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TRANSLATING FROM ONE MEDIUM TO ANOTHER

Explorations in the Referential Power of Translation

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Abstract:

This thesis explores the identity of translation as its power of reference through an analysis of transformations of biblical narrative from their written form to audio-visual versions made for television. The central problematic of translatability between word and image is examined through the "translation strategies" used by producers and translators. These strategies reveal the philosophical binarisms that underpin an assumption of source and target texts as autonomous entities. The polarities of binary thinking are implicit in a perception of translation as a representation of a prior text.

The language of representation that is central to theories of representational equivalence raises the question to what does representation refer. This question forms the focus for a critique of the epistemology and ontology of representation and its artificial separation of language and vision, or word and image in our perceptual experience of the world. The criticism is essential to an exploration of the referential power of translation understood in semiotic and narrative terms as its ground of interpretation. This exploration describes the symbolic or semiotic value of translations, or the contexts in which they acquire contemporary coherence and significance.

The central descriptive part of the thesis employs three conceptions of context: the context of texts themselves as narratively and semantically coherent units; their cultural contexts, or the irreducible intertextuality on which they depend for the recognition and interpretation of their significant features; and the social and economic conditions which underpin the work of production and provide the social contexts within such works circulate.

In rejecting the notion that translations are an image, however impure, of an antecedent text, my thesis excludes a notion of conventional limits to translation based on structuralist conceptions of semantic or narrative form as the principal carriers of meaning. It concludes that the limits of translation are defined by its possibilities.

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INTRODUCTION

To refer is always and at the same time to evaluate oneself and the world, *to be critical.*[1]

In 1993 the United Bible Societies' Director of Translation, Publication, and Distribution invited me to help organise a consultation for Bible Society officers on translating the Bible for video. The need for consultation arose from a perception that the technological revolution in electronic forms of communication affected people's preferences the world over. The book was out, television and computers were in. Concurrently literacy even, or especially, in so-called economically advanced societies had declined. Bible Societies saw little prospect of achieving their mission, to ensure that everybody had access to the Bible, if half the world's population couldn't or wouldn't read. Several Bible Societies had already experimented with making audio-visual versions of Bible stories. Experiments had led to questions: Could one translate from one medium to another without radically altering the meaning of the original text? Did such translation so change the original text as to undermine the Society's traditional identity and credibility as print translators and publishers? Should audio-visual versions be called translation at all and, if so, what kind of translation principles might ensure faithfully equivalent transpositions of the original text? The Bible Societies looked to me as a film maker and cultural theorist, to have some answers to the problem of equivalence between word and image, or at least to formulate some appropriate research questions about this central problem.

In the course of preparation for the consultation, I came across an interesting phenomenon. Many first attempts at "translation" chose the story of the Prodigal Son from the Gospel of Luke. In this story, the younger of two sons persuades his father to give him his share of his inheritance which he subsequently squanders in a riotous life-style. Destitute and compelled to subsist in the most degrading of

[1] (Morot-Sir, 1993, p 139)

occupations, the son reflects on the good life he had enjoyed in his father's home. He determines to return and beg his father's forgiveness. Almost without exception, the examples I looked at changed the original story's ending. Whereas in the biblical version, the elder brother expresses disgust at the joyful welcome his errant younger brother receives on his return, in many of the television versions, the elder brother had either disappeared altogether or joined in the welcome. The version made by the Bible Society of Malawi was especially interesting. As the elder son invites the guests to enjoy the barbecue laid on for them, his younger brother bursts into the well-known Christian song of redemption, "Amazing Grace". The focus of the story's narrative shifts from a parable about God's love to a story about an erring sinner who found grace with God.

My initial observations presented several immediate questions. Why was the story of the Prodigal Son so popular and why the ubiquity of a happy ending? If producers presented these versions as translations, what motivated the altered ending? There are several possibilities. The first relates to interpretive traditions within Christian communities, which Gabriel Josipovici argues, appear within the New Testament itself. In his work on the Bible as literature, he claims that in *Romans* chapters 7 and 8 Paul of Tarsus reconstructs the narrative of the Prodigal Son to authenticate his own conversion.

> We can now see clearly why Saul of Tarsus dramatised for his listeners what had happened to him and how he became Paul the Apostle. And we can also see that in this he was, after all, only doing what...all readers do: he was completing or continuing a series, and the series he chose to continue was that which concerned the Prodigal Son. Gone, however, is the elder brother, gone is the father' admonition to that brother ... Instead what is developed is the story of the sinner who repents and is welcomed back.[2]

On the face of it, then, the audio-visual versions I looked at fulfilled an evangelical or didactic purpose. The makers did not apparently intend to replace the written word, that central authoritative document of the Christian faith, but to supplement it. If this were the case, why pursue the matter further? Why think about these audio-visual productions in terms of translation? Surely, the popularisation of the Bible

[2] (Josipovici, 1988, pp 244-245)

through film and video is a more appropriate topic for biblical scholarship or religious studies or, at a pinch, research in popular culture. But if, as Josipovici suggests, interpretations of the Prodigal Son as a redemption narrative appear within the very pages of The Book, who can say that the Bible Society of Malawi has not made a faithful translation? The question is a teasing one, for it strikes at the heart of what people understand by the term "translation" and the conventional dichotomy between sense for sense and word for word translation. It is important, however, to recognise this thesis is about translation and reference, not Bible translation *per se*. The closer I looked at adaptations of biblical narrative in terms of translation, the more my study raised general questions about the theory and practice of translation. Whether or not film makers, artists, or writers label their work "translation" has more to do with the intellectual boundaries that have been constructed around the term in academia than with what people actually do. In the case of biblical adaptations, the language producers and writers use to talk about their work is replete with metaphors for translation. Adaptation "brings to life" the original biblical narratives. Film makers claim faithfully to reconstruct the original contexts of the stories. Promotional literature exhorts viewers to "be there", "travel the dusty roads", "be intimately involved in the life of Jesus". Nor is this kind of rhetoric restricted to productions intended primarily for Christian audiences. Even explicitly commercial or secular productions seek validation in claims to their integrity and the imprimatur of biblical experts and religious authority.

The range of treatments within this corpus of adaptation, from animation to dramatic re-enactment, from historical reconstruction to contemporary representation, also raises questions about their specificity as Bible translation, or whether, indeed, Bible translation can be categorised as a special and separate activity. The idea that Bible translation differs from literary translation, despite its literary character, stems from its particular status as a sacred text and its categorisation as a certain text-type. (Snell-Hornby, 1995) This idea arises from a functional or instrumental view of translation as a tool. However, even a cursory review of recent English translations (Korsak, 1993; Mitchell, 1996) reveals that not all translators approach the original text with a concept of its sacredness or with the

awe with which translators of the Septuagint are supposed to have undertaken their task in 200 BCE. Literary as well as theological considerations motivate Bible translators (Arichea, 1993; Jasper, 1993; Prickett, 1986), just as literary and theological considerations motivated the Bible's original authors. (Crossan, 1998; Romer, 1988; Thompson, 1999) The revelatory nature of biblical writing has as much to do with its inclusion of the supernatural or the miraculous as with the frame within people read it. (Aichele, 1997; Prickett, 1986) A review of the range and types of publication on the market also reveals that Bible translation and publishing fulfil a variety of purposes. (Carroll, 1998) As one Bible Society officer once remarked to me, "There are now so many publishers and media agencies in the English speaking world that exploit the Bible as a source for commercial gain, literary enjoyment and just plain entertainment that we must not assume anymore that when we talk about the Bible everybody understands it to mean a sacred Canon! So much then for those who think that claiming biblical authority for some belief or norm is it in itself a self-evident authority!"[3] While this study does refer to some controversies about translating the Bible, questions such as the original text's authority or its antiquity and associated modernising or archaising strategies, it does not consider these issues to be unique to Bible translation. They may apply just as well to other translations from one medium to another, such as film adaptations of Shakespeare or Jane Austen, or the animated version of the Canterbury Tales (BBC 2, 1998) made by the same team that created *Shakespeare*, *Operavox*, and *Testament*.

If the plethora of translations, adaptations, and publications makes a concept of Bible translation as something separate from other types of translation provisional, then the intertextual character of the television adaptations that are the focus of this study makes the concept of the Bible as a source text equally provisional. It has become something of a commonplace that, as "multi-media" texts, cinematic adaptations of literary texts adapt more than one source. (Cattrysse, 1992; Cattrysse, 1997) But as my analysis shows, the double reversal of the "hermeneutic flow"[4] of productions that rework popular cinematic genres, which are themselves based on biblical themes, suggests an even more complex relation

[3] Dr. Basil E. Rebera, United Bible Societies, Personal communication. 12th August 1998
[4] (Kreitzer, 1993; Kreitzer, 1994)

between source and target texts. The *Turner Pictures* Old Testament epic mini-series (chapter five) or the BBC2/S4C animated series *Testament* (chapter six) are typical. The palimpsestic nature of biblical texts, their roots in oral tradition, and the rich interpretive history that began within the pages of the Christian Bible further destabilise the concept of an identifiable source text. The notion of a source or original text and the derivative nature of translation, implied by the language of target/source oppositions, is further complicated by questions about the nature of translated texts. The strict opposition (endemic to Romantic discourses on translation) of a creative "source" text to a "target" text which, by virtue of its derivative nature, merely reproduces cannot be attributed to the intrinsic nature of texts. (Bogatyrëv, 1929) The concept of a source/target text opposition reflects the linguistic essentialism of certain comparative methodologies. The Bible's inter-textuality undermines definitive questions about translation based on this dichotomy. It problematises the ideas of source and target texts as autonomous entities, and of certain types of textual relationship as explaining the concept "translation". Resisting the temptation to treat translations and their originals as independent entities raises the question of their common ground. To what does a translation refer if not to an antecedent text? These considerations expose thehistorical and cultural relativity of definitive questions about translation.

One of the principle difficulties that confronts an organisation such as the Bible Society when it comes to translating the Bible from one medium to another is that people regard the languages of word and image as structured in radically different ways. Whereas the semantic uncertainties of language are thought to be contained by its syntax, Roland Barthes, for example, describes images as "a message without a code."[5] The problem of translation from word to image is, therefore, one of interpretive excess: how to achieve a semblance of equivalence, how to contain the meaning of the Bible once released from its written form. But this is a problem of perspective and habit. For organisations such as the Bible Society, the habit has been formed by the ubiquity of print as the technology of mass communication for three centuries or more, by the uniformity print has imposed on language use, and by

[5] (Barthes, 1977, p 17)

resultant perceptions of the Bible's textual unity. (Anderson, 1991) This unity was not apparent when the Bible existed in scroll or manuscript form. The habit has also been formed by the Society's reliance on modern structural linguistics to support its theory and practice of translation. For an organisation whose credibility rests on a policy of translating without doctrinal note or comment and whose understanding of translation has been constrained by structuralist definitions of language, the difficulties of interpretive excess reflects a conception of the image's resistance to being tied down to a single or specific meaning. These perceptions and habits are not unique to organisations such as the Bible Society. As Yves Gambier's presentation to the conference on multi-media translation in Misano, Italy (1994) illustrates, they invade twentieth century theories of translation in a much more general way.[6]

Rather than treat certain types of text and certain types of relationship as definitive of a phenomenon we call translation, this study uses contemporary adaptations of biblical narrative for television to examine the theory and practice of translation. Its purpose is to consider three related issues invited by an attempt to understand literary adaptation in terms of translation. First, the relation between word and image: do these constitute separate spheres of meaning or ways of organising our perceptions of the world? Does language represent our perceptual experience in a more precise way than images? What is the relation between perception and language? Second, questions about representation: If language does not represent the world, if it turns out not to be a function of our perceptual experience, to what does it refer? What broader implications does this question have for understanding any kind of code, visual, kinetic or verbal as representations of a separate reality? If words and images are not representations, if the conceptual validity of representation is uncertain, can the notion of translation as a representation of another text be sustained? Third, the implications of these questions: How do they affect the limits and possibilities of translation? What alternatives exist for thinking about the relationship between words and images, between written texts and their audio-visual interpretations in terms of translation?

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[6] (Gambier, 1994)

The polarisation of language and vision, and its material expression through word and image, simply cannot be sustained outside the narrow fields of linguistics and textual criticism informed by structural linguistic theory. Several interesting dimensions to this debate are taken up in the following section. Graphic artists and poets see words and images as a continuum of the way the world is described through language. Thus the written word has a visual quality as much as images have formal (even narrative) elements. (Bal, 1991; Drucker, 1998; Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996) The contemporary art form of comic strips exploits the continuum of word and image as a central formal element of their meaning. (Fresnault-Deruelle, 1992) The American Bible Society exploits this same continuum in their *newmediabible* translation. Chapter one explores the formal nature of images through a discussion about the semiotics of images and film. In so doing, it challenges the marginalisation of "intersemiotic" translation that has dominated translation theory over the past forty years since Jakobson published his article on the linguistic aspects of translation. (Jakobson, 1959) Chapter two examines the convergence of the visual and verbal in a case study of the *Visual Bible*, a production that claims to be a "word-for-word" visual translation of the NIV English translation of the Gospel of Matthew. The case study seeks to demonstrate the value for a critical theory of intersemiotic translation of treating the visual elements of this film as a text in its own right rather than an illustration of the written text. Chapter three explores the translatability of word and image through a discussion about reference. In many respects, this chapter represents a logical conclusion to the exhaustion of the conceptual usefulness of equivalence realised as a representational relationship between source and target texts. Instead, it takes up the view that, from a philosophical point of view, meaning is based in a perceptual, visual organisation of language and that language may be accounted for by its power of reference. I argue that translations may be accounted for similarly by their power of reference. The analysis of a translation's power of reference demands a close, formal reading, or contextual analysis in order to discover its ground of interpretation in preference to a comparative methodology that identifies the similarities and differences between source and target texts as a translation's representational ground. This perspective constitutes the principal theoretical and methodological parameter of this study. It

imposes a particular philosophical rigour. Firstly, it presumes that all translation is interpretation. However, the fact that a text and its translation have a separate material existence does not mean that the translation is an interpretation *of* its original nor that interpretation and translation are separable processes. The language of reference understands translation to be an experience of reading. This implies that the ground of interpretation lies in the texts themselves, not in a reality external to the experience of interpretation. It also implies that the translator has made judgements of value based on the language of the source text itself and on her own experience as a reader. In treating translation as an experience of reading and interpretation this study attempts to understand translation as the power of reference irrespective of whether it involves inter-semiotic, intra-lingual, or inter-lingual interpretation. It attempts to go beyond the boundaries of word and image, or source and target texts, to consider the limits and possibilities of translation.

This consideration involves taking a position on a number of issues. Since the majority of translations examined in this thesis make some kind of claim to faithfulness or integrity, the referential power of translation has a bearing on the questions of what a translation shares with its original and how to evaluate their common ground. Chapter four takes up this question through an analysis of framing and its function. Narrative frames in chapter four's case study function as a kind of *mise-en-abyme* where interpretation, in the first instance, involves unravelling the story from the narrative and its narration.[7] Chapter five considers the power of reference through an analysis of the discourses of similarity in historical reconstructions of biblical narrative, not as a relational phenomenon (which on the surface appears to be the intention of the translations examined), but from a phenomenological perspective in which the aims of their historiography appear as an endeavour to represent biblical characters as "just like us". Whereas chapters four and five focus on the internal structures and contexts of the text itself, (Avni, 1990; Morot-Sir, 1993; Niranjana, 1992) chapters six and seven take up a

[7] That is, Genette's *récit, histoire,* and *narration.* See (Stam, Burgoyne and Flitterman-Lewis, 1992, pp 95-96) for an explanation of these terms and their application in film theory. See also (Avni, 1990, pp 137-145) for an application of the concept of *mise-en-abyme* to the problems of translation in Mérimé's "Lokis"

translation's context as something that is socially produced. (Bal, 1991; Bogatyrëv, 1982, Bourdieu, 1993). This perspective adds a somewhat different inflection to the question of limits and value discussed in chapter four by situating value within the larger frame of the translation "system". Chapters six and seven also mark the site on which the terminology of narrative theory and semiotic theory converge in an understanding of context or system as the structures that give meaning to individual texts. This helps to understand the translated text as a sign and to make a connection between the referential power of translation and its ground of interpretation. Chapter six approaches this question primarily through textual analysis in keeping with the other chapters in the same section. Chapter seven departs radically from this method to locate an understanding of a translation's referential power explicitly within the social contexts of translating and its discursive habits.

My analysis employs three conceptions of context: Firstly, there is the context of the text itself as a narratively and semantically coherent unit. Secondly, as Bal has demonstrated in her method of reading iconographically, texts do not exist in a vacuum. The recognition and interpretation of significant features in a text depends on a knowledge of the representational traditions by which texts are formed and which give them coherence. As texts are irreducibly inter-textual, their context may, therefore, also be understood as cultural. Thirdly, the social and material matrix of a text's production and reception forms a significant element of its meaning. This constitutes the social context. While the social and economic conditions that give rise to individual works and their translations exist independently of the texts themselves, they may only be apprehended as signs. Thus the social contexts within which such works circulate may also be treated as a text. These three conceptions of context intersect in ways that may account for the referential power of any individual translation, or in Mieke Bal's terms, its ground of interpretation.

Semiotic and philosophical investigations on the nature and relation of word and image do not exhaust the possibilities for reconsidering the boundaries of translation and its theoretical language. One of the richest fields for this is art history. The scope of this study prevents all but a brief consideration of debates in

this field via Mieke Bal's method of reading iconographically. Close attention to the narrative themes, the visual tropes, and formal structures of the audio-visual translations examined in this study, however, reveal a trend that may provide a more radical challenge to the ways in which translation is thought about than the reconsideration of translatability introduced in the first section suggests. An underlying and ever-present theme in all the translations considered comes from the establishment of a shared interpretive ground with their "sources" through the narration of space and spatial form. W. J. T. Mitchell challenges the argument that literature differs from the plastic arts because of the connection of writing to a temporal conception of narrative versus the plastic arts' connection to a spatial conception of interpretation. He argues that even theorists who have strongly contested the concept of spatiality in literature resort to spatial metaphors in their defence of the temporality of literary narrative. Spatial form, he writes, provides "the perceptual basis of our notion of time ... we literally cannot "tell time" without the mediation of space ... [it is] our basis for making history and temporality intelligible ... It may help us to see how a theme is embodied, where a narrator stands in relation to his story, what structure of imagery provides the grounds for symbolic meaning."[8] This study considers questions of spatial form in chapter four in the analysis of narrative framing and point of view and again in the analysis of the American Bible Society translation project in chapter seven. These questions appear in a more muted way in the analysis of the narration of space in chapter five. A more sustained theorisation of spatial form in relation to questions about translation from word to image awaits further research.

Although the examples used here are taken from the Bible, this study deals with more general questions about translation from one medium to another as they pertain to the central defining quest for understanding translation as its power of reference. This is taken up in detail in chapter three. Apart from the rather serendipitous beginning for research in this area, other more important reasons have emerged for exploring translation from one medium to another from the perspective of adaptations of biblical narrative for television. In the first place, Bible translation

[8] (Mitchell, 1980, pp 274 and 294-295)

has had a powerful influence on the development of language and literature and the visual arts (including film). So much is common knowledge. But, as a result, Bible translation in its many guises provides a broad inter-textual base to explore the referential power of translation. These translations offer more scope to trace the semiotic value of a text through its successive translations than any other individual text with few exceptions - Homer's *Iliad*, for example. More importantly, however, the Bible and its audio-visual interpretations present a more visible challenge to definitions of text, authority, and equivalence constructed around the central notion of originality in theories of literary translation. This makes it possible to explore the productive and creative nature of translation in ways often overlooked in studies of literary translation. Secondly, because the Bible occupies such a privileged place in the literary and cultural history of the English language, and because of its special status as a sacred text, the dichotomies of translation theory are often more polarised. Audio-visual translations of biblical narrative are interesting because they often make explicit what is only implicit in cinematic adaptations of literature. Finally, the translations studied here deliberately blur distinctions between sacred and secular, high and popular art, literary and theological, verbal and visual, making it possible to see more clearly the connections between different text types and the more general nature of translation. If George Steiner argues that we do not need to go beyond literature and language to discover the grey areas of translation, this study argues that we learn more about translation precisely in going beyond language.[9]

Two questions of terminology not developed elsewhere in this work require explanation. First, what name best applies to the processes and texts described here. I opted for "translation" for several reasons: To borrow the term "adaptation" from film studies is problematic, because in translation studies it has a more specific sense that indicates an absence of equivalence. Since one of my opening questions concerns the implication of equivalence in perceptions of translatability, the use of the term "adaptation" would introduce an undesirable qualification at the outset. The term "multi-media" recently introduced into translation studies to refer to translations involving more than one medium of communication presented similar

[9] See Unni Wikan in (Pálsson, 1993) for a discussion about the art of going beyond words in translation.

problems of focus. Although it may refer rather loosely to any number of communication media - cinema, television, personal computers - its introduction often signals a rather spurious differentiation between the organisation and processes of translation in each medium. Certainly, it is interesting and important from a practical point of view, say, to consider the importance of icons in the "localization" of computer software for different markets, or to point out that multi-media translation involves more than a single authorial translating mind. But the collaborative and collective nature of translation is not unique to multi-media forms. More importantly, the use of the term "multi-media" often covertly imports a technological determinism into translation analysis. I am particularly anxious to avoid this perspective. The American Bible Society, having originally adopted the term to distance themselves from the connotations of audio-visual translation, later dropped it in favour of "translation from one medium to another" because "multi-media" is too vague a term and overburdened with all kinds of theoretical baggage. (Soukup, 1999) In the interests of sustaining my criticism of Jakobson's translation categories, or any other kind of category for that matter, I do not see the need to qualify my examples by drawing attention to them as video, film, or television translations. Evidence of the use of the term translation in other fields (such as the history of art, and anthropology) amply challenges its exclusive use in linguistic and literary theories of translation. (Perhaps more striking, in this context, is the absence of any reference to or concept of translation in biblical studies)[10]. My unqualified use of the term translation is therefore at once provocative and reflective of the necessary inter-disciplinary nature of my thesis.

The other issue, perhaps more difficult to decide, is what name to give the "source" text. Except for some specific contexts, I have rejected the pair "source" and "target" text. The terminology brings an association with particular types of comparative methodology generally underpinned by a very mechanical model of communication. The pair imports a set of assumptions about communication

[10] Many biblical scholars who write about the interpretive history of the Bible in art, literature, music, and film quite rightly, in my opinion, treat these "translations" as another form of textual criticism. Their analyses are therefore not prejudiced by questions about how true these representations are to the text, or whether they are "faithful translations". See (Exum and Moore, 1998; Haskins, 1993; Kreitzer, 1993) for a range of critical methodologies in this area.

anachronistic to any but the most technical considerations about translation. They function as a metaphor for a communication model that assumes the passivity of reception.[11] (McQuail, 1993). The terminology of "target" and "source" thus has a tendency to impoverish debates about translation, especially those that take a culturalist perspective. Eventually, I settled for the term "original" because it seems a better description of popular perceptions about the Bible embedded in the discourses of originality and translation in my corpus. In this context, the concept of originality is self-reflexive. It has a number of rich and problematic semantic associations which provide a springboard for exploring how producers have approached the very tricky question of biblical authority. Chapters two and four pay particular attention to this question. In fact, originality and authority are virtually inseparable concepts. Several semantic possibilities in their association are worth mentioning. "Original" is a problematic term because it has an historical association in literary theory and textual criticism with Romantic concepts of authorship. The Romantic idea of literary or artistic authorship is, however, demonstrably a cultural construct that is linked to the economics of literary or artistic production. (Bourdieu, 1996) In film studies, this question surfaces in Auteur theory where the problem of authorship is tied to the collective nature of film making imposed by the technologies and structures of film production. Again, the parameters of authorship are invariably debated in the romantic terms of artistic originality.[12] In the context of biblical writing, where individual books are a redaction of several sources, the concept of authorship is defined by modern text criticism intended to establish the authenticity of a text's origins. While the techniques of text criticism are literary and linguistic, their motivation is irreducibly theological. Besides the overtly cultural parameters of its semantic field, the concept of originality is also unequivocally connected to the economics and technologies of

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[11] See, for example (Fiske, 1987; Hall, 1980; Livingstone and Lunt, 1994; Sperber, 1995) for counter-arguments to this view.

[12] It is also interesting to note in passing how considerably indebted film studies is to literary theory. There is an historical explanation for this. In its early development, the cinema was modelled on literary and narrative forms instead of documentary forms of representation. Consequently, the cinema adapted the repertoires of literary production. While film making also has its own rich tradition of documentary production, the terms of contemporary genre criticism in this tradition are more closely affiliated to debates about historiography and ethnology. See for example, (Renov, 1993; Sobchack, 1996).

reproduction. From this perspective, the distinctions between authorship and originality are more appropriately drawn from differences between folk traditions and written traditions (Bogatyrëv, 1982) than from distinctions between different types of mechanical (or now digital) reproduction. For example, the history of copyright law, which has invariably been designed to protect producers not artists, provides a fascinating counter-argument to a Romantic conception of authorship.[13] Unlike literary translation or cinema adaptation, where questions of fidelity popularly weigh with the authority of an original author, in Bible translation questions of fidelity weigh equally with the authority of the sacred Scriptures' divine inspiration and the authority of their interpretive communities. The term "original" in this connection reflects quite appropriately the notion of an origin in divine authorship and a beginning lost in the mists of time and overlaid by a rich interpretive history that nevertheless always assumes an original. The impulse to return to or recover an original, reflected in the promotional literature and historical reconstructions of audio-visual translations, is also a reflection of the interpretive habits of Bible readers. They are, as Josipovici suggests, "completing a series", in this case, the originary image of the Christian Old and New Testaments' opening narrative trope, "in the beginning ... "

[13] (See for example (Jardine, 1996) on the print revolution and (Mann, September 2000) on the digital revolution and copyright in the music industry).

CHAPTER ONE

Translation as a semiotic interpretive event

> The understanding of signs is not a mere matter of recognition (of a stable equivalence); it is a matter of *interpretation.*[1]

Roman Jakobson distinguishes three ways of interpreting a verbal sign in his essay *On Linguistic Aspects of Translation.*[2] He calls the translation of signs into the same language "intra-lingual translation" or *rewording;* translation into another language "inter-lingual translation" or *translation proper*; and translation into another sign system "inter-semiotic" or *transmutation.* By titling his chapter "On linguistic aspects of translation", Jakobson follows Saussure in subsuming semiotics under linguistics and thus reduces the interdisciplinary power of semiotics. His distinctions have contributed to some common misconceptions in translation studies: the treatment of these distinctions as discreet and irreducible categories; a reduction of his inter-semiotic, intra-lingual, and inter-lingual translation types respectively to Charles S. Peirce's iconic, indexical, and symbolic signs; and a further reduction of Peirce's iconic signs to non-verbal (primarily visual) forms of communication and his symbolic signs to verbal communication. This reductionist delineation of the field of translation stems from Jakobson's sleight of hand in identifying "inter-lingual" translation as *translation proper* and conflating Peirce's notion of symbolic sign relations with Saussure's concept of the sign as wholly arbitrary and of semiotics as a branch of linguistics. Jakobson's definition of *translation proper* rests on a particular condition of translatability understood as a seemingly paradoxical conception of equivalence or synonymy within difference which may only fully occur, according to his argument, at the level of arbitrary and conventional sign use. In order to appreciate how he arrives at his concept of

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[1] (Eco, 1984, p 43)
[2] (Jakobson, 1992)

translatability, it is worth examining the process whereby Jakobson uses his essay to translate Peirce into a Saussurean semiotic frame.[3]

The identity of Peirce's iconic, indexical and symbolic signs stems from the quality of their relation to their object, or the respect in which they refer to their object. An iconic sign resembles its conceptual object in a qualitative, or immediate sense that it shares some properties which the object possesses. Photographs, paintings, sculpture, but also graphs, maps, diagrams are iconic in this respect. Its firstness, or its unmediated relationship to its object determines the qualitative nature of iconic signs. The signifying value of firstness is the immediacy of experience. Thus,

> The Icon has no dynamical connection with the object it represents; it simply happens that its qualities resemble those of that object, and excites analogous sensations in the mind for which it is a likeness.[4]

As Peirce's definition suggests, the quality, such as colour, odour, sound, etc. of the object is essential to the icon as a sign. Jakobson's idea of iconic signs more closely resembles Saussure's definition of a symbol as motivated, or never wholly arbitrary. As such, symbols fall outside the scope of semiotic investigation. Likewise, inter-semiotic transformations fall outside the scope of Jakobson's investigation by virtue of their untranslatability.

An indexical sign resembles its object by virtue of an existential bond. It bears a causal relationship to the thing it signifies insofar as it points directly to its object. For example, a weather vane provides an index of the direction of the wind, just as smoke indicates fire. Secondness, or the law-like character of its existential bond determines the qualitative nature of indexical signs. The relationship tends to be a simple and straightforward one. Thus,

> The index is physically connected with its object; they make an organic pair, but the interpreting mind has nothing to do with this connection, except remarking it, after it is established.[5]

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[3] See (Gorlée, 1993, ch. 8) on the structuralist inflection of Jakobson's inflection of Peirce.
[4] (Peirce, 1931-1966, p 299)
[5] ibid., p 299

The signifying value of indexical signs lies in its capacity to make the object conceptually present. Jakobson equates indexical signs with intra-lingual translation on the basis of a necessary relation between code units and their synonyms. For example, the statement "every bachelor is an unmarried man, and every unmarried man is a bachelor"[6] demonstrates the logic of necessity, or the law-like character of the equivalence. Inter-lingual translation may be similarly indexical. The translator will always find a word or code unit if there is no already existing equivalent. "Whenever there is a deficiency, terminology may be qualified and amplified by loanwords or loan translations, neologisms, or semantic shifts, and finally by circumlocution."[7] Again Jakobson excludes indexical signs/intra-lingual translation from the scope of his analysis, because they are not wholly arbitrary.

A symbolic sign resembles its conceptual object in a general sense in that the relation between sign and object is imaginary:

> A symbol is a sign which refers to the Object that it denotes by virtue of a law, usually an association of general ideas, which operates to cause the symbol to be interpreted as referring to that object ... Not only is it general itself, but the Object to which it refers is of a general nature.[8]

Its thirdness, or the general nature of its signification determines the qualitative nature of the symbol. Thus,

> The symbol is connected with its object by virtue of the idea of the symbol-using mind, without which no such connection would exist.[9]

The signifying value of a symbol is its conventional nature that permits sign and object to be interpreted as connected, based on a general agreement or habit. Jakobson connects symbolic signs and inter-lingual translation on the basis of the conventional nature of the relationships: "messages may serve as *adequate* interpretations of alien code units or messages."[10] (emphasis added) However, his conception of translatability most definitely relates to the *arbitrary* nature of the

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[6] (Jakobson, 1992, p 145)
[7] ibid., p 147
[8] (Peirce, 1931-1966, Vol. 11. pp 143-144)
[9] (Peirce, 1931-1966, p 299)
[10] (Jakobson, 1992, p 145)

Saussurean sign, and only in a limited sense to Peirce's symbol. The elision of Peirce's symbol into Saussure's sign occurs through Jakobson's understanding of equivalence - something linked to the idea of arbitrariness. The sign's arbitrariness depends on both its independence of the real object and its position in the regulated play of differences in the signifying system. Hence the significance of Jakobson's concept of equivalence as synonymy in difference. Differences occur on two levels: first, the relation of signs in different languages, for example, the English word "cottage cheese" and the Russian word *syp*. Insofar as both refer to cheese made from pressed curds, the two terms can be used synonymously, but they differ because Russian cheese is only *syp* if it is fermented.[11] As code units the terms are equivalent because speakers recognise the difference while maintaining synonymy on the basis of an arbitrary rule or convention. Complete equivalence, therefore, relies on a notion of difference. Iconic and indexical signs may substitute for other more or less synonymous signs, but lack full equivalence because the relation is not arbitrary (i.e., there is no difference involved). Second, Jakobson maintains a thesis of arbitrariness at the level of language structure, not at the level of code units. Translation involves two equivalent messages in two different codes, by which Jakobson means *linguistic* codes since, following Saussure, it is clear from his essay he means,

> Signs that are wholly arbitrary realise better than others the ideal of the semiological process; that is why language, the most complex and universal of all systems of expression, is also the most characteristic.[12]

To give credence to his assertion that languages are translatable at a syntactical level Jakobson relies not only on a Saussurean conception of meaning where the combinatory rules of language give the individual units coherence but, as Eco points out, proposes further that "the code is not so much a mechanism which allows communication as a mechanism which allows transformations between two systems ... what matters is that they are systems which communicate *among one another*."[13]

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[11] Jakobson hints at the cultural disparity of these terms, but his real interest in his essay on translation is the structural nature of equivalence. Like Saussure, he separates *langue* and *parole* and makes meaning a function of the former, at least at the level of translatability.

[12] (de Saussure, 1966, p 68)

[13] (Eco, 1984, p 168)

This implies that the system gives meaning. Translation is therefore mono-logical and univocal, resting on a conception of equal exchange where, for example, one can exchange "bachelor" for "unmarried man" or "screw" for "rotating nail". But the equivalence of these terms comes only from the structures of the system in which they occur.

While he owes his working definition of signification to Peirce's triadic conception of the sign, Jakobson's transposition of these into three kinds of translation is dependant on Saussure's conception of the sign. The logic behind Jakobson's argument that inter-lingual translation is translation proper depends on shifting Peirce's concept of a Symbol as a sign whose interpretant has an entirely arbitrary relationship with its conceptual object to a concept of language as a system of entirely arbitrary signs. By changing Peirce's conventional nature of the symbol into Saussure's arbitrary nature of the sign, Jakobson successfully excludes iconic and indexical signs, therefore inter-semiotic and intra-lingual translation, from his definition of translation proper. Furthermore, as Derrida points out in his critique, Jakobson proposes a definitional equivalent for intra-lingual and inter-semiotic translation. He defines inter-lingual translation, however, as *translation proper*, he does not translate. In the first case the "translation of 'translation' is a definitional interpretation." In the second case Jakobson

> supposes that it is not necessary to translate; everyone understands what that means because everyone has experienced it, everyone is expected to know what is a language, the relation of one language to another and especially identity or difference in fact of language.[14]

Jakobson's definition of equivalence thus classically combines the structuralist thesis of arbitrariness with its principle of transparency. By definitional fiat rewording and transformation are excluded from translation. Translation studies has inherited this legacy which imposes epistemological boundaries on the definition and scope of "multi-media translation". In fact, all translation (whatever the medium) is intersemiotic translation. Therefore, this thesis about transfers from one medium to another (somewhat misleadingly and narrowly labelled "inter-semiotic" translation)

[14] (Derrida, 1992, p 225)

must begin with a discussion about the semiotics of translation, if only to clear the ground of inadequately theorised processes and prejudiced conceptions about the limits of translation.[15]

In principle, any process which adapts a prior conception that serves as a model for the new composition could be called a "translation". In practice, however, various conventions qualify definitions of translation: the view that only certain forms of inter-lingual transfer constitute translation proper, or the idea that translatability is synonymous with certain types of semiotic equivalence.[16] Emergent emphases in "multi-media" translation research indicate a conformity to what Umberto Eco has termed the political and epistemological boundaries of a discipline. A general view of language as the primary modelling system of human signification has set the boundaries of translation theory. (Lotman 1967, de Saussure 1966, Barthes 1977). Roland Barthes, for example, argues the linguistic sign anchors the meaning of all other visual and auditory signs within mass communication: "We are still, and more than ever, a civilisation of writing, writing and speech continuing to be the full terms of the informational structure"[17]. Umberto Eco, quoting Barthes, remarks on the perceived pre-eminence of linguistics as "not only the most important branch of semiotics but the model for every semiotic activity." He concludes that "without doubt verbal language is the most powerful semiotic device that man has invented."[18]

Any discussion about transfers from one medium to another ultimately has to deal with the dominance in Western thought of a structuralist linguistic paradigm which not only privileges verbal communication over other forms, but also assigns

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[15] It is typical of writers on translation to admit the possibility of including translations between media in the field but then draw back to discuss Jakobson's *translation proper*. See (Even-Zohar, 1990; Steiner, 1975; Toury, 1995). Steiner, for example notes: "we need not go immediately or entirely outside language. There is between 'translation proper' and 'transmutation' a vast terrain of 'partial transformation' ... These include paraphrase, graphic illustration, pastiche, imitation, thematic variation, parody, citation ... false attribution ... plagiarism, collage, and many others." (p 437)

[16] This view persists in spite of attempts by scholars to articulate the terms of "translation" in a broader semiological frame.

[17] (Barthes, 1977, p 38) Of course, this view is invariably contradicted by the art-historical perspective that "The image is the essence of the society in which we live." (David Salle, exhibition catalogue, Madrid, Spain, 27 September to 13 November 1988, quoted by (Sailer, 1996))

[18] (Eco, 1976, p 174)

the origins of truth and stability of meaning to the word. This paradigm sets the indeterminacy of non-verbal languages against the determinacy of verbal communication. Such indeterminacy has been attributed to the polysemy of non-verbal language which Barthes has described as "a message without a code",[19] i.e. a message without the combinatory rules that govern meaning within language. But in theories of meaning medium-bound conceptions of the intrinsic properties attributed to verbal and visual signs express a more fundamental conceptual opposition between the referential character of signs and their codification as meaningful systems of communication. Ultimately, questions about "translatability", however named in different fields, converge on the problem of whether meaning is a function of the codes that structure it or of the signs that represent an independent reality and the conventions and habits that determine their interpretation.[20] The opposition is embedded in Jakobson's essay on translation. One perspective holds that meaning is inscribed in and circumscribed by the text itself - is contextual;[21] the other, that meaning is inscribed in the context of interpretation - is inter-textual and open ended. The first perspective grants the possibility of translation based on a conception of the universality of codes; the other asserts that the radical heterogeneity of signs makes translation, in the narrow sense, impossible and open to manipulation. This explains why Jakobson, who treats poetry as "*parole*" in the Saussurean sense, cannot include it in his concept of translatability. These polarities share a common ground in the conception of equivalence as a particular inter-textual relation unique to translation and in many respects definitive.

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[19] (Barthes, 1977, p 17)

[20] For a succinct demonstration of this confrontation see Ora Avni's analysis of "De la soriscte des estopes" ("The little mouse in the Rag Basket") in (Avni, 1990)

[21] Context is another term that is fraught with conceptual difficulties that are not necessarily solved by defining everything within the translated text as para-textual and everything outside it as meta-textual. The separation is only possible if source and target texts are viewed as distinct entities. In this context a translation's preface is viewed as meta-textual. Once the reception of translations is included as integral to the dynamics of intercultural communication, the preface may be treated every bit as much as part of the translated text. It becomes, in fact, the authorial voice of the translator. In general, I take the view that the contexts of interpretation are a significant factor in the meaning of any text. I find it more helpful to make distinctions between the formal structures of a text and the cultural and social contexts of production that form part of the text's discourse and give coherence to any individual interpretation of a text. In this sense, cultural and social contexts may be "read" as texts themselves. Meaning, in this case, is never given, it is always negotiated but never wholly idiosyncratic.

While linguistic and literary paradigms circumscribe the terms in which people think about translation from one medium, and even determine the scope of research, might it not also be the case that the cultural and symbolic value of a written source text overdetermines the practice of translation from script to screen ("adaptation")? Indeed there is considerable evidence to support this possibility, particularly in the ubiquitous popular and critical observation that a film rarely matches up to the novel it has adapted.[22] Similarly, the ubiquity of print as the medium of literary translation has contributed to a tendency to take for granted the technologies through which translations have come into being. Thus the relevance of communication media for considerations about the form and content of translations and translation practices is generally overlooked. These two tendencies are linked. They reflect the logocentrism of Western thought which not only privileges verbal over other forms of communication but also assigns the origins of truth and stability of meaning to the word. Frederic Jameson neatly summarised the ideological realities of a cultural confrontation between word and image, or between print and audio-visual media when he wrote:

> What is paradoxical about this displacement of literary terminology by an emergent mediatic conceptuality is that it takes place at the very moment in which the philosophical priority of language itself and of the various linguistic philosophies has become dominant and well nigh universal. Thus, the written text loses its privileged and exemplary status at the very moment when the available conceptualities for analysing the enormous variety of objects of study with which 'reality' present us (now all in their various ways designated as 'texts') have become almost exclusively linguistic in orientation. To analyse the media in linguistic or semiotic terms therefore may well appear to involve an imperialising enlargement of the domain of language to include non-verbal - visual or musical, bodily, spatial - phenomena.[23]

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[22] The issue of "faithfulness" is as much part of the critical and scholarly vocabulary on adaptation in film studies as it is of the critical and scholarly vocabulary of translation studies and many of the same kinds of arguments are rehearsed in this context. (See for example: Andrew, 1984; Bluestone, 1957; Cohen, 1979; Moliterno, 1995). Their arguments boil down to two principal themes: one is the antecedence of the adapted work which, as Dudley Andrew points out, "delimits representation by insisting on the cultural status of the model", (p 97) the other is the specific differences between the two media, the "*very nature* of cinema and literature" (Moliterno, p 206, emphasis added) Attempts within film studies to invigorate debates about adaptation tend to focus on formal relations between novel and film, i.e. their narrative similarities and dissimilarities. (Chatman, 1978; McFarlane, 1996)

[23] (Jameson, 1985, p 200)

The difficulties for theory begin when translators need to establish an adequate point of comparison between two semiotic systems that construct their significance in apparently radically different ways leaving little common ground on which to decide a level of equivalence. In spite of a rather general resistance to equivalence as a definitive term, nowadays, it serves well as a concept that organises the parameters within which the polarities of similarity and difference apply to relations between languages, cultures, texts, and media. In sum, Jakobson's basic problem: synonymy within difference, though not unique to translation, constitutes the ground of meaning that informs questions of "translatability" in a range of comparative contexts. Yet the discourses of comparison resonate in such consistently similar ways across different fields that it raises the question whether, for the purposes of understanding translation as translation, the definitional distinctions within these fields are all that remarkable. For example, film studies use "adaptation" in almost identical ways to "translation" in translation studies. But the distinction between /translation/ and /adaptation/ does not carry the same value in each of these disciplines.[24] The difficulties of comparison are therefore teleological as much as they are structural and must be confronted as such. The following discussion will not attempt to resolve the difficulties of comparison, but rather, will explore translation as a semiotic interpretive process that may apply to a broader range of circumstances than circumscribed by Jakobson's narrow definition of translation proper. This exploration bears on the limitations of comparison and the descriptive validity of the categories used to account for similarities and differences. It focuses, therefore, on the paradoxes of equivalence encountered when Saussure is confronted with Peirce. Semiotic perspectives appear here primarily as

[24] A fairly extreme, but not unrepresentative, example of the distinction between 'translation' and 'adaptation' is expressed in an essay titled "The cultural factor in the production and use of education and training software" in *Research Perspectives on Open Distance Learning*. (Martínez et al., 1997) The author notes: "the quest for linguistic equivalences makes translation a work of in-depth study of cultures which constitutes one of the foundations of interculturalism. Translation is the task of making a cultural product appreciable in a cultural context different from that which surrounded its creation, while respecting the original cultural identity of the product. Adaptation, i.e. the translation of non-linguistic determinants, pursues objectives which are quite the opposite... Adaptation is not a flawed translation. It is used instead of it when translation has proved impossible for want of equivalents. The radical distinction between translation and adaptation can be seen in their respective objectives. While the translator's main concern is to be the faithful interpreter of the original creator, that of the adapter is to serve the future user of the product adapted and cater for his needs." (p 200) See also (Moliterno, 1995) who argues that adaptation is not translation because it requires a complete transcodification of the text.

an argument to overcome anticipated objections to a more inclusive conception of "translation", not as the theoretical frame for an analysis of intersemiotic translation.

