

Schereschewsky of producing an interpretation instead of a translation,¹ he was actually paying him a compliment. Schereschewsky's aim had not been to translate literally without considering Chinese linguistic usages and the Jewish commentary tradition.

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“EQUIVALENCE” IN THE PRESENCE OF “OTHERNESS”

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Introduction

Translation studies have been established in a number of university departments in Europe over the past two to three decades, and to a lesser extent in the United States. As a consequence, definitions of translation have come under scrutiny, for instance Nida's notion that translation can be regarded as “equivalence.”² The concept of “equivalence” is regarded by some writers as “unsuitable as a basic concept in translation theory,”³ as “perverse” and an “obstacle,”⁴ as having “fallen into disrepute,”⁵ or simply as “untenable.”⁶

In light of such criticisms, what should Bible translators do? Should the notion of equivalence be abandoned, or should it be redefined or supplemented by other criteria? Can disciplines that have developed since the 1960s—discourse studies, pragmatics, or the growing body of intercultural studies—assist us in a notion of equivalence? The success of conservative translations, such as the New International Version, compared to the Good News Translation and the Contemporary English Version, past and present flagships of the United Bible Societies, whose members advocate “dynamic” or “functional” equivalence, also raises its own questions about the felicity or appropriateness of a notion of “equivalence.”

1 See the quoted letter from Sheffield to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions of January 12, 1908, in Jost Oliver Zetzsche, *The Bible in China: The History of the Union Version or The Culmination of Protestant Missionary Bible Translation in China* (Monumenta Serica Monograph Series 45; Nettetal: Steyler Verlag, 1999), 154.

2 Eugene A. Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating* (Leiden: Brill, 1964); and Nida and Taber, *Theory and Practice*.

3 Mary Snell-Hornby, *Translation Studies: An Integrated Approach* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1988), 22.

4 See Susan Bassnett-McGuire, *Translation Studies* (rev. ed.; London: Methuen, 1991): “James Holmes, for example, feels that the use of the term equivalence is ‘perverse’, since to ask for sameness is to ask too much . . .” (28); “The problem of equivalence, a much-used and abused term in Translation Studies, is of central importance . . . Raymond van den Broeck is . . . right when he challenges the excessive use of the term in Translation Studies and claims that the precise definition of equivalence in mathematics is a serious obstacle to its use in translation theory” (25-26).

5 Anthony Pym, “European Translation Studies, *une science qui dérange*, and Why Equivalence Needn't be a Dirty Word,” <http://www.fut.es/~apym/on-line/deranger.html> (Published in *Traduction, Terminologie, Rédaction: Etudes sur le Texte et ses Transformations*, 8 [1995]:153-76.)

6 Y. C. Whang, “To Whom is a Translator Responsible—Reader or Author?” in *Translating the Bible: Problems and Prospects* (eds. Stanley E. Porter and Richard S. Hess; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 53, 55.

What is "equivalence"?

In 1969 Eugene Nida defined "dynamic equivalence" "in terms of the degree to which the receptors of the message in the receptor language respond to it in substantially the same manner as receptors in the source language."¹ Whang comments on this: "The number of responses of persons affected by the *Vorlage* [original text] is innumerable. If this is the case, whose response is the one which a translator should take into account in a translation?"²

In an earlier publication, *Toward a Science of Translating*, Nida states:

. . . a translation which attempts to produce a dynamic rather than a formal equivalence is based upon "the principle of equivalent effect" (Rieu and Phillips, 1954). In such a translation one is not so much concerned with matching the receptor-language message with the source-language message, but with the dynamic relationship, that the relationship between receptor and message should be substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptors and the message.³

"Rieu and Phillips" is in fact an interview of E. V. Rieu and J. B. Phillips, conducted by the BBC in 1953.⁴ E. V. Rieu was the founding editor of the Penguin Classics series and a translator of the classics; he also undertook a translation in that series of the New Testament. J. B. Phillips is the well-known NT translator. The phrase "principle of equivalent effect" is in fact Rieu's, who uses it in answer to a question put to him by the interviewer on whether he uses principles of translation:

When I came to the translation of the Gospels, I had already, through a great deal of practice in translation, equipped myself with at least one very general principle, the lodestar of the translator's art, I call it, and that is the principle of equivalent effect; the idea being, that that translation is the best which comes nearest to giving its modern audience the same effect as the original had on its first audience.⁵

It is worth noting that, in his presentation, Rieu does not attempt to polarize translation into literal and equivalent; rather he considers this "very general" principle a "lodestar" for maximizing translation, that is: ". . . that translation is the best . . ." He continues by way of illustration:

. . . to illustrate that . . . French novelists often represent married couples as calling each other *mon chou*, which I don't think would strike a Frenchman as funny at all. If you translate that into English by the words "my cabbage", you're going as far as possible from the principle of equivalent effect. In fact, you're making the English reader think that Frenchmen are silly . . .⁶

Understanding this origin of the notion of "equivalent effect" is, we believe, helpful, along with the question of whether views of translation haven't unnecessarily polarized it into "bad formal" and "good equivalent." Along this vein, Robinson, in an article entitled "22 Theses on Translation," states: "The

1 *Theory and Practice*, 24.

2 Whang, "To Whom Is a Translator Responsible?" 53.

3 Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating*, 159.

