

Communicating and Translating the Bible in New Media for the 21st Century

Robert Hodgson, Jr.*

Introduction: Translation and Culture

When hominoids began first shaking sticks at each other, pounding their chests, stamping their feet, marking territory with fluids and scents, drawing lines in the sand, grunting approvals, hissing and growling about danger, and otherwise signaling thoughts and intentions, someone had to make these messages understandable among individuals and groups who did not share the same sign system. In time, a profession and special kind of communication expert grew up, the dragoman, the ancestor of today's translators and interpreters. From these early beginnings until today, translators and interpreters have mediated between cultures and languages, carrying civilization's mail, as Pushkin said, across boundaries of time, space, and every known form of social organization, including families, tribes, fiefdoms, kingdoms, city states, and nation states.

For most of half a century, an academic discipline called Translation Studies has researched and charted the role of translating and interpreting in history and culture, documenting what is surely one of the richest, least valued, but truly universal stories of our time. Translators and interpreters have invented alphabets, sparked the birth of national languages and literatures, spread scientific and humanistic knowledge, gripped in their hands the reins of political power, fostered religions, and helped write history. And that's just one kind of translating—mediating verbal texts. To that contribution add the influence of translating and interpreting on drawing, painting, illustration, graphic design, music, sculpture, dance, and architecture, as well as film, television, radio and the Internet.

Until modern Translation Studies dug into the subject of translating and interpreting, the story remained largely ignored and invisible, with the exception of

* American Bible Society Nida Institute Dean

a few well-known episodes, mostly from the realm of Bible translation such as Saint Jerome and the Latin Vulgate, Martin Luther and the German Bible, and King James II and his Bible project. Historically, the invisibility of translators and interpreters goes back to a profession with low prestige, poor pay, and little support in academic and cultural institutions. As a matter of habit, few of us one-language North Americans think about the translated texts we read, although from childhood on we digest vast amounts of stories, novels, histories, fables, tales, and poetry that originated in languages other than our mother tongue. Think of classic titles from children's literature, for example, *Grimm's Fairy Tales* and the *Ugly Duckling*. Take the stream of translated literature that flows through our high school and university education—*Around the World in Eighty Days*, *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea*, *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, *Aeneid*, *Faust*, *The Three Musketeers*, *Dante*. Or, take the case of modern mass media: How many of us read or listen to news reports coming across wire services to mass media and recognize these reports as instances of translated and interpreted texts? Even readers of the Bible belong here. We don't often remark on the experience and implications of reading a translated book. In fact, some Bible translations lose their identity as translations and function as pseudo-originals, the King James Bible, for instance.

Translation has left its fingerprints on modern screen and broadcast media, beginning with the 1920s radio programs of evangelist Aimee Semple McPherson and the early 20th century films of D. W. Griffiths, *Intolerance* (1916) for example. Modern film adaptations of Bible stories such as *The Passion of the Christ* or *Joseph the Prince of Egypt* exhibit this same reliance on translation. Every dubbed and subtitled film, every superscripted opera or play, depends on translation.

Translation threads its way through the whole cloth of American religious and political life. The Pilgrims carried with them on the Mayflower a Bible translation known as the Geneva Bible whose translated text and brisk notes set a cornerstone for later American evangelical Christianity. Westward-bound pioneers and Pony Express riders cared translated Bibles with them, thanks to the agents and colporteurs of the American Bible Society, which was founded in May 1816 for the purpose of distributing translated Bibles to the growing American populace. Thanks to translated literature, Thomas Jefferson gave America a sense of architectural style for its public buildings, visible in his home at Monticello, by reading in English the works of Andreas Palladio, an Italian architect of the 16th century. American law

drank deeply from the waters of interpreted and translated legal traditions and texts, ranging from English Common Law and the Magna Charta to Greek, Roman, even ancient near Eastern law codes and writings. The translated Napoleonic Code forms the basis for the laws of the State of Louisiana.

For at least two and one half millennia, translating and interpreting the Bible has contributed to this larger story of human communication, interaction, and acculturation. Perhaps more than any other translated and interpreted text, the Bible has stamped its character on the peoples of Europe and the Americas, not to mention on the peoples within the colonial empires to whom missionaries brought Bible translations. The Bible even reports its version of this larger story with its account of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9), giving us the word “babel” for confused and noisy speech in need of translating and interpreting.

This book belongs to the wider story of translation and culture, though it just treats one aspect of the larger story: translating and interpreting the Bible. And even here, it only takes into account a single side of Bible translating: rendering of the Bible into media other than print.

Our topic is sensitive but timely. Sensitive because to talk about *translating* the Bible into media other than print challenges deeply felt convictions about the nature of translation, about the Bible as a book, about Christianity as a religion of the book, and about the future of professions and academic fields that count on the Bible being a book. Timely because, under the influence of modern Translation Studies, it brings back a mostly invisible side of interpreting and translating the Bible, one that survives as “art history”. Timely, too, because modern media and technology have led to a renaissance of media translations of the Bible.

1. *Lecture One: The Nature of Translation*

Traditional Translation

The Russian linguist Roman Jakobson said that the human behavior we call “translating” stood for three related but different kinds of activities. The first, which he called inter-linguistic translating, refers to the traditional and commonly understood task of replacing a verbal text in one language with a verbal text in

another language: Chapman translated Homer from Greek into English. The second, known as intra-linguistic translating, stands for paraphrasing or rewriting a text that is, replacing a text in one language with a text in a different version, dialect, or register of the same language. Kenneth Taylor in 1971 finished his paraphrase of the American Standard Version, publishing it as the wildly popular *Living Bible*. The American Bible Society's line of graphic novels are examples of such intra-lingual translating.

The third kind, which Jakobson called inter-semiotic translating, replaces texts or information in one sign system or medium with a text or information in another sign system or medium, or even combinations of sign systems and media. Inter-semiotic translating covers activities such as turning a book into a film, a comic, or a graphic novel; it includes transforming scripts and librettos into plays and operas; it covers converting sheet music to voice or instrumentation. It also includes re-presenting narratives in painting, dance, sculpture, and architecture; turning verbal texts into Braille or sign language; and encoding messages in semaphore or Morse code. Simultaneous and consecutive interpreting of lectures, dubbing and subtitling of films, as well as multimedia presentations of texts on CD-ROM, DVD, and Internet belong here as well.

Augusto Ponzio has remarked that translating today has long since jumped over the retaining wall of linguistics and philology, bounding off across a wide-ranging, multidisciplinary prairie and slaking its thirst for tools, theories, and praxis in every imaginable technology, media, academic field, and professional guild. Still, in the popular and traditional mind, translating, especially Bible translating, means inter-linguistic translation. It brings up images of translated verbal texts, preserved on tablets, scrolls, codices, and eventually on a printed page. This traditional view does not much connect translating with film making or the production of comics and graphic novels, much less with the performance of dance and music or the creation of statuary and the building of web page on the Internet.

Post-modern Bible Translation

But in a post-modern world, the Jakobsonian view of translation looks and feels right, and does so for several reasons. Translation, an activity belonging to the complex domain of human communication, should reflect a diversity of

communication models and patterns. These communication models and patterns clearly include what Walter Ong described as secondary orality, the oral culture that broadcast and screen media such as radio, television, films and the Internet have created side by side with traditional book culture. Secondary orality points to forms of literacy and intelligence that process sound, image, motion, color, and perspective, rather than verbal and printed texts. Coupled with these factors comes a new appreciation for the active role that readers and audiences play in the making of meaning within the texts they read or view. Gone the days of passive readers or viewers who represented static targets toward whom bullet-like messages were aimed. Active readers and viewers join in the making of meaning when they read and view; they decide what is relevant, acceptable, and useful to them. In a post-modern, Madison Avenue-driven world, products, especially translated products, must show a high degree of localization and specialization to engage specific audiences and markets. The new mantra is “one size fits one” rather than “one size fits all”. And finally we may note the growing demand globally for media products, including media products based on sacred texts and Scriptures.

Paradoxically enough, these post-modernist forces push media translation into the foreground in ways that take us back to a time before the dawn of the printing press and mass produced Bibles, to a time when people heard a Bible read from the pulpit, staged Passion Plays, stitched biblical scenes and motives into clothing and tapestries, chanted and sung their Psalms, drew, illustrated, and painted from biblical sources, and conceived of private art and public buildings as media for proclaiming biblical narratives and themes.

Inter-semiotic or media translation involve teams, not individuals; it relies on technology and media; it can produce a film, a graphic novel, a comic, a Website as easily as it can produce a dance, a song, a quilt. True enough, it honors traditional best practices, just as inter-linguistic and intra-linguistic translation do. It consults source texts and receives input from linguists, mother tongue speakers, philologists, and Bible experts. Checks and balances will apply along the whole production process to provide quality assurance. But inter-semiotic translation can bring in an artist or illustrator, a choreographer, and a scriptwriter along with musicians, drummers, dancers, and a software programmer. Additionally, an inter-semiotic team will test the reliability of its work not only with the traditional test of adequacy of fidelity, but also with the test of acceptability. Every step of the way, the question

will arise, will the reader, or viewer, or market, or receiving culture or audience welcome, understand, reshape, connect, apply and engage the translation?

Eugene A. Nida set modern translation of the Bible on a new course when he recognized that all translation is local. He fought for the right to place mother tongue translators on every team because he knew that ultimately the success of a translation depended on local acceptance, not on the authority of a church, the power of a Bible society, the marketing savvy of a publisher, or even the skill of a translator. In post-modern Bible translation Nida's insight remains valid. But what does "local" mean in Hip-Hop culture of urban American, in the Manja comic book culture of Japan, in the Internet Café culture of Europe? It probably means that semio-translation teams recruit new kinds of mother tongue speakers – artists, illustrators, film makers, web designers, and musicians.