To begin with, one cannot simply adapt existing literary or linguistic translation models on the assumption that any signifying system is structured in the same way as verbal language. Each sign system differs irreconcilably at the level of sign structure.[25] In *A Theory of Semiotics* Umberto Eco offers an extensive critique of two positions: (1) that linguistics should serve as the model for every semiotic activity; and (2) that sign systems that do not measure up to the linguistic model are imperfect. This view holds that the only sign systems to be conferred with the dignity of "language" (meaningful communication) are those that consist of a double articulation between single code units, which are not analysable into smaller meaningful units, and their combination into broader syntagmatic units.[26] Eco argues that interpretations are made on the basis of the recognition of signifying codes and their contents. Expressions in different sign systems may be subject to two, one, or no articulation depending on their pertinent levels of meaning. To use his analogy of Poker vocabulary,[27] individual cards in a pack are not distinguished merely by the position they hold in a system (ace, two, three, four, and so on) but also by the value they carry in various winning combinations: suits, pairs, three or four of a kind, full house, royal flush. These combinations constitute the pertinence levels conferred by the rules of the game. This illustrates what he terms systems containing elements of second articulation similar to verbal language. "The units of the suits ... combine to form signs endowed with meaning in relation to the game ... [which] may combine into 'card-sentences' such as «full» or «royal flush»." (p 233) To continue the analogy, he notes that Poker, forms a sub-system of a pack of French playing cards (52 plus one or two jokers), which another sub-system, such as Bridge, (constituted by a different sets of combinatory rules and card values) can

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[25] Umberto Eco concludes his discussion of the problem of the typology of signs (Eco, 1976, pp 172-174) with the suggestion that "it is absolutely necessary to demonstrate that (i) there exist different kinds of signs or of modes of sign production; (ii) many of these signs have both an inner structure and a relation to their content which is not the same as that of verbal-signs; (iii) a theory of sign production must and can define all of these different kinds of signs by having recourse to the same categoral apparatus." (p 174)

[26] (Eco, 1976, pp 228-231)

[27] ibid., p 230

replace. Playing cards also contain elements of first articulation, namely signs which subdivide into smaller units, e.g. the Queen which breaks down into the denotations «woman» and «queen».

Eco notes that sign recognition occurs not only on the basis of a unit-to-unit correlation suggested by linguistic models that establish meaning primarily on the symbolic level, but also at the level of larger meaningful units that he calls "super signs". These larger expressions are analysable into smaller discreet units but have conventionally come to be recognised as single meaningful units. Iconic signs are generally super signs:

> In fact when looking at the King of Spades or an image of the Virgin Mary we do not really have to grasp the representative meaning of the image, we do not interrogate the expression in order to guess, through a sort of backward projection at the format of the content-type. We immediately recognize this large-scale configuration as if it were an elementary feature.[28]

Even larger configurations, such as stylisation, may function as a single conventional expression. These include musical types (such as those associated with a particular film genre), or literary or artistic genres (Western, animation, folk music video), or iconograms such as "The Nativity", "The Sermon on the Mount", "The Prodigal Son". Although a supersign such as "The Sermon on the Mount" breaks down into the smaller units of /sermon/ and /mount/ and a visual representation of those two words, in fact, the larger configuration is immediately recognised and provides the sign which is endlessly translated and parodied in a further, more developed sign.

Eco proposes that cinematographic language consists of a triple articulation. At the first level of signification it consists of visual non-significant light phenomena *(figurae)* that combine to form single meaningful frames: images, icons, or supersigns. This relationship relies on a double articulation. The transition from frame to shot relies on a third articulation based on a temporal movement of kinesic signs or gestures which break down into discrete kinesic *figurae* that are not at all significant from the point of view of kinesic language.[29] Cinematographic language

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[28] (Eco, 1976, p 238)
[29] ibid., p 234

consists of a multiplicity of visual, auditory, and kinesic signs systems. Each of these possesses discrete units, which only become intelligible through their interaction.

Eco's analysis of different sign systems has important implications for any questions about translatability. Clearly, in this context, one cannot maintain even Jakobson's minimalist definition. It would seem advisable, therefore, to abandon sign structure as the ground of meaning that establishes a correspondence between texts in different media and look for alternative ways of describing the relationship between two such texts as translation. An examination of semiotic approaches in other disciplines will contribute to a foundation for a new description.

Both Saussurean and Peircean semiotic models have strongly influenced film theory. Christian Metz has shown that the language of cinema does not compare with spoken language because it lacks the double articulation of the latter.[30] Even the smallest unit of signification in the cinema (the shot) is equivalent to the phoneme (the minimal meaningful linguistic unit) and therefore is not subject to the same combinatory rules of language. The filmic shot, he argues, "resembles the statement rather than the word" (p 79). However, it differs from the statement because, unlike the statement, it is not reducible to discrete arbitrary elements (words, morphemes, phonemes). The elements of spoken language are always given or discrete, hence their arbitrariness, whereas the elements of filmic language are unlimited and variable or non discrete according to Metz. Thus to "'speak' a language is to use it, but to 'speak' a cinematographic language is to a certain extent to invent it".[31] Nevertheless, drawing substantially on Saussurean linguistics, Metz attempted to elaborate a grammar of film based on an extended analogy with language. In the context of the present discussion about the translational problem of equivalence - defined momentarily as a congruence at the symbolic level of linguistic

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[30] Metz distinguishes cinematic "language" from a language system (*langue*). Cinema can be called a language "to the extent that it orders signifying elements within ordered arrangements ... and to the extent that these elements are not traced to the perceptual configurations of reality itself." (Metz, 1974, p 74)

[31] (Metz, 1974, p 73)

articulation - it is worth picking out some aspects of Metz's argument and examining their implications with respect to the development of film semiotics.

One of the principal distinctions Metz makes between cinematic and verbal language starts from his definition of the sign as always "motivated" (that is codified in some way) but not necessarily arbitrary. At the level of film denotation, the similarity of the signifier to its significate supplies the motivation by analogy. In other words, the filmic sign is iconic. Whereas the meaning of a word is established through a process of differentiation in the Saussurean sense, (e.g. the meaning of the colour brown exists by virtue of the concept 'not brown') the filmic signifier derives its character from a distortion of the object not its transformation as in the case of verbal signifiers. Moreover, the cinema transforms the world into discourse by virtue of the fact that a film maker always shows a particular view of an object. Thus a shot is "an activated unit, a unit of discourse...which always refers to a reality...The image of a house does not signify 'house' but 'there is a house.'" (p 79) In this sense Metz understands the shot (or sequence of shots) to be indexical. He distinguishes between denotative and connotative levels of meaning in a manner clearly borrowed from Barthes and attributes denotation to iconic and indexical levels of meaning and connotation to the world of symbolic meaning. However, the example he gives of a particular trait of any character indicating the character's presence, even when the character does not appear on screen, to describe connotation as symbolic more typically follows the Peircean indexical sense of the sign rather than Saussure's symbolic sense of the sign.[32] Thus Metz argues that although connotation takes on additional meaning, it is never entirely arbitrary, but always has a residue. "In short connotative meaning *extends over* denotative meaning but without fully *contradicting* or *ignoring* it" (p 68).

According to Metz, cinematic language most nearly resembles verbal language at the level of film "grammar" where shots are arranged into a meaningful whole on the basis of a set of "habits" or conventions. Metz's division of film

[32] Wollen notes an important distinction between Peirce, for whom the linguistic sign is symbolic in a narrow and scientific sense, and Saussure for whom the symbol is never wholly arbitrary. (Wollen, 1988, p 102). Metz follows the latter reading of symbolic signs.

grammar into eight syntagmatic units is of concern here insofar as he specifically relates the syntagmatic level of cinematic signification to narrative.

> Although each image is a free creation, the arrangement of these images into an intelligible sequence - cutting and montage - brings us to the heart of the semiological dimension of film. It is a rather paradoxical situation: Those proliferating (and not very discrete!) units - the *images* - when it is a matter of composing a film, suddenly accept with reasonably good grace the constraint of a few large syntagmatic structures. While no image ever entirely resembles another image, the great majority of narrative films resemble each other in their principal syntagmatic figures. *Filmic narrativity* by becoming stable through convention and repetition over innumerable films has gradually shaped itself into forms that are more or less fixed.[33]

Moreover these syntagmatic units, which constitute the basic spatial and temporal ordering of cinematic narrative, are "located *in* the film but in *relation* to the plot" (p 88). Hence, they function as a self-referential system necessary to a structuralist conception of language and meaning. In many respects, Metz's structural analysis of cinematic signification presents a degree of circularity similar to Jakobson's conception of translatability. This results primarily from Metz's understanding of cinema as a closed system in which the significates of the filmic sign take on an intelligibility only in relation to each other. His ignoring of the iconic and indexical elements of the cinematic sign is of great significance, if only because his work helps form a structuralist tendency in film theory based on Saussurean linguistics and its exclusive focus on the symbolic or arbitrary nature of the sign.

Peter Wollen, on the other hand, sees the cinema as primarily indexical and iconic in the sense of Peirce's categorisation of signs. Wollen identifies different levels of signification with different kinds of film aesthetics[34] and argues, consequently, the importance of admitting the existence of the symbolic as a "guarantee of objective criticism".[35] He locates the poetics of the cinema within its

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[33] (Metz, 1974, p 73)

[34] In his scheme of the semiotics of cinema Wollen equates realist aesthetics with a projection of the indexical, "pictorial" aesthetics with the iconic and "discursive" aesthetics with a stress on conceptual meaning with the symbolic. (Wollen, 1988, p 168)

[35] "In the cinema, it is quite clear, indexical and iconic aspects are by far the most powerful. The symbolic is limited and secondary. But from the early days of film there has been a persistent, though understandable, tendency to exaggerate the importance of analogies with verbal language.

iconic and indexical levels and associates the creative and elusive nature of the iconic sign with poetry. "The iconic sign is the most labile; it observes neither the norms of convention nor the physical laws which govern the index... [It] is shifting and elusive; it defies capture by the critic." [36] This argument does not differ greatly from Jakobson's comment about poetry. In fact, Wollen bases his argument on a discussion about Jakobson's description of language with reference to Peirce's iconic, indexical, symbolic signs.[37] But like Barthes, Wollen identifies the symbolic level of meaning in cinema with the connotative and with a political aesthetic or, to put it another way, with filmic discourse. Thus in commenting on Metz's interpretation of a shot from Eisenstein's *Que Viva Mexico!* of the expressions of three peasants who have been buried in the sand after they have been trampled by the horses of their oppressors, he states:

> There is also a connotative level: the nobility of the landscape, the beautiful, typically Eisensteinian, triangular composition of the shot. At this second level the image expressed 'the grandeur of the Mexican people, the certainty of final victory, a kind of passionate love which the northerner feels for the sun-drenched splendour of the scene.'[38]

Wollen wants to downplay the linguistic model used by Metz. He works out his description of the cinema as possessing an amalgam of iconic, indexical and symbolic signs in which "films are texts which should be structured around contradictions of codes."[39] more fully in his own project of avant-garde film making to hold in tension what he regards as a comprehensive aesthetic of the cinema.

Although these arguments are based on different perspectives, Metz and Wollen have both identified cinematic language as primarily discursive at the indexical and iconic levels and narrative at the symbolic level of signification. While this does not bear directly on the problem of translatability in the conventional understanding of the term, it becomes relevant to a consideration of relations

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The main reason for this, there seems little doubt, has been the desire to validate the cinema as an art." (Wollen, 1988, p 97)

[36] (Wollen, 1988, p 105)

[37] ibid., pp 97-100

[38] ibid., p 105

[39] ibid., p 118

between word and image in the more radical terms proposed by Mieke Bal. (see chapter two) For the present, the emphasis placed by Metz and Wollen on the discursive and narrative aspects of cinema suggests an alternative perspective as the starting point for considering the translatability of whole sign systems. Certainly, the incommensurability of sign systems proposed by Marco de Marinis[40], whether spoken or written, written or visual, written or performed, makes it more difficult to think about transfers between them in terms of the transcodification of fixed messages.

The application of a Peircean semiotic frame to understanding translation as an interpretive process, inclusive of a wider set of relations than those that are assumed to pertain between semiotic codes, strongly supports alternative perspectives. Susan Petrilli, for example, equates the human capacity for signification with "translative thinking", a term she borrows from Victoria Welby (1837-1912). Petrilli takes a much broader view of translation by turning the relation between semiosis and translation around.

> We could ... state that semiosis ... cannot subsist without translation for semiosis is itself a translation-interpretation process. The role of translation is fundamental in the very constitution of the sign, both verbal and nonverbal, in the very determination of its meaning.[41]

Her emphasis on translation as a semiotic interpretive process stems from two claims by Peirce: (1) his frequently quoted definition of the sign as "something which stands for something in some respect or capacity"[42] and (2) his recognition of interpretation as endlessly commutable through the interpretant which is "nothing but another representation ... and as representation, it has its interpretant again."[43] This allows for the development of three important related issues: the first subsumes translation within a broader concept of interpretation as an infinite semiotic chain; the second gives no special priority to verbal signs; the third emphasises the importance of understanding the mediating role played by

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40 (De Marinis, 1993)
41 (Petrilli, 1992, p 234)
42 (Peirce, 1931-1966, p 228)
43 (Peirce, 1931-1966, Vol. I, p 171)

translation as sign between its referent (the source text as sign) and its interpretant (which, for the present, I shall describe as its reception).

The formulation of this concept of translation has its foundation in the philosophical proposition that our knowledge of the world is available only through our representations of the world. In semiotic terms, our understanding of reality arises from intuitive inferences made about our perceptions. That is, although the object determines the sign, it is only knowable through the sign. Peirce,

> The object of a representation can be nothing but a representation of which the first representation is the interpretant.[44]

This implies that meaning is not given by the sign, as assumed by structuralism, but inferred through the interpretant. According to Peirce, three types of reasoning ground inferences about the world The first, hypothetical (abductive) reasoning constitutes unanalysed, immediate feelings or instinctive or intuitive responses to events or things (a First or iconic sign). The second inferential premise leads to deductive reasoning where predictions about things or events rest on observable facts (a Second or indexical sign). Finally, inductive conclusions about feelings and observations derive from rules and conventions, habits of interpretation instituted through a general and pre-established premise (a Third or symbolic sign).

Translation theorists have applied Peirce's semiotic theory, that meaning is constituted through an endless chain of interpretant signs, together with his three types of inferential reasoning to a description of translation as a process of semiosis. (Gorlée, 1993; Petrilli, 1992; Ponzio, 1984; Stecconi, 1994). Dinda Gorlée develops Peirce's notion that the interpretant sign produces an "equivalent sign, or perhaps a more developed sign"[45] into an evolutionary model of "semio-translation" namely a

> unidirectional, future-oriented, cumulative, and irreversible process, one which advances, in successive instances, toward higher rationality, complexity, coherence, clarity, and determination.[46]

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[44] (Eco, 1976, p 69)
[45] (Gorlée, 1993, p 200)
[46] ibid., p 223

Her thesis is modelled on the premise that the translator is both the interpreter of the primary sign and the utterer of the translated sign; "the translator ... interprets and translates in fact his/her own interpretants."[47]

Translation theorists who use Peirce's semiotic theory, conceive translation relationships in radically different ways to the Saussurean model. Rather than accounting for equivalence in terms of the relative proximity of a translated text to its source, in which translation consists of searching for pre-existent equivalents in the target language, they link Peirce's three types of sign production to three stages in the translation process.[48] The first stage, the translator's first encounter with a text, provokes an intuitive response comparable to the firstness of an iconic sign. The second stage, a process of translating or making choices from a range of possible interpretants, corresponds to the secondness of an indexical sign. The process consists in finding an appropriate equivalent from a range of possibilities that already exist in the target language. The third stage constitutes the logical conclusion to the translation. This corresponds to the thirdness of Peirce's symbolic sign because the final decision rests on a habit of translating in a particular way which is only a temporary conclusion open to further translating.[49] This formula stresses the fact that translators apply a problem solving procedure in preference to a knowledge of the double structure of reference implied by concepts of equivalence in structuralist semiotics. As Ubaldo Stecconi notes,

> Equivalences are only apparently central in the system, in fact they are historically constituted by inferential processes and can be altered or subverted any time by further inferences as soon as the need arises.[50]

In this respect, all translations are genuine symbols.

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[47] (Gorlée, 1989, p 83)

[48] (Stecconi, 1994) "After stabilising our interpretant for A, we *guess* at a B; then, we conduct relentless mental experiments to test it against A itself, against our overall translation strategies, against the likely response of our readers, against the respect under which A meant whatever it meant, against what we want to mean by B, etc. Only at the end of this series of inferences de we normally reach a satisfactory solution." (pp 172-173) See (Gorlée, 1993) for a longer discussion about this process in relation to Wittgenstein and the semiotics of games and decisions.

[49] Stecconi, *A Thought Engine for Translation.* Unpublished paper presented to the ABS New Media Translation Research group (November 1999)

[50] (Stecconi, 1994, p 175)

If we understand equivalence as "the habit of acting in a given way to desire a given result",[51] it will be necessary to review referential and representational relationships between translations and their originals and the "crudely referentialist and realist conceptions of content"[52] implicit in conventional notions of equivalence. There is a striking resemblance between the different theoretical discourses on translation, adaptation, and *mise-en-scène*. (Andrew, 1984; De Marinis, 1993; Gorlée, 1993; Pavis, 1988) In summary, this literature identifies three types of relationship: The first self-referential type holds that translation/ adaptation/*mise-en-scène* is a literal interpretation of its prior text (total constraint). The second relationship acknowledges the source and target cultures of the transformed text, and the third references the prior text only in passing in the act of totally recreating it (total freedom). Andrew, writing of cinematic adaptations, identifies these relationships as (1) "transformations" which aim faithfully to reproduce the original text and measure up to the literary work; (2) "intersection" where the film-maker attempts to represent the distinctiveness of her/his source while honouring the specificities of the adaptation's aesthetic; and (3) "borrowing" which takes the original work's idea, or basic plot, without attempting to replicate it. Patrice Pavis offers a similar typology of *mise-en-scène*.[53] In this case, (1) an "auto-textual" relationship attempts faithfully to reproduce the play text without any reference to anything beyond it. Literally it "tries to understand the textual mechanisms and the structure of the plot according to an internal logic". (2) An "intertextual" *mise-en-scène* "relativises every new production as one possibility among others, placing it within a series of interpretations, every new solution trying to dissociate itself polemically from the others." (3) An "ideotextual" *mise-en-scène* functions almost as a metatext that tolerates the play text as nothing more than a "dead weight" and seeks to open up the political, social and psychological sub-texts of its source. These compare with Gorlée's three categorisations of translational equivalence which she describes as (1) "qualitative equivalence" (iconic because characterised by its similarity to the internal features of the text), (2) "referential equivalence" (characterised by an inferential similarity between source and target

[51] (Gorlée, 1993, pp 104-105)
[52] (De Marinis, 1993)
[53] (Issacharoff and Jones, 1988, pp 98-99)

texts rather than a representational similarity of qualitative equivalence), (3) "significational equivalence" (represents a whole new text based on the connotative depth of its source) - in other words, it takes the idea of the source text and re-presents it as a new and different text with its own signifying structures.[54]

These typologies relativise the hierarchical relation between "source" and "target" texts, suggesting a model of subordinate and dominant relationships that varies with the type of reference. However, as descriptive and theoretical categories they may not prove as useful as their frequency in critical literature might suggest.[55] In the first place, they are value laden. The writers cited here express a covert preference for one type over the others, depending on their initial definition of "translation" (or its equivalent) and their views on the role of the "translator". For example, it emerges quite clearly from Gorlée's description of translation as an evolutionary, cooperative process which moves successively towards a higher rationality and clarity that she values her third typology more highly than the other two.[56] If, as with Jakobson's categories, these typologies provide some kind of definitional criteria, the individual preferences call for a degree of scepticism. Secondly, these typologies do not necessarily function discreetly as a translation strategy within any individual text. Even if it were possible, as in some cases, to identify the discreet use of these categories, this raises a further question about the signifying value of any particular strategy. For example, what is the value in

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[54] (Gorlée, 1993, pp 169-176). See also (Dryden, 1962) who makes the distinction between metaphrase (literal translation), imitation (free) and paraphrase, whereby the translator endeavours to be true both to the author and to the reader for whom he is translating.

[55] The relative discreteness of these typologies is challenged by Stecconi in an unpublished essay, "A Thought Engine for Translation" (1998) who argues that all translations are symbols that contain indexical and iconic elements. The conventional nature of translation is established by the receiving community of readers, critics, and theorists who accept a text as a translation on the basis of prevailing norms and habits: "receivers can only rely on texts that are *prescribed* as translation, the fact that translating has taken place is represented in a claim located in or around the text." At the symbolic level, it is the claim made about a text that matters, not its empirical relationship to a presumed source text (which in the case of pseudo translation does not exist). In the context of the arguments presented below, an empirical relationship in terms of the equivalence between two texts may only be established at the indexical level of translation.

[56] Stephen Prickett makes a similar point about the aesthetic agenda implicit in Dryden's valuation of paraphrase (Prickett, 1986, p 30) and George Steiner's more general critique of the three categories (Steiner, 1975). Susan Petrilli makes the point that the task of translation is to convey the "sense" of a text, by which she means its ideology. Consequently, she notes, "what emerges is not so much the ideological character of translation as the *inevitability of taking into account the problem of sense and therefore of ideology in translation theory.*" (Petrilli, 1992, p 259)

identifying Kristoff Kieslowski's *Dekalog,* an adaptation of the Ten Commandments, as "ideotextual", or as "borrowing" from its Old Testament source, and Pier Pasolini's *Gospel According to Matthew* as a "transformation" or "auto-textual". Clearly these categorisations apply to the films' plots and narrative structures, but an examination of the discourses of each film makes it apparent that Pasolini's film "seeks to open up the political, social and psychological sub-texts of its source" while Kieslowski's *Dekalog* "[tries] to understand the textual mechanisms and the structure of the plot according to an internal logic".[57] The comparison reveals a paradox which has not gone unnoticed by Stephen Prickett who comments on the interpretive results of different strategies used to translate ambiguity in the Bible. Prickett criticises conventional assumptions behind the apparently common-sense distinctions between "transparent" and "opaque" modes of textual interpretation that underpin definitions of literal versus free, or archaising versus modernising translation strategies. Dryden's metaphrase aptly describes the interpretive conventions of "literal" translation which aim to render all the idiosyncratic singularity of the original. Literal translation takes the original at face value and focuses on the form of the text; it does not attempt to comprehend it. It treats the original text as transparent and accessible to the modern reader. Dryden's paraphrase best describes the interpretive conventions of "free" translation. Modern translations based on Nida's theory of functional equivalence also examplify Dryden's paraphrase (since few translators would credit Dryden's third category with the title translation). Free translation recognises the difficulties of translating ancient texts rendered opaque to the modern reader through their historical distance and attempts to make them transparent by using modernising translation techniques. Prickett's paradox lies in the tension between the text-critical methods translators use to understand the original and the methods of translation they employ. He notes,

> We are left with the paradox that an apparently 'transparent' approach to the Bible turns out to be, in reality, severely (if unconsciously) formalist and 'opaque', while an apparently 'opaque' technique seems to be the only way to restore a genuinely 'transparent' reading. To put it another way, it is those who would look through the text, who, disconcertingly see least; those who

[57] See note 53 above

> would look at it and study the detailed patterning of its surface as an artefact, who discover most. For the former, the text has become ever more transparent - revealing nothing behind; for the latter, the text's apparent opacity has become even more richly revealing.[58]

The paradox does not necessarily require a resolution. Rather, it may help to open it up a little more by considering further the function of iconic, indexical and symbolic signs in translation.

In an attempt to recover allusions to Peirce's theory of semiotics in Jakobson's essay on translation, Susan Petrilli argues that all translations are symbolic whatever the medium. Petrilli's analysis throws light on Jakobson's rather enigmatic conclusion that poetry is by definition untranslatable - "only creative transposition... is possible: either intralingual transposition ... or inter-lingual transposition ... or finally intersemiotic transposition".[59] The ambiguity stems from whether Jakobson intends his three categories as three distinct types of translation, as is most commonly assumed, or whether his categories refer to three strategies in the same vein as Dryden's typology. Successive readings of Jakobson's essay through a structuralist linguistic lens have compounded this ambiguity. Petrilli confirms a doubt that Jakobson intends relations between source and target text in the hierarchical sense inferred by some commentaries on his essay.[60] Instead of viewing intra-lingual, inter-lingual, and inter-semiotic translation as discreet and irreducible categories, Petrilli argues each of these processes represents a relative predominance of sign-interpretive relations in any one text. She notes, "these three types of translation as identified by Jakobson are always interrelated, are more or

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[58] (Prickett, 1986, pp 35-36). See chapter 5 for an application of Prickett's paradox to my analysis of archaising and modernising translation strategies. But it should also be noted that the context for Prickett's comment is a comparison of the theory and practice of literal translation (in the sense used by Schleiermacher) and paraphrase (in the sense of Nida's dynamic equivalence) as solutions to the problem of translating ambiguity.

[59] (Jakobson, 1992, p 151)

[60] (Bassnett, 1991; Gorlée, 1993). Gorlée, wrongly in my view, equates Jakobson's inter-lingual translation with Peirce's Indexical sign, and his intra-lingual translation with Peirce's Symbolic sign. She arrives at this conclusion because, contra Jakobson who thinks of inter-lingual translation as "reported speech, she thinks of translation as a linear process - "The translation procedure itself has been commonly but arguably hypothesised as a chronological scenario involving variously three or four stages. It is tempting to view the nature and role of these stages in the light of Peirce's process of interpretation, which is systematically described by him as a threefold reasoning-process consisting in the production of three successive interpretants." (Gorlée, 1993, p 182)

less co-existent with a relative predominance of one or the other."[61] In inter-lingual translation, conventionality (the definitive characteristic of a symbolic sign) predominates. But indexical and iconic signs are equally present. Indexicality is always present "when it places the vocable and its equivalent(s) in the target language alongside each other" (p 238), that is, when the translator places "cottage cheese" alongside "*syr*". She relates iconicity to the discursive nature of sign production, following Bakhtin. She notes that iconicity is also present with respect to everything when the relation between the sign and its object is not established by rules as in the case of symbols, or necessary contiguity as in the case of indexes. Iconicity relates to Bakhtin's concept of meaning as "all which is original and unreproducible in an utterance." Thus Petrilli associates iconicity in translation with "dialogism, alterity, polyphony, polylogism, and plurilingualism - all essential properties of language which render such things as critical awareness, experimentation, innovation and creativity possible." (p 240) In inter-lingual translation, indexical and iconic signs exist as well. Indeed, Petrilli argues that if translation processes "remain at the level of conventionality and indexicality, the translator ends in failure ... The translator must necessarily deal with [the iconic] component by moving beyond the conventions and obligations of the dictionary and entering the live dialogue among ... languages ... verbal signs and nonverbal signs." (p 240) Petrilli's interpretation of Jakobson's typologies undermines the rather simplistic oppositions described in my opening paragraph and makes possible a critique of the reasoning that attempts to equate visual images with iconic signs and literal translation.

Augusto Ponzio spells out the rather important point that "all signs participate in symbolicity, iconicity and indexicality."[62] Never purely a symbol, a sign, he argues, always contains elements of iconicity and indexicality. Similarly an indexical sign always contains elements of iconic and symbolic relations, while an icon bears indexical and symbolic traits. Wollen's example, cited earlier, of the shot from Eisenstein's *Que Viva Mexico* gives substance to Ponzio's argument. Several layers of signification may be identified within the shot. It is symbolic with

[61] (Petrilli, 1992, pp 237-238)
[62] (Ponzio, 1984, p 284)

indexical and iconic elements both at the level of sign production and the sign's content. As an image the shot is obviously iconic because it represents a particular scene, it bears a relation of similarity with its pre-textual referent. It functions as an index because it is both an effect of the work of film production and establishes a necessary relation between the peasants' expressions and the fact they are dead. Finally, the shot is symbolic because it obeys conventional rules that obtain within its production and because its composition invites an interpretation based on a typically Eisensteinian aesthetic founded in turn on his theory of montage. We may describe the inferential processes of interpretation as iconic, indexical and symbolic. Wollen infers the denotative level, the information that the peasants are dead, through a deductive process of interpretation based on the peasants' expressions (an index). He connects the shot's composition to his interpretation of it as "the grandeur of the Mexican people, the certainty of victory, a kind of passionate love which the northerner feels for the sun drenched splendour of the scene."[63] He bases this reading of the cinematic conventions used by Eisenstein on an inductive process of interpretation (a symbol). He bases the specificities of interpretation on an abductive process that does not rely on a necessary or conventional relation of the interpretant sign to its referent. It is an icon that stands for the pluralistic, creative, dialogic character of the sign and its interpretation. This is close to what he calls the shot's connotative level. Whereas Ponzio views abduction as proof of the sign's alterity and the dia-logic (as opposed to univocal and mono-logic) character of interpretation, Wollen views the open-endedness of connotation as a threat to meaning. He assigns the symbolic sign a critical function, the possibility of "maximising lucidity, minimising ambiguity". (p 105) Wollen's symbolic sign therefore serves as a code, a form of ideological criticism that anchors the proliferating meanings of connotation. In this respect he makes an essentially post-structuralist argument which owes more to Barthes than Peirce. Ponzio would regard the symbolic level as evidence of the shot's materiality, or "textuality" in the sense that he refers to the textuality of writing, a concept that he borrows from Bakhtin. The symbolic accounts for the sign within the totality of a semiotic process that Ponzio identifies as:

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[63] (Wollen, 1988, p 105)

> a comprehensive, unitary sense of the sign [that] is inseparable from concrete communicative contexts, social interaction, and from its connection to a concrete situation with particular values, ideological orientations, etc.[64]

Whereas Wollen locates meaning in the sign, Ponzio locates it in the relation between signs: between the sign and its object. This relation is necessarily mediated by the relation between the sign and its interpretant. As a sign, the interpretant refers to another interpretant which itself becomes a sign. Meaning is therefore an infinite chain of deferments which has no fixed definitive interpretant. According to Ponzio, this accounts for the identity of the sign as *other*.

> Identity of the sign requires displacement of the sign, this means that each time it is interpreted it becomes other: it is in fact the *other* sign that acts as interpretant.[65]

Rather than seeing the sign and its interpretant as two perfectly correlated parts, the *signifiant* and *signifié*, whose equivalence is represented by the formula a=a, the relation of the interpretant and the sign is one of continual deferment represented by the formula a=b=c=d, and so on. This relation is not one of mechanical substitution, but rather requires interpretation based on hypothetical inferences (of the deductive, inductive, and abductive kind) about the identity of the sign. Furthermore, Ponzio argues that the different characteristics of those hypothetical references may account for the degrees of alterity between the sign and its interpretant, where deductive inferences of the indexical variety present the most limited degree of alterity and abductive reasoning of the iconic variety, the most exaggerated degree.

Ponzio's model of the dialogic alterity of signification based on his reading of Peirce and Bakhtin offers a more complex reading of translation strategies than the typologies outlined earlier. It also accounts for the apparent paradoxes inherent in attempting to categorise translations. In applying his model to the more specific example of translating biblical narrative from a written to an audio-visual medium, one must necessarily recognise that all translations are symbols that may present a predominance of indexicality or iconicity at different levels of sign function.

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[64] (Ponzio, 1984, p 284)
[65] ibid., p 275

Arguably, therefore, a literal translation, which may be characterised by its attempt to reconstruct the historical or geographical context of the original text, presents a predominance of symbolicity. At the level of their visual portrayal of biblical history, literal translations stand on conventional visual representations of biblical narrative. Any similarity with past events, people or places is only apparent. Most of the translations presented as case studies in the following chapters are predominately symbolic in this sense. However, narrative strategies used to retell the biblical stories present a range of generic styles that mark each translation as thoroughly inter-textual in unique ways. At this level, some translations, such as *The Visual Bible* (analysed in chapter two) are predominately indexical in their use of an existing Bible translation as a script. Others, such as the *Turner Pictures* epic television mini-series (analysed in chapter five) present a greater degree of iconicity in the sense suggested by Ponzio and Petrilli, because they freely adapt the biblical text. Thus even within the group of translations broadly characterised as literal, there is a marked degree of heterogeneity. At the other end of the spectrum, there are productions that may be characterised as "free" at the level of visual representation. For example, the American Bible Society *newmediabible* project (discussed in chapter seven) appropriates the contemporary generic idiom of music video; or *Veggie Tales*, an extremely popular American series, represents biblical characters as animated vegetables. However, on another level, both productions present marked degrees of conventionality which mediate the visual creativeness of their interpretations. Despite its visual imagination, the theology inscribed in *Veggie Tales'* interpretation of biblical narrative presents a very orthodox brand of American Protestantism. The ABS adaptation of functional equivalence for its *newmediabible* translation indicates a high level of conventionality at all levels of practice in the context of modern Bible translation. The interpretive paradoxes that this strategy introduces to the programme are analysed in chapter seven.

In summary, the habit of characterising translation strategies by the levels of equivalence between source and target texts is untenable within a Peircean semiotic frame because Peirce's signs are not conceived as fixed types but interpretive *relationships*. Peirce's notion of the interpretant encourages a focus on the

contextual nature of signification. In this context, Saussure's *parole* is a necessary and significant component of linguistic and other forms of sign analysis. The translation critic and theorist alike must think through the semiotic value of each translation (its "meaning") in terms of the interpretive-translative practices (including their own) that ground it within particular social and cultural communicative practices.

This study takes the interpretive-translation practices of translation theory as its starting point. It targets the convention that reduces semiotic analysis to a linguistic model on the one hand and the claim that pure signs are necessarily arbitrary on the other. This reasoning seems to represent a principal objection to the translatability between print and audio-visual media.[66] The objection rests on two assumptions: a) a conflation of the iconic nature of images with the mimetic character of translation, leading to the reasoning that images must somehow resemble the words they represent; and b) photographic images function iconically by virtue of their special correspondence to the real world. These assumptions make a distinction between the specific nature of images and the generic nature of verbal language. They apply the criteria of linguistic equivalence by assuming that the meaning of the image is *intentional*, rather than *inferential*, in that it stands for the object it supposedly represents in a one-to-one relationship. In view of the argument that visual images are coded, we must examine the first objection in light of the discursive character of images and the creative nature of iconic signs. This will include an investigation of the implication of language in vision and of the symbolic character of visual representation. We must examine the second objection in view of Giardetti's argument that the degree to which a photographic image of the real world is *acceptable* depends on intelligent inferential processes of recognition made by the viewer. So that, in the case of pictorial representation, "We have the habit of combining certain concepts and conceptual relations (propositions) so definitely with certain sense experiences that we do not become conscious of the gulf - logically unbridgeable - which separates the world of sensory experience from the

[66] At this point, in order to simplify my argument, I will risk criticism by following the same path of reducing multi-media texts to their visual components.

world of concepts and propositions."[67] In this case, the opposition of the generic nature of language and the specific nature of images needs to be examined in light of the implication of vision in language. Placed within the context of a logocentric structuralism that gives them coherence, these objections represent epistemological and political frames that police the boundaries of translation.

Even this brief review clearly reveals that the boundaries of translation are constructed and maintained on fairly tenuous grounds based on a cultural bias towards the dominance of verbal communication. Shifting from a notion of translation as fixed set of relations between source and target texts to a concept of conventional and creative contiguity between texts and their common referential ground, and getting rid of the notion that audio visual translation functions as an equivalent to its written source by virtue of an iconic similarity between word and image, makes it possible to account for referential relationships that do not depend upon assigning a one-to-one correspondence. I propose, therefore, that it is not only conceptually possible, but also necessary, to include non-verbal transformations of written texts in other media within the field of translation studies. The key problem, in my view, is not *whether* we should include adaptations, dramatisations, remakes, or visual representations, within the boundaries of translation studies, but *how* we may adequately define and analyse non-verbal elements of communication (including the paralinguistic elements of verbal texts) as translations. In the remainder of section one, I shall consider the impact of conventional word/image oppositions on the theory and practice of translation from one medium to another.

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[67] (Giardetti and Oller, 1995, p 105)

CHAPTER TWO

Figuring the Word

Visuality erupts, insists, interrupts and the eye is massaged. But authority continues to seem to reside in transcendence, a denial of the actual existence in material form of the word—as if the disembodied terms of language could better serve to stabilize the positions of power seized by a fear and a trembling in the face of the face of the

WORD.

[1]

If we can turn structuralist and post-structuralist formulations of the equation literal=similar=iconic on their heads, it is equally important that we examine the idea that iconic signs are purely visual and, consequently, that we refuse to take at face value Jakobson's reduction of inter-semiotic translation to "transmutations" between media. In this chapter, I will examine the fallacy of iconism (the idea that iconic signs are purely visual) that not only sustains the conventional separation of word and image, but also validates the use of historical reconstructions of biblical narrative to stand for literal translation. In fact, the equivalence of literal translation and historical reconstruction doubly depends on the binary polarities of word and image and of source and target texts. The normative assumptions supporting this set of relationships allow challenge on two premises: first, the significantly symbolic nature of visual images and second, the function of literal translation as a sign to bond the translation to its original. The arguments of these two perspectives support an attempt to theorise the question of translation

[1] A photocopy taken from p 138 of (Drucker, 1998) and pasted on to this page.

between media and elaborate the difficulties of similitude inherent in concepts of historical reconstruction.

Mieke Bal's description of Peirce's iconicity, indexicality and symbolicity as "ground[s] of meaning production" or codes that establish a relation between sign and meaning accentuates the semiotic reductionism outlined in chapter 1.[2] She cites perspective in figurative art as a particular example of a so-called iconic sign which is significantly symbolic. "We accept perspective as "natural", as realistic, because we are accustomed to it, even though we know there are many art forms, within and outside our own culture, that are not perspectival."[3] Bal's point is consequential because she suggests that perspective results from its conceptual organisation. Perspective is a code, a way of ordering spatial relationships that give a particular coherence to representations of reality. Moreover, she argues that codes are cultural constructions grounded in the social practices of interpretation.[4] Bal's concept of "ground" accentuates the importance of relations between signs and their interpretants. In the context of translation studies it becomes more difficult to understand translation in terms of the resemblances between source and target texts; to categorise those resemblances as literal versus free, archaising versus modernising, domesticating versus foreignising; or to categorise translation strategies as "metaphrase", "imitation", and "paraphrase", or any one of the many variants of this formulation. More importantly, her argument emphasises the methodological value of a contextual analysis which aims to account for the significance of translations as interpretant signs without reducing that significance to an iconic, indexical, or symbolic relationship.

The claims of literal translation presupposed by historical reconstruction collapse under the scrutiny of Bal's concept of "ground". This scrutiny also highlights the logocentrism of theory and practice in this particular form of translation. The identity of historical reconstruction and literal translation is not a simple or straightforward one. It reflects a theory of representational equivalence

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[2] (Bal, 1985, p 32)
[3] ibid., p 32
[4] (Bal, 1992)

founded on textual conventions that have developed through historical and social practices of representation rather than on logical relationships inherent in texts themselves. In this chapter, I will focus on a specific example, Visual International's production of *The Gospel According to St. Matthew.*[5] The producers explicitly identify the programme as a "word for word" account of the Gospel of Matthew which uses the NIV English translation as a script.[6] The producers have clearly acted on a principle of literal translation in their generic choice of historical drama. In addition, the video cover announces "the Bible is now visual" suggesting a further assumption that the visuals transparently reflect the written text. My example is interesting not only because it highlights many of the normative assumptions behind historical reconstruction as a literal translation strategy, but also because it demonstrates the logocentric foundations of its own version of iconic literalism. *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* raises a cluster of interesting questions that range from the teleological implications of treating visual images as literal representations of written texts, to broader semiological and narrative considerations of how images communicate. A significant number of iconographic details in the video disrupt the purportedly literal representation of *The Gospel* and undermine the effect of the real encoded in its visual style. These disturbances of its representational transparency draw attention to the social contingency of convention and emphasise the work of textual production. In the following discussion, I will treat the images in this video translation as a narrative text in its own right in order to demonstrate the theoretical and methodological usefulness of the notion that signs are the grounds of meaning production for resisting representational conceptions of equivalence that pervade so much of translation theory.

Chapter one showed that the iconic/indexical, in contrast to the predominately symbolic nature of verbal signs, characterises photographic images

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[5] *The Gospel According to St. Matthew*, Visual International, South Africa, © 1994. Distributed in the U. K. by The Visual Bible Ltd. Slough, Buckinghamshire, U.K.

[6] *The Holy Bible*, New International Version. Copyright © 1973, 1984 by International Bible Society

(still or moving). The photograph[7] may be considered iconic insofar as it resembles its referent in some respect, while the image stands as an index of the physical presence of the person or object in the photograph. The photograph may be considered technically and aesthetically to have a unique relationship with that which is/was in front of the camera. From here, it is a small step to think of representations in film of the historical and geographical contexts of biblical narrative as literal translation on two counts: firstly, taking the written text as referent, one may imagine that the actors in some respect resemble the narrated characters that they bring to life (an iconic relationship). Secondly, if the video text's referent is taken as an historical account, one may also imagine that the actors fulfil an indexical function of standing in for the real historical people portrayed in the narrative. Of course, this is a necessary illusion. It serves a function in "bringing the stories to life" of sustaining a fantasy for the spectator of "being there". This thinking motivates Matthew's introductory description of himself as a young man who lived in Capernaum on the shores of lake Galilee during the Roman occupation of Palestine. The same point applies to geographical settings. Insofar as narrative reconstructions of biblical space and time treat their relation to the real as unproblematic, these representations bear a closer affinity with the aesthetics and ideologies of documentary film than with fiction. The motivation for the use of historical reconstruction as a literal translation strategy, therefore, presumes an intellectual tradition of historical criticism reinforced by popular images of ancient Palestine both in travel documentaries[8] and photographs included in some editions of English Bibles. The institutional ideologies of objectivity that inhere in an aesthetic of representational realism invests these images with a powerful guarantee of "what you see is what there was." The illusion of iconicity promoted by realist aesthetics of historical reconstruction (the denotative element of the photographic

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[7] Note the use of "photograph" here in a generic sense which can apply to cinematic images (Wollen, 1988) and figurative painting (Bal, 1991).

