



## Language at the Frontiers of Language

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### Introduction

Scripture is a literary text made up of a diversity of genres and language uses. As a result, biblical interpreters have quite rightly worked with and been influenced by, various theories of language. However, in view of the scepticism implicit in some of these theories, uncritical acceptance may result in unwarranted suspicion concerning the capacity of Scripture to communicate truths about God, the world, and the self. What perspectives on language theory are to be considered useful or dangerous for the faithful art and act of biblical interpretation? How might Christians respond to the driving polemics attached to the current intrigue and infatuation with language? These exceedingly pertinent questions require the careful attention of christian scholarship should it wish to learn from, but also eschew the perils of, the medley of language theories on offer.

In the contemporary arena of debates about language one is faced with a puzzling question: what is a theory of language? Is it even a possibility, without recourse to a horizon past its own boundary? How is one to talk about language in a post-Pentecost, post-structuralist, post-modern, and now allegedly post-christian<sup>1)</sup> world?

According to one commentator, language is a sort of labyrinth playfully deferring meaning,<sup>2)</sup> while another argues it is a series of signs which refer only to themselves, eventually leading to an endless erring?<sup>3)</sup> 'Meaningless, Meaningless, Everything is Meaningless' reads one translation of the words from the famous work of Ecclesiastes.<sup>4)</sup> Perhaps, 'Language, Language, Everything is Meaningless Language' resonates an up-to-date echo of this age old commentary. All language is suspect and void of meaning. Such a plot may well describe the current state of language theory and what has been referred to as the linguistic turn<sup>5)</sup> in philosophy, literature, theology, and hermeneutics.<sup>6)</sup>

The subject of language has undergone intense investigation and become a central topic of

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debate within each of the disciplines mentioned above. Language has been understood to be ordinary, scientific, or religious. It has also been suggested that language is language and is grounded in nothing other than language.<sup>7)</sup> There has been the claims, among others, that language is God,<sup>8)</sup> a gift of God,<sup>9)</sup> and that language is man.<sup>10)</sup> Questions of the origin, essence, and function of language have come under piercing examination and a raging discussion has ensued which has led to a variety of perspectives and conclusions that have had an impact on biblical interpretation.<sup>11)</sup>

In this chapter I shall not undertake the task of dealing with the breadth and diversity of the language debates and problematics. I should like rather to address two basic, yet complicated questions related to language theory and Scripture. First, the division between religious language and other language and second, in the light of this, whether Scripture should be read as any other book or in a special manner.

### **1) Religious Language versus Other Types of Language**

Are ordinary language and religious language rivals? Scientific language a panacea? God language a mysticism? Anthony Thiselton points out:

whereas the heart of the problem of religious language has traditionally been perceived to lie in its distinctively 'religious' character, especially since around 1967 the deepest problems of religious language are perceived to lie in the opaqueness and deceptiveness which supposedly characterize all language.<sup>12)</sup>

In the context of this discussion, religious language is considered by some to be non-sense.<sup>13)</sup> A requisition of special pleading is often thought to be necessary if it is going to have a legitimate place in the world and language.<sup>14)</sup> In response to this radical separation and a privileging of ordinary or scientific language, religious language advocates may aim to enlarge the horizons of language so that religious language can be included as cognitive, or at least in some sense meaningful, without however dealing with the 'all' language problematic. The inordinate disjunction between two types of language seems to have been left intact in this scenario and it is this that I would like to explore further.<sup>15)</sup>

Since the time of what has been referred to as positivism and perhaps even long before,<sup>16)</sup> religious language has often been viewed as completely separate from other categories of language. The early work of L. Wittgenstein,<sup>17)</sup> followed by A. J. Ayer<sup>18)</sup> and others, privileged a verificationist view. Language needed to be defined according to strict empirical requirements. As Ayer is a major protagonist of this notion, especially concerning religious language, his position is worth citing at length:

To test whether a sentence expresses a genuine empirical hypothesis, I adopt what may be called a modified verification principle. For I require of an empirical hypothesis, not indeed that it should be conclusively verifiable, but that some possible sense-experience should be relevant to the determination of its truth or falsehood. If a putative proposition fails to satisfy this principle, and is not a tautology, then I hold that it is metaphysical, it is neither true nor false but literally senseless.

For since the religious utterances of the theist are not genuine propositions at all, they cannot stand in any logical relation to the propositions of science.

And if 'god' is a metaphysical term, then it cannot be even probable that a god exists. For to say 'God exists' is to make a metaphysical utterance which cannot be either true or false.

.... to say that something transcends the human understanding is to say that it is unintelligible. And what is unintelligible cannot significantly be described. But if one allows that it is impossible to define God in intelligible terms, then one is allowing that it is impossible for a sentence both to be significant and to be about God.<sup>19)</sup>

Ayer's concoction of an effacing of metaphysics and an embrace of scientific - positivistic analysis attempts to render religious language non-sense. This point of view has undoubtedly contributed to the trend of a denial of metaphysics in any form,<sup>20)</sup> as well as to a general suspicion towards the referential capacity of all language in the wake of its failure, yet the contemporary version of this rejection and scepticism is more entangled in theories of language than in scientific - empirical presuppositions per se.

It has become indispensable in the light of this emphasis on language theory and its relation to God, Scripture, metaphysics, and intelligibility, among other issues, that those who practice biblical hermeneutics be aware of how theories of language are intertwined with and have an influence on the task of biblical interpretation. Language theory is connected to a view of the world and reality that is often the underlying force behind such a theory.<sup>21)</sup> As this is the case, it is essential that christian interpreters of Scripture be encouraged to re-think language theories, including their own, in the recognition that such theories have a premise which is connected to a world-view.<sup>22)</sup> How does a view of the world 'count' when it comes to a language-view? World-view analysis will not inevitably decide if a language theory is God affirming or denying, yet world-view considerations will give some useful indications as to the merit, or lack of thereof, of a language theory for the christian art and action of interpreting God, the world, and the self. Responsible christian scholarship will endeavor to detect which world-views are attached to which theories and whether or not these are hermeneutically in accord with Scripture.