Israeli scholar Gideon Toury, one of the founders of modern Translation Studies, has said that a translation functions as a translation when a given audience accepts it as such. Publishers, Bible societies, associations of booksellers and distributors, along with denominations, ministries, and churches urgently need to retool their thinking to accommodate this shift toward reader and audience. The street-smart teens of urban America, the wired denizens of Internet cafes, the devotees of Manja comics in Tokyo know which forms of communication and media they trust and which they do not. To authentically walk the streets in urban centers, to engage souls in the malls of suburbia, and to find its way down rural byways, the Bible must go local; it must look and feel more like the graffiti, the comics, the music, the dance, and the art of the urban, suburban, and rural neighborhoods rather than the pulpit Bibles and hymnals of most neighborhood churches.

Lecture One sets out a few examples from the past 2000 years of media Bible translation. It reminds us of a continuous history of translating the Bible into illustrations painting, music, sculpture, architecture, and print. Lecture Two gives a general theory of media translation that accounts for key tasks within research, training, production and evaluation. This chapter draws on, among other things, recent work in semiotics, or the study of signs and how signs create meaning.

2. *Lecture Two: A Short History of Bible and Media*

Sacred and Syncretic

From the time that Jews and Christians decided that their sacred stories were worth archiving, preserving, interpreting, and repurposing they translated them textually and visually. The history of the textual translation of the Bible is well documented and does not concern us here. The history of the visual translation of the Bible — its semio-translation — is virtually unknown as a subject of translation, having been subsumed into fields such as the history of art, music, dance, film, theater, architecture, and so forth. But to speak of the visual translation or semio-translation of the Bible should not surprise us. How could Christian antiquity not have translated into drawing, painting, music, dance, sculpture, and architecture the ever-popular stories about Noah and the Ark, the Sacrifice of Isaac, David and Goliath, the Exodus, Jonah and the Whale, Jesus the Good Shepherd, the Last Supper, Mary Magdalene, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday? Similarly, how could modern Christianity not bring the same stories back to life with translations for film, comics, graphic novels, radio, television, and the Internet? After all, the ancients knew as well as us moderns the power of the arts. In Goriée’s words, the arts “can materialize and signify one message in more than one way; and by appealing to different senses, inter-semiotic translation effectively bridges the gap between different ‘languages’—aesthetic, political, philosophical, cognitive, electronic, etc.”

True, the Bible that holds these stories looks very much like a book; it is even called *The Good Book* and *Holy Scripture* to remind us of this side of things. But open the covers of the Bible and begin to read it out loud and you cross a threshold that takes you to a mysterious and majestic place called the Holy Land. This is a place, not of the written and printed word, but of living clans, tribes, villages, merchants, princes, paupers, story tellers, artisans, performers, priests, and prophets who handed-down narratives shot through with images, sounds, smells, movements, colors, and emotions, along with the codes and norms for their usage. In short, the Bible is a syncretic text, to use a term coined by semiotician Siri Nergaard. It is constituted by signs systems of all sorts, not just words.

The visual language of biblical narratives paints pictures of lambs and goats, of tents and temples, of gates and gardens, of serpents and sinners, of caravans and

crosses. You can listen to the blasts of Joshua's trumpets and Jericho's crashing walls, or pick out David's furtive footfalls as he sneaks into King Saul's camp. Your ear will pick up the grim chatter of Maccabean soldiers grinding war swords and spears to razor-shape edges. Smoke from the fires raging in Jerusalem in 70 AD will fill your nostrils; you'll long remember the spicy aromas escaping from jars of frankincense and sweet balm and the brisk fragrance from baskets of rosemary and thyme and garlic; you will want to linger in the fruity airs wafting from tubs of freshly pressed grapes and olives. Your fingers will press against the hairy textures of wool and the fine threads of linen and silk. You will take stock of a biblical bestiary with all manner of flying, swarming, swimming, prowling creatures. No doubt about it. Within its covers the Bible houses a multimedia production studio stocked with a thousand years of material culture just aching to be translated.

But none of this material culture would really matter except that the biblical stories have religious messages that tell passionately and variously about God's coming and going with the women and men who populated the stages of the ancient Mediterranean world. And these religious messages did not remain textual and verbal either. Rather, they rendered themselves into various sign systems. God rescued the Israelites from Pharaoh's army, and Miriam dances. God lays out the inscrutable divine will on tablets of stone. Israel escapes from Egypt and commemorates this event with a ritual meal serving lamb, bitter herbs, and unleavened bread. The Temple choirs sing to God and record their hymns in a book of Psalms. God delivers the Maccabees from their Syrian enemies and the Maccabees construct a tall monument that can be seen for miles. Paul dictates letters. The author of the Apocalypse sees visions and records them; Jesus breaks bread and drinks wine to commemorate his death. Jesus' followers use water to help people turn from sin and toward God. Preeminently, they chose the sign of the cross to stand for Jesus' saving death and to capture in one image the passion and death of Jesus. To preserve and record an oral tradition they chose scrolls and invented codices.

In short, the Bible tickles every sense, prods our imagination, churns up our memory, and sparks artistic sensibilities. No Bible reader has ever left the story of Noah and the Ark, without picturing in the mind's eye what that strange ship's company looked like, and how they got on with each other; or, turned from the story of David and Goliath without wondering about the creak of Goliath's armor, the

thud of David's stone on the giant's head, or crashing sound of Goliath's fall. Who has not heard the hammer's collision with the spikes that nailed Jesus to the cross? Who has not wondered what shrine or sanctuary the apostle Paul saw when he entered Athens and bristled at the sight of a city celebrating its Greek and Roman gods?

Bible Translation and Art History

Because the Bible is both sacred Scripture and syncretic text (today we might say a multimedia production waiting to happen) we cannot so easily separate, as is usually done, the history of print translation from the history of artistic, media, and cultural representations of the Bible in pictures, music, dance, architecture, and fabrics. Hand-written and printed Bibles as well as artistic and cultural creations of biblical narratives all belong to a communication strategy called translation. The one represents inter-linguistic, the other inter-semiotic translation.

In the history of Christianity, both forms of translation have served common purposes: spiritual edification, worship, value formation, domestication, localization, education, and entertainment. Both have in common a dependence upon sources, a need for checks and balances to assure adequacy and acceptability, a history of powerful traditions of interpretation and usage, and an awareness of audience involvement. With regard to audience involvement, we know it expresses itself in the power of the purse, the framing rituals and received faith of church-goers, the polity of a prince, the threat of the iconoclast, and even (today) the click of a television remote control.

For most of its history, the Bible's audience consisted not of readers, but of auditors and spectators. Church-goers heard the sacred stories from the pulpit at mass and in sermons and homilies. But on a day-to-day basis, they encountered the world of the Bible and its narratives in their work-songs, hymns, passion plays, domestic arts, grottoes, pilgrimage sites, public buildings, mosaics, reliefs, statuary, and relics. In short, what we routinely call the subject of art history really represents a popular presentation of the Bible to a non-reading audience, a presentation that was arguably a primary point of contact with the Bible for many Christians.

In short, the material and spiritual culture of Christendom drew upon the Bible in the Jakobsonian manner, using inter-linguistic, intra-linguistic and inter-semiotic

translation to confer the meaning of the sacred stories from the Bible on words, sounds, images, motions, colors, lines, and shapes. The Bible has come down to us today using virtually every medium and technology known to us. And in some cases, the Bible has created its own medium, for example, the ancient codex which is the ancestor of the modern bound book. No surprise then that the Bible has helped shaped the modern broadcast media of radio, television and film. Who can doubt the effect of the Bible on Hollywood production studios, most recently Dreamworks and Icon Productions, with their films *Joseph the Prince of Egypt* and *The Passion of the Christ*, respectively.

The inter-semiotic translation of the Bible is a rich story, even in broad outline as presented here.

The Oral Tradition

Most Bible experts accept the view that large portions of the Scriptures originated in oral traditions handed down by word of mouth for generations before someone wrote them down. While the oral tradition has not survived, it has left its fingerprints. When a Jew recites the Passover Haggadah or the Shema; when a Christian repeats the words of consecration at the Eucharist they each revive that oral tradition. The apostle Paul depended on this oral tradition when he wrote about key elements of early Christian faith, especially the fundamental teaching about the death and resurrection of Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:1-9) that later formed the basis of the Gospels. Widespread and vigorous, this oral tradition remained a living part of Christian life until well in the 2nd century AD.

Handwritten Texts

Handwritten texts represent one of the first, if not the first strategy for recording and interpreting the oral traditions for biblical narratives. These handwritten and hand-copied texts, called manuscripts, constitute the first phase of the source texts that historically Jews and Christians have identified as sacred Scriptures. From early on, Jews and Christians privileged the written form of the biblical narrative, deferring to them in worship, education, and study. The earliest texts from the Hebrew Bible or Old Testament stem from a collection called the Dead Sea Scrolls, dating to the 2nd and 3rd centuries B.C. Here is a sample of the book of Psalms.

