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Book review

Review of: In Translation: Translators on Their Work and What It Means, Esther Allen and Susan Bernofsky, Editors

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Book Review

In Translation: Translators on Their Work and What It Means

Edited by Esther Allen and Susan Bernofsky
New York: Columbia University Press, 2013. xxiv + 264 pages. Paper $32.00. ISBN 978-0231159692.

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In this scholarly anthology of 264 pages, including the editors' introduction, a listing of contributors, and a subject index, eighteen professional literary translators "from widely varying backgrounds, languages, fields, and genres" (xx)[1] reflect deeply and from diverse perspectives on the nature of their craft and its importance within the wider world of English literature. These essays explore "both the larger, complex questions of translation's role and function in the world of literature and the more detailed, word-by-word dilemmas faced by every translator," thus illuminating "what matters in translation and why translation matters."[2] The various studies are divided into two major sections. *Part 1*, "The Translator in the World," discusses "attitudes towards translation as seen in a variety of ethical, cultural, political, historical, and even legal contexts," offering "a number of perspectives on the understanding and self-understanding of translators in the literary and critical arena" (xx). In *Part 2*, "The Translator at Work," there is a focus "on questions of craft" and a consideration of "specific acts of translation from various points of view" (xxi).

In the material that follows, I do not present a normal review of the sequence of studies included *In Translation*; rather, I offer a selection of citations that I found especially significant from each of the essayists (from some more than others) with regard to my own circumscribed interest in Bible translation, and specifically, the application of a *literary* (artistic-rhetorical) *structural* manner of rendering the sacred text.[3] Thus, only a limited portion of the wide range of content covered in these individual studies is reflected in the quotations that I have chosen, but this should be sufficient to indicate the high quality of each author's work and accordingly to encourage a reading of her/his entire essay. Occasionally I interact with the author on a particular issue, either directly or by means of a footnote, but usually I simply present his or her perspective and opinion as it appears in the text. I trust that I have not distorted any individual author's content or intent by means of these selective quotes or my comments on them.[4]

In their introduction, "A Culture of Translation" (xiii), the editors reflect on the role of translators in English, which "is now indisputably the dominant global lingua franca" (xv). On the one hand, contemporary "translators into English can be said to labor in the service of monolingualism…by increasing the degree to which the culture of the entire globe is available through English" (ibid). But on the other hand, "translation works to strengthen the pluralism of world languages and cultures by giving writers in all languages the opportunity to reach English's global audience while still writing in their native tongues" (ibid). Furthermore, "the failure to translate into English, the absence of translation, is clearly the most effective way of all to consolidate the global monoculture and exclude those who write and read in other languages from the far-reaching global conversation for which English is clearly the vehicle" (xvii). "To say of translation—as is so often said—that 'the original meaning is always *lost'* is to deny the history of literature and the ability of any text to be *enriched* by the new meanings that are engendered as it enters new contexts—that is, as it remains alive and is read anew" (xvii–xviii, original emphasis). "Translation not only brings us the work of those who write in other languages; it simultaneously reveals the limits of our own language and helps us move beyond them, incorporating new words, concepts, styles, structures, and stories" (xviii).

The 21st century "has shown itself to be an age of translation," and the development of new technologies, like the Internet, "has affected every aspect of the translator's work, from the process of producing a

[1] All page citations are from the book under consideration, unless otherwise indicated.
[2] From endorsements by Lydia Davis and Motoyuki Shibata given on the book's back cover.
[3] See, for example, Ernst Wendland, *Translating the Literature of Scripture* (Dallas: SIL International, 2004).
[4] I extend my sincere apologies to the authors wherever this has inadvertently happened.

translation to the mode of publication, the scope of the audience, and the depth and complexity of the preexisting relationship between the source and target languages and texts, particularly when the target language is English" (xix). In sum, "translators are writers and curators of cultural interaction who transport us between linguistic spheres, making their languages listen as well as speak and transforming them into vehicles for a wide range of literary traditions" (xxii). Not only that, but from a theological perspective, Bible translators are also instruments of the Holy Spirit, who desires that the words of Scripture are read, heard, and understood in all languages and cultural contexts of the world (Acts 2:1–12).

In the first essay, "Making Sense in Translation—Toward an Ethics of the Art," Peter Cole endeavors to answer the question, "Can ethics really account for an art in any way that matters?" (3). To produce a "good" translation, one that attains "an afterlife for the literature in question," requires not only skill, training, experience, and so forth—it also demands considerable effort (4). To a lesser extent, it also needs the right translation technique—one that is appropriate for the text, the intended audience, and the context of use. The question is: "Is it ethically more appropriate to call attention—through register, cadence, and the like—to the passage of time and the difference of cultural context; or, when push comes to translational shove, is it ultimately more honest to create an illusion of immediacy—to account for the way a story or poem *might* have been heard by its original audience?" (6). The contemporary translator must take into consideration not only the meaning of the text itself and how to best convey that, but the original context of interpretation also needs to factored into the communication process along with the hermeneutical tradition that has been attached to the text since the time of its initial composition. "One needs in translating, and especially in translating [sacred] texts from the ancient past [like the Scriptures], to respond and be responsible not only to the original poem or passage of prose but also to the body of knowledge that has accrued around it, around the would-be reader of the translation, and around the two (and sometimes three or more) languages and literary traditions involved" (6).[5]

In their virtually impossible effort to achieve "this transmigration *ha'ataquah*, or transference" of texts along with their cognitive contexts,[6] translators are similarly warned that "there is…no serious afterlife for a given poet or writer of prose that does not re-embody (as it reimagines) the *sensory dimensions* at the heart of an art" (10, my emphasis). Relying on artistic, communicative "instinct, not ideology," and "trained by long apprenticeship to attention in language, [translators] let themselves be led by a feel for the words before them in an asymptotic rehearsal and performance involving desire, denial, vision, revision, imagination, and regret—nearing, perhaps, but never achieving something we choose to call perfection" (10)—or complete "equivalence"! To be more specific, "good translation…is translation that both makes and discovers sense. It is reasonable, and coheres emotionally, but also and more importantly engages the senses as it embodies, in a physical manner, what the translator recognizes as the salient properties or qualities of the original and its artfulness" (11).