[8] See Burke O. Long, "Parlour Tours of the 'Holy Land" a summary of which is published in *Religious Studies News,* 28th November 1998 (American Academy of Religion) and 'travelogues' of The Holy Land presented by actors such as Charlton Heston, Jonathan Frakes, and Alexander-Scourby. Representations such as these assume Palestinian time and space has remained unchanged throughout biblical history. Consequently the modern Bible reader is able to easily make the imaginative leap back through historical time because the temporal distance has been collapsed. It supports a populist twentieth century imperialising tendency to view people of the past and from other cultures as "just like us".

sign) serves to mask its cultural content (its connotative value). A realist interpretation such as *The Visual Bible* focuses on the form of expression rather than the content of the sign. It attempts to establish the convention that what is displayed to the viewer is the meaning of the sign, or as Barthes states, the denoted image/iconic sign "naturalizes the symbolic message, it innocents the semantic artifice of connotation."[9]

Choices of framing, camera angle, lighting, composition - the rhetoric of an image - not only supply its connotative content but also indicate a preferred way of seeing. The illusionistic transparency of productions such as *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* serve to sustain a particular sense of narrative truth. It promotes a particular view both of the story as history and of historical accuracy. Bal and Wollen, who both see narration as the symbolic content of visual images, refer to this as the discursive, or ideological, element of figurative language.[10] In their view, images serve a narrative as well as visual purpose. Narrative organisation gives coherence to individual iconic and indexical elements of visual images. This makes symbol(icity), the analysis of the narrativity of images, a powerful critical tool. In other words, a critique of the narrative or symbolic content of images undermines the assumption that visual art is purely iconic and verbal art symbolic.[11]

The use of historical literalism to construct a narrative truth rests on another powerful myth that Derrida describes as the logocentrism of Western metaphysical concepts of "presence"; a myth that assigns all meaning to the natural and indissoluble relation between the spoken word and the speaking subject.[12] This conceptualisation of the relation between mind and word, and between word and the

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[9] (Barthes, 1977, p 45)

[10] (Bal, 1991, pp 31-33 and 177-179; Wollen, 1988, pp 100-106). Elsewhere, Bal (pp 1-4) shows how narrativity is inserted into painting by means of a sign that at first glance may be taken as a realistic detail. Bal's method indicates a resistance to a realist reading of her example and a preference for reading the content of the sign. In this way the sign becomes narratively significant. There are significant differences however. Bal grounds her reading in the social and cultural practices of interpretation foregrounding the work of reading. Wollen, on the other hand ignores the historical and social circumstances of reception. For Wollen, symbolicity involves an ideologically correct interpretation of a meaning that is already in the text.

[11] On this point, Bal is more explicit in her use of Peirce's iconic, indexical, and symbolic signs than Eco who uses Peirce incidentally, but maintains that iconic signs are visual (Eco, 1976, p 215)

[12] (Derrida, 1998) see pp 10-13 for an introduction to this idea.

speaking subject, has an iconic, indexical and symbolic content. The voice of the speaking subject has an "essential and immediate proximity with the mind", (an iconic relationship). As producer of the first signifier, voice signifies "mental experiences", (an indexical relationship). "Between being and mind, between mind and logos, a relation of conventional symbolization".[13] Western literary cultures treat the relationship as entirely transparent because phonetic writing as a representational form has become so closely associated with the spoken word. Like perception, writing is therefore significantly symbolic. This suggests that productions such as *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* use historical literalism as a code, a ground of meaning production, to link the idea of "presence" (the speaking subject of the written text brought to life by the actors' performances) with their particular version of narrative truth. *The Gospel* reveals a romance with the historical-critical fiction of an oral tradition which, as Harold Bloom argues so persuasively in *The Book of J*, obscures the undeniably literary textuality of biblical writings.[14] *The Gospel* reduces a revival of the supposed oral tradition of Matthew's Gospel to a set of crude visual aids: a fist banged on the table, a sorrowful shake of the head, a pregnant look, a skinful of water poured jokingly over somebody's head. The paradox of *The Gospel's* literalism dissolves the conventional word/image opposition by assigning meaning to a decontextualised, universalist principle of "the Word of God". Thus one must treat its literal translation strategy with a scepticism justified by a critique of its iconism. I turn my analysis, therefore, to the symbolic content of images in *The Gospel According to St. Matthew*, which give narrative coherence to the relation between word and image, and not to the adequacy of the film's visual representations.

The first iconic fallacy of literal translations such as *The Gospel* rests on the assumption that certain properties of image/word relationships may be reduced to their similarity in a naive sense, as when people equate the visual image of Jesus to /Jesus/ in the written text. However, the fact that words and images are differently coded undermines this assumption. Eco notes, in his discussion about iconic equivalents between word and image, that the iconic articulation of images is not

[13] (Derrida, 1998, p 11)
[14] (Bloom and Rosenberg, 1991)

resolvable to the discrete units of verbal expressions. To use his example here, the visual representation of the word /horse/ may be expressed in a thousand different non-foreseeable ways. Recognition of an image as a horse depends on the isolation of certain commonly accepted features of /horseness/, its shape, for example, rather than a single image equivalent to the word /horse/. This leads to his first description of iconic signs as "texts" that relate to different kinds of speech acts, not to individual units of meaning.

> An iconic sign is indeed a visual text, for its verbal equivalent (except in cases of considerable schematisation) is not a word but a phrase or indeed a whole story; the iconic representation of a horse doesn't correspond to the word /horse/ but rather to a description.[15]

It follows that iconic signs depend on the context of their expression for their recognition. According to Barthes, this is because iconic signs are characterised by an indeterminacy anchored only by verbal description. Eco prefers to attribute the indeterminacy of visual communication to the fact that it uses weak codes or "systems of vague correlation" fixed only by their context. On the strength of Eco's assertion that iconic signs are descriptive texts whose signification may be recognised by their context, one may argue that the recognition of cinematic images of /Jesus/ occurs on two planes: the commonly accepted features of long, wavy hair, beard and robes which identify him on the denotative plane, and the projection of Christian values such as holiness, martyrdom, humility (conveyed through gesture, expression, and posture) which identify him as "Jesus" on the connotative plane. The context of recognition is conventional, supplied by a long tradition in painting and Bible illustration of associating certain personality traits attributed to Jesus with a certain set of iconic features. The controversy over Scorsese's *The Last Temptation of Christ* and Pasolini's *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* resulted in part from the challenge to conventional iconographic representations of Jesus posed by the actor's portrayals of Christ in each film. Eco's differentiation of denotation and connotation helps greatly here. In *A Theory of Semiotics,* he argues that the code or semantic system, not the "difference between 'univocal' or 'vague'

[15] (Eco, 1976, p 215)

signification, or between 'referential' or 'emotional' communication"[16] establishes an expression as denotative or connotative. Denotative and connotative markers differ "only insofar as connotation must rely on a preceding denotation"[17] Both cultural units function as sign-units rooted in social conventions that establish the code. Therefore, the semantic system (by which he implies context of use) and not their referential features gives both denotative and connotative markers their stability.

If, as Eco points out, iconic signs are discursive, one may "read" them as "texts". This does not mean, in the sense of the dominant linguistic paradigm, that one can reduce images to an underlying verbal text. It means, specifically, treating iconic signs as narrative and reading them for their narrative content. Bal defines this process as reading the image iconographically.

> Iconographic reading is itself a discursive mode of reading because it subordinates the visually represented element to something else, thus privileging the symbol at the expense of the icon, while displacing the indexicality that allowed this semiosis in the first place. Iconography means, literally, writing by means of images.[18]

Bal suggests that an iconographic approach involves interpreting the *sense* of an image by placing its elements within the representational tradition that gives it meaning rather than processing its immediate content for an effect of realist representation. Therefore, in figurative representational systems, the iconic details of an image, which on a superficial viewing may merely denote the reality of a scene, take on a signifying force in which the elements function not as symptoms of the image's realism but metonymically as tropes within the meaning of the text as a whole.[19] This means that iconographic interpretation involves a recognition both of the meaningful units of an image and of their generic force within a tradition of representation. Moreover, Bal argues that the "readerliness" of iconography

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[16] (Eco, 1976, p 55)
[17] ibid., p 85
[18] (Bal, 1991, p 178)
[19] Throughout *Reading Rembrandt*, Bal uses "text" in three senses: a) an individual narrative work, b) the entire corpus of any artist together with its critical reception, and c) the "effect of representation" or the thematisation and narrativisation of social realities such as rape, father-son relations, and so on. In this particular case I follow her use of "text" to refer to a body of individual works which constitute the representational tradition of any written or visual story or image.

depends on the ability of an iconographic detail not only to place the work within a tradition as a whole but also to import into an individual work the whole story tradition for which the detail functions synedochically. That is, an iconic detail functions inter-textually; "it operates through the discursive rhetorical strategies of meaning production" to "import into the image an entire story with all its verbal elements."[20] In this sense, an individual element is at once iconic, insofar as it is a descriptive detail; indexical, in that it establishes a continuity within a representational tradition; and symbolic, because through its discursive strategies it becomes a text in its own right. Eco's "supersigns", mentioned in chapter one, function in a similar way when, for example, the Christian image of a baby lying in a manger evokes a whole narrative tradition of the Nativity.[21]

Bal's method of reading iconographically (recognising the fundamentally verbal or textual signifying force of iconic details) presents a number of important theoretical and methodological implications for understanding the extraordinary conceptual complexity of translations between media, understood here in the broadest sense of (a) (re)presentations of biblical texts as oral/performative, written, or audio and/or visual narratives, (b) the linguistic, visual, or aural representations of cultural border crossings, and (c) the politics of interpretation.[22] First of all, Bal's method makes it impossible to reduce "translation" to a representative relation between a source and a target text. Jakobson solved the problem, articulated in his essay *On Linguistic Aspects of Translation*, by reducing Peirce's symbolic sign to Saussure's definition of the sign as a linguistic code. Bal's iconographic reading denies this solution. Peirce's symbolic sign may rely on conventional agreement or

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[20] (Bal, 1991, p 181)

[21] In fact, an iconographic reading of the very word "manger" involves the same process of recording the whole Nativity tradition which is lost when the Greek word is translated as "bed of straw" even if "manger" is an archaism that may be meaningless to modern readers.

[22] I use the term 'politics' here to denote the radical politicisation of both the concept of translation in postcolonial and feminist writing on the subject (see, for example: Niranjana, 1992; Simon, 1996; Tymoczko, 1999) and of a parallel emergence of a cultural agenda in biblical scholarship (see for example Journal for the Study of the Old Testament supplement series: Gender, Culture, Theory, Sheffield Academic Press and *Semeia* an experimental journal for biblical criticism published by The Society of Biblical Literature, (Bach, 1999; Prior, 1997). For publications that deal explicitly with the politics of Bible translation see (Haskins, 1993; Pippin, 1996; Stine, 1990).

a rule as the ground of its interpretant, but the conventions do not inhere in the sign itself; they are socially produced.[23]

Secondly, Bal's method raises the difficult question of the value of discussing translation in terms of source and target text at all. One example from my case study will clarify this problem. According to commentaries,[24] the writings on Jesus' teaching have been collected into five discourses in the Gospel of Matthew the first of which, chapters 5-7, English translations commonly title "The Sermon on the Mount", although the publications of the NIV do not. Graham N. Stanton in his commentary notes that the "Sermon on the Mount" has been understood throughout the history of the Church as a compendium of Christian ethical teaching.[25] Apparently, Augustine first used the term, *De Sermoni Domini in monte*, in his commentary on Matthew 5-7. The Oxford English Dictionary cites a reference to its use in 1200 and again as a marginal note in the 1582 Douay-Rheims Bible, "The Sermon of Christ upon the Mount". The term did not gain wide currency until the sixteenth century, probably encouraged by its use as a title for Matthew 5-7 in the original edition of the King James translation of the Bible. /The Sermon on the Mount/ may, therefore, be described as one of Eco's supersigns that provides an image of a text - the sayings of Jesus remembered by eyewitnesses and gathered into a single and continuous record of his teachings - although, since the beginning of the twentieth century, scholars recognise that the author of Matthew's Gospel compiled these from various sources. Stanton notes: "Jesus did not 'preach' Matthew 5-7 as a sermon. But even in recent decades many [scholars] have paid only lip service to the fact that the sermon is the first of the Evangelist's five discourses. The sermon is often taken without further ado to be a summary of the ethical teachings of Jesus."[26] The title, a relatively modern interpretation, supplies universal status to Jesus' ethical sayings collected in Matthew's first discourse. The word /the/ suggests a continuous narration which implies that Jesus uttered all these sayings at one time in the same place. The use of the word "the"

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[23] See (Silverman, 1983)

[24] See (GNB Study Bible, 1994; Oxford English Dictionary, 1933; Buttrick, 1951; Coggins and Houlden, 1990)

[25] (Stanton, 1990)

[26] ibid., pp 625-629

universally unifies in this case, as in the case of *The* Ten Commandments, or *The* Story of Jesus. /Sermon/ defined in the OED as "A discourse, usually delivered from a pulpit and based upon a text of Scripture, for the purpose of giving religious instruction or exhortation"[27] seems to have appeared in English usage around the same time as the title. In the Churches and Cathedrals of medieval Europe, stained glass windows, mosaics, murals, and statuary provided visual aids for religious instruction. Modern preachers often resort to their own visual aids. Several aspects of the text become important for my analysis. Preachers in Western Churches generally stand to address their congregations. The NIV translates Matthew 5:1-2 as "Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and *sat down*. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them, saying:"[28] (emphasis added) Commentaries in other translations note that (a) the "mountainside" was probably one of the hills around Capernaum.[29] In fact, the Good News Bible[30] uses "a hill" in their translation, which may be a more accurate description of the topography around Capernaum. (b) On the words "Jesus sat down" commentaries note that in Jewish custom teachers sit.[31] (c) Verses 1-2 suggest, even in translation, that Jesus withdrew from the crowds and began to teach his disciples, although the Good News Study Bible notes that the verses anticipate a more general audience.[32] In this context, how have the producers of *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* used the image of /The Sermon on the Mount/? The producers translate the image quite literally. They set the scene on a barren, rocky outcrop high on a mountain side (wide shots establish its altitude relative to the surrounding countryside) that people have climbed to hear Jesus (played by Bruce Marchiano). A previous scene shows people scrambling up a narrow rocky path to reach the location.[33] As Jesus

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[27] (The Oxford English Dictionary, 1933)

[28] (the NIV, 1995, p 683)

[29] (The New Jerusalem Bible, 1994)

[30] (Ellingworth, 1994)

[31] (Johnson and Buttrick, 1951). These commentaries focus on the surface details of the text's content, not its literary structure whose parallelisms mark the Gospel's discourse as a radical reinforcement of Jewish law. I am grateful to Philip C. Stine for pointing this out to me. See also *A Handbook on the Gospel of Matthew* B.M. Newman and P.C. Stine, United Bible Societies, New York (1988).

[32] See also (Johnson and Buttrick, 1951)

[33] I will resist the interpretive allusions here to Matthew 7:14 "But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few shall find it." (The NIV, 1995, p 685)

speaks, he *paces* among the gathered *crowd* seated around him. The cadences and pacing of Marchiano's oration resonates with a particular style of public reading rather than a performance in the role of Jesus as a narrative character. In effect, Marchiano's delivery more closely characterises that of a twentieth century Anglo-American preacher complete with rather literal visual aids used in this style of rhetorical address.[34] We can usefully compare Marchiano's performance not with the written word itself, which does not give many clues (especially in translation) as to how it should be read aloud, but with other rhetorical traditions such as the Greek one contemporaneous to the Gospel of Matthew, or more recently with modern story-telling techniques that have attempted to revive oral traditions as an interpretive approach to the Bible, as for example the Story Tellers Guild[35]. What is *translated* here is not so much a particular set of messages gathered together in a fixed *source text* but a whole tradition that is continually reworked with each successive presentation of a residual collective memory from an unimaginable, distant past. Did an historical character named Jesus really sit down and say to his disciples "μακαριοι οι πτωχοι τω πνευματι. οτι αυτωνεστιν η βασιλεια των ουρνων" ("Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven").[36] For practical and theological purposes of "faithful translation" one must assume a source text as origin, however, for the theoretical and philosophical purposes of asking "what is translation?" the concept of an original text as a concrete entity may turn out to be superfluous. I will return to this difficult question in chapter three. **(See Clip 1)**

Thirdly, Bal's method of reading iconographically extends semiotic analysis beyond an identification of individual signs and their classification. Her method, as she herself demonstrates, is fundamentally and irreducibly interdisciplinary.[37] It radically transforms the equation of iconic signs with literal representation by taking up Eco's argument that iconic signs are discursive and may be "read" as "texts". Bal

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[34] In Ch 7 vs 3-5, Marchiano jokingly holds a stick to the side of his face to illustrate the problem of a speaker who criticises a friend for having a speck in his eye while he has a plank in his own. "Jesus'" audience laughs on cue at the joke.

[35] See http://www.nobs.org/

[36] Matthew 5:3, NIV

[37] (Bal, Winter 1990)

uses her approach to read against the grain of dominant realist interpretations of figurative painting, in other words, "to make sense out of what the image is *not* rather than *viewing* it."[38] To do so, she uses the symbolic sign as a critical tool which gives sense to iconic and indexical signs or intervenes in the signs.

An iconographic reading encourages a view of *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* as a translation that attempts to establish a relation of iconic similarity with its source, the NIV English translation. The iconic codes of similarity also index a typically idealistic attitude in translation that identifies the idea of origin with an authorial voice that represents the mind of the speaker and assumes writing to transparently reflect authorship. *The Gospel* forms the first episode of an ambitious project to bring the Bible to life by transposing it, quite literally, into a dramatised version for video. It was produced by a South African film company based in Johannesburg and shot on location in Morocco. The project to date has only completed Matthew and Acts. Both Matthew and Acts were shown quite recently on British Television. (ITV, 1998 and 1999)[39] However, the producers have made no attempt to adapt the text to the narrative techniques and conventions of another medium. They simply transpose the written text, word for word, to a oral narration by actors dressed up as first century CE Palestinians and set in an appropriately Middle Eastern looking location. The flowing robes and head-gear worn by the actors typify Sunday school performances of the Nativity, while locations stereotypically reproduce a twentieth century Western vision of ancient Palestine created, for example, by photographs and illustrations included in some publications of English Bibles. Obviously, the topology of the Moroccan landscape, the film's location, is intended to literally represent the historical Palestinian geography of the Gospel narrative's setting. (see fig. i)

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[38] (Bal, 1991, p 178)

[39] See Visual Bible web site address: http://www.visualbible.com. The original company and copyright to the films were owned by an American organisation, Visual International. The company was bought in August 2000 by an American Christian media organisation, American Uranium, with headquarters in Toronto. They are listed in Nasdaq. American Uranium have changed their name to The Visual Bible. The company proposes completing the visualisation of the entire Bible. Their co-production partners include the American Bible Society.

(fig. I) Matthew

However, as narrativised space, the video's *mis-en-scène* functions in a different way from the narration of space in the Greek text from which the NIV is translated. For example, place names construct a specific point of view in the first century CE text that would have resonated with the cultural politics of centre and periphery in the Roman Empire and the Jewish diaspora, for whom Matthew is understood to have written.[40] And so, in the written text, the Gospel writer intends the mention of Bethlehem as Jesus' birthplace to establish the credibility of his ancestry and therefore his credentials as "the saviour of the Jews". The video's *mis-en-scène* constructs an imaginary space more concerned with evoking and perpetuating an image of first century Palestine that typically distances the average twentieth century Western viewer historically and geographically while allowing a colonisation of the image through the construction of the gaze. The film thereby encourages the audience to view this representation of Palestine as an exotic and unknown

[40] See L. O. Dorn "'Going down' and 'going up'" in *The Bible Translator*, Vol. 49 No. 2, April 1998. A sense of the geopolitical significance of location for an understanding of the Gospel of Matthew can be also be gained from Robert D. Kaplan's essay "Israel Now" in *The Atlantic Monthly*, Vol 285, No 1, (Jan 2000). The locations picked for *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* make no reference whatsoever to the political context of the narrative that give a different view of Jesus' identity.

landscape made familiar and domestic through repeated uses of this form of representation. The *mis-en-scène* thus functions as a symbol established through conventions of accuracy.[41]

Matthew, played by Richard Kiley, who identifies himself in the opening scene as the author of the Gospel of Matthew and gives some autobiographical detail, missing from the written version narrates the video. He describes himself as an outsider shunned by his community because of his collaboration as a tax collector with the occupying forces of the Roman Empire. Narrator and author are embodied in one character.[42] The scene shifts, periodically, from Matthew's oration to a dramatisation of Jesus' life and teaching in which Jesus becomes the central speaking character. Usually, but not always, when such scene shifts occur, other characters who speak in the written account speak their own lines as well, while Matthew carries the rest of the account in voice over. Matthew tells his story to an audience of his immediate family, apparently, of wife and son or grandson; a small family of neighbours, perhaps, who appear in an early scene and stay throughout most of the video drama; and two scribes who appear, usually in the background, diligently and faithfully transcribing Matthew's every word. The spoken word and written word are treated synonymously to the extent, even, that chapter and verse references are burned into the bottom right hand corner of the image so that viewers may follow the story in the NIV translation if they choose. On the face of it, therefore, the translation represents a case of Pavis' "auto-textual" translation. The intention of the video to bring the story to life appears in the promotional details of the video's packaging which reads: "as his story unfolds, the centuries melt away and we are intimately involved in the life of Jesus". This intention is also implicit in the *mis-en-scène* and the repertoires of photographic realism that fit within a tradition of iconographic representation that values the Bible as an ancient historical document. The stated and unstated intentions of the video production thus signify

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[41] The ideological parallels with representations of travel and spatial distances in ethnographic television documentaries are interesting here. See (Nichols, 1992)

[42] "It is not known who the author of Matthew's Gospel was. The text itself does not say who wrote it, and the title "According to Matthew" was probably not part of the original text. Scholarly opinion ascribes authorship to a second generation Christian who wrote for Jewish-Christian readers. (The GNB study edition, 1994, p 1453)

a formal or literal translation strategy.[43] The disruptions of iconographic anomalies, however, prevent the practices of literal translation from making the relation between word and image completely transparent. For example, the Crucifixion is depicted in naturalistic and gruesome detail in keeping with a Christian narrative tradition of the martyrdom of Christ. But the carnivalesque interruption of two jeering soldiers who abuse Jesus loudly in broad white South African accents disrupts the dramatic naturalism of the scene.[44] Since very few characters in the video speak more than one or two lines, the intervention of these two actors dressed as *Roman* soldiers is all the more startling in the context of the video's realism.[45] Despite an inevitable temptation to treat it as an example of ludicrous amateurism, the scene invites a consideration of word-image relationships and the subordination of the visuals as illustrations of the spoken and written word. Such carnivalesque details as these foreground a tension between "seeing" and "reading" that betrays an anxiety about the capacity of audio-visual translation to sustain the authority of the written word, even while the images project an idea of the video as a "faithful" translation of the written text. Rather than focus on these details as evidence of a

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[43] Since my intention in this chapter is to raise critical questions about the cultural values encoded in the equation of formal/literal translation with certain repertoires of visual representation, I will continue to use these terms rather than invent new ones despite the difficulties, raised in chapter one, of matching linguistic and audio-visual translation processes. Since, in many respects this terminology constitutes part of the ground of meaning, I prefer to follow Derrida's example of putting these terms "under erasure" and thereby highlight the contradictions embedded in their everyday use in discourses on translation. For example, comparative methodologies in translation studies persist in the contradictory pairing of 'representation' and 'equivalence' that obscures a enduring belief in a transcendental signified mobilised through post structuralist translation metaphors like "abusive" or "foreignising". See (Worthington, 1996) on the problems of post-structuralism, (Snell-Hornby, 1995) on equivalence.

[44] Kiley speaks with an English accent and Marchiano with a mid-Atlantic accent.

[45] There is, however, a long tradition of representing these soldiers differently from other characters in the story. Susan L. Ward has pointed out to me in medieval and early Renaissance art the torturers of Christ are frequently depicted in accurate contemporary costumes while the virtuous have generic clothing. Since irony or satire do not appear to be a general rhetorical feature of the video, it may be misleading to assume that the inclusion of carnivalesque detail in the *Visual Bible* functions to undermine interpretative authority in the same way that it does in medieval mystery plays. In fact, Bruce Marchiano's account of his experience of playing Jesus and the heavy promotion of this film by Visual International as an evangelical tool does not support a thesis of carnival. (Extracts from Marchiano's book about his experience are advertised on the Visual Bible web site) This does not, however, rule out the possibility of an oppositional reading generated by disruptive iconographic detail.

poorly conceived strategy, I propose to examine how they draw attention to the producers' intentions manifest in their reworking of /the story of Jesus/.[46]

On first viewing, spectators may be struck by a significant detail in the portrayal of Jesus who seems to smile broadly all the time. It is a very particular and flashy gesture. **(See clip 2)** On the denotative level of *The Gospel*, the smile signifies the real, human qualities of the Jesus portrayed.[47] But Marchiano's smile is arguably defamiliarising since it departs from the generic depictions in film of Jesus as a grave and rather dignified character. Marchiano's smile marks *The Gospel's* Jesus as different from the interpretive abstraction of Jesus as the "Son of God", or the "suffering Christ" of Christianity. Because Marchiano's smile is an unfamiliar gesture in traditional Western iconography of Jesus it draws attention to itself. Consequently, it becomes an iconic detail that demands interpretation. The identification of Marchiano's smile as a significant iconographic detail entails a process of interpretation that, as Eco suggests, depends in the first place on an ability to identify it as a sign. This requires a knowledge of the iconographic and narrative traditions from which Marchiano's expression deviates. His smile intrudes on viewers' consciousness not only because of its iconographic unfamiliarity, but also because of its exaggeration. To account for the smile as significant within the overall economy of the story depends on being able to "read" it as a "text". This means that it has a narrative coherence beyond its purely denotative signification of "friendly or happy human being". Its interpretation must occur in the context both of the narrative that gives it coherence and of the way that it gives coherence to the narrative. To return to the scenes of "The Sermon on the Mount": as Jesus speaks to the gathered crowds he smiles. His smile invites a response from his audience who smile back at him. But these smiles differ qualitatively. Jesus' smiles self-assuredly. Viewers recognise his smile because he has already been identified as the son of God in earlier scenes. The people in Jesus' diegetic audience smile more

[46] The universalism of this concept is problematic because, as biblical scholars have shown, this version gained currency in the early Christian church as an outcome of a power struggle between Paul and Jesus' brother James. This is a power struggle that has re-emerged in modern discourses of liberation theology.

[47] This reading is confirmed by Marchiano's own published account of his interpretation of the Gospel. See the Visual Bible web site, http://www.visualbible.com

tentatively. They express both a response to what Jesus says and a dawning wonder. Whereas the viewer already possesses a superior knowledge, the smiles of the people in Jesus' audience signify the response of characters who only have access to a knowledge of Jesus' identity through his preaching and action.

Reading the smile iconographically means identifying its indexical and symbolic functions. The exchange of looks between Jesus and his audience points to the relation between the speaker and his audience, while the relation evokes the specificities of the video's narrative theme of faithful discipleship. In this sense, the smile is symbolic; it animates the dynamics of focalisation in the translation. Or as Bal suggests, it "dynamize[s] the activity of the viewer. Attracting attention to the work of representation as well as to the work of reading or viewing."[48] To this may be added that it attracts attention to the work of interpretation and translation since the theme of discipleship in the video does not compare with the theme in the original text. For the moment, I will pursue Edward Branigan's rather concise use of focalisation because it helps to identify and distinguish the various roles of Matthew as narrator, Jesus as actor/story teller, and their respective audiences. Branigan defines the term as a display of character perception. He notes: "Focalisation (reflection) involves a character neither speaking (narrating, reporting, communicating) nor acting (focusing, focused by), but rather actually *experiencing* something through seeing and hearing it." Thus focalisation "displays character perception as a consequence of events of the character's world even if other (nondiegetic) worlds are also affected. That is, focalization represents the *fact* of character perception"[49] whether it occurs as external focalisation, what the character sees or hears, or as internal focalisation, what the character thinks or feels. The focalised object is what the actor has seen or heard; the focaliser, the character who looks or listens. However, focalisation belongs strictly within the domain of the implied viewer and not the diegetic field of narrator or narratees. In Branigan's definition, focalisation is a purely narrative construct through which the implied viewer has access to what characters see and hear, or think and feel. It is controlled both by the direction of the character's looks within the frame and by the camera's

[48] (Bal, 1991, p 4)
[49] (Branigan, 1996, pp 101-102)

point of view and camera movement. The syntax of shot/reverse shot forms one element of the grammar of focalisation in film. For example, when Jesus looks out of frame, the shot cuts to what he sees from his angle of vision - a case of external focalisation. An example of internal focalisation is provided when Jesus' gaze seems to be fixed on an empty space in front of him, and the camera moves in on his face. Within the overall economy of *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* as a translation, the dynamic of focalisation belongs to the relation between the sign as an audio-visual translation and its interpretant (its reception). Focalisation is, therefore, a highly significant element of the video's function as translation to bring the story to life.[50]

The story world of *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* has three distinct levels of narration and two diegetic groups of narrator and narratees. The first level consists of the implied narrator and narratees of the video translation. These do not coincide with the implied narrator and narratees of the NIV translation who appear as the characters of Matthew and his audience in the second, diegetic, level of narration. As fictionalised characters, they stand in for the implied narrator and narratees of an "original" Greek version. The third level of narration belongs to that of Jesus and his addressees. It is embedded in the second level of narration which frames the story of Jesus' life and teaching. Jesus appears as both a character and a story teller in his own right with his own diegetic audience. The inter-relation of these three levels of narration is exceptionally complex. As focalisers, Matthew's audience and Jesus' audience fulfil rather different functions. Matthew's audience draws attention to Matthew's narration as an oral performance and to the necessity of an audience for such acts of communication. Matthew's narration may be understood as a proclamation, an announcement of the 'good news' in the tradition of Gospel writing. But the presence of the scribes creates an awareness of his performance as dictation of a narrative thus marking it as a pre-text. The scribes function as an index of the Gospel's presumed origin in an earlier oral tradition. The

[50] This concept of focalisation is derived from Genette - see (Stam, Burgoyne and Flitterman-Lewis, 1992). It has been adapted for film theory to distinguish between point of view which designates the physical location of spectators in relation to the screen and focalisation which describes the imaginary relations of the spectator to the narrative. It is thus a purely narrative construct which designates the relation of the implied spectator to the implied narrator.

video thus elides the primary orality of the Gospel and the secondary orality of the television performance in a way that foregrounds questions about literacy and a written text. Matthew's audience plays the role of both the addressees of Matthew's proclamation and of the diegetic narratees of his story. They therefore stand in for the real and implied viewers of the video translation, but the implied readers only of the written narrative. This act of standing for is achieved through the grammar of shot/reverse shot that is commonly recognised as one focalising device designed to persuade the real viewer to identify with a particular act of looking or with a particular character, or set of characters, in the film. This operation of identification has been called "interpellation" by film theorists who have borrowed the term from Louis Althusser's description of how individuals are symbolically constituted as subjects within the cultural and ideological matrixes of society. Interpellation describes an element of the speech act of "hailing" or "calling" when the hailed individual recognises herself as the subject of address. This is equivalent to Branigan's focalisation, but extends to it the concept of an imaginary or illusory subject position for the spectator constructed by the grammar of cinematic address. As Silverman notes:

> Interpellation designates the conjunction of imaginary and symbolic transactions which results in the subject's insertion into an already existing discourse. The individual who is culturally "hailed" or "called" simultaneously identifies with the subject of the speech and takes his or her place in the syntax which defines that subjective position. The first of these operations is imaginary, the second symbolic.[51]

The terminology of interpellation also incorporates negative concepts of ideology in the discursive positioning of subjects within social power relations. In this case, for an effective interpellation the processes must be seamless or transparent. Thus the grammar of shot/reverse shot usually obeys another rule of film syntax in which, in order not to disrupt the singular perspective of the film's spectator, the reverse shot must remain within 180° of the invisible axis of the motivating shot.

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[51] (Silverman, 1983, p 219)

The scenes with Matthew and his audience are carefully constructed to achieve an identification of the real viewer with the diegetic audience, by creating the effect of a shared singular perspective. Matthew/Kiley appears frequently to look straight at the camera and, therefore, beyond the diegetic audience to the real viewer seated in front of the television screen. The symbolic erasure of the intermediary agent of representation[52] establishes a direct link between viewers and the object of their gaze.[53] Photography and cinema or television, of course, require a further erasure of the mediating technology by requiring the spectator to imagine a position immediately behind the camera. This is a particular, but not the only mechanism of interpellation. Each time Kiley looks at the camera, the scene cuts to a reverse shot of Matthew's audience. In order to maintain the 180° rule of shot/reverse shot syntax, the shot cuts to a view of the diegetic audience from Matthew's angle of vision. The audience takes the same perspective as Kiley's imaginary audience: a frontal view of spectators seated in a row. In the reverse shots, the diegetic audience looks off-screen in the direction of Matthew. The angle of vision remains within the same 180° axis thus formally within the diegesis of the narrative. The conflating point of view and focalisation collapses the distance between diegetic and non-diegetic audience. This conflation is reinforced by another typical point of view shot of Matthew from behind his audience whose heads and shoulders fill the foreground of the shot. **(See Clip 3)**

Jesus, too, has a diegetic audience. Sometimes it is the crowds who come to hear him speak; at other times (such as in the scene of the final meal before his arrest), it is his disciples. Jesus' status as a character is only ever once violated. This extremely interesting deviation from the grammar of focalisation in the film disrupts Jesus' narrative position as a character in Matthew's story. Towards the end of the film, Jesus begins to tell his disciples about the end of the age and the second coming of Christ. The shot cuts from a shot of Jesus to a pan from a guttering candle to a dozing Matthew. In this disruption of the video's syntax,

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[52] In this case, the camera operator, but in other cases it may be the animator, graphic artist, or painter. The grammar of looking works in the same way for all of these processes. For example, see (Bal, 1991, chapter 4)

[53] See (Bal, 1991) and (Berger, 1980) for possible readings of this exchange of looks.

Matthew cedes the authority of own narration to Jesus who thus appears to become the author of his own destiny. In fact, Matthew does not reappear as a narrator until after the crucifixion. Whereas Matthew looks at the camera, Jesus looks only at members of his audience. Whereas Matthew's gaze takes in his entire audience, Jesus sees only those individuals in his line of vision. Whereas Matthew is generally shown in close up looking out towards his audience, Jesus is often shown in close up looking inwards, his eyes focus on an empty space just in front of them and symbolically on his thoughts.

Bal's analysis of looks and focalisation in Rembrandt's work moves beyond the economy of looking within the formal organisation of the story to a consideration of how the act of looking thematises the position of viewers in relation to the socially discursive contexts of the work.[54] Bal distinguishes between the gaze and the glance. The gaze conflates actor and character (model and figure in Bal's application). It encourages an attitude of looking that accepts the transparency of cinematographic representation, effacing the traces of the work of production. This resembles Branigan's use of focalisation and the particular dynamic of interpellation discussed above. The glance emphasises the viewer's own position as viewer, encouraged by traces of the work of production. The two modes of looking suggested by the work's structure are not mutually exclusive, they may coexist in the same act of looking. Bal's distinction between the gaze and the glance may account for how *The Gospel* thematises the problematics of translation from one medium to another: the investment of authority in the written word and the originality of the Gospel's oral tradition. While Bal makes the actual materiality of representation and Rembrandt's depiction of his models her starting point for a discussion about the differences between the glance and the gaze, her analysis of who looks at whom and how these looks narrativise the very act of looking interests me here. Matthew looks *at* the camera, disrupting the conventional representational realism of *The Gospel* that is held together by its *mis-en-scène* and syntax. Thus, while the shot/reverse shot grammar of Matthew's scenes should narrow the distance between his diegetic audience and the viewer, Matthew's look at the camera

[54] (Bal, 1991)

encourages a mode of viewing that is best characterised by Bal's description of the glance. Matthew's look functions in a similar way to the illocutionary act of direct address. It demands a response of the viewer as the person addressed. While the direction of Matthew's look implicates the viewer in the narrative, it also makes the act of looking on the part of the viewer a self-conscious one. The mode of looking encouraged by the direction of looks within Jesus' scenes, however, is closer to Bal's description of the mechanisms of the gaze. The focalisation of Jesus' looks is entirely intra-diegetic. It cements the act of looking with the act of narration and implicates the viewer within the story rather than within the process of telling. The separation of the glance and the gaze in the two narrative frames of *The Gospel* has important consequences for a construction of narrative authority in relation to the video's status as translation.

Matthew's claim to authorship at the beginning of the video is significant in the context of the story's presentation as an oral account because it raises questions about the authority of the written word in the formal exposition of the video. Matthew's introduction, reinforced by the presence of the scribes, may be interpreted as a prefatory closure on such questions. This little sub-text clearly equates authorship and authority with the written word, not with the oral performance. I would argue that the video producers have conceived the question of authority in terms of writing and translation and, sensing a problem in the conventional dialectic between word and image, have tried to reinforce closure through the dynamics of focalisation and point of view. In this way, the *meaning* of the words are, supposedly, left intact and in no need of further interpretation. However, the *sense* of the visual narrative reveals a discourse of biblical literalism that, as a hallmark of fundamental evangelical Christianity, assumes a universal and unproblematic meaning in the written text. This is signified by the different functions of Matthew's and Jesus' audiences as focalisers. As noted earlier, Matthew's audience stands for the subject of enunciation, the 'you' who is hailed and who recognises herself as such. His audience thus represents the recipient of the *kerygma*, or the good news according to Matthew, and by extension, the crowds anticipated in the introductory verses to "The Sermon on the Mount". Jesus'

audience, on the other hand, signifies the response of individuals to the *content* of enunciation. The different attitudes assumed by the two audiences matter, therefore. Matthew's audience merely *listens*; they are never seen reacting to his oration even when he dramatises a point by banging his fist on the table. Matthew's audience never betrays an emotion that would enlist a particular interpretation of what is said. Similarly, the scribes write impassively, giving no evidence that they might have added their own interpretive gloss on Matthew's words. Jesus' audience, on the other hand, focalises the *response* of the implied audience. Members of Jesus' audience react to the speaker, laugh at his jokes, smile when they have understood a point he has made, hug him in gratitude when he heals them. But because the film makers keep focalisation and point of view strictly separate in the image of Jesus' audience, they restrict the meaning of the spoken words safely to the formal boundaries of the audio-visual narrative, i.e. to the script on which it is based. Jesus' audience thus fits into the already existing discourse, the ideology of the text into which the narrative specificities of looking and hearing interpellate the real viewer. This dynamic symbolises the logocentrism of the literalist strategy used for the *Visual Bible*, but at the same time highlights in a more general sense the problematic of its translatability in formal terms understood by the conventions of inter-lingual translation.

The video raises the question not so much whether the visual images function as a translation of the written text, as the producers evidently see it, but how the video problematises the very notion of representational equivalence implicit in dominant definitions of translation. In fact, the very notion of discussing *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* in any kind of representational terms seems faintly preposterous.[55] The concept of equivalence between word and image signalled by efforts faithfully to reproduce the historical and geographic contexts of the Gospel story can only be sustained if we maintain the theoretical opposition of word and image and the reduction of visual images to their iconic and indexical functions. Once the implication of language in vision is admitted via an understanding of the symbolic or discursive character of visual images, it becomes

[55] This would be true of terms such as "adaptation" [*of*], "performance" [*of*], or other synonyms used to get around the definitive limitations of translation.

more difficult to see word and image as autonomous planes and to subordinate images to words. As I noted earlier, *words* do not order the sense of images (as Barthes would have it). The images' *context* supply this order. In this production, iconographic detail frequently produces a defamiliarised text that also "speaks" for itself and undermines the intent of literal translation.

By the same token, the opposition of source and target texts raises fundamental questions about origin and authority. These questions are usually suppressed by a conception in theory and practice of the translator's invisibility, thereby maintaining the source text's authority. A ready assumption of the transparency of writing also works to supply this suppression. As a consequence, the contexts of production are subordinated to the context of the text. A shift of media disrupts the assumed transparency of writing, foregrounding the context of production and the questions of origin and authorship embedded in it.[56] *The Gospel* treats transparency as an issue and attempts to restore it by rolling real author, implied author, and narrator into one character, thereby making no distinction at the level of authorship between the context of production and the content of the story. Matthew as "author" and the scribes acquire a dominant presence in the video narrative itself. That this gives the video producers a theological headache in the metaphorics of "bringing the story to life" may be evidenced by the video's interesting deviation from the grammar of its focalisation discussed earlier. At the moment Jesus begins to narrate his own story, the video text, it seems, can no longer sustain the all too solid presence of a "real" author and "human" Jesus; Matthew is caught napping. Jesus looks at Matthew and the viewer, following his gaze, also looks *at* Matthew rather than back at him. Matthew's authorial presence is thereby deferred to the transcendental signifier of a divine author.

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[56] The prevalence in audio-visual translations of the Bible of frame narratives that deal explicitly with the problem of authorship would seem to be a distinguishing feature of this genre. See my chapters 4-7 for more discussion about the function of frames. While frame narratives are rarely used in cinematic adaptations of literary works, it is not an exclusive feature of Bible translation. The analysis of the function of frames in audio visual translation in other genres, e.g. children's television, is beyond the scope of this study.

The issues of authority embedded in the transparency of writing are, however, more clearly focalised by the self-effacing scribes who enter the narrative before Matthew begins his story and who write so diligently and faithfully throughout. The scribes provide the most visible clue to the video's logocentrism for they inscribe a far more profound opposition than that between word and image. What then do they transcribe? Viewers receive a privileged insight through the reverse shots of what Matthew sees when he looks over their shoulders. We must assume that they write down what they *hear*. But this can only be an imaginative guess because they write not in English but in some ancient orthography - whether Hebrew, or Aramaic, is left to the viewer's imagination - the signs relate arbitrarily to Matthew's words. But that arbitrary and imaginary reference forms the written sign of an oral performance, or an authorial presence in the text, and of an origin that precedes the written source, and predates an English or Greek version.[57] **(See Clip 4)**

Questions about the original language of the Gospel of Matthew aside, the scribes' demeanour calls attention to another factor of the arbitrariness of writing and its assumed transparency: the split between form and content, or *langue* and *parole*. The contrast between the scribes' impassiveness and Matthew's passion arouses curiosity as to what exactly they transcribe - Matthew's interpretation of events contained in his oral performance or merely the content of his words? The question is intriguing because it confirms the valorisation of writing in Western literary cultures that Derrida has criticised as idealist. The scribes' inscrutable expressions perhaps provide a clue to the philosophy of language and of writing inscribed in the video. The scribes' looks narrates their invisibility in the orthography of Matthew's Gospel. Their invisibility functions metonymically as a trope for the invisibility of writing as a graphic representation of the text. The trope puts under erasure the work of textual production signified by the scribes' presence in the video as characters. It is significant that the scribes also disappear from the audio-visual narrative after the scene in which Matthew is caught napping.

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[57] Textual criticism is almost unanimous on the fact that the Gospel of Matthew was written in Greek. If there was a Hebrew or Aramaic manuscript from which the Greek was translated there is no proof because it has been lost.