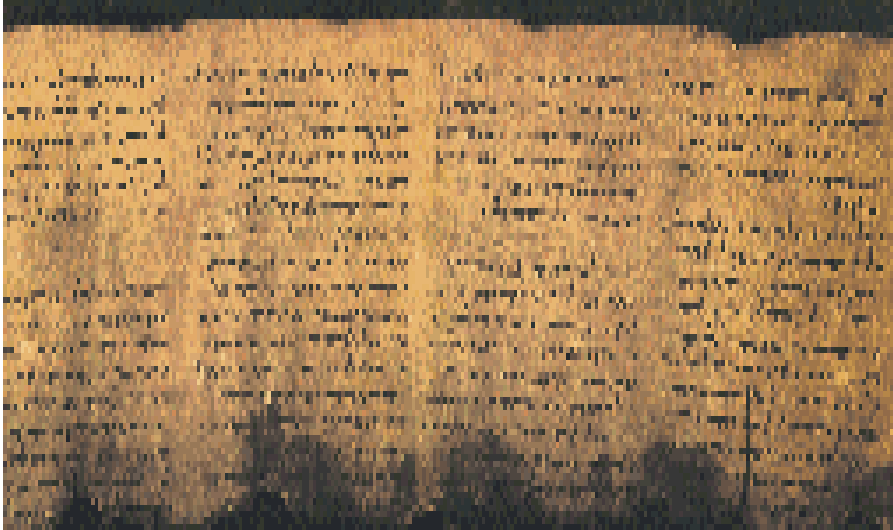


Figure 1. Dead Sea Scroll of Psalms

Although Christians prized the oral traditions from Jesus and his first followers, they knew that for practical reasons they need to write things down. So from the middle of the 1st century, letters came from the hand of the apostle Paul and Gospels from the hands of evangelists. Of all these early Christian writings, no original copy has survived. Scholars date our earliest examples of complete manuscripts or hand-copied Bibles to the middle of the 4th century. But plenty of fragments from

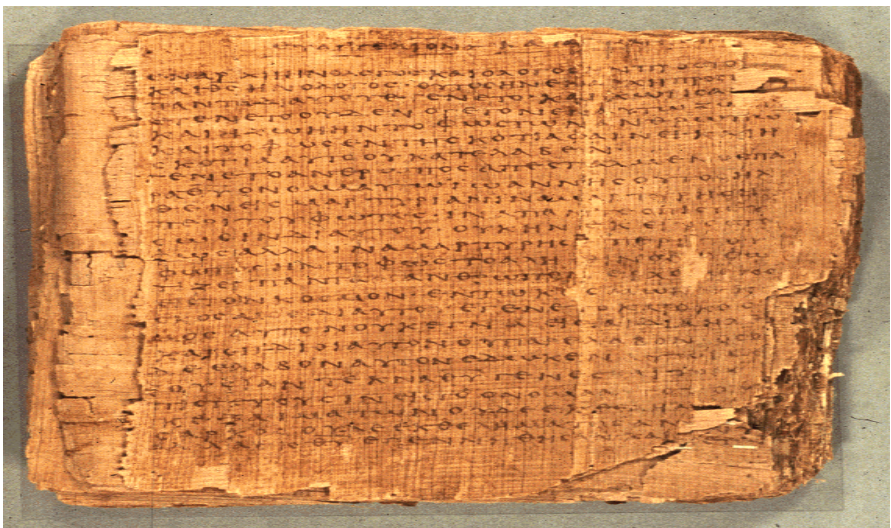


Figure 2. Papyrus 66

the earlier period remain, giving eloquent witness to the role that writing played in the transmission and preservation of the biblical text. Here for instance is the Bodmer Papyrus 66, which dates to the 2nd century A.D. and contains texts from the Gospels.

While these early Jewish or Christian manuscripts do not rank as art, they show great technical detail and expertise. Skilled artisans cut and prepared the writing surface of papyrus, leather, and copper, then ruled and inscribe the lines and columns for writing. Professional writers called scribes then copied out the texts or took down dictation from the author. These scribes played an important role in the composition of the letters that the apostle Paul wrote. Paul, for example, dictated his letter to the Romans to a professional scribe named Tertius (Romans 16:22), a practice he followed in other letters according to a common interpretation of such texts as 1 Corinthians 1:1 (Sosthenes), 2 Corinthians 1:1 (Timothy), Philippians 1:1 (Timothy), Colossians 1:1 (Timothy), 1 Thessalonians 1:1 (Silas and Timothy), 2 Thessalonians 1:1 (Silas and Timothy), Philemon 1 (Timothy).

Drawings

At the same time that Jews and Christians wrote and copied out the sacred narratives, they turned to other media and technologies to represent the biblical narratives. The decorative arts, especially wall drawings and illustrations figure among the earliest examples. The examples below come from the town of Dura Europas, an ancient trading center and military outpost that the Romans refortified as part of their Syrian defensive line against Persia. Dura Europas thrived until the 3rd century A.D., when a Persian army destroyed it. Rediscovered during the First World War by French military engineers looking for strategic sites to place artillery, Dura Europas has yielded to the archeologist's spade an amazing variety of ruins from public and private buildings. Among its reconstructed ruins lie a synagogue and a Christian house-church. In the first, archaeologists discovered and restored walls embellished with drawing of biblical scenes. Below is a scene from Exodus 12, depicting the Exodus from Egypt and showing the Israelites walking out of the city of Rameses, loaded with booty from their Egyptians captors. This illustration and a half dozen others cover the wall of a room that housed a niche or small

cupboard in which the Jewish community kept the sacred Torah scrolls. The room functioned as a place for worship and education, providing an exhibit of key narratives from the Jewish Scriptures the congregations could study as they listened to the Scriptures being read and explained. We can easily imagine a Jewish leader reading or explaining these biblical narratives and gesturing in the direction of a wall painting serving as a memory aide and illustration.



Figure 3. Dura Europas

Not long after the death of Jesus in 33 A.D., Christians traveled to Rome and planted a Christian fellowship there, most likely in a district called Transtibertina, a local name which means something like “on the other (west) side of the Tiber River.” In the Transtibertina district, Christians would have found a large and already established Jewish population consisting of artisans, shopkeepers, day workers, tradesman, soldiers, and freed slaves. Initially, these Christians used their homes as places of assembly and worship, but they also discovered a vast system of abandoned underground galleries and passageways called the catacombs that Rome’s city administrators had abandoned. Christians used these catacombs in Rome, and similar ones in Naples and Alexandria, as places to assemble for worship, fellowship, protection, and for burying their dead. If we imagine the Christians celebrating Lord’s Supper in the catacombs, then we can understand why

in the catacomb of Domitilla we would find one of the first visual representations of the Lord's Supper. Pictorially presenting Jesus and the Twelve Apostles, this painting gave a visual reference point as Christians celebrated the ritual and listed to textual accounts and verbal explanations of the Last Supper from, for example, 1 Corinthians 11:17-25; Matthew 26:26-30; Mark 14:22-26; Luke 22:14-23. We can easily sense the power of a visual representation of Jesus at table with his friends, forming the backdrop to an early Christian celebration of the Lord's Supper. In the same catacomb, one of the earliest depictions of Jesus appears as part of a scene representing Jesus as the Good Shepherd, a wide-spread characterization of Jesus also known from the Gospel of John 10:1-21. Famously, Jesus appears as a beardless youth, dressed in the Roman fashion of the day, surrounded by sheep and carrying a lamb across his shoulders. Remarkable in both catacomb examples is that Christians not only borrowed from the Romans their technical skills in painting and illustrations, but also used Roman models for Jesus and his followers, showing them as beardless, youthful, and dressed in Roman outerwear.



Figure 4. Last Supper



Figure 5. Jesus the Good Shepherd

Illustrated Manuscripts

In the course of time, Christians and Jews recognized the power of combining the textual and the visual representation of biblical stories and began producing manuscripts that blended word and image into one artistic and narrative whole. Some of the more elaborate of these pictorial manuscripts featured a gold paint that glowed in the dark (*illuminare* in Latin, whence the notion of illuminated manuscripts). The images and illustrations did not just decorate a text, but served as a visual and non-discursive tool to communicate important messages from the narrative to the reader and viewer. Most Christians in this early period of the Church could not read so their leaders commissioned illustrated biblical manuscripts to work around the general illiteracy of the times, to communicate along visual pathways, to accent and vivify messages that needed more than a verbal representation, and to integrate the visual, material, and popular culture of the day into the presentation of the biblical message. The Alba Manuscript from 15th century A.D. Spain represents not only a coming together of textual and visual arts but also an attempt to reconcile Jewish and Christian cultures in Spain. The patrons of this project hoped to bring Jews and Christian together over a Bible text featuring the

most exquisite calligraphy and symbology of the time. They hoped to win at least tolerance, if not admiration for the Jews from Spanish princes and prelates. True, the princes and prelates might not read Hebrew, but surely they would find grounds for admiration and respect in a Hebrew text whose visual artistry matched the best of their own schools. Sadly, this plan misfired and Spain's rulers forced Jews to leave Spain later in the century. But the Alba Manuscript remains as strong witness to the prestige and power enjoyed by the illuminated biblical manuscript in the late Middle Ages.



Figure 6. Alba Manuscript

From the early Middle Ages onwards Christians treated the biblical text as a story to be told in word and pictures. Two of the most famous examples come from the Celtic Christian church of Ireland in the 8th and 9th centuries A.D.: The Book of Kells and the Lindisfarne Gospels, respectively. Missionaries to Ireland stood before a double challenge as they preached the Gospel to the Celtic tribes. On the one hand, Celtic culture was oral and had no written literature. On the other hand, the missionaries brought the Gospel with them in a written language, namely Latin. How then to evangelize an oral Celtic culture with a written Latin Bible text? Part of the answer lay in the willingness of the Irish missionaries to tap into the brilliant

visual resources that the Celts had developed: fine geometric patterns, brilliant colors, whimsical animals. These missionaries learned to “read” the visual language of the Celts and then used it to make the unfamiliar Latin Bible familiar by floating the sacred text on a virtual sea of images, drawings, shapes, knots, birds, and animals. In the first illustration from the Book of Kells, a carpet page with four squares depicts the four Evangelists and does so with a combination of Celtic whimsy and Christian tradition. The evangelists turn into figures of a lion, an ox, a human, and an eagle. In the second illustration, which is the first page of the Gospel of Luke, the letters, colors, design are so intimately woven into the page as to form a single multimedia representation of the biblical narrative.

Architecture

But it was not only the visual arts that transplanted biblical narratives into popular culture and made them accessible to viewers. The building arts easily incorporated the Bible into its repertoire of compositions and styles. Who could imagine a Gothic cathedral without portals, windows, apses, and naves running over with biblical narratives? Even as early as

Dura Europas, architectural composition and biblical narrative go hand in hand. The above- mentioned Torah niche and surrounding wall of biblical images in the



Figure 7. Book of Kell



Figure 8. Lindesfarne Gospel

synagogue of Dura Europas create an architectural space reserved for holding the Torah scrolls and displaying a tableau of biblical stories.