4 This article can be accessed in facsimile form at <http://rosetta.reltech.org/TBT/CD1/TBT.html>.

5 E. V. Rieu and J. B. Phillips, "Translating the Gospels," *BT* 6 (1955): 153.

6 *Ibid.*

traditional focus on normative structures of equivalence has stifled translators' creativity . . . every translation is not potentially wonderful but potentially error-ridden . . . the incessant harping on errors, errors, errors has created a pedagogy that is by definition demoralizing." Further: "Equivalence is essential to translation; the real issues are what it is, how it works . . . ?"¹

"Equivalence . . . ; the real issues are What it is, How it works . . . ?"

We can shed more light on this notion of equivalence by looking at Phillips' response to Rieu's proposal. In the same interview, Phillips responds to Rieu's proposal of a "lodestar . . . [of] . . . equivalent effect" in the following way:

I do so agree with this principle of equivalent effect. I think I would only like to make this comment, that in a sense I look upon a translator as a kind of liaison officer between what was written long ago and the people of today.²

Both Robinson ("22 Theses . . .") and Pym argue for retaining a notion of equivalence, but add that it needs rethinking or restating. How should we understand equivalence? We would like in this article to see how J. B. Phillips' response may help us consider additional criteria.

Meaning

"What is meaning?" is one of those stock-in-trade questions which philosophers have perennially asked. Studies over the past half-century in pragmatics, starting with Wittgenstein, have improved our understanding of meaning. The interpreter's adage, that he or she must always look at the context, receives formal recognition in pragmatic studies, which is based on the premise that meaning always depends on context.³ We can imagine the text as a plane (i.e., a cross-section) in a "trajectory" of understanding: before it lie the reader's presuppositions; after it, his or her inferences, the implications that he or she derives from a reading of the text. The New Guinea highlander may read: "Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's and to the ancestors what is due to the ancestors."⁴

This is also the burden of Gutt's analysis of meaning. As a result of a pragmatic reading of the text (reading the text in a cognitive context), the meaning can be said to be the sum of the explicatures and implicatures that are derived from the text by a reader:

". . . the intended interpretation of an utterance consists of its explicatures and/or implicatures. Thus to say that a translation should communicate the same interpretation as that intended by the original means that it should

1 Douglas Robinson, "22 Theses on Translation," *Journal of Translation Studies* 2 (1998): 92, 96.

2 Rieu and Phillips, "Translating the Gospels," 155.

3 The following is an example of meaning in context: A sign on a door in Germany reads "Kein Eingang" ("No Entry"). However, people can be seen coming and going through the doorway during the day. Another door, a few metres away, also has a sign "Kein Eingang," on the same side. Again, people are seen coming and going through that door during the day. The meaning becomes clear when the context is known: the two doorways connect the dining room of a large guesthouse to a kitchen. The literal meaning, understood as that *no one* may go through the doorway, is false; it is the interaction of the "text" with the context that gives rise to the meaning that the instruction is intended for the guests of the guesthouse.

4 We recognize limitations of language in a "folk" fashion when we say that a picture is worth a thousand words. In Eastern European tradition, Alexieva also recognizes this limitation: ". . . the depiction of a scene or situation does not include all its features; nor does it include the relationships between those features" (B. Alexieva, "A Cognitive Approach to Translation Equivalence," in *Translation as Social Action: Russian and Bulgarian Perspectives* [ed. Palma Zlateva; London: Routledge, 1993], 104).

convey to the receptors *all and only those explicatures and implicatures that the original was intended to convey.*"¹

He elaborates this further in the following way:

The sum total of the explicatures and implicatures of the translation must equal the sum total of the explicatures and implicatures of the original.²

This is the most precise statement of the notion of "equivalent effect," even if there is a "reshuffling" (as Gutt calls it) of the explicatures and implicatures. We can understand the assumptions (explicatures plus implicatures) that a reader derives from reading or hearing a text as his response to it, including his emotive and phatic responses.

There is, however, a problem, as already suggested in our hypothetical example from New Guinea. Gutt puts it this way:

This raises an immediate question: what reason is there to expect such a "reshuffle" to be generally possible? . . . the meaning of an utterance is not simply the proposition partly encoded by it, but a set of interrelated assumptions; furthermore, the meaning of each utterance is influenced by the meaning of its predecessors. With such intricate interrelations it seems rather arbitrary to assume that these assumptions can be rearranged without significant loss.³

In a similar fashion, Nida states:

Intraorganismic⁴ meanings suffer most in the process of translating, for they depend so largely upon the total cultural context of the language in which they are used, and hence are not readily transferable to other language-culture contexts [S]uch translations as "anointed," "Messiah," and "Christ" cannot do full justice to the Greek *Christos*, which had associations intimately linked with the hopes and aspirations of the early Judeo-Christian community.⁵

However, not all translators may take these problems sufficiently into account in their translations. There exists the danger that practitioners will insufficiently heed these warnings, by Nida and others, and think that they are somehow achieving *all* of the meaning. This is also the burden of a recent article

1 Ernst-August Gutt, *Translation and Relevance: Cognition and Context* (2nd ed.; Manchester: St. Jerome, 2000), 99.

2 *Ibid.*, 100.

3 *Ibid.*, 100. Given Gutt's comments on the difficulty of conveying to a present-day reader the implicatures that a first-century Palestinian Jewish audience would have derived from the first chapter of Matthew (Gutt, 80-82), it is notable that, in the Rieu-Phillips interview, Rieu asks Phillips about the omission in his translation of the genealogies of Jesus. In reply Phillips makes appeal to the principle of equivalent effect: "Yes. I have got a reason for that, because . . . you talked originally, and I do so agree, about the principle of equivalent effect . . . I feel one's got to consider here what is the effect going to be on the modern reader . . . if he sees a string of possibly unknown Jewish names . . . I felt that though it was important for the modern reader to realise that the genealogy of Jesus went right back through Jewish history, the actual list of names as such was not important to them. The whole idea of equivalent effect, do you see? I'm prepared to admit that I may be wrong, but that was my reason for it" (op. cit., 1955:159). This seems rather to point to the difficulty, or impossibility, of achieving equivalent effect in translation.

