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## BIBLE COMMENTARY AS A LITERARY GENRE

In Andrea del Col's recent study of the Italian Inquisition<sup>1</sup>, we read, apropos of witchcraft manuals, 'The manualistica<sup>2</sup> not only collected the experiences and the beliefs of the various inquisitors and secular judges, both Catholic and Protestant, but was a literary genre in itself, and the authors often used preceding texts, quoting them as authorities, sometimes reproducing or summarising some parts more or less faithfully, and sometimes criticising their information and interpretation. The doctrines contained in them were regularly preached and taught by the Catholic clergy and the Protestant pastors, and were supported by the greatest ecclesiastical and state authorities'. Since the witchcraft manual can be considered a literary genre because it used preceding texts in the way described above, there is little reason to discriminate against biblical commentary and deny it the same status, for the reliance on authorities is an invariable characteristic of this form of discourse. In fact, the authorities on which commentators on the Bible relied as they strove to elicit the meanings of a text almost universally acknowledged to be complex and enigmatic had long since been codified. They were frequently referred to as 'loci communes' or 'loci theologici'. They denoted the places or sources from which proofs were to be deduced<sup>3</sup>; and they could be ranked in order of importance, as they were for instance

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<sup>1</sup> Andrea del Col, *L'Inquisizione in Italia Dal XII al XXI secolo* (Milano: Oscar Mondadori Editore S.p.A., 2006) [Hereafter 'Del Col'] p. 192.

<sup>2</sup> Manualistica: the term is Italian and means 'the ensemble of the manuals of a determinate discipline or of a determinate epoch.' Nicola Zingarelli, *lo Zingarelli Vocabolario Della Lingua Italiana* (Bologna, Zanichelli editore S.p.A., 2004) p. 1054.

<sup>3</sup> Johannes Kunze, 'Loci Theologici' in *Christian Classics Ethereal Library* <http://www.ccel.org/s/schaff/encyc/encyc07/htm/ii.ii.htm> [Accessed 19 April 2008]



by Melchior Cano in his 'Loci Communes' of 1563. The point of enlarging the extension of the term 'literary genre' to include Biblical Commentaries is that it legitimates the application of methods familiar in modern literary criticism to the study of some forms at least of religious discourse. This has already happened in the study of the Bible itself. But it has not yet happened in the study of Biblical commentary. The aim of this paper is to suggest what the result might be if it did. The project is on a small scale, and will be restricted to one 16<sup>th</sup> century commentary and the storm of protest that it aroused. A 16<sup>th</sup> century commentary has been chosen because the Reformation crisis of the 16th century made the meaning and interpretation of the Bible a bitterly contested issue.

The Bible commentaries concerned are those of the celebrated Italian Dominican Cardinal Tommaso de Vio Cajetan (1469-1534). They were published at intervals between 1527 and 1534. At the time of his death, Cajetan had not completed his commentaries on the Prophets, but otherwise he had covered all the books of the Old and the New Testaments with the exception of the Song of Solomon, and the Book of Revelation, which he believed were beyond his powers: a remarkable feat for so old a man in so short a time, in such a busy life, and under such difficult circumstances. There were doubts about the orthodoxy of some parts of Cajetan's commentaries almost from the beginning. The critics were mostly Dominicans, including the Sorbonne Masters<sup>4</sup>, but the doubts were expressed most forcefully by Cajetan's Italian Dominican colleague Ambrosius Catharinus Politus (1484-1553) in his 'Annotationes in Commentaria Caietani' first published in 1535<sup>5</sup> and then, in a revised form, in 1542<sup>6</sup>. What particularly infuriated Catharinus was Cajetan's determination to take an independent line with regard to the Scriptures and the way in which they should be interpreted. This independence is best seen in Cajetan's short Preface to the Five Mosaic books (1531)<sup>7</sup>, which deserves quoting in full:

<sup>4</sup> M-H. Laurent, O. P., 'Quelques documents des Archives Vaticanes', *Revue Thomiste*, 1934-1935, pp. 117-119.

<sup>5</sup> Ambrosius Catharinus Politus, *In excerpta quaedam de commentaries Reverendissimi Cardinalis S. Xisti dogmata* (Paris, Simon Colinaeus, 1535)

<sup>6</sup> Ambrosius Catharinus Politus, *Annotationes in Commentaria Caietani denuo multo locupletiores et castigatiores redditae* (Lyons, Matthieu Bonhomme, 1542).