Similarly Christians let the translation of biblical narratives dictate, inform and inhabit architectural space, and they did so in a great variety of ways. The Church of Saint Apollonaris the New in Ravenna, Italy reveals the strong influence of biblical narratives that transferred their stories to space, composition, and design. Saint Apollonaris show how architects made room for the visual display of stories on the aisles, vaults, and other surfaces of the church. In a longitudinal section of the church, we see how biblical narratives and characters, aligned along vertical and horizontal axes, become integrated into the architecture to tell a panoramic story of the Bible.



Figure 9. Torah Nich

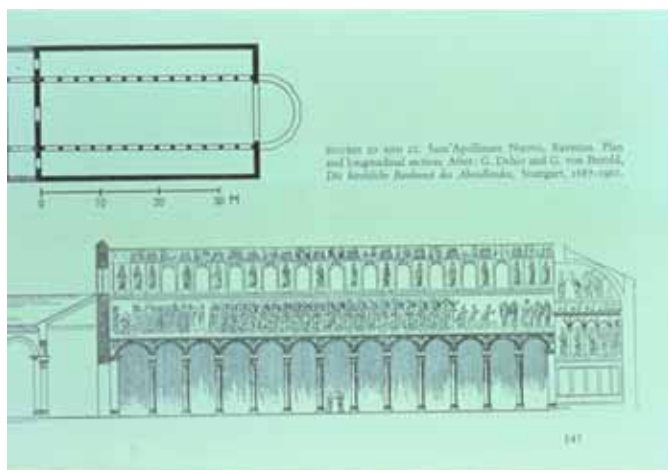


Figure 10. Saint Apollonaris the New

Performing and Fiber Arts

At the same time that visual and architectural arts translated biblical narratives, so too did performing and fiber arts. Musical reproduction of biblical narrative played a role in Jewish and Christian faith even before textual representation of these narratives. The Song book of Judaism, the Psalter, consists of 150 hymns whose public and out loud singing and chanting rather than their silent and private reading has always been a primary mode of presentation. The New Testament refers to music, most likely Jewish music, on several occasions

(Revelation 5:12; 15:3). These texts suggest that Jews and Christians both esteemed music as a medium for representing Bible stories. By the 6th century, Christians had developed models of music that did not depend on Jewish ones, for example the plainsong chant, here illustrated in Choir Book from a Dominican monastery. Note the blending of many media: visual illustration for the eye, notes for the melody to reach the ear, and texts to embody the words so the eye could follow.

From ancient times to modern ones, dancers have performed biblical narratives. Miriam danced (Exodus 15:20) to celebrate the crossing of the Reed Sea, a narrative captured in Exodus 15. And into modern times dance continues to serve Jews and Christians as a medium for



Figure 11. Dominican Song Book



Figure 12. Miriam's dance on a quilt

expressing the message of biblical texts, for example, this representation of Miriam's dance on a quilt by Jewish artist Marilyn Belford.

Modern ballet presents one of the most compelling renditions of the parable of the prodigal son in the Sergei Prokofiev production of the same name. Premiering in Paris in the spring of 1929, the ballet lasted scarcely more than half an hour. But its choreography, costuming, and scenario set a gold standard for artistic treatments of biblical stories. The ballet introduced one of the great roles in modern dance, the Siren, representing the prostitute with whom the younger son consorted in a single verse in the biblical story. In the ballet, the Siren's scene occupies fully 1/3 of the total dramatic time. The Prodigal Son Ballet shows the kinds of transformations that occur when biblical texts move not just from one language to another but from one medium to another.



Figure 13. Prodigal Son Ballet

Domestic and fiber arts have since ancient times “performed” biblical narratives. In the African-American tradition of quilting, biblical symbols, characters, even whole narratives come to life, as in this Harriet Power's (1837-1911) piece of stitchery.



Figure 14. African American Quilt



Figure 15. Jewish Quilt

Contemporary Jewish fiber arts maintains this connection between domestic and fiber arts and representation of biblical narratives. Here we see a piece sewn in honor of the Jewish holiday called Tu B'shevat

An Example from Korea

One way of testing this hypothesis about the visual representation of the Bible is to look at the colonial and missionary experience of the 15th century onwards. No sooner had missionaries planted the cross, circulated Old World translations, and begun to create New World translations than the indigenous peoples transferred the new faith into local and vernacular forms of popular and decorative art. There is a famous story of a Spanish conquistador whose encounter with an Inca ruler ended with the ruler throwing down on the ground a copy of a Spanish Bible translation that he had been given for inspection. Holding up the Bible to his ears and then shaking it, the prince threw it from him in disgust, saying, "This Bible does not speak." We sense that the Inca people expected a Bible to have multiple channels for communication.

To take an example from modern-day Korean, where Protestant Christianity took root around the end of the 19th century. In the 1970s some Korean Bible scholars developed an approach to Christianity and culture known as *minjung* theology. In this approach, theologians turned less to the traditional religious and philosophical traditions of Asia as a framework for interpreting the Bible, and more to the popular folk religio-cultural traditions of Korea. In this context, the traditional Korean mask-dance emerged as a cultural form that could interpret the Bible, particularly its teachings on poverty, oppression and injustice. Christian student activists of this period combined the tradition of the mask-dance and the Magnificat or Song of Mary from Luke 1:46-55. They performed the Magnificat in traditional costume giving new meaning to the word of Mary: "My heart praises the Lord; my soul is glad because of God my Savior ... He has stretched out his might arm and scattered the proud with all their plans. He has brought down the mighty kings from their thrones, and has lifted up the lowly."

This short history of representing the Bible in history raises does not even deal with modern representation of the Bible on radio, television, and film, media that bring the biblical narratives within reach of millions of people around the world. But our few examples have raised the important questions, for example, in what sense can we speak of a dance or quilt as a translation? What would the source text be for a quilt or a film or a cathedral's Bible-rich portals, naves and transepts? In what sense can we measure the fidelity of such compositions to the biblical narratives? Should



Figure 16. Korean Mask Dance

we even do so? Who is the audience for such representations? A single wealthy patron who commissioned the piece: or all the viewers across the ages? What makes such a presentation of the Bible acceptable? How does each medium reshape the narrative, or even change it? What does the notion of “text” come to mean in this environment? Is it something printed, immobile, fixed on a page in a single medium, or is it something more fluid, more syncretic, that is, something that embodies and requires many media to find fullest expression at a given moment in time? What does the notion of audience mean in such an environment? Clearly more than just a reader. What is the key message of a biblical narrative reported in a quilt or a dance? How has this medium opened up the key message of the narrative in ways not possible in print?

All of these questions presupposed a single common question: what method or methodologies do we employ as we move a biblical narrative from one language to another, from one medium to another, and from one culture and time to another culture and time. The mother of all translation and communication methodologies is a discipline called semiotics, or the study of signs. We turn now to a short discussion of signs and semiotics as they bear on the elements of media translation and shed some light on the questions raised above.

3. *Lecture Three: Toward a Theory of Media Translation of the Bible*

Semiotics, Meta-language, and Translation

It is all well and good to say with Roman Jakobson that, from a linguistic point of view, we are doing translation no matter if we are rewriting a text in the same language, transplanting it to another language, or adapting it to the screen. But a linguistic point of view does not explain how moving information within one language, or from one language to another represents the same kind of translational behavior as adapting a text to the screen. So we must find another discipline to give us a single theoretical model that actually makes this claim transparent at a conceptual level while at the same time providing guidelines and principles that can guide production and practice. Also, it is one thing to say that we are doing translation no matter if we go from a Greek source text to an English target text; or from a source in literary Russian to a target text in a Russian dialect; or from a novel to a film. But it is quite another to place all three processes within a single theory or conceptual framework that adequately explains why they share the similarity we call translation but show clear differences in process and end product.

The field of study that offers such a theory and model is called semiotics, a term that comes from the Greek *semeion* “sign.” Classicists know the term well from, for example, Greek medical writings where it means a symptom of a disease. Bible scholars know it from, for example, the Gospel of John, where it denotes the miracles of Jesus as actions pointing to the power of God (John 2.11). Modern semiotics has many varieties, but all go back to the work of three scholars: Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913), Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914), and Charles William Morris (1901-1979). Peirce’s work has particularly captured the attention of researcher for its many applications to translation theory and practice of all kinds. Today, a growing consensus asserts the value of Peirce’s semiotics as a general theory of translation in the sense that Jakobson understood the term (inter-linguistic, intra-linguistic, inter-semiotic).

Broadly speaking, semiotics provides a meta-language for translation, that is, it gives a structured way of talking about translation. It describes, predicts, and analyzes elements of translation. And it does so without devaluing one or the other

kind. In a semiotic model we would not say, “Well, that’s a paraphrase, not translation” or “Come now, that’s a film adaptation, not a translation”. Semiotics also works particularly well as a meta-language for translation because it handles complex signs and sign systems as easily as single signs. It can explain how we make meaning and how we translate whether we are dealing with single words, sentences, paragraphs, films, architecture, dance or music.

The application of semiotics to translation goes beyond its function as a meta-language. It explains perennial problems of meaning, particularly translated meaning. It is particularly useful for explaining why signs or set of signs mean different things to different readers and viewers, even within the same language and culture. For example, why would a simple utterance or combination of lexical signs such as “I’ll take a cup of coffee with room” make perfect sense in mid-town Manhattan, but seem ill-formed anywhere else in the English-speaking world? Or why do different viewers have different interpretations of a film such as Mel Gibson’s *The Passion of the Christ* or painting such as da Vinci’s *Mona Lisa* when they are looking at the same object under similar conditions? Semiotics accounts in a coherent way for the complex changes in meaning that take place when information travels from single language (say English) or medium (say a book) to another language and medium in the process called translation. Finally, semiotics gives a much needed and dynamic corrective to a widespread but altogether too limited view that treats meaning as a semantic kernel locked inside things (images, sounds, words), whose interpretation or translation requires a translator only to crack open the shell and extract the meaning.