Furthermore, when undertaking "the *responsibility* for another work of art in a different language—for the particular pressure, pleasure, texture, tension, and tone of its constituent parts—the translator also (if he [*sic*] is up to the task) becomes more responsive to these same constituent qualities; and so he will in the passage to a new language try to account for them as live elements, to preserve them through transformation rather than salting or pickling them through superficial mimicry" (ibid, original emphasis).

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[5] In this connection, Cole suggests that "in crossing centuries, languages, and cultural galaxies, factoring in the thousands of elusive elements that come into play, the straightforward algebra of equivalence won't do; if we want to approach it in scientific fashion…we'll need to look in the direction of postquantum physics, or the nature of scientific study itself" (6–7). Unfortunately, he does not really explain the meaning of his "scientific" proposal, and we are left with more down-to-earth multifaceted practical approaches, like that of "frames of reference" (e.g., T. Wilt & E. Wendland, *Scripture Frames & Framing*, Stellenbosch: Sun Media Press, 2008), to deal with the complexities presented by a complete translation project and its management in the modern age, e.g., that of the Bible.

[6] The term *ha'ataqah* derives from "fourteenth century kabbalists" and "also happens to be a term Hebrew uses to mean—*translation*" (10). "Only one who is profoundly convinced of the impossibility of translation can really undertake it" (citing Franz Rosenzweig, 15). Regarding the "religious" notion of "transmigration," Cole observes: "in the word 'translation' itself—which etymologically suggests a 'ferrying or carrying across' (as does the root of the word 'metaphor')—[a translator's ethically motivated] investment, surrender, and belief lead to a place where alignment is sought between souls" (ibid), namely, with respect to the pragmatic sensory-emotive (artistic-rhetorical) dimension of the original text and its re-expression in another language.

The question for serious Bible translators then is this: To what degree do the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures actually embody artistry alongside theology in their constituent books, and if the former dimension is found to be significantly present in the text,[7] how will they undertake their ethical responsibility to address it in their work? When carried out "responsibly," Cole suggests that "*mutual* enhancement" is the result: "In giving the original new life, a translation sheds light on it as well. And in the process, the language of the translation is also renewed" (14). However, such communicative enrichment cannot occur by adopting a brute foreignizing procedure; rather, a more sensitive, creative approach must be adopted, one that utilizes the ubiquitous "'malleable material' of one's own language"—not some "freakish or distorting implant shouting, 'Look at me, I'm different, foreign, *unusual*!'" (ibid, original emphasis).

In chapter two, "Anonymous Sources," Eliot Weinberger has a number of interesting things to say "On Translators and Translation" (17). Following from the book's introduction, he observes that "translation liberates the translation language"; this is because "a translation will always be read as a translation, as something foreign," and it is therefore "liberated from many of the constraints of the currently accepted norms and conventions in the national literature" (18).[8] Weinberger goes on to point out a crucial misunderstanding of "that tedious Italian pun *traduttore traditore*" (21).[9] "The characterization of translation as betrayal or treason is based on the impossibility of exact equivalence, which is seen as a failing," but while it is true that "no translation is identical to the original," even within the same language "no reading of a poem [or any piece of literature] is identical to any other, even when read by the same person" (22).[10] As cognitive linguistics teaches us, every new act of communication, of whatever kind, is a new "translation," as it were, a re-expression within the mental framework of "one's own [constantly changing] experience and knowledge—whether it is a confirmation, a contradiction, or an expansion" (ibid). Thus, "translation, above all, means change" because, like metaphor, it obviously involves semantic "movement"—the former, from one language into another. But whereas "metaphor makes the familiar strange, translation makes the strange familiar" (23).

Turning his attention to the translation of poetry, Weinberger suggests that the purpose "is to allow the poem to be heard in the translation language, ideally in as many of the ways it is *heard* in the original language" (24, original emphasis).[11] This "means that the primary task of a translator is not merely to get the dictionary meanings right—which is the easiest part—but rather to invent a new music for the text in the translation language, one that is mandated by the original," but which "is not a technical replication of the original" (ibid). How can one learn these new verbal lyrics? "To do so requires a thorough knowledge of the literature *into which one is translating*" (ibid, original emphasis). On the other hand, "all the worst translations are done by experts in the foreign language who know little or nothing about the poetry alongside which their translations will be read" (25). That was certainly the case during my years as a Bible translation consultant: the "weakest link" of any team was a self-styled "expert" in the biblical languages who knew little or nothing about the orature and written literature in her/his mother-tongue.

While it used to be the case that translators were "invisible people…often confused with simultaneous interpreters" (25), nowadays they often have organized themselves into influential social pressure groups, with some even claiming "that they are authors" too (26).[12] Academic interest has also grown to the point

[7] For some textual documentation, see E. Wendland, *Lovely, Lively Lyrics: Selected Studies in Biblical Hebrew Verse* (Dallas: SIL International, 2013).

[8] He cites the examples of German literature at the turn of the 19th century, post-revolution (1949) poets in China, and American poets twice in the 20th century (18–19).

[9] "Perhaps the Italian sentence betrays something in the cultural consciousness of Italy, which resonates through the political and ecclesiastical life of that country, where betrayal, like a shadow, is the obverse side of trust" (21, citing the Italian-American philosopher, Arthur Danto).

[10] In addition to pointing out a common misunderstanding of the concept of "equivalence" in translation studies, Weinberger also tackles "the old bugbear of 'fidelity,' which…may be the most overrated of a translation's qualities" since "up to a point, anyone can translate anything faithfully" (24). The problem here lies in defining that "point" where fidelity changes into something else—for what reason(s) and with what consequences.

[11] I have noticed that whereas professional translators, like those represented in this anthology, pay close attention to *sound* and the *oral-aural dynamics* of their work, secular translation theorists by and large do not and rarely mention the subject.