<sup>7</sup> Thomas de Vio Cajetan, *Opera omnia quotquot in Sacrae Scripturae expositionem reperiuntur: cura atque industria insignis collegii S. Thomae Complutensis ordinis praedicatorum*. (Lyons, Jacob et Petri Prost, 1639), Tomus I, no pagination.



As I am about to write on the five Mosaic books according to the literal sense and sometimes, subject to the censure of Holy Mother Church and the Apostolic See, bring forth a new meaning of Scripture, I ask all readers not to denounce anything in haste but to read everything mindful of Holy Scripture, the truth of the Catholic faith, and the lessons and practices of the Catholic Church; and if a new meaning presents itself which is consistent with the text and not inconsistent with Holy Scripture and the teaching of the Church, although different from the torrent of holy Doctors, to show that they are impartial judges. They should remember to give each man what is just. Augustine says that only to the authors of the Sacred Scriptures is the authority given that we believe that something is the case because they say so; but I read the other authors in such a way that however much they excel in sanctity and learning, I do not believe that things are so because they say so. No one therefore should denounce a new meaning of Holy Scripture because it differs from (the meaning of) the early Doctors, but he should look more carefully at the text and the context of Scripture, and if he finds that (the new meaning) squares (with these), he should praise God, who has not bound the exposition of the Scriptures to the meanings of the early Doctors, but, subject to the censure of the Church, to the meaning of the whole Scripture. Otherwise all hope would be taken from us and from posterity of expounding the Sacred Scripture, except by transferring as they say from one book into another. I am now an old man, and I am not enticed by love of novelty, but only by love of truth alone. I begin this work as an offering to Almighty God for kindling the minds of others towards the Holy Scriptures. May the Lord Jesus Christ grant that I achieve my intention: I aim to expound the text in accordance with the Hebraic verity, where there are differences between the Vulgate edition and the Hebraic text, for the text of Moses himself, not his translators, should be expounded: it is the authority of the Hebrew text itself, not that of a Greek or Latin translator that we are required to embrace and all faithful men do embrace.

Though the tone here is mild, calm and dignified, the content in the early decades of the Reformation must have been received with astonishment, especially so since the author was the trusted advisor of Clement VII and would have been papabile<sup>8</sup> on that pope's death had he not

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<sup>8</sup> The term is Italian and is said of a person who is a candidate for an office and has a good chance of being elected to it. Nicola Zingarelli, *Lo Zingarelli Vocabolario Della Lingua Italiana* (Bologna, Zanichelli editore S.p.A., 2004) p.1258.



ruled himself out on account of his advanced age. First he said that he was going to declare the literal sense of the Scriptures. Was this not what Luther wanted to do?<sup>9</sup> Then he rejected the authority of the early doctors, and that was certainly a challenge to the widely accepted 'loci communes' tradition of theological reasoning<sup>10</sup>. Finally, he questioned the authority of the Vulgate text, and aimed to replace it with a new text based on the Hebraic and Greek verities. Here, it must have seemed, he intended to do what Erasmus had already attempted<sup>11</sup>. This declaration of scholarly independence was by no means the only reason for Catarino's indignation, but it is perhaps the best place to start in explaining it, for, in Catarino's opinion, 'believing other than the Church believes', 'departing from the meaning of the Holy Doctors and the Catholic Church itself', and explanation of the scriptures 'by the private desire of some man' is the basic fault from which all the others derive. How can fallen man relying on his natural capacities aspire so high: 'the ordinances of God most high are supernatural and divine'<sup>12</sup>. The consequences of this allegedly arrogant aspiration included new and unheard of doctrine, self-contradiction, the perversion of Christ's words, and vulnerability to the influence of the heretics especially Erasmus and Luther<sup>13</sup>. Cajetan,

<sup>9</sup> The literal sense was only one of several senses that Catholic students of the bible accepted. See for instance Ambrosius Catharinus Politus, *Claves Duae ad aperientdas intelligendasve Sacras perquam necessariae*, (Lyons, Petrus a Sancta Lucia, 1543) [Hereafter 'Claves Duae', pp. III-122.

