1985, pages 134-135, refers to the use of "teaching outlines" as well as to the selection of Old Testament materials for translation, thereby recognizing the function of the church in selecting and supplying such background information for the reader.

Our theology of the church may also influence the way in which the Scriptures are published and distributed, especially when biblical fragments are printed in the form of brief selections such as those that are widely circulated by the Bible Societies. Present UBS guidelines insist that selections, as well as book-length portions, are accompanied by appropriate introductions, although this norm has not yet been put into practice as widely as desired. In fact, it is a bit difficult to plan an "introduction" to a one-page selection, for example, without making it too long in proportion to the text itself. But many such selections can be almost meaningless to the reader without at least some bit of explanation to introduce them, giving the setting of the passage, the occasion of the parable, an identification of the speaker, and so on. Sometimes a slight change can be made in the opening sentence of the text of a selection, to give some of this information; but unless the material is such as to be really transparent to the reader when removed from its wider context, some additional indication needs to be given. And even with such indications, when passages are chosen for people outside the church there needs to be much care, and they need to be used in such a way as to attract their readers to the church or to some source of orientation and witness within the Christian community. (See the provocative discussion in Mathew P. John, "The Bible, Inside the Church and Outside: The Theology of Scripture and the Philosophy of Distribution", *The Bible Distributor*, December 1983.)

LOUIS DORN

THE UNEXPECTED AS A SPEECH DEVICE: SHIFTS OF THEMATIC EXPECTANCY IN JEREMIAH

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Jeremiah often uses figures and standard expressions which normally convey the theme of well-being, but he shifts their use to convey the theme of evil, punishment, or doom. In this article we will refer to this kind of shift as a **shift of thematic expectancy**. The translator must be alert to such shifts of expectancy, especially in those instances where the shift comes as a surprise.

Jeremiah's situation

When the prophet Jeremiah was bringing his message to the people of

Jerusalem, the prevailing attitude was one which many scholars call a "theology of unconditional optimism". The people believed that the presence of the Lord's Temple in their midst assured them that no enemy could overthrow them, and that the Lord would bring them continual prosperity. The fact that Sennacherib could not take Jerusalem in the days of Hezekiah and Isaiah, supported this attitude (2 Kings 19). For Jeremiah to predict doom upon Judah and Jerusalem would be regarded as both treason and heresy.

If people had the custom of listening respectfully to a prophet's sermon until the end, they seem at times ready to forsake that custom, interrupt the prophetic speech, and ask him to stop (11.21; 18.18; 19.15). We may wonder if Jeremiah had to plan his presentation in a way that would capture and hold his audience until the end.

The idea of using expressions that people love and which anticipate a statement of well-being would have been useful in two ways:

1) it would be appropriate for the problem at hand, since his message attempted to show the people how their expectations of well-being were to be disappointed, as God's anger was about to show itself; and

2) it would in some instances help to hold the attention of the audience, who would expect a happy ending to the prophetic speech, only to have it turn into a prophecy of disaster.

In some cases the shift of expectancy is quite sudden and resembles a modern "punch line", with a definite effect of surprise and shock.

Shift of thematic expectancy in other prophets

Jeremiah was by no means the first prophet to use such a device. Amos, in his opening message, stands at Bethel, denouncing all the neighboring countries, no doubt to the approval of the people of Israel (Am 1.3—2.3). But he then continues by speaking first against Judah and then against Israel itself (2.4-8 and following). Egyptian curse texts performed a similar function, but no one would ever dream of such an utterance being turned against the speaker's own people.

In a less sudden fashion Amos uses the term "day of the LORD", which was an expression normally thought of as expressing a moment of victory or well-being for the Lord and his people. But Amos turns it into a dark day on which the Lord turns against his people (Am 5.18-20).

A prophet was expected to offer prayers on behalf of his people, as Moses did. When Hosea responds to God's threat of doom against Ephraim, the prophet's opening words seem to be the first words of such a prayer: "Give them, O LORD—what wilt thou give?" The expected request turns into a cruel one: "Give them a miscarrying womb and dry breasts" (Hos 9.14, RSV).