4 Explained by the text that follows.

5 Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating*, 171.

by Van Leeuwen,¹ where, having appreciated and expressed a relevance-theoretic account of communication, he argues that the reader needs to access and understand the original context for full understanding. A more explicit and positive caveat seems appropriate.²

The problem of achieving “the sum total of the explicatures and implicatures of the original” is not the only problem. A text has its own trajectory through history, and in the process has acquired a diachrony or history of interpretation. Linguists warn against a diachronic understanding of language: the structural approach to linguistics since the beginning of the last century emphasises that language must be understood synchronically; its present-day system of interrelationships (*langue* in the Saussurean sense) determines meaning, not how a word was used in the past or its derivation. A text, however, is not *langue* but *parole*.³ It is use of language by an originating community, interpreted by other communities, that may have a history of centuries, even millennia. A reading of the text will be affected by the history and traditions of interpreting communities (even if not by new readers, then by church people who work with them or who may be sponsoring the translation.)

A translator’s ability to replicate the “meaning” of the original may be severely constrained by such interpreting communities, for instance, by the cultural understandings of a western “guilt” culture (found in Augustinian theology, for instance) impressed on the reading of the text, which may have been more meaningful for the originating community, and possibly for a new receptor community, as a shame-oriented culture (an example may be the pre-Augustinian theology of Irenaeus). Wycliffe Bible Translators states, in a 1994 draft of principles of translation: “our translations aim to . . . [express], as faithfully as possible, the meaning that the original author intended.”⁴ But the ability of a translator’s lodestar to follow the true north of authorial intention may be severely influenced by the imperatives and agendas of evangelical or missionary movements.⁵ The importance of canonical interpretation cannot be denied; ultimately canonical understanding is more important for the church than authorial meaning. And the text should also be allowed to live and render reader-interpretation.

1 Raymond C. Van Leeuwen, “On Bible Translation and Hermeneutics,” in *After Pentecost: Language and Biblical Interpretation* (eds. Craig Bartholomew, Colin Greene, and Karl Möller; London: Paternoster Press/Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 284-311.

2 It can also be pointed out that the semantic model used in Nida’s early approach invokes the notion of “deep structure” and the assumption that this deep structure is where “the semantics” is expressed, and as such is equatable across languages. This is a model which was abandoned by generative grammarians; rather, in subsequent versions of the generative program, “the semantics” is considered to be “read out” from the “logical form,” a proposal with which relevance theory is fully compatible.

3 Pym, *in situ*.

4 Katharine Barnwell, “The SIL Philosophy of Bible Translation (Draft)” (Dallas: SIL International, 1994). In a 1998 revision of this draft, approved by the Forum of Bible Agencies and published in an SIL translation consultants’ handbook (Katherine Barnwell, *A Handbook for Translation Consultants* [Dallas: SIL International, 2000]), the notion of *authorial meaning* is inscribed no fewer than three times (clauses 1, 4, and 5). However it is notable that in what appears to be a 1999 version of these principles, published with the Translators’ Workplace software, in two of these clauses the notion of authorial meaning is replaced by the “meaning of the text.”

5 Porter points out, for instance, with respect to the choice of “virgin” in the CEV translation of Isa 7.14: “. . . clearly conservative leanings (and perhaps not good conservative scholarship), including placing determinative priority on the New Testament for rendering the Old Testament, have led to this translation” (S. E. Porter, “The Contemporary English Version and the Ideology of Translation,” in *Translating the Bible*, 26).

As a further example, a post-Nicean trinitarian understanding may be demanded of the translation by the sponsoring communities, in the interests of "clarity," instead of, say, an emerging adamic christology of the original.¹ In such circumstances, what is the appropriate translator ethic?² Let us return to Phillips' response to Rieu's proposal of the "lodestar" of equivalent impact: "I look upon a translator as a kind of liaison officer between what was written long ago and the people of today."³ Does this give us a clue?

Otherness in translation

The impact of pragmatic studies has been strongly felt in translation, most conspicuously in the work of Gutt; the impact of discourse and genre studies is as yet less strongly felt. What about cultural studies? In 1996, Budick and Iser, with other contributors, published a collection of articles entitled *The Translatability of Cultures*. In the opening essay to this collection, Budick states: "... the essays in this volume engage in a collective critique of a single concept. That concept is alterity, or, as we frequently say—yoking definiteness with indefiniteness—'the other.'"⁴

In the final essay in this collection, Iser expresses the experience of a translator when he says:

. . . current necessities are projected onto the past in order to make it translatable into the present. This mutuality ultimately decides the nature of the past invoked A return to the past entails undoing its pastness, shaping it in accordance with present needs and, in so doing, exposing the present to change.⁵

We could summarize this by saying that *bridging to otherness allows the "other" to affect the familiar "selfness."* This is similar to the point that Phillips makes, that the translator is a "kind of liaison officer" between the past and the present.

Van Leeuwen is more severe in this respect:

In short, the dominant notion and practice of Bible translation seems to me often to violate the basic hermeneutical principle of respect for the other. In the words of A. Thiselton: "... hermeneutics nourishes respect as respect for the otherness of the Other [Citing Gadamer:] "It is the Other who breaks into my ego-centredness and gives me something to understand." . . . interpreters conditioned by their own embeddedness in specific times, cultures, and theological or secular traditions need to listen, rather than seeking to "master" the Other by netting it within their own prior system of concepts and categories. This premature assimilation of the Other into one's own prior grooves of habituated thought constitutes the "control" and advance commandeering that Gadamer calls "Method." We may contrast contemporary discomfort with a genuine "Other" (a

1 James D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1980), 98-128. Certain aspects of Dunn's work have been revised or called into question; see, in particular, relevant works by Seyoon Kim and by Richard Bauckham.

