *manner* in

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acters express directly contradictory views. Which view, then, is to be attributed to the author? Schokel is aware of these problems and readily admits that he is embarking on dangerous waters. Yet it is true *in some sense* that the character does express the author, and that the author is in some mysterious way "in" his characters. The analysis of this relationship is the crux of the problem, of course, and Schokel maintains that the investigation, despite the many pitfalls, is worth the effort for the light it throws on the mysterious relationship of the human author and the divine in the Scriptures.

[12] Schokel, *op. cit.,* p. 75.

which inspiration takes place, in order to appreciate more fully
the mystery, though we are aware that our question brings us
face to face with problems that are, ultimately, insoluble."[13]
Schökel's starting point is the fourth analogy for the relation-
ship of the human and divine authors, the analogy of the au-
thor and the characters he creates.

Great writers . . . can truly create people whose action determines
the plot, and whose words well up from some depth within themselves.
We need only think, for instance, of Don Quixote, Hamlet, the Bro-
thers Karamazov, or Anna Karenina. If we hear the words of these
personalities read out loud, we have little trouble in determining who
is speaking. No one can confuse Ivan with Aloysha, Don Quixote with
his Squire. But then, suppose we push the question further, and ask:
"Whose words are these?" "Do they belong to Aloysha or Dostoievski?"
"Are they from Sancho or Cervantes; from Laertes or Shakespeare?"
The question makes us think.[14]

The question also introduces the whole problem of the psychol-
ogy of literary creation.

The question: "Whose words are they? also demands as
a presupposition, an understanding of the very nature of the
word, of language itself.

We ought not to begin (our study of scripture) by trying so to purify
and spiritualize human language that it resembles the speech of angels.
Nor should we start by accentuating the distance between the human
and the divine and arming ourselves with a catalogue of negations. We
can make a better beginning, one freer of prejudice and more ade-
quate to the truth, if we set out simply and humbly, taking our lan-
guage as it is and expanding our study of it to include all the rich
multiplicity of the thing as it actually exists. To understand what it
means when we say that God has spoken to us, we need only accept
the reality of the human language He has used, error alone excepted,
just as we believe that Christ was like us in all things, but without
sin.[15]

Finally, the result of the psychological act of literary crea-
tion working with human language is the written work itself.
Literary language is usually actualized in a literary work. As

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[13] *Ibid.,* p. 45.

[14] *Ibid.,* p. 74.

[15] *Ibid.,* pp. 122-123. The reference is to Pius XII. See *Enchiri-
dion Biblicum,* 559.

Schökel says: "The intuition of the poet, or novelist, or dramatist, along with his subjective participation in reality, and the experiences he chooses to relate, acquire objective consistency in his work. This consistency is made up of words, of language forms whose own existence is in their significance, and which are communicable."[16] This is also true of the Bible. Language is employed under the inspired creative activity of the individual human authors to produce literature.

The present volume, as Father Schökel is quick to point out, is not meant to be a treatise on inspiration, "as can be seen from its themes, the categories in which it moves, and its manner of exposition."[17] The theme is the word rather than inspiration. Its categories are those of the whole of language and literary analysis, rather than strictly theological categories. Nor is the discussion strictly scientific, but rather reflective and intended for "the educated Christian public who have become aware of the modern biblical movement."[18]

Yet such a treatment is not as narrow as its author modestly declares. The understanding of inspiration and the inspired Scriptures, because they are couched in human language and framed in a human literary work, and the product to a certain extent of a human author, can be deepened by an understanding of the human language and the psychology of human literary creation and by criticism of the literary frame. Father Schökel's volume is *en passant*, a good summary of the principles of inspiration, though this is not his main intention. His point of view is literary, and the book serves the vital and necessary function of allowing the theologian to look at Scripture from a new and different angle.[19]

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[16] Schokel, *op. cit.,* p. 258.

[17] *Ibid.,* p. 13.