There is no question today of whether Ayer's language theory, or his world-view for that

matter, were justifiable. They have been rightly critiqued and one would suppose bypassed on the grounds that the verification principle itself is non-empirical.<sup>23)</sup> However, what interests me at this stage is not the validity of the critique, but the powerful residue of the theory that seems to remain in spite of it.<sup>24)</sup> One still finds, for example, as influential a scholar as Paul Ricoeur generally accepting that there is an unmitigated difference between religious language and other language,<sup>25)</sup> although he forcefully joins the critique of the positivist position in other respects.<sup>26)</sup> In my opinion, Ricoeur is a scholar who attempts to make religious language credible within what he sees as a 'process of secularization,' a world of technical, factual, and scientific language. In some sense I share his evaluation and a concern over the loss of the sacred, yet differ in the way to address the problem. His argument is that religious language has a right or even a priority over other language and therefore has at least a legitimate place along side it. This view however, assumes that other language types are unable to speak God and this leaves Ricoeur reducing God language to the poetic-symbolic.<sup>27)</sup> On the issue of religious language, it is argued that Ricoeur's orientation is more anthropological (human possibilities), than theological (about God).<sup>28)</sup>

A variety of responses to Ayer and those who adopted similar views of language have developed, but I shall briefly focus on only two of them. In her influential book *Metaphor and Religious Language*,<sup>29)</sup> Janet Martin Soskice points out two such ripostes that influenced biblical interpretation: christian empiricism and idealism.

According to Soskice, christian empiricism was proposed by Ian T. Ramsey<sup>30)</sup> who attempted to show that religious language was cognitively credible on the basis of empirical arguments, which would in turn in his opinion, lead to the re-animation of metaphysics. Ramsey recognized that if this was to happen there needed to be an adequate explanation of reference in religious language. One of the ways he formulated this was in terms of 'cosmic disclosure' affirming that this type of confrontation might function in a positive manner for objective reference and claims of transcendence. One of Ramsey's difficulties in this project was being too empirical, or at least being inconsistent with his empirical orientations. Soskice states:

His difficulty is this - he relies on his empiricism to ground his reference, but he is not justified in terms of the same empiricism in developing the 'disclosure event' with models of God as husband, king, landlord, shepherd, or judge. The disclosure is simply a point of reference with no content and, to be consistent with his empiricism ... Ramsey should restrict his claims to what is observable, but this he plainly does not wish to do.<sup>31)</sup>

If there is no reason why Christians should eschew empirical reference claims, it is crucial however that they recognize any exclusive focus on them leads to reductionism, which in turn diminishes the broader based assertions of Scripture that God communicates in a diversity of

ways. An over-emphasis on solely empirical concerns results in biblical interpretation being forced into a frame that is unable to contain the picture. Ramsey sought to establish the cognitive character of religious language in the midst of the era of positivism and falsification, rather than questioning the validity of the world-view presuppositions underlying the claims that there was a valid exclusivity between religious language and other types of language in the first place.

Soskice argues that with the failure of empiricist theology, and in the face of scepticism towards cognitive models or claims for religious language, one may find something of an explanation for an idealist thesis.<sup>32)</sup> In her opinion, this relates to a broad point of view which can characterize religious language as personal, affective, or evocational. Religious language, it is thought, has an impact in an existential sense as it addresses the human situation, but it does not 'depict reality.'<sup>33)</sup> Such language has some form of anthropological merit, but it is theologically empty. In this context, the transcendent - immanent God of Scripture disappears behind a cacophony of fictive or human constructs which are continuously recycled as they fail to have any capacity to refer outside themselves. God is so far away that language can never begin to speak God. Biblical interpretation risks becoming a shadow desperately in search of a form that lacks any stability.

The problematic, as I see it, is that both of these developments accept the fundamental division between religious language and other types of language. Christian empiricism seeks to respond to positivistic empiricism with empiricism on its own terms, attempting to observably show that religious language is just as meaningful and cognitive as other language. Idealism argues that there is no need to respond to empirical claims and criteria as religious language should not have to measure up to such demands. In being freed from these requirements religious language may speak in an entirely different way, hence there is no need to seek to justify it as cognitive or even referentially meaning-full.

In the light of the weaknesses in these two responses to Ayer and his view of language, which in some sense remain relevant in our own context, Soskice appeals to and calls for a theological realism. While not agreeing with all her arguments and conclusions,<sup>34)</sup> she has done much to advance the language discussion. I shall sketch out below a somewhat different angle on theological realism and its application to language.

Does the embracing of an *exclusive* division between different types of language force biblical scholarship into choosing between the false options of religious language versus other categories of language?<sup>35)</sup> In my opinion, a theological perspective contributes to a unifying of language that does not discount its diversity. On this account, theology legitimately addresses the issue of the 'all' language problematic.<sup>36)</sup> This can be framed in an 'either-or' manner. Scripture makes a powerful and pivotal proposal: God is there as opposed to not being there. If God is there, this then opens the possibility of a 'both-and' paradigm for the world and language that may be

described in the following way.

Scripture, for example, affirms that God exists *both* outside the world and language use (transcendent),<sup>37)</sup> *and* also that God comes into the world<sup>38)</sup> and language use through speaking in creation, to people, and through Christ (immanent).<sup>39)</sup> There is no warrant to collapse these two truths into one, nor is it necessary to wholly distinguish them, as in one fashion or another empiricism and idealist notions tend to do. A definite tension embedded on the level of God and the world, language, and human beings, points toward the possibility of a relation-distinction between the identity of God and language. Tension in this Scriptural sense is to be embraced, not rejected. To say it another way, God is outside - *beyond* language, but can be said inside - *within* language. This is precisely because God in Scripture is revealed in language, although never confused with it. The point here is that God is not reduced to language, but is *both* related to *and* distinct from it as God, hence the relation-distinction tension. Furthermore, I would argue this holds true for the world and for human beings. God is *both* related to the world as creation, *and* also distinct from it as God and, God is *both* related to human beings, *and* also distinct from them as God.<sup>40)</sup>

A Scriptured portrayal of this tension relates to daily life, the land, work, justice, economics, social contexts, etc. The Scripture writes to the whole of life not some sequestered area designated 'religious.'<sup>41)</sup> Whether scientific, ordinary, or religious, 'all' language has a capacity, in a meaningful, referential, dynamic manner, to point back to the Creator who made the world and human beings as images of God. Particles, quarks, atoms, and rock, fortress, shelter may all recount something of the complexity and character of God the Creator.<sup>42)</sup> Why should any of these, in their specific contexts, be prohibited from referring to God in a general context? What is one to make of the most sophisticated geometrical language formulations? Why should they be forbidden from having the Creator as their referent? Such language types, while often used in specific scientific or mathematical contexts, may also refer to God in a more general creational perspective. As the world is not merely one's own but God's, language boundaries can be refigured. Scientific and religious languages are not so absolutely divided as Christians may often have been led to suppose.<sup>43)</sup> They are *both* related *and* distinct on a creational level. What I want to stress here, from a Scriptural perspective, is that language is creational in that it enters the world through the world's createdness. As the world is given by God, so is language. Human language in the world then, refers back to its Creator and is first of all an attribute of the speaking God who is revealed as the Great Speaker.<sup>44)</sup>

On a creational register language is language, as for example, experience is experience. While it is true there are distinct types, this does not signify that one type is utterly disjointed from the other on the level of language or experience. All language has cognitive and non-cognitive, literal, metaphorical, analogical, private and public spheres which are related to and dependent on the contexts in which language is used.