[12] A situation that strikes the essayist as "a Pirandellesque (or Reaganesque) confusion of actor and role" (26).

that "there is, perhaps, no subject in literature more suited for theoretical rumination in its current modes than translation" (27). Along "with this preoccupation with the translator—and the self-evident and now excessively elaborated corollary that everything is a form of translation—the translator has suddenly become an important person" (ibid).[13] It would be better, both theoretically and practically, for their respective roles and associated recognition, whether criticism or acclaim, to remain distinct: "The translator, in the familiar analogy, is an *actor* playing the role of the *author*" (28, my emphasis). What cannot be denied is that "translation is an obvious necessity" because "translation is what keeps literature alive" (30), at least in the sense of allowing access to books that would otherwise remain closed to the vast majority, and this includes *The Book*—the Bible. Moreover, despite what may be some formidable challenges in certain situations, "there is no text that cannot be translated; there are only texts that have not found their translators" (ibid)—and consequently, given the right practitioner(s), there is no translation that cannot be somehow improved in relation to a particular purpose and target audience.

In "Fictions of the Foreign" (ch. 3), David Bellos critically examines "The Paradox of 'Foreign-Soundingness'" (31). In response to the charge by certain translation critics that "domesticating translation styles" are guilty of committing "ethnocentric violence,"[14] Bellos asks, "How then should the foreignness of the foreign best be represented in the receiving language" (31)? The common practice of borrowing lexical and syntactic features of the ST for use in the TT in order to be somehow "faithful" to the original only results in "the foreign-soundingness of a translation," and the usual result that it "may be rejected as clumsy, false, or even worse" (32). "The project of writing translations that do the least 'ethnocentric violence' to the original thus runs the risk of dissolving into something different—a representation of the funny ways foreigners speak" (42). In the case of the Bible many people patiently tolerate the "funniness," awkwardness and frequent opaqueness of their translations on account of their reverence for the sacred text and its divine author, but it does not have to be that way. And given the high literary quality, generally speaking, of the various texts of Scripture, it *should not* be that way—not for any translator worth his salt.

This is not to say that there is no benefit at all in a "foreignizing translation style" that bends "English into shapes that mirror some limited aspect of the source language, such as word order or sentence structure" (39). Thus, "a genuine educational and social purpose can be served by maintaining items of the source text in the translation," for "it allows readers to acquire what they had not learned at school, or to refresh their memory of half-forgotten lessons" (35).[15] But this "selective or 'decorative' foreignism is available only in translating between languages with an established relationship" (ibid), like French for American English-speakers and increasingly Spanish in the 21st century.[16] Such a foreign-oriented translation policy is also appreciated by scholars who happen to keep up-to-date with the ST languages, like biblical Hebrew or Greek; they often know what the original is referring to in the case of otherwise difficult English renditions.[17]

Bellos calls attention to Friedrich Schleiermacher, the 19th century philosopher-translator, who is "usually understood to have taken his distance from fluent, invisible, or 'normalizing' translation when he said, 'The goal of translating even as the author himself would have written originally in the language of the translation is not only unattainable but is also in itself null and void.' But that famous statement can also be understood the other way around" (36)—the foreign accent of the original needs to be naturalized in translation. For example, "Why should we want or need Kafka to sound German, in any case? In German, Kafka doesn't sound 'German' at all—he sounds like Kafka…. Making Kafka sound German in English is

[13] "Small wonder, then, that the advance guard of translators and their explainers are now declaring that the translator is an author" and "that a translated and original text are essentially indistinguishable" (27). This is a regrettable development in the field that I too have found occasion to critique (e.g., pp. 7–9 in E. Wendland, *Survey of Translation Studies*, University of Stellenbosch electronic publication, 2015).

[14] Citing Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility* (London: Routledge, 1995, 20 and passim) (43).

[15] It almost sounds as if Bellos writes with a certain degree of irony here, but I cannot be certain. He adds, "Without the information that the work in question has been translated from language A, foreignizing translations do not themselves allow the reader to identify which foreign language A is" (39).

[16] "You can't do that with Russian or German anymore" since "these languages are taught to only tiny groups of students nowadays" (35).

[17] These literalistic English (French, Spanish, Chewa, etc.) versions "rely for their foreignizing effect on the reader's prior knowledge of the approximate shape and sound of [the] foreign language" of the source text.

perhaps the best means a translator has to communicate to the reader his or her own experience of reading the original" (ibid) like a MT speaker would have read it.

The conclusion is, and this is quite significant: "Foreignness in a translation is necessarily *an addition to the original*" (ibid, emphasis added), and, I might add, an *unnatural* addition at that. But this dark literary cloud does have its silver lining, at least for English: "A foreignism—be it a word, a turn of phrase, or a grammatical structure that is brought into our marvelously and infuriatingly malleable tongue by a translator seeking to retain the authentic sound of the original—has its path already mapped out: Either it will be disregarded as a clumsy, awkward, or incomplete act of translation, or it will be absorbed, reused, integrated, and become not foreign at all" (42)—yet, with reference to semantics, not necessarily retaining the same sense or significance. The latter scenario is the imminent danger where translations of Scripture are concerned.

In "Beyond, Between—Translation, Ghosts, Metaphors" (ch. 4), Michael Emmerich delves into the definition of "translation," in spite of the fact that the term is, by his own admission, "incapable of definition…because it is sort of a node—a point of intersection" (44). He begins his quest from the perspective of English, where "translation comes from the Latin word *translatus*, the past participle of *transferre*, which might be translated as 'carried across'" (49)—then with special reference to the various terms available in Japanese, e.g., *hon'yaku*, which "refers specifically to translation from foreign (non-Japanese) languages into Japanese (or vice-versa)" (45).[18] Emmerich concludes that rather than as a point in a particular language, "translation must be viewed as a node within which all the ideas of translation in all the languages that ever have been or could ever be might potentially congregate, intersect, mingle" (47). Here is where the metaphor of the "ghost" comes in: "We could say that the word 'translation' is haunted by all the concepts it might translate, the words with which it may be translated" (ibid). Thus, rather than as a "bridge," translation is better conceived "as a ghostly activity," that is, "the haunted, haunting experience of being simultaneously within two languages, cultures, and nations but belonging fully to neither" (51). As a translator of sorts myself, however, I wonder whether it is accurate to say that the translator operates in some sort of nebulous "ghostly, disembodied" state (56): Can s/he really become "disembodied" cognitively or sensually as s/he works within and between the mental frames of reference of two distinct corporeal languages?[19] Furthermore, the binary imagery itself may be somewhat too simplistic; I find the fourfold distinction of "mental space theory" rather more satisfying and useful as a figurative conception of the multiplex process of interlingual, cross-cultural, world-view transposing communication that translation both refers to and represents.[20]