<sup>10</sup> In Melchior Cano's *Loci Communes* of 1563, the authorities on whom or which theologians could rely in deducing their proofs were, in order of importance: Holy Scriptures; Catholic tradition; General Councils; the Catholic Church; the Fathers; the Schoolmen, Natural Reason; Philosophers; Doctors of Civil Law; and History. For Melchior Cano's *Loci Communes* see Melchior Cano, *L'AUTORITÀ DELLA STORIA PROFANA* (De humanae historiae auctoritate, a cura di Albano Biondi), Edizioni Giappichelli, 1973, p. XIV.

<sup>11</sup> Erasmus Roterodamus: *Nouum Instrumentum omne diligenter ab Erasmo Roterodamo recognitum & emendatum, non solum ad Græcam ueritatem, uerumetiam ad multorum utriusq[ue] linguæ codicum, eorumq[ue] ueterum simul & emendatorum fidem, postremo ad probatissimorum auctorum citationem, emendationem & interpretationem, præcipue, Origenis, Chrysostomi, Cyrilli ... [et al.] una cum annotationibus, quæ lectorem doceant, quid qua ratione mutatum sit* (Basel, Froben, 1516).

<sup>12</sup> I have dealt with these matters more fully in Allan K. Jenkins and Patrick Preston, *Biblical Scholarship and the Church. A Sixteenth Century Crisis of Authority*, (Ashgate 2007), pp. 209-214.

<sup>13</sup> Erasmus was never a heretic. He never apostatised though certain of his works afterwards appeared on the Index of Prohibited Books.



Catharinus alleged, had changed the text<sup>14</sup>, relied on the Hebrew and Greek verities, and being no linguist himself had had to rely on other scholars – rabbis for the Hebrew<sup>15</sup>, and humanists for the Greek. As an interpreter of the text, he twisted the letter and concerned himself overmuch with single words. The dire consequence of these various failings was that he endangered the Church by subverting its doctrine and its liturgy, and thereby weakened the position of the papacy. There was a moral in all this, Catharinus implied: going it alone means cutting yourself off from institutional criticism and brotherly admonition, the only sure guarantees of theological objectivity.

This short sketch of what Catharinus thought was wrong with Cajetan's approach to the text and the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures is based on an ambitious hermeneutic that is never really systematically expounded but is contained for the most part in his *Claves Duae ad aperiendas Sacras Scripturas*, 1543, a work that appears to have been written in a great hurry<sup>16</sup>. The first of the two keys is that 'Scripture is ordained by the Providence of God and inspired by the Holy Spirit with a view to our instruction so that we may know our true good and the way or covenant by which we are legitimately to obtain it.' The three consequences of the divine origin of Scripture are firstly that it is to be preferred to all earthly wisdom, secondly that it cannot be in error except as the result of human shortcomings in transcription and/or transmission, and thirdly that it has to be interpreted not by purely human methods (these are described as the root of all heresies) but by the same spirit that produced it. The second key is that 'the matter of all Scripture is Jesus Christ', however much it may appear to be otherwise, e.g. because of seeming triviality or obscurity, and one of the tasks of biblical scholar is to show this. This may not be possible at the moment, but we may rest assured that at some time, perhaps in the distant future, all will be made clear to us. Meanwhile, we must remain content with the distinction between the literal meaning and the metaphorical meaning which this impasse entails. A further distinction is associated with it, the distinction between an outer 'fleshly' interpretation<sup>17</sup>, and an inner 'spiritual'

<sup>14</sup> He corrected the Vulgate text, and rejected some parts of it.

<sup>15</sup> Catharinus thought that reliance on the Jews was particularly perverse. See *Claves Duae*, p. 82.

<sup>16</sup> Catharinus published two substantial works in 1542 and five in 1544.

<sup>17</sup> Literal interpretation, or 'interpretation in the flesh', is, Catharinus thought, the root of all heresy.



or mystical interpretation. The point seems to be that even when the literal interpretation does yield Christ, it is appropriate sometimes to seek for a further metaphorical sense. In this way we are left with a four-fold method of interpretation reminiscent of that of Nicholas of Lyra without being reducible to it<sup>18</sup>.