[18] *Ibid.,* p. 14.

[19] Schokel indicates that the reason not much emphasis has been placed upon the Bible as a human literary work is because St. Thomas placed the charism of prophecy in the category of knowledge and this influenced all subsequent theological studies of inspiration, and secondly because philosophical reflection on language and the creative process are fairly modern disciplines. *Op. cit.,* p. 123.

It is this literary point of view which determines the outline of Schökel's volume on the inspired word.

This approach determines the general lines of our essay. The radical human capacity to speak is realized in various languages and actualized in the individual speech act. This individual act may be given form in the literary work which is then actualized by being represented and repeated, and then finally consummated in the act by which it is received. God also descends to speak to us, taking hold of the human capacity to speak (Logos, condescension) which is realized in two languages concretely (election in history, language in society). These chosen languages are given literary form by means of a divine impulse given to certain men (inspiration, psychology of literary creation), and this results in a series of works which go to make up one work (the inspired work, the Scriptures) which is in turn actualized by being proclaimed and read in the Church wherein it is received and given its consummation. Thus, God speaks to man and man listens and responds.[20]

Thus, the three main points to be discussed are the inspired word and the philosophy of language, the inspired author and the psychology of literary creation, and the inspired work and literary criticism. A final section of the volume considers the communication of the literary work, the dialogue of perception and response between the author and the reader.

THE INSPIRED WORD AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE

The Bible is the word of God, in which God speaks to us in human language. Schökel echoes St. Augustine, "God assumed human language as it is, in its total reality, in order to speak to us." But as Schökel asks, "What is a word, and what does it mean to speak?"[21]

Language can mean several things. It is, first of all, the radical human capacity for self-expression, and as such it is the proper object of the philosophy of language in all its intricacies. Language can also mean any one of various linguistic systems in which men give expression to their thoughts. Language in this sense is a social reality. If God is to speak to men, he must choose to speak in one or other linguistic system, and along with the linguistic system He must accept the

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[20] Schokel, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 122. See Augustine, *Patrologia Latina*, 41:537.

social implications of this or that system. The study of language therefore implies linguistic and sociological investigation. Language can also mean "speech," or the use an individual makes of a given linguistic system. For language, as a system of significant forms providing possibilities for expression, exists only as the "individual speech act." This is the proper field for the psychology of language. Language finally can mean the works themselves which embody the individual use of language, and therefore demands literary criticism of the actual text or work.[22]

Schökel's discussion of the function of language and its application to Scripture indicates the freshness of his approach, which brings new insights to bear on the problem of inspiration. Karl Buhler's classical work[23] divides language according to its three principal dialogue functions into statement, expression and address.

We make statements about facts, things and events with a certain preference for the third person and the indicative mood. This function of language is objective; it regards the outside world and is the proper medium for history and didactic literature. We also express our interior state, our emotions and feelings, our participation in the reality of things and events. For this purpose we prefer language in the first person; it is a subjective function of language, one which regards the individual, and is the proper medium for memoirs, confessions, and lyric. We address an interlocutor, attempting to stir him to action by way of response. We want to influence him and impress upon him our sentiments, preferring for this purpose the second person and the imperative mood. This function of language is intersubjective; it has regard to society, and is the proper medium for oratory.[24]

This, of course, is a laboratory analysis but it does have value for a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of human language.

All sorts of possibilities begin to open up when we apply this analysis to Scripture. Which of these functions of language does God assume in the sacred Scriptures? Is His language objective, subjective or intersubjective? Or is it all three?

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[22] Schokel, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

[23] *Sprachtheorie die Darstellungsfunktion der Sprache*, Jena, 1934.

[24] The summary of Buhler's theory is from Schokel, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

And in what cases and under what conditions? What does this tell us both about the God who speaks and the nature of his communication? Apply the schema, for example, to the passage in Hosea on God's love for Israel and the richness and the depth of the language of God becomes most manifest.