2 Douglas Robinson, *The Translator's Turn* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991).

3 Rieu and Phillips, "Translating the Gospels," 155.

4 S. Budick and W. Iser, eds., *The Translatability of Cultures: Figurations of the Space Between* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 1.

5 Iser, "Coda to the Discussion," in *The Translatability of Cultures*, 296.

deep irony in our time of superficial “multicultural” celebration of “difference”) with the eager desire to be challenged, corrected, and “reformed” by the Bible as Other which characterized the Reformers.¹

In the 1994 principles of translation, referred to above, Wycliffe Bible Translators requires of a translator that the “otherness” of “historical facts must be retold without change” (1998 and 1999 versions: “. . . expressed without distortion”); but that:

. . . in seeking to represent the original situation and background culture accurately, translators keep in mind the very different situation and background culture of the new audience, and seek to translate in a way that *will help the new audience to understand the original situation* (italics added; the 1998 and 1999 versions express it as: “. . . may understand the message that the original author was seeking to communicate to the original audience.”)²

We can describe this as *giving access* to “otherness.”

The notion of “otherness” in translation has been investigated by Roman Lewicki. He discusses three types of otherness:³

- otherness due to error,
- necessary otherness,
- deliberate otherness or translator strategy.

We will expand on Lewicki’s proposals in the next section, but in the rest of this section consider other problems with, and attitudes towards, otherness.

Whang points out the problem of translating prototypical concepts of *friendship* between cultures:

Two men stand before a restaurant. They are friends. One man searches his pocket to find money in vain. He forgot to bring his wallet. He asks his friend to lend him money for lunch. His friend tells him that he has sufficient money to lend him and lends him money for lunch. They have lunch and chat.

He comments on this:

Any Korean who reads this story translated into Korean, however, would either think that they are not friends . . . , or think that the man who lends the money rather than pays the price for his friend’s lunch is unqualified to be a friend of the other man This example shows that the English term “friend” is not equivalent to the Korean word “chin-ku.” But there is no other Korean word than “chin-ku” for the English word “friend.”⁴

So, is the translator lost? Is there nothing he or she can do in this situation except throw up his or her hands and deplore an inalienable “otherness” and, therefore, untranslatability of the text? Or should we celebrate “otherness,” and consider it part of the hallmark of translation? Budick, quoting Assman, states: “From a menacing, anxiety-provoking term, “the other” has become the central

1 Van Leeuwen, “On Bible Translation and Hermeneutics,” *in situ*.

2 As mentioned above, the 1994 draft mentions authorial meaning in one clause; the 1998 version boldly expands this to three mentions in three clauses. The 1999 version, however, reverts to a more undefined “meaning of the original text,” and only retains the notion of “authorial meaning” in this clause.

3 Roman Lewicki, *Obcość w odbiorze przekładu* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS, 2000), 132-6.

4 Whang, “To Whom Is a Translator Responsible?” 48.

value of post-modern culture.' . . . I believe that reflection upon our work points toward a reconceptualisation of the experience of alterity."¹

Should we celebrate otherness? Martyn Lloyd-Jones, in an interview in 1964 claims: "I maintain you see the glory of the Christian's salvation in the variety of ways it is expressed as between all these nations There is an expression in the first Epistle of Peter, which should be translated 'the variegated grace of God'—these wonderful colours like the colours of the spectrum!"² Sanneh, in the same way, considers it a hallmark of the gospel that it can be translated, re-expressed (in a sense re-incarnated) in any language or culture.³

In a similar fashion, for Nida, who has possibly run furthest with Rieu's baton, Robinson pays a high tribute:

One of the best-publicized recent subversions of the KJV/RSV hegemony was Today's English Version in the mid-sixties—best-publicized because one of its prime movers was the prolific and persuasive Eugene Nida, translation consultant to the United Bible Societies It may seem strange to call "subversive" a man who upholds the Bible translation principles of Jerome and Luther—but in fact he is as subversive as Jerome and Luther, who similarly burst upon a scene dominated by rigidly fixed expectations and smashed them. It is odd, in fact, that Bible translators like Jerome, Luther, and Nida, who really only keep repeating and applying the same tired old clichés about translating sense for sense rather than word for word—they were tired in Jerome's day, dating back at least to Cicero and probably further—should over and over again find themselves playing a subversive role.⁴

Nevertheless, just as a faithful reader should respect the otherness of a text (Thiselton,⁵ Van Leeuwen,⁶ Vanhoozer⁷), so we believe there is an ethic of translation, that is to say, of the translator to the reader, in which the translator respects the reader's need to access otherness.

Otherness traditions in Eastern Europe

Returning to Lewicki's study of "otherness" in translation, we can expand on his list given above and apply it to Bible translation. Considering the three possible ways he sees otherness as potentially present in a translation, under *OTHERNESS DUE TO ERROR* he lists:

- the translator is unaware of the results of his choices.

We could give as examples:

- errors caused by copying the target language syntactic structure,
- insufficient studies in OT culture.

1 Budick and Iser, eds., *The Translatability of Cultures*, 1.

2 Martyn Lloyd-Jones, "Nationalism, Tradition and Language," *The Evangelical Magazine of Wales* 8 (1969): 7. Original Welsh text reprinted in "Os Wyt Gymro," *Y Cylchgrawn Efyngyllaidd*, 5. (1987), 21–24.