In "Translation as Scholarship" (ch. 5), Catherine Porter surveys some of the present challenges and possible solutions to the interrelated issues of translator roles and responsibilities as they pertain to advances in scholarship in the field of translation. For example, "serving the text and collaborating with its author are only two among the many, sometimes conflicting, responsibilities that a translator has to weigh and juggle" (59). Furthermore, should translators strive to remain "invisible" in their work, and is the notion of "original, authorial meaning" empirically valid? (60–61). Finally, is the job "doable" at all: "Literary and scholarly translation alike entail not just a transfer of meaning but a thoroughgoing recontextualization: In what contexts—literary, rhetorical, social, historical, political, economic, religious, cultural—was the source text embedded, and what adjustments will have to be made to transmit those contexts or produce comparable ones in the translation?" (62). From this perspective, the translation of an ancient, high-value document, such as the Scriptures, is clearly impossible—that is, if one is limited to the confines of the translated text itself. Only a complete "study" or "reference Bible" will do, that is, a

[18] Thus, "in order to translate 'translation' into Japanese," one first must ask "what particular variety of 'translation' we are talking about," for example, "a retranslation is a…*kaiyaku*" (46).
[19] Cole seems to suggest the same, as noted earlier: "Good translation…engages the senses as it embodies, in a physical manner, what the translator recognizes as the salient properties or qualities of the original [text] and its artfulness" (11).
[20] Four distinct "mental spaces" are posited as one works both conceptually and linguistically within and between two languages when translating: target (ST), source (TL), generic (ST-TL), and blended (TT) (Wendland, *Survey of Translation Studies*, 138–139).

meaningful translation supported by a wide array of "supplementary helps": explanatory notes, illustrations, introductions, a glossary and concordance, cross-references, sectional headings, and so forth.[21]

Toward the end of her essay, Porter makes two general, but noteworthy observations: "The aspect of the translator's invisible work…requires both an intuitive and an analytic command of the interlocking features and structures of two language systems" (65). Thus, academic knowledge is not enough; this must be coupled with native intuition augmented by a considerable amount of translation-based experience. Second, when approaching any translation commission, "one cannot posit a simple dichotomy between works that privilege artistic form and those that privilege the communicative function" (ibid). Indeed, in the case of the Scriptures, both these considerations, or obligations, are abundantly applicable throughout.

In chapter 6, "The Biography of an Artform," Alice Kaplan overviews several novel case studies that relate "the lived experience of translators" and "the everyday psychology of translating" to "the complex relationship between writers and translators" (67). She concludes with some personal reflections regarding "the gift of translation" (78):[22] "Every act of translation is an act of attentiveness. As a translator, I notice aspects of style and language that would have escaped the part of me who is simply a reader, and even a literary critic. . . . In the act of translating, we come closer to the literary object than anyone else except the writer who has created it; and in so doing, we learn something about ourselves as writers" (80). I would like to also suggest the reverse procedure in the formal and informal training of (Bible) translators: Try to gain as much experience as possible as an active and "attentive" literary writer (or oral composer) in the language of translation, for example, by composing poetry (hymns), argument (sermons), or narrative (dramatized scripture re-telling).

In "The Will to Translate" (ch. 7), Esther Allen presents "Four Episodes in a Local History of Global Cultural Exchange" (82), in which she selectively describes "the work of four translators of Latin American literary prose into English in and around New York City" (83).[23] In closing, Allen reflects on Google Translate's claim that "this technology can make the language barrier go away" (100). A "closely related misconception" is that "there is a single 'correct' translation of any given phrase or literary passage, and if the human just thinks hard enough, or the machine crunches enough data, both will arrive at that unique and identical formulation" (ibid). The fallacy of course is that there are as many "correct translations" as there are different social situations, communicative purposes, and evaluating authorities for the same source text. The same threefold principle applies to translations of Scripture. While Google may be reckoned to "succeed" at a certain basic level of information transfer, "if we deem language to be information and nothing more, and translations no more than the transfer of that information, this misconception may become our truth" (ibid). This warning is just as apropos to all those who endeavor to translate "the literature of Scripture" (Wendland 2004).

The first of the more text-focused studies of Part 2 of *In Translation* is Forrest Gander's consideration of "The Great Leap: *César and the Caesura*" (ch. 8).[24] After an introduction that surveys the importance of translation in the modern age, Gander concludes: "It shifts our perspective and realigns our relation to the world, bringing us into proximity with other modalities…it can draw us across that most guarded border, the one we build around ourselves" (110). Training and experience should raise a "big question" for all translators: "To what degree do host languages and host cultures attest to constructions of the world that are

[21] Even the *method* of translating itself must be up to the task. In this respect, the bottom-up procedure seemingly advocated by the author is inadequate: "The translator can begin to engage with the text itself: word by word, phrase by phrase, sentence by sentence" (62). Clearly, a more holistic, discourse-oriented, structure-functional approach needs to be adopted.

[22] One experience even intimated to her "a metaphor for translating—when it goes well," namely "piano music for four hands" (79). Most experienced translators can suggest what each of those essential "hands" might represent.

[23] They are, in order of consideration: Mary Tyler Peabody Mann, Rollo Ogden, Harriet de Onís, and Gregory Rabassa.