The perspective of the relatedness of all language then, on the level of creation, does not necessitate an obliterating of distinctions. Language games or understanding the world as linguistic may, in some sense, be viewed positively from a christian standpoint.<sup>45)</sup> There is no question that there are different types of language use and that these are relevant in their own specific contexts.<sup>46)</sup> Distinctions may be perceived as a good thing and a beautiful dimension of creativity. What often happens however, is that these contexts are thought to become the totality of language, thereby negating any horizons larger than their own network or language game. If this is the case, language becomes the sole vehicle for understanding, explanation, and new understanding, rather than one important, but not comprehensive reality-world identifier.<sup>47)</sup> If there is no referent outside of one's language games, networks, and the linguisticity of the world the hermeneutical circle is indeed vicious and not productive.<sup>48)</sup>

A major difficulty concerning the problematic of 'all' language, in my opinion, resides in this previously described claustrophobia. That is, there is supposedly no way out of distinction. One is caught within a web of distinct language uses that never relate or cohere. Each language game has only its own specific rules which are not subject to any general ones. In this plot distinction reigns, and relation is underplayed or even thought to be non-existent. Yet for all the supposed flexibility here the result is disconcertingly one dimensional.

The problem is not with distinct language categories per se, but with not re-connecting the distinctions to relatedness and viewing both as emanating from God the Creator.<sup>49)</sup> The fascinating intricacy of *both* relation *and* distinction, in finding its *raison d'être* in the being, character, and complexity of God, must be allowed to play itself out in a positive 'both-and' tension, which better explains the world and the phenomena of language than reductionistic polarizations. The creator God, who is capable of creating the universe in all its complexity, explodes such reductionism in having spoken open the world for investigation, creativity, participation, and discovery, which in turn produces language use of *both* a related *and* a distinct manner.

This framing of God's transcendence and immanence, in spoken penetration of the created world,<sup>50)</sup> opens up possibilities for an 'all' language perspective through a creational context. This is embedded in the Creator-creature relation-distinction (Gen. 1-2). Furthermore, God's transcendence and immanence spokenly revealed in the saving Word (Jn. 1) and the event of Pentecost (Acts 2) opens 'new' possibilities for language in a salvific context (Eph. 5.1-20). Perhaps, the great contemporary language debate centers on the answer to the ancient query, 'Did God really say?' (Gen. 3.1). As suspicion reigns over trust, human beings are devastatingly broken, language misfires, communication and relationship are shrouded in obscurity, and left a mere shadow of what they were.<sup>51)</sup> God's goal through Christ in vanquishing the latter however, is not focused on a redeeming of language, but on the hope of a transformation of the whole world (Rev. 21.1-27), including people, and through people, language,

communication, and relationship.<sup>52)</sup> This perspective situates language in a creational, salvific, and eschatological context which recognizes its value and importance, without granting it a power or status it does not deserve. Language is continually at the frontiers of language<sup>53)</sup> and is being framed as a traitor when scholars argue that it refers only to itself.<sup>54)</sup>

A crucial task for christian scholarship, as it aims to faithfully interpret the biblical text, is to make effective and rigorous theological contributions to redrawing the boundaries of language theory. I am not intending to say that Scripture presents a detailed philosophy of language, but perhaps biblical scholars have underplayed the possibility that it may provide a paradigmatic world-view perspective that gives an orientation to the world, language, and the whole of life. Al Wolters puts it this way:

[b]iblical faith in fact involves a worldview, at least implicitly and in principle. The central notion of creation (a given order of reality), fall (human mutiny at the root of all perversion of the given order) and redemption (unearned restoration of the order in Christ) are cosmic and transformational in their implications. Together with other basic elements ... these central ideas ... give believers the fundamental outline of a completely anti-pagan Weltanschauung, a worldview which provides the interpretive framework for history, society, culture, politics, and everything else that enters human experience.<sup>55)</sup>

It is vitally important to evaluate philosophical, literary, hermeneutical, and language world-views in the light of the biblical text and in so doing to be better able to elucidate their advantages and disadvantages for the faithful art and action of biblical interpretation.<sup>56)</sup> While it is true, following Wittgenstein, that 'what we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence',<sup>57)</sup> one might complement this with, 'and where we can sufficiently speak we must.'

## **2) Should Scripture be Read as Any Other Book or in a Special Manner?**

There has been a fair amount of lively debate over this question.<sup>58)</sup> The recent Scripture and Hermeneutics Seminar: Third International Consultation, was no exception.<sup>59)</sup> My aim is to address this controversy, in its contemporary context, through an elucidation of what Ricoeur and others have referred to as the question of general and regional hermeneutics, or another way of stating it, philosophical and biblical hermeneutics.<sup>60)</sup> I shall primarily focus on the work of Ricoeur, as in my opinion, it can make a useful contribution to this question. The dispute concerning whether one reads Scripture as any other book or in a special way is intricately linked to the hermeneutical orientations just mentioned and to the discussion of language addressed in the first part of this chapter. Language, reading Scripture, and philosophical - biblical hermeneutics are not entirely unrelated worlds of investigation. While respecting their



differences and in no way attempting to cancel them out, their relationship also needs to be recognized. A polarized viewpoint, without warrant, or a sophisticated synthesis, for its own sake, are in danger of short circuiting the hermeneutical enterprise. Does a creational perspective play a role in this debate? How might a 'both-and' trajectory work its way out with respect to reading the Bible and what are the implications for biblical hermeneutics?