Like any theoretical model, semiotics consists of a set of basic features or conceptual building blocks. They consist of 1) a set of philosophical categories, 2) an approach to logical thinking based on these categories, 3) a treatment of reality in terms of signs and 4) a process of meaning-making called semiosis; and a commitment to pragmatism or engagement.

Categories

The practice of setting up philosophical categories to explain how the mind organizes reality goes back at least to the Greek philosopher Aristotle (384-322 B.C.). In this practice, philosophers and logicians infer that the mind sets up mental

spaces or categories that we humans use to sort out all the sense impressions that pour into our minds from the outside world via our five senses of sight, sound, taste, touch, and smell. The categories work like sorting boxes into which the mind routes sense impressions so that the mind can go about its work of logically processing the impressions, turning them into thoughts, propositions, and value judgments and then sparking an appropriate action response from us.

Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) spelled out 10 such categories: substance, quality, quantity, relation, where, when, position, having, action, passion. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), the German philosopher, postulated four sets of categories for the mind: quantity, quality, relation, and modality. In the Kantian view, for example, my nose and eyes register a billowing cloud of smoke and transfers these sense impressions to my mind which in turn assigns them to a category called relation, specifically that kind of relation that determines causes and effects. My mind processes this information and determines that the smoke points logically to fire. Semiotics works with just three categories, thus simplifying the way we envision thinking, reasoning, and meaning-making. They are called Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness. Think of each category as a step taken by the mind as it processes raw feelings, sense impressions, and intuitions (Firstness); connects them to objects of our experience (Secondness); and then draws conclusions and states rules, guidelines, and laws (Thirdness). In short, the three categories explain in a simplified but pragmatic way how the mind moves sense impressions to certitude, truth, and habits of mind and action.

Firstness describes the present moment especially as captured by the realm of feelings. It "... stands for unanalyzed, instantaneous, immediate feeling: direct 'suchness' dependent on nothing else beyond itself for its comprehension. For example, Firstness is experienced in...the feeling of acute pain, an electric shock, a thrill of physical delight, the sensation of redness or blackness, the piercing sound of a train whistle, a penetrating odor.... Firstness is thus the idea of the timeless present instant experienced as 'pure emotion of the *tout ensemble*'" You experience Firstness when you read a thermometer calibrated in degrees of centigrade but only know a Fahrenheit scale. If you read that the temperature is 16 degrees centigrade you experience Firstness as a raw number without any reference point in your experience. You also experience Firstness when you look at a text written in a set of characters you don't understand, say Chinese or Arabic, and experience their

“strangeness” as compared with the Roman characters and texts you normally read.

Firstness turns up throughout the stories of the Bible wherever we read narratives full of raw feelings, emotions, and non-mediated experience. Concrete examples come immediately to mind: the erotic passion of the Song of Songs, the angst of Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Paul during God’s appearance to them in the so called Epiphany stories (Exodus 3:1-22; Isaiah 6:1-13; Jeremiah 1:4-10; Ezekiel 2:1-3:27; Acts 9:1-19; Acts 22:6-16; Acts 26:12-18), Saul’s madness and jealousy (1 Samuel 18:6-16); Paul’s “Traenenbrief” (angry letter) in Corinthians (1:12-6:13). The following chart lays out qualities, examples, and Bible references for Firstness:

Firstness:	Qualities	Examples	Bible
	Feelings and emotions	Falling in love; betrayal; death; angst	Song of Songs; Hosea’s wife (Hosea 2:1-13); David’s dirge for Saul and Jonathan (2 Samuel 1:17-27); angst of the call narratives (Isaiah 6:1-13)
	Powerful first sense impressions	Shock, pain, amazement	Fall of Jerusalem (Lamentations 1:1-22); discovery of empty tomb (Mark 16:1-8 and parallels)
	States of Mind	Ecstasy, madness, visions, status and identity	Ecstatic dance (1 Samuel 19:18-24); vision (Revelation 1:9-20); status and identity of a chosen people (2 Samuel 7:1-17)
	Oriented to Present	Here and now	John 20:1-31 (present tense verbs)

Secondness looks back from the present to the past and adds the dimension of otherness. It connects a present, unmediated feeling or experience of Firstness with “another,” that is, with a concrete object or event (a Second). This notion of

otherness involves “...two-sided consciousness”, the experience of action and reaction, stimulus and response, change and resistance to change. The idea of hitting and getting hit is a true Second, since it contains the elements of polarity, interaction, comparison and struggle. While a First is a potentiality, a possibility, ‘merely something that *might* be realized’, a Second is a hard fact, ‘an occurrence... something that *actually* takes place.... All knowledge of the factual world and the more practical aspect of human life—such as opening a door, making a phone call, and kicking a football—are Seconds.’ To return to our thermometer example: When you look at a thermometer scale in the familiar degrees Fahrenheit and read 50 degrees you experience Secondness because your experience provides you with a correlate, a Second, for the raw number. You relate the number to air temperature that is chilly but not cold. Or in the case of the non-Roman characters and text, you experience Secondness when someone says to you that you are looking at the Arabic language version of *Arabian Nights*.

In the Bible we find Secondness embedded in historical narratives (Joshua, Judges) that tell about how Israel applied its Firstness (status as an elected people) to the conquest of the other nations; in narratives laying out the conflict between Cain and Abel (Genesis 4:1-16), David and Saul (1 Samuel 18:6-31:13); in apocalyptic narratives about the struggle of good against evil (Revelation 13:1-21:8); in Paul’s letters that deal with his opponents; in stories of polarity, change and resistance to changes such as the dynastic histories of Israel and Judea and the Passion narratives of the Gospels.

The following chart sets out qualities, examples, and biblical references for Secondness:

Secondness: Qualities	Examples	Bible
Otherness; change, polarity, and struggle; two way consciousness and communication	Conquest and defeat; wars and social conflict; consciousness of another; dialogue and debate; family conflicts; wars	Joshua, Judges, and 1 and 2 Maccabees; Creation accounts; parables, conflict stories, miracles. 3 John (Gaius versus Diotrephes and Demetrius); Joseph and

	and military campaigns	his brothers (Genesis 37); Passion Narratives; Psalms (dialogue)
Action and reaction; knowledge of factual world	Response to need; world views	Collection for Jerusalem (2 Cor 8-9); life out of common fund (Acts 4:32-37); Signs of the Times (Luke 12:54-56)
Hard facts; occurrences		The Flood (Genesis 7); Ecclesiastes 3 (A time for everything)
Oriented to Past	Good old days	Kerygma (1 Corinthians 5:1-11)

The category of Thirdness takes us into the future and beyond the “the vague generality of Firstness...and the definite nature of Secondness... [to] continuity, the rule of feeling and action by general principles. Since these principles provide logical explanations, all intellectual activity is a Third. Logical thought, Thirdness creates orderliness, law, and regularity.... Since it is concerned with continuity, Thirdness is future-oriented and permits us to predict what is to be, and to adapt our attitude accordingly...” To return to our example of a thermometer...When you read the scale in degrees Fahrenheit, note that the air temperature is chilly, and then conclude, for example, that this reading and air temperature are customary and predictable for this time of year, you have Thirdness in the form of a rule general statement. In the case of the Arabic text of Arabian Nights, you experience Thirdness when you are able with regularity to read the text yourself because you know the rules and conventions governing the language. In the Bible, narratives with this quality of Thirdness would include Proverbs, the Holiness code of Leviticus, the Ten Commandments, and the Sermon on the Mount. The following chart lays out qualities, examples, and biblical references for Thirdness:

Thirdness	Qualities	Examples	Bible
	Orderliness	Lists, tables,	New Temple (Ezekiel

	maps, charts, blueprints	40:1-48:35); New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:1-22:5) ; 1 Chronicles 1:1-9:44)
Regularity	Succession, predictability	Call of Twelve Apostles (Mark 3:13-19);
Generalizing	Wisdom, advice, practical	Proverbs, Job,
Authority	Laws, rules, codes, norms	10 Commandments (Exodus20:1-17); Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7); Holiness Code (Leviticus 19-26); Deuteronomic Code;
Future oriented	Predictions, hypotheses, apocalyptic	Daniel, Revelation

Logic

Using the three categories, semiotics develops an approach to logic, that is, the process by which the mind moves from first impressions to well formed conclusions and complex arguments, and from known information to new information. Translators follow these same rules when weighing choices and making decisions. Classically speaking, semiotics wants to know how the mind moves from a premise to a conclusion. But semiotics breaks with the classical tradition in the matter of logic just as it did in the matter of the categories. It recognizes the classical syllogisms of deductive and inductive reasoning, but adds a third syllogism called abductive reasoning. It is this third kind of reasoning that bears especially on translation.

In deductive reasoning we begin with a rule, state a specific case, and end up with a conclusion:

Rule: All the cars in the parking lot are Mercedes.

Case: This car is from the parking lot.

Result: This car is a Mercedes.

In a translational context we could say:

Rule: All the statements in the Sermon on the Mount exhibit Jesus' authority.

Case: This statement is from the Sermon on the Mount.

Result: This statement exhibits Jesus' authority.

Deductive reasoning does not create new knowledge, but only amplifies, applies and expands what we already know, bringing a general rule to bear on a specific case. Its conclusions are necessarily true. The premise or rule in a deductive syllogism, representing a generalizing statement, is an example of Thirdness. In semiotic terms we call such a generalizing statement a symbol of Thirdness. As such, the premise functions as a rule and convention that allows us to draw a necessary conclusion.

In inductive reasoning, we go from a specific case, to a result, and finally to a general rule:

Case: These cars come from the parking lot.

Result: These cars are red.

Rule: All the cars in the parking lot are red.

Or in a translational context:

Case: These statements come from the Sermon on the Mount

Result: These statements exhibit Jesus' authority.

Rule: All statements from the Sermon on the Mount exhibit Jesus' authority.