In order to reassert the the idea of a transcendental authorial presence in the video text, the film must present writing as secondary to the primary signifier, the sound-image of the word. Writing is represented as the "signifier of a signifier."[58] The derivative nature of writing depends on a radical break between speech and writing, (symbolised in the video by Matthew and the scribes), which reduces writing to an instrument, or a technology of representation. In this view, writing is a symbol, a graphic representation of speech. As Derrida argues, this separation of writing from the interior system of language permits the logocentrism of language. In order to sustain the separation of speech and writing the relation between the two must, however, be considered arbitrary or unmotivated. Writing thus functions as a sign system in its own right. The individual units of writing, graphemes, equal the phonemes of language and are ordered similarly by their distribution in a system of similarities and differences. In writing, as in language, the system regulates meaning. Graphemes relate arbitrarily to an external referent. Derrida maintains that this thesis of arbitrariness, however, "must forbid a radical distinction between the linguistic and the graphic sign"[59] because it accounts for the symbolic or conventional nature of the relationship between spoken and written words. The thesis of arbitrariness deals with the contradiction of speech and writing by treating the relation as conventional and therefore transparent. But, "by the same token it forbids the latter to be an "image" of the former."[60] The conventional character of the relationship arbitrarily suppresses difference at the expense of similarity while simultaneously insisting on the difference. Thus the logic of this thesis mirrors that of Jakobson's definition of translation proper which deals with the problem of "difference in similarity" in precisely these terms. By excluding other semiotic relationships from his definition, Jakobson surreptitiously and indissolubly links *inter-lingual* translation with *written* translation in a relationship of transparency that makes language and writing and translation synonymous and excludes other forms of notation from the circle. The inscription of invisibility and transparency in the scribes' performance functions as an important index of the video's ideology

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[58] (Derrida, 1998) See especially his discussion about the Saussurean formulation of the arbritrariness of writing. pp 30-47

[59] ibid., p 44

[60] ibid., p 45

of presence. An iconographic reading of *The Gospel*, therefore, makes it possible to carry the critique of word/image oppositions to the very heart of translation theory and the assumptions that inform its definitions.

The mechanisms that maintain the opposition of speech and writing, while assuring a relational transparency, function somewhat differently in relations between word and image. While Bal and Eco argue that the implication of language in vision undermines the opposition of word and image, it does so discursively and not conventionally. The thesis of arbitrariness breaks down under the pressure of the tension between word and image. Confronted with the undeniable iconic and indexical dimensions of visual images, but denied the possibility of transparency by the discursiveness of iconic signs, one must necessarily account for the relationship between word and image by other means. In *The Gospel* the scribes function metonymically for a translation strategy that attempts seamlessly to interpellate the spectator in the audio-visual text's ideology of translation as a faithful reflection of the written text. *The Gospel* presents itself at one and the same time as the original message brought to life and as a translation of a written text. The audio visual sign thus becomes the signifier of a written signifier. It functions as a supplement that is added to writing as an image or representation. Within the metaphorical construct of translation as "bringing to life" the visual image adds to the written the fullest measure of presence. This idea finds support in extending Derrida's concept of supplement, where "the art of writing is nothing but a mediated representation of thought",[61] to a concept of audio-visual translation as nothing but a mediated representation of the written word. The scribes function symbolically to effect this representation. They supplement the main narrative. A visible reminder of Matthew's oration as dictation and of his presence as author of the Gospel each time he looks over the scribes' shoulders. The direction of Matthew's look and the reverse shot of what the scribes are writing focalises the theme of faithfulness in the video and inscribes spectators in this theme by including them in Matthew's point of view.

But the idea of the supplement also signifies a lack. Derrida:

[61] (Derrida, 1998, p 144)

> The supplement supplements. It adds only to replace. It intervenes or insinuates itself in the place of: if it fills, it is as if one fills a void.[62]

Derrida makes the point that if writing as supplement acts as a substitution for "presence" - the idealised proximity of mind and word that is the foundation of logocentrism - it is because as substitution it defines the absence of an external referent (in this case the mind) as a guarantor of the meaning of a text. For Derrida, writing confirms that no meaning lies beyond the text: "the concept of the supplement and the theory of writing designate textuality itself."[63] Notwithstanding Derrida's own logocentrism in his theory of writing and the idealism of his formulation of a thesis of arbitrariness, this idea has some important implications for the representation of writing as translation in the video. The vision of the scribes writing designates the material textuality of the Gospel of Matthew. Thus on the one hand they secure a Christian view of the inscription of authority in the written word. Writing is therefore already itself a translation. However, in its representational practices, the video does not go so far as to confirm the inscription of meaning within the very texture of writing. Far from it. I would argue that the scribes' inscrutability, the cutaways to a written representation of an originary verbal narration, the focalisation of invisibility, are all efforts to introduce closure to the excess of the supplement. The greatest anxiety encoded in the literal strategy of *The Gospel According to Matthew* is a fear of the discursiveness of the iconic sign, hence the emphasis on writing and its transparency. Consequently, only when the "true" author of the /story of Jesus/ reveals his identity can the producers dispense with the scribes.

The Visual International translation expresses a general belief in the Judeo-Christian tradition that the "Word of God" is not only divine utterance, but is itself evidence of a divine presence and of a transcendent meaning beyond the mere words of the page. Symbolically, Marchiano's smile functions to cement the ideology of presence in the conflation of the video's visual realism with conception of representational equivalence. There is thus a metaphorical play/ploy in the video's

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[62] (Derrida, 1998, p 145)
[63] ibid., p 163

invocation of the literal=iconic paradigm which indissolubly connects *The Gospel's* theology with its translation strategy. To pursue the rhetorical and narrative function of Marchiano's smile in this context is to explore the politics of the valorisation of writing as an extension of logocentrism. That in turn points beyond a superficial question of equivalence to the central philosophical problem of the tension between word and image that structuralist definitions of translation have evaded by prioritising inter-lingual translation. In sum, the politics of valorisation necessitates an analysis of the ground of meaning in translation which, in other words, calls for an examination of the contexts in which meaning is socially produced through translation.

CHAPTER THREE

Translation, Vision, Reference

> The perfect expression of reference is vision, and the perfect expression of vision is reference. The two words 'vision' and 'reference' form a reciprocal state of understanding.[1]

In the previous chapters, I have considered several difficulties connected with understanding translation a) as a concept of translatability based on structural similarities between source and target languages, and b) as a concept of equivalence based on the representational similarity of target to source texts. In this chapter, I will examine the conceptual foundations of these difficulties before I explore an alternative approach in theories of reference to the problem of how to talk about translations from one medium to another. One of the principal challenges of translation studies motivates my discussion: how to strike a balance between an understanding of translation broad enough to include the many forms it takes (from literary translation, to adaptations and remakes, to ethnographic description) and a definition rigorous enough to demarcate some intellectual boundaries to the subject. However, I should make clear at the outset that I do not aim to elaborate yet another general theory of translation, especially not a theory of multi-media translation, to give coherence to the "extraordinary number of dichotomies" that inhabit the world of translation.[2] I am more precisely interested in the resistance of translations to general rules occasioned by the central paradox that the practice is at once derivative and creative. In this context, the more appropriate question is how translation between two different sign systems is possible and, consequently, what light a focus on explanations for apparent elements of untranslatability or mis-translations casts on theories of translation. In the first instance, it will be helpful to examine

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[1] (Morot-Sir, 1995, p 23)
[2] (Hatim and Mason, 1997)

more closely one of the central orthodoxies of translation studies; the relation of language and translation.

Generally, the production of "better" translations has informed the goal of conceptual definition in translation theory.[3] This has consisted in the complementary process of refining what might properly be called "translation" and constructing appropriate translation models which, in turn, has involved creating taxonomies or corpora to validate these models. The whole process rests on the classic separation in Western philosophy of language and identity, whether in terms of a linguistic realism which postulates the independence of word and object, or in terms of an idealistic conception of the independence of thought and language. In either case, people have viewed translation as a representation of a prior object (the source text) or of the mind of an original author. They have treated language and, by extension, translation as transparent and overlooked its referential power. Translation theory has been pre-occupied with the extent to which translation successfully achieves invisibility, by helping the original text or the imagination of its author shine through the work of interpretation, rather than consider the question 'what is the ground of meaning in a translation and in what respects does it transform its object?' The possibility that a translation may be better than its original, or have an independent existence, has an aura of heresy.

Functionalist approaches, such as those of Eugene Nida or Gideon Toury, have not effectively challenged the Cartesian dualism that marks the theory and practice of translation. Nida's model of functional equivalence, however subtly inflected by his substantial reference to C. S. Peirce, reflects a realist conception of Peirce's sign. For Nida, utterances may be functionally equivalent because they express a common experience and produce a similar effect in the hearer, in the same way that Peirce's "dynamical object", or real object (which he excludes from the sign) motivates or determines the sign's immediate object, or the idea of the object which is immanent to the sign. Toury's influential attempt to resituate translation studies within an inductive approach, which proceeds from an examination of a

[3] See for example Holmes' seminal essay on the goal of translation studies where the purpose of descriptive studies is to provide more sophisticated theories that in turn serve an improvement of translation practice. (Holmes, 1975)

particular relationship (e.g. the comparison of target and source text) to a discovery of general translation principles or laws, amounts to an elaborate restatement of the so-called transparency of the Saussurean sign.[4] His functional definition of translation cloaks a realist conception of language and communicative instrumentality. By making the target text and target text norms the focus of an empirical science he does not overcome the problems of discussing translation in representational terms. Toury problematises the source text as the ultimate comparative value, but his notion of an intermediary comparative value introduces a ghostly third term (a universal language perhaps) which is external to both source and target text. The conceptualisation of translation in terms of particular theories of language has tended to overshadow an understanding of translation as translation. As Andrew Benjamin notes in his commentary on Walter Benjamin's essay *The Task of the Translator*, "translation pertains not to meaning but to language itself."[5] Typically, translation theorists have tended to classify translation by the communicative function of language, in which the translator acts as some kind of broker or mediator in a communication exchange between language cultures, (Hatim and Mason, 1997) or by text-types and their function, such as literary, general or special. (Snell-Hornby, 1995)

The "cultural turn" in translation studies reflects an effort to account for the discursive nature of translating in its full contextual complexity as a corrective to the limitations of text-linguistic approaches to translation. (Bassnett and Lefevere, 1998; Niranjana, 1992; Simon, 1996; Tymoczko, 1999) A culturalist approach applies a conception of translation as both an effect of inter-cultural communication (a necessity epitomised by the myth of Babel) and the evident cultural and social effects of inter-lingual translation. As Sherry Simon notes,

> The globalisation of culture means that we all live in "translated" worlds, that the spaces of knowledge we inhabit assemble ideas and styles of multiple origins, that transnational communications and frequent migrations make every cultural site a crossroads and a meeting place.[6]

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[4] (Toury, 1995)
[5] (Benjamin, 1989, p 89)
[6] (Simon, 1996, p 134)

The so-called cultural turn does not necessarily overcome the problem of thinking about target/source text relations in indexical terms or as the effect of a cause. But as an alterative approach to defining translation it does reflect an effort to explore its application in the various fields of language, literature, and culture. This has promoted a vastly expanded delimitation of the concept of translation, but left a nagging doubt, inspired as much by Mary Snell-Hornby's classification of texts in her *integrated* approach to translation, that somehow each of the textual practices described as translation refers to something rather different formally and semantically. The examples selected as case study material for this dissertation demonstrate that the function of Bible translation has proved remarkably heterogeneous and manifestly resistant to the primary function of the original, whatever that may have been. Bible translation has, and continues to manifest a whole range of intentions through its translation strategies from devotional, to literary, to historical, to informational, to unabashed entertainment. Even given the tendency of cultural perspectives to turn things on their heads and argue that translation is definitive of language (Steiner, 1975) or of culture (Bassnett and Lefevere, 1998), Bible translation continues to evade the totalising constructs of attempts to define translation. The black hole that remains at the centre of translation has been described variously as the invisible working of the translator's mind, as *supplement* - the result of finitude or a lack (Derrida in Niranjana, 1992), or as cultural transfer and its appropriation or manipulation of translation's Other (Bassnett and Lefevere, 1998; Hermans, 1996). None of this invalidates the achievements of scholarly research in translation studies. I raise the inherent problems in each of the approaches summarised above primarily as a starting point for the search for a conceptual language that will integrate all three of Jakobson's categories within "translation" without needing to qualify each use of the term. This entails restating the question "what is translation?" as *what is the implication of language in translation and what is the implication of translation in language.* However, given the presence of symbolic, iconic and indexical signs in the translated sign, it is important to qualify the question by the referential relation of language to the real world; the implication of perception in language or the language of images.[7]

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[7] This is a problem that has been raised quite specifically in connection with ethnographic

In the previous chapters I have played on the tension between two approaches to translation: that which relies on a conception of the deictic force of language and that which makes the semantic force of language its starting point. I have borrowed these terms from Ora Avni's' work on reference and literature where she uses them to contrast two different forms of meaning or knowledge of the world experienced through language.[8] The deictic aim refers to the philosophy of language which sees meaning as a function of the reference of words to their objects. Avni uses the semantic force of language in the Saussurean structuralist sense where language aims at producing meaning within a closed system of differences and oppositions. The one view presupposes an indexical or vertical relation between expressions and their non-linguistic elements, the other presupposes a horizontal or semantic relation between expressions independently of their object or referent. Typically, translation studies expresses the tension through the antinomy of word for word and sense for sense translation and its variants. I have argued that sign systems are similarly organised with respect to their aims: in structuralist semiotics, the sign's deictic force corresponds to its denotative elements and its semantic force to its connotation. In a Peircean semiotic system, the deictic aim of sign use is indexical and its semantic aim symbolic. However, I do not want to make too close an analogy with the "semantic" and "symbolic" because different theories of linguistic or visual sign use put different values on these terms. Besides, to associate Ora Avni's use of "semantic" with my use of "symbolic" in chapters one and two would muddle her argument. Notwithstanding the differences in the way verbal and visual signs function - the triple articulation of film (Eco, 1976), the discursive character of iconic signs (Bal, 1991; Eco, 1976), the apparently non-arbitrary or motivated character of images (Metz, 1974) - once it is recognised that word/image oppositions are based on a reductive description of images as purely iconic and indexical (or having a primarily deictic function) or words as exclusively symbolic (or having a primarily semantic function) it becomes necessary to reconsider the question of equality between word and image, or language and vision, dismissed in structural linguistics.

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writing as translation of other cultures, see (Clifford, 1988; Geertz, 1993; Pálsson, 1993)

[8] (Avni, 1990)

In my first chapter, I argued Jakobson's restriction of "translation proper" to a concept of translatability based on the formal structures of language does not necessarily confer the unique title of translation on any particular corpus. I noted the fallacy in making the leap from assuming that meaning is a function of the syntactical structures of language to assuming that images are untranslatable because they are polyvalent or weakly coded. I suggested, following Eco, that visual images are also meaningful because they are coded, thus contextually significant. In the terminology of narratology based on Peircean semiotics, images are significant at the level of their symbolic content which comprises the field of intersubjective discursivity.

I was obliged to include the context (convention and circumstances) of sign use, a factor that logical or structural theories of meaning find problematic, in order to contest the priority of language over vision. However, this does not automatically infer the implication of vision in language. [9] Before I explore the significance for translation from one medium to another of an identity of perception and vision in language, another contradiction provoked by the conceptual separation of word and image merits closer attention. The contradiction has emerged from my hypothesis that a "literal" translation is iconic by virtue of its similarity to the source text, but recognition of its similarity is based on the symbolic (or conventional) relation between source and target text, not on an iconic similarity because, paradoxically, iconicity is associated with the alterity of signs, a characteristic which renders possible such things as experimentation, innovation and creativity. There is more to the paradox than the confusion of terminology in different semiotic theories. The paradox is fundamentally connected to the problem of reference and sense in language with which Western philosophy has grappled for

[9] The American Bible Society multi-media translation programme has made this a cornerstone of their translation philosophy (see chapter 7 for a fuller discussion of the project). Their approach is based on the principle that language contains both sonic and visual elements that must be recovered if functionally equivalent images are to be found for audio-visual translations. (Hodgson, 1997; Soukup, 1999) Given their appropriation of Nida's theory of functional equivalence, it is not difficult to see how its application to translating from one medium to another would encourage the projects' translators to resist any temptation to treat the linguistic sign as transparent. The gradual refinement, among members of the research group that advises the translation team, of what they mean by "one-to-one correspondence" in the context of the project is as much a recognition of the heterogeneity of language at its referential level (let alone its semantic level).

two thousand years. My identification of literal translation as iconic (in the sense of its similarity to the source text) and symbolic (in the sense of its conventionality) while, at the same time, recognising the character of iconic signs as discursive is really another way to say that two apparently irreconcilable perspectives inform descriptions of translation: its referential function and its semantic function. This is basically the problem that Jakobson recognised in his essay on translation and tried to solve by restricting translation proper to the symbolic or semantic aims of language. In so doing, he reveals Saussure's persistent influence on his writing, despite his interest in Peirce. But are deictic and semantic aims irreconcilable and, if so, why? Ora Avni puts the problem succinctly in her comparison of Saussure's and Frege's meditations on the problems of reference (or the relation of word and object).[10]

> Frege sees reference as an essential component of language; Saussure claims that words name not objects but differences between their representations. In short, where Frege advocates a shuttle between things and words, the Saussurean tradition crosses things out and deals with the distribution of meaning among words independently of any reality ... One advocates the absolute, and the other, the relative. ... [B]ut we must not forget that, ... both assume (at least at some level of their discussion) that the order of things and the order of words are radically distinct and heterogeneous. Their projects can therefore be considered as diametrically opposed solutions to the conceptual difficulties that the radical heterogeneity of words and objects imposes on "theories".[11]

Avni comes to the conclusion through her close reading of the manuscripts from which Saussure's *Cours de linguistique générale* was edited, together with some of the main criticism of the *Cours*, that (despite efforts by Saussure's editors and critics to smooth over the contradictions in his theory of signs) Saussure never fully reconciled the dual nature of the sign or the subject and object of language.[12] If the relation between signifier and signified is arbitrary (or un-motivated) and if the sign's meaning is fixed only by its relative position within the play of differences or oppositions that constitutes the system (*langue*), where the meaning of the signified is subject to change through its interaction, horizontally, with other signifiers, how

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[10] (Avni, 1990)
[11] ibid., p 231
[12] Indeed, she argues that he deliberately chose not to.

is sign interpretation possible? On the other hand, "if entities have to remain identical in order to be recognised and to allow for communication by becoming units of language, what of the free play of values essential to *langue* as a system?"[13] Avni notes, through Benveniste's criticism of Saussure, that the contradiction presupposes the "surreptitious recourse to a third term which was not included in the initial definition" of the sign.[14] Benveniste calls this term "reality" and Avni calls it the "referent". Avni argues the difficulty lies not in the irreconcilable contradictions of Saussure's theory of language and the sign but in its object, in language itself. Is meaning a function of the relation of signs to their objects, or a function of the code (system) that regulates the signs' interaction? The possibility of intersubjective communication collapses if the immutability of signs is removed altogether from the equation (which it must if meaning is a function of the play of differences within the code), or if there is no value within the system against which other terms can establish their relative value. In this case, individuals would wake up to the absurd world of *Alice in Wonderland* where the pieces in Alice's game of croquet with the Red Queen keep moving about and Humpty Dumpty makes a word mean whatever he chooses.[15] Jakobson's essay on translation is enigmatic for the same reasons; by excluding reference from his definition he raises the difficult question of a common representational ground between languages that he relegates to intra-lingual translation, or *rewording*.[16]

Theories of representational equivalence that entertain a notion of the parity of terms in different languages present a related set of difficulties. I have already drawn attention to the problem of assuming an equivalence, say, between the word /horse/ and the image of a horse, but what of the ontological or epistemological problems of the theory of representation itself? The concept of representation

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[13] (Avni, 1990, p 55)

[14] ibid., p 56 Quoted from Emile Benveniste, "Problems in General Linguistics", trans. Mary Elizabeth Meek (Coral Gables, Fla.: University of Miami Press, 1971, p 44)

[15] In fact, the incompatibility of semiotic theories can be attributed in part to these opposing perspectives on the relation of signs to their referents and their relative value within the system (code). Eco's definition of an iconic sign as both a visual image and a relationship with other signs marks this dichotomy.

[16] Wollen's and Bal's descriptions of symbolic signs discussed in chapter 1 present the same philosophical problem - what is "value" in visual/film languages and how can it be pinned down when it seems to be culturally and historically contingent?

assumes one of two causal relations between an object and its referent: either the perceived object causes a corresponding image, idea, or impression on the mind - the perceiver is aware of the object through an experience of the object or sensory data (an indirect sense of realism), or the perceived object causes a corresponding experience of its essential qualities without the intermediary of an image or idea (a direct sense of realism). While one may mistake an object for something else, both concepts assume a transparent relation between the object and its representation. In sum, the object and its perception precedes its recognition and description.[17] The principal philosophical objections to this understanding of representation are, on the one hand, that there is no way to verify whether the image produced is an exact replica (an accurate representation) of the perceived object and, on the other hand, because the image is but a representation of the object, it is impossible to ascertain whether individual perceptions of the object are identical.

Arguments about the conventional nature of representation and reality are linked to particular intellectual formations, especially post-structuralism, which has produced a radical critique of the repressed realism in structuralism. But the post-structuralist textualisation of the human subject and meaning does not necessarily provide a corrective to realism. Post-structuralism is a "negative structuralism [which] promotes a conception of the human subject as a discursive position."[18] The idea that language produces the human subject merely inverts the paradigm. It shows itself as part of the idealist-realist antinomy that affirms the independence of the human mind. Edouard Morot-Sir pushes the problem of representation still further by questioning whether its habitual use as a basic function of common, scientific, or philosophical vocabularies justifies its status as a critical conceptual term of language. He asks, within a referential system of language "what does [representation] refer to?"[19] He claims that from a realist perspective,

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[17] A fine example of this form of representational realism can be found in Gideon Toury's differentiation between translating literature and literary translation (Toury, 1995) where *literature* may be identified as a particular genre of writing, while *literary* writing is literature. Apart from the unhelpful tautology of this conception - Literature is a style of writing characterised by its literariness - Toury's distinction merely presents two sides of the same coin. It does nothing to clarify concepts of translation because it assumes that everyone is expected to know what is literature and therefore what is the proper sense of translation in that sense.

[18] (Worthington, 1996, p 28)

[19] (Morot-Sir, 1993, p 48)

representation implies the belief in a non-linguistic being, reality exists outside of and, in some sense, is constitutive of its mirror image as a linguistic entity. From an idealist perspective, representation as a word that refers to a non-linguistic experience, represents nothing since the language of experience is no more than the subjective projection of mental images on the exterior world. If representation refers to a pre-linguistic entity, or to nothing at all, it does not seem to have much to do with language *per* se. In either case, therefore, Morot-Sir judges the concept of representation as "of no assistance in the understanding of language. On the contrary ... it has contributed to the obfuscation of the consciousness of language, as if language were a pure and simple signification of our representation and of the represented world."[20] It is worth asking at this point whether the concept of representation has also contributed to an obfuscation of the consciousness of translation. To ask the question 'to what does representation refer?' in the context of relations between source and target texts, whatever their media of expression, opens up some tricky questions about the antecedence of the source text and the semantic realities of the target text. Arguably, for the same reasons, representational equivalence, and the typologies associated with it, contributes nothing to an understanding of translation.

The separation of language and being has had some important consequences for both realist and idealist conceptualisations of translation. It has led to the conclusion that translation, like language, always represents something and that the object or subject of that representation is also its cause. Representational equivalence is, therefore, open to the same criticisms as philosophical realisms and idealisms. Depending on the historically social circumstances under which reality (as an objective entity) is interpreted, this understanding of representation can be seen to have overtly ideological implications. To see what has been made by the specific social practices of writing, painting, and film-making as "*reality* or as the *faithful copying of reality* is to exclude this active element and in some extreme cases to pass off a fiction, or a convention, as the *real world*"[21]. Tejaswini Niranjana,

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[20] (Morot-Sir, 1995, pp 49 -50)
[21] (Williams, 1976, p 225)

among others, uses this negative sense of representation in her criticism of Western (or westernised) translation principles and practices. She notes,

> "Conventionally, translation depends on the Western philosophical notions of reality, representation, and knowledge. Reality is seen as something unproblematic, "out there"; knowledge involves a representation of this reality; and representation provides direct, unmediated access to a transparent reality. Classical philosophical discourse, however, does not simply engender a practice of translation that is then employed for the purposes of colonial domination; I contend that, simultaneously, translation in the colonial context produces and supports a conceptual economy that works into the discourse of Western philosophy to function as a philosopheme (a basic philosophical conceptuality).[22]

This begs the question as to whether representation is necessary to the formulation of a concept of translation. Niranjana concludes from her critique of the weaknesses and ideological implications of thinking about language and translation in terms of representation, especially the fundamental ethnographic process in translation of representing the other, that [23]

> To see the sign as a reflection or representation is to deny what Roland Barthes has called the productive character of language. Revealing the constructed nature of cultural translations shows how translation is always *producing* rather than reflecting or imitating an original.[24]

However, so long as one adheres to a concept of equivalence as a necessary constituent of translation, an emphasis on the productive character of language and translation runs the risk either of linguistic determinism, which maintains a split between subject and language (in which identity is arbitrarily constructed through language),[25] or of linguistic indeterminacy, in which the subject is reduced to an endlessly commutable sign. Niranjana appears to avoid these pitfalls in her final chapter of *Siting Translation*. Meditating on Derrida's question as to whether "'the so-called relation of translation or of substitution' escapes 'the orbit of

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[22] (Niranjana, 1992, p 2)

[23] The concept of representation has been similarly problematised by critics of ethnographic documentary film-making where a convergence of the problems of language, vision and translation is strongly marked.

[24] ibid., p 18

[25] See (Worthington, 1996) on feminist linguistic determinism.

representation'"[26] she considers her understanding, inspired by Walter Benjamin, of translation in a post-colonial context as a *re-writing of history* based on a de-colonisation of Western historical discourses in translation.[27] In this context, she describes her own translation of a fragment of the *Sunyasampadane*[28] as "speculative, provisional, and interventionist."[29] Significantly, her translation exercise is also a critical exploration of the elementary constituents of language and translation. Her exploration is especially instructive in light of Edouard Morot-Sir's meditation on imagination and reference.[30] Read through the lens of Morot-Sir's meditation, Niranjana's translation and her commentary on her translation acquire a particular inflection that helps to elucidate the value of reference for translation. More importantly, read in conjunction with each other, the two texts demonstrate the irreducible complementarity of perception or vision and language within reference and point a way out of the blind allies of structuralism and representation that inform the habitual opposition of word and image. As her commentary indicates, Niranjana's translation partakes in a strategy of *reference criticism*[31] which merits fuller discussion because it overcomes the problematic separation of word and image, and of the subordination of words to syntax in questions of translatability. Effectively, Niranjana engages in a critical exploration of what Morot-Sir has defined as the elementary constituents of language and identity understood as the power of reference: perception, indication, nomination and description.[32] My discussion in the following paragraphs will serve as a

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[26] Derrida, "Sending: On Representation" *Social Research 49*, no 2 (Summer 1982) 302-3 in (Niranjana, 1992, p 169)

[27] (Niranjana, 1992, chapter 6 "Translation as Disruption")

[28] *Sunyasampadane* (achievement/attainment of nothingness) is a lengthy spiritual text that is usually attributed to a twelfth century saint, Allama Prabhu, who was born in a small village in South India.

[29] ibid., p 173

[30] (Morot-Sir, 1995; Morot-Sir, 1993)

[31] See (Morot-Sir, 1993, Meditation Five, pp 139-158) in which he defines it as "emphasis put on the text itself and its effects, not on its surroundings; search for its internal structure and sense of its unavoidable ambiguities; rejection of a simple relation of causality between author and work; and finally, with the denunciation of a rhetorical logocentrism, the awareness of all sorts of referential falsifications due to cultural and political accommodations." (p 150)

[32] Morot-Sir's two-volume philosophical work is an attempt to understand language as language, or how the referential power of language may "contribute to our common, scientific and artistic perception of the world." (p 25, volume II) In his first volume, he meditates on the experience of language without the philosophical support of the common referents that have dominated Western cultures for two thousand years: the realist postulate that signals a belief in an independent reality; the idealist postulate, the belief in a mind that is the cause of emotions,

preliminary outline for a model of translation as reference which I will use throughout the rest of this thesis. My comparison of Niranjana and Morot-Sir is presented as a parallel reading of the two texts. However, in the interests of coherence, most of my references to Morot-Sir will appear in footnotes.

Niranjana compares her own translation of a fragment from the *Sunyasampadane* with two others by "post-colonial" Indian writers. She comments on the challenge of translating a text for which there is inadequate knowledge about its socio-cultural history and therefore of the cultural context of its 'origin' which compels her to attempt translation without the help of a realist postulate of representation. Similarly, the prior circulation of the poem in a strong oral tradition before it was eventually codified in the fifteenth century raises the problem of origin. This means she is denied equally the idealist postulate of an "original" author's mind. Faced with the absence of two basic constituents of representational interpretation/translation, Niranjana is obliged to adopt another translation strategy by relying on the referential character of language and translation,

> That is to say, on the one hand by the notion of *figure* in Saivite poetry, which undoes the insistence on *linga*, meaning, and representation; and on the other hand, by a consideration of the afterlife, the *living on* of a text, and the task of the translator.[33]

Niranjana's translation exercise inscribes three movements which distil the connection between perceiving, marking and naming, and the reciprocal character of language and identity. Her translation exemplifies Morot-Sir's point that "'vision' and 'reference' form a reciprocal state of understanding" in which language and vision are "the common source of all possible relations."[34]

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thought, and ways of expression; and the belief that the external world of objects and the internal world of subjects exist as functions of meaning (see Volume II, chapter 1 for a summary). He describes reference as "language aware of itself as language" (Volume I, p 139) affirming his postulate that experience does not exist outside of language and language does not exist outside of experience. In his second volume, he meditates on the relation between perception and reference and on its semantic field as indicating, nominating, and describing within the bounds of which "naming is the paradoxical condition of reference" (p 190). "We are only names and named" he concludes. "Without names we would be blind, deaf, and mute indeed." (p 191)

[33] (Niranjana, 1992, p 177)

[34] (Morot-Sir, 1995, p 23) His conclusion comes off the difficult philosophical problem of the priority of language and perception. He argues that we cannot have perception without language because, to recognise an object is already to have a name for it, while to have a name for an object is

In the first part of Niranjana's translation, the poet, Allama, draws back to look at the eye in the sole of his foot. In that act of perception, he sees a deity. The poet expresses his vision through the figure of light and its metaphors of radiance, sun, dawning, and lightning. Niranjana emphasises the importance of vision in relation to the language of being and reference in her comparison of the three translators' interpretation of this movement. Her understanding of *perception* in the poem does not exist independently of the words that describe it. She remarks, therefore, on the important relation of light (*teja* "radiance") to the movement of the poem "*toward* the ostensible simplicity of light" (p 182) and criticises Ramanujan's replacement of the play of lightning by a metaphor ("ganglion") which takes "the "play" from the realm of meaning and plac[es] it firmly within the nervous system of the individual body." (p183) Her formulation of the translation problem here substantiates Morot-Sir's argument when he says *perception* and *reference* are in a state of coexistence without any logical priority between them. Reference and vision

> belong to the experience of language constituting and instituting itself ... we speak conveniently of a universe of perception and a universe of words as if they are distinct ... when in fact we exercise our referential power in a combination of perceptions and actions, putting the world and ourselves into a simultaneous existence.[35]

In the second movement of the *vacana,* Allama names his experience as *Guhesvara.* Niranjana underscores the importance of naming as part of the semantic field of reference, and of the relation of naming and identity, in her retention of the name of Allama's God. Her reasons are political: "given that colonialism's violence erases or distorts beyond recognition ... the *names* of the colonised, it seems important *not* to translate proper names in a post-colonial or

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already to perceive it. Thus we cannot apply a cause and effect relation between word and object, nor will a means and ends relation apply to meaning because both arguments already infer that language and perception are possible. Eco makes a similar argument from a semiotic perspective, as he points out: "... it is equally hard to conceive of a world in which certain beings only utter words; when considering the labor of mentioning states of the world, i.e. of referring signs to things (in which words are so intertwined with gestural pointers and objects taken as ostensive signs), one quickly realises that in a world ruled only by words it would be impossible to mention things." (Eco, 1976, p 174)

[35] (Morot-Sir, 1995, p 24)

decolonising practice."[36] Moreover, she criticises Ramanujan's decision to translate the name, which is of Sanskrit origin, as "assigning Kannada, and by implication English, the ability to make and be transparent."[37] Her criticism reveals an understanding of the power of naming and reference. She explicitly connects naming, identity and language through her refusal to translate proper names and insists on naming as the source of identification and the power of the name to confer on *Guhesvara* a unique identity that marks, and is marked by, the deity's difference from others. This represents a refusal to assimilate the Indian God to a Christian cosmological system through a translation strategy that rejects the principle of universalism as a common value of language in translation. By retaining the Sanskrit name she not only insists on the opacity of the sign/name but also resists the temptation to separate word and object. She honours the poet's naming of his perceptual experience by following his example of keeping the experience within the boundaries of language and thus demonstrates her understanding of existence as reference. As Morot-Sir argues, "I perceive what I am able to name; I name what I perceive: naming perceiving is naming my consciousness of naming."[38]

Finally, in the third movement of the *vacana*, Allama apprehends the identity of *Guhesvara* and tries to describe it. Niranjana reaches for a form in her translation that retains the power of reference in the rather awkward phrasing "if you are become the *linga* of light/ Who can find your figuration?"[39] She comments on her choice in the context of her understanding of *linga* as a figure in the entire corpus of Saivite poetry that expresses "form for formlessness, a shape for shapelessness. An attempt to articulate that which cannot be articulated in the mystic experience."[40] The phrase "if you are become the *linga* of light" evades a psychologistic representation of identity, in which being precedes language, by expressing what Walter Benjamin has called the "translatability" of the original

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[36] (Niranjana, 1992, p 183)
[37] ibid., p 184
[38] (Morot-Sir, 1995, p 85) Later on in the same meditation on naming and identity, he notes: "identification with persons, living beings, remains inevitably identification with names, because in our linguistic condition, naming is the only expression of identification and thus, of reference." (p 105) See also an essay by (Avni, 1990) on translating names and their symbolic and metaphorical value.
[39] (Niranjana, 1992, p 175)
[40] ibid., p 178

work, or the "suprahistorical kinship of language [which] rests in the *intention* underlying each language." [41] Niranjana realises the intention of the original work (*Sunyasampadane:* achievement/attainment of nothingness) through her use of two tenses in juxtaposition with the idea of *Guhesvara's* figuration. The verb construction she uses inscribes the simultaneous notions of being and becoming in identity that denies the very possibility of origin and therefore of a concept of time as linear. Her "are become" undermines modern Western concepts of history and of the division of time into past, present, and future. She indicates the principal of identity as an expression of semantic value through the double power of affirmation and negation in naming: *Guhesvara* is and is not light.[42] But whereas she explains her strategy as deconstructive and her use of "figuration" as a resistance to the strategy of containment typical of colonial discourses, in my view, her translation has much broader implications for the philosophy of translation and reference. Her deliberate choice of tense and vocabulary avails itself of the logical expression of equality and inequality which Morot-Sir uses to overcome the Cartesian dualism of Western philosophical discourses of identity. Here the idea of semiotic value expresses the power of negation. The concept is essential to the notion of semantic value in any form of textual criticism, but particularly to the form of criticism that precedes a translation such as the one under discussion, because it requires a self-reflexivity on the part of the interpreter/translator.

Niranjana's interpretation/translation is self-reflexive on three counts: firstly, she introduces the notion of temporality as a principal element of translation in her use of the construction "are become". (See chapter five for a development of this principle) Andrew Benjamin's conception of time in his depiction of the after-life of a work of art is apposite in this context. He identifies three conceptions of presence, adapted from Walter Benjamin's sense of temporality and translation, in a distinction between information and story. The first presence exists in the temporality of the instant and relates to the finitude of interpretation. This is the sense of presence that Niranjana criticises in Ramanujan's translation, "if you are

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[41] (Benjamin, 1992, p 75)

[42] Compare this with Morot-Sir's discussion about the importance of negation for an understanding of reference. (II, pp 2-11)

light," as a simplification of the two senses of being and becoming in the poem. Andrew Benjamin's second conception of presence "inheres" or is "primordially present"[43] but is neither transcendental nor that of the instant. This is the sense of presence at which Niranjana appears to aim in her translation: the temporality proper to the after-life of the original and of the relationship of the translation to the original.[44] Secondly, Niranjana's translation is self-reflexive because she introduces the notion of voice, through a negation of tense, that interferes with or destabilises the semantic value of the poem. Her translation "if you are become the *linga* of light" resonates strongly with the Old Testament account of origin in Genesis in which God calls forth light bringing form to the void, as opposed to the New Testament account of origin in The Word which problematically presumes an original or pure language as absolute semantic value. Niranjana's translation gives significance to the Old and New Testament oppositions between voice and word that contain different concepts of the "origin" of form and meaning. The same opposition is expressed in Saussure's description of *langue* and *parole* where *parole* always threatens to subvert or undermine *langue*. Thirdly, Niranjana uses the word "figuration" to complete the complementary movements within the *vacana* of perception, description, and naming. The associated lexemes of figuration: form, outline, representation embed the semantic associations of vision and being that intersect in the name of *Guhesvara*. Niranjana's translation demonstrates Morot-Sir's argument about seeing as a fundamental constituent of perception and language and their co-existence in the referential life of experience. Morot-Sir poses the relationship of seeing and perception as a question of what he calls the "cerebralization" of vision, not as a characteristic of seeing, or of the properties of light and its interaction with the brain. His question about seeing in relation to perception and reference is, "what is the reason for the emergence of the word seeing ... in our language condition?" He concludes that we have learned to call for

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[43] (Benjamin, 1989, p 107)

[44] In this case, I refer to Niranjana's choice of syntax which she justifies as allowing the text to "affect" the language into which it is being translated. (p 185) I am stretching Andrew Benjamin's point somewhat here, but my interpretation seems to be in keeping with Walter Benjamin's analogy of the tangential relationship of the translation to its original (p 81) and the effect of the translation which produces in the target language an "echo of the original". (p 77)

the word *seeing* in appropriate circumstances which lead to the challenging consequences that "we could not see if we were unable to say that we see."[45]

The evidence of how Niranjana's translation foregrounds language and perception as reciprocal constituents of reference justifies my rather long digression. By denying representational concepts of translation, she admits the equality of language and vision within translation in a far more radical way than the semiotic solutions proposed by Bal and Eco to the problem of word/image oppositions. Niranjana demonstrates that vision is implicated in language itself, not in a metaphorical way, but as an elementary constituent of reference, thereby showing how to overcome the conceptual separation of word and image not only by asserting the discursivity of visual images but also the visual nature of language. Niranjana's focus on the language of translation puts an emphasis on the text itself and its effects, not its socio-historical or authorial origin. The semantic value of the translation remains, therefore, within the boundaries of the *vacana.* She thus self-consciously resites her translation within the context of its production. Her phrase "if you are become the *linga* of light" is not simply a foreignising element but a graphic rejection of the conception of representational equivalence, not only at the level of the poem's content, but also at the level of relations between source and target text.[46] Niranjana draws attention to the referential power of translation as translation, as opposed to its conception as a function of interlingual communication, by affirming the radical otherness of the source text while, at the same, time demonstrating its translatability.[47] In summary, Niranjana's translation exercise suggests a solution to the questions raised at the beginning of this chapter and to the theoretical conceptualisation of translation as representation.

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[45] (Morot-Sir, 1995, p 174) He notes that blindness does not provide a counter example; nor does a physical deficiency prevent blind people from developing a full language of perception. See Bal's chapter on blindness in *Reading Rembrandt.* Bal's example is a reminder that "seeing" participates in the spatial composition of the world. Or as Morot-Sir puts it: visuality is a dominant property of language. (Morot-Sir, 1995, p 175)

[46] As I demonstrate in my chapter five, the distinction between foreignisation and domestication, breaks down very quickly. Foreignising translation techniques can be profoundly domesticating in their attempt to represent the other as other.

[47] Niranjana's methodology resembles that advocated by Mieke Bal in her essay on *The Point of Narratology* where she makes a case for criticism that is situated within the context of the text and its social production. (Bal, Winter 1990)

In order to understand how to speak of transfers from one medium to another in terms of translation while using a concept of translation rigorous enough to demarcate the intellectual limits of the subject, it was necessary to move beyond the language of representation that designates pre-determined boundaries within which translators act and which fix target and source texts as distinct and observable entities. It was also essential to understand the referential power of language both to confer meaning on our existential experience of the world and to facilitate interpersonal communication. However, in resisting recourse to the categories whereby translation is described as an imitation of its source or as a function of cross-cultural communication and, thereby, resisting the temptation to use either the source text or the effect of translation as definitive criteria, I am obliged to resort to other methods to evaluate any translation or to justify its inclusion within a definition of translation. Value is a critical element of the problem of defining and describing translation. As such, it is connected to two other ideas, knowledge and judgement, and thus to the referential power of language. In the realm of language use, the problem of knowledge and reference has two articulations: (1) how to know the word that designates a particular object presents the same idea of the object for all language users and (2) how to judge the suitability of the substitution of one term for another if the meaning of words is derived from their position within a system of similarities and differences.[48] If the realm of knowledge and reference involves the speaker's existential experience of the world and the modes of knowledge that are brought to bear on that experience, the realm of judgement involves the universals by which a speaker judges a statement to be true or false. The problem of knowledge and judgement as referential functions of value stems from the undermining effect that the social use of language, in all its radical heterogeneity, has on the logical and theoretical construction of language. How can claims to truth and semantic reliability be defended if language constantly proves to be in excess of theory? As Bal notes,

[48] Avni illustrates this problem with the analysis of a fable about a silly peasant on his wedding night in which the bride and groom fail to consummate their marriage because the modes of reference and the semantic aims within which the pair operate are mutually exclusive. (Avni, 1990)

> Meanings shift constantly according to social and historical pressures. The predicament of culture, it appears is the instability of the categories used to address it, to analyse it, even to live in it.[49]

Translation theory has, not unnaturally, imported the difficulties of reference and value and debated endlessly the same predicaments and binarisms. That Steiner turns the problem around and argues "a theory of translation is necessarily, or rather a historical-psychological model ... of the operations of language itself" or concludes "to study the status of meaning is to study the substance and limits of translation"[50] is, therefore, no accident. However, to reiterate my original proposition, the problem consists in defining those limits without succumbing to the tautology implied in Steiner's statement - translation is language - and thereby assuming the problems of translation are identical with the problems of language. In this scheme, the question "what is translation" merely returns the counter question "what is language?" whereby the question of limits is caught up in a vicious circle of definition. An example from the *Visual Bible* may serve to break out of this vicious circle:

When I write, as in the previous chapter, "The *Visual Bible* translates an image of the Sermon on the Mount", I simultaneously refer to the irreducible character of the word "sermon" as a speech act, but retain the notion of "Sermon on the Mount" as an image, a supersign which resonates with the experience of /sermon/ as an audio-visual performance complete with visual aides. Commentaries describe Matthew 5-7 as a set of discourses on discipleship framed by the image in 5:2 "he went up on a mountainside and sat down."[51] This frame establishes Jesus as a teacher in the rabbinical tradition of his time. The addition of the title "Sermon on the Mount" translates the discourses into the modern idiom of Christian liturgical tradition. In the same movement of translation Jesus is (re)presented (in the sense that a new image is constructed), not as the radically conservative interpreter of Jewish law portrayed by Matthew's account, but as someone who sought to radically undermine Jewish law and replace it by a new understanding of Christian

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[49] (Bal, 1992, p 543)
[50] (Steiner, 1975, p 436)
[51] (NIV, 1995).

discipline. This characterisation of the discourses as sermons subsequently overdetermines interpretations of Matthew's Gospel. The process of renaming the Matthean discourses bears a striking resemblance to the imperialising gesture of translating proper names criticised by Niranjana. In *The Gospel*, the disjunction between the Matthean frame and the Christian label is marked. The character, Matthew, recites in his commentary "Jesus *sat* down", whereas visually the character, Jesus, manifestly does *not* sit, he does not even stand still for more than five seconds. The image therefore draws attention to itself as a translated sign, the visual index of both a generalised and particular experience of moral instruction from the Scriptures denoted by the title "Sermon on the Mount".[52] Within the terms of representational equivalence, this shift constitutes a mis-translation, an inaccuracy, an infidelity, an unacceptable rewriting of the original that hangs on the insertion of a title, an amplification. Alternatively, shifting evaluation from a comparison of source and target texts to a contextual analysis of the translation itself, one may describe this translation as the manifestation of a power struggle between Paul's internationalist version of Christianity and Jesus' disciples' understanding of his ministry. The disciples' version was never documented and survives only as a trace in the emerging dominant orthodoxy about Jesus' divinity recorded in the New Testament. The history of translation and rewriting is translated into the video itself, but not the content of the original text which remains outside, and in many ways peripheral to, the video translation.