God could have chosen to express this truth in the language of the theology manuals, in the third person, the language of statement, in purely objective fashion. He could have said: God is Love, or God loves His people. Instead, He chose to express this great truth in the first person with all the nuances of his subjective expression.

> When Israel was a child I loved him.
> Out of Egypt I called my son.
> I call to them,
> But they only walk away from me;
> to the Baals they sacrifice,
> to idols they burn their incense.
> Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk.
> I took him up in my arms,
> and they did not know
> that I cared for them.
> With human ties I tugged at them,
> with cords of love.
> I was to them
> like one raising a suckling child
> up close to his cheek.
> I stooped to them
> and fed them.[25]

It is obvious that there is a difference in the message between the language of statement and the language of expression.

These three functions of language, statement, expression and address, are the dialogue functions of language. They are meant for communication. There are, in addition, three monologue functions of language, in which I can express my feelings to myself, help myself think, listen to myself as to another, address myself, and even stir myself to action. These functions occur quite often in the Psalms, for example, and the

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[25] Hosea 11: 1 ff. This is an outstanding example. Schokel also discusses Chapter 7 of the Epistle to the Romans, in which not God but man speaks. *Op. cit.,* pp. 140-142.

awareness of the monologue functions of these passages deepens our appreciation of the Psalms themselves, as well as of the human author and the God who inspires them.[26]

Finally, if we pursue the analysis of language further, there are secondary functions of language, chiefly aesthetic and functional, which contribute to the total entity of language communication.   Their analysis belongs more properly, perhaps, to literary criticism.

If God has limited Himself to the language of statement, it is a simple thing to extract the 'inspired' element from the language.   But if, on the other hand, God has made use of all the functions of language, we are presented with a much more difficult problem.   At the same time, the nature of the inspired Scriptures becomes much more meaningful and profound.   They are no longer the simple transmission of an 'inspired message' but the communication of a whole person.

Schökel concludes this section of his work with a discussion of the three levels of language, the common, technical and literary aspects of language, and their application to various sections of the Bible.   Of particular interest is his discussion of literary language in the Bible and the conclusions he draws.

A great part of the Old Testament and a good proportion of the New belong to this level of language (literary) . . . . the sacred authors availed themselves of a preexisting literary language and, under the motion of the Holy Spirit, developed a literary medium of their own. This fact, which is of some importance in a study of inspiration, has the greatest consequences in hermeneutics, for inspiration takes upon itself and actively exploits all the rich possibilities of literary language. Their resources are abundant and their content full.   They are an integrally human reality, and not simply a doctrinal textbook.   They contain all of revelation, but not in propositional form (Scripture and tradition).   Since the language of Scripture is literary, it demands a literary interpretation, and yet every interpretation still leaves the text unexhausted.[27]

Because of the literary nature of Scripture, certain consequences follow inevitably.   Since the language of the Scrip-

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[26] See, for example, Psalm 62: 9, 142: 2-7 and 6: 9-10.

[27] Schokel, *op. cit.,* p. 161.

tures is literary, it is not ordinary or commonplace and it cannot be made ordinary or commonplace to suit the popular taste of the man in the street. Men must rather be lifted up to the Scriptures. Nor can the literary language of the Scriptures be simply transposed to the level of technical language, nor can its interpretation be reduced to merely conceptual categorizations and propositional presentations. The Scriptures subsist and live in the words and in the literary language. They are not a set of disembodied ideas, which move independently of the words which express them. All of this is extremely important in any approach to the Scriptures which hopes to plumb them without destroying their very nature.[28]

THE INSPIRED AUTHOR AND THE PSYCHOLOGY OF LITERARY CREATION

In the second main section of his discussion, Schökel gives a lengthy summary of the standard theological interpretations of the psychology of inspiration, or what could be called the "psychology of the inspired human literary process."[29] He then attempts to put the psychology of inspiration into the framework of literary creation, and suggests one possible schema, that of literary material, intuition and execution, as a basis for a deeper understanding of inspiration.[30]