Induction consists of a probable or statistical argument. It does not guarantee that the general rule follows necessarily from the specific case. But inductive reasoning has a pragmatic intent: it provides one of the chief paths along which we move to certainty and truth. Semiotics treats the case or premise of an inductive argument as a special kind of sign called an index "pointing" to its conclusion like a weather vane points to wind. Just as an index points to something else (the general rule), so the premise of an inductive argument points to Secondness.

Abductive reasoning does not have the same logical force as inductive and deductive reasoning. But the power of its logic can create new knowledge in the

sciences and in the humanities. An abductive argument begins with a premise in the form of a rule, states a result or observation, and draws a conclusion or case:

Rule: All the cars in the parking lot are Mercedes.

Result: These cars are Mercedes.

Case: These cars are from the parking lot.

In translational terms we would have:

Rule: All the statements in the Sermon on the Mount exhibit Jesus' authority.

Result: These statements exhibit Jesus' authority.

Case: These statements are from the Sermon on the Mount.

Abductive reasoning results in hypotheses and has sometimes been compared to gaming or wagering or placing a bet: I bet that these statements are from the Sermon on the Mount because these statements exhibit Jesus' authority and all the statements in the Sermon exhibit Jesus' authority. Abductive reasoning is a common kind of reasoning in translation, beginning with a kind of intuition or insight cast as a rule. For example, a translator of the Gospel of Mark, wanting to understand the overall scope of the Gospel might reason:

Rule: All the chapters in the Gospel of Mark presuppose the Passion Narrative.

Result: These chapters presuppose the Passion Narrative.

Case: These chapters are from the Gospel of Mark.

Because the rule or premise of an abductive syllogism constitutes a kind of intuition, hypothesis or wager ("I bet that every chapter..."): it constitutes a case of Firstness; it is a feeling, an intuition cast as a rule. In semiotic terms, it stands for a special kind of sign called an icon. Because abduction amounts to hypothesizing, it must be verified with other data; but an abductive argument can also be challenged or falsified. This observation explains why there is no single answer to any translational choice or decision; new data can verify but also falsify a choice. The gamble of abductive reasoning is even more apparent in media translation where every translational choice remains open to verification, falsification, interpretation as the viewer brings her or his data and experience to bear on the hypotheses represented in the work.

Signs

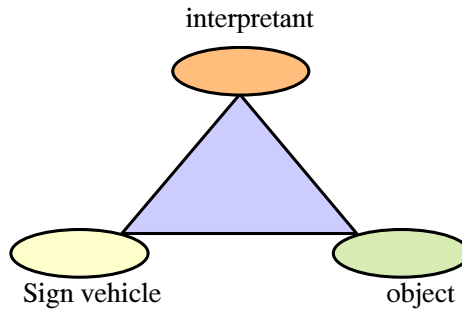
In semiotics, everything has the capacity to serve as a sign. The single requirement is that something be able to point beyond itself to something else and be capable of interpretation. Words and images, cultural artifact and codes, thoughts and feelings, plants and animals, lines and colors, smells and tastes—everything is potentially a sign pointing to something else. What's more every sign has the potentially to express itself as another sign. Signs can exist at the level of Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness, that is they can express present feelings, past events, and future, rule-based actions. They figure in all our logical syllogisms, showing up in premises, observations, and conclusions.

For semiotics, all signs are equal. There is no precedence of one sign system over another. Words, windmills, cats, cuisine, clothing, clouds, books, pictures, gestures, languages, animals, plants, and stars are all signs. Social mores, street codes, and cultural systems function as signs, as do all political institutions, literary genres, and scientific theories and laws. Concepts and ideas as well as feelings and emotions belong here as well. When you look at a cloud and predict rain, you are treating the cloud as a sign and translating its meaning in a pragmatic way. When you look at a painting of your great uncle Isaiah and think of your ancestor and family history you have given the painting the value of a sign. When you translate the Bible from one language to another, you are working with signs. When you feel hungry and think of a Big Mac you have put hunger in the category of a sign. When you shake your fist angrily at a New York taxi-driver, you turn your fist into a sign. If flags make you feel patriotic; if the color green makes you feel serene; if a loaf of French bread and a bottle of Medoc wine take you back to the Paris of your student days, you are working with signs.

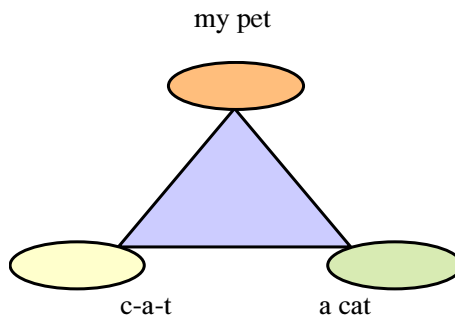
Parts of a Sign

Semiotics identifies three parts to a sign. There is (1) some thing (2) that stands for some other thing (3) to somebody in certain respects. In its simplest form, think of a picture of an apple appearing on a grocery stand. Behind the picture is a basket full of Jonathan apples. You enter the store, look at the picture, then at the basket of apples and at that moment and social location attached a specific meaning to that

picture and apple. You see the picture apple and the real apple from the point of view or ground of the apples that will go into the pie you plan to bake. Semioticians have technical terms for each of these parts of a sign: (1) sign-vehicle, (2) object, (3) interpretant. In traditional linguistics, you would think of the object like the denotation or reference, the interpretant like the meaning and connotation. The semiotic triangle has emerged as a classic visualization of a sign's threefold structure.



A simple example of this three part sign would be the letters “c”, “a”, and “t” that denotes as its object a physical cat. For the interpretant, viewing this sign vehicle and object from the viewpoint of household life, the cat connotes a pet rather than a mouser or an object of zoological study. Think of the sign vehicle as an instance of Firstness that is connected with its object (Secondness) by means of an interpretant (Thirdness).



Types of Signs

Common sense indicates that there are different types of signs. The sign of the cross makes up a different kind of sign than a stop sign and they in turn differ from sign language. Think of what it might mean to translate the sign of the cross from a gesture to a drawing or a stop sign in one culture into a stop sign in another. We also speak of signs of the time. Semiotics identifies three kinds of signs: icons, indexes and symbols.

Semiotics classifies signs according to the different relationships among the parts of a sign. Especially for new media translation of larger texts and discourse units, this feature of semiotics is especially provocative and rich because it offers a high level analytic tool for classifying and identifying signs, ordering and prioritizing them, and ultimately deciding what signs a translation should transfer into from one language and media to another language and media. In semiotics, signs can include everything from a jot or single letter on a piece of paper to a complex legal and theological argument such as we find in the letters of Paul to the Corinthians

Semiotics breaks down signs according to the triangle parts shown above: sign vehicle, object, and interpretant. Sign vehicles considered in and for themselves are an instance of Firstness and represent very abstract levels of things, for example, the letters, morphemes, and lexemes of linguistics, the colors of an artist’s palette, the numbers of an arithmetical system, a feeling of happiness, a thrill of excitement. The name for this kind of sign is a quality-sign since it denotes a quality; the technical term for this kind of sign is “quali-sign”. When a sign vehicle stands for single occurrences of things they are called a single-sign (technically a sin-sign). And when a sign vehicle stands for a generality or a repeatable case, for instance, laws and trends, it is called a law-sign (or legi-sign).

Sign Vehicle in Itself

Firstness:	Types	Features	Examples	Biblical examples
	Quality Sign	Colors, numbers	Mathematical and algebraic expressions	Red, purple scarlet (Rev. 17)

Single Sign	Single occurrences of things	Haley's Comet	Birth of Jesus (Matthew 1:18-25)
Law Sign	Generalities, laws, trends	E=MC Squared	Judges 21:25 (Everyone did what was right in his own eyes);

When we translate Firstness we aim to transfer a feeling or quality from the original to the target next; we wish to capture raw emotion and visceral impressions. The Mel Gibson film *The Passion of the Christ* does this with excruciating success. In and of itself, the mathematical symbol Pi stands for a quality inherent in numbers. Expressing quality is the function of the colors in Rev 17, which in and of themselves function as quality signs. In and of itself the birth of Jesus represents a Single Sign in its uniqueness, expressed in the Gospels in phrases such as “only begotten son” (John 1:14,18). A law of modern Einsteinian physics (E=MC squared) by itself stands for a law sign, expressing a regularity in the physical order of things. Statements such as Judges 21:25, taken by themselves, are also Law signs, denoting regularity and trends.

When we bring together sign-vehicles and their object we come up with a case of Secondness—the case in which some thing experiences, or is connected to the presence of the other. Here too semiotics gives three sign types. Signs can represent their objects, like a map or a portrait. In such cases they are called icons; a sign can stand in a casual relationship with its object, say a weathervane to wind, or an action to its consequence; it is then an index; or a sign vehicle can relate to its object as a symbol; in such a case the relationship is based on custom and convention.

Sign Vehicle and Its Object

Secondness	Types	Features	Examples	Bible Examples
	Icons	Representational,	Maps, portraits,	Biographies of

		blueprints, dreams, visions	David, Saul, Joseph,
Index	Cause effect	Thermometer, cloud formations, barometers	Parables, miracle stories exorcism
Symbols	Conventional, Culture bound	Words, texts, designs, images	Symbology of Revelation

A map, portrait, blueprint, dream, and vision are icons. They represent an object outside themselves, say a city, a woman, a building, repressed desires, and messages from God. But an icon “cooks down” the reality of its object and reduces it to a smaller scale. The Bible stories that give us the portraits of David, Saul, and Joseph function as icons because they point us to their historical object or correlate. Thermometers, barometers, cloud formations are indexes. As index-signs they stand in a cause-effect relation with something. A thermometer responds to the amount of heat in an object; a barometer reacts to the pressure of the air, a cloud formation builds in response to a weather front. Jesus’ parables and miracles function as indexes, pointing in cause-effect fashion to, say, the authority and glory of God, or the coming of the Kingdom.