Some have argued that of the two hermeneutical orientations a christian perspective should privilege a biblical-theological, rather than a philosophical hermeneutics,<sup>61)</sup> or even that the way the Bible is read should be the way that all other texts are read.<sup>62)</sup> It is often maintained that Ricoeur gives precedence to a philosophical over a biblical hermeneutics.<sup>63)</sup> Allegedly, Ricoeur supports his biblical hermeneutics with a philosophical point of view that jeopardizes the true referent of the biblical story.<sup>64)</sup> That is, Ricoeur has attempted to re-frame the ancient text in more contemporary categories in order to make it compatible with current philosophical concerns and queries.

I would suggest the debate over biblical and philosophical hermeneutics might move toward greater clarity if one remembers to differentiate between a reader's imposition of a general-philosophical hermeneutics and having one in the first place (which may or may not then be modified as a result of reading Scripture). Will an interpreter simply impose the general-philosophical hermeneutic and snuff out the flaming arrow of the sense and referent of the biblical text - God, world, Christ, self and other, etc. - or will this arrow enlighten enough to explain that this is God's Spirit illuminated word, world, creation, not one's own, and thereby transfigure a reader's general-philosophical hermeneutics into a biblical hermeneutics, demonstrating that one is obliged to come under an authority greater than oneself?

There is no doubt a complex inter-relationship between philosophical and biblical hermeneutics in the thought of Ricoeur.<sup>65)</sup> Does this presume, as Frei and others argue, that he gives more weight to the philosophical?<sup>66)</sup> Ricoeur affirms that the philosophical pole begins the movement to the biblical. In his opinion, the same categories of a 'work, writing, world of text, distanciation and appropriation' apply to both poles.<sup>67)</sup> However, Ricoeur's position is that in dialogue with the unique character of the biblical text the movement inverses, eventually resulting in the subordination of the philosophical to the biblical. The biblical overpowers the philosophical.<sup>68)</sup>

In my view, this is because the explanation of God, the world (God's creation), the human condition (a broken God image), history (God's mighty acts), salvation (Christ), the future (new heavens and earth) are utterly and magnificently unique. The biblical text has the capacity, because of these truths among others, to lead one from understanding, through explanation, to new understanding which culminates in a knowledge of the truth and a saving relationship with God.

On the one hand, Ricoeur's view affirms a hermeneutical motion from the philosophical to

the biblical, while on the other, philosophical hermeneutics gradually functions within the sphere of a text related biblical hermeneutics. I shall briefly focus on three points of this gradual movement in Ricoeur's hermeneutics: a 'confession of faith,' asseverated in the forms of biblical discourse, 'the world of the text' and the 'naming of God.'<sup>69)</sup>

Firstly, Ricoeur views the confession of faith, in the biblical text, as interwoven with its forms of discourse.<sup>70)</sup> As a result of this vision, it can be said that the biblical text has a structure, genres, such as narrative, parable, gospel, prophetic, etc., while at the same moment however, it is also a declaration of faith.<sup>71)</sup> For Ricoeur, it is precisely this declaration that challenges philosophical hermeneutics, resulting in its eventual surpassing, but not effacing by biblical hermeneutics.

In Ricoeur's argumentation the inverting, and eventual subordinating of philosophical hermeneutics to biblical hermeneutics, comes about through the message or content of the biblical text as expressed in its diversity of forms of discourse. Form and content, in this sense, can be said to synchronize, yet this synchronization does not produce an annihilation of either one or the other. Such is the case because Scripture's content can be identified by the form (narrative, etc.), but the content (God the great actor of deliverance) is not merely the form.

Secondly, 'the world of the text,' as the world of the biblical text, Ricoeur calls this 'thing' of the text,<sup>72)</sup> the 'object' of hermeneutics.<sup>73)</sup> Hermeneutics, in the first instance, is to be an explaining of the text and the world of the text as a proposed world of possibility and possible habitation. Many texts, it can be said, present a world, but the specificity of biblical discourse, as Ricoeur affirms, is to be found in the emblematic characteristic of its referent 'God' and in the presentation of a new world, new birth, new covenant.<sup>74)</sup>

Thirdly, there is a biblical text resistance situated in the fact that in the naming of God, the word 'God', cannot be reduced to a philosophical concept of 'being' as it always says more than this. Ricoeur appeals to the word as presupposing a total context under which, and towards which, all the diversity of biblical discourses gravitate. To understand this word involves a supervening of the arrow of sense orchestrated by God. For Ricoeur, this 'arrow of sense' asseverates a twofold force: firstly, a re-assembling of all the signification generated by the biblical discourses, incomplete though they may be, and secondly, the aperture of a vista that eludes the closure of discourse.<sup>75)</sup> The naming of God, in Scripture, relates to God's initiative and objectifying of sense.

According to Ricoeur, on the grounds of these three points among others, regional-biblical hermeneutics becomes the organon for general-philosophical hermeneutics. It seems however, in my opinion, that this can only be confirmed through the Spirit illuminated Scripture and its reader in reading the author's literary act inscribed in the biblical text. This scenario works out in the following way. Every interpreter comes to the Bible with a general-philosophical point of view when they begin to read it. One's reading the biblical text does not make this be the

case, as it is already in place on a creational level before one ever reads Scripture.<sup>76)</sup> Yet this reading does count for the reader, not in the sense that one makes the biblical text what it is when read, no more than one makes a car what it is when looking both ways before crossing the street. The reader is always *both* related to what is read *and* distinct from it, just as the person crossing the street is related to the car, and distinct from it. The point here is that these relations-distinctions can be said to be true for human beings at the practical level on general hermeneutical grounds. I would argue this is because it is God's world (although it may not always be recognized for what it is), even before one reads the Bible to discover that this is the case. It is nevertheless, the biblical text that explains how and why the world is the way it is. In moving from general to regional hermeneutical grounds there is then an overcoming and re-framing of the general as Scripture explains that this is God's creation. Biblical scholars too often underplay a biblical world-view perspective that frames a place for the scientific, language orientated, and philosophical approaches to the world as it is God's created world. These valid enterprises however, need to be put into dialogue with Spirit illuminated Scripture if they are to have a possibility of both affirming and critiquing their various positions on criteria both related to and distinct from themselves. This is essential if they are to move from understanding, through explanation, to new understanding that it is ultimately God who gives science, philosophy, and language their *raison d'être* in the first place. As Acts 17:22-34, in a fascinating coup de force affirms, God has created the world and everything in it and it is in God that humans live and move and are.