3 Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact of Culture* (N.Y.: Orbis, 1989).

4 Robinson, *The Translator's Turn*, 224–5.

5 Anthony C. Thiselton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics: The Theory and Practice of Transforming Biblical Reading* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997).

6 R. C. Van Leeuwen, "Biblical Worldview and Bible Translation," Paper delivered at the 2002 biennial UBS workshop, Dublin, Ireland.

7 K. J. Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998).

Similarly, in the vein of Lewicki's study, under *NECESSARY OTHERNESS* we can propose:

- local background that obscures the flow of the story,
- literalness in style caused by theological presuppositions of the target audience, for instance, a church-based notion of fidelity or cultural norms of reception,
- metaphorical network and intertextuality (symbols, parallel passages, wordplays).

Under *TRANSLATOR STRATEGY*, he lists:

- avoidable but desired; purposefully introduced to the text.

We can give as examples:

- foreignizing (exotic flavor)—stylistic enrichment,
- to direct the readers' perception—to make them aware of a foreign ground,
- to change the mode of reading—literal or metaphorical, historic or legal, poetry or narrative,
- to expand the semantic system of the target language and introduce new genre,
- translator's personal convictions of fidelity over naturalness,
- choosing a style as a means of making a stand on belonging to a certain church tradition or emphasising unity/identity.

Other authors in Eastern Europe have raised the question of what a reader expects of a translated text. Anna Legieżyńska claims, in her book on the translator as a second author, that conventions of reception are not the same for a text that originated in a culture and a text that was translated into that culture.¹ In a similar fashion, Lewicki, as well as the Russian theorists Shveitser and Komissarov, suggest that a translation is a text to which a reader applies a different norm, a norm of translation.² Therefore a text that is perceived as such is valued, judged, and approached with a different set of expectations. This special status of translation, introduced by signals or markers of otherness, enhances the reader's acceptance of features that would not be tolerated in an original text.³ Translation of culturally significant texts, also, facilitates the broadening and enriching of a

1 Anna Legieżyńska, *Tłumacz i jego kompetencje autorskie* (Warsaw: PWN, 1986), 15.

2 The notion of "norms" in translation and their relationship to equivalence is discussed in V. N. Komissarov, "Norms in Translation," in *Translation as Social Action*, 63-75. After presenting five "norms" of translation (70)—"equivalence, genre and style, linguistic usage, pragmatic function, convention"—he claims in summary that "the present conventional norm for translation can be described as . . . the translation's ability to function as a full-scale substitute for the original . . ." (74) and that "the norm of equivalence often proves the least obligatory requirement . . ." (75).

3 The openness of one culture and receptivity towards the other are not constant; they may vary in time. Shveitser discusses the notion of "dynamics of translation norm" (in, for instance, A. Shveitser, *Sociolingwisticheskie osnovy teorii pereвода* [Woprosyazykoznanania 5, 1983], 21); see also: Albrecht Neubert, *Translation and Theorie* [:] *Semantik und Übersetzungswissenschaft* (Leipzig: Übersetzungswissenschaftliche Beiträge 6, 1983), 107.

language system; the level of otherness elements that is allowed, without the loss of coherence and clarity, is culture-dependent.¹

What is the expected speech act of a translator? Is that the same as the ethic that the reader expects of the translator? If translators attempt too high a degree of assimilation to the receptor culture—too much loss of otherness, for instance, in the interests of naturalness—do they betray the reader with an unexpected speech act? What voice does the reader expect them to add to the polyphony² present in a text?

Otherness and translator ethic

We mentioned above the notion of *translator ethic*. To whom or to what is a translator responsible? Vanhoozer suggests that there is such a notion as a faithful reader, a reader who reads a text responsibly. What of translators? Are translators required to translate “the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth”? Or does a more flexible and creative notion of responsibility apply? Should they indicate in a preface the type of translation, the translation speech act, they believe they are undertaking? Gutt has suggested that, just as any utterance is conveyed with a presumption of relevance, in translation there is a presumption of *resemblance*, exactly as a hearer would expect in quoted or reported speech. But does a sacred text demand more than that?

In order to investigate this we would like to consider here examples from a parallel domain, that of the translation of Celtic religious poetry into Polish, in order to see how one translator attempted to undertake a faithful translation.³

In the first example, the original, in a fairly literal translation into English, is:

My Druid is Christ, the son of God,
Christ, Son of Mary, the Great Abbot,
The Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

The following translation was undertaken into Polish:

<p><i>Moim druidem jest Pan Jezus Chrystus, Syn Boga, Chrystus, Mac Mhuire, Wielki Opat Ojciec, Syn I Duch Święty.</i></p>	<p>My druid is the Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, Christ, Mac Mhuire, the Great Abbot Father, Son and Holy Spirit.</p>
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The translator comments:⁴

We can ask, to begin with, whether the goals of the original and the translation are the same. The main goals appear to be the same. In the translations of early Celtic prayers (poems), the main reasons for allowing a new audience to read them are identical with those of the original audience. These are: to give testimony to the goodness and glory of God, to be a record of intimate conversations and encounters, to express the joy of being part of creation, and to reflect on the beauty and mystery of life. They encouraged the seeking of a

1 Lewicki, *Obcość w odbiorze przekładu*, 25-38.

2 “Polyphony” is a notion with which French rather than English readers would be more familiar, though it is akin to the notion of “echoic” utterance in relevance theory. A good summary is found in Jacques Moeschler and Antoine Auchlin, *Introduction à la linguistique contemporaine* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1997).