Several important points may be drawn from my suggestion that the content of the original remains marginal to the effort or effect of translation. Firstly, what is at stake is the perpetuation of a particular orthodoxy about Jesus' identity and its significance for contemporary viewers, rather than a faithful representation of an original text (despite rhetorical appearances). Thus the signifying force of the video appears to lie in its relation to other texts and representations that make up the history of the Gospel's interpretation (or its after-life). Rather than produce a unified, homogeneous vision of its source material, the life and sayings of a first century Galilean peasant, turned teacher and miracle worker, who fell foul of

[52] Of course, this has its secular applications in idioms such as "preaching at someone" which is used of a speaker who wishes to make a moral point.

Jewish-Roman politics of his time and was later canonised by a group of diasporic Jews after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE (Christian Era), the video is marked by its heterogeneity, or discursive character.

However, some ambiguity remains as to what has been translated into the video through its particular iconographic representations. The ambiguity is founded upon the video's reference and the status of the *New International Version* of the Gospel of Matthew which it claims as its source text. The video's self-referentially repeats the classic split in Christian exegesis of message and medium. Thus the message remains intact in spite of the medium of translation. The meaning of the Gospel becomes a matter of revelation indicated by the rather frequent use of expressions of dawning wonder on the faces of Jesus' audience in the video. Judgement and knowledge are founded on a conception of Christian universalism which creates a problem for post-structural translation theorists, but not faithful viewers or readers.[53] If one judges the fidelity or truth of the video translation by its reference to an "original" illocutionary act (a valorisation implied by costume, landscape, and cultural artefacts such as the scribes' writing materials), the NIV does not provide a very reliable measure of the video's fidelity or authority since it too seems to have accumulated new values throughout the history of translation, not the least of which is its repositioning of the Matthean discourses as sermons. Allowing for the fact that the video does *function* as a translation, but disallowing that its function involves a definitive concept of *translation*, one may justifiably ask how a translation's function assists in evaluating the translation itself without resorting to the culturally relative categories of "adequate" or "acceptable". In other words, if the "meaning" of the original is not translated, if there is apparently no common ground between the two, how may one account for the video as translation? The problem lies in perceiving source and target texts as two autonomous planes, whereas in fact the two are inextricably linked. This problem is ultimately tied to an epistemology and ontology of representation which postulates a view of word and object, or language and perception, as independent entities. This separation places emphasis on the derivative and deictic value of translation and

[53] (Budick and Iser, 1996; Stine, 1990).

invests the "original" with a fixed semiotic value. It consequently reduces the referential function of translation and its value to judgements based on extrinsic knowledge of the source text as an independent object. The creative and heterogeneous character of the *Visual Bible* with its multiple points of reference clearly negates that possibility. Whatever the ostensible instrumental function of translation, whether didactic and/or evangelical, the *Visual Bible* locates the visual and verbal, as referents of its very title, on a single continuous plane. As such, it is compelled to treat the verbal and visual as equal constituents of meaning without subordinating one to the other. For the *Visual Bible*, the judgement of value lies elsewhere than a comparative evaluation of the relation between word and image, or of the intentions of the "original" with that of its translation.

The argument that the verbal and visual, or language and perception, constitute a single continuous plane of reference does not deny differences between the construction of verbal and visual languages, (although post-modern art and literature, and post-modern theory makes these differences somewhat debatable[54]) it poses the question of reference in a fundamentally different way, especially where it concerns a concept of translatability. Instead of thinking of a translation's heterogeneity as a betrayal of its source, which in itself is a historically and culturally relative attitude, it may be more useful to think of its heterogeneity in terms of how the original text functions as a sign, and therefore how it has come to acquire *semiotic value* through its circulation as translation. I will borrow Avni's definition of semiotic value as "the manner in which the signifying object evokes the referential circumstances in which it has come to acquire a meaning, and which subsequently govern its evaluation"[55] to develop this proposition. Indeed, one may already see how Avni's definition resonates with Niranjana's concept of translatability and with Mieke Bal's method of reading iconographically. Avni's notion of semiotic value aims to account for the relative stability of meaning in the face of indeterminacy generated by the radical heterogeneity of literary texts. She uses an analogy from *The Three Musketeers* of the function of the King of France's

[54] See (Sailer, 1996) for an interesting analysis of the debatable nature of these distinctions.
[55] (Avni, 1990, p 240) See especially Gregg Hurwitz' discussion about how semiotic value functions in film adaptation in (Hurwitz, 1997)

gift to the Queen of a diamond sash to explore the contexts in which objects acquire meaning, or become signs and acquire value through their circulation as signs. Avni argues that the meaning of an object-sign depends as much on its non-linguistic context, or the referential relation between the sign and object, as on the semiotic sub-systems in which it circulates. Thus, while deictic and semantic aims of language pull meaning in different directions, the *context of language use* anchors the referential value of any given text or utterance.[56] Avni's anecdotal use of *The Three Musketeers* is worth repeating here to illustrate what she means. In her analysis, she shows how the object (the diamond sash) becomes a sign, invested with the signification and obligations of its function as a gift. The gift stands for or evokes the relations of power between giver and receiver. Each time the sash is *translated*[57] into a new context: is given again, divided, stolen, counterfeited, multiplied and returned, it evokes the circumstances in which it became a sign of power. The Queen's gift of the sash to Buckingham symbolises a similar set of power relations between herself and her lover, but at the same time her action undermines or subverts the King's power. When Richelieu attempts to expose the Queen's infidelity, he evokes the original power relation that the sash symbolises. The original symbolic value of the twelve diamond studs in the sash, therefore, does not change whether there are 10, 12 or 14 diamonds or whether some of them are counterfeit. In the context of the narrative, twelve minus the two studs that were stolen does not equal ten, but the proof of the queen's infidelity to the king when she gives the studs to her lover, Buckingham. The restoration of the sash with the two counterfeited diamonds bears the same value as the twelve original diamonds so long as the counterfeit remains undetected by the King since it serves to sustain the original relationship between King and Queen. On the other hand, Richelieu's attempt to expose the queen's infidelity with evidence of the counterfeit backfires. Here, twelve plus two does not equal fourteen, the two are in excess. At no time does the material value of the diamonds affect the narrative shifts that accompany the object become sign in its circulation between the different actors of the narrative.

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[56] Avni's premise is similar to that of Eco's description of iconic signs (when he means visual) which possess weak codes of articulation but whose meaning is anchored by their context.

[57] In the more general sense of its Latin root *translatio* which refers to various forms of transfer, including power.

What is really at stake in the narrative intrigues and twists is the power of the King of France. This provides the ground of meaning which is about social relationships. Crucially for her analytical method, Avni makes an important distinction between a sign's object, its content, and its function (or semantic force within any given context). Her example is a perfect analogy for translation and its referential power. As in the case of the studs, the original's symbolic value as narrative and its ground of interpretation, not the content of the original, provides for its relative stability in translation. To the degree that a translation evokes the symbolic value of the original, it is "successful" in the absolute terms implied by the etymology of the term translation. The crucial issue for an evaluation of translation therefore becomes how to determine its ground of interpretation! A comparison of Avni's, Bal's and Niranjana's methods of referential criticism makes apparent the ground's existence within the ways the narrative itself evokes the social relations that give it force.

In summary, referential criticism requires a close reading of the text to distinguish between its object, its content, and its function. However, it is worth considering, from a semiotic perspective, some of the difficulties of interpretation that this method entails before applying its principles to an evaluation of audio-visual translation. Petr Bogatyrëv makes a similar distinction in the semiotic components of a text.[58] He argues the sign's function and its interpretation is an effect of the semiotic system within which it circulates. In other words, a sign is meaningful by virtue of the system of codes and conventions in which it functions as sign.[59] An object must first be recognised as a sign, and secondly as having a signifying value within a particular signifying system. But a sign's function within any particular system is only guaranteed if the interpreter understands the conventions of that sign system. (Avni, 1990; Bal, 1991; Bogatyrëv, 1972; Eco, 1976; Jakobson, 1959) Mis-recognition of the sign system, or interpretation of a sign according to the conventions of another sign system, results in the attribution of a different signifying value to an object (for example Barthes' "effect of the real" (Barthes, 1968). Otakar Zich's description of puppet theatre as comic/grotesque or mythical, that Bogatyrëv uses as the starting point for his essay on the study of

[58] (Bogatyrëv, 1971)
[59] (Eco, 1976)

theatrical signs, has a direct bearing on some aspects of translation in my case studies. Citing Zich, Bogatyrëv notes if we consider puppets as puppets, i.e. if we consider their significance as objects in themselves and emphasise their lifeless material, this material is something real to us, and the puppets' expressions of life strike us as comic, grotesque. On the other hand, if puppets are considered living beings they strike us a marvellous; consciousness of the lifelessness of puppets as objects recedes and their expressions of life evoke a sense of mysteriousness. As creatures of fantasy, they have the potential to provoke a feeling of terror in the spectator. Bogatyrëv argues that the experience of puppets as comic or mysterious results from interpreting them within a different signifying system than that of puppet theatre. The treatment of biblical characters as historical figures rather than figures within the biblical narrative represents a parallel misreading . Putting aside, for the moment, the fact that an actor in theatre (or film) is the "sign of a sign",[60] when biblical characters are treated as historical figures ("real" people, therefore material objects in Zich's first description of puppets) the efforts of actors to bring the biblical characters to life may strike the spectator as comic or grotesque. This has already been noted in the *Visual Bible's* "realistic" representation of the Gospel of Matthew. A similar effect occurs in the *Turner Pictures* epic series analysed in chapter five, especially Richard Harris' (unintentionally) amusing portrayal of Abraham as perpetually dumbfounded by his God. One may attribute the comic or grotesque nature of the characters in these films to the result of the parody or stereotyping of narrative figures through costume, gesture, accent, and location. Arguably, the representation of Jesus in the *Story Keepers* (chapter four) fits this description as well. If, on the other hand, biblical characters are treated as narrative constructs, having a life of their own within the formal contexts of the Bible, they function as living beings. Their representation in film or video, therefore, evokes a sense of mysteriousness. The BBC2/S4C animated series *Testament* is exemplary. (See chapter six) A biblical video's generic style, whether it uses animation or live actors, cannot account for the appearance of characters as comic or grotesque. The difference results from an interpretation by the translator within a different signifying system which invests the biblical characters with a different symbolic significance.

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[60] (Bogatyrëv, 1971)

Richard Walsh's distinction between myth and fantasy may help here. He argues that "narratives tend to have a mythic or fantastic relationship to readerly realities. Narrative either supports or subverts reality."[61] Following Barthes, he defines myth as "realistic" narrative that celebrates, explains, transmits, and/or defends reality. Walsh identifies rational discourse (whether scientific or theological) with myth. Even though myth incorporates miraculous or supernatural elements, it functions to sustain a human desire for certainty and order. Myth is, therefore, a particular type of narrative rather than a fiction. Treating the Bible as myth does not question its truth, but uses it as a narrative to create a certain order for human experience. Fantasy, on the other hand, subverts and challenges reality. Fantasy is a particular practice of imagination that keeps reality provisional, it subverts the world. Fantasy "leaves one awfully wondering."[62] Reading the Bible as fantasy does not take it any less seriously or any less real either. It involves paying close attention to those aspects of biblical narrative, its ambiguities, that challenge readerly realities. Stephen Prickett's argument that approaches to translating textual ambiguity in the Bible focuses attention on the language of religious experience confirms Walsh's differentiation between myth and fantasy. Maintaining the ambiguous, fantastical, nature of biblical language in translation is an interpretive move that acknowledges the creative function of language. It insists on a close reading of the detailed patterning of the original that allows its surprising, transformative nature to affect the language of translation.[63]

In summary, to think of source texts as signs, or signifying objects involves temporarily dissociating the content of the source text from its semantic force (or function). This seems to indicate a return to the classic binarism of word for word or sense for sense translation. However, this is not possible within a Peircean, as opposed to a Saussurean, conception of the sign. Whereas in the latter case, source texts have fixed values which are entered into a translative economy of equal exchange, (Ponzio, 1984) in the case of Peirce's interpretant, with each new context the original text (itself a sign) is translated into another sign which becomes the

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[61] (Walsh, 1997, p 136)
[62] ibid., p 135
[63] (Prickett, 1986)

referent of yet another interpretant sign. What gives a translation temporary stability is its conventional nature - the habit of interpreting a sign in a particular way. Within the terms of the discussion presented here, the habit consists of the contexts of a translation's production and reception. A text, therefore, acquires an original semiotic value from the social and cultural contexts in which it was produced which in turn continues to affect the text through its displacements as translation, irrespective of its mode as abridgement, paraphrase, amplification, deletion, anthology, or transformation. Since the context of translation (not the content of the original) supplies its semiotic value, it is safe to assume that one may evaluate translations by their contexts rather than the equivalence of source and target texts. As Bal, Avni, and Niranjana have demonstrated, the point of contextual analysis is to account for the relative stability of meaning in the face of the radical heterogeneity of texts and their interpretive indeterminacy. Furthermore, it suggests that a translation's semiotic value (and consequently its definition) is irreducibly connected to its function.

CHAPTER FOUR

Framing the Word

There is frame, but the frame *does not exist.*[1]

It is not uncommon for audio-visual translations of biblical stories to construct a narrative frame that embeds the translated text. In fact, even a programme such as the Visual Bible's *Gospel According to St. Matthew*, which purports to present a formally faithful, word for word translation has constructed a new narrative frame by giving the Gospel's implied author, Matthew, an on screen narrating persona and changing the narrative voice from third to first person. As demonstrated in chapter two, this framing functions to authenticate narrative truth problematised by a shift of medium. Matthew's characterisation as a first person narrator serves to compensate for a lack in the audio-visual translation of textual authority conventionally invested in the written text.

Frames take various forms in the translations examined here. Broadly speaking, at the level of their narrative structure, there are three dominant types:

1. Frames around the narrative which are not part of the original text. For example:
   a) Invention of a narrative in which the biblical story is embedded: the *Story Keepers*, Hanna Barbera series, *Veggie Tales, Testament.*
   b) Commentaries and other exegetical material: the American Bible Society *newmediabible* and other CD-ROM or world wide web projects.
2. Part of the translated text is used as a frame for the rest. For example:
   a) *The Gospel According to Matthew* (Visual International) where there is a shift of focalisation between Matthew's narration of Jesus' life and teaching and the dramatisation of those events.

[1] (Derrida, 1987, p 81)

b) A story from one part of the Bible is framed by another, for example the story of Noah in *Testament* which frames the creation story from Genesis.

3. Metaphorical frames, for example:

Stories that are rewritten and embellished with non-biblical material embedded in the narrative as a whole, such as the *Turner Pictures* Old Testament television mini-series. These translations use narrative frames of time and space symbolically to give the biblical narrative contemporary significance.

The concept of frame has been used to describe various kinds of textual relationship: the frames of reference readers use to create a sense of narrative coherence (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983); the relation of the work itself to society where the frame functions as a physical border that separates or isolates the work from its surroundings (Caws, 1985); and as a rhetorical construction that stabilises meaning (Kennedy, 1991) and heightens the intensity of what is contained within the frame's borders (Caws, 1985). Mieke Bal and Susan Snaider Lanser use speech act theory to describe framing as a narrative device that structures the relationships of authors, narrators and actors to the "primary" (frame) narrative and the "embedded" (inset) narrative.[2] Their conceptualisation of frames as a series of narratives, where each level successively encloses the next one creating an infinite regression of frames, allows a formal analysis of the frames' narrative strategies. Bal assigns a more important function to the embedded text which "explains" or "determines" the primary fabula. The embedded text serves as a "sign" or a set of suggestions on how to read the primary text.[3] Mary Ann Caws, who deals with framing at a more metaphorical and often highly pictorially conceptual level, is more concerned with the focalising function of frames in literary fiction. The two approaches are not mutually exclusive, though they do constitute different critical strategies. Bal analyses framing processes by reading the embedded text. Caws analyses the embedded narrative by reading the frame. The two approaches bear on the relative importance of framing and embedded narratives. Jacques Derrida takes up the question of the problematic space between the framing and the framed, "between the

[2] (Bal, 1985; Lanser, 1981)
[3] (Bal, 1985, pp 142-147)

outside and the inside, ... external border and internal border ... the figure and the background ... form and content..."[4] while Bal takes up the notion again of framing as discourse or cultural text in her work on museum exhibitions. (Bal, 1996) These arguments raise questions about the significance of frames for the work they frame and the ground of meaning established by framing processes that pertain to the judgement of value in translation and its referential power.

This chapter explores the concept of "frame": translation's frames, translation as frame. It focuses on how stories invented to frame translated biblical narratives construct an ideal interpretive perspective for viewers. The discussion endeavours to understand the narrative and rhetorical mechanisms of framing: how the frame story directs the viewer's gaze, circumscribes interpretation, and underpins the authority of the translated text; how the embedded text explains and interprets the frame; and how framed and framing narratives interact to produce coherence in the text as a whole. The discourses of framing reveal a great deal about a translator's attitude to the contemporary significance of biblical narrative, the cultural status of the Bible, and the interpretive procedures at work within the process of translation. The frame narrative, therefore, functions as the principal vehicle for the translation's point of view. In so far as point of view structures relations between author and audience, it also determines the socio-historical function of the translated text, in which case the frame functions as a metatext that positions the biblical text within broader social and cultural contexts. The frame story's rhetorical function, therefore, draws attention to the processes of framing as a translative act in itself. As with the *Visual Bible*, this translative act is a sign, an index of the impossibility in formal terms of translation from one medium to another. The rhetoric of the frame delimits the relations of framing and translation as the ground of interpretation and problematises one of the central critical methodologies of translation studies; the comparison of source and target texts. As a translative act that is not part of the translation itself, it is important to examine framing not solely for the ways in which it circumscribes the translated text, but also for the light it sheds on the very concept of translation. An analysis of the discourses of framing may explain to some extent its use as a solution to the difficulties of translating from one medium to another.

[4] (Derrida, 1987)

This will necessitate going beyond a formal analysis of the frame's function to explore what the framing processes inscribe.

A preliminary examination of the salient characteristics of narrative frames and their rhetorical function will provide a useful foundation for a critical analysis of the relation between translation and framing. It will help to refer to a particular example in order to establish some principles for a descriptive approach. I will use the *Story Keepers*, which employs the vehicle of a fictional adventure story to present the translated biblical narrative, as a model. Note, however, that the practice of embedding the translated text within another narrative is quite common not only for Bible stories, but other classic texts as well.[5] The following analysis draws principally on studies in narratology which describe the poetics and rhetoric of a text and its frames as constitutive of their point of view. (Lanser, 1981) I will discuss metaphorical frames in chapter six, and the rather extended form of framing represented by the American Bible Society *newmediabible* series in Section Three.

The Story Keepers is a thirteen part series of animated Gospel stories created for an audience of 4-9 year old children released in 1996 by the American publishers Zondervan. The series is set in 64 AD in Rome. The emperor Nero has launched a campaign to wipe out the Christians for claiming a king higher than Caesar; thousands are sold into slavery or thrown to the lions. Ben, a local baker, and the beautiful Helena, his Greek wife, take under their wing a group of orphaned children. The children discover an amazing secret network of daring men and women who risk their lives to tell the stories of the greatest story teller, Jesus.[6] The gospel stories (taken from Mark and Luke) are woven into the back story of heroes and villains. Each episode follows the same format: the set-up - a group of Christians are in trouble; the rescue plan - Ben and his family go into action (undercover of course) - an encounter with the villains, final rescue and miraculous escape of Ben, his family and the other Christians; the villains come to a sticky end. In the course of these adventures, the Christians tell each other stories about Jesus' life and teaching to

[5] For example, the BBC adaptation of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (1998) restructures the tales to make the pilgrims journey into the framing narrative. As with *Testament* and the *Story Keepers* the distinction between frame and embedded narratives is marked by a change in animation style and narrative genre.

[6] Taken from the title sequence of *The Story Keepers*.

encourage each other and provide explanations for their own circumstances. The purpose of the series is to acquaint viewers with the contemporary significance of the Bible. It targets people who are unfamiliar with the Bible.[7] The Bible stories drive the plot of each episode, while the frame story provides both an interpretation of and an application for the biblical narratives.

The frame story provides narrative enclosure and closure. It simultaneously directs the viewer's attention to the embedded biblical narrative and supplies a meta-commentary emphasising some elements of the Gospels and ignoring others. The *Story Keepers* follows a classic Aristotelian model of rhetorical persuasion which consists of three inter-related elements: 1) a relationship between speaker and audience that relies on the personal character of the speaker; 2) a relation between audience and text that relies on putting the audience into a certain frame of mind; and 3) a relation between speaker and text that relies on the words of the speech itself to provide the proof, or apparent proof, of the speaker's argument.[8] The *Story Keepers'* frame narrative uses these three elements to fulfil its rhetorical intentions. The principal narrators' characterisation as reliable constitutes the first element of persuasion. The interaction of story characters constructs the frame's point of view. The frame's point of view functions as a means to persuade viewers to share the translator's moral disposition towards the Gospels. This constitutes the second element of persuasion. The frame's narrative genres provide the proof of the biblical stories embedded in it. The genres impart narrative plausibility to the embedded story depending on whether a certain frame is read as adventure story, history, or theology.

One function of the series' frame story is to provide an understanding of the primacy of the Gospel narratives' oral tradition and the importance of the early Christian church as a story preserving community in which, for the community of believers, the stories become articles of faith that bind its members together and provide a moral and spiritual guide. This constitutes the historical and theological frame for the Gospel narratives translated for the series. The nature and function of story telling within an oral tradition, particularly the authenticity of tellers and

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[7] Conversation with Brian Brown
[8] (Warner, 1990)

telling, acts as an important mechanism for establishing the moral truth of the story. The hierarchy of character/narrators draws attention to the story within the frame and underwrites its authenticity. There are several levels of narration that, as Susan Lanser argues, are structurally significant because they signify differences among narrative voices and their relative authority in any given text.[9] Briefly, following Lanser's model, the narrative levels in this series are arranged as follows: (see fig. i below)

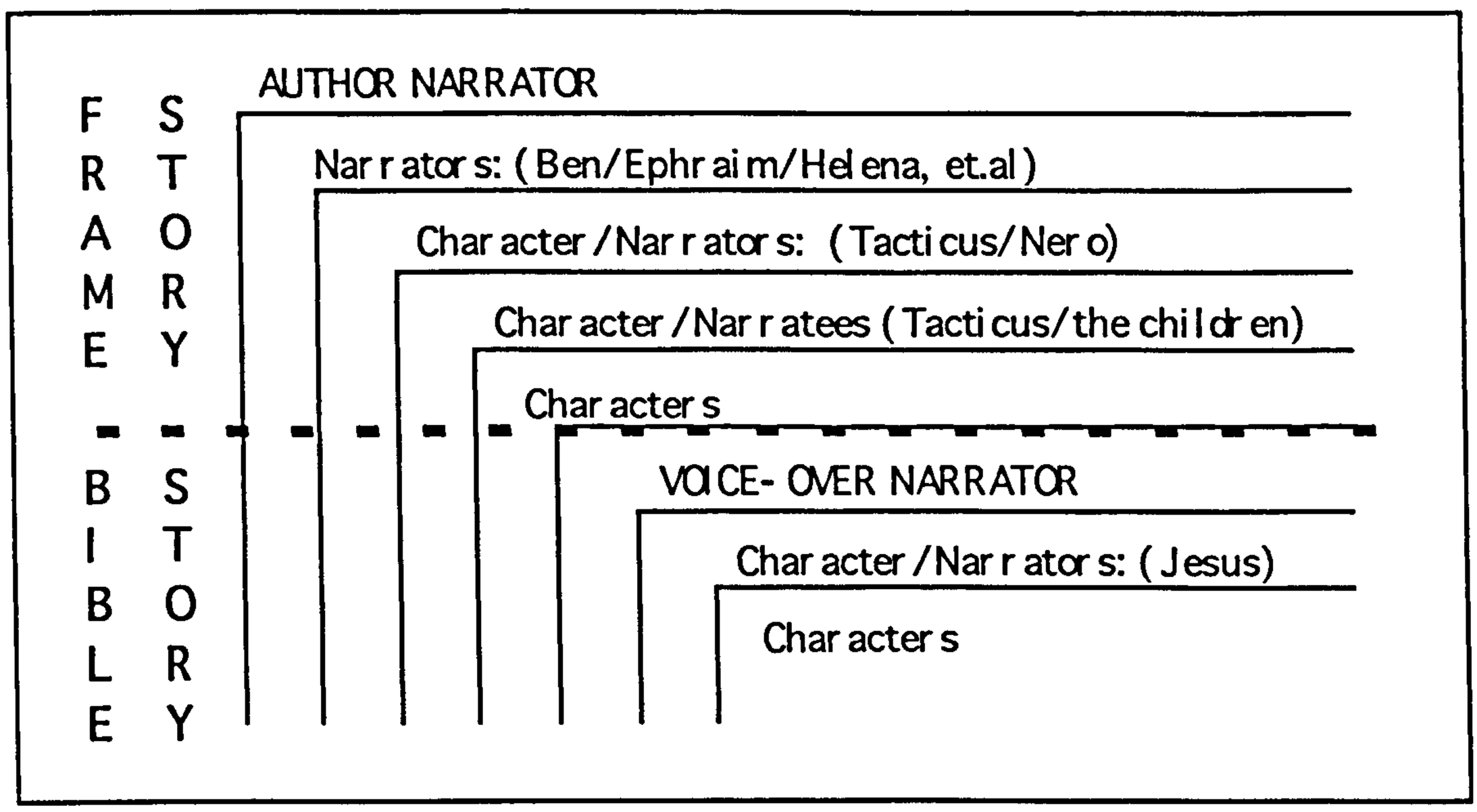

fig. i

Narrators and narratees are divided into two basic types: reliable and unreliable. The personal character and appearance of the principal players in the frame corresponds to their function as reliable or unreliable. Apart from their position in the hierarchy of characters, different narrators and narratees perform different roles as focalisers. The play between reliable and unreliable characters is interesting insofar as it is used to confirm the authority of the Gospel stories. It has also been argued that the power of persuasion in religious rhetoric is founded on authoritative proclamation rather than rational argument (Jasper, 1993; Wolterstorff, 1995) so that the 'personal character' of the narrator becomes an essential affirmation of narrative truth.

[9] (Lanser, 1981, p 136)

Characters who were eye witnesses to Jesus' life and teaching occupy the first level of narration. These characters become the principal narrative voice of the series. They play a central mediating role between the series' audience and the translated Gospel stories. Ben the baker, who as a boy provided the 5 loaves and 2 fishes to feed a crowd of 5,000 that turned up to hear Jesus speak, is the principal narrator.[10] He tells stories from the Gospel of Mark, believed by the scholarly community to be the main source for the writers of Matthew and Luke. Ben's wife, Helena, is Greek and tells Lukan stories. [11] Although she is not an eye witness, Helena's authority as a story teller is established by virtue of her close relationship to Ben as his wife. Other story keepers such as Ephraim, who is a "very important story keeper", figure prominently in individual episodes because they knew Jesus. These characters are termed "anaphoric characters", who "interpret, remind, and predict indication of the past and future action."[12] Whereas they repeatedly refer to Jesus as "the greatest story teller of all", in fact they play a mediating role between Jesus and the children in the story as well as the implied narratees in the series. Ben and the other story tellers draw their narratees into the story world through promises of a story and offer explanations or interpretations of these narratives.

The frame narrative's historiographic representation privileges the authority of eyewitness accounts of Jesus' life and teaching. The story keepers' referential claim to the status of their stories as historical fact, or at least founded on the historical figure of Jesus, is an important device for establishing its truth. The authority of eyewitness accounts becomes a crucial authenticating manoeuvre. This is accentuated in a number of ways. The speakers' characterisation as sincere, friendly and wise and the corroboration of their stories by other eyewitnesses (some characters in the crowds surrounding Jesus turn up in Ben's audience) support the speaker's reliability. Their social status as adults also validates their reliability. Helena's account of Joseph's and Mary's flight into Egypt provides an example of this strategy where the entire episode is used to corroborate the historical veracity of

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[10] This little piece of background information that emerges in a conversation between Ben and one of his adopted children reveals an evangelical sub-text in the series: obviously Ben's early encounter with Jesus changed the course of his life.

[11] The Gospel of Luke is attributed to a gentile born in Antioch and was written in Greek for Greek speaking diasporic Christians.

[12] (Caws, 1985)

Jesus' origin and the nativity story. Ben and his family engage an eccentric cart driver, Milo, (cast as a Texan cowboy) to drive them to an out-of-town story meeting. (fig. ii)

(fig. ii) Milo in "Starlight Escape"

Milo takes a short cut down a dry riverbed to evade Nero's pursuing soldiers. During the wild ride, the cart loses a wheel. While Milo fixes the wheel, Helena tells the children a story about Jesus' birth and the family's flight into Egypt. The unfolding plot establishes Milo's reliability as a corroborating eyewitness. Although Zak, the eldest child, questions Milo's sanity (he appears to be as deaf as a post and talks to his horse) viewers are left in no doubt about his reliability. Milo proves he knows the area "better than a dog knows his fleas" as he successfully dodges the ubiquitous pursuing soldiers. In one tense moment during the journey, Milo emerges from an inn accompanied by some Roman soldiers. The soldiers turn out to be friendly allies with whom Milo has cultivated a relationship that ensures the family's safe passage through the area. Zak's development as an unreliable narratee and story character provides an important foil to Helena's and Milo's reliability. As Milo drives off into the sunset having delivered the family safely to their destination,

he muses that he had once helped such a family escape in circumstances similar to the one in Helena's story. Zak does a double take as he overhears Milo trying to remember the names of the family.

Repetition of stories is another feature of oral tradition. In this series the repetitive characteristic is clearly marked by openers such as "One of my favourite stories...", or, "Well, as you know..." Characters such as Tacticus, Nero's reluctant Chief of Police, form part of a second generation of story tellers who ensure the continuity of this oral tradition. Tacticus' role in confirming the authenticity of such stories is twofold: not only is he intrigued by the Christians' fierce devotion to Jesus but also, through a series of adventures and encounters with Ben's family, he falls in love with a young Jewish-Christian woman in Ben's circle, converts to Christianity and has to escape from Rome. His reliability as a second generation story keeper is developed progressively through the series. His characterisation as a tough soldier with a soft heart and the sub-plot of fierce antagonism with his arch rival Nihilus, the ruthless centurion of Nero's Praetorian Guard who is a brute who loves to torture Christians, confirms his authority. Following classic adventure story endings, in the final episode of the series Tacticus rids the Christians of one of their most formidable enemies when he overcomes Nihilus in one-to-one combat.

Finally, there is a third type of narrator whose unreliability contrasts with the reliability of the other narrators. Where there are minor characters who tell stories that lack the force of stories about Jesus, or who simply confuse the double meaning of "yarn" and present Nero with a length of "string" at his birthday celebrations, Nero is the prince of unreliable story tellers. The inauthenticity of his stories compare unfavourably with Ben's stories. Whereas the context of their telling motivates the stories told by the Christians, Nero's stories lack moral force, are self aggrandising, and fall on deaf or reluctant ears. In one episode, titled "Raging Waters" Nero's soldiers intercept Zak and the children trying to smuggle a written version of a story out to a remote district where the resident story keeper has been arrested. Zak is captured along with the scroll and dragged before Nero who commands him to read the scroll. When Zak refuses, Tacticus reads out the story about Jesus calming a storm on the sea of Galilee. Nero and his audience are visibly

impressed by this account of God's power. But Nero, who thinks of himself as God, is threatened by the story and demands it be destroyed at once and Zak be thrown to the lions as an example to other Christians. Tacticus is intrigued by a character who can inspire such loyalty in his followers and helps the Christians escape with the scroll.

Tacticus' and Nero's contrasting reactions provides the key markers of this story's power. The whole episode sets up an antinomy between reliable and unreliable modes of story telling. In the scene that encloses the scroll reading, Nero composes a song about himself before an audience of sycophantic senators. The sound is excruciating. The senators applaud politely (under threat of being thrown to the lions). Snivellus, one of the senators, has an inspired idea and plugs his ears with wax candles. Oblivious to Nero's discovery of his ruse, he takes a visual cue from the other senators and applauds loudly and enthusiastically. This scene embeds the reading of the scroll and its reception and accentuates Nero's own lack of authority as a story teller. The event also provides a discourse on power and narration. It implies that the real authority of a story rests as much in its ability to move its hearers as on the social power of the speaker. **(See clip 5)**

Lanser argues that the authorial privilege of the narrating voice, its claim to knowledge about the details of story events and actions, derives in part from the status of the tale which may range between factual report or complete (parodic) invention. The *decorum*[13] of the text, its narrative conventions and generic plausibility, guide the behaviour of narrators, for example,

> If the narrator claims to be telling a true story, s/he is expected to account for the information and lay a plausible framework for the claim. Report commits the narrator in a way that invention does not, just as historical claim and obvious parody imply different relationships in the literary act.[14]

The decorum of the *Story Keepers'* frame clearly privileges eye witness accounts through the behaviour of the principal narrators and its contrast with other kinds of narrating behaviour, such as that of Tacticus and Nero. These relationships create a

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[13] (Lanser, 1981, p 165)
[14] ibid., p 164

particular dynamic in the genre shifts between frame and inset narratives. I will return to this aspect at a later point in this chapter.

The hierarchy of narratees also comprises two contrasting levels of reliable and unreliable narratees with specific functions. The children fulfil an important role as "shifter characters".[15] As Ben's and Helena's primary narratees they frequently provoke a story telling. They ask questions typical of children of their age who want explanations that make their world comprehensible. Shifter characters are those with whom the viewer empathises and around whom the action moves. They are central to structuring the viewer's identification with the series' authorial point of view, while the story's context provides an interpretation and the children demonstrate its application through their subsequent actions. The narratees' characterisation has several interesting features. Their reliability is portrayed through their innocence signalled in part by their exaggerated facial features, particularly big bambi eyes. This characteristic cartooning device intensifies spectators' empathy with the character's feelings and emotions. Zak's unreliability as a narratee also provides an important foil that further reinforces the story tellers' authority. His tendency to leap into action without thinking through the consequences leads the family into a number of scrapes, but his behaviour also draws attention to and problematises the narratee's role in an oral tradition. The episode "Ready, Aim, Fire" focuses specifically on the problematic reliability of Bible readers, through the character of Zak. In this episode, Zak is so concerned about the impression he makes on his uncle that he quite simply does not comprehend the relevance or point of a story and fails to learn or apply the lesson supplied. The narrative makes another interesting contrast between the children who hear and act upon the stories they are told and Nero's audience who applaud his perorations on cue and follow his lead in how to respond, i.e. by acknowledging him as God or being thrown to the lions. Tacticus combines the dual role of narrator and narratee. He is a central figure in the series' evangelical theme.

To summarise, the combination of the frame narrative's referential status, the teller's motivation, and the personal character of narrators and narratees creates a

[15] (Caws, 1985)

mechanism for reinforcing both the authenticity of the embedded Bible translations and the series' conception of narrative authority. In the *Story Keepers*, story telling is dispersed among many speakers, making authorship of the biblical narratives a collective one. While Jesus is referred to as "the greatest story teller of all", the stories are not granted a fixed meaning attributed to an individual historical author. Rather, they acquire coherence and significance only through the socio-historical context of their telling.

The frame's narrative point of view also accounts for the frame's rhetorical function of stabilising the meaning of the Gospel stories. Analysis of the frame's point of view provides a particularly useful approach to identify the construction of an interpretive position and its social ground. For this purpose, I understand point of view as a structural relation between the narrator's moral disposition towards the tale; the representation of that view through the formal composition of a film; the gaze of the characters and the direction of their look; and the spectator's identification with and her attitude toward the characters' point of view. Nick Browne argues in his analysis of *Stage Coach* that the spectator recognises the moral or social view of the narration through an identification with relationships between characters.[16] He describes point of view as a figurative as opposed to a literal position achieved through a sequence of shots rather than an individual shot or camera position. Browne argues that ownership and direction of the gaze is not necessarily identified with the physical location of a spectator in front of the screen. There is no authorial vantage point from which to view a film, rather, the spectator is implicated in the narrative itself as events unfold. Point of view, therefore, has both spatial and temporal dimensions.

Viewers of *The Story Keepers* may immediately remark two rhetorical features of the series' point of view which invite a preferred reading of the biblical narrative. First, a difference in the framing and the framed narratives' visual style. The latter represents a neutral point of view drawn as if the scenes were shot straight on from shoulder height. The animation mimics news reporting or observational documentary film conventions of realism that pretend an objective

[16] (Browne, 1982)

point of view in a neutral photographic style. No tricky angles are used to appeal to the spectator's emotions through extreme close ups, canted framing, or exaggerated proportional relationships such as the size of character's facial features, hands or feet. (fig. iii)

(fig. iii) "Raging Waters"

This unvarnished treatment signifies a narrative mode of reportage rather than invention and encourages a particular kind of engagement with the stories' contents. In contrast to the presentation of Jesus in the biblical narratives, the frame story is highly stylised. It uses unrealistically distorted close ups and exaggerated facial features to draw viewers into the story and put them "into a certain frame of mind". The contrast between the two styles of animation shifts the locus and ownership of the gaze. Whereas viewers apparently control the gaze in the Gospel narratives, in the frame, control shifts to relations between the characters. For example, Nihilus is not merely developed as a nasty character, he is consistently drawn to fill the frame in a menacing way, and routinely shown as gigantic in relation to the other characters. Like other characters he towers over Nero who is small, skinny and rather effete. Similarly, Ben's relation to spectators is differently characterised by

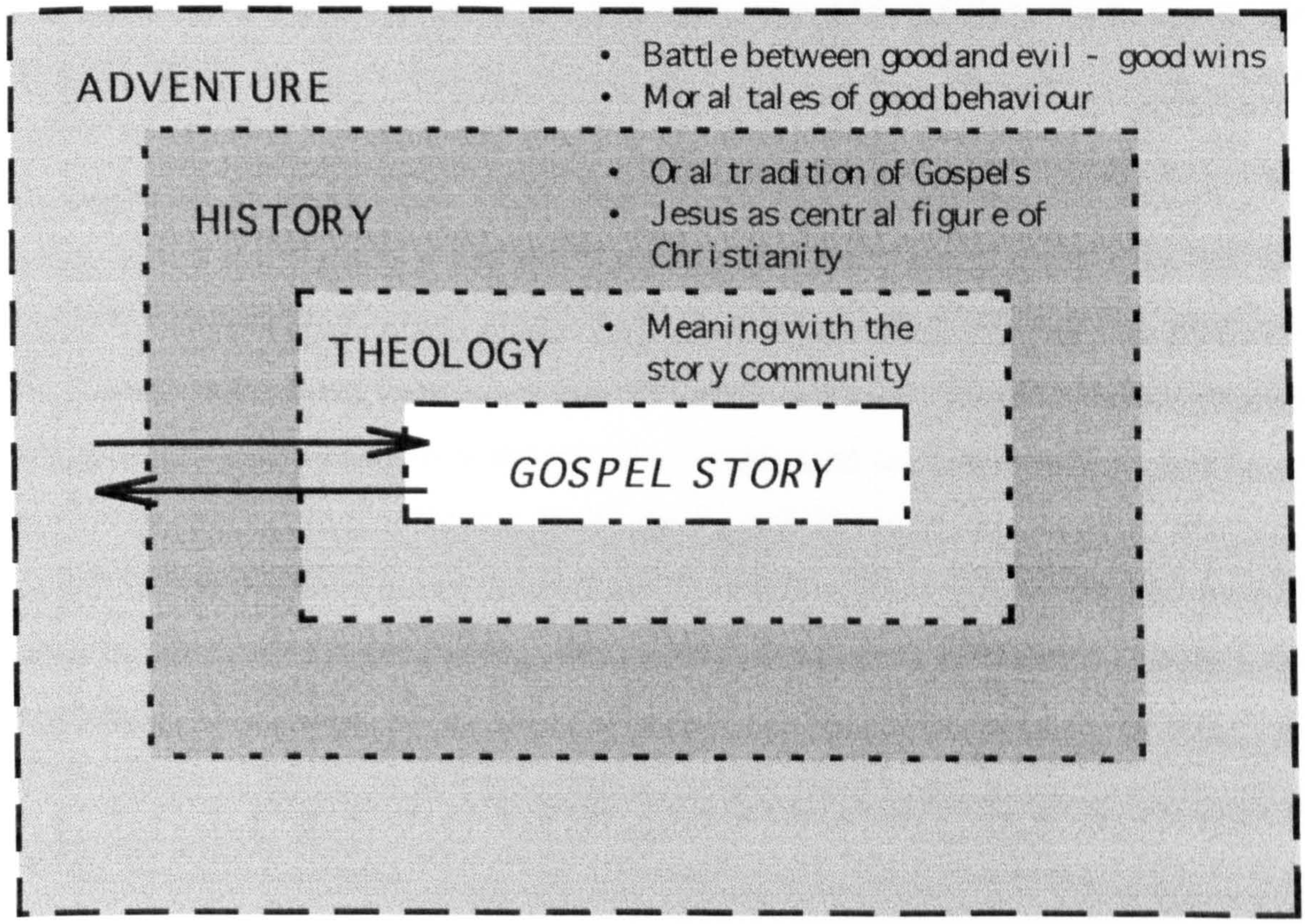
the angle of representation in the drawing. The animation relies on exaggerated stereotypical representations such as the hooked or bulbous noses reminiscent of characters in *Asterix* . Eyes are another notable feature that calls attention to stereotypical differences between "goodies" and "baddies". Evil characters are drawn with large shadows around their eyes while good characters have rounded, friendly eyes. This typical animation convention marks Nero and his henchmen as baddies. The way Tacticus' eyes are drawn marks the progression of his characterisation from "bad guy" to "good guy". Thus point of view is sometimes tied quite literally to the characters' vision ; how they perceive and understand the world around them. **(See clip 6)** "Catacomb Rescue" provides a typical example of the ways in which characterisation and point of view are developed. Ephraim, a prominent story keeper on Nero's list of most wanted men, makes a daring visit to Rome. During a secret story-telling meeting at which many Christians have turned up, one of the audience slips away to inform Nero. In the scene that develops, the use of extreme camera angles and exaggerated close-ups portrays the extremity of Nero's wickedness and his evil intentions. The same scene contains a development of the sub-plot or rivalry between Nihilus and Tacticus which is carried as much by the drawing as by the dialogue. **(See clip 7)**

In conclusion, if the rhetoric of the story is designed to put the viewer in a certain frame of mind, then the play between good and evil acted out by these characters, the stereotyped representations and highly stylised drawings, are clearly calculated to provoke a preliminary emotional and moral response to the narrative as a whole. As Browne notes, in principle, as spectators we do not identify with the camera but with the characters. Our point of view is "tied more closely to our attitude of approval or disapproval",[17] to the beliefs and attitudes conveyed by the characters.