I would argue Scripture may *both* be read as any other text, *and* not be read as any other text. Either a one dimensional forcing, a synthesis that exclusively fuses these two together, or an antithesis that keeps them entirely apart seems inadequate on the level of the complexity of creation. There is interconnection without effacement. The intriguing value of a 'both-and' approach to this question, as has already been argued with reference to language, is that it respects a creational relation-distinction, symmetry-asymmetry dynamic on the register of God, Scripture, the world, and language, which culminates in a tension that neither de-prioritizes the biblical, nor dissolves the philosophical.

All texts are texts and their authors may indicate, in one way or another, that this is God's world, but not all authored texts claim to be revelation illuminated by the Spirit.<sup>77)</sup> Even though the former is the case, the Bible remains a special text, not just one of many texts. Authored Scripture's Spirit illuminated recounting of events in history, its theological configuration, its referent God, its creation-salvific-eschatological focus, its canonical form, etc. all render it unique. The Scripture merits being read as a special book. It is still true, however, that the Bible is a text like other texts: genres, work, written, etc. and therefore that it should be read as any other text might be. On one level the Bible is a special book, on another level it is book like any other. This perspective acknowledges a space for both a biblical-regional and a

philosophical-general hermeneutics and a tension between them that is interactive and productive.

My contention is that to force this issue into an 'either-or' where it is not warranted may result in a underplaying of the complexity of Scripture, creation, and the concurrent relation-distinction that has already been developed with respect to the problematic of language. While it is true that the Bible presents God as 'either' there 'or' not there, the Bible is not God and therefore does not 'either-or' frame the question of the Bible being read as a special book or like any other. Perhaps, as with language, a 'both-and' perspective is in order, but if this is the case it must be clear where the relations-distinctions stand.

The relevance of this for biblical hermeneutics moves along the following lines. A biblical world-view presents the hermeneutical venture as a living one in motion. Interpreters are situated in the created world, move to the authored Spirit illuminated biblical text, and potentially move back to the world with a biblical view of it. In other words, there is a movement from understanding, through explanation, to new understanding. However, the trajectory does not end here in a biblical perspective. A living hermeneutics in motion only comes to its realized, yet provisionally mediated closure, when the biblical text is acted or lived out into the world. It is only in this sense that a contribution to the transformation of the world begins and can be brought to finite completion.

Biblical hermeneutics does not culminate with the linking of author and reader or the connecting of the world of text and the world of reader,<sup>78)</sup> but with the hermeneutical Spirit illuminated "what" read and Spirit acted on, which has *transforming world power* as it continues its motion through the text to the reader, and through the reader out into the animate world. It is only when this motion reaches the world, not just the world of the reader, that a living hermeneutics motion is then re-animated back through the hermeneutical circle in a broad sense. The animate world, in its relation and distinction to both biblical text and reader, is a hermeneutical factor that demands consideration. The world of the text and the world of the reader then must finally be in dialogue with the world God has created. This hermeneutics in motion however, is envisaged as stratified, neither static, nor iniquitous. In this context, hermeneutical motion is to be understood as living and having the capacity to affect the world.

While it is true that the goal of understanding and explanation is what has been done in the text, which then for a reader has the possibility of becoming new understanding (Ricoeur's passionate claim), this new understanding also calls for an engagement with God and the world in order to evaluate and cultivate its authenticity. If this is the case, the hermeneutical venture is not entirely a private matter between text and reader, but in addition to this, it relates to the world which is distinct from, yet related to both.

In this sense, the biblical text through its readers, must be acted out into the animate world,

(which speaks back), if anything other than self-transformation is to be hoped for that world. Ricoeur's use of the biblical realities of new covenant, the Kingdom of God, new creation are neither merely poetic possibilities, nor are they solely concerned with self-understanding (they do pertain to and are for both) in the biblical text. Such biblical realities however, also aim at a transforming the totality of the world, not merely the one of the reader.

## **Conclusion**

The issues of language and reading Scripture addressed in this chapter are indeed something of a minefield. In my opinion, those interested in interpreting Scripture better, cannot afford to avoid the arduous questions that language, philosophy, and hermeneutics pose for biblical interpretation. It is essential to be keenly aware that each of these will have an effect, sometimes positive, sometimes negative, on how one interprets the biblical text. A variety of language proposals, philosophical overtures, or hermeneutical directives are simply anti-God and must be identified and critiqued on their own grounds, without adopting an anti-christian methodology.

Wolters, Ricoeur, and Thiselton have all pointed out that world-views are always connected to philosophical perspectives and language theories. Discernment, for a christian perspective is indispensable, not only when it comes to the evaluation of language claims and philosophical statements, but also with respect to the underlying world-views that are an integral part of them. The validity of the christian faith will only suffer should interpreters assume that the minefield is of no concern to them.<sup>79)</sup> There remains much work to be done in terms of engaging previous and emergent points of view in all these fields if Christians are going to have a role in developing a theory of language and better ways of reading and living Scripture out into the world.

Language theory, as explained in the Introduction, is much debated in our contemporary context. In some circles, it seems to be all that matters. Everything is language and language is often considered meaningless. It was only a short step from Ayer's overstated and sweeping rejection of religious language to a suspicion of 'all' language.

I attempted to deal with this problematic in Part 1. Religious, scientific, and ordinary language are related to and distinct from each other in God's created world. They are meaningful in their specific usage contexts, but this is because they are related to one another and the world in a general usage context that encompasses them all. I have argued that a creational perspective of language, being intimately connected to God, the world, and the self, opens up a possibility for a new understanding of 'all' language as both related and distinct on the level of creation. Such an orientation intends to confront any absolute division between language types, without forging a synthesis that dissolves distinction. I would wager, on these

grounds, that either-ors do not fit a theory of language, because they do not fit a theory of creation in its high degree of complexity.

This proposal was put forward as a theological realism. As one who embraces such a view, my hope is that this conception creates fecund discussion and moves towards an alternative that goes beyond the powerful residue of positivism, which continues to haunt language theory at the present time. Furthermore, it seems to me that there is an inordinate amount of time spent on language introspection. No doubt investigations of this genre have merit to some degree and they are beneficial, yet if such painstaking elucidation never arrives at working its way out of details and questions of language usage, in order to draw some general conclusions about the whole of life, one is in danger of getting lost in the reticulation of language that is never merely the context or referent for itself.