As the title to this work of 1543 – a blatant pun – reminds us, the pope has a key role in biblical interpretation: when other interpreters cannot agree on the meaning of a particular text, the pope is the one who, on the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and with the assistance of the senior members of the Church if required, must decide the case. The power and authority of the pope and the Church over the Scriptures is such that, in confuting the Protestants, Catarino is prepared to commit himself to the remarkable argument that there was a pope and a church in Adam and Eve, so that these two were both temporally and logically prior to the Scriptures, which were first produced by Moses. The 'Claves Duae' is replete with the apparatus for explaining and describing all failures (and their consequences) in interpreting the Scriptures: first a list (the implication is that it is exhaustive) of 'Errors concerning the Scriptures'; secondly, a short method for recognizing heresy of any kind.

The theory of Biblical explanation and interpretation outlined in the 'Claves Duae' is itself polemical in nature. The polemical stance seems to have been natural to Catarino, and it is an almost invariable ingredient in his works. It was adopted, for instance in three famous short tracts of the following year<sup>19</sup>, where particularly in the second of these tracts – *Resolutione sommaria contro le conclusioni Luterane estratte d'un Libretto à intitolato Il sommario dela sacra scrittura* – he was engaged in re-appropriating the Pauline Epistles and defending the doctrine of the efficacy of good works. Here the power of the strident invective is memorable. Only detailed quotation could do it justice. But before that, in 1535 and 1542 Cajetan had been its posthumous victim; the implication was that Cajetan was a traitor and a heretic, though Catharinus never charged him with either of these crimes. Cajetan, however,

<sup>18</sup> Nicholas of Lyra emphasised the importance of literal interpretation, but conceded that Scriptures could also be interpreted analogically, anagogically and tropologically. *Nicholas of Lyra* <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicholas\\_of\\_Lyra](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicholas_of_Lyra)> [Accessed 20 April 2008].

<sup>19</sup> *Compendio d'errori et inganni Luterani; Resolutione sommaria contro le conclusioni Luterane estratte d'un Libretto à intitolato Il sommario dela sacra scrittura; Rimedio ala pestilente dottrina de Frate Bernardino Ochino.*



though not without enemies<sup>20</sup>, was very widely admired, particularly in his own Order, and with good reason. He had been Master General of the Dominicans, and papal legate in Germany. He was a great scholar and a voluminous author not only on the Bible and on biblical subjects, but also on Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas. In fact he was the greatest Thomist of his day and was to be remembered as such long after his death, for in 1882, Leo XIII ordered his commentaries to be incorporated with the text of the 'Summa' in the official Leonine edition of the complete works of St. Thomas, the first volume of which appeared in 1882. Though a number of his works appeared at various times on Indices of Prohibited Books in Spain on Portugal, they never appeared on the Roman Index, the most important index of all.

The contrast between Cajetan and Catharinus – in character, personality, status and achievement – could scarcely be more dramatic. It had many aspects: Cajetan was a Dominican Conventual, Catarino, a Dominican Observant; Cajetan was a Thomist, Catharinus, though paying lip-service to the doctrines of Aquinas, had a strong Scotist streak; Cajetan taught the Assumption of the Virgin, Catharinus was an Immaculist; Cajetan was a scholastic and wrote a correct but inelegant Latin, Catharinus, originally educated as a humanist and a civil lawyer, wrote Latin with style and sophistication. Cajetan seems to have avoided polemic<sup>21</sup>, but Catharinus delighted in it. As a Dominican polemicist, Catharinus's favourite self-image involved a time-honoured pun at the expense of the Dominican name: a Dominican is referred to as 'dominicanis', domini canis, Christ's dog. When confuting heretics, wolves in sheep's clothing, he imagined himself as a barking sheep dog, intent on alerting the shepherds to the dangers that threatened the flock. Often, he seems to have detected the whiff of heresy, or the danger of it, even among fellow members in the Order. His conduct as a Dominican was

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<sup>20</sup> The Dominican Bartolommeo Spina, Master of the Sacred Palace in 1547, was one of them. He objected to the way in which Cajetan had dealt with the Pomponazzi case in 1516, and also with regard to his 'weakness' over the question of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin. See Giorgio Caravale, *Sulle Tracce dell'Eresia. Ambrogio Catarino (1485-1553)* (Firenze, Leo S. Olschki, 2007) [Hereafter 'Caravale' p. 143.