3 See Alina Krajewska, *Modlitwa Celtów* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo M, 2002).

4 The translator is one of the authors of this article; but where the comments reflect her own aims in translation, we present them in quotation form.

closeness with the Creator, and challenged a “tight” worldview and a selfish style of life.

Since Poland is a country in which more than 90 percent of its population claim to belong to a Christian church with 1,000 years of history, the Polish are well familiar with contemplative religious poetry. Medieval-looking monks in sandals are normal elements of the “landscape.” Part of the challenge of translating this poetry, belonging to a seemingly same cultural frame or mindset, is to prevent a simple or automatic interpretation.

The “otherness,” the distinctiveness of the culture, which is shown through the narrative of the book—poems, illustrations, footnotes, essays, stories about the saints—has something relevant to offer to Polish society, something that is essentially the same but still challenging. An origin from a different space facilitates the perception of a different message.¹ Some of the Celtic flavor will suggest a new spirituality, which will hopefully open the reader to new ideas, new formulations, a renewing of certain notions.

Some of the goals of a target text, compared to the original, are therefore different:

- to inform of a historic reality, counterpart to a false view of early Celtic culture as entirely pagan,
- to challenge a different understanding of Christianity,
- to encourage an enriching of church tradition, etc.

The translator comments:

In order to achieve these goals, coupled with a need for faithfulness towards the original authors, the work had to be carried out so that familiar ideas did not *block* the process of interpretation. The intention is to give a glimpse of a reality which is different, to create a space or construe a scene that suggests a distance. This needs to be done in order (1) to stir interest (new exciting information), (2) to trigger a longer processing that will divert interpretation from a false or shallow identification, and (3) to allow a broadening of well-known concepts.

The most obvious markers of otherness in a text are toponymics and patronymics. In translation some of these names may already exist in fairly natural form; some names, however, are given with the original in brackets, for example: Kolumba (Columcille). This is done to *prevent* domesticating of the saints, as is done in a popular reception. There are some words introduced that are specific to a Celtic rite: *lorica*, *caim*, *rune*, etc. These are emphasized and explained. Others are used—like “blessing”—but are not a part of everyday life experience. The book of poems has the goal of portraying real people as they lived and believed in a previous millennium; as such it is full of cross-references and explanations, sometimes in the form of footnotes. An

¹ The current interest in Celtic things certainly is a supporting factor. That interest is not really widespread, but is noticeable. It explains why so much of otherness in a Polish text is tolerated or even welcomed by a contemporary reader. Moreover, since it has been a factor that incites the eagerness to dig in the text and to unravel the meaning, emphasizing that “Celtic taste” has been perceived as a positive approach to achieve the effect that is desired.

essential part of the book is a long essay on the times and spirituality, and short profiles of the most significant characters and authors.

With regard to the particular poem presented above, it is a crucial text which to some extent resembles Psalm 23, and also summarizes several important beliefs: Christ—Son of God, Christ—son of Mary—two natures of the Lord; his authority over every spiritual wisdom and power; his headship of the church (the basic units were monasteries); and the doctrine of the Trinity. The function of a foreign phrase is to redirect the attention from a typical Polish Madonna-and-child image, and instead to enable the perception of an adult, even if in Celtic costume.

Another example:

Głębia pokoju

Głębia ukojenia fali biegnącej—tobie
Głębia ukojenia płynnego powietrza—tobie
Głębia ukojenia spokojnej ziemi—tobie
Głębia ukojenia rozbłyskujących gwiazd—tobie
Głębia ukojenia Syna pokoju—tobie.

Deep peace . . .

Deep peace of the running wave to you,
 Deep peace of the flowing air to you,
 Deep peace of the quiet earth to you,
 Deep peace of the shining stars to you,
 Deep peace of the Son of Peace to you.

In this second example, the translation sounds natural, but an explanation below openly admits that the text has been altered in translation. The keyword in this poem is "peace." Except for the last expression, "Son of Peace," the common word in Polish "pokoj" has been replaced with "ukojenie"—"alleviation, becoming calm, consoled"—which comes from the same root as "pokoj." "Peace," just like "freedom," has connotations for the whole of society—"patriotism," "lack of war," or as a standard liturgical formula.¹

The expression "peace of mind" in Polish does not use "pokoj" either, for then it is "spokoj"—"quietness, stillness, absence of noise." The biblical idea of "shalom" is very far from the dictionary entry. "Ukojenie"—"consolation" or "calmness"—at least suggests something personal, a reaching of the depths of the soul. Covert translation helps to realize the process of searching for the depths the reader needs to undergo. As Toury says, a target text (translation) will be involved in a dynamic and creative interaction with the culture of the new readers, with their language at that point in their history, their worldviews, their intertextual awareness. A skilled translator, with the desire to be faithful to the original text and the intentions of the author, has to find in the mechanisms of the target language and culture an ally to enter a dialogue with the hearts and minds of the people.²

The process that the translator has adopted here is consistent with Vanhoozer's reflections on translation in the light of hermeneutics, and with a theme that we wish to develop further below, that of "process" and "dialogue." Vanhoozer emphasises, as do Thiselton, Van Leeuwen and others, the crucial need of respect for "otherness." When transposed to the domain of translation, we can validly ask how "equivalence" is possible in the presence of "otherness." Do we fully understand the author, writing in the context of a first-century mindset,

1 Compare Wierzbicka's analyses of that term in Polish and other languages in A. Wierzbicka, *Understanding Cultures through their Key Words* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

2 Gideon Toury, "The Notion of 'Assumed Translation'—An Invitation to a New Discussion" in *Letterlijkheid, Woordelijkheid* (eds. H. Bloemen, E. Hertog, and W. Segers; Antwerp/Harmelen: Fantom, 1995), 138-9.

when we read in translated scripture of the “fullness” of God, or of Christ as the “image” of God?