In addressing the question in Part 2 on reading Scripture in a special way or as any other text, I aimed to move a polarized discussion forward. There are those who overplay a general-philosophical hermeneutics, while there are others who overplay a regional-biblical hermeneutics. If one makes the biblical text too general there is a loss of its distinctness from other texts, if one makes it too special there is a loss of its relatedness to other texts. A general-philosophical hermeneutics that underplays regional-biblical hermeneutics is to be faulted for its comprehensiveness, which has the tendency to envelop Scripture within the context of all other books. While it is true the Bible is a text, it is a text unlike any other. A regional-biblical hermeneutics that underplays general-philosophical hermeneutics is culpable for its narrowness, which has the tendency to focus on the Bible as solely a special book that deals with theology. Granted, Scripture is theological, yet it relates to the interpretation of the world, the self, and the whole of life, not just theology. It seems to me there is room for critique and embrace on both sides once one takes into consideration a possible both-and proposal that respects relation-distinction. The problem resides in assuming an either-or approach on the question where it is not warranted by the biblical text. Clearly, in other cases this type of approach would be entirely acceptable, even obligatory.

In addition, this assumption unwittingly or perhaps otherwise, attempts to resolve too early the tension that exists at a diversity of levels in the hermeneutical process. A diminution of tension on this question, in my opinion, incurs the risk of being reductionistic and therefore entirely excluding one hermeneutical dimension from the other. Scripture, as far as I can tell, itself points beyond itself to resolution, but for the present tension remains. A position of relation-distinction, on such questions, seems to correspond better with Scripture than polarizations.

It is crucial, in the end, to not leave biblical hermeneutics in the text or with the reader, but to view it in motion and relevant to the whole of life. As interpreters begin in and with the world, this too is where biblical hermeneutics must provisionally and in a finite manner reach

its summation. This orientation does not intend to ignore readerly transformation, but only to situate it in a context that is always larger than itself. When one's understanding is modified by the explanation of the biblical text, one's new understanding is to be passionately lived out into the world.

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- 1) Cupitt, 'post-Christianity,' in: P. Heelas, ed. *Religion, Modernity and Postmodernity*, 218-232, argues that post-Christianity means: there is no longer capital - T truth, existence is in flux, human expression is our redemption, and there is only the stream of language-formed events. It is crucial to understand that Cupitt has not only embraced a theory of language here, but he is advocating a particular world-view in connection with it.
- 2) Crossan, 'A Metamodel for Polyvalent Narration,' *Semeia* 9 (1977), 105-147.
- 3) M. C. Taylor, *Erring, A Postmodern A/Theology*, 3, marks Nietzsche as being one of the major prophets of postmodernism with his declaration: 'God remains dead. And we have killed him.' See also, 134-135. The death of God, from Taylor's point of view, 'marks the loss of a stable center' which was believed to be the support for individuality and a transcendent selfhood. 'This mortal wounding of the original subject releases the erring of scripture that entwines all things.' In Taylor's perspective, language 'as a ceaseless play of interrelated differences' undermines the possibility of any original subject outside of language.
- 4) NIV, (Eccl. 1:2). This is not the end of the story in Ecclesiastes, in contrast to what some suppose is the case in the contemporary context.
- 5) Stiver, *The Philosophy of Religious Language: Sign, Symbol, & Story*, 4-7.
- 6) J. Fodor, *Christian Hermeneutics: Paul Ricoeur and the Refiguring of Theology*, 147.
- 7) Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. A. Hofstadter, 190-191. See also by the same author, *On the Way to Language*.
- 8) M. Edwards, *Towards a Christian Poetics*, 217.
- 9) Vanhoozer, *Is There A Meaning in This Text? The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge*, 205.
- 10) Ricoeur, 'The Language of Faith,' in: C. E. Reagan and D. Stewart, eds., *The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur*, 230-231, seems to accept this point of view.
- 11) See Stiver, *The Philosophy of Religious Language* and Thiselton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics*, for erudite discussions of this topic.
- 12) Thiselton, 'language-religious' in: A. McGrath, ed., *Blackwell Encyclopedia of Modern Christian Thought*, 315-319.
- 13) Cupitt, 'post-Christianity,' 218-232. See Thiselton, *Interpreting God and the Postmodern Self*, 81-118, for an insightful analysis and critique of Cupitt's work.
- 14) See P. Clayton, *The Problem of God in Modern Thought*, who argues that some who doubt (following Kant) theistic language, also see difficulties with 'metaphysical explanations' and a 'historicity of knowledge.'
- 15) While I agree with Thiselton that the supposed problematic today is with 'all' language (see note 11 above), I would nevertheless argue that an acceptance of an absolute division between religious language and other language will not help in addressing the tyranny of this view.
- 16) Braaten, 'Naming the Name,' in: Braaten, ed., *Our Naming of God*, 14, argues, 'the problem of language seems to be as old as creation.'
- 17) Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. D. F. Pears and B.F. McGuinness. The later Wittgenstein, in my opinion, is still empiricist in his orientation to language use or games, however he is not as reductionist as in his early work.
- 18) Ayer, *Language, Truth, and Logic*. See O'Connor, 'Alfred Jules Ayer,' *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 1, 229-231, who argues that this is 'one of the most influential philosophical books of the century.' See also, Thiselton, 'language-religious,' 316, 'In his *Language, Truth, and Logic* of 1936, A. J. Ayer expounded what amounted to a positivist world view, but clothed in the dress of a theory of language.'
- 19) Ayer, *Language, Truth, and Logic*, 31, 115, 117-118.
- 20) Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 144.
- 21) Devitt and Sterelny, *Language and Reality*, 236-237, comment in regard to Ayer and the positivists, 'So, at the same time the positivists are rejecting the metaphysical dispute about the nature of reality, they are making a strong metaphysical assumption about reality: it consists only of the given. Despite their disavowals, they are committed to a powerful and, we claim, thoroughly false metaphysics.' While being in agreement with this evaluation and critique, I would nevertheless disagree with these two scholars on their approach to the problem of language which is entirely 'naturalistic' in both the epistemological and metaphysical sense. See also, *Language and Reality*, 9-10.
- 22) A. Wolters, *Creation Regained*, 1-11 on the importance of Christians thinking world-view. See also, Devitt and Sterelny, *Language and Reality*, 237, who point out that, 'one cannot theorize about anything, least of all language, without implicit commitment to a view of the world.' Also, Ricoeur, *History and Truth*, 193, states: 'Every philosophical attitude flows from a Weltanschauung, from a certain vision of the "world."' (Italics his).
- 23) D. J. O'Connor, 'Alfred Jules Ayer,' *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 1, 230, asserts that Ayer's view has 'been