[24] The first part of the title regarding the "leap" derives from Robert Bly's (1972) collection of poetry entitled *Leaping Poetry: An Idea with Poems and Translations*" (107): "What Bly's 'leaping poetry' boils down to—'leaping is the ability to associate fast'—is a diffusion of Ezra Pound's translation of Aristotle: 'Swift perception of relations, hallmark of genius'" (108). Gander uses the device of "caesura" (a break or pause introduced into a poetic line, like the *athnah* in Hebrew) to deal with various rhythms, or a "call and response" pattern in the translation of Spanish poetry (112–115).

incommensurable with my own?" (ibid). Consideration of several Spanish examples prompts a pair of related practical queries: "If we translate…colloquially, are we simply undermining [some] of the most interesting differences in the ways that the two languages negotiate experience?" On the other hand, "if we draw attention to differences by foregrounding the literal…aren't we merely exoticizing a distinction imposed by our foreignness, by our own point of view, one that isn't discerned by the readers of the host language…" (112). In any case, careful, contextualized translating reveals that "there seems to be a close relation between the particularities of language and the perceptions and conceptions of the speakers of that language" (113)—a relationship involving semantic and/or pragmatic "meaning" that needs to be accounted for in any serious translation, like that of Scripture (e.g., via expository notes, or some other device, depending on the medium of message transmission).

With particular reference to the translation of poetry, his specialty, Gander concludes, "Maybe there are times when *not* 'representing' the original is precisely what permits the creation of something less definitive but more ongoing, a form of translation that amplifies and renews (and even multiplies) the original poetry's meanings" (115). Although one must take care of possible erroneous amplification or multiplication of meaning in the case of biblical poetry, meaningful experimentation with regard to poetic form, including certain felicitous foreignizing reflections, in order to enhance the aesthetic and affective dimensions of the original text may well turn out to be rewarding, especially when an oral performance is in view. "From even such intermittent linguistic collaborations, a whole new realm of sonorous interaction and implication becomes possible, allowing [one] to create a more expansive and expressive prosody and inviting readers [and hearers in particular] to venture a little further across the border" (116) towards the verbal domain of the source text.

In "Misreading Orhan Pamuk" (ch. 9), Maureen Freely documents the various linguistic, symbolical, and emotive[25] challenges that she experienced when translating several novels by the Turkish author Orhan Pamuk into English.[26] In an exceptional manner of collaboration, Freely, herself a novelist, was able to work closely together with the author, Parmuk, to produce a joint work, the additional effort being necessary "because we both knew that the English translation would form the basis for most translations into other languages (…now more than sixty)" (120).[27] Freely describes her multifaceted role as follows: "A translator did not just need to find the right words, stay in close conversation with the author, and run interference for him as the book made its way through the publication process; she also had to do everything she could to contextualize the book for readers who were not familiar with Turkey—not inside the text but outside it, in journals and newspapers, and at conferences, symposia, literature festivals…" (123). As already noted, various types of paratextual contextualization are frequently used by Bible translators and publishers nowadays, but extratextual means similar to those mentioned by Freely should also be seriously considered, thus hopefully engaging those readers and listeners who do not possess or have access to a printed copy of the Scriptures.

In chapter 10, José Manuel Prieto describes his experiences "On Translating a Poem by Osip Mandelstam" from the original Russian into Spanish.[28] "The poem was the celebrated 'Epigram Against Stalin,' which begins with the line '*My zhivem pod soboiu ne chuia strany*' ('We live without feeling the country beneath our feet')" (127). Prieto presents a most interesting historical and linguistic "commentary" on the

[25] "Our greatest area of difficulty was the language of emotion, which tends to be expansive and even anatomical in Turkish" (121).

[26] The difficulties were also political in nature, for "over two generations [in the 20th century] [a] program of state intervention in the Turkish language has resulted in the loss of 60 percent of its vocabulary…most of the lost words [being] of Arabic or Persian origin" (119).

[27] A similar result is seen in the case of certain Bible translations in languages of wider communication. Knowing the potential for the extended influence of such versions, greater attention and perhaps also resources can be devoted to their careful preparation. This occurred with the new Chewa Bible translation (E. Wendland, *Buku Loyera* 'Holy Book', Blantyre: Kachere Books, 1997), for example, which after its publication (and even before, in draft form), has served as a model in the 21st century for many other translations within east-central Africa, where Chichewa is spoken as a first or second language by some twenty million people.

[28] This essay has itself been expertly translated into English by Esther Allen. Osip Mandelstam, of Jewish ancestry, "ranks among the most significant Russian poets of the twentieth century" (www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/osip-mandelstam, accessed 11/10/2015).

successive lines of this famous poem,[29] which in fluid lyric sarcasm expresses Mandelstam's bitter critique of the great persecutor of himself and his people. Prieto introduces his revealing observations on the poem with an astute, indeed poetic reflection on the difficulties that he experienced in the process: "It was virtually impossible to translate its sonorities, or the richness of its many images that don't come through or resonate in the target language—in my case, Spanish. As the poem moves from one language into another, the aura of meaning and allusion that is absolutely transparent to the Russian listeners the poem was addressed to is lost. *It's as if the poem were a tree and we could only manage to transplant its trunk and thickest limbs, while leaving all its green and shimmering foliage in the territory of the other language*" (128, added emphasis). How often does this same deflated feeling of creative loss and deficiency strike Bible translators when contemplating their current rendition of one of the great poems or poetic passages of Scripture—Genesis 1, Exodus 15, Judges 5, 2 Samuel 22, Job 3, Psalm 23, Isaiah 40, Ezekiel 37, Hosea 2, Joel 2, Habakkuk 3, Matthew 5, John 17, 1 Corinthians 13, Ephesians 1, Revelation 7, and so many more?