If the responsibility of the reader, as Vanhoozer and others allege, is to respect the “otherness” of the text, then the responsibility of the translator to the reader is surely to allow *access* to that otherness, so that it can be respected.

Dialogue with the text

Writers who advocate respect for “otherness” in a text point out that in so doing the reader enters into a process of dialogue with the text:

According to Bakhtin, the ideal reader is much more than a passive mirror. Mirrors simply image the original, and mirrored reading achieves only reproductive or “duplicative” understanding. In Bakhtin’s view, however, authors typically expect more of their readers. Reading, he believes, should never be monologic; neither the text nor the reader is a “voiceless thing” with nothing to contribute. Understanding (the goal of the human as opposed to the natural sciences) is thoroughly dialogic.¹

And:

Creative understanding, however, does not renounce its own place in time or culture and precisely for this reason can understand what is foreign about the other. “A meaning only reveals its depths once it has encountered and come into contact with another, foreign meaning; they engage in a kind of dialogue, which surmounts the closedness and one-sidedness of these particular meanings, these cultures.” (M. Bakhtin, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays* [Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986], 7)²

We have here what we could call a “process” reading, rather than a “static” one. A good translation is one that promotes and facilitates a dialogue with the text, that gives access to the opinions of the text vis-à-vis the reader. We find ourselves back with the notions of J. B. Phillips, that a translator is a “kind of liaison officer” between the text he or she has translated and the contemporary public. In the same vein, Vanhoozer, in the framework of a speech-act approach to

1 Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text*, 389.

2 Vanhoozer, 389-90. De Vries refers to Bakhtin in an article which has many of the concerns of this one. Quoting Hatim and Mason, who define translation as “an act of communication which attempts to relay, across cultural and linguistic boundaries, another act of communication” (Basil Hatim and Ian Mason, *The Translator as Communicator* [London: Routledge, 1996], 1), and referring to a supposition that a text is always processed in terms of the receptor culture, he claims:

Secondary audiences process the information of secondary texts in terms of how they conceive of the world of the source text; they try to create a secondary world, different from their own, on the basis of what they have been told about it, on the basis of the translated text itself, and on the basis of projections of their own world onto this secondary world. The creation of such a secondary world is needed to make sense of the secondary text with its many signals which indicate that it did not originate in the world of the readers The great tension between the familiar language of the Bible translation and the unfamiliar world behind it is characteristic of Bible translations in general (Lourens de Vries, “The Notion of Genre and the Nature of Bible Translation,” *Notes on Translation* 13 [1999]: 31).

And:

Isolated communities in Irian Jaya, where the Bible is the first or one of the first translated texts, tend to react positively to mixed signals in secondary texts. However, in the future . . . the Papuan communities may change their attitude of acceptance towards elements in translations that “falsely” suggest that the text is part of their primary world (33).

faithful interpretation, asserts a similar "process" description, defining the translator as one who "preserves the efficacy of past communicative action."¹

Quoting Paul Ricoeur, Vanhoozer points out the claim that there are two types of sameness: an *idem* one-and-the-sameness of impersonal things, and the *ipse* consistency of persons:

Can we carry the analogy between texts and personal identity . . . even further? Why do some texts affect various readers in different ways? Perhaps for the same reason that I affect people differently. Though I remain myself, I relate to different people in different ways . . . So it is, perhaps, with texts. A text remains what it is, but it can affect and relate to others in different ways. Further, the text cannot be itself without the mediation of others—without readers. The reader is necessary in order to receive and realize the communicative capacity of the text. Interestingly, the mediating role of others is discussed by Aristotle in his *Nichomachean Ethics* under the rubric of friendship. Friendship brings to the forefront the question of reciprocity. One does not love a friend for the sake of utility or even pleasure . . .

Is the translator, then, friend or foe of the text? There is a kind of "handing over" that is not betrayal. Or, to be exact, there is a "handing down" . . . that is not a "handing over," a *traditore*. Whereas Judas handed Jesus over, the other apostles handed Jesus on to subsequent generations. Faithful interpretation is, I believe, more like apostolic tradition; it is a matter not of betraying but of continuing the communicative act, of passing it on. One who stands in a tradition attends to and is affected by the past. We receive something that we did not make and pass it on to others. Interpreters [mediate] the past to others . . . Like tradition, then, translation does not simply repeat the past but rather develops it. Like tradition, interpretation helps the text survive the passing of its original context in order to live on. The text does not preempt dialogue but opens it through an overture of meaning that invites a responsible response . . . *the translator is one who preserves the efficacy of past communicative action.*²

An example that can be cited in this respect is in Titus 1.10. In it Paul refers to "the circumcision," a common way at the time of referring to Jews. If meaning is restricted to original referential meaning, then the translation "the Jews" is acceptable. However, such a translation for a Muslim culture, say, would not facilitate dialogue: rather it would imprison the meaning of the text within existing prejudices and not allow the text to live and apply itself to a new reader (even if that involves, in this case, a referential meaning Paul could never have had in mind.) What is the "meaning of the text" in this case? It seems to be true that the text has greater potential meaning than its original referential reading, and that greater potential, that greater depth, that *life* of the text,³ should be maintained in translation for a new context.