- shown to be faulty in admitting as meaningful metaphysical statements of precisely the kind that the principle is designed to outlaw.' Also, Stiver, *The Philosophy of Religious Language*, 44-46, points out that one significant factor in the theory's diminishing influence was the internal critique from the positivists themselves.
- 24) J. H. Gill, *On Knowing God: New Directions for the Future of Theology*, 36. See also, Thiselton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics*, 20, who provocatively suggests an analogy between Ayer and his world-view, 'positivism in linguistic dress' and Barthes, Derrida, among others, who propose 'a post-modernist world-view in semiotic dress.'
  - 25) Ricoeur, 'The Language of Faith,' 223-238. Also, *History and Truth*, 165-191.
  - 26) Ricoeur, 'Toward A Hermeneutic of the Idea of Revelation,' in: Mudge, ed., *Ricoeur, Essays on Biblical Interpretation*, 100-104. See the comments by Fodor, *Christian Hermeneutics*, 147-171, who perceives something of a 'residual positivism' in Ricoeur's view of language, while he nevertheless points out some of his differences with a positivistic outlook.
  - 27) Ricoeur, 'Toward A Hermeneutic,' 100-104, and 'Biblical Hermeneutics,' 29-148. This does not mean, in Ricoeur's orientation, that poetic language is non-cognitive or non-referential.
  - 28) See Vanhoozer, *Biblical Narrative in the Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur: A Study in hermeneutics and theology*, 120-122; 236-238. For another view, see Laughery, *Living Hermeneutics: An Analysis and Evaluation of Paul Ricoeur's Contribution to Biblical Hermeneutics*, 115-120.
  - 29) Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, has done much to dispel the illusions that scientific and theological models and metaphors are completely incongruent. Her insights, in this context, make a valuable contribution to a theory of language. I am in her debt for these thoughts on Christian empiricism and the notions of idealism.
  - 30) Ramsey, *Religious Language: An Empirical Placing of Theological Phrases; Christian Empiricism*, 1974.
  - 31) Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 146.
  - 32) *Ibid.*, 147. While it is true that Soskice is discussing scientific models she herself makes an application to the theist and the Christian in this regard.
  - 33) *Ibid.*, 97-117.
  - 34) *Ibid.*, 147-161. I do agree with Soskice that a theological realism should neither be dogmatic nor presumptuous and that a realist perspective accommodates figurative speech which is reality depicting. I also agree that a realist position holds that the world informs our theory, however I am not convinced that our theories may never adequately describe the world. My view would be that it is possible to sufficiently describe the world and that most of the time that is practically what happens. In those cases description is adequate.
  - 35) While no one denies some distinction, as with French and English, is there not also a primordial relationship that has been underplayed with regard to its place in the world and language? Religious language is distinct from other language, yet it is also related to it.
  - 36) See the quote from Thiselton above.
  - 37) Watson, *Text, Church, and World. Biblical Interpretation in Theological Perspective*, 144.
  - 38) Braaten, 'Naming the Name,' in: Braaten, ed., *Our Naming of God*, 29, argues the problem of contemporary thinking about God is expressed in a 'great divide.' There are those who see anthropomorphic language about God as beyond all concreteness 'rapt in mystical silence' and those who follow 'the incarnational current deep into history, into the concreteness of human flesh' - God incarnate in Jesus. Braaten rightly affirms the latter, but in my opinion too exclusively, thereby lacking an emphasis on a creational and eschatological perspective.
  - 39) Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, trans. D. L. Guder, 288, remarks with regard to Christ, 'The translation of the model of human speech to God is based on the certainty that God has shown himself to be human in the execution of his divinity. To think of him as one who speaks, to speak of him as one who speaks, is not a "dogmatic anthropomorphism," which comes too close to God, but rather the result of that even in which God becomes accessible as God in language, which the Bible calls revelation.'
  - 40) See Gunton, *The One, the Three and the Many: God, Creation and the Culture of Modernity*, 167, 207-219, on the relation-distinction between God, world, and being.
  - 41) C. Wright, *Living as the People of God*, 1983. See also, A. Wolters, *Creation Regained*, 7, who rightly argues, 'Scripture speaks centrally to everything in our life and world, including technology, and economics and science.'
  - 42) Ricoeur, *History and Truth*, 193, argues, 'in the eyes of the psalmist: it is the trees which "clap their hands" and not the electrons and neutrons.' While this is true, perhaps it is not necessary to paint the picture so reductionistically. If one considers the creational perspective that God made the world and everything in it, as affirmed, for example, in Paul's discussion with the Athenians (recounted in Luke's narrative: Acts 17: 22-34), there is no necessity to exclude the language and reality of electrons and neutrons from pointing to the creator God.