"Are We the Folk in this *Lok*?"[30] is the thematic query posed by Christi A. Merrill (ch. 11), as she explores the notion of authorship and "Translating in the Plural" in relation to traditional verbal art forms ("folklore"). The illustrative focus of her discussion is a Hindi short story by Vijay Dan Detha that "itself was inspired by a Rajasthani folktale" (143). The problem of compositional origin arises, she suggests, when we conform "to modern (European) notions of single authorship when the creative process itself is decidedly plural" (ibid). Her solution, stated at the outset and defended in her essay, is "to create a new category called 'storywriter,' which can apply equally to author and translator as be used as the literary equivalent of a 'storyteller'" (ibid). One may debate whether this proposal regarding terminology really helps settle the issue, but Merrill moves on to consider the important factor of medium of transmission (oral performance versus written text), which clearly muddies the waters. For example, Albert Lord's theory (*Singer of Tales*) "fails to take into account…the role played by the invisible, nameless scribe setting these songs to paper," so if he "can insist that each performance of a song is a creation unique in its own right and not a mere reproduction, then he should consider a written version as yet another performance" (147). The Brothers Grimm are a case in point: "[They] did not seem to distinguish authenticity based on oral versus written sources, but rather would write down as many versions as they heard, and then begin the arduous process of refining them in order 'to create an ideal type for the literary fairy tale, one that sought to be as close to the oral tradition as possible, while incorporating stylistic, formal, and substantial thematic changes to appeal to a growing bourgeois audience'" (148).[31]

Merrill's argument is that "while logocentricity encourages us to believe the power of the story can be reduced to specific words in a fixed text, *lok*-centricity forces us to embrace the ambiguity and temporality inherent in plural play" (152). She further recommends that "we recast the author-translator relationship in such a way as to emphasize the creative enterprise we both participate in" (154). Of what relevance is the preceding discussion to Bible translation? In recent years, folklore-based proposals like those of Merrill regarding authorship, scribal influence, a "flexible tradition" of textual transmission, and "multiple authorship" (no "divine" involved!) are being increasingly applied in biblical studies, and the potential impact upon translation is considerable. For example, what is the "original text" (or better perhaps, the "earliest established text") of Scripture that we are to translate (in whatever language), and if there is no recognized, documentable "source text" (as many would claim), then how does this position affect our practical manner or method of translating and familiar qualitative notions such as "fidelity," "accuracy," "equivalence," and "relevance"?[32]

In chapter 12, Jason Grunebaum considers the issue of "Choosing an English for Hindi," which "raises some very interesting questions about the process of translation and the intended audience" (156). Audience location is important in relation to both the language of the ST and that of the TT speakers. In

[29] It is "described by one critic as the sixteen lines of a death sentence…perhaps the twentieth century's most important political poem" (128).
[30] "Here I mean *lok* in the sense of people or folk, but also in the sense of worlds" (149).
[31] Citing Jack Zipes, *The Brothers Grimm: From Enchanted Forests to Modern World* (New York and London: Routledge, 1988), 10.
[32] For a discussion of these and related issues, see ch. 3 in E. Wendland, *Orality and Scripture: Composition, Translation, and Transmission* (Dallas, SIL International, 2013).

particular, "the translator's process of bringing cultural differences and nuances from the source language [Hindi] into English, weighing one strategy against another, might conclude with one choice if the English reader is from North America and quite another if the reader is from South Asia" (156).[33] Grunebaum employs two contrastive case studies to illustrate certain key aspects of the hypothetical decision-making process involved when translating certain technical terms and culturally specific concepts from Hindi into English: Krishna of South Delhi and Kris of Chicago. For example, with Krishna as the "ideal reader," the translator "can leave some Hindi words in the English translation" (157), and there would be "many fewer cultural differences" that s/he would need to deal with. Furthermore, s/he "might also decide to write in a more South Asianized" dialect of English, e.g., "I am just coming" (= "I'll be right back") (158). For Kris, on the other hand, "much more translation will need to be done" (159), for example, using special devices like a "stealth gloss" to "sneak a definition…into the English text" of a Hindi local term or culturally specific concept (158). Grunebaume provides several fascinating examples of such terms and how he would handle them when translating for a Western audience in a situation where footnotes or a glossary are not allowed (167–168 fn 2): *juthan*—"leftover food that has been made ritually impure by someone else's having touched it" (161) and *swadeshi*—"literally it means both of one's own country (India) and something made and manufactured in one's own country (India)" (163). The decision-making process outlined for these two cases is very instructive, also for Bible translators, as is Grunebaum's final piece of advice when seeking to work out "difficult conversion problems"—simply, "enthusiasm" (167).

In Chapter 13, "As Translator, as Novelist: The Translator's Afterword," the well-known Japanese novelist and translator Haruki Murakami reflects on his translation of Scott Fitzgerald's novel *The Great Gatsby* as well as the controversial history of Fitzgerald's colorful life.[34] In situating his own rendition in relation to other Japanese versions of the novel, Mukarami observes: "Although numerous literary works might properly be called 'ageless,' no translation belongs in that category…. When a specific translation is imprinted too deeply on the minds of its readers for too long, it runs the risk of damaging the original" (171). He does not elaborate, but a major type of "damage" might be that the translation actually replaces the original in people's minds, and the venerable *King James Version* of the Bible comes to mind here. "It is therefore imperative that new versions appear periodically" for the purpose of linguistic "updating" and to offer "a broader spectrum of choices" (ibid), and this has been proven over the long history of Bible translating. A particular challenge for Murakami was how to deal with "the beauty of Fitzgerald's fluent, elastic prose" (172), "which flows as does a piece of elegant music, and his sentences ride upon this rhythm" (174). In his effort to "recreate that rhythm in Japanese" (175), Murakami "found himself reading sections of the novel aloud as [he] worked, sometimes in the original English and sometimes in Japanese" (ibid).[35] That would be an excellent practice for all Bible translators to emulate when working on prose and, especially, poetic texts. Not only are more translations actually heard than silently read, but a translation that is sensitive to the spoken word as it is heard will be easier to read as well.