Words and the texts, along with many designs and images fall mostly into the category of symbol which semiotics defines as a conventional and culture bound sign. Convention determines how a language represents its words and draws its semantic maps and how both of those represent the world. Convention, for example, determines that the swastika meant Nazism in Germany of the 1930s and 40s, but that the same figure among native Americans stood for an leit-motiv in decorative art.

Finally, in a relationship of Thirdness, an interpretant brings together both the sign-vehicle and object in a logical proposition to create the possibilities, propositions, and arguments that structure human knowledge and discourse, including the knowledge and discourse that define translation. If the sign forms a possibility, then the sign is called a rheme; if the sign stands for a fact, then it is a proposition; and if a sign states a reason, then it is an argument.

Sign Vehicle with Object and Interpretant

Thirdness	Types	Features	Examples	Bible Examples
	Rheme	Possibility	Abductive, inductive syllogisms	Conditional Law (If... Then) in OT
	Proposition	Facts	Deductive syllogism,	Apodictic Law in Old Testament
	Argument	Reasons		Letter to Philemon

The statements of conditional law in the Old Testament are examples of rhemes or possibilities within the field of biblical legislation. The well-known formula “If ...then” represents such a case. “If you still continue to resist me and refuse to obey me, I will again increase your punishment seven times.”(Leviticus 26:21) Some form of ongoing action or thinking (sign vehicle) points to resistance to the divine will (object), which to an interpretant, thinking in terms of conditional law, means that punishment is one outcome for such ongoing action and thinking. Statements of apodictic law, the Ten Commandments for example, stand for propositions or facts. In Exodus 20:1-17, a finite set of actions and thoughts (killing, stealing, lusting) represent sign vehicles pointing to violations of the divine will which to an interpretant, steeped in apodictic law, means a breaking of the covenant with God. Philemon represents an example of an argument. The action of a runaway slave (Onesimus) represents a sign vehicle that points to an object, namely a deed punishable under Roman law, at least to an interpretant such as the slave’s master Philemon. But to another interpretant, namely Paul, the sign vehicle and object point to another meaning or outcome, the possible liberation of Onesimus, for which Paul mounts an elaborate argument.

Semiosis

The process of meaning-making is called semiosis. It stands for the complex interplay among all three parts of a sign, an interplay that reaches a high point with the intervention of an interpretant. Semiosis foresees that a sign does not stop

creating meaning in the first interaction of a sign vehicle, object, and interpretant. Rather, semiosis forecasts that each action of an interpretant with its sign-vehicle and object creates a new sequence of sign-vehicle, object and interpretant. If an interpretant, thinking about household animals as companions, brings the sign vehicles “c” “a” and “t” together with an actual cat as their object, then the interpretant will possibly land on “pet” as the meaning of this sign-vehicle and object. “Pet” now becomes its own sign-vehicle, connected to an object, say the interpretant’s own pet cat Hugo. Another interpretant, working from a frame of reference such as medicine and health, might conclude that Hugo represents a threat to him because he is allergic to cats. In principle, semiosis is open-ended and could go on forever, which is one reason why pinning down the meaning of media texts is so difficult but fascinating. In practice we set pragmatic limits to meaning-making based on Grice’s maxims.

Semiosis applies also to meaning at the sentence level. Take, for instance, a sign vehicle in the form of “Storm clouds are gathering on the horizon today” which stands for an object in the form of an emerging weather front. An interpretant reading this sign vehicle and object from the point of view of meteorology or weather science will treat this information as a warning of severe weather and advise people to stay indoors. An interpretant reading this sign from the perspective of sailing regatta will treat it as a happy weather condition for the scheduled race. If the object of the sign vehicle turns out to be an event, say an impending battle, then an interpretant, working from a political, social, or even religious point of view, will see in the storm clouds a metaphor for upheaval, change, and violence.

Of supreme relevance to media translation is semiosis at the level of discourse and genre. Take for example a sign vehicle in the form of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). As a sign vehicle, this text points to an object, say, the figure of Jesus and his role as a teacher. An interpretant will, depending on the ground or point of view, treat this object differently, for instance, as a summation of the teaching of the historical Jesus, or as a genial creation of the evangelist Matthew. An interpretant in the form of a painter, sculptor, filmmaker or creator of a graphic novel will overlay another frame of reference on the Sermon, namely that of artistic creation.

Genre often functions as a sign-vehicle, the gospel genre and the passion narrative for instance. As a sign-vehicle, the gospel genre points in many people’s minds to

the life of Jesus. If the interpretant is a scholar, then the result may be an historical-critical life of Jesus. If the interpretant is a film producer, then the outcome is a movie. *The Passion of the Christ*, the 2004 film by Mel Gibson provides a good example. In this case, the film itself is an instance of an ongoing semiosis that goes back through the whole history of Hollywood films about Jesus and even beyond into the whole history of media representations of the Christ. It is also a sign vehicle, pointing to its object, the historical suffering and death of Jesus. For an interpretant viewing the film from the point of view of return on investment, theology, race relations, violence, or translation studies, the film will represent a financial bonanza, the vicarious suffering and death of Jesus, a barrage of anti-Semitic barbs, a sea of gratuitous violence, or a brilliant cross-cultural effort in screen translation.

We should recall that in their own way the gospels depict Jesus as a semiotician who engaged in semiosis. In Luke 12:54-56, a story about understanding signs of the times, we see the three elements of a sign working within the preaching of Jesus. “When you see a cloud coming up in the west, at once you say that it is going to rain—and it does. And when you feel the south wind blowing, you say that it is going to get hot—and it does. Hypocrites! You look at the earth and the sky and predict weather; why, then don’t you know the meaning of this present time?” Converting this story into semiotic terms, we would say that the sign vehicle is the puff of water vapor arising in the west that points to an event (change of weather). The combination of sign vehicle and object brings an interpretant to deduce that it is going to rain. Similarly a movement of air from the south (sign vehicle) points to an event (change of weather). For an interpretant grounded in climate changes this means it is going to get hot. Many if not all of the parables of Jesus represent semiosis of this sort. Especially the parables that have evolved into allegories deserve consideration in any discussion of semiosis in the New Testament. We should also note in passing that the Fourth Gospel explicitly uses the Greek term *semeion* “sign” for the miracles of Jesus (John 2:11).

As we have noted above, semiosis is recursive or never-ending because signs are never locked and stable but constantly growing in meaning. Take verse 56 in the Lukan text mentioned above: “Hypocrites! You can look at the earth and the sky and predict the weather; why, then, don’t you know the meaning of this present time?” The whole of Jesus’ utterance about wind and clouds in verses 54-55 become

a sign vehicle pointing to a mental capacity (ability to read weather and forecast change) but now subject to an interpretant who is not interested in meteorology but in spirituality. This interpretant (Jesus) concludes about his audience that, despite their ability to read weather signs, they cannot read the really important sign vehicles of the time (Jesus' word and deeds) and connect them with an event (coming of Kingdom).

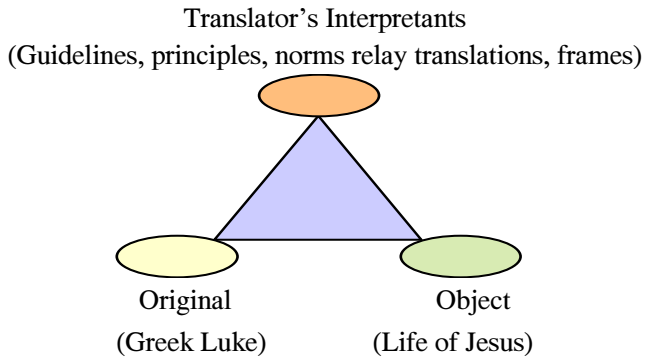
The sign of the cross is a famous example of the recursive side of semiosis. In the context of ancient Roman law, a figure in the shape of a cross would have pointed to an actual cross or even the process of crucifixion and represented the just punishment due to a criminal. But when early Christians adopted the sign of the cross, they gave the sign-vehicle (figure of the cross) a new object (the cross on which Jesus died) and a new, if not multiple interpretants, for example, the saving death of Jesus. Later Christian devotion and theology adopted the sign of the cross further, turning the sign-vehicle of Jesus' cross into a gesture (sign-vehicle is now the physical touching of head, heart and shoulders) that pointed to its object (physical death and material cross of Jesus). In turn, a new interpretant arose: the mystical union of believer with crucified and resurrected Christ.

Semiosis also accounts for what takes place within the Bible or any body of literature when authors borrow and manipulate texts from one another. The synoptic parallels in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and the Sayings Source stand for recursive semiosis in the sense that one set of sign vehicle-object-interpretant, say The Parable of the Sower in Mark 4:1-9, becomes a sign vehicle in Matthew and Luke with their own objects and interpretants.

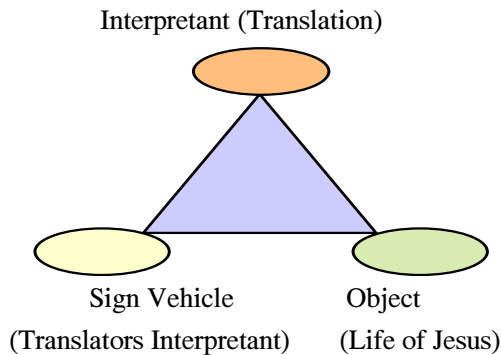
Semiotics and Translation

Within the process of translation, we may imagine that semiosis happens at least twice: Once in the formation of the original text and once when the original is transplanted into a new language or medium. In actual fact, translation involves a process of semiosis that never ends. Think of the sign vehicle as the whole of an original text, for instance the Greek text of Luke. The object would be the life of Jesus. The first interpretant (there are others, as we will see) would be a kind of proto-translation that consists of how a translator understands the Greek or Hebrew text; how a translator reacts to the text; what kind of translating strategy is chosen (dynamic or formal equivalence, paraphrase, interlinear); in short the whole

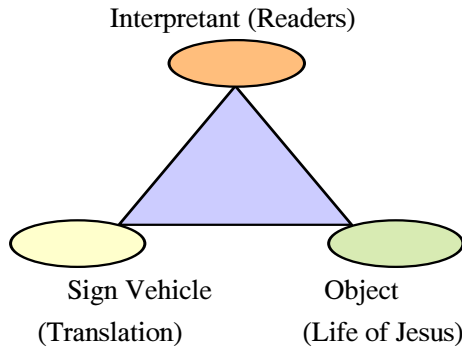
complex set of decisions we call guidelines and principles. We may even want to think of the hermeneutics that will produce a translated text. The following diagram illustrates this first movement in the ongoing process of translational semiosis.