To summarize

To summarize, we could say that there are three types of otherness that translators need to handle. Reformulating and developing Lewicki's analysis, they are:

1 Vanhoozer, 392.

2 Ibid.

3 W. Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator," in *Illuminations* (ed. H. Arendt; Glasgow: Fontana/Collins, 1955; reprinted 1982), 69-82.

- the “otherness” of the original language with respect to the receptor language,
- the “otherness” of the message with respect to the receptor culture or cognitive environment,
- the “otherness” of the receptor language with respect to the original language.

For these types of otherness we could say:

- the otherness of the original language has to be discarded,
- the otherness of the message has to be maintained,
- the otherness of the receptor language has to be used.

Statements in this article make it clear that this is a simplistic formulation. For instance, communicating some of the otherness of the message may be achieved by retaining some of the otherness, the foreignness, of the original language.¹

There is no guarantee that the translator can give access to all of the “otherness” of a sacred text. That is the burden of Van Leeuwen’s article and of Gutt’s proposals. The reader has to do some of the work, even a large part of it, reflecting on the text, and researching the cognitive background to the text. For instance, when translating the notion “falling short of the glory of God,” the translator cannot hope to represent all this meant to a Jewish reader (which also may not have been apparent to all of Paul’s Greek-speaking readers):

... it almost certainly alludes to Adam’s fall ... The thought of Adam’s fall as his being deprived of the glory of God was probably already a feature of Jewish reflection on the Genesis narratives (cf. particularly *Apoc. Mos.* 21.6—Adam accuses Eve “you have deprived me of the glory of God” ...) ... Paul probably refers here *both* to the glory lost in man’s fall and to the glory that fallen man is failing to reach in consequence.²

The translator can attempt to give access to this concept or, more accurately, complex of concepts, and must obviously attempt to do so if the average reader of his text will understand it differently. In short, when translating, the translator must be aware that “equivalence” involves “giving access” to the otherness of an unfamiliar message.

Conclusion

In this article we have looked at the notion of “equivalence,” and considered whether it is an adequate criterion for translation in itself, or whether it should be supplemented with further criteria. We have argued that this is particularly necessary where differences between the original and receptor cognitive contexts make “equivalence” unlikely or even impossible. We have argued that this situation is, in fact, relatively frequent and that translation criteria are needed to address such situations realistically.

¹ In wording these principles in a simple fashion, we are aware that they might be misunderstood. The whole tenor of this article implies that each has to be maintained in balance with the other. In particular, with respect to the last, we can repeat: a skilled translator has to find in the mechanisms of the target language and culture an ally to enter a dialogue with the hearts and minds of the people.

² James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8* (WBC 38A; Dallas: Word Books, 1988), 168.

In addition to attempted equivalence, translators must be aware of places where the "otherness" of the message impedes their attempts at equivalence. The fact that they are trying to put aside the otherness of the original language to adopt the otherness of the receptor tongue, should not hide from them the fact that there is an otherness in the message that needs to be maintained. If they are successful, they will enable the reader to enter into the process of a self-changing dialogue with the text.

REVIEWS

Heller, Roy L. *Narrative Structure and Discourse Constellations: An Analysis of Clause Function in Biblical Hebrew Prose* (Harvard Semitic Studies 55). Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2004. xi + 494 pp. \$49.95 Cloth. ISBN 1-57506-918-0.

Based on a Yale University dissertation, this book investigates the function of the verb in Hebrew narrative from a discourse perspective. The author explains how already Lambdin looked at verbs primarily in terms of their function in the text: how do the various verb clauses give structure to a prose text? Discourse linguists have done the same. Chapter 1 briefly surveys problems with tense-based, historical-comparative, and aspect-based approaches to Hebrew verbs, and then moves on to discourse-linguistic approaches (notably F. I. Andersen's and R. E. Longacre's) to Hebrew verbs and clause types. Heller demonstrates that verbs and their function in narrative are different from verbs and their function in direct discourse, a key distinction already worked out in W. Schneider's grammar. Building on Longacre's distinction between four discourse types—narrative, predictive, expository, hortatory—Heller adds a fifth: interrogative discourse, which is defined by the consistent presence of interrogative particles, and "in which a character attempts to elicit a verbal [rather than active or attitudinal] response from the hearer(s)" (25-26).

What is different from Longacre's approach is that these discourse types are actually treated as types of direct discourse: Heller reserves the term narrative discourse for narrative in direct discourse (where *qatals* dominate) and keeps this separate from other narrative text (where *wayyiqtol*s are the backbone). When *wayyiqtol* does occur in narrative direct discourse (e.g., Gen 42.30), it usually signals a close parallel to preceding narrative text (i.e., Gen 42.9). The same applies to the *wayyiqtol*s in Judah's long speech in Gen 44.20-26. Another major improvement is that in Heller's approach a passage of direct discourse may contain more than one discourse type. For instance, Joseph's interpretations of dreams in Gen 40.13, 19 are predictive discourse. The whole first half of Gen 40.8 is narrative discourse (*wehinnê* is lacking): "We have had a dream and there was no interpreter of it," rather than ". . . and there is no one to interpret it" (95). Gen 42.36, with an incipient *iqtol*, is expository discourse (138): "And Benjamin you are going to take." The *qatal* clauses in Gen 42.25, 28 are part of expository discourse as well: they are not past tense accounts but "function within the present tense nature of the speech as explanations about the origin of the dream . . . : 'What God is doing he has told/has shown to Pharaoh!'" (467). In hortatory discourse, for a first-person *qatal* clause to be considered performative ("I hereby say") it should stand in parallel with other hortatory forms (e.g., imperative or jussive clauses) or immediately precede a *iqtol* clause, as in 2 Sam 19.30 (19.29) (377).