<sup>21</sup> Though he was not a polemical writer, he could certainly defend himself with great skill if the occasion required it, as it did, for instance, in 1534, when he received notice of the circulation in Mainz of a copy of the list of censures that the Sorbonne Masters intended to impose on his commentaries on the Bible. See Allan K. Jenkins and Patrick Preston, *Biblical Scholarship and the Church*, op. cit., pp. 273-277.



regularly appropriate to this self-image. The great Spanish Dominican, Domingo de Soto, with whom Catharinus was involved in a controversy that started at Trent in 1546, drew attention to the frequency with which Catarino took it upon himself to correct and rebuke fellow members of the Dominican Order<sup>22</sup>. His way of doing it could scarcely be described as brotherly admonition. His excuse for being so aggressive, whenever he felt it incumbent upon him to make it, was that he was motivated only by love of the truth. Though he was plainly ambitious<sup>23</sup>, he always disclaimed his ambition: another favourite form of self-reference was 'the very humble servant of the servants of God'. He was also, it seems, vindictive. At least there is reason to believe that his polemic against Cajetan originated in a sensational controversy with other members of the Dominican Order in the Convents of Santo Spirito in Siena, and San Marco in Florence, over the celebration in Siena of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin. The upshot of this controversy was an appeal to Rome, which Catharinus was adjudged to have lost. The adjudicator was Cajetan. Shortly afterwards Catharinus began to compose the first of his three tracts on the Immaculate Conception along with the first draft of the 'Annotationes in Commentaria Caietani'. There can be no doubt that these Annotations made a series of telling points against Cajetan that would later be very congenial to conservative opinion in the Church, as can be seen from the Trent legislation on the Scriptures, 1546; but his mockery and sarcasm, e.g. in his pointed reference to his opponent as the 'The Very Reverend Gentleman' is clear evidence of his resentment. It seems that he could not bear to be beaten. Just to drive his point home, he tended to repeat it<sup>24</sup>, and the more he repeated it, the more one suspects that he was less than certain of the strength of his case. This at least is what is suggested by the 6 works on the certainty of inherent grace<sup>25</sup> that he directed against Soto<sup>26</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> Domingo de Soto, *Apologia fratris D. Soto à quâ Ambrosio Catharino de certitudine gratiae respondet* (Venice, Nicholaus de Bascharinis, 1547) p.1.

<sup>23</sup> See Caravale, p. VIII

<sup>24</sup> There are not only two versions (of 1535 and 1542) of the *Annotationes in Commentaria Caietani*, but also three versions (of 1532, 1542, 1552) of his tract on the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin.

<sup>25</sup> *Interpretatio noni cap. Synodalis decreti de iustificatione* (Venice, Gabriele Jolitus de Ferrariis, 1547); *Defensio catholicorum, qui pro certitudine praesentis gratiae disserunt*, (Venice, Gabriele Jolitus de Ferrariis, 1547); *Expurgatio...adversus apologiam fratris Dominici Soto* (Lyons, Matthieu Bonhomme 1551); *Confirmatio*



Though further details about the context of this fascinating controversy and the text that inspired it might come to light in the course of normal research in theology and ecclesiastical history, one way of making further progress in the meantime is to exploit what is already available by varying the perspective from which it is seen. That is precisely what happens in this case if we consider Biblical commentary as a literary genre. Some different perspectives that literary study introduces are as follows:

1. The text is no longer considered instrumentally, that is to say as merely a means or instrument for communicating the content. When great significance is attached to the text itself, paraphrase is inappropriate. If it is text, then, it has its own peculiar properties, notably its literary quality, i.e. its rhetorical structure: not just what it says, but how it says it, so that one biblical commentary is not just like another, although they are all supposed to be interpreting the same fixed text with the same authorities.