Schökel is exasperatingly vague in this section, perhaps because the nature of the beast is such. He gives several descriptive passages of biblical literary creation, but nowhere does he offer a detailed psychology of the process. His reflections, however, do serve a vital purpose. By clearly equating the inspired literary process with that of the human literary process, he does take the Bible out of the laboratory of theological analysis and put it back where it belongs by its very nature, in a human literary context. Take for example, his comparison of Hosea 1:2—3:5 and Proverbs 31:10 ff.:

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[28] *Ibid.,* p. 162.

[29] *Ibid.,* p. 177. See Leo XII, for example, in *Providentissimus Deus, Enchiridion Biblicum,* 125 and the references and discussion of the theories of Benoit and others, Schokel, *op. cit.,* pp. 179-183.

[30] *Ibid.,* pp. 209-212.

Let us pass now from a great poet and prophet of Love (Hosea) to an anonymous craftsman of a later date who had not a pennyworth of poetic temperament (Proverbs).[31]

Even more stimulating is Schökel's comparison of Jeremiah, Machado and Gerard Manley Hopkins.[32] All three are struck with a flash of poetic intuition at the sight of a tree. Jeremiah says:

> The word of Jahweh came to me:
> What do you see Jeremiah?
> I said:
> I am looking at a branch of the vigilant tree.
> And Jahweh said to me:
> Well seen!
> For I am keeping vigil over my word bringing it to completion.[33]

The Spanish poet, Antonio Machado Ruiz writes:

> Elm tree, let me record on this paper, the favor of your vernal branches.
> My heart is looking
> Also, toward the light and toward reliving another miracle of springtime.[34]

And finally Gerard Manley Hopkins:

> Not of all my eyes see, wandering on the world,
> Is anything a milk to the mind so, so sighs deep
> Poetry to it, as a tree whose boughs break the sky.
> Say it is ash-boughs: whether on a December day and furled
> Fast or they in clammyish lashtender combs creep
> Apart wide and new-nestle at heaven most high.
> They touch heaven, tabour on it; how their talons sweep
> The smouldering enormous winter welkin!   May
> Mells blue and snow white through them, a fringe and fray
> Of greenery: it is old earth's groping towards the steep
> Heaven whom she childs us by.[35]

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[31] *Ibid.,* p. 191.

[32] *Ibid.,* pp. 194-195.

[33] Jeremiah 1: 11-12.

[34] Antonio Machado, "A Un Olmo Seco," *Poesias Completas.* Madrid, 1955, p. 169.

[35] "Ash Boughs," *Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins.* Ed. W. H. Gardner, New York, 1959, p. 164.

The words of Jeremiah are inspired in the technical theological sense and the poetry of Machado or of Hopkins is not! What is the nature of this inspiration when the psychology of literary creation seems so similar?

There are other examples in Schökel's discussion. Psalm 119, for example, or Psalm 29, or the account of the Plagues in the book of Exodus, illustrate Schökel's point that the biblical author is subject to the same rules of literary creation as is the poet or the novelist. The psychology of creation remains the same, whether the work is theologically inspired or not. This psychology of creation is summed up in a passage from Valery which Schökel thinks important enough to quote in two separate places.[36]

> The poet is awakened in a man by some unexpected happening, some event outside himself or within him: a tree, a face, a "subject," an emotion, a word. Sometimes it is the desire for expression which sets the thing in motion, a need to translate experience; but sometimes it is just the opposite, there is some fragment of style, some hint of expression which is searching for a cause, which seeks a meaning somewhere in my soul . . . . Note this possible duality: sometimes a thing wishes to be expressed, at other times a means of expression is looking for something to serve.[37]

This is the psychology of literary creation which Schökel attempts to apply to the inspired works of Scripture. Inspiration does presuppose the literary process. The divine does not destroy the creative psychology of the human author, but in some mysterious way uses it to produce an inspired human work.