The third element of rhetorical persuasion, the proof, or apparent proof of the words themselves, is achieved through the complex relation between framed and frame story and the mechanism of the frame genre in establishing the plausibility of the Gospel narratives. For the purposes of the following discussion, I understand

[17] (Browne, 1982, p 8)

genre as a set of narrative, representational, and aesthetic conventions which create the coherence of the story and shape viewers' expectations. Narrative conventions provide the grounds for how the story will develop as well as how the audience makes sense of the unfolding narrative and predicts its outcome. Generic plausibility, in this case, has to do with the internal coherence of the narrative and audience expectations rather than any direct relationship to the story's external reality. As illustrated in fig. iv below, the frame narrative in the *Story Keepers* is quite complex in genre terms.



(fig. iv)

Viewers are confronted at once with a decision about how to read the frame's genre and how it provides apparent proof of the Gospel stories' truth. Different generic readings of the frame story will impact on interpretations of the framed story.[18] The

[18] Mary Gerhart, who treats genre as constitutive of the meaning of the text, notes that an audience's identification of a text as belonging to a particular genre will influence their understanding of the text and their interpretive strategy: "In reading Henry IV (or, for that matter, the biblical book of Genesis) as history (a genre favored by the majority), readers are likely to imagine a retrogressive sequence of observed "facts" based on unquestioned assumptions about the genre as well as the elements in the story. But if readers attend to the structure of the elements in the story, they read the text as poetry." (Gerhart, 1992, p 20) Stephen Mitchell's translation of Genesis draws attention to

episode "Catacomb Rescue" provides several good examples. The classic adventure story in which good always triumphs over evil provokes a corresponding tendency to simplify themes of morality into oppositions between good and evil in the framed story. In "Catacomb Rescue", Ben's family and an eminent visiting story keeper, Ephraim, take refuge in the catacombs when their house is raided by soldiers of the Praetorian Guard. The children knock out some of the props for the roof of their escape route in an attempt cut off the pursuing soldiers. Justin and Anna are caught on the wrong side of the rock fall when the passageway caves in. Suddenly, they hear groans from Tacticus, the City Police chief who, having fallen into a chasm, has been left to die by his arch rival Nihilus, centurion of the Praetorian Guard. Anna insists on rescuing him declaring that the Good Samaritan in the story she hears at the beginning of the episode would not have left his enemy to die. Tacticus is impressed by the children's bravery. He befriends the Christians and provides the necessary travel documents to secure Ephraim's escape from the city. In this case, the "baddy" with a soft heart intervenes in time to save the "goodies". If the parable is read allegorically, Tacticus is the traveller on the road to Jericho who is beaten up by robbers and left to die, Nihilus is the Levite and Pharisee, combined as one, who would be expected to help the unfortunate traveller not least because the two have so much in common. Unfortunately, Nihilus shows no such solidarity. Anna is the Samaritan. As a reward for her act of compassion, Tacticus saves her life and those of her fellow travellers, or at least grants a reprieve from imminent death at the hands of Nihilus and the Praetorian Guard.[19]

The theological or moral frame of this episode deals with a broader principle of forgiveness in the series' representation of Christian morality. The theme presents more than a question of loving one's enemy in a context where the lines between friend or foe are clearly drawn by including two other gospel stories. Towards the end of the episode, the band of Christians hiding in the catacombs want to take advantage of their superior numbers and kill Nihilus and Tacticus while they have the chance. Ephraim recounts the parable of the unforgiving servant in

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how Genesis has been reconstructed through English translations of the book as a single coherent historical narrative that masks the presence and function of different genres within the text. (Mitchell, 1996)

[19] The opening question that provides the motivation for the parable is asked of Jesus by a "Teacher of the Law" who asks "What must I do to receive eternal life?" (GNB Study Bible 1994)

Matthew 18 in an effort to calm the crowd. In this parable, the king orders one of his servants to be beaten and thrown into jail until he repays a large debt. The servant pleads with the king and the king, moved by the servant's pleas, cancels the debt. The servant immediately goes out and finds one of his own debtors, who owes a paltry sum by comparison, takes everything he has and throws him in jail. When the king hears about the servant's behaviour he is furious and punishes him severely. This story contrasts the king's behaviour and that of the perfidious servant. The parable's theological frame provides fresh grounds for interpreting the episode's moral by undermining the simple oppositions in the adventure story and suggesting that the significance of the two parables is not straightforward. Their meaning has to be worked at.

Finally, the historical framing in this episode, and the series as a whole, is used in a quite complex fashion to promote a universal relevance for the parables. The series is set in Nero's Rome. It represents a period of history just prior to when the Gospels are presumed to have been written down. In many senses, however, this series overturns generic expectations of historical narrative because it resists a linear articulation of time and a specific representation of the period in which it is set. Instead, it relies on viewers to recognise playful references to other historical narratives and representations in films and comic books, such as *Asterix*, Hollywood spectaculars such as *Ben Hur*, and the Hollywood Western. In so doing, it repeatedly parodies the concept of a fixed historical context that gives originality and meaning to the Gospel stories.[20] For example, although the frame story is set in AD 64 the band of daring men and women who risk their lives are alternatively represented as Zealots, freedom fighters, rebels, or members of an underground resistance organisation. These representations echo different periods of resistance in the history of Christianity. Each subversion of the frame narrative's generic plausibility stands out from the surrounding story. One of the most startling instances of this narrative reflexivity occurs in "Catacomb Rescue". As Ephraim escapes through a concealed back passage to the catacombs, narrowly evading Nero's soldiers, Ben turns to the camera and winks, "They don't call us *underground*

[20] Another characteristic of the series is its adaptation of the parodic strategies of naming in *Asterix*. The *Story Keepers'* characters bear wonderful names like Snivellus, Tacticus, Nihilus, Giganticus.

Christians for nothing" (emphasis added). Ben's wink *at* the camera is a rare departure from the series' convention of keeping the direction of the characters' looks within the diegetic frame; it is generically parodic. With his wink, Ben shares with viewers a direct conspiratorial collusion in the fugitive's evasion. The combination of the wink and Ben's naming of the escapees as "*underground* Christians" alludes to representations of religious and political resistance in twentieth century Europe. For viewers who are familiar with Western cold war rhetoric about the persecution of Christians "behind the iron curtain", or who know of efforts by evangelical Protestant organisations to smuggle of Bibles into the USSR during the 1970's, the reference and collusion are quite explicit. The series' resistance to a time-bound conception of history underwrites the time-lessness of the Gospels through a play of intertextual references which draw the audience into making connections between the biblical narrative and contemporary political or ethical issues. In many respects, this represents a modernising translation strategy that contrasts with the series' more straightforward visual representations of Jesus and his disciples.

In summary, the frame story's central narrative theme of the role of oral tradition in establishing and preserving early church communities is an important device for authenticating the Bible stories. It underwrites the authority and faithfulness of translation through a claim to the stories' contemporary significance as much its equivalence to the Greek source text used.[21] The *Story Keepers'* frame provides a powerful and captivating meta-commentary on the translated biblical narratives.[22] The choice and combination of biblical stories in each episode, their contextualisation, and the authority of the story tellers are all crucial to a fulfilment of the series' rhetorical function. The *Story Keepers'* framing deals explicitly with the Gospel narratives as discourses on Christian morality formed over time through

[21] This was a deliberate strategy borne of the recognition that formal equivalence is an unrealistic translation strategy in this instance. However, scripts for the biblical narratives were translated from the Greek. Once these were written and approved by scholarly advisors these translation/scripts became a fixed, non-negotiable part of the whole production process. (Conversations with series creator and translator, Brian Browne, and writer, Andrew Melrose.)

[22] I have observed a five year old child glued to the television for the duration of four 30-minute episodes in a row. Other acquaintances have recorded similar responses by young children. I have not come across any systematic accounts of viewer's responses to the series to supplement observed viewing behaviour.

the representational and interpretive practices of believing communities. The series' historiography is essential to the fulfilment of this aim. The narrative crosses historical time frames to demonstrate that the Gospel stories acquire social and moral significance through their interpretation and application in different historical contexts. This is achieved through a sophisticated manipulation of language (both visual and oral) so that the series flips between past and present while using animation to sustain the verisimilitude of the narrative as a whole. The *Story Keepers'* frame inscribes a theory of reception and of the history and function of translation that draws its intellectual force from Walter Benjamin's views on translation. In this case, the principal question is whether it is possible to detect, within the series' narrative structures a sense of the temporality proper to the after-life of the original and a relationship between translation and its original that grants the original text the power to affect the translation.

The series uses the mechanisms of framing and narrative genre to manage the relationship between text and audience, in which the frame story creates an interface between the Gospel stories and their reception. The frame's narrative genres form the discursive ground on which viewers negotiate both their comprehension of the Gospel's moral order and its contemporary significance. The frame narrative's rhetorical modes and its different generic levels perform complementary functions in this series. If the adventure story provides a way to understand the moral or theological importance of the biblical narrative, it functions as such so long as the verisimilitude of the oppositions between good and bad, authentic and inauthentic, heroic and cowardly are maintained and everything turns out right in the end. The consistency and reliability of narrators and narratees in the frame narrative are important factors for maintaining the plausibility of these moral oppositions. Similarly, the historical setting and perspective of the frame is important because it creates a perception of historical continuity in which the audience is able to engage imaginatively as a recognisable part of their own cultural environment, not because it narrates and represents the experience of early Christians in Nero's Rome with any accuracy. The frame's historiography, therefore, apparently intends to create a temporal space that encourages audiences to identify with a Christian tradition embodied in the repetition of Gospel stories more than to legitimate the historical

originality of the biblical narratives. Mindful of its target audience, the series does not take for granted the universality or authority of the Gospel narratives. Rather, it uses the play of generic plausibility, on the one hand and parody, on the other, to demonstrate how and why the stories can be taken seriously today.

Despite my focus on the formal narrative characteristics of the *Story Keepers'* frame story, the impossibility of treating it as an autonomous text should be evident. As noted in my introduction to the series, the relation between framing and framed narratives is an important factor in understanding how the series functions as translation and how the translation is authenticated. The framing performs acts of both closure and enclosure. However, the frame is not hermetic and closure is never complete. Framed and framing narratives interact to prevent closure. William Kennedy describes the relation between frame and its object or focus as a "dialectical interaction" in which "focus and frame interact to produce intelligible meaning" He writes,

> Separated from the focus of the text, the frame has no meaning of its own and serves no purpose. Without the frame ... on the other hand, the focus of the text amounts to a purely formal structure of meaning that lacks semantic depth and intellectual complexity ... Frame and focus restrict and define one another by agreement and contrast, convergence and divergence, similarity and difference. One gauges the meaning by balancing part against whole.[23]

Kennedy's point invites an alternative critical strategy, that of Mieke Bal, for example, who treats the embedded text as a sign or set of suggestions on how to read the primary text. This strategy requires that formal distinctions between frame and focus as autonomous texts be abandoned. As Kennedy notes, quoting Derrida, "There is no natural transcendent frame; there is only the activity of framing."[24] However, the activity of framing in the *Story Keepers* is marked in several ways. The most important of these is the presence of genre shifts within the narrative as a whole. These shifts are created by changes in animation style, the poetics of animation, as the narrative switches from the adventure story to stories about Jesus'

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[23] (Kennedy, 1991, p 79)

[24] ibid., p 85 Kennedy's translation is perhaps more literal than that of the better known translation by Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod (see note 1)

life, or parables taken from the Gospels. A change of animation style signals a genre shift in the narrative and a shift from primary to embedded text. Caws notes that a change of genre within the narrative is always noticeable as it constitutes a "breaking up of the frame of expectation".[25] This shift differs from the subversion of expectations achieved through the generic parody of historiography observed earlier. It relies on a mechanism that Caws terms the "insetting of text and picture within text as narrated and pictured ... [where] ... the inset disturbs the surface, presenting a contrasting plane by advance or obtrusion or by recession."[26] She notes three sorts of contrast between the inset and the frame: "between foreground and background, between advance and recession in time, and between narrative and drama." (p 270) She argues the text thus framed achieves two things: as an intensified moment with the larger narrative it functions metonymically as an essence of the work as a whole;[27] and as a shift in the frame of expectation it functions as an agent of change in the larger narrative. Both of these elements are at work within the *Story Keepers.* The examples taken from "Catacomb Rescue" and "Raging Waters" demonstrate how the Gospel stories function as agents of change. In "Raging Waters", the story in the scroll precipitates a change of attitude in Tacticus who helps Ben and the children escape from Nero's palace. In this case, the action of the frame narrative is arrested while the characters listen to Tacticus. The arrest is marked particularly by the pensive reactions of Tacticus' audience. In "Catacomb Rescue", the example of the *Good Samaritan* induces Anna's determination to rescue Tacticus, an action that changes the fortunes of the beleaguered Christians.

The genre shift from framing to framed narratives occurs as a double shift of poetics, first between different styles of animation and secondly from adventure story to dramatisation of the Gospel texts. It exemplifies what Caws identifies as a contrast between narrative and drama. The contrast is also marked by a change of narrative voice where the narrator in the frame gives way to the narrator of the inset story; the narrator (Ben, Ephraim, or whoever) quite literally changes to another invisible, anonymous voice-over. In the context of relationships between frame and

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[25] (Caws, 1985, p 7)
[26] ibid., pp 16-17
[27] "These parts standing for the whole ... force our deeper understanding of the unity and the ultimate meaning of what we are led to contemplate and reflect upon." (Caws, 1985, p 8)

inset it is significant that this occurs as a marked feature of the translated stories since this is the closest the series comes to an omniscient author/narrator. This factor is particularly significant if the inset stories function metonymically to "force our deeper understanding of the text as a whole", since it signals the moral authority of the Gospel narratives relative to experience that viewers bring to their interpretation via an identification with the story characters. Thus genre shifts in the series are a necessary formal device not only to signal a change in the narrative, but also to foreground the Gospel story. While point of view in the frame narrative directs the viewer's gaze to the inset story, the foregrounding of the inset story directs the viewer's gaze to the background, or social ground of the biblical narratives conveyed through the generic frames of the primary story. This dialectic between figure and ground, between focus and frame, operates both at the level of the series' formal organisation and at the level of its reception. The inset Gospel narratives suggest a greater moral complexity than the simple antinomies of the adventure story's plot and invites a more sophisticated response. "Catacomb Rescue" not only addresses the issue of behaviour towards other people, but the combination and placement of the Gospel stories within the main plot give examples of circumstances where choices must be made between retaliation and forgiveness and where kindness is not necessarily an obvious course of action. The dialectic between frame and inset in this episode modifies a discourse on the meaning of neighbourliness with a question about justice and situational ethics. "Raging Waters", in which Tacticus reads the scroll, is a discourse on the nature and exercise of power. The frame narratives provide analogies through which the viewer can test their understanding of the Bible's significance. The frame, therefore, never fully circumscribes the Gospel narrative. Enclosure in this instance is not foreclosure because the framed story challenges and disrupts our reading of the frame, deferring closure.

To conclude, I have tried to show how the *Story Keepers* uses the mechanism of a narrative frame firstly to establish the authenticity and authority of the Gospel stories and, secondly, to encourage viewers to see the personal significance of these stories. Its central function as a guarantor of narrative truth is, as Kennedy suggests, to "stabilise meaning" in the text. One of the central features of this mechanism is the use of different generic levels within the frame story and of generic shifts

between frame and framing stories. From the perspective of the series' reception, its narrative genres function as an experiential field through which audiences play out, or make sense of, their individual identities as human subjects within a spatial, temporal, and social context. The frames' genres are, therefore, significant as an interface between the translation and its reception, and between the biblical text and society. Framing functions as a translative act in itself where the nature of the frame and the choice of genre positions viewers relative to their understanding of and response to the translated Bible stories. However, as already noted, the dialectic between frame and focus in the series fails to secure narrative closure in each episode. My analysis of the *Story Keepers* has revealed a kind of circularity between framing and framed narratives which is the source of a deferral of closure. The narrators derive their authority from the authenticity of the stories they recount, which in turn, derive their authority from the narrator's ability to convince audiences of his or her reliability. Similarly, the frame heightens what is contained within its borders, which in turn functions metonymically as an essence of the work as a whole. The reception of the work thus framed raises two questions: first, what are the limits of the frame and what (in terms of translation) is its function? This question implies that one cannot determine the social ground of translation (its reception) without first delimiting the borders of its framing; the inside and outside and very textuality of the frame. Second, if the translation's frame bears upon, delimits, or augments the translation in the ways suggested by my analysis, what precisely is the thing that it frames, the object called translation? These questions invite a philosophical consideration of the nature of the frame in addition to a description of its rhetorical mechanisms.

The frame story in *The Story Keepers* has the properties of the *parergon* which, according to Derrida:

> comes against, beside, and in addition to the *ergon*, the work done [*fait*], the fact [*le fait*], the work, but it does not fall to one side, it touches and cooperates within the operation, from a certain outside. Neither simply outside nor simply inside.[28]

[28] (Derrida, 1987, p 54)

The *parergon* has a special relationship with the work that it frames. It is defined as such not only because it is a supplement to the work but also because it is more difficult to detach it from the work. It enters into the meaning of the work, but does not share the same ground.[29] The *parergon* is difficult to detach because the internal structural relationship of a lack rivets the work to its frame. The *parergon* "inscribes something which comes as an extra ... but whose transcendent exteriority ... intervenes in the inside only to the extent that the inside is lacking."[30] This lack constitutes the unity of the work itself: "Without this lack, the *ergon* would have no need of a *parergon*. The *ergon's* lack is the lack of a *parergon* ... which nevertheless remains exterior to it."[31] This description raises questions about the quality of the "work" and the nature of the "lack". Derrida's discussion of framing deconstructs Kant's critique of aesthetic judgement; it explicitly addresses questions about the knowledge and judgement of value. Derrida argues that the principal difficulty is to determine where the frame takes place and what are its inner and outer limits, which is not so easy to do. Yet to define what is properly essential to the judgement of value presupposes an ability to distinguish what is intrinsic and what is extrinsic to a work; in other words to determine what is beauty in a work of art, or what is intrinsic to a pure aesthetic judgement of a work of art.

Derrida's discussion is remarkably relevant for the problem of determining what is properly essential to the judgement of value in translation or what is *translation proper;* specifically, what is *translation proper* with respect to translations from one medium to another. It is apparent the examples of framing discussed in this chapter and in chapter two pose a similar question about the limits and function of framing. If the *Story Keepers'* frame is a *parergon*, how does it function as supplement? What is the work that it frames? What is lacking in the work that requires a frame? I noted one of the principal rhetorical functions of the frame narrative was to secure the authority of the original text. This was also

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[29] "The *parergon* stands out [*se détache*] both from the *ergon* and from the milieu ... But it does not stand out in the same way as the work ... The parergonal frame stands out against two grounds [*fonds*], but with respect to each of those two grounds, it merges [*se fond*] into the other ... The *parergon* ... has as its traditional determination not that it stands out but that it disappears, buries itself, effaces itself, melts away at the moment it deploys its greatest energy." (Derrida, 1987, p 61)

[30] ibid., p 56

[31] ibid., pp 59-60

evident in *The Gospel According to Matthew*. If the lack thus described amounts to a problem of authority, why and how does translation generate this problem? The lack of formal or structural similarity between two sign systems presents one of the principal difficulties of translating from one medium to another. By the same token, translation from one medium to another never fully achieves representational equivalence. Thus translation is defined by its difference (*différance*), while at the same time it aspires to similarity, to sharing with its original the same interpretive ground that secures the translation's authority. It is clear from an analysis of the representational and narrative strategies in the *Story Keepers* that its creators have paid considerable attention to questions of authority and authenticity, for example, the fact that Ben tells stories from the Gospel of Mark while Helena tells stories from the Gospel of Luke, or the fact that Jesus and his disciples are given Semitic features.[32] The principal translational difficulty faced by the *Story Keepers'* creators was how to maintain equivalence to the Gospel texts and at the same time create a programme that appeals to the expectations of young viewers whose tastes are formed by the values of television animation. The decision to translate the biblical narratives as "literally" or "neutrally" as possible in formal and representational terms, and create a frame that conforms to audience expectations reflects the creators' sensitivity to these difficulties.

However, the question of authority does not in itself define the quality of "work" or the nature of "lack" in a translation. In the cases observed here, it merely determines the inner and outer limits of the frame. It is necessary to dig a little deeper. Derrida's definition of "work" and his determination of lack in that context provides an explanation. Work, *ergon*, is energy, *energeia*, the free energy of the originary process, its pure productivity, captured, framed, mastered by the bordering determination of the frame (*parergon*). But the lack in the interior of the *ergon* thus circumscribed is not the opposite of energy, an absence, or an emptiness, it is the "impossibility of arresting *différance* ... of making it come back, equal or similar to itself".[33] Umberto Eco, who describes sign production as work, or labour,

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[32] Brian Brown, the creator of the series, revealed in conversation that he had made every effort not to overlay the frame story with Christian imagery and iconography from later centuries. The unconventional representation of Jesus as Semitic is also significant in this instance.

[33] (Derrida, 1987, pp 80-81)

and codes as frames that give significance to the sign, makes a similar distinction. The coincidence of Derrida's philosophical perspective and Eco's semiotic perspective on the nature and meaning of a work, or to put it another way our knowledge and judgement of value in a work, provides a significant clarification of translation and of the function of framing in this context. The coincidence recalls the central semiotic problematic of Jakobson's definition of translation. The "intersemiotic" level of translation inscribes its *energeia* . It signifies the elusive, labile, creative nature of iconic sign relations in the work of translation that defy capture.[34] The "interlingual" level of translation functions as a *parergon* to arrest differences (*différance*) in the free play of iconic sign relations. The lack in the work thus defines the impossibility of translation, of obtaining a similarity or equivalence between a text and its translation except by general agreement or convention. The frame as *parergon* functions to prop up the absence of meaning (equivalence). It is now obvious why the *Story Keepers* embeds the translated biblical texts in a frame narrative and why its narrative and rhetorical features focus so explicitly on the narrator's reliability and authority. The frame inscribes within its borders, and within its very textuality, the fundamental difficulties of translation from one medium to another. The *Story Keepers'* frame constitutes the ground on which material judgements about the faithfulness of the translated biblical stories (in terms of their semiotic equivalence) and formal judgements about the stories universal significance are made. Finally, Derrida's point about the nature of the frame's autonomy, or its dependence on the work it frames for its own status as frame, raises another important question about the object of translation studies and its critical methodologies. The lack of the frame's autonomy, the impossibility of detaching it from the work it frames suggests that the frame is itself part of the translation and so cannot be separated from the creative work of translating or from the work of reception. The study of a translation's frame is therefore an exercise in understanding translation as translation through an analysis of judgements of value inscribed in the frame. Source/target text comparison, if it at all possible, yields to more important questions about the ground of interpretation in translation.

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[34] See Wollen and Petrilli in chapter one

CHAPTER FIVE

Closing the gap: Narrative Time and Historical Consciousness

> Time becomes human to the extent that it is articulated through a narrative mode, and narrative attains its full meaning when it becomes a condition of temporal existence.[1]

How to bridge the temporal and cultural gap between a two thousand year old text and its contemporary readers is a common problem for Bible translators who have debated it in terms of a dualistic opposition between literal and idiomatic, or archaising and modernising strategies. This opposition is stated as a question of whether translators should "leave the author in peace, as much as possible, and move the reader toward him; or ... leave the reader in peace as much as possible, and move the author towards him."[2] Commentators on the archaising/modernising debate have tended to group themselves into two camps: they seek either to acknowledge the source text's alterity and so emphasise its cultural and temporal distance from the modern reader, or they attempt to diminish the source text's difference by translating it in to contemporary cultural idioms so forestalling any disturbance of a faith in the Bible's universality. The debate has a long history which, although periodically dressed up in fresh terminology, essentially retains the same polarities of literal or idiomatic translation. Assumptions that archaising strategies create "a deliberate aura of strangeness, or peripheral opaqueness" where modernising strategies make the translation "at home in the speech of the translator and his readers"[3] reveal a static view of language.

Two other pairs of words clarify this diminishment of the dynamism of language. The first pair associates archaisms with "literal" or formal (word for

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[1] (Ricoeur, 1983, p 52)

[2] Friederich Schleiermacher, "On Different Methods of Translation" trans. A. Lefevere, in Wilson, ed., *German Romantic Criticism,* pp 1-30.

[3] (Steiner, 1975, p 280)

word) translation and modern with idiomatic (sense for sense) translation. The second pair associates "literal" with "literary" and "idiomatic" with a functional understanding of language and translation that aims to convey the sense of the source text in preference to its literary features.[4] Edward L. Greenstein exposes the contradictions and cultural relativism of this cluster of oppositions when he says,

> More literal translations can cover a wider spectrum of literary features; but idiomatic renderings can depict the historical denotations of the text with greater clarity. While the idiomatic style can present a culture to us in familiar terms, a literal rendering can disclose the more idiosyncratic aspects of that culture. One may liken the idiomatic mode to the clear voice of a speaker reciting someone else's message in his own language. The literal translation resembles the voice of the author, but muffled.[5]

His treatment of "literal" and "literary" as synonymous and his discussion about the theoretical underpinning of different approaches conflates the means and ends of translation theory and practice. He suggests, for example, that "a more literal reproduction of imagery can often shed light on the realia of an alien society" giving the translation an aura of anthropological authenticity.[6] As opposed to this, he associates a philological approach (which focuses on the contextual use of language) with idiomatic translation which comes closer to reconstructing the ancient history and particular cultural milieu of the source text in the language of the target culture.

But, as Stephen Prickett argues in his discussion about the history of translating ambiguity in biblical texts, there is another sense in which archaising strategies achieve greater transparency in their attention to the opacity of passages in the Bible, whereas modernising approaches, which aim at transparency in their rendering of difficult passages, are in fact covertly opaque in their methods of critical textual interpretation.[7] Prickett's discussion reveals a paradox at the heart of

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[4] This conflation of literal with literary and idiomatic with pragmatic dates back to the Romantic poets' definition of biblical and religious language as poetic and a subsequent development of literary critical approaches to the Bible in the 18th century. (Prickett, 1986, ch. 2). Nida's promotion of idiomatic translation marks a distinct break with Bible translation philosophy dating back to Jerome which was concerned primarily with the formal structures of biblical language.

[5] (Greenstein, 1983, p 20)

[6] ibid., p 14

[7] (Prickett, 1986) The modern critical methods to which Prickett refers are based on the principles of Bible translation proposed by Eugene Nida and followed by large Bible translation

the dualism of archaising and modernising strategies. The paradox, for Prickett, arises from the fact that archaising strategies adopt a far more literalist critical approach as a means of achieving an effect of opacity, while modernising strategies attend more closely to the opacity and ambiguities of the source text to produce an effect of transparency. The paradox is born of the asymmetry of its polarities, as he notes,

> The narratives of the past remain for us strangely enigmatic. If to 'modernise' is to embrace cultural relativity; to 'archaise' is not to choose stability, but merely to opt for a particular (apparently no less culturally variable) reading of history.[8]

Prickett's discussion about how Bible translators have treated ambiguous passages in light of "the unconscious assumptions and the cultural context of the period when the interpretation is made" (p 21) points to radically different and historically relative interpretive attitudes towards biblical texts and the need for a more nuanced understanding of what lies behind these different attitudes to the original texts' temporal and cultural distance.

Greenstein's and Prickett's discussions are useful because they draw attention to an important point: the level at which Bible translators attend to the original text's temporal distance. Archaising strategies tend to make alterity explicit by including a notion of the temporal distance within the language of the translation itself, for example, by using words or grammatical structures that literally reproduce Hebrew or Greek forms. Where literal translation is impossible, an archaic literary form in the target language may signify the differences. Modernising approaches, on the other hand, attend to the temporal gap within their own interpretive

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organisations such as the Bible Societies and the Wycliffe Bible Translators. Nida's definition that *"Translating consists in producing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent to the message of the source language, first in meaning and secondly in style"* (Nida, 1975, p 33) is based on the principle that meaning is conveyed through the discourse levels of language use. That is, the meaning of a word can only be stated in terms of its context of use where the connotative levels of a word gives it different "emotional" colouring. The primary task of a translator who wants to achieve the "closest natural equivalence", therefore, is a careful exegesis of the formal and semantic structures of the source text to reconstruct its original meaning and its effect on the original audience. For Nida, a good translation is one that reflects an understanding of the cultural diversities of the language of the source text and its equivalents in the target language.

[8] (Prickett, 1986, p 17)

methodologies by taking pains to transform the cultural and historical specificities of the ancient texts into modern idioms. Any one issue of *The Bible Translator* gives an idea of the extent and detail of formal analysis in modernising Bible translation methodologies. However, the translation's reader will very likely be unaware of the exegetical work behind such production unless footnotes draw attention to the process.

Parallel attempts in audio-visual translation to use literalist (which recreate the time and place of the biblical narrative) and visually idiomatic representations repeat the paradoxes of the archaising/modernising duality. These approaches show that, as in language translation, temporal differences are negotiated primarily at the level of narrative structure, rather than word or syntax. At this level, the literal or allegorical treatment of biblical texts functions as temporally and spatially reflexive narrative conventions that provide an historical perspective through which the ancient stories acquire contemporary coherence and significance. The following discussion traces how the generic narrativity of individual translations constructs an historical consciousness that opens up imaginative spaces where viewers can identify with the story events and characters. This analysis considers the adequacy of the archaising/modernising conceptual antinomy to account for translation strategies used to bridge the temporal gap between Hebrew and Greek texts and their contemporary interpretations. It relies on an approach to genre criticism in film studies that theorises the structural relations between audience, text, and society. In this case, genre constitutes allegorical and temporal maps that allow audiences to imagine themselves in time and space. The approach thematises the relations between narrative time and place and the spectator's subjective experience of history and geography. Ultimately, questions about history, narration, and translation raised in this analysis are not unique to the case studies considered here, they have a broader scope.

The construction of an historical consciousness both in the advertising rhetoric of video catalogues, programme trailers and packaging, and the formal and narratological structures of the videos themselves is central to the negotiation of the biblical narrative's antiquity and cultural opacity. The narrative construction of

historical consciousness consists in ordering the concept of time for readers or viewers through the structural relations between past, present and future and the actions of a story. For the viewer, the present is always the present (or presence) of viewing. Thus the present of past things is represented narratively as memory, and the present of future things as expectation.[9] The construction of time within a story (through ellipses, repetitions, flash back or flash forward), therefore, has a significant effect on the reader or viewer.[10] The formal and functional aspects of the generic representation of time are also crucial to the "reality effect" of the story. In the case of biblical videos, this contributes to viewers' recognition of their subjective relation to the ancient texts constructed through translation. As Vivian Sobchack notes of the narrative representation of history in the Hollywood epic,

> The importance of the genre is not that it narrates and dramatises historical events accurately according to the detailed stories of academic historians but rather that it opens a temporal field that creates the *general* possibility of recognising oneself as a *historical subject* of a particular kind.[11]

The phenomenological aspects of narrative time, therefore, concern how readers or viewers symbolically make sense of their social experience, a process that addresses the central philosophical question "how to comprehend ourselves in time."[12] The generic construction of time and narration in the videos positions viewers relative to their experience of viewing and the time frame of the ancient biblical narratives. Different forms of narrative construction allow different kinds of subjective projection within this time frame. The translation, therefore, mediates between the temporal structures of the original text and those of its contemporary interpretation. To study the construction of an historical consciousness requires attending to the narratological and rhetorical devices that are used to

a) establish a particular referential relation to the Bible as an object of and in History and contemporary interpretations of its content;

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[9] See Paul Ricoeur in (Ricoeur, 1983) chapter three for an elaboration of this view.
[10] (Bal, 1985; Chatman, 1978; Rimmon-Kenan, 1983)
[11] (Sobchack, 1995, p 286)
[12] ibid., p 283

b) create a temporal and spatial field that produces the general possibility for viewers to position themselves subjectively within the historical continuity of these stories; and

c) establish the transcendence of biblical narrative and mask the distancing effects of its alterity.

The promotional discourses that frame video translations and establish them as objects of and in History invariably set the scene. The promotional language, therefore, seems to play a central role in constructing a particular conception of historical reality calculated to provide a space for ideal viewers to recognise the film's generic construction of time as a bridge between the original and its contemporary interpretation.[13] In so doing, the advertising establishes a sense of continuity from the past tense of the source text to the present of its reception. This process, exemplified by a frequently used translational metaphor to "bring the stories to life", parallels archaising translation strategies insofar as it represents a literalistic attempt to reconstruct the original story's historical and geographical contexts. Some typical examples from the Vision Video catalogue of Christian and biblical videos and from the covers of video cassettes obtained through this catalogue adequately make the point.[14]

The advertising on the front page of the catalogue bills *The Revolutionary, Parts I and II* as follows:

> These fast-paced films on Jesus, made in high definition technology, show His life and teaching[15] in a way never seen before. The main events from the Gospel sources are presented with careful attention to details and the original historical and cultural context. Originally shown in state-of-the-art virtual reality theatres, these riveting and acclaimed presentations are now offered in letterbox format.

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[13] The concept of an original is vital to the perception of the biblical narrative's historicity irrespective of the assumed source texts used in translation. The original may be understood as an image that producers and audiences alike already have of the biblical narrative. This image, or pre-text, accounts to a large extent for the generic verisimilitude of the videos.

[14] Vision Video, PO Box 540 Worcester, PA 19490-0540, USA, URL - www.catholicvideo.com. Undated. Acquired in June 1998.

[15] The wording suggests a covert didactic aim that contrasts with the aim to represent the original historical context.

There are several significant ideas implied by this statement. First, a concept of narrative time expressed as a dimension of screen time, "these fast paced films". Screen (or text) time, the pace at which the story unfolds, is contrasted with story time, "the original historical" time of the Gospel narratives. The contrast makes explicit the difference between the world as it was then and the viewer's experience of it now "in a way never seen before". The advertising thus points to the self-referentiality of cultural production in the film. Second, the film's screen time is described in spatial rather than chronological terms. This is reinforced by two metaphors for the films' realism: "the high definition technology" and the "virtual reality" of its original presentation. Thus the catalogue's advertising rhetoric conflates time and space and primes the viewer for an experience of the past historical in the present.

Dramatic reconstruction or animation that makes stories "come alive" expresses a routine desire to bring the past into the present. Thus "The Easter Story" from the animated series of *Greatest Adventure Stories from the Bible,* created by the Hanna-Barbera team, is described as "the thrilling Easter story [which will] come alive for children of all ages" and as a "beautifully animated re-creation ... seen through the eyes of the Apostle Mark."[16] Significantly, the stories are supposed to come to life as part of the personal experience of viewers themselves. Advertising for the *Reader's Digest* series on "Jesus and his Times" exhorts viewers to "*Travel* the dusty roads with Joseph and Mary as they *make their way*" or "*Be there* as John the Baptist *baptises* Jesus."[17] (emphasis added). Similarly the jacket cover for the Visual Bible's production of the *Gospel According to Matthew* announces, "As [Matthew's] story unfolds, the centuries melt away and we are intimately involved in the life of Jesus." In each case, the advertising language not only metaphorically privileges spatial over temporal narrative dimensions, it also articulates a notion of presence as the embodiment of written accounts. The rhetoric infers the story characters' embodiment on the screen will transport viewers to the scene where they will participate intimately in the life of

[16] Vision Video Catalogue, p 8
[17] ibid., p 12

Jesus.[18] The discourses of presence conflate both text and story space and text and story time which effectively elides past and present for the viewer. Another example makes this effect more explicit: the *Turner Pictures* "collectible" series of mini-epics based on Old Testament stories are described as "breathtaking" and "epic". The video case for "Samson and Delilah" reads,

> Samson and Delilah is a stunning film based on the most provocative of all Biblical tales. Samson (Eric Thal) is a simple shepherd with the strength of a titan and the destiny to fight the Philistines and General Tarique (Dennis Hopper). Delilah (Elizabeth Hurley) is a Philistine beauty, torn between her love for the shepherd and loyalty to her people. As told in the Old Testament, Samson's betrayal by Delilah left him in slavery. But Samson's epic revenge vanquished his Philistine foes and made him one of the greatest heroes of the Bible. Samson and Delilah is the powerful tale of a deception that brought down an empire ... and sealed their names in eternity.

In this example, the hyperbole of promotional discourses and the excessiveness of narrative representations of history presume the transcendence of history and the transparency of the past. This produces a similar effect to the other advertising. But in this case, the conflation of time and space occurs through a collapse of the distance, a metaphorical space, between the story's original setting and its re-presentation as an epic tale of betrayal and valour.

The processes that make the conflation of text and story time possible are complex. My analysis of the promotional discourses in the Vision Video catalogue arises from a particular narratological conception of text and story time. Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan argues text time, the process of narration, as opposed to story time (the plot) possesses both linear and spatial dimensions. Thus,

> The narrative text as text has no other temporality than the one it metonymically derives from the process of reading. What discussions of text-

[18] This particular notion of presence expressed not only as the embodiment of the text (the Word made flesh, John 1:14) but also of the viewer's embodiment in the text, is essentially a theological one which is dealt with in a variety of ways in the videos themselves. See especially the Hanna-Barbera series.

> time actually refer to is the linear (spatial) disposition of linguistic segments in the continuum of the text.[19]

Edward Branigan similarly defines the spatial nature of films in terms of the graphic conventions of individual shots (focal depth, lighting, framing) and the conventions of editing.

> Narrative film rests on our ability to create a three-dimensional world out of a two-dimensional wash of light and sound. A bare facticity of graphics on the screen - size, color, angle, line, shape, etc. - must be transformed into an array of solid objects; and a texture of noise must be transformed into speech, music, and the sounds made by solid objects. Light and sound in narrative film are thus experienced in two ways: virtually unshaped *on* a screen as well as apparently *moving within,* reflecting and issuing from, a world that contains solid objects making sounds.[20]

The writers of the Vision Video catalogue treat that "two-dimensional wash of light and sound" as the "real thing" and thereby invite audiences to collude in the verification, through virtual experience, of the historical actuality of biblical narrative. The promotional statements about "bringing to life" function as metaphors for historical realism that key viewers to a predisposition to treat the narratives as history and to accept the films' historical representations unproblematically. Already, therefore, the advertising rhetoric's realist representation of time and space subverts the presumed intentions of "literal" translation to move the reader or viewer closer to the original, by assuming a transparent and unproblematic relationship to the original text. Instead, the advertising establishes a privileged spectatorial position for ideal viewers in the story space itself ("be there", "travel the dusty roads", etc.) that infers an omniscient point of view within the narrative.

The most common, but by no means the only, form of representation (whether live action or animation) is a reconstruction of the imagined historical, geographic and cultural contexts of biblical narrative. The flowing robes and head dresses function as powerful symbols of both the authenticity of televisual

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[19] (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983, p 44)
[20] (Branigan, 1996, p 33)

narratives and the historical veracity of the original stories. One may interpret this apparent intention to transport the viewer to the life and times of biblical characters as a translation strategy that emphasises the historicity of the source text. As a particular form of historicising, it reflects a certain mode of temporal consciousness and produces particular historical effects for the ideal viewer. Thus, the narrative representation of the original's temporality becomes highly significant.

The conventional use of historical representation to "bring stories to life" is essentially a genre question in so far as time and narrative relate to their emplotment and plots are described by their generic characteristics. In this case, I borrow a hermeneutic conception of emplotment from Paul Ricoeur who assigns it a mediating function between the world of action that prefigures its narration and the world of the audience that configures the narrative itself through its reception.[21] Ricoeur's characterisation of the mediating role of the plot evokes the important question of reference discussed in chapter three. In his discussion about narrativity and reference Ricoeur notes,

> ...making a narrative [*le faire narratif*] resignifies the world in its temporal dimension, to the extent that narrating, telling, reciting is to remake action following the poem's invitation... What is resignified by narrative is what was already presignified at the level of human acting.[22]

According to Ricoeur, the temporal nature of narrative referentiality is semantically encoded: "Being-in-the-world according to narrativity is a-being-in-the-world already marked by the linguistic [*langagière*] practice leading back to this preunderstanding."[23] Narrated time also, essentially, refers to its phenomenological status. At this level, all narrative, whether it takes the form of myth, history, or fiction, deals with the central philosophical problem of "how to comprehend

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[21] Ricoeur describes emplotment as a poetic (both historical and fictional) mode of combining "in variable proportions to temporal dimensions, one chronological and the other not. The former constitutes the episodic dimension of narrative. It characterises the story insofar as it is made up of events. The second is the configurational dimension properly speaking, thanks to which the plot transforms the events into a story. This configurational act consists of "grasping together" the detailed actions or what I have called the story's incidents. It draws from this manifold of events the unity of one temporal whole". (Ricoeur, 1983, p 66)

[22] (Ricoeur, 1983, p 81)

[23] ibid., p 81

ourselves in time."[24] The following descriptions, therefore, focus on the function of time and narrative as an imaginative space that mediates the relation between viewer and original text.

My first examples come from the series *The Greatest Adventures* produced by William Hanna and Joseph Barbera. (1986)[25] Like *The Story Keepers*, this series uses the device of a frame story starring two archaeologists and their friend Mowki, who are accidentally transported to another world where they discover the life and times of popular biblical characters. Unlike *The Story Keepers*, however, the Hanna-Barbera series makes no attempt formally to separate the frame from the biblical narrative. The three characters simply walk into the lives of biblical characters, who evince no great surprise at the sudden arrival of a pair of fair skinned aliens in modern safari suits, accompanied by a dark skinned curly headed lad with an accent that, with a bit of imagination, may be traced to the Indian sub-continent. The biblical characters carry on with their tasks, building an ark, killing a giant, delivering the Israelites from the Philistines. Placed rather blatantly as characters within the primary narrative, the intruders embody the subjective experience of viewers as *"us as them, then"*. The convention of characters turning up (sometimes in disguise) in a foreign land where they appear completely at home in the language and culture of the place is common in English fiction, particularly children's adventure stories and twentieth century spy fiction. The convention assumes the protagonists are able to see through cultural differences without an intermediary or translator while their imposture and improbable disguise remain undetected. The convention reflects both an imperialising gesture and a universalising tendency that refuses to acknowledge difference.

Each episode in the series opens with the title sequence that portrays an archaeological site somewhere in an Egypto-Biblo location. As the camera pans

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[24] (Sobchack, 1995). Sobchack's discussion about the phenomenology of historical narrative contributes to the core of my argument in this chapter about the function of historical representation in terms of 'literal' translation.

[25] The Greatest Adventure Stories from the Bible (1986) H-B Production Co., distributed by Turner Broadcasting System 1994.

over the stereotypical scene of an archaeological excavation, a sonorous male voice-over sets up the story: **(See clip 8)**

While surveying the site of some ancient ruins, two young archaeologists, Derek and Margot, and their nomad friend Mowki, find themselves trapped in a sinking whirling pool of sand.

Cut to a close up of the three characters disappearing into the sand. The Voice continues:

And when the dust settles ...