- 43) Stiver, *The Philosophy of Religious Language*, 196, states, 'Perhaps the most remarkable implication of recent developments for religious language is the affirmation that despite irreducible imprecision and metaphorical language, religious language is communicable and understandable. Even if religious language possesses more indeterminate and figurative language it is not so unlike other language, even scientific language.'
- 44) Vanhoozer, *Is There A Meaning?*, 205. See also, Milbank, *The Word Made Strange*, *Theology, Language, Culture*, 29, who argues that human language utterance reflects the divine creative act.
- 45) Thiselton, 'Language and Meaning in Religion,' in: C. Brown, ed., *NIDNTT*, Vol. 3, 1123-1146.
- 46) *Ibid.*, 1123-1146, esp. 1132, where Thiselton argues that religious language 'is not necessarily a special kind of language, but is ordinary language put to a special kind of use.'
- 47) Laughery, *Living Hermeneutics*, 55-91.
- 48) Ricoeur, *The Conflict of Interpretations*, 298, argues, 'This circle is not vicious; still less is it deadly.' and 389, 'The hermeneutic circle can be stated roughly as follows. To understand, it is necessary to believe; to believe, it is necessary to understand. This formulation is still too psychological. For behind believing there is the primacy of faith over faith; and behind understanding there is the primacy of exegesis and its method over the naïve reading of the text. This means that the genuine hermeneutical circle is not psychological but methodological. It is the circle constituted by the object that regulates faith and the method that regulates understanding. There is a circle because the exegete is not his own master. What he wants to understand is what the text says; the task of understanding is therefore governed by what is at issue in the text itself. Christian hermeneutics is moved by the announcement which is at issue in the text.' According to Ricoeur, 'Toward A Hermeneutic,' 103, 'The proposed world that in biblical language is called a new creation, a new Covenant, the Kingdom of God, is the "issue" of the biblical text unfolded in front of this text.'
- 49) I would propose that the Babel event in Gen. 11, often understood as the root of language distinction, might be better explained as the root of language confusion. Gen. 10 seems to affirm that distinction was already there pre-Babel.
- 50) See Milbank, *The Word Made Strange*, 74-78, for an illuminating discussion of Hamann's views of language, creation, and God's transcendence. In addition, Watson, *Text, Church, and World*, 137-153, on language, God, and creation.
- 51) There is always the possibility that people speaking language misfire. Should this surprize us? Meanings and referents are partially opaque, yet context can help in diminishing this to the sufficient degree that language often functions accurately, but never perfectly. See Carson, *The Gaggling of God*, 102-105, on valid communication.
- 52) In this case, language has no ontological status of its own. The Word in John's gospel, for example, seeks to redeem people as a person/God, not language. Language, in a Scriptural context, is always related to a person/being, never an entity in and of itself or the totality of any person/being.
- 53) Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning*, 20, states, 'Language is not a world of its own. It is not even a world.' Ricoeur's point here is that language is always dependent on something else. Also see, *Interpretation Theory*, 15-16, where he argues for the miracle of communicative meaning becoming public.
- 54) Crossan, *The Dark Interval. Towards A Theology of Story*, 40-41.
- 55) A. Wolters, 'Gustavo Gutiérrez,' in: J. Klapwijk, S. Griffioen, and G. Groenewoud, eds., *Bringing into Captivity Every Thought*, 237.
- 56) See Laughery, *Living Hermeneutics*, 105-106. Perhaps, as an unfortunate result of over-specialization, biblical scholars often pay little attention to the ways in which philosophical-general hermeneutics in-forms or de-forms a reading of the biblical text, while philosophers rarely engage themselves with biblical-regional hermeneutics, thereby inadvertently, (or perhaps otherwise) risking the loss of a more in-formed or less de-formed reading of that very philosophy.
- 57) Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*, 74.
- 58) Laughery, *Living Hermeneutics*, 92-106, for a fuller account than can be undertaken here.
- 59) The Scripture and Hermeneutics Project intends to publish several volumes through Zondervan/Paternoster arising out of yearly consultations. See C. G. Bartholomew, C. Greene, K. Möller, eds., *Renewing Biblical Interpretation*, Scripture and Hermeneutics Series.
- 60) Ricoeur, 'Philosophical Hermeneutics and Biblical Hermeneutics,' in: *From Text to Action*, trans. K. Blamey and J. B. Thompson, 89-101. See also, Frei, 'The "Literal Reading" of Biblical Narrative in the Christian Tradition,' in: McConnell, ed., *The Bible and the Narrative Tradition*, 36-77; Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age*, and Kelsey, *The Uses of Scripture in Recent Theology*.
- 61) Watson, *Text, Church and World*, 1-2.

- 62) Vanhoozer, *Is There A Meaning in This Text?*, 379, 'Christian doctrine, I have claimed, has hermeneutical significance. I prefer to say, not that we should read the Bible like any other book, but that we should read every other book as we have learned to read the Bible, namely, in a spirit of understanding that lets the text be what it is and do what it intends.'
- 63) Frei, 'Literal Reading', esp. 45, 50, 56 for a critique of Ricoeur on this. Also Vanhoozer, *Biblical Narrative*, 148-150.
- 64) Frei, 'Literal Reading,' 50. See also, Placher, 'Paul Ricoeur and Postliberal Theology: A Conflict of Interpretations,' 35-52.
- 65) See M. I. Wallace, *The Second Naiveté*, 27-103. Also, Laughery, *Living Hermeneutics*, 91-121 and 172-195. Vanhoozer, *Biblical Narrative*, 119-272.
- 66) Fodor, *Christian Hermeneutics*, 258-330, has an excellent discussion of Frei and Ricoeur.
- 67) Ricoeur, 'Philosophical and Biblical,' 89-90.
- 68) *Ibid.*, 89-90. See also, Ricoeur, 'Toward A Hermeneutic,' 104.
- 69) Ricoeur, 'Hermeneutique - Les finalités de l'exégèse biblique,' in: *La Bible en philosophie*, 27-51, formulates his views on 'la lecture savante and la lecture confessante' and gives an insightful articulation of biblical genres and the theological import of their confessing characteristics.
- 70) See Laughery, 'Reading Jesus' Parables According to J. D. Crossan and P. Ricoeur,' 145-154, for how this pertains to the parables.
- 71) Ricoeur, 'Philosophy and Religious Language,' 71-85, esp. 84-85 where faith is related to a logic of superabundance. '... the thematic of faith escapes from hermeneutics and testifies to the fact that the former is neither the first nor last word.' There is a need for a reliance on a 'constantly renewed interpretation of the sign-events reported by the writings, such as the Exodus in the Old Testament and the Resurrection in the New Testament.'
- 72) See Wolterstorff, *Divine Discourse*, 130-152, for a critique of Ricoeur's emphasis on the meaning of the text at the expense of the author's intention. Vanhoozer, *Is There A Meaning?* 106-111, addresses this question with much erudition. See also Laughery, *Living Hermeneutics*, 292-321 and 'Reading Ricoeur: Authors, Readers, and Texts,' 159-170.
- 73) Ricoeur, 'Philosophical and Biblical,' 95.
- 74) *Ibid.*, 97. In addition, Ricoeur, 'Philosophy and Religious Language,' 71-85.
- 75) Ricoeur, 'Philosophical and Biblical,' 97-98.
- 76) Interpretation is rooted in the situatedness of the interpreter, however it is not actualized only by this, but also by the created world which precedes it. Interpretation takes place within the borders of creational limits. No interpreter, at least that I know of, begins the hermeneutical journey grounded in the biblical text.
- 77) Gunton, *A Brief Theology of Revelation*, 64-82.
- 78) Ricoeur and LaCocque, *Thinking Biblically, Exegetical and Hermeneutical Studies*, trans. Pellauer, ix-xix, who, I believe, overemphasize the readerly end. See also, Ricoeur, 'Life: A Story in Search of a Narrator,' in: M. J. Valdés, ed., *A Ricoeur Reader: Reflection and Imagination*, 423-437.
- 79) See C. G. Bartholomew, 'Unchartered Waters: Philosophy, Theology and the Crisis in Biblical Interpretation,' in: C. G. Bartholomew, C. Greene, K. Möller, eds., *Renewing Biblical Interpretation. Scripture and Hermeneutics Series*, Vol. 1, 1-39.