Schökel adds one other valuable insight in discussing the social implications of the literary author. It is his threefold analysis of the relationship of the author to the community.[38] When a writer begins to write, he enters into a tradition. In the case of the biblical writers this step precedes the act of inspiration. The next step for the maturing author occurs when a literary man, without abandoning the tradition, begins to

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[36] Schokel, *op. cit.*, pp. 187, 193.

[37] Paul Valery, *Oeuvres*.   Ed. J. Hytier, Bibl. de la Pleiade, 1962, vol. 1, p. 1338.

[38] Schokel, *op. cit.*, pp. 228-232.

create, using the materials at his disposal and what he has re-
ceived from the community. This relationship can take three
possible forms. The author can truly speak or write in the
name of the people, *vox populi*, as Schökel puts it. This is po-
pular literature in the deepest sense. The people feel that the
author is *their* author, he is *their* poet or novelist. In this sense
many of the narrative, and liturgical pieces of the Old Testa-
ment, the Proverbs, for example, are popular literature. But
the author can also dominate and direct society to a certain
extent. In this case, the literary author is stimulated by the
opposition of the community. The example that comes imme-
diately to mind is that of the Prophets. The parallel in con-
temporary literature is perhaps Unamuno, Evelyn Waugh's
satires or James Baldwin. This social dimension may be prior
to the act of inspiration or it may permeate the whole process.
Thirdly, the literary author can in a sense completely retire
from society into the literary garret with little or no commu-
nication with the community. Although Ecclesiastes comes
closest, there is no genuine example of this type of literary
alienation in the Bible, for the Bible is essentially dialogue
and communication.

THE INSPIRED WORK AND LITERARY CRITICISM

Schökel's treatment of Scripture as a literary work draws
much of its analytic principles from Wellek and Warren's
Theory of Literature.[39] A literary work is a system of words
possessing a structure of meaning. As a structure it is already
accomplished, it is a realized act, and at the same time it is a
potentiality which can be further actualized. A literary work
actually possesses a multiple structure, because it has various
levels of existence or meaning, which manifest the intellectual,
emotional, and imaginative levels of man's existence and thus
actualize the three functions of language previously discussed.

This is certainly true of a human literary work, the *Odys-
sey* or *War and Peace*, for example, and these multiple struc-

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[39] Rene Wellek and Austin Warren, *Theory of Literature.* New
York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1956. See especially Chapter
XII, "The Analysis of the Literary Work of Art."

tural levels are the object of literary criticism. It is equally true of Scripture. The Fathers often gave expression to the manifold wealth of the sacred text. Scripture, for example, is "an infinite forest of meaning."[40] It is in this context that the medieval authors elaborated the theory of the four senses of Scripture, the literal, allegorical, moral and anagogical senses.[41]

From what we have said about plurality, certain conclusions present themselves spontaneously. It is impossible to exhaust the appreciation and the analysis of a work by taking only one aspect of it, be this its conceptual level, the emotional or imaginative strata, the literary personality created, the action of the plot, the desire to influence, etc. The necessities of method or the requirements of training may require that we concentrate on one aspect or another, but we must remember that it is but one aspect and nothing more, and that by isolating this aspect we have changed it somewhat, divorcing it from the total system in which it exists. I may extract from the rich complexity of an existing work an aspect that appeals to my temperament or state of soul, or present scholarly preoccupation; but I can never legitimately identify the aspect of my choice with the totality of the literary work. When speaking about inspiration, we said that the inspired process was ordered to and reached fulfillment in the work. Now, if we take the case of a biblical work which actually and fully possesses all the levels of existence we have been describing, we are forced to ask ourselves whether or not inspiration extends to all of them. Should we consider that inspiration affects only certain strata of a biblical work? May we exclude, for instance, the expressive function of language as this is actualized by rhythm? Must we eliminate the resonances of a turn of phrase, and restrict its allusions in order to arrive at its purely conceptual significance as being the only one inspired? Or should we not rather consider as inspired the work as a whole in its total concretization with every level of existence according to its own nature and the role it plays in the over-all language system?[42]

Presupposing the literary structure of the Scriptures, every element of literary criticism, structure, consistency, style, euphony, rhythm, image and metaphor, literary genre, has valid

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[40] See Henri de Lubac, *Exégèse Médiévale.* Paris, 1959-1961, vol. 1, pp. 119 ff.