In the second move, the translator's interpretant (the hermeneutic or interpretive combination of guidelines, principles, norms, frames, relay translations) turns into a sign vehicle standing for the same object. But now the interpretant turns out to be the actual translation, which from a particular ground or point of view gives concrete meaning to its sign vehicle and object. Its diagram would look like:



In a final and third move the translation itself stands as a sign vehicle, whose object is still the life of Jesus, but whose interpretants are the readers (or in a performance or media product, the viewers).



Interpretants

One of the fresh ideas introduced into translation by Peircean semiosis is that of the interpretant. It is also one of the crucial differences between semiotics in the European tradition of Saussure and the American tradition of Peirce and Morris. An interpretant should be thought of as the frame of reference in which a sign-vehicle and object receive one of several possible, context-based meanings. It is location, time, and culture bound. It can be a person or an audience or even a market sector; it can be as we saw the guidelines, principles, and hermeneutics that produce a translation. It is a way of saying that all meaning is context bound and occurs within specific social, institutional, and cultural locations. In modern translation studies, an interpretant can be thought of a frame of reference, in modern lexicography, the idea of a semantic field come close to functioning as an interpretant; in grammar the prescriptive and descriptive rules governing word and sentence structure are interpretants; in theology, interpretants are related to interpretive positions such as fundamentalism, liberalism, conservatism, modernism, post-modernism.

The Pragmatics of Translation: From Signs to Habits of Mind to Actions

Semiotics is eminently practical and pragmatic. It treats thinking and meaning-making as purposeful activities that aim at providing habits of mind and informed, intelligent action. By subsuming all reality under the notion of sign, semiotics has a universal reach and far-reaching implications for translation aimed at real engagement

with the text. Its conceptual resources (categories, logic, semiosis) seek to gain certitude about the meaning of things and to grow new knowledge for the mind to process in its pursuit of truth.

The pragmatic side of semiotics also shows up in its descriptive and balanced approach toward all sign systems. As a field of research, semiotics describes sign systems but remains neutral about the value of the sign systems, whether visual, written, sonic, kinetic, olfactory, or tactile. A written word, a spoken sentence, a ballet move, a musical tone all convey information and do so efficiently and adequately within their individual domains. In this regard, semiotics reflects the stance of modern linguistics when it remains neutral and refrains from judgments about language, treating Eskimo Inupi'at, Sea Island Gullah, and North American English as different but equal linguistic systems.

From a translational point of view, semiotics allows us to expand our theoretical and practical understanding of what constitutes adequate and acceptable translation. For too long, translation has stood for only the first of Jakobson's types: inter-lingual. Semio-translation has until recently hardly been considered a valid type of translation, much less a reliable source of knowledge about translation and translated languages and cultures. Semiotics not only extends our understanding of what constitutes translation, but also what it means to do translation in an adequate and acceptable way. "An adequate way" measures how well a target text or translation has captured the meaning of a source text. "An acceptable way" measures how well a translation captures the expectations and norms of the target audience. Traditionally, terms such as fidelity, invariant core of meaning, equivalence, accuracy, and similarity have expressed judgments about adequacy or acceptability. They have applied chiefly to inter-linguistic and intra-linguistic translations. And in those cases they measure a single kind of sign: the written word or literary text. Operating within a linguistic model of translation, they assess the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic "gap" between a source text and its translation. If the gap is narrow, a translation is faithful; if the gap stretches wide, the translation is unfaithful, or at best a paraphrase, adaptation, rewriting, or retelling.

In a semiotic model, adequacy and acceptability apply to all sign systems, not just textual and written. In such a system, we can speak of a dance, a song, a gesture, a smell, an artifact, or a color as an adequate and acceptable translation of a source message. A weathervane adequately and acceptably translates the direction of the wind into a visual sign that humans can see and respond to. The color red in some cultures marks a birthday, in some it stands for anger, and in others membership in a

gang.

Conclusion

A semiotic approach gives a media translator a powerful new tool to apply to the interpretation and preparation of biblical narratives designed for media translation or communication. For one thing it allows us to add to our common understanding of translation and meaning in terms of words, sentences, discourses, and genre levels. It rises above these and gives us the ability to read meaning at the level with which media and technology most easily operate. For example, media producers often want to know what is the “big idea” in a text that they are supposed to translate into film, video, dance, and so forth? A good place to look for the big idea is in the areas of Firstness, Secondness, or Thirdness. Think of the Firstness which Mel Gibson captured in his film *The Passion of the Christ*. As an analytic tool semiotics permits us to distinguish between the translation of a sign vehicle, an object (or referent or denotation) and an interpretant (or meaning or connotation). In so doing we can make informed choices about what we wish to translate.

Semiotics opens up a new understanding of the nature of the texts we translate. For example, we often think of texts in terms of their three major linguistic components—semantics, syntactics, and pragmatics. But semiotics tells us that texts are also syncretic, that is, constituted by a variety of sign systems, whether they are printed, visual, kinetic, or sonic. The expression “syncretic text” refers to the nature of information embedded in texts; it means that information comes to us in multiple channels or media. Think of those examples from our lecture on the history of Bible and media. There is line, color, design, typography, layout, and texture in even printed texts. When you consider an illustration, drawing, painting or music you add figures, perspective, tonality, texture to the syncretic nature of a text. All of these sign systems contribute to the original meaning of a text and also to its translated meaning in a target text. A good way of gauging the syncretic nature of texts is invite someone to a black and white movie instead of a color one; or give someone a paperback Bible instead of a black leather bound, gold edged book.

As we remarked above, semiotics is inherently aimed at engagement and practical outcomes. A semiotic notion of translation brings with it a commitment to practical outcomes. It moves us from the realm of signs and meaning to the establishment of habits of the mind that inform our actions; in the case of Bible translation, a

semiotic model can lead to greater Bible engagement, authority, and awareness. It treats thinking and meaning making as purposeful activities whose goal is provide habits of mind that lead to informed and intelligent action.

As a meta-language semiotics offers a robust set of descriptive, predictive, analytic, and pragmatic tools. It uses the universal phenomena and structure of signs to describe the high value currency that translators exchange when they mediate between a source text and culture and a target text and culture. Its predictive side asserts that in a process called semiosis signs will construct meaning as a sign sets its internal machinery in motion in a dynamic interplay with other signs and within a specific social location and cultural setting. As an analytic tool, semiotics offer a set of three conceptual categories (Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness) and an inventory of sign types that facilitate the encounter with a text by offering a fresh way of parsing a text into elements that may be important for semio-translation. The categories and sign types do not replace philological and historical critical analysis, but precede it, setting up semiotic boundaries inside which translation goes forward. And because Peirce's semiotics is inherently pragmatic, it defines the highest goal of translation as the formation of good habits of mind. In terms of Bible translation this would mean habits of mind that lead to the recognition of the authority of Scripture.

* Keyword

Media Translating, intra-lingual translating, inter-semiotic translation, semio-translation, semiotics.

<Abstract>

21세기의 새로운 미디어를 통한 성경의 번역과 전달

로버트 하지슨

(미국 성서공회 나이다 연구소 책임자)

본 논문의 목적은 크게 두 가지이다. 첫째, 본 논문은 오랫동안 그 본래의 가치만큼 주목을 받지 못해 온 성경의 기호간 번역(inter-semiotic translation) 혹은 매체 번역(media translation)에 대해서 살펴보는 것이다. 둘째, 기호학(semiotics)이 성경 번역, 그 중에서도 특히 기호간 번역에 대해서 가지고 있는 효용성이다.

러시아의 언어학자 로만 야콥슨(Roman Jakobson)은 세 가지 종류의 번역을 구분하였다. 이 것들은 각각 언어내 번역, 언어간 번역, 기호간 번역이다. 이 중 언어학의 차원을 넘어선 기호간 번역, 즉 성경을 그림이나 영화로 전환시키는 등의 작업은 최근에 와서야 겨우 번역의 한 범주로서 다루어지고 있는 형편이다. 그러나 본 논문은 사실상 매체 번역은 단지 정당한 주목을 받지 못했을 뿐 유대교와 기독교의 초기부터 현재에 이르기까지 장구하고 풍요로운 역사를 갖고 있음을 동서고금의 다양한 예들을 통해서 증명해주고 있다.

이러한 기호간 번역을 번역의 범주에서 이해하는데 있어서 본 논문이 도입하고 있는 방법은 기호학이다. 기호학은 몇 가지 점에서 기호간 번역을 설명하는 이론적 도구로서 가치가 있다. 우선 번역에 대한 메타언어(meta-language)로서의 기호학은 야콥슨의 세 가지 형태의 번역을 동일선상에서 이해할 수 있게 해준다는 측면에서, 즉 기호간 번역을 나머지 두 가지 형태의 번역과 같은 이론적 맥락에서 이해할 수 있게 해준다. 또한 기호학은 의미의 문제, 특히 번역된 의미의 문제를 잘 설명해준다. 즉 기호학은 정보가 번역의 과정을 통해 한 언어나 한 매체에서 다른 언어나 매체로 전환이 될 때 일어나는 의미의 복잡한 변화 및 그 의미의 다양한 수용에 대해 이론적인 설명을 제공해준다. 본 논문은 이러한 가치를 가진 기호학을 번역, 그 중에서도 특히 기호간 번역과의 관련성 속에서 설명해주고 있다.

(박철현)