High angle of the three characters, looking up to the camera position, in a large chamber

... they stare in awe ...

cut to slow pan across Mesopotamian/Egyptian sculpture and other artefacts

... at a vast chamber filled with great riches and artefacts from another civilisation.

Zoom in on a door at the end of the chamber

And at the far end of the chamber a door with a strange inscription:

cut to close up of hieroglyphics on the door, Margot runs her hand over them

all who enter these portals pass through time.

Door slides open to reveal a blinding light out of which the series' title dissolves

This short sequence lasting no more than 30 seconds establishes the viewer's relation to the temporal and cultural differences of the biblical texts. The sequence transports viewers through the device of swirling sands and a door with a magical inscription into a very distant past of biblical history. The shift, therefore is both temporal and spatial. The cultural and temporal differences of the original text, as well as the timelessness of the stories claimed in promotional trailers at the head of the tape, are clearly marked in the opening scene. While the style of the tents and the archaeologist's pith helmet in the opening shot dates the frame story and connotes adventure and exploration of a particular kind, the site workers stereotyped as native Arabians by their traditional Arab dress and head gear

signifies the timelessness of ancient history. This representation is important because, while the clothing of modern Westerners is dated by cultural convention and fashion, the Arabian costume is not. At the same time, the opening scene filters the original text's alterity through the discourses of Western empire and exploration in the earlier part of the twentieth century. The biblical stories may have originated with an ancient civilisation, but as objects of archaeological exploration and ancient history they have been repossessed by contemporary Anglo/American culture by virtue of the recovery in the twentieth century of ancient biblical manuscripts. The shot of the archaeologist examining a manuscript with his magnifying glass is symbolic of the ancient text's inscrutability whose script must literally be decoded before it can be read. In the final shot of the title sequence, Margot erases the history of Christian tradition and translation through which the Bible has passed to the modern reader by cracking the code of the hieroglyphics. The door to the past magically opens for her. The sequence suppresses any idea that access to the meaning of the book requires interpretation in favour of a notion of direct engagement with the past. Thus, while the world of the text is presented as distant and exotic, it is not impenetrable. Margot, Derek and Mowki who are the story's key focalisers reinforce this notion in each episode. As noted earlier, the biblical characters apparently do not notice the cultural differences of these intruders in their story. Mowki, complete with his fake Indian accent, (but whose origin as a nomad is uncertain), points up the discourses of alterity through his frequently mystified response to story events and actions. Everything has to be explained to him. Mowki resolutely inhabits a modern world of comfortable beds and good breakfasts, even if this is merely wishful thinking during his adventures in biblical lands. Derek and Margot (particularly Margot), on the other hand, recognise many of the stories. The two function as a metaphor for discovery and are, if you like, merely unearthing the historical evidence of an established truth. For them, the meaning of the ancient stories is transparent. **(See clip 9)**

Another set of narrative events functions as important signifiers of an implicit theory of reception. This is realised through viewers' identification with Derek, Margot, and Mowki as contemporaries of their world, albeit a somewhat

archaic one of the earlier part of the twentieth century, and the threesome's agentive role within the biblical narrative. Margot, Derek and Mowki appear in the biblical scene not simply as passive onlookers or narratees of other characters' stories, they frequently play an active role in changing (or sometimes nearly changing) the course of the story. In "Noah", the three appear on the scene just in time to save Noah's wife from being crushed by a large rock, tipped down the hillside by a hostile neighbour. Later in the story, as the waters rise, Mowki plugs some leaks in the ark with his finger until one of Noah's sons is able to seal the hole. In "Samson and Delilah", Derek conceives a Bond-like plan to warn Samson of Delilah's imminent betrayal. He constructs a hang glider from the silk hangings in the temple and makes a daring escape sailing over the Philistines who have surrounded the temple. Unfortunately, he arrives at Delilah's house too late to save Samson. Delilah has already cut off Samson's hair and called the Philistines to capture him. In his weakened state, Samson is no longer able to resist his captors. The three characters' role in the story is symbolic of the role of the reader. They engage actively in the plot and, while the characters of the biblical story acknowledge their presence, they seem oblivious of the little alterations made to accommodate this intervention. This functions as an implicit recognition that the text acquires its meaning through the engagement of a reader in the narrative, thereby reinforcing the contemporary significance of these stories through a rather complex set of narrative operations. **(See clip 10)**

The integrity of the original text (as opposed to the larger frame of the video narrative) is contained in another set of story events. Towards the end of each episode, Derek, Margot, and Mowki simply leave and the biblical characters complete their own story. In "Noah" they sail away on a life raft made earlier by Mowki (in case the ark sank) while Noah and his family admire the rainbow set in the sky by God as a promise that He will never again destroy the world. In "Samson and Delilah" the three reappear at the temple to find out about Samson's fate after his capture by the Philistines. The episode ends when Samson's family reclaims his body for burial, but the three friends are absent from the scene of Samson's final triumph. Thus, the video adaptation of biblical narrative always

contains closure. Margot, Derek, and Mowki however never reappear in their story world of the archaeological site from which they vanished at the beginning of the story. With no closure in the frame narrative, viewers, like the young archaeologists, are trapped in the biblical narrative's story time, perpetually caught in limbo between the frame narrative and the biblical narrative and, like their surrogates, excluded from its end. The story thus reasserts its power over the reader. In summary, the metaphor of time travel signifies the biblical narrative's historicity in spatial rather than temporal terms. The agency of the three focalising characters within the frame as well as the biblical narrative effectively collapses any idea of temporal distance. Derek and Margot's familiarity with the stories masks the original text's opacity (which is an effect of that distance), while narrators in the biblical frame merely serve to fill in the gaps of their knowledge.

On first viewing, the series of Old Testament dramas, made for television as a Turner Pictures international co-production with Lube Productions (USA), Lux Vide (Germany) and Rai Uno (Italy) is a highly naturalistic historical reconstruction of the times and places of biblical narratives. The trailers included in the video tapes of *Moses* promote the dramas as a series of epics. A voice portentiously advertises other episodes in the series over clips from the films:

> In the time of Pharaohs and slaves, of Sodom and Gomorra, one man led his people on journey that would demand undeniable faith, untold courage, and the ultimate sacrifice. Abraham, played by Richard Harris, star of Unforgiven
>
> (cut to clip of Richard Harris as Abraham, "This is the Promised Land.")
>
> An extraordinary presentation of biblical epic for all times and all audiences. Abraham is an exciting and realistic portrait of a timeless story. Abraham is a story for all ages, the ultimate journey, the ultimate adventure. Abraham will prove as timeless as the story itself.

Similarly, *Jacob and Esau* is introduced as "The Bible's most famous love story ... a passionate love story with timeless appeal."

Promoted with splendid hyperbole, these epic films are presented as an apotheosis of history as narrative; History as Narrative; the Narrative from which all narratives take their inspiration. The excessive naturalism of the films' cinematic style and the realism of their narrative structure matches the extravagance of the promotional literature. The conventions that establish the Bible as Narrative and as History merit closer examination for the way they establish a continuity between past and present.

Although written and directed by different people, the films in this series exhibit a stylistic and thematic unity that is due to their adaptation of Epic and Western cinematic themes and iconography, more than similarities imposed by costume design and Moroccan film locations. The generic choice is hardly surprising given the conventionally established affinity of Epic and Western genres to the series' central thematic core of national and moral identity.[26] The films rework America's preoccupation with its own national and moral boundaries within the frame of an epic story about the establishment of a nation of Israel across several centuries. This is a far remove from the literal reconstruction of biblical history ostensibly offered by the films' cinematographic realism. The series reflects an identifiably American rather than biblical historical consciousness that relies on presenting certain forms of human struggle as universal through a selective and allegorical interpretation of the Old Testament narratives. To show how the generic themes and iconography of Epic and Western cinema create the series' particular historical perspective, I shall refer to two films: *Moses* (1996, dir. Roger Young, starring Ben Kingsley as Moses, Frank Langella, Christopher Lee and Anna Galena) and *Samson and Delilah* (1996, dir.: Nicolas Roeg, starring Eric Thal as Samson, and Elizabeth Hurley as Delilah).

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[26] (Buscombe, 1988; Elley, 1984; Koosed and Linafelt, 1996) on the references to Deuterocanonic laws about housebuilding in *Unforgiven*, (Pye, 1955) on narrative themes in *The Searchers* which are based on accounts in the book of Numbers of the forty years the Israelites spent wandering in the wilderness after their escape from Egypt.

The landscape is a central trope in the series as a whole. The wide open spaces, the stark juxtaposition of fertile, cultivated land and desert, the receding perspective of the filmic frame and deep focus cinematography offer far more than a mimetic representation of the geography of ancient biblical lands. They symbolise the conception of an Israelite national identity that has both historic and modern resonance. Consequently, the wilderness, represented as inhospitable and hostile territory in contrast to the land "flowing with milk and honey", is a central element of the narrative, the principal frame in which each of the stories unfolds. The antinomy of wilderness and promised land, through which the themes of national identity are worked out, ties the narratives explicitly into the discourses of the Western. In *Moses*, stereotypically Western shots of the Hebrew caravan winding through a barren landscape frame the dramatic confrontation between God's promise, (represented by panoramic shots of a fertile landscape shown always from the mountain top or in swooping aerial photography - see fig. i below) and the rebellious Hebrews. In this film, the wilderness represents exile, while the fertile land represents settlement and a moral and social order. **(See clip 11)**

(fig. i) The Promised Land at last.

In *Moses*, the promised land as frontier represents freedom as a national and cultural autonomy evoked in classic Western style. As Douglas Pye notes in his essay on biblical allusions in *The Searchers*,

> If the West was seen as a potential Eden, the garden of the world, it was also seen as the wilderness, the great American desert. The life of the frontier was both ennobling, because it was close to nature, and primitive, at the farthest remove from civilization.[27]

Samson and Delilah reworks the same theme through the antinomy of the garden and wilderness. But in this episode, the Israelites' moral ownership of the promised land and its defence is at stake. The Philistines, who ride out of the desert like marauding Indians in the early captivity Westerns swooping down on their defenceless victims, pose an external threat to the order and integrity of Israelite political identity. *Samson and Delilah* is about the moral right to ownership of the promised land conferred through the Israelite's status as chosen people. The film establishes the theme through an association of the Philistines with the desert/immorality/pantheistic barbarism and the Israelites with fertile land/political modernity/and monotheistic order and civilisation. **(See clip 12)**

The generic representation of landscape serves a particular cultural function as Edward Buscombe comments on the ideological significance of landscape in the Hollywood Western,

> In any society the representation of landscape involves the entire values of the culture, from its technology of representations to its psychology and politics. The American landscape as presented in the Western is no exception.[28]

The series' specific iconographic and narrative allusions to the Western's representation of American landscape point to its allegorical nature which displaces the parameters of Israelite identity onto a particular conception of American national identity bound up with conservative Protestant politics and morality. The history of American national and cultural identity is explored within the same exclusive limits of the classic Hollywood Westerns, exclusive that is of women,

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[27] (Pye, 1955, p 192).
[28] (Buscombe, 1988, p 167)

indigenous Indian populations, Irish immigrants and the descendants of African slaves. The themes of law and community reinforce this central organising concept of the frontier between wilderness and promised land and its discourses of identity that create significance for an American audience.

In the second part of *Moses* (90 minutes) the Israelites wander in the desert having crossed the Red Sea in which Pharaoh's army is destroyed. This part develops a narrative about law and community described as a central generic theme of Hollywood Westerns.[29] The Israelites wander for forty years until they have learned to be free, or to symbolically throw off their habitual dependence on an Egyptian order, imposed by their former slave masters, and internalise the stricter code of law given by God. This section spells out the liberal democratic ideology underpinning the film's theme of freedom. For example, in a scene where Jethro (Moses' father-in-law) pays a visit, the script adds some advice from Jethro to the original scene in Exodus. Jethro advises Moses to appoint other Israelite leaders to help him adjudicate people's disputes, and continues,

> Have you traded an Egyptian slave owner for a task master in the heavens? Laws are not sufficient in themselves. The people must learn how to follow the Law without Moses or any leader. They must learn to want to follow the Law without fear of any whip on their backs or their souls. To follow the Law because they are free not to. When they have learned that they will truly be free, until then they are still slaves.

The speech mirrors the tensions of the frontier thesis in Hollywood Westerns where civil society (represented by an urban, industrialised, institutionally ordered society of the American East coast) is opposed to the struggle for a utopian social order based on concepts of community and solidarity (made tangible by the threat to homestead and town of lawlessness represented by the wild west). *Moses*

[29] "The classic Western is less about escaping the constricting aspects of law and culture (i.e. The East), as is often supposed, than it is about establishing an even stricter code of law and conduct. The fact that the setting is the wide open, lawless western territories only serves to accent the necessity for strict enforcement." (Koosed and Linafelt, 1996)

reworks this confrontation in a number of important ways. In the second part of the film, the confrontation of order and anarchy is acted out as conflict between those who want to return to the relative comforts of Egypt and those who want to press on to the Promised Land. The confrontation is twice resolved by violent and fatal argument between the factions. Scenes of increasing domestic organisation portray the Israelites' gradual internalisation of a sense of social and moral order so that, eventually, their encampment resembles a small, neat town dominated by a church on the hill. Visual spaces, such as the one created by the tabernacle, an enclosure constructed out of poles and curtains, or the spaces between the Hebrews' tents characterise this sense of moral order. Images of the tents pitched on flat ground, in neat lines, with wide "streets" between them contrast earlier scenes of disorder where tents are pitched on rugged, stony ground. **(See clip 13)** The first reel of *Moses* sets up an expectation of social order based on the home and the family in a series of scenes that take their references directly from classic Western plot lines: a stranger appears in a lonely homestead; a romantic liaison develops between the stranger and one of the women in the homestead; the stranger defends the homestead from some external threat; he leaves again - alone. (fig ii.) *Moses* maintains the generic integrity of the stranger in Western narratives. Whereas in the biblical account Moses takes his wife, Zipporah, and two sons with him when he returns to Egypt, in the film he leaves Zipporah behind and has no children.

While the films draw on the Western for representations of landscape and metaphorical tropes of frontier, the central character's depiction in each of these films is closer to an epic hero than the Westerner. There is a remarkable consistency in the central characters' representation in both *Moses* and *Samson and Delilah.* Perversely, Moses' and Samson's reluctance to fulfil their heroic role establishes them as tragic epic heroes. Moses and Samson are heroes in the sense described by Derek Elley in *The Epic Film,*[30]

[30] (Elley, 1984)

(fig. ii) Moses and Zipporah exchange looks

> The literary epic generally turns on the exploits of a single central character, surrounded by a broad substratum of secondary characters who react upon him morally. This focus, this pyramidal structure gives epic much of its power - the characters are supra- (sometimes super-) human, waging an allegorical struggle on their own plane.[31]

Moses' character distils the quest for a national identity based on the occupation of a defined geographical space (the promised land) and a moral integrity based on the freedom to obey the Law. His journey from Pharaoh's court, where he is the ridiculed and stammering adopted child of Pharaoh's daughter, his gradual politicisation as a Hebrew, and his eventual assumption of moral leadership function as an allegory for the Hebrews' emancipation as the nation of Israel.

Derek Elley argues, in his introduction to the Epic film, that "the historical epic film has been dominated by the message of personal and political freedom, more often than not expressed as the form of Christianity (or Zionism) triumphant - often, one feels, by special prerogative rather than any vote of confidence or

[31] (Elley, 1984, p 16)

popularity."[32] In that case, Moses' characterisation as epic hero gives a particular inflection to the discourses of national and religious identity that support the unity and timelessness reflected in the film's realist representation of history. The series' historical imagination makes the temporal and cultural specificity of the source text redundant. The importance of the Turner series' universalising narrative conventions lies in its imaginative representation of Old Testament history to fabricate an American subjective identity. The epic heroes in this series are modelled on an American romantic tradition of historical fiction that blurs fiction and history and attempts to make American history coincide with biblical history.[33] This enables an exploration of American political and moral identities that are bound up with the mythical invention, through the literature and film of the past two and a half centuries, of America as the Promised Land.[34] An allegorical reading of the *Turner Pictures* epics endorses the argument that as translation the series rewrites biblical narrative to suit the political, ideological, or cultural needs of its viewers. It also demonstrates one of the principal arguments of modern historiography that history tells us more about the writer's understanding of the past than the past itself, that the world a writer reflects is the one she knows.[35] The significance of the Turner series is marginal to the literary and cultural worlds in which the biblical stories originally circulated. The series' significance lies in its appropriation of the Bible stories and their translation into the contemporary contexts of American television as part of the ongoing mythologising of America as the Promised Land.

Apparently, therefore, the configuration of time in its emplotment does not sustain the literalism of historical representation in the films' *mis-en-scène*. The series' realism effectively obscures cultural and temporal differences through its generic representation of historical narrative as transcendent inspite of its presumed

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[32] (Elley, 1984, p 6)

[33] E. M. Budick, *Fiction and Historical Consciousness the American Romance Tradition*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993) for a discussion of this tradition. Also (Babington, 1993 and Wyke, 1997)

[34] E. M. Budick, *Fiction and Historical Consciousness the American Romance Tradition*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993 See also J.P. McWilliams, Jr., *The American Epic: Transforming a Genre, 1770-1860.* (Ed., Standford University Albert Gelpi, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) on the American Epic.

[35] See T.L. Thompson, *The Bible in History: How Writers Create a Past*, (London: Pimlico, 2000) for a discussion about modern historiography and biblical history and (Wyke, 1997)

aim to establish events and people as historical actuality and move viewers closer to that world. It is significant that the film makers have appropriated as translation models the generic forms in American cinema most closely associated with historical actuality, for the history thus represented lends moral credence to a particular vision of the founding of America. This approach repeats Prickett's paradox of a literalist translation strategy that, for all its attention to the historicity of the source text, results in seeing through the text revealing nothing behind, for the films reveal nothing of ancient biblical culture and peoples in the surface details of costume, landscape and architecture.

Remaining for the moment with the duality of archaic or modern translation strategies, some productions arguably adopt a modernising approach in the sense outlined by Prickett. These translations are more temporally reflexive in their representation of the Bible's historicity because they focus on the historical continuity of the text whose reception has manifestly changed over time. The *Story Keepers*, discussed in the previous chapter, is one example. The frame story makes clear the text acquires coherence and significance only in the retelling of biblical narrative and its contextual application by the hearer. Unlike the Hanna-Barbera series, which also constructs an historical perspective for the biblical material, the characters in the *Story Keepers'* frame narrative are not magically transported to the text time of the original stories, the stories themselves maintain a sense of continuity through their repetition. The frame makes the story world familiar through its caricature of Roman and Christian history, modelled on viewers' own cultural repertoires of television and comic book cartoons, Moreover, where Ben's conspiratorial wink includes viewers in the make-believe of the frame narrative and its inter-textuality, the Hanna-Barbera series, on the other hand, presents a story world made alien by its orientalist representations of Mowki, of antiquity, and its setting in an archaeological excavation. The American Bible Society *newmediabible* series discussed in chapter seven presents another case of modernisation. This series adapts and applies Nida's model of functional equivalence. Taken together with the ancillary essays about the history of the Bible in art, music, and translation, the adaptation of music video genres for the audio-visual element of

translation encourages a hermeneutic interpretation of the stories and signals the translator's task as both hermeneutic and exegetical. Both the *Story Keepers* and the *newmediabible* draw attention to the indeterminacy of the original text, not so much in their presentation of biblical narratives, but in their framing of these translations as part of the history of interpretation within the life of the Christian church. The *Story Keepers* indicates the biblical world's cultural alterity in genre shifts between the frame and the Bible story and in the (critically controversial) representation of Jesus as Semitic. The American Bible Society *newmediabible* treats the Bible as an object in history through both its idiomatic translation strategy and accompanying essays about the cultural and historical contexts of the original's representation.

The various strategies used to bridge temporal and cultural gaps between the original text and its contemporary interpretations draw attention to the Bible's antiquity in different ways. On an ideological level, it is relevant to distinguish between those that treat the Bible (literally) as history and those that depend on literary readings of one form or another. The former case claims an ultimate reference to empirical reality, however it restructures reality narratively as history or myth. Arguably, this translation approach treats the Bible as an object of history whose meaning is fixed but nonetheless significant for contemporary audiences because of its universal or transcendent nature. The approach uses corresponding representational forms to signify the historical reality of events portrayed but nevertheless contracts the temporal and spatial distance of the ancient biblical narratives. However, the question, as postmodern historiography argues, is not *what* is the objective reality of events signified in historical narratives, but *how* they are represented. (Jenkins, 1997; Ricoeur, 1983; Sobchack, 1996; Thompson, 1999; White, 1987)[36] Roland Barthes argues the "what" and "how" of historical discourse occupy two different levels of signification. The former relates indexically to the

[36] Sobchack makes this distinction as a central part of her argument about the historicity of Hollywood Epics. She notes: "In that it engages human beings of a certain culture at a certain time with the temporally reflexive and transcendent notion that is History, the Hollywood historical epic is as "real" and significant as any other mode of historical interpretation that human beings symbolically constitute to makes sense of human - and social - existence that temporally extends beyond the life and times of any single person... However, both kinds of historicizing are cultural productions of a certain mode of temporal consciousness, and both produce their history effects for model readers and spectators through formal and narratological devices that are conventional." (Sobchack, 1995, pp 282-284)

empirical data of history while the latter he describes as the form of the signifier aimed at "filling out" the meaning of History, the essence of historio-graphy - the writing up and explanatory discourses of history.[37] The signifying function of the second level of historical discourse is to create a "reality effect" which covers up the "imaginary elaboration" of events in order to lay claim to an objective authority. In semiological terms, the illusory claim of historical discourse to a direct relation between historical events and their narration takes place through a conflation of the referent of historical discourse with its signified and the separation of the signified from its signifier.[38] The reality effect of historical discourses in these videos comes from the production of a neutral time which relies on and is coterminous with a conventionally neutral representation of space achieved through the single point perspective and deep focus of realist cinematography.[39] In other words, the formal conventions of historical representation are calculated to mask its nature as the cultural production of a certain mode of temporal consciousness. Thus narrative structure as a signifying practice is made transparent allowing the reader or viewer to "see through" the text.

There is one more point to make about the referential nature of video translations and their mediation between the temporal representation of biblical narrative and its contemporary interpretation. Paul Ricoeur presents the hypothesis in *Time and Narrative* "that between the activity of narrating a story and the temporal character of human experience there exists a correlation that is not merely accidental but that presents a transcultural form of necessity"[40] His argument is relevant for an examination of the nature of narrative representation as a

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[37] (Barthes, 1967)

[38] "Historical discourse takes for granted, so to speak, a double operation which is very crafty. At one point ... the referent is detached from the discourse, becomes external to it, its founding and governing principle... But at a second point, it is the signified itself which is forced out and becomes confused with the referent; the referent enters into a direct relation with the signifier, and the discourse, solely charged with *expressing* the real, believes itself authorized to dispense with the fundamental term in imaginary structures, which is the signified... In other words, in "objective" history, the "real" is never more than an unformulated signified, sheltering behind the apparently all-powerful referent" (Barthes, 1967, pp 121-122)

[39] "In other words, the historical convention of temporality asserts a fundamental and powerful idea: that the neutral medium of experience, which extends to infinity and opens to an individual mind a vast power of generalization, literally is constructed by, is a product of, consensus, that is, the formal agreement among viewpoints that produces "space" and "time." (Ermath, 1992)

[40] (Ricoeur, 1983, p 52)

bridge to the temporal and cultural distance of biblical narrative. To demonstrate the relationship between time and narration, Ricoeur makes a logical distinction between three levels of narration that he calls $mimesis_{1,2\&3}$. $Mimesis_1$ constitutes the narrative pre-text which is already "grounded in a pre-understanding of the world of action, its meaningful structure, its symbolic resources, its temporal character," a world already made meaningful through the "cultural processes that articulate experience" including the symbolic shaping of human time as a succession of events.[41] He describes $mimesis_2$ as the activity of story telling, or the organisation of events and actions in the narrative pre-text into an intelligible whole through the process of emplotment in which the pre-figured time of the world outside the narrative is restructured through the configurational act of emplotment. $Mimesis_3$ marks the intersection of the world of the text and the world of the hearer or reader in which narrative time is refigured by the processes of reception.

> What a reader receives is not just the sense of the work, but, through its sense, its reference, that is, the experience it brings to language and, in the last analysis, the world and the temporality it unfolds in the face of this experience.[42]

An analogy of Ricoeur's three levels of narration with translation identifies the source text as the narrative pre-text (which for the sake of the present argument, is a concept, at least, of a Hebrew or Greek original) and the translation as the activity of story telling. The same process of configuring and refiguring narrative time occurs in historical reconstructions of biblical narrative where the source text is the pre-text that has already acquired narrative coherence following the compositional norms and conventions of its time. Translation configures biblical time following the narrative conventions of the chosen genre which, in turn, is refigured through viewers' subjective experience of biblical time from the perspective of their present act of viewing.

The importance of an understanding of the temporal reflexivity of translation lies in its ability to account for the effect for the reader or viewer of different

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[41] (Ricoeur, 1983, pp 54-57)
[42] ibid., p 78

translational approaches. It emphasises the cultural and historical relativism of translation as an interpretive process. The paradox of the strategies observed in the translations analysed here lies in the tendency of presumably archaising approaches, represented by the Turner films, to obscure cultural difference and collapse temporal distance, while so-called modernising strategies such as that of the *Story Keepers*, apparently retains a greater degree of temporal reflexivity. Arguably, the *Testament* series analysed in the next chapter, succeeds in creating an "aura of strangeness" in spite of its idiomatic use of animation. Faced with this, the terms of the archaising/modernising debate seem rather outworn and oddly irrelevant. The closer one looks at the effects of these strategies through their historical imagination, the more the dichotomies seem to dissolve. Perhaps, as Stephen Prickett suggests, the differences are more aptly associated with how closely the translator has read the source text. Indeed, to render the sense of the original in the way that *Testament*'s creators have done calls for a very close reading in literary terms, whereas the creators of the Turner series appear simply to have used the plots of Old Testament stories to rework contemporary American themes that are already a reworking of biblical themes.[43] The more significant question is what sense does a particular translation strategy create of the temporal and cultural alterity of an original text and how, within the temporal fields opened up by this strategy, do readers/viewers symbolically make sense of their social experience as historical subjects of a certain time and place. An analysis of a translation's historical imagination requires fresh consideration of translation strategies from the point of view of their referential function. This involves an examination of the processes whereby translation gives contemporary coherence and significance to biblical narrative while, at the same time, it facilitates a critique of the cultural function of individual translations. I will explore this suggestion in the following chapter through a consideration of how the symbolic and cultural value of individual translations are framed by the specificity of their production contexts.

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[43] (Budick, 1989)

CHAPTER SIX

Undermining Readerly Realities

The Bible is above all a *translated* book. It exists not merely as a text translated into over a thousand languages, nor as a palimpsest of ancient oral and literary traditions, or even as a diversity of literary styles borrowed from Mesopotamian, Egyptian or Greek civilisations.[1] It is impossible to think of the Bible as a text in the unitary sense inferred by source and target text oppositions; it exists solely as an intertext. The biblical text, as its modern readers know it, is an accretion of writings from different sources skilfully woven together, overlaid by a rich interpretive history. The Bible has for centuries inspired a Christian art tradition in painting, literature and music. Its popularisation through mystery plays, Sunday School, cinema, cartoon illustration and animation is equally significant. The modern Bible is also much more than a palimpsest or intertext. It is a text in the sense Mieke Bal defines Rembrandt as a text. (Bal, 1991) The modern Christian Bible represents the imaginative and creative work of a number of authors defined by Christian canon as a single unity that has inserted itself into the cultural discourses and visual and literary practices of Christian civilisation. In this respect, the Bible is arguably definitive of modern notions of text and textuality.[2] By the same token, once typologies are stripped away from definitions of translation, the Bible represents the very essence of translating, both in the specific sense, given by its Latin root of the verb *traductio,* translating texts from one language to another, and in its more general sense, given by the Latin root *translatio,* referring to various forms of cultural or political transfer. Perhaps the claims made by Nida that Bible translation covers all possible forms of translation are not so extravagant, particularly considering the Bible's influence on Western Romantic canons of

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[1] (Crossan, 1991; Romer, 1988)

[2] Stephen Prickett goes so far as to call the Bible a "monument to intertextuality" and further that "Christianity was born of critical debate about the meaning of texts." (Jasper and Prickett, 1999, p 13)

literature. (Jasper, 1993; Jasper and Prickett, 1999; Prickett, 1986) Nowhere is this broader understanding of translation and textuality more evident than in the animated version of Old Testament stories created by S4C in co-production with BBC 2, Christmas Films in Moscow, and Cartwn Cymru in Wales. (1995-1996)

Although producers conceived the series as an animated *version* of Old Testament stories and make no pretensions to translate, examined as translation *Testament* poses some interesting questions about the way translation theorists think about source/target text relations.[3] The central problematic in this pairing of texts is the question of the grounds on which comparisons, judgements of value, are made. Theo Hermans' anecdote about the debate over equivalence sparked off by criticisms of Thomas Mann's translator, Helen Lowe-Porter, encapsulates the scope of theoretical and methodological difficulties of comparison. (Hermans, 1999) Canons of accuracy developed according to a conception of the structural or formal equivalence between languages require an absolute value (irreducible meaning) to judge levels of difference or similarity. Mathematics postulates the power of 0 as absolute. In philosophy it is the power of negation. In the eighteenth century, accurate navigation was thought to depend on an absolute value to measure the variables of distance and speed. Harrison's clock provided the mechanism for calculating a spatial absolute essential to navigation - longitude. In the humanities and philosophy, an absolute that provides the means for judgements of value such as truth, beauty, or meaning has proved elusive. In modern translation theory, "equivalence" is a metaphor for an arbitrary and absolute standard. Equivalence has been described variously as an invariant core, a structural relation, a hypothetical comparative term or "Adequate Translation".[4] Hermans doubts the validity of a hypothetical comparative value and descriptive neutrality due to the asymmetry of languages and the inescapably ideological nature of translation processes. But abandoning universal concepts in translation, which privilege the intrinsic value of a source text, in favour of how a translation "appears to be, how it presents itself to us"[5] does not necessarily solve the problem of value, it merely shifts it to something

[3] See (Jasper, 1993) for a selection of essays about translating biblical texts into literature and painting.
[4] (Hermans, 1999)
[5] ibid., p 6

else. The new standard for judgements of value is the notion of a translation "context" initiated by, in one case among others, the concept of "norms". In this instance, judgements of value are based on the rules of the "literary system" (Even-Zohar, 1997), the norms of the target culture (Toury, 1995), or the translator's *habitus* (Sheffy, 1997; Tymoczko, 1999). This perspective shifts the weight of comparison to the target text, and target text contexts. Unlike time, however, context is not an abstract absolute. It consists of networks of shifting social and cultural relations and a complex matrix of texts, producers, consumers and institutions that supports the work of translation. Analysis of a translation's value depends on the perspective (a spatial not a temporal construct) of its interpreter. Context, and its many synonyms, only seems a stable standard when considered symbolic in Peircean terms. The stabilising influence of context depends on a habit or general agreement not on its intrinsic nature. Contextual analysis, on its own, is in fact an extreme relativist stance that jettisons the baby with the bath water by getting rid of any concept of value at all, or introducing it covertly through the back door. As my analysis of Niranjana's translation demonstrated, however, understanding translation as the power of reference (or its semiotic value in Avni's terms) creates the possibility to analyse a translation's context while keeping the original in view. It retains the notion of a source text as referent while attempting to identify new value created in the process of interpretation and translation. I will apply this sense in my analysis of source/target text relations in *Testament*.

Testament demands that source/target text relations be defined by the very nature of the series' textuality and the social and cultural contexts that give it form and significance. It underscores the palimpsestic nature of biblical writing both in its original versions and in translation. *Testament's* treatment of the story of Elijah is a case in point. The producers present "Elijah" as "the story of one man pitted against a kingdom that has betrayed God. Elijah is a man of towering courage, a lonely, awesome character who arranges a spectacular contest between God and the false prophets of Baal." The miracles and prophecies of Elijah the prophet are recorded in the book of Kings, woven into a genealogy of the Kings of Israel and a chronicle of their misdeeds. *Testament*, like many other popular treatments of the

story of Elijah, abstracts the significant events in which Elijah plays a part and restructures them to give the story a modern sense of narrative coherence in which Elijah becomes the hero. Abstracted from the generic particularities of the biblical frame, "Elijah" takes on the character and universality of myth. The story is, to quote the promotional description of the series, "Miraculous and astounding, tragic and amusing, epic and heart-warming." There is nothing particularly remarkable about this treatment. In fact, if asked, any one typically introduced to the story through Sunday School or children's' Bible stories would probably consider the *Testament* version a fairly accurate rendering of the story so far as its plot is concerned. This version is significant for the way it reframes the biblical text and what this reveals about the Bible's cultural value in the context of British television production.

The animation in "Elijah" blends popular culture and high art in a superb opening scene where God sends Elijah to warn king Ahab about the dire consequences of his betrayal of the God of Israel. As Elijah interrupts festivities at Ahab's court, the music swells and Elijah bursts into song, delivering his message of doom in Bryn Terfel's rich baritone voice. The music is Mendlesson's *Elijah.* The effect is as dramatic as Elijah's entry to Ahab's court. Elijah's performance rivals that of any contemporary opera star. The animation drawing of Elijah, however, bears all the hallmarks of superman cartoons. He has broad shoulders and a perfect set of pectoral muscles. He wears the ubiquitous superman cloak, in this case a leopard spotted one, that emphasises his physique. Like superman's cape, Elijah's cloak confers magical powers on him, such as the ability to part the waters of the River Jordan. The juxtaposition of high and popular art in the series' representation of Elijah accentuates his awesomeness. By contrast, Ahab's queen, Jezebel who masterminded the destruction of Israel's prophets, presents the perfect antinomy to Elijah. The animated version restructures the narrative sequence of the story of Elijah to make Jezebel a wicked witch of modern fairy tales and personalise King Ahab's disobedience as an enmity and bitter struggle between Elijah and Jezebel. The story caricatures Jezebel as the power hungry temptress of Western narrative tradition. In *Testament*, Jezebel possesses all the allure of Hedy Lamarr's Delilah in

Cecil B. De Mille's *Samson and Delilah* (1949) - a graceful figure, flowing black hair, full pouting red lips, big flashing eyes - and all the wickedness of the snow queen in the BBC adaptation of C.S. Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. (See fig. i.)

(fig. i) Jezebel in "Elijah"

Mendlesson's oratorio lends a tone of high seriousness to the animation, which may otherwise have produced an infantilisation of the Old Testament text. This approach is characteristic of the series as a whole. By drawing on what the production describes as 'great works of religious art" for its principal aesthetic references, the production dignifies the series with a conception of the Old Testament as a classic literary text. **(See clip 14)**

Most of the episodes have compressed a rather longer narrative into a half-hour animation and restructured the biblical original to give it modern narrative coherence. There are some particularly interesting forms of restructuring. For example, the story of the Flood frames the Creation story recounted by Noah. This double story telling device weaves in a theological theme, while the stories' visual

treatment retains a sense of their mythical and fantastic nature. The story of Moses begins with his flight from Egypt after he murders an Egyptian. Moses' miraculous escape in a reed basket as an infant and his childhood with his adoptive mother, Pharaoh's daughter, are recounted in flash-back by Moses. While, obviously, any popular version would be incomplete without the story of Moses in the bullrushes, *Testament's* treatment effectively makes Moses' origins almost incidental and gives God a much stronger sense of character, thereby reinforcing one of the central themes of Old Testament writing, the foundation of an Israelite nation and its developing relationship with a unique and jealous God. Each episode has a unique approach to telling its story. "Ruth" is a classic fairy tale in which the princess, who is good, and kind, and obedient, gets her prince charming and lives happily ever after. "Jonah", unremittingly cantankerous to the last scene when he grudgingly accepts God's point of view, is an archetypal Scrooge. "Daniel", a story of exile framed and narrated by a modern refugee woman and her child, adopts the vivid and exuberant colours of Chagal's painting but the same darkness of his reworking of the biblical themes of holocaust and exile.

The *Testament* production team's translation strategy positions the series within a literary-critical tradition that identifies the language of the Bible with the source of literary and poetic expression. In this respect, one may compare the series with other television productions such as *The Gospels*, (1993) a Drama House-BBC production which re-enacts the life of Christ in a minimalist film space, defined only by lighting, and a single chair for a prop. The paired-down set, the minimalism of gesture and lighting, and the actors' delivery focus on the literary qualities of the King James version which the production used as a script. The connections between the Bible and literature are even more explicit in *Words from Jerusalem* (1994), another Drama House-BBC co-production, read by Sir John Gielgud. The production intercuts an account of the Easter Story taken from the Gospels with poems by contemporary poets. *Testament* may also be contrasted with another popular animated series for children, *The Story Keepers*. However, the two series display distinct differences in their interpretive approach. Both series make equal claims to a close reading of the text and an interpretive integrity. Whereas

Testament's inter-textuality marks its reading of the biblical texts as primarily literary (although essentially Christian in its interpretive stance), the historical-critical stance in *The Story Keepers* reveals a greater interest in the function of the stories in the life of the Christian church.[6] These two readerly approaches produce different interpretive effects. The makers historical-critical method in *The Story Keepers'* emphasises the original social and cultural contexts of the stories. The literary-critical methods of *Testament's* writers translates the history of interpretation in Western art, literature, and music into the animation. There are many subtle touches to support this characterisation of *Testament*. Shakespeare is one obvious model for some episodes' dramatic structure as well as their poetic prose style and characterisation of some minor characters. For example, the exchange between the prison guard and the prisoner locked away more than half his life in Joseph's story provides Shakespearean comic relief and irony. Abraham's script is written in a strongly rhythmic style that displays a taste for poetic imagery, as the following extract shows.

Sarah We are blown like rattling leaves from desert to desert.

Abraham Must risk all that we love
to find greater a sanctity in God's love.
Sarah, he promised us a son.

Sarah You know I could never bear a child
and you and your God taunt me with it.

Abraham He has promised.

Sarah He speaks to you of your descendants.
My slave, Hagar
is young and she is kind.
Perhaps she will make you a father

Abraham No Sarah. I am yours.
You are the one I love.

Translating for the sense of the biblical text to conform to the constraints of television schedules has provided a practical alternative to translating word for word.

[6] Both approaches assume a close reading of the text in contradistinction, say, to the *Visual Bible* translation or the *Turner Pictures* Old Testament stories.

Despite the innovative use of puppet and cell animation and extensive rewriting, this strategy is apparently successful . Although, in itself, this is a relative judgement motivated by the quality of animation, the clever intertextuality of the writing, and the treatment of each story within canons of English literary composition and popular writing. The very idea of translating for the sense implies a consensus on the meaning of biblical narrative, a consensus not necessarily assumed by *Testament's* writers. In fact, a comparison of the narrative structure and content of each episode with the Christian Bible reveals radical omissions, a reworking of biblical content, and a tendency towards Romantic forms of characterisation. Yet the producers claim the same textual integrity reserved for their animation of Shakespeare's plays and operatic works, two series that preceded *Testament.* One of the principles of integrity in this instance is the "painstaking research" that went into pre-production. Both the visual images and the interpretation of biblical narrative show evidence of extensive research. At the outset, therefore, the notion of integrity implies a close reading of the original texts, in this case, the modern palimpsest credited with the title "Old Testament". Given this evident respect for the biblical texts and their interpretive history in literature, art and music, one cannot take lightly any claim to integrity by simply comparing the series to its presumed source text, the King James Version. An evaluation of the series' integrity in terms of how true the writers and animators are to the biblical text, if indeed that is what they mean by their claim, needs to start with an attempt to understand their concept of biblical text.

The production's apparent strategy of translating for the sense provides clues to concept of text used. Scripting, animation, visual imagery, and music contribute in equal measure to the series' interpretation of the narratives and their representational history. While an equivalent of "word for word" translation, such as that used in the *Visual Bible,* may indicate a desire to convey the internal integrity of each story in the series, reference to other works that have been inspired by these narratives clearly demonstrates a broader historical understanding of the sense of the text. In the first instance, the writers and animators have treated the Bible as an open text. A close analysis of "Abraham" demonstrates how this sense of openness

is achieved. The *Testament* version recounts the story of Abraham's migration from Haran to the hills in Caanan where he settles and raises his longed-for son Isaac. (Genesis chapters 12-22) The series' publicity bills the story as an epic journey to the Promised Land. This familiar biblical image of a quest is sketched only briefly with a few wide shots (many of them from a bird's eye view) of the family and their flocks travelling through a bleak and windy landscape. In the biblical account this journey takes up a mere two verses. (Genesis 12:5-6) With the exception of a journey to Egypt to escape a severe drought, that is not included in *Testament,* (end of Genesis 12) Abraham's nomadic wandering is set in a relatively small area around Hebron to the east of the salt sea. Abraham is already settled in the "Promised Land" for most of the story. According to the biblical account, he seems to have got along pretty well with his neighbours, making treaties with neighbouring kings to establish a presence and to enrich his family. The central drama of the story as told by *Testament,* is not the journey, but the foundation of an Israelite nation and its distinctive relationship with a single God. The focus of this drama is Abraham's lack of an heir and his faith in God to provide one. The story's moment of high tension is God's demand that Abraham sacrifice his only son, and its catharsis Isaac's last minute reprieve. In *Testament*, unlike the *Turner Pictures* version of "Abraham", the quest for a Promised Land is ignored, it figures neither as a metaphor nor a trope. The central core of the narrative revolves around God's promise to secure Abraham's future through a male heir and Sarah's attempt to intervene in that prophesy by offering her slave Hagar as a surrogate mother. The sub-plot of Lot's escape from Sodom adds local colour, it is a short interlude in the main narrative included perhaps to reinforce the theme that God keeps his promises to righteous people who remain faithful. The *Testament* version of this story ends when Lot's wife turns into a pillar of salt. This closure emphasises the mythical quality of the series giving the interlude the sense of a legend attached to a certain rock formation that looks like a woman looking back into the valley where the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah had stood.

If the preferred strategy in the series is to translate for the sense of the text, the omissions in *Testament's* version of "Abraham" are significant for what they

illuminate in the original text. Deviations from the original story reveal much about the translator's critical attitudes, her value judgements and, as a consequence, the text she has translated.[7] Treating the translator's work as a form of text criticism supports a recognition of translation as the power of reference in a more fundamental way because it places an emphasis on the original's value and its reception in the target culture. In the context of a growing interest in translation as cultural criticism (particularly in feminist and postcolonial studies) this approach displaces questions about a writer's or film-maker's translation strategy, or the categories into which the work fits, and evaluations of equivalence through source/target text comparisons. Comparative methodologies that aim to evaluate the adequacy or acceptability of a translation and the normative vocabularies associated with them, even at their most empirical and descriptive, focus on a translation's function in the target culture. Paradoxically, these critical and descriptive methodologies make the source or original text disappear from view, they share the same ground as a functional conception of translation and its repertoires of passive instrumentality.