In a less surprising fashion Hosea speaks of Israel as a "luxuriant vine", a figure of prosperity, but he immediately shifts to a prediction of punishment (Hos 10.1-2). As with many of these oracles, we cannot

know whether surprise or shock was involved without being able to see the actual setting in which the oracle was delivered.

Similar examples of shift of thematic expectancy are seen in the messages of other prophets who lived before and at the same time as Jeremiah (for example, Is 5.1-7; Zeph 1.7-9; 2.4—3.5). Jeremiah did not invent a new speech device, but he used it most effectively in his own situation.

Jeremiah's use of the shift of thematic expectancy

As Jeremiah uses themes that normally express well-being, shifting them to express woe, at times he does so in a context that indicates woe from the outset. At other times the shift in theme comes as a complete surprise. In many cases, however, it is difficult to determine just what effect was produced and how the shift was used, because there are many factors unknown to us that would have been obvious if we had been present when the message was first given. Nevertheless, there is much that we can observe.

In 2.2-3 there is the picture of Israel as a bride, dependent wholly upon Yahweh during the wilderness wandering, and dedicated to him with a holiness not to be defiled. The image is presented as a happy memory from the past, implying that the former condition may no longer hold true. The Hebrew meter is that of a lament, and so it is no surprise when verses 4 and following show Israel forsaking Yahweh. But the bridal theme has shifted to that of prostitution. The importance for translators is obvious: the material should reflect sadness over the change from Israel's former relationship with Yahweh.

Two figures occur in 4.29-31 that relate to each other in an interesting manner. In verse 29 the cities of Judah take to flight. Verse 30 pictures one of them, desolate, as a prostitute seeking lovers in vain, since they have turned against her. Normal translation procedures should easily reflect the reversal from the prostitute's expectations. But then, within the continuing pattern of the speech, the prophet seems to turn his attention aside to another woman, (verse 31), whose voice sounds as if she is in the pangs of giving birth. She is identified first as Jerusalem, "the daughter of Zion". Does one dare hope that a child will be born in the midst of all this, a symbol of hope for the future? Not until the last word in the Hebrew text, "murderers", does it become clear that the sounds of a woman giving birth have been deceptive. Translators will do well to refrain from introducing the equivalent surprise term until the end of the verse.

In 6.1-5 there is an interesting wordplay on the Hebrew word for "shepherds", which also means "rulers". The shepherd was a common figure for the king throughout the ancient near east. After the alarm has been sounded, warning of the coming enemy, and the threat against Zion has been expressed, verse 3 becomes an ironic description of a siege. The beautiful picture of shepherds pasturing their flocks around Jerusalem

was easily understood by the Hebrew as irony, especially as these "shepherds" sound the command to attack in verses 4-5. Translators will not be able to do anything about the wordplay, but they may have to bring out the significance of the metaphor, perhaps by changing it into a simile; for example, "The enemy rulers are like shepherds who. . . they each control (or, organize) their men the way shepherds graze (tend) their portion of the flocks. . ."

During a siege it was important to have a dependable supply of fresh water. And so in verse 7 the figure of a well is mentioned in passing, and normally this would be used for the theme of well-being. But the prophet uses it with irony, reversing it from a normally positive theme to a negative one. The surprise effect is not in the topic, which is negative from the outset, but in the use of the figure of a well of fresh water. Translators will want to retain this simile in a way that highlights both the expected positive theme and the unexpected negative one: for example, "As you can depend on a good well to give you fresh water, so you can depend on her—to continue acting wickedly!"

In a similar manner the figure of a green olive tree is used in 11.16, but used to predict a sad ending. In this context the tone of the verse is negative from the beginning, and so the shift from the living olive tree to the burned-up one does not produce a surprise. There is no serious translation problem here other than the normal one of finding ways to express figures strange to a culture—in this case, the olive tree and its special meaning in Israel.