2. Texts like those described in 1. must of course exist in context, but often perhaps the context is unimportant. However, if the context is important, it will be of a special kind: the contexts that literary study makes salient are not the same as those required in history and theology, though both of these might in their turn be considered from the literary point of view. Suitable contexts in which to consider a biblical commentary from the literary point of view would certainly include the audience to which it is addressed. How is the message adapted to that audience? For instance, Cajetan tells us in the Preface to the Five Mosaic Books (see above) that he is trying to kindle minds towards God, but his tone is certainly not that of a passionate evangelist. He aims to convince by the reasonableness of his case and by relying only on the literal meaning of the text. Catharinus however goes about his discussion - in effect he is providing the rudiments of an alternative commentary - by deploying his impressive rhetorical repertoire to influence his special audience - his fellow members of the Dominican Order - whose admiration for and loyalty to Cajetan he is trying to weaken.

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*defensionis Catholicorum pro possibili certitudine gratiae* (Matthieu Bonhomme, 1551); *De certitudine inhaerentis gratiae*, (Vincentius Valgrisius, 1551); *Assertiones quatuordecim circa articulum De certitudine inhaerentis gratiae* - (Rome, Antonius Bladius 1552).

<sup>26</sup> In the event it seems, the Catholic Church even in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, came to think that Soto was right. See Caravale, p. 202.



3. A special kind of context for a literary text is constituted by other literary texts. Julia Kristeva introduced the term 'Intertextuality' to refer to the ensemble of literary texts that our needs and interests make it useful to us to associate together, e.g. all translations of Homer into English verse. What is the system of relationships within such a cluster? How far does one text shape the meaning of another? Take another case, that of 16<sup>th</sup> century commentaries on Paul's epistle to the Romans. Was Catarino's work<sup>27</sup> in any way influenced by that of Sadoletto<sup>28</sup>, whom he knew and whose views on some subjects he shared? Were differences between Dominican commentators, like Cajetan<sup>29</sup> and Catarino, in any way influenced in their commentaries by the emphasis placed by their order on the views of Aquinas?

4. 16<sup>th</sup> century Bible commentary purports to explain all difficult biblical terms and to offer the reader a meaning that he should find in a biblical text. Is the reader permitted to reject this meaning and find a different meaning for himself? A preliminary question is whether the entire text of the Bible must be reducible to a set of clear meanings, and that what each of these meanings is is uncontroversial. One of the ideas latent in reader response theory is that the meaning of a text is the meaning which a reader is sufficiently ingenious to discover for himself. There are two ways in which the reader can be deprived of his share in the creation of meaning. One is when he is deprived of access to the text. A common 16<sup>th</sup> century way of effectively depriving a would-be reader of access is when the text is to be found only in a language that he is unable to read, and translation is not permitted. The other way is when he is threatened with punishment if he produces a meaning that is not orthodox and persists in asserting it. Even Cajetan was close to this because he was prepared if need be to oppose himself to the meaning that had been discerned by the Fathers, but of course he promised to back down if the Church required it. In due course, even the limited freedom that Cajetan had allowed himself was removed: in the decree of the Council of Trent on the Scriptures, April 1546, we read not only that the Vulgate edition is to be regarded as authentic, but that 'no one

<sup>27</sup> Ambrosius Catharinus Politus, *Commentaria R. P. F. Ambrosii Catharini Politiani omnes divi Pauli, et alias septem canonicas Epistolas*, Vincentius Valgrisius, Venice 1551

<sup>28</sup> *In Pauli epistolam (sic) ad Romanos commentariorum libri tres* (Venice, Jacobus Fleuron 1536).

<sup>29</sup> *Epistolae Pauli et aliorum Apostolorum*, Paris, Josse Badius, 1532.



relying on his own judgement shall in matters of faith and morals pertaining to the edification of Christian doctrine, distorting the Holy Scriptures in accordance with his own conceptions, presume to interpret them contrary to that sense, which holy mother Church, to whom it belongs to judge of their true sense and interpretation, has held and holds, or even contrary to the unanimous teaching of the Fathers<sup>30</sup>.