Chapter 14, by Ted Goosen, is a tribute to "Haruki Murakami and the Culture of Translation." "Japanese culture is often characterized as a culture of translation" because "the Japanese language of today is the result of translators struggling to match Chinese characters and Japanese words, affixing native pronunciation in some cases, adopting approximations of Chinese pronunciation in others" (183). On the other hand, "the founders of Japanese modern literature tended to be either scholars of Western literature or translators" (ibid). But Murakami went even further, and when creatively tackling the rhythmic prose of *The Great Gatsby* developed a distinctive rhythm of writing drawn from 20th century American jazz. Though deemed "unnatural" by "some Japanese critics," his translations are so popular that "the 'Murakami style' now feels quite normal, especially for those raised on it" since the 1980s (185). Such an idiosyncratic personal style would not be recommended for any translation of Scripture, but a procedure that pays major attention to the "music of language" is one that should definitely be encouraged.

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[33] At the time of publication, the author estimated there to be at least "254 million English speakers and potential readers" in the general region of "South Asia" (156). As the "'associate official language' of India, English is obviously an extremely important bridge language on the continent" (159).

[34] This essay was translated from Japanese by the next essayist, Ted Goosen (ch. 14).

[35] On the other hand, his strategy for "translating Gatsby's per phrase, 'old sport'" (181) was simply to import the expression into Japanese because "try as I might, I could find no Japanese word with similar associations" (182)!

In his case study on "Translating Jacopone da Todi" (ch. 15), Lawrence Venuti addresses the challenge of "Archaic Poetries and Modern Audiences." Venuti is rightly skeptical "as to whether cross-cultural understanding is possible in literary translation, particularly when the foreign text to be translated was produced in a remote historical period" (187). He renders his usual criticism of Eugene A. Nida's early (1964) notion of "equivalent effect" (188), but strangely, does not draw attention to Nida's later (1986) concept of "functional equivalence"[36] when observing that "modern translators have been forced to develop strategies that answer primarily to the *function* which the translations were designed to serve" (194, emphasis added). In any case, Venuti focuses on the difficulty of dealing with archaic poetic forms in translation: "Prosody, in particular, is a repository of literary traditions and practices, so that the translator's effort to imitate somehow the meter or rhythm of an archaic foreign poem cannot simply restore past sounds and listening experiences for readers who do not have sufficient access to the foreign context" (189). Venuti illustrates his argument by fairly critiquing the poetic translation techniques of Ezra Pound.

One possible solution, though only for experienced scholarly translators it would seem, is to create a "stylistic analogue [that] signals the linguistic and literary features of the foreign text in a disjunctive and indirect manner, through the interpretive differences that transform the foreign forms and themes as well as the receiving literature" (191). The problem is that such a rendition would require an equally sophisticated interpretive audience: "Can a translation of an archaic foreign poem be appreciated by readerships who do not necessarily share the interpretation that the translator has inscribed in the text through a stylistic analogue?" This would appear to be the challenge faced also by Bible translators, say, of the Psalms, but hopefully a sufficient hermeneutical framework should have been established for readers/hearers who are familiar with the Scriptures in general and who have been educated as to how to understand these ancient prayer-poems through the teaching ministry of the church.

Venuti exemplifies his own innovative method of approaching these issues by means of a rather detailed comparative study of several lyric renditions from the original Umbrian composed by the medieval Italian poet Jacopone da Todi. He precedes his own experimental versions aimed at creating a "stylistic analogue" with the query: "Will the translations work for an audience of literary scholars and translators who not only have some familiarity with the traditional materials I have used, but can understand (if not accept) the theoretical rationale for my method?" (202). This would appear to constitute a rather small target group indeed. On the other hand, one wonders if Venuti has not set himself too small a target to aim at with the self-imposed scholarly strictures placed upon his methodology. How much of the original poetic technique does a modern audience really need to comprehend in order to evaluate and appreciate (or critique) Venuti's lyric efforts, a sample of which follows (*O papa Bonifazio*, 204–205)?[37]

> My dear Pope Boniface,
> I suffer your disgrace,
> the dreaded malediction
> of excommunication.
>
> You spoke with forkéd tongue
> and deeply I was stung:
> it has to lick my sore
> to show the plague the door;
> because I'm sure my grief
> can't find the least relief
> without the execution
> of your absolution.
>
> Out of grace I beg you,
> say, "Ego te absolvo,"

[36] Technically termed *Skopos* (purpose) theory in functionalist translation theory, which though not specifically named, is clearly embraced and developed rhetorically in Jan de Waard and Eugene A. Nida, *From One Language To Another: Functional Equivalence in Bible Translating* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1986).

[37] The original Umbrian poem is classified as a *lauda*, "a religious song or hymn, designed for a soloist with a chorus and framed in different meters and verse structures" (192). Jacopone da Todi composed over a hundred such poems.

leaving my other fears,
till past this vale of tears.

In "'Ensemble discords': Translating the Music of Scève's Délie" (ch. 16), Richard Sieburth unfolds a rather technical description of his efforts to translate Délie (1544), a celebrated Italian musical poem by the composer Scève, following the three essential categories proposed by the famous Roman politician and philosopher Boethius in his 6th century treatise *De Institutione Musica* (209).[38] One really has to read Sieburth's essay rather closely in order to appreciate his specialist insights as he explains his varied translating procedures; even his figurative description of the translation process itself almost requires a musical mind to fathom: "Translation, like love (or music)—as I have been trying to suggest with Scève—involves being apart together, mutually ingathered by an interval or caesura that, as he puts it…, renders us 'ensemble discords'" (219). Perhaps the ultimate aim of this imagery is to suggest something of the paradox(es) that translation present(s)—for example, the unified looking (and sounding) outcome in the target language, when later assessed by the translator, who realizes all the disjunctions and infelicities that are present when compared with the source language base text. But the good news (if it may be considered as such) is this: The vast majority of those for whom we translate are not translators themselves and/or are unable, on their own, to access the original in order to make any critical evaluation.[39]

In chapter 17, Susan Bernofsky offers many helpful suggestions regarding "Translation and the Art of Revision." She leads off with her main point: "Revision isn't the first thing that comes to mind when we think about creativity and artistic production, but it is nonetheless a crucial part of the writing process" (223). And *translation* involves a complex form of writing—hence also re-writing: "Although we strive to produce translations that look as though they hatched perfectly formed from the translator's skull, generally a great deal of reworking is required" (ibid). Bernofsky, an award-winning literary translator and educator, proceeds to outline her four-stage process of translation-and-revision, concluding: "There is rarely a single perfect solution to any given translation problem, and so the process of revising involves trying out dozens of potential solutions until one of them begins to shimmer in that peculiar way that marks it as the best possible choice" (225). A carefully controlled and documented revision procedure must also be followed in any Bible translation project, due to the sacred nature of the source text, its compound size and complexity, as well as the manifold individual and public use for which the translation is prepared. A common problem facing such projects is the frequent lack of credible "potential solutions" that are generated over time, especially concerning certain key theological terms and controversial passages; on the other hand, the options that do become available may be evaluated by a (hopefully) coordinated team of colleagues rather than a single person, "the translator."