[41] Littera gesta docet, quid credas allegoria, moralis quid agas, quo tendas anagogia. See Robert E. McNally, S.J., *The Bible in the Early Middle Ages.* Woodstock Papers No. 4. Westminster, Maryland: Newman Press, 1959, Ch. IX.

[42] Schokel, *op. cit.,* p. 264.

applications in the Bible. They all become a legitimate field of investigation. The problem of literary translation, particularly, has pertinence in the study of Scripture. For inspiration does not usurp these areas, but rather in some mysterious and charismatic way, uses them to convey the message of both the human and the divine author.

CONCLUSION

In a particularly perceptive essay entitled "Priest and Poet," Karl Rahner distinguishes two types of words. Some words are clear because they are flat and colorless. These are fabricated words, technical words, useful words. They are not, strictly speaking, literary words. But there are also what Rahner calls *urworte*, poetic words, words that spring from the heart, that have power over us, great words. The great words are entrusted to the poet, who can utter the great words pregnantly (*verdichtet*).[43] Rahner goes on to say that "among the highest possibilities belongs the union of priest and poet in one man,"[44] the union of theologian and man of literature in a single individual. This, without a doubt, is Schökel's talent and his contribution to biblical studies.

Contemporary literature has already made great strides towards a new and fresh encounter with theology. Nathan Scott, Amos Wilder, M. H. Abrams, William F. Lynch, S.J., Yvor Winters, Edmund Fuller, Hyatt Waggoner, and other literary critics have been the pioneers in this endeavor.[45] The parallel movement on the part of the theologians, in applying the findings of language and literature to theology, is just beginning. There is room for considerable work in this field in order to discover "a point of entry into the country of the mind inhabited by the men of our time."[46]

Père Malevez, dean of the Louvain theologate, was asked not long ago by a biennist who had just completed his work in theology, what should

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[43] *Ibid.,* p. 3 ff.

[44] *Ibid.,* p. 3.

[45] See J. Robert Barth, S.J., "A Note on Theology and Modern Literature," *The Theologian,* XV, No. 2 (Winter, 1959), 123-130.

[46] Nathan A. Scott, Jr., *Modern Literature and the Religious Frontier.* New York, 1958, p. 46.

be the next step in his progress. Père Malevez's reply pointed toward an intellectual rapport that is urgently needed today. His advice: to study modern literature.[47]

The Inspired Word: Scripture in the Light of Language and Literature is a volume that has long needed writing. The professional theologian, and to certain extent, the biblical scholar, tend to lose contact with the contemporary world and to retreat into their own ivory towers to pursue the engrossing study of the Word of God, guarding at all costs the gates of theology against all comers, proclaiming to all who will listen that the literary man or any other has no right to theological ideas. It is very true that the man of literature is not a theologian, nor does he claim to be. But there is room, and need, for both the theologian and the literary critic, particularly in biblical studies. Father Schökel's volume proves that the theologian and the poet can stand as partners in unraveling the depths of the word of God, which is both human and divine. The ivory tower theologian may scorn Schökel's study as "popularization" and "contamination" of theology. But in our age, it is not a fault to come down to the human as Chirst did. It is a virtue.

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[47] Barth, *op. cit.*, p. 123. Significantly enough, another theologian has commented that there is more pertinent and relevant theology in the contemporary novel than in the theology manuals.