5. But if the exercise of mere authority can, like this, rule out the reader's response, the question is how and why. Marxist literary theory offers some pertinent answers. Ideology is the key notion in Marxist literary theory. The Marxist view of ideology maintains that the function of the current system of unquestioned beliefs is to maintain the prevailing structures of power, which originated as the best means of facilitating economic productivity<sup>31</sup>. These structures in the early modern period, the argument might go, involved both Church and State in a mutually supportive relationship, which is clearly visible in the operation of the Holy Office<sup>32</sup>, where the State supplies the force that is required to eliminate dissent - 'heresy' - when the suasions of the inquisitors, using arguments derived from the 'loci communes', fail. To what extent reliance on such ideas might illuminate Catarino's critique of Cajetan's Bible commentaries is not clear, but the following considerations seem relevant: Firstly, Catarino's acrimony towards Cajetan seems excessive, and therefore requires explanation. There are various possible explanations. The explanation that Catarino himself favoured refers to his zeal for the truth. Another explanation is that he was vindictive: he was repaying Cajetan for the old injury inflicted in the case over the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin. A third explanation refers to the condition of the times. The world was being turned upside down: Church and Society were in danger. In these circumstances Cajetan's love of 'novelty', his tendency to favour unorthodox views like those of Erasmus, could only further unsettle the Church and so lead a further instalment of social

<sup>30</sup> *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, tr. H. J. Schroeder, (Rockford, Ill., Tan Books and Publishers, 1978), pp. 18-19

<sup>31</sup> The first successful attempt to unmask these structures was of course that of Luther in his reply to Catarino in 1521, when he identified the papal church first as Antichrist, and then as a series of faces, or facades, masks in fact, that concealed nothing but a gaping void. See P. Preston, 'Catharinus versus Luther, 1521', in *History*, ed J. Smith, Volume 88, Issue 3, Number 291, July 2003, pp. 373-377.

<sup>32</sup> See Del Col, 2006, pp. 63-79. The arrangements then entered into between Church and State lasted for centuries.



disorder like the Peasants' Revolt of 1525 and the Anabaptist uprising in Munster in 1535. Catharinus must have known about these two sensational events and his acrimony can therefore be attributed to his anxiety at the prospect of impending chaos. This last argument can only be described as ideological in kind if it is claimed that when Catarino attacked Cajetan's theological views, what he was really doing, though without knowing, it was contributing to the perpetuation of a threatened social structure. In other words he would have been the victim of false consciousness.

6. An alternative, and probably more convincing way of accounting for Catarino's acrimony is made possible by invoking the ideas of Freudian, rather than Marxist literary criticism. The key notion in Freudian literary theory is that of unconscious motivation where deep-seated damage incurred by the personality during socialization and early family life manifests itself in neuroses and psychoses. The mother is a key figure in this process, but it is not necessary to assume the universal incidence of the Oedipus Complex. In applying these abstract views to the controversy between Catarino and Cajetan, first consider the following: Catarino found it difficult to form lasting relationships. A sign of this, perhaps, is the fact that his career was patterned by false starts, quarrels and rejections, though contributory factors might have included his versatility: he was in succession a humanist, an academic civil lawyer, and a Dominican theologian. He wrote fluently, effectively, elegantly, and in quantity. He had an irritating way of always claiming to be in the right. He was obviously ambitious and did not suffer fools gladly. None of these qualities would endear him to those with whom he came into contact. He seems to have been unpopular in the University of Siena when he taught there, and unpopular later with his fellow monks both at San Marco, Florence, and at Santo Spirito in Siena. He frequently opposed his fellow Dominicans: not only Cajetan, but also e.g. by letters, the Prior of San Marco (1530); and by tracts, Carranza (1547), de Soto (1547), Savonarola (1549) Caterina Ricci (1549). Fellow Dominicans feared his ability and seemed to have hated him. In 1532, perhaps in the attempt to reduce the friction, he was freed from all allegiance to his monastic superiors, and placed under the authority of the Master General of the Order. It nevertheless came easy to him to find powerful and influential patrons: e.g. Niccolò Ridolfi, Gasparo Contarini, Rodolfo Pio da Carpi, Cardinal Francois de Tournon and Gian Maria del Monte. These were no doubt attracted by his evident ability, and thoughts of the