Bernofsky continues with some examples of revision work—her own preceded by several from August Wilhelm Schlegel, "one of the greatest German translators of all time" and a "master of rhythm, tone, and nuance" (225). Special attention is rightly given to the *sound* of the text: "The translation does have to find a rhythmical identity and integrity that will convince readers [especially hearers!] they are encountering a genuine piece of writing…. Revising means listening to a potential text, hearing it amid all the rhythmical detritus of inadequate versions [so that] with each successive draft, the text draws closer to the ideal form it will inhabit when its transformation is complete" (229). In short, "voice is the crux of all translating"—one's inner and outer ears—because "hearing [the text] happens on a non-cognitive level, but approaching [it] cognitively while listening can help" (230).

The translator must work hard to counteract the fact that "style can go soggy in translation," and so "emphasizing and underscoring a text's characteristic attributes [i.e., functionally, if not formally] is crucial to good translation, a way of turning up the volume on a key aspect of a sentence or phrase to solidify the writer's voice in the translation" (ibid), which is thereby complemented by the translator's voice. Finally,

[38] These are *musica mundana* ("the overall harmony of the universe"), *musica humana* ("which unites the incorporeal activity of the reason with the body"), and *musica instrumentalis* ("the actual singing or playing of music") (209).

[39] Of course, Bible translators do want their target audience to thoughtfully, even emotively, respond to their publications, draft versions in particular. However, such popular criticism needs to be adequately informed in the sense that respondents should first be educated with regard to the nature and purpose of the version at hand—as well as some of the difficult choices that had to be made in its production.

Bernofsky offers some excellent advice for all dynamic and creative literary translators, including those who seek to functionally render the varied literature of Scripture: "All translation is transformation. It just isn't possible for a text to work in its new language and context in exactly the same way it worked in the original. When you create a translation of a literary work, you are creating a new set of rules for the text to operate by. This is what revision is for….and yes, somewhere along the line the original text must be forgotten" (233)—though, we might add in the case of Scripture, never completely or for too long a time.[40]

In the final essay (ch. 18), Clare Cavanagh discusses "The Art of Losing: Polish Poetry and Translation." This title reflects the opinion of "many critics" that "losing things is what translators do best," and that "translators of poetry generally get the worst of it" since they must confront "the forms of meaning and the meaning of forms" (234). However, the title actually derives from Elizabeth Bishop's villanelle,[41] "One Art," the first stanza of which reads as follows (235):

> The art of losing isn't hard to master;
> so many things seem filled with the intent
> to be lost that their loss is no disaster.

In this study then, Cavanagh aims "to take a look at what is lost and found when you try to follow the poet's form-creating impulse by re-creating, however imperfectly, the original poem's rhyme and meter" (ibid), with reference to the Polish poet, Stanislaw Baranczak's borrowing of the forms of Bishop's villanelle in his poem "*Plakala w nocy*" ("She Cried That Night").[42] Cavanagh then considers some additional poems (in translation) by Baranczak and several other Polish poets to further illustrate "what's been lost and found in translation" (236)—actually, with special reference to the latter, as particular instances of poetic creative reconstruction are briefly discussed ("the rich Polish tradition of poetic creation from loss," 241). In conclusion, she observes: "Form, substance, and joyful failure: these are the defining elements…both in lyric poetry and in poetic translation. Of course translating poetry is impossible: all the best things are. But the impulse that drives one to try is not so far removed, I think, from the force that sends the lyric poet out time after time to master the world in a few lines of verse…. You try remaking [the original] in your own language, in your own words, in the vain hope of getting it once and for all, of finally making it your own" (244).

Would that all Bible translators were motivated and driven by the same—yea rather, a higher—desire, the impulse of seeking to serve the Word-inspiring Lord of sacred Scripture. For them, when they do try their best, there is no "vain hope" or final failure, for they will find blessing not only in the final version, joyfully produced, but also during the long journey of getting there (Psalm 119:103–105, NIV):

> How sweet are your words to my taste,
> sweeter than honey to my mouth!
> I gain understanding from your precepts….
> Your word is a lamp to my feet
> and a light for my path.

As I hope to have implied in the preceding overview, the diverse essays collected in *In Translation* are both insightful and instructive on many levels for all literary translators, teachers, and researchers, including those who have the gift and the supporting resources to apply some of these principles when tackling biblical poetry. This book, written by professional poets and translation practitioners, is therefore well worth a read by all experienced translators of Scripture and their consultant trainers—ideally, if possible, also by their eventual audiences, by people who will, to one degree or another, evaluate their published poetic renditions, perhaps in close comparison with other versions in which the effort to beautifully and powerfully lyricize the vernacular has not been made.

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[40] Thus, this "forgetting" of the original text pertains mainly to the linguistic *forms* in which the message was expressed; after the message has been re-shaped in the TL, then the translated result must be carefully compared in terms of inscribed *content* and *intent* with that of the source text, which is thereby "remembered" again.

[41] A *villanelle* is "a pastoral or lyrical poem of nineteen lines, with only two rhymes throughout, and some lines repeated" (Concise Oxford Dictionary).

[42] This formal lyric imitation appears in Baranczak's collection, *Chirurgiczna precyzia* (*Surgical Precision*, 1988).