Another agricultural figure occurs in 12.13: "They have sown wheat and have reaped thorns. . ." Here the shift involves a reversal of expectations. The context has a negative tone and so the shift has no impact of surprise. Translators should find no difficulty representing this kind of statement, since most cultures have proverbial sayings equivalent in form and function to this one.

In using the figure of the wine jars, 13.12-14, the prophet may be referring to or quoting a familiar proverb derived from a saying of drinkers, "Every jar shall be filled with wine". The crowd seems to be mildly irritated as they are told what seems to them such a commonplace thing: "Do we not indeed know that every jar will be filled with wine?" But then comes the interpretation, the ironic metaphor application, as drunkenness is to relate to the figure of the wine of God's anger: "Behold, I will fill with drunkenness all the inhabitants of this land. . . and I will dash them. . ." (see also 25.15-18). In the Hebrew the word for "drunkenness" is delayed until the end of verse 13 so that the hearers would assume, until that point, that all the people mentioned were to be filled by Yahweh with good things. Added to the figure of the full wine jars is that of the jars being dashed together, only that it is the people who will be dashed against each other, breaking one another. The threat comes with shocking suddenness. It may not be possible in every language to delay the punch-line word, "drunkenness", until the end of

verse 13, but that is the best thing to do if we wish to retain the effect.

In 15.1-2 there is a message that uses two figures, that of the prophet praying for his people, and that of the exodus from Egypt. Moses and Samuel are referred to in their intercessory role as prophets, but Yahweh will not listen. Then the speech uses well-known phrases from the exodus, but in a context that reverses their original purpose and message so that, rather than being sent from bondage to the land of promise and to the presence of Yahweh, they are sent from the land and the presence of Yahweh, and are sent into pestilence, death in battle, famine, and renewed captivity. "Send them out of my sight" reflects the same verb used in Exodus 5.1, "Let my people **go**." Similarly, "let them go" reflects the same verb used in Exodus 13.3, "The LORD **brought you out** from this place." While this message is negative from the outset, there is the element of shock produced by the ironical application of a topic that was quite sacred in Judah—the exodus under Yahweh's protection. Translators will do well to consciously imitate words from their translation of the exodus story, so that the allusion will be as obvious as possible in "Send them out. . . let them go."

The reversed exodus figure occurs again in 21.5: "I myself will fight against you **with outstretched hand and strong arm**, in anger, and in fury, and in great wrath." The expression in bold type is used repeatedly in Deuteronomy to show the power of God at work in the exodus (Dt 4.34; 5.15; 7.19; 9.29; 11.2; 26.8). To Zedekiah's request for a message from Yahweh, with his expressed hope that perhaps a wonderful deliverance will take place (verses 1-2), Jeremiah brings the grim response that Yahweh himself will join the Babylonians in fighting against Jerusalem with the same power he used in the exodus. The opening of the response is already negative, but the use of these terms must have been shocking to the hearers. The translator should, of course, use the familiar exodus expression to keep the allusion clear. We could make the allusion even more obvious, if necessary: "Do you remember my outstretched hand and strong arm? I will use it myself to fight against you in anger. . ."

In 22.6 the message is against the king of Judah and is presented as a separate poem used within a longer speech. In the opening line of the poem the positive image of the king is presented as a mountain with trees and vegetation, but this is immediately shifted to the image of a king who is made into a desert and an uninhabited city. Note that the shift of expectancy is accomplished by changing the figure. It should present no problem to the translator.

In 24.1-10 the figure of good and bad figs represents a reversal of the expected application of the figure. The figure in itself is neutral: Jeremiah sees the two baskets of figs, one completely good, the other completely bad, with no indication as to who, or whose fate, is represented by the respective baskets. The prevailing concept in Judah would have been that the exiles taken away with King Jeconiah had

nothing but evil to look forward to. The popular notion of divine retribution may have fostered the attitude that these exiles were evil people themselves, as demonstrated by their being deported. The exiles themselves were faced with the question of whether they could worship Yahweh in a strange land, or whether they were not completely cut off from him. The exiles had been the cream of society, but now the remnant in Jerusalem found themselves the possessors of a new dignity that led to excessive pride on their part. The surprise comes in the reversed application of the two baskets from what was anticipated, the good figs now standing for the exiles and the bad figs standing for those remaining in Jerusalem. There is no sudden shock here, but the element of surprise is there, even in the steady and deliberate movement of this prose material. There are no serious problems of form for translators in this text.