use to which they could put it. In a way, he was deflected from a career suited to his ability and his ambition by his devotion to the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin: it was this doctrine that led to the appeal to Rome and brought him into conflict with Cajetan. Since the nearest thing that we have to a biography of Catarino is the very short autobiographical 'Excusatio' of 1549, it is good to be able to use Freudian theory to bring out the implications of information that we can find in his works, especially his 'Annotationes'. A cautious use of this theory for this purpose suggests that the circumstances of his upbringing left him in some way damaged. His feelings were not centred on his family, nor on his friends (he did not have any) but on abstract and remote objects, like his native city, the Church and the Virgin. He seems to have been a lonely, cold-hearted and very clever, aggressive, and self-righteous elitist. His thinking was structured by bipolarities and binary opposites: truth and falsity, heresy and orthodoxy, high culture and low culture, pearls and swine. He had no sense of moral dilemma. Perhaps the development of moral reasoning in him was thwarted by the unfortunate circumstance of his upbringing suggested above. There was scarcely a tinge of eirenicism in him. Life for him was a battle: man between God and the Devil. Consequently he fought and he fought to win: he was ambitious, and determined to succeed. He needed to prove himself, perhaps. There is no evidence to suggest that he enjoyed a deep and rich spiritual life. He wrote no devotions, no spiritual exercises. He was not famed for good works, nor administrative ability. His life was not consummated by miracles, although he claimed to be a beneficiary of them. He impressed people, but he did not inspire their affection. This is the personality that is discernible in the 'Annotationes in Commentari Caietani', though not all the details for describing it can be obtained there.

### Conclusion

There is no difficulty of principle in extending the notion of literary genre to include the category of biblical commentary, which has a specific form and distinctive way of ordering and dealing with its material. Furthermore, there are advantages in making this extension, as the discussion above has shown: the adoption of approaches normally restricted to literature - the emphasis on the qualities of the text rather than the content, Reader-response theory, Intertextuality, and the literary



versions of the theories of Marx and Freud - will permit a much fuller exploitation of our existing knowledge of Catarino's critique of the 'Commentaria Caietanis'. They will do it in different ways. Each will provide some further insight, but the least likely to help the scholar to understand the details of the material at his disposal is the Marxist version, which here encounters the usual difficulty: the theory is extremely plausible but in practice it is virtually impossible to make the necessary connection between the very general and abstract description of the base, and the myriad particulars of the superstructure, especially that small fragment of it constituted by 16<sup>th</sup> century Bible commentaries.

## KOMENTARZ BIBLIJNY JAKO GATUNEK LITERACKI

### Streszczenie

Artykuł stawia pytanie, czy jest właściwe rozpatrywać komentarz biblijny jako gatunek literacki i jakie mogłoby to mieć zalety? Pierwszą z tych wątpliwości można rozwiązać wedle autora, wskazując analogiczny przypadek - podręcznik czarów, który przypomina biblijne komentarze specyfiką trybu argumentacji z autorytetów, zwłaszcza jeśli były pisane we wczesnej nowożytności. Jeśli podręcznik czarów kwalifikuje się jako gatunek literacki, to dlaczego biblijny komentarz miałby się nie kwalifikować? Ogólną odpowiedź na kolejne pytanie - Jakie są zalety rozszerzenia pojęcia gatunku na biblijny komentarz - jest legitymizacja wykorzystania metod dobrze rozwiniętych w badaniach literackich jako środka do wzbogacenia badań nad biblijnym komentarzem. Najlepszą drogą pokazywania tego jest analiza konkretnych przypadków. Jedynym, który zostanie tutaj omówiony, są biblijne komentarze Kardynała Tomasza Kajetana i przypisy do tych komentarzy opracowane przez jego współpracownika, dominikanina, Ambrogia Catarina Politiego. W dialogu tych badaczy jest wystarczająco wiele szczegółów, by pokazać, jak to może być objaśnione przez rozmaite podejścia i metodologie popularne w krytyce literackiej. Najbardziej obiecujące podejście do tego wydaje się być następujące: skoncentrowanie się na tekście, bardziej niż kontekście albo przedmiocie; retoryczna manipulacja; intertekstualność; teoria czytelniczego rezonansu; metodologia Marksistowska i Freudowska. Krótką ilustracją możliwości użycia teorii Freuda do badania komentarzy biblijnych jest propozycja, by pokazać, jak, przy prawie całkowitym braku empirycznego materiału odnoszącego się do osobowości i charakteru Ambrozjusza Catharinusa Politiego, Freudowskie pojęcia mogą umożliwić nam lepsze rozumienie motywacji i zachowania tego wyraźnie ambitnego i wojowniczego człowieka.