The next figure comes from a different situation, for it is Hananiah ben Azzur who sets the theme of relief from the yoke of Babylon, and it is Jeremiah who reverses it. In Chapter 28 Jeremiah had been wearing a wooden yoke as a symbol of the Babylonian oppression. In verses 10-14 Hananiah breaks the wooden yoke, thus communicating a message purporting to come from Yahweh, that the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar will be broken. After an indefinite lapse of time Jeremiah returns with an additional word of Yahweh. The wooden yoke will indeed be broken—to be replaced with one of iron! In this instance the shift of thematic expectancy is just as clearly marked as in other texts already referred to, but the way in which the dialogue of the two prophets is presented dulls the effect of shock that may have marked the actual encounter. Translators will have to follow the narration as it is in the text, with only the command of Yahweh, (verse 13), indicating the surprise effect of the reversal.

The theme of the year of liberty appears in 34.17. The people of Jerusalem had released their slaves during the siege, at a time when they could not use them for work in the fields but would have had to feed them nevertheless. But when the siege was lifted temporarily (verses 21-22), they took their slaves back again, breaking the covenant they had made. Jeremiah uses the figure of the year of release to threaten the covenant breakers with their own kind of release: "You have not obeyed me by proclaiming liberty, every one to his brother and to his neighbor; behold, I proclaim to you liberty to the sword, to pestilence, and to famine, says the LORD." The word for "liberty" is from a root expressing free, abundant flowing of a liquid, or simply expressing abundance. The irony implies that those who broke the covenant of freedom will now have their gates opened so that they can rush out freely —into slaughter by the sword, pestilence, and famine. This shift occurs within a larger unit that is consistently negative, but it is the sudden twist from the expected use of an expression related to the year of liberty that provides the element of surprise. The translator is fortunate whose

language has a term of "liberty" that can be used in a way that will reflect both kinds of "release".

Significance for translators

In meaningful translation we constantly strive to make the original communication event become alive for the reader. In many languages the translator can use writing skills to provide such things as moods of optimism or of dread. Thus, for example, in 4.31 it may be good to make a clear change in mood from that of condemnation at the end of the previous verse to one of sudden interest in a new subject—the sound of a woman giving birth. In some languages, notably certain African languages, there are ideophones, that is, sounds which a storyteller makes to embellish the tale with indicators of mood, attitude of participants, sound effects accompanying motion, and so on. If such features are determined to be legitimate for a Bible translation, they can clarify and highlight the way in which these figures effect a change or are themselves changed. In other languages, stylistic features such as choice of terms, sentence construction, or words which reflect significant sounds, accomplish the purpose.

An obvious point for translators to consider will be the retaining of the punch line whenever one is used for highlighting a shift in expectancy. Suggestions have been made in the above discussion, and these are by no means exhaustive.

And since other prophets struggled through ministries in which they had to shock people out of their complacency, translators should be alert to similar occurrences of such shifts in thematic expectancy. Some of them will require great skills for translators who wish to retain the speech effect in an appropriate form in their own language.

JACOB A. LOEWEN

THE TRANSLATION OF HOLY IN MONKOLE: SOLVING A PROBLEM

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"How can you as a foreigner who doesn't even speak our language tell us that our word *kuma* is not good enough to translate **holy** in the expression **Holy Spirit**?" the Monkole translator, a mother-tongue speaker, asked incredulously. He had not been present at the earlier meeting at which the translation consultant had actually made a statement expressing his doubt about the adequacy of the word *kuma*; nevertheless the strength of the translator's feelings about the statement