In the case of Bible translation, a great deal hangs on whether the text is interpreted as historical actuality or founding myth. John Romer notes in his book on the Bible and history, written to accompany a television series made for Channel 4 (1988), that the question of historical truth or accuracy is difficult to establish on the evidence of archaeology and written records of the ancient civilisations of the Bible.[8] He argues, for example, that the plausibility of the Abraham story lies in its function as a founding myth of the nation of Israel and its uniquely monotheistic identity. While no corroboration exists in other ancient records that Abraham, or other Hebrew Patriarchs such as Jacob, Joseph, or Moses, actually existed as historical figures, there is plenty of archaeological evidence to support the credibility of the biblical narratives and their literary function. As Romer notes, to believe that

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[7] The idea of deviation as textual criticism is taken from Leo Steinberg in (Mitchell, 1980). It is also the method adopted by Niranjana's translation described in chapter three and the principal translation method adopted by the American Bible Society in their *newmediabible* translations.

[8] (Romer, 1988). See also (Bloom and Rosenberg, 1991). Thompson (1999) puts the same case in a more scholarly style. He focuses on the historical foundations for post-exilic literature in the Bible, or the restoration of chosen people to their land of origin.

concordances of the biblical stories in other Egyptian and Mesopotamian myths and records:

> serve to cast doubt upon the authenticity of the Book of Genesis is to misinterpret its true purposes. When the Old Testament decorates itself in the details of local colour ... they are always put at the service of an overriding theme: the slow-developing relationship of Israel and Jehovah and this is an unfolding revelation; the definition of a god ... Appropriately [the stories of the Book of Genesis] use some of civilisation's oldest stories.[9]

Testament's treatment of the story of Abraham apparently supports this reading in its omission of narrative details that would give the viewer a sense of the story's historicity. The episode pares away any sub-plot not immediately relevant to its main theme. Abraham's journey to Egypt, the wars between tribes in the surrounding area, Abraham's rescue of Lot following his kidnap by the kings of Elam, Goiim, Babylonia, and Ellassar, and Abraham's acquisition of wealth through his treaties with neighbouring kings have all been dropped. The land which Abraham occupies with his family is a barren lunar landscape empty of other inhabitants. *Testament* focuses Abraham as a man of faith and obedience and his relationship with his God. References that place him in a specific time and location, and tempt viewers to expect a historical authenticity are eliminated. They are replaced by the recurring motif of an hour glass, half buried in the desert sands, to remind viewers that time in the episode is an approximate rather than absolute idea represented by clocks. In many respects, this visual play with a motif of tense parallels that of Niranjana's interesting use of tense in her translation of the *Sunyasampadane*.[10] The visual effect serves to reinforce the fantastic nature of the narrative and produce a sense of awe.

Some significant rewriting reinforces the effect of omissions. For example, *Testament* adds an exchange between Sarah and Abraham's supernatural visitors when when they chide Sarah for laughing at their promise she will have a son, (Genesis 19:9-15) Sarah denies she scoffed at the promise.

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[9] (Romer, 1988, p 53)
[10] (Niranjana, 1992) See chapter three for a discussion.

Sarah What laughter?

Visitor Sarah, I hear beyond silence to the meaning of silence
Listen, time is mine to speed or slacken
You shall have the son I promised.
You shall call him Isaac.
I shall bless you through him.

Sarah Abraham. You could always believe.
Now my belief is sure.

Similarly, after the angel restrains Abraham from murdering Isaac a voice announces:

God Hold, Abraham.
The boy is not demanded.
Only the faith that would give him up.
Take him and walk into the sunlight of your God.

Voice From Adam to Abraham
the Lord God has been patient, waiting.
Now God waits for you Isaac
and your brother Ishmael.

This treatment of Abraham's story with its particular omissions and rewriting suggests the writers may have relied on J as one of their principal sources.[11] With one exception, the binding of Isaac which scholarly opinion attributes to E. Comparison of *Testament's* treatment of the story with Harold Bloom's commentary suggests an attempt to be "true" to the Yahwist writer as depicted by Bloom. Bloom argues that J's version of Isaac's sacrifices has been completely obliterated by later redactors. His commentary on this story is an attempt to recover what would have been J's narration from what exists as the canonical Old Testament text. In the animated version, the binding immediately follows a happy

[11] Scholars attribute the first five books of the Christian Old Testament to a number of writers and editors J, E, P, and R who worked on the texts with different ideological intent. The approximate chronology starts with the J texts in 950-900 BCE (J stands for Jahwist, because the author always uses YHVH "the Lord" for God). E or Elohist is a revision of J made in approximately 850-800 BCE. E uses the name *Elohim* for God. P, the Priestly writer, approximately 550-500 BCE worked on older sources and added some of his own. R is an editor who performed a final revision of the texts c. 400 BCE. (Bloom, 1991)

little scene with Isaac and his parents. Here is a transcript of the scene: **(See clip 15)**

God Abraham. Abraham.

Abraham I am here Lord

God Your son Isaac
You longed for and loved.
Take him and sacrifice him to me.
A burnt offering.

Abraham No! Not Isaac! No!

God A burnt offering.

Abraham Lay down my son in flames?

God Abraham. Surrender him.

Abraham You trample, you tear me Lord.
Take anything.

God Abraham. Surrender.

Abraham Endless darkness
It closes over me.

MS Sarah. Dark clouds cover the sun obliterating the brightness of the earlier scene.

Sarah Abraham. Isaac.
This is more than absence.
The future creeps on my skin.
Some fear is kicking in me like a child.
Lord God. Love them into safety.

WS Abraham and Isaac climb the mountain. The same dark atmosphere pervades.

Abraham Isaac. Listen.
Heaven forgive me.

Isaac Am I the lamb that God has chosen?
Am I a trouble to him?

Abraham It is the Lord's command.

Isaac Do it quickly.
I am afraid.

Abraham binds Isaac. He weeps over the boy, prolonging the suspense of the moment. Then he raises his knife to kill him.

God Hold, Abraham.
The Boy is not demanded.
Only the faith that would give him up.

Bloom characterises J as a supreme ironist whose elliptical style resembles that of Shakespeare.[12] She (for Bloom also argues that J is a woman) represents God as extremely capricious and possessive in his relationships towards with his chosen favourites. "J's attitude toward Yahweh resembles nothing so much as a mother's somewhat wary but still proudly amused stance toward a favourite son who has grown up to be benignly powerful but also eccentrically irascible."[13] Bloom argues that God's motivation for requiring Isaac's sacrifice comes from this particular characterisation, rather than a desire to "test" Abraham's faith (an addition in a later redaction of the story). In *Testament*, as in Bloom's recovered J version, God's demand is unexpected. It comes out of the blue so to speak. The sudden break in the story is portrayed visually. An extra-diegetic voice calling to Abraham motivates a cut from the family scene to a high angle close-up of Abraham who turns to look up at the sky. Abraham's response to God's demand is an entirely natural paternal one. He argues with God; he drags his heels up the mountain; he puts off the awful moment of sacrifice. In short, he confronts God with the same determination that he pleads for the lives of the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah. Bloom argues the mindless obedience of Abraham that has survived into the modern Old Testament story is uncharacteristic of J's writing, that Abraham's reluctance would be more typical of the relationship of J's patriarchs (Abraham, Jacob, Moses) to their God.[14] This comparison suggests the writer of the *Testament* version (Elizabeth Laird) may

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[12] (Bloom and Rosenberg, 1991, p 26) "In J, the characteristic ellipsis is related to endless wordplay, to an incessant harmony of puns, false or popular etymologies, homonyms, virtually Shakespearean in their witty profusion ... If one could imagine a Jewish Chaucer writing with the uncanny ironies of Kafka and Isaak Babel and Nathanael West, but also with the high naturalistic wisdom of Tolstoy and Wordsworth, then one would approach the high humor of J, ultimate ancestor of *The Canterbury Tales* as well as of Tolstoy's fictions and Kafka's parables."

[13] (Bloom and Rosenberg, 1991, p 26)

[14] "As I read J, her episode of the Binding of Isaac would begin very differently from the story that has come down to us. Abram battled vigorously for the lives of the sinful inhabitants of Sodom; would he do less for his innocent son Isaac? J had little interest in and even less taste for sacrifice, as we have seen in the tale of Cain and Abel..." (Bloom and Rosenberg, 1991, p 206)

have identified with Bloom's close reading of the text even to the extent that there is no substitute sacrificial animal waiting in the thicket; the scene ends with Isaac skipping into the fresh sunlight. But Bloom's commentary is apparently not the only source of comparison. Visually, the scene of the sacrifice resembles Rembrandt's *Abraham's Sacrifice* (1634) now hanging in the Hermitage in St. Petersburg, except, in the television version, we see the angel only as a swift blur as he knocks the knife from Abraham's hand. In the first Rembrandt there is no ram lurking in the background either.[15] The two renditions of the story focus all their narrative tension on the shocking moment when Abraham nearly kills his one, much loved son. The landscape's depiction also suggests Rembrandt as a model, especially on the route up the mountain, where, in a style characteristic of Rembrandt, only a small break in the lowering clouds illuminates the dark scene. Other details in *Testament's* representation of the sacrifice suggest further interpretive sources that undercut the notion of an ironic depiction of the Yahwist God put forward by Bloom. While the sacrifice is aborted altogether, the story points through Sarah's prayerful little interlude towards an allegorical Christian interpretation of the scene as the ultimate sacrifice and the way to salvation. As Sarah speaks the clouds gather, obliterating the sun. The scene creates an analogy with accounts of Christ's crucifixion in the synoptic Gospels when the whole country is covered with darkness while Mary, the mother of Jesus, stands at a distance watching. The juxtaposition of this scene with the final scene of Isaac skipping into the sunlight obviates the need for a direct reference to the sacrifice. But Isaac's representation not only as a *willing* sacrifice but also a young and innocent boy, symbolising the unblemished and blameless sacrificial lamb of Christianity, suggestively indicates a predominately Christian reading of the story.[16]

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[15] There are two paintings on this subject attributed to Rembrandt. The second one, presumably a copy, now hanging in the Alte Pinakothek in Munich includes the substitute ram. It is quite possible, given the *Testament* version is made by Christmas Films in Moscow that the Rembrandt hanging in St. Petersburg would have provided the model for the visual treatment of this story.

[16] See (Feldman, 1998). Feldman argues that the motif of child sacrifice and its representation as an Oedipal narrative derives rather from Greek mythology and that the habitual reading of this story "through the lens of a Freudian psychology and its Greek foundation" has resulted in the imposition of a psychological dynamic that is alien to the Hebrew biblical narrative.

Apparently, the production's notion of integrity rests primarily on the literary character of the biblical text. This perception is not confined to any intrinsic qualities of biblical writing. The production's references to other religious works of art embraces a conception of the universality of biblical literature as a matter of its enduring ability to entertain, move, or inspire its readers rather than a matter of faith. Unlike other examples discussed in this thesis, *Testament* seems to take for granted the modern Bible as a palimpsest, a translated book. The conception of, and reverence for, the Bible's textuality indicates a secular sensibility that allows for a more eclectic and imaginative response to these biblical narratives than translations with a narrower, didactic aim. The notion of integrity is not confined to the truth of biblical texts and their interpretive history, both religious and secular. The series also infers, through its visual treatment of the stories, a particular sense of biblical truth as marvellous and fantastic. The artwork, particularly, helps to sustain this sense. The visual treatment of the creation story in "Noah" is especially interesting in this respect. Its flowing, abstract imagery helps to heighten a sense of the fantastic. No image remains stable for very long. No sooner does a form emerge and hold than it mutates into something else. **(See clip 16)** The surrealist imagery in "Moses" achieves a similar effect in its exaggerated sense of perspective and use of flat colours. The figure drawing in "Moses" mirrors the geometric minimalism of ancient Egyptian art and architecture and the episode tells its story in the same minimalist fashion. The animation's backgrounds are flat and rendered in vivid colours, the deserts and mountains of the Middle Eastern and Egyptian landscapes depicted in Tolkeinesque fantastical and surreal imagery. **(See clip 17)** This treatment provokes questions more about the relationship of the Bible's narrative worlds to modernity than the translated text's relationship to its source.

If a particular attitude of secular modernism in the series reflects an evasion of the historical realism of epic cinema, how may one evaluate the power of translation as reference? How does a close reading of the text, evoked by the series' narrative and visual treatment of its multiple literary and artistic sources, reveal the semiotic value of the "original"? Is it possible to show how the original may have "affected" the language of translation, or produced an "echo of the original"? Richard Walsh argues the Bible is fantastic literature, a critique of the realities of

biblical times intended to "subvert readerly reality."[17] The narrative worlds of stories like Moses, Daniel, and Jonah offer alternative images of power to subvert the powers that be. The stories "fantastically subvert ancient imperial worlds" through their accounts of the miraculous and marvellous. The series treats the fantastic as ordinary elements of the narrative: a bush burns in the desert without being consumed by flames; Daniel survives the hungry lions; a tree grows up in a day to shade Jonah and withers away overnight. (Fig. ii)

(fig. ii) Jonah

Walsh distinguishes two possible modern responses to the fantastic and mythic in the Bible, rationalism or supernaturalism.[18] He argues rationalism "reduces the biblical narrative to the uncanny."[19] Rationalism, in a modern scientific world seeks plausible scientific answers to the plagues inflicted on Pharaoh by God. Recent

[17] (Walsh, 1997, p 136)

[18] ibid., The antinomy is endlessly reworked in the science fiction detective television series the *X Files* in which Molder always finds a supernatural explanation and Scully a rational explanation for the inexplicable and the baffling. The ending of each episode, however, is always ambiguous; logic and reason never succeed in accounting for the supernatural.

[19] ibid., p 139

microbiological research has apparently found a reasonable and rational explanation not only for each of the plagues depicted in Genesis, but also for their specific order in the biblical narrative. This type of rationalisation "reduces the Bible to antiquarian or ethical interest."[20] The alternative supernaturalist response romanticises the miraculous as divine intervention at the same time making humans servants of an unpredictable and capricious God. Arguably, *Testament* challenges a rationalist view of the Bible as much as it challenges a response of pious supernaturalism. Noah's account of the creation story sets the existential parameters of the series. Adam and Eve risk death to opt for the freedom of choice instead of blind obedience to God by eating the fruit from the forbidden tree. In the spirit of Enlightenment they choose the "burden of understanding". But as they leave the garden, God promises they will always carry the memory of a flawless world to console them. The series' aesthetic response to the Bible, its magical realism, serves to transfigure reality. The series treats biblical writing as transcendent by reading the Bible as literature, in the modern sense of Literature. It also subverts modern reality in a critical approach that dates to antecedents such as the medieval mystical plays.

The concept of the modern Bible and its textuality used in this chapter was geared to testing the validity of source/text oppositions as a central concept of translation theory and practice. Despite my focus on certain textual features of the series, particularly its inter-textuality, it is important to acknowledge the modern Bible as the product of centuries of textual and compositional practices grounded in the social contexts of its use. Consideration of translators' claims to integrity purely on the basis of the series' textual integrity ignores a fundamental aspect of that integrity conveyed through the evidence of extensive research underpinning the series. The series' creators worked within a matrix of institutional relationships and values that form the social ground of interpretation and contribute to the semiotic value of the Bible through translation. These practices bear on the value of the text irrespective of whether it is J's "Abraham", Shakespeare's "Hamlet", Puccini's "Turandot", or Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales".

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[20] (Walsh, 1997, p 139)

It is important to understand the social and cultural contexts of production and reception and, what is more important, how translation mediates the social relationships and cultural values pertaining to those contexts, to grasp the referential power of *Testament* as translation. I will take up this issue in more descriptive detail in my analysis of the American Bible Society's New Media Translation Project. The following serves as a preliminary exploration of some pertinent questions on this aspect of translation, rather than a detailed analysis of production contexts in British broadcasting that give rise to a series like *Testament*. Translation consists of a range of technical and professional practices and relationships that are fairly general in nature, but are articulated in unique ways in the private worlds of individual institutions or organisations. An organisation's culture is formed through both its hierarchical structures and personal networks and its interface (political, economic, and social) with the public world to which it belongs. The extent to which these interact to produce a stable organisational environment or social and cultural change is a question for organisational or social research. Nevertheless, these considerations are important for understanding the relationship between translation practice and its signification in an analysis of the referential power of translation. It may help to illuminate these issues through a brief examination of the main discourses of "integrity" as a certain kind of textual practice that invites evaluative responses

The production team claimed integrity not only for *Testament* but also other series they created. Integrity, in this context, functions as a value and a compositional discourse that express a set of attitudes about the translation as well as relationships between the production team, the broadcast institution, and viewers. In the first place "integrity" signifies a set of production practices including detailed and painstaking pre-production research, responsible consultation with theological and religious advisers, and the employment of highly experienced, award-winning programme editors, writers and animators. The notion of integrity reflects a set of programme and production values that underpin the production's status within the sponsoring broadcast organisations. The maintenance of particular standards of excellence formed through the BBC's perception of its role as a public broadcasting

institution confirms the production's integrity.[21] The organisation maintains standards of professional excellence throughout which affect decisions as minute as every day cutting room practice and as general as programme aesthetics. These standards constitute a particular interpretation of the regulatory requirements of the BBC's Charter to provide a universal service of high quality. Insofar as professional values of excellence and integrity are acted out as institutionalised production practices in the making of *Testament*, these practices constitute "translation norms" that serve to maintain social cohesion between the broadcaster and its publics. The values function to maintain the BBC's public profile as an organisation that provides high standards of technical quality and programme content. The extent to which these function as *constraints* on the production is debatable. As broadcasting institutions, the BBC and S4C are subject to political, economic and social pressures that bear on how they constitute themselves as organisations, the programming decisions they make, and the ways they present themselves to their publics, particularly through their programming. Changes in the broadcasting system, whether they come from the introduction of new channels, changes in the franchise system and financing television, or the introduction of new technology such as digital television, invariably produce questions about broadcasting standards that are debated within and outside the organisation. Production practices associated with standards of excellence may be put to the service of managing change for the organisation as well as to maintaining a status quo. Integrity as a value that is realised through certain kinds of production practice, therefore, is one indication of *Testament's* referential power.

The discourses of integrity require evaluation in the context of a broadcasting organisation's relationship to its publics. Two historical factors are significant for this relationship and may account to a considerable degree for the appearance of a series like *Testament*. First, the foundation of Channel 4 with its regulatory requirement to serve a variety of audience tastes, encourage innovation in programme making and show a suitable portion of educational programmes. (Hood 1994). Second, the deregulation of broadcasting in 1990 and changes in the franchise system

[21] (Burns, 1977)

of bidding for control of television stations in the independent network which resulted in newly franchised companies chasing larger audiences with more popular programming policies. This profoundly affected Britain's broadcast culture, in particular BBC2 which has established a more recognisable identity as the provider of high quality programmes for minority audiences (particularly art programmes). The principles of innovation and quality that underpin the programme values of integrity in *Testament* form part of the interpretive ground of the series. Integrity, in this case, means the creation of a corporate persona intended to assure viewers of the broadcaster's continuing commitment to innovative programming of high technical and aesthetic quality. The broadcaster's credibility in turn guarantees the series. The discourses of integrity thus function as a reciprocal reinforcement of the standards of evaluation used to judge the series in its own right and in relation to other programming of its kind.

One may pull back further to evaluate the creators' claims to the integrity of *Testament* in the context of broader cultural attitudes towards religion and society and the television companies' contribution to shaping those attitudes. One of the ways the discourses of integrity have emerged in the series' textual composition is perhaps its use of fantasy. The fact that BBC 2 and S4C (Welsh Channel 4) are "minority" channels within the overall mix of British broadcasting, with a remit to serve interests marginal to mainstream culture in innovative ways, makes them natural sponsors of a series whose translation strategy is calculated to disrupt readerly realities and effect a "re-enchantment" of the rational world of modernity. The writers' literary reading of the Old Testament stories reflects a Romantic sensibility that sacralises the ritual space of television. (Goethals, 1997; Murdock, 1997) *Testament's* fantastical imagery subverts modern readerly responses to the Bible, dominated by two centuries of historical criticism and the theological frames of religious establishment, in a number of ways the principal one of which is a challenge to assumptions about secularism and religious broadcasting that blurs the boundaries between sacred and secular within the text of *Testament.* The claim that the series represents a literary reading of the Bible demands an explanation beyond the scope of this short chapter. However, a brief summary qualification is possible.

Prickett and Jasper comment, in their compilation of literary readings of the Bible, on three distinguishable trends: the Bible as Criticism, the Bible as Literature, and literary readings of the Bible. (Jasper and Prickett, 1999) The first is an interpretive attitude that reflects the reader's own circumstances. The second interpretive attitude focuses on an understanding of the Bible as literature in its own right. These two trends intersect in literary readings of the Bible which reflect the creative, critical response of writers, artists, and film-makers to biblical narrative where the barriers erected in the nineteenth century between biblical studies and literary criticism have been broken down. *Testament* partakes of this history of reading in its own interpretive practices while at the same time calling attention to it.

In conclusion, we may draw three lessons from a consideration of translation as its referential power that have important implications for the focus of translation studies and its critical methods. If as Hermans suggests, translations can tell us something about themselves, then it is important, as translation theorists not merely to examine translated texts and their contexts for what they reveal about translation but to look critically at our own interpretive attitudes. The rich intertextuality of the *Testament* series calls attention to the work of production in translation that the framing devices of other series examined here have sought to obscure, or efface. The writers and animators of *Testament* have revealed something about the creative nature of translation and about the function of the Bible in modern society in their treatment of the Bible as a text belonging to a literary and artistic history that any reader brings to his or her interpretive experience. Efforts to evaluate this work of creation from the standpoint of a fixed value, the source text or the translator's normative behaviour, reveal more about the translation theorist than the translated text itself. *Testament* opens up a space for considering the relation between a translation's function and its value that in turn invites an exploration of the social and cultural construction of value.

Second, the discourses of integrity embedded in *Testament* confront translation critics with a question about their own interpretive habits. If a translation's differences and omissions constitutes a body of criticism that reveals more about the original text, one may reasonably ask what translation criticism

reveals about the translation itself. Prickett's comments about the paradoxes of translation return to haunt the critic. Those who look through the translated text in a comparison that would reveal the relative transparency of its relationship with a source text see the least. For those who study the translated text closely, its apparent opacity becomes even more richly revealing.

Finally, a translation enters into a dialogue with the original and other texts as a sign that mediates between the original and its reception. Translation has a life of its own born of other interpretations, the sum of which are an index of the translation's value or its ground of interpretation. Reference criticism, whether undertaken by a translator or a translation critic, blurs the boundaries between interpretation, criticism, and translation, and focuses on the creative life of a text in an invitation to test the limits of translation.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Limits and Possibilities of Translation

[Function is] a certain property of being and of behaving in a regional field.[1]

The foregoing discussion has dealt with the manner in which translations refer. My intention has been to demonstrate how a close reading of the texts used here and a focus on what Jakobson has defined as untranslatable, or what remains beyond the superficial equivalence of source and target texts, challenges the efficacy of theory based on representational concepts of translation in which the translation is seen as a substitution of its original. This perspective has created the possibility to challenge some of the habitual oppositions embedded in modern definitions of translation and the comparative methodologies and categories that result from those oppositions. What interests me here is not the apparent impossibility of translation but the very fact that we do communicate across languages, media, and cultures. This thesis, therefore, confronts one of the central contradictions of translation theory and practice. Conceptually, translation is limited by the epistemological and ontological terms that police its boundaries. In practice, we have seen that translation inevitably evades those boundaries. Thus the "untranslatable" as defined by Jakobson points paradoxically to the possibilities of translation. However, the contradiction of limits and possibilities is not resolved simply by relaxing the boundaries of translation, as suggested by semiotic definitions, or by hedging definitions with elaborate typologies or theories of translation norms. As I argued in my introduction, an examination of translation's referential power, the social and cultural contexts in which texts acquire their semiotic value (meaning) and which continue to affect any text through its various transformations, promises a fuller understanding of translation both in theory and practice.[2] Each of the case studies studied here demonstrate how producers have tried to resolve the impossibility of translation, as they see it, within the narrative and representational forms they used. In so doing, they have revealed more about the

[1] (Morot-Sir, 1993, p 125)

[2] See Sherry Simon (1996), especially her analysis of the Anglo-American translation and reception of French feminist theory, for a particularly cogent example of this approach.

processes and referential power of translation than normative theories of equivalence which rely on essentialist distinctions between languages, text types, or media. It is no small wonder, therefore, that translation studies has taken a cultural turn which emphasises the productive or creative characteristics of translation. The importance of this turn is its shift from a focus on what translations are to how they function.

Reference in translation is exceptionally complex on two counts. First, a translation's referent is already a text, open to interpretation and proliferating intertextual references, in which the ground of interpretation is difficult to pin down. Indeed, the question of *how* this ground has been constructed has been central to my analysis. In the case of *The Visual Bible* we noted how the author of a message of salvation encoded in the Gospel of Matthew is assumed as the ultimate referent. Hence the central importance of the dynamics of focalisation within the video and the shift in point of view when we look *at* Matthew through Jesus' eyes. In *The Story Keepers* we noted how the frame story is designed to preserve the heterogeneity of the Bible's interpretive communities. Thus while the series' producers and writers recognise that translation (re-telling, or re-writing) produces new interpretations, there is a clear attempt to preserve what is understood as the moral integrity of the biblical stories by making a distinction between reliable and unreliable narrators and narratees. In chapter five we noted how the translation process re-configured the original texts to make sense of viewers' experience as historical subjects of a particular kind, where the ground of interpretation is the moral and political identity of Americans as a chosen people, modelled on a mythical invention of America as the Promised Land drawn from the exilic writings of the Old Testament. Patrice Pavis' distinction between the possible fictional world of an illusion created by a system of signs, and the real world in which members of the audience exist is helpful here.[3] Pavis argues that the interaction of these two worlds gives meaning to the artistic sign, but that the "Social Context" of production and reception constitutes the sign's referent, whereas what is seen on stage is *"the illusion of a referent"*. He concludes, "It becomes necessary, in order to understand the fiction offered, to compare the *possible world* of the dramatic universe with the *real world* of an audience, at any given moment of reception ...

[3] (Pavis, 1987, pp 122-137)

[where] the sign is necessarily to be interpreted as a unit forming part of a discursive and ideological whole."[4] In this context, we noted in chapter six that the integrity of the *Testament* translation is not an intrinsic aesthetic relationship, but is contingent upon its discursive construction through the professional practices of BBC 2 as a broadcasting institution. The second factor that adds complexity to the referential model used here is the problem of translating from one medium to another, where each medium shares common rhetorical and narrative strategies, but does so in unique ways. Since we are dealing with questions of translatability within the frame of reference criticism, it has been important to move on from theories about the adequacy of translation (in other words its feasibility in terms of a structural equivalence between texts) to questions about the processes of translation, since it is already clearly something that authors, film makers, painters and composers do, irrespective of the outcome. I have argued, therefore, that the more important question is the *interpretive effects* of translation from one medium to another. This was a central issue in chapter two. Since I have already shown how interpretation is intimately connected to the contexts of a work's production and reception, it follows one of the most logical ways to address the question of media specificity is to focus on genre shifts that accompany media shifts. On this I follow Bazin's argument that "The true aesthetic differentiations, in fact, are to be made not among the arts, but within genres themselves: betweeen psychological novel and the novel of manners, for example, rather than between the psychological novel and the film that one would make from it."[5] The effects of genre shift has been a constant thread running throughout my case study analysis. In this chapter I take it up as a specific critique of the ABS' principle of dynamic equivalence. A focus on genre also allows for the thick description adopted as the principal method of my thesis because genre criticism, particularly its application in media studies, accommodates the three levels of context noted in my introduction as relevant to questions of reference. While the foregoing case studies have concentrated on textual and contextual factors of reference, the case study in this chapter focuses on the social contexts of reference. As I suggested in my analysis of the principle of "integrity" in chapter 6, the very terms we use to describe translation

[4] (Pavis, 1987, p 124)
[5] (Bazin, 1948, pp 32-40)

are themselves socially produced. In other words, if we attempt to evaluate a translation on the basis on an assumed value, we very quickly find ourselves tangled in a web of culturally relative positions.[6] An analysis of the social contexts of translation enables us to interrogate the very grounds on which those assumptions are constructed and give historical specificity to terms that often appear transparent or self-evident.

While I began this process of interrogating the social ground on which translations acquire their semiotic force in the previous chapter, this chapter takes a further step by examining how the translated text becomes the site on which the translation organisation negotiates its role and status within the larger sphere within which it operates. Consequently, it is important, firstly, to establish the role of translation in the organisation's construction of its own identity. This description is followed by an analysis of one of its translation projects following the critical principles established in chapters 1 through 6. That is, an emphasis put on the text itself and its effects, a search for its internal structures and sense of its unavoidable ambiguities, and a rejection of a simple relation of causality between translation and work, and between source and target text. The relation between the translation and its social ground is handled through an analysis of the project's "repertoires" used here in its sociological sense to account for the models of action, discourse, and interpretation that frame and direct social interaction and contention in the translation process. This chapter aims at thicker description than the comparatively thin description of the referential power of translation in the preceeding chapters. The first section of this chapter is necessarily descriptive. It is imperative to have a clear idea from where the translation project began both to appreciate its experimental character and to reach a clearer general understanding of translation as its referential power.

Translation has emerged from my study so far as something at once derivative and creative, in which the innovative forces of its creativity and the conservative forces of its derivative nature pull in opposite directions. This observation does not necessarily engender a clearer idea of translation, it merely re-introduces the question of a translation's reference as its difference or similarity. If the free play of differences between one language and another, whether verbal, visual

[6] This is precisely the argument made by Prickett in *Words and the Word.*

or kinetic, constitutes translation how may one recognise it other than by its polysemous inter-textuality? On the other hand, if the rules or norms that tie it to the semiotic system of which it is a function constitute translation, how may one establish its relation to an exterior reality, the source text that is purportedly its model? One solution to the apparently unresolvable paradoxes of these oppositions is an investigation of what precisely translation supposedly transfers or transforms and its effect in the target culture. The notion of 'effect' places emphasis squarely on translations and their contexts. In this case, I agree with Gideon Toury who says, "Translations are facts of the target culture."[6] Toury's argument is an interesting one. He proposes a clearer idea of translation and its function (effect) in the target culture is possible by examining the rules and norms adopted by translators. Toury proposes a semiotic qualification of function that he describes as "the value assigned to an item belonging in a system by virtue of the network of relations it enters into."[7] This bears a superficial resemblance to the arguments put forward at the conclusion of chapter three and developed throughout section two. Since this chapter's purpose is to explore translation as its function, some of the theoretical difficulties of Toury's approach merit examination for they illuminate the basic starting point of this chapter.

Toury argues the prospective position of a translation (or its function) in a target culture is a strong factor in the final form a translation takes and the translation models used. For Toury, translation is an instrument of the larger cultural forces that make up the literary system. Like Saussure's *langue*, this network of relations apparently possesses an autonomy, an independence of the practices of translation and its outcomes. According to Toury, this autonomous network furnishes the rules or norms of translation. He subordinates any question about the social or cultural agencies of translation, i.e. that the "tool" itself could transform the network of signifying relations, to his hypothesis about the conservative nature of translation. His theory offers no perspective to account for change or innovation, or the interaction of innovation and conservatism within the field of translation. The conclusions Toury draws from his analysis of Chaim Nahman Bialik's translation

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[6] (Toury, 1995, p 2)
[7] (ibid, 1995, p 12)

into Hebrew of the German fairy tale *Das Schlaraffenland* exemplify the difficulties of his functional definition.[8] In this case study, he glosses over a number of innovations that are a product of the function of Hebrew literary translation in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, described as an effort to "catch up with the Western world" (p 130) and to create a sufficiently diverse literary repertoire to "protect Hebrew literature from foreign waves." (p 132) In Toury's account, Bialik's translation seems to have contributed successfully to this function. The story was integrated into the canon of children's literature and its authorship attributed to Bialik. Over time, the text's semiotic value changed, suggesting that it not only filled a perceived gap in the Hebrew literary system, but also became a model of children's writing because of its inclusion in an anthology of Bialik's writing for children. Toury, however, is seemingly more concerned to present these innovations as conservative norms that confirm the peripheral position translation occupies within a literary system. Toury's functional description of norms, therefore, is rooted in his ontological definition of translation as something pre-given. Translation assumes the quality of an *a priori* that serves the purpose of confirming the instrumentality of translating.

The principal difficulty with Toury's definition lies in its inability to account for the function of translation except by adding the specificities of norm theory without explaining where these norms come from. If, however, we rephrase his definition to emphasise the active element of a translation's functionality, by considering translation an *experience* of the target culture rather than a fact, we may account for both the "special status" of translation and its experimental or innovative nature. Edouard Morot-Sir's description of function as a set of semantic relationships, or the constellation of action, experience, and experimentation, helps clarify the usefulness of functional definitions without accepting the weaknesses of Toury's position. Morot-Sir proposes that human action deals with an immediate future; it implies a specific final system, an instrumentation or intention.[9] Thus far, this is close to Toury's argument. However, the notion of experimentation adds new meaning to the basic action from which the experiment is a departure. It shows

[8] Toury, pp 147-165
[9] (Morot-Sir, 1993, pp 133-134)

action can be treated as an experience and evaluated as such. Thus contra Toury, semiotic value is a function of the experience not of the system. Imagining the experimental character of an action makes it necessary to think what is new about the experience. Given the importance of this conceptualisation of function for my case study in this chapter, it will perhaps help to quote in full the implications of Morot-Sir's discussion about novelty. He writes

> It is not a change of routine, because I could change my habits without considering it an experiment, although the sense of novelty seems to be a precondition of initiating an experience ... When I say "It will be an experiment," I add a new dimension to my daily or professional actions in the sense that I isolate an act in the series of my deeds; it gets a special value independently of the usual values governing my actions. It means that at the same time I wish to evaluate an act in a certain case and actually to compare it with my preceding ones in order to make a decision concerning their own efficiency. In other words, this special act I call 'experience' is considered as a possible future model ... To make an experience is to *remodel* the forms of my life in any situation and in such a way that I will be able to evaluate the new form under consideration ... The development of an action ... is modified in regard to the consciousness of modeling.[10]

Morot-Sir's distinction is crucial to a functional conception of translation for it deals with language and meaning as an open, active, creative process without losing sight of action modelled on routine behaviour. It allows for a characterisation of translation that is both innovative or creative and derivative or conservative. It also adds the element of intention to experimentation. The most significant aspect of Morot-Sir's concept is the inclusion of a language user. Value is more than a set of textual relations bound by a particular system, it is a factor of the relationships between real people, or between individuals and their environment. In the context of translation, Morot-Sir's conception of function characterises the translator as a creative decision-maker, someone who may consciously try new models. Toury's functional concept of translation, on the other hand, implicitly characterises the translator as subservient to the literary system and its constraints. Whereas in the case of Toury's definition, an analysis of textual relations is adequate to an evaluation of the function or value of translation, in the case of Morot-Sir's concept

[10] (Morot-Sir, 1993, pp 133-134)

of function, an analysis of translation's semiotic value requires tracing it through the social and institutional contexts of its production. This involves looking at the work of translation (its *energeia*) as much as the work (*ergon*) itself.

I will take up the idea of translation as an experience of the target culture in my case study of the American Bible Society's New Media Translation Project (which I shall refer to as The Project or the *newmediabible* following The Project's title for its web site http://www.newmediabible.org/). The Project is a "multi-media" translation of biblical texts and their interpretations into a hypertext environment on CD-ROM or the world wide web. The main focus of my case study is to consider how a functional definition of translation may help to account for the contradictory character of translation as creative and derivative. My study combines analysis of the translated texts and the social and institutional relationships that underpin the project. It attempts to account for some of the textual features of the translations by exploring the social and cultural factors that may have influenced the translation team's decisions. This attempt involves a broadening of the methodological parameters of my study to include a sociological account of the production of meaning and value in my case study. There are several reasons for choosing this particular project as a case study. As a research fellow on the project, I have the benefit of inside information gained through participation in some of the decision processes. However well informed my observations of these processes are as a consequence, I have been able to substantiate them with material publicly available in the project's research publications. The programme's decision processes are relatively public because one of The Project's purposes is to develop translation models that other people can use. In other words, the function of translation in this programme is not simply to find innovative ways to communicate the biblical message, it was conceived as an experiment to "test the limits and possibilities of translation". Its purpose was to find new ways to translate the Bible for a generation of readers more inclined to access the world of knowledge and ideas via electronic forms of communication than via print. As such, The Project not only started with a functional conception of translation, it also initiated experimentation

as an active principle.[11] This means the *newmediabible* translation is essentially an exercise in testing the theory and practice of translation. As a principle of translation, this is interesting in itself. On the one hand, it represents a praxis that is rare in the field of translation studies (although this kind of praxis is mainstream in modern Bible translation). On the other hand, as an experimental exercise, The Project is not an abstraction, it is thoroughly grounded in a social and cultural context defined by habitual ways of framing the world and its routines and models of behaviour. Testing the limits and possibilities of translation, in this context, involves an active engagement in questions of translatability and definitions of translation raised in this thesis. The advantage of the ABS project for a study, whose principal theoretical purpose is also to question the boundaries of translation, is that The Project explicitly engages questions about translation as social practice. Literally, it confronts an elusive concept that has cast a shadow over the previous chapters: the ground of interpretation

The concept of repertoire forms the principal frame for my analysis. Repertoires constitute models of action, discourse, or interpretation that frame and direct social interaction or contention. (Traugott, 1995) Itamar Even-Zohar introduced the concept to translation studies as a term to designate "the aggregate of rules and materials which govern both the *making* and *handling*, or production and consumption, of any given product."[12] The idea of the making of a cultural repertoire was introduced into polysystem theory via an essay by Ann Swidler (1986) in which she defines culture as instrumental, as opposed to an older anthropological definition of culture as the whole way of life of a people, or the body of knowledge that a person needs to become a functioning member of society.

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[11] In fact, the programme started with a very specific functional conception: Nida's theory of dynamic equivalence which, of course, is grounded in a particular theory of language and meaning.

[12] (Even-Zohar, 1997, p 20). Also in (Even-Zohar, 1990). Even-Zohar's use of the concept offers a more flexible way of thinking about constraints and innovation in the creation and reception of works within any given literary system than is possible with norms theory developed by Gideon Toury to validate his hypothesis about the essentially conservative nature of translation. Even-Zohar's development of repertoire as a conceptual term to describe the dynamics of cultural exchange is heavily compromised by his overly mechanistic model of production and consumption, his hierarchical conception of communication or production, and his one-dimensional view of power. These weaknesses in the presentation of his model result in a reification of repertoire that contradicts the term's theoretical flexibility. Ultimately, it is not easy to distinguish how repertoires differ from norms in Even-Zohar's writing.

Instead, she describes culture as a "tool kit of skills from which people construct their conceptual strategies", and of cultural significance as providing "cultural components that are used to construct strategies of action."[13] Rakefet Sheffy develops this instrumental metaphor of cultural repertoire to suggest "the knowledge of systems people have and use as competent actors in a given culture consists of ... *models*, pre-organised options ... that *constrain* people's actions in each and every case, given the specific cultural field one is acting in and according to one's position in it."[14] Notwithstanding the rather unfortunate contradiction of persisting with the mechanistic metaphor of "system" as a theoretical frame for her argument, Sheffy makes two important points about repertoires that are a considerable advance on Even-Zohar's reductive abstractions. Sheffy locates a sociological explanation for the formation and persistence of repertoires in Pierre Bourdieu's notion of *habitus*. She links the conventional characteristics of repertoric options to the idea that people's actions are formulated within and by their social affiliations and the cultural attitudes and habits that distinguish any one group, (although she pointedly distances herself from Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* bounded by distinctions of social class). Sheffy argues the concept of *habitus* may explain how cultural models "help to maintain social cohesion and interdependencies, as well as social *distinctions*."[15] Secondly, she points out, through her distinction between models of action ("generative models") and models of interpretation ("classificatory models"), that knowledge about how to do something cannot be deduced from its end product, any more than the way somebody does something can be reduced to the implicit set of instructions underlying a particular kind of action. While Sheffy concludes it is theoretically important to distinguish between action and interpretation models, she acknowledges that in practice the two interact in mutually reciprocal ways. To borrow her example, cookery books legitimise a certain style of cookery, or give labels to exemplary dishes, as such, they are more than a set of instructions to teach people how to cook. Consequently, they do not simply treat food as life-sustaining, they give it symbolic value by raising cookery to the level of a culinary art. In other words, repertoires of action are a set of skills invested with symbolic significance.

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[13] (Swidler, 1986, p 273)
[14] (Sheffy, 1997, p 36)
[15] (Sheffy, 1997, p 37)

Moreover, because cultural practices are historically and socially grounded they acquire different symbolic value in different social contexts. Pierre Bourdieu develops this concept of social distinction in an analysis of the function and aesthetics of photography in relation to the French class system.[17] Bourdieu argues that the function of photography among peasant classes demonstrates how people use the camera not merely to record important events in family life but to maintain existing social relationships within the family. The person who takes the photographs, the aesthetics that are particular to this form of family portraiture, the ways in which the photographs are displayed, and the family members who control their exhibition and interpretation, are all important aspects of the repertoires of photography. Photography, therefore, acquires a symbolic value beyond its purely mimetic function. In short, the aesthetics or poetics of photographs and their interpretation are embedded in the social uses of photography as a technical form.

A discussion about the function of translation within this framework implies translation consists of more than a neutral technique or an act of transferring meaning from one language to another. Rather, the translator's repertoires or models of action invest each translation with a different set of values than its source. The concept of repertoire does not rule out a notion of the acceptability or adequacy of translation, it repositions it as a translation's symbolic and cultural value. The introduction of a concept of repertoire into the theoretical frame of polysystem studies has created a tendency to treat it as a unified or unifying one, following its formalist conceptualisation by Even-Zohar. I prefer the model of social action shaped by repertoires of contention presented by Tilly and other sociologists (in Traugott, 1995). This model helps to account for the contentious character of a translation "system", or the manner in which innovative and conservative elements of translation pull in different directions. This perspective also relies on Bourdieu's theory of the field of cultural production, defined as "inseparably, a field of positions, and a field of position takings."[18] The field consists of everyone who

[17] (Bourdieu, 1996)

[18] (Bourdieu, 1993, p 34) Bourdieu criticises Even Zohar's exclusive emphasis on the textual or intertextual relationships of his theory of the literary polysystem. He notes "they [the theoreticians of cultural semiology] forget that the existence, form and direction of change depends not only on the 'state of the system', i.e. the repertoire of possibilities which it offers, but also on the balance of forces between social agents who have entirely real interests in the different

contributes to the result of cultural production: artists, performers, technicians and audiences (including critics and so on). Bourdieu emphasises that a cultural field is not "reducible to a *population*, i.e. a sum of individual agents, linked by simple relations of *interaction*. (p 35) According to Bourdieu, the symbolic value of a work is the "product and prize of permanent conflict" (p 34) between the different agents and interests that constitute the field and the positions they take within that field. The field of position takings constitutes the discourses and repertoires of production and reception that invest the work with social and symbolic significance. His inclusion of the discourses of cultural production intends to avoid the narrowness of formalist analysis on the one hand, and on the other, the difficulties of structural economism encouraged by the belief in a homology between the work of art and its social and economic conditions of production. Bourdieu's concept of the field of position takings accounts for the dynamics of change within literary or artistic production, or the forces of innovation and conservatism that are the result of a struggle over the boundaries of legitimation in any field. In the particular instance of the American Bible Society's New Media Translation Project, what is at stake is their descriptions of translation and the translator. The United Bible Societies' formal declaration of the role of the Translation Officer as the ultimate authority in all decisions about the quality of translations from one medium to another illustrates this struggle.[19] The declaration states that the "TO (translation officer) should be involved in the total review process at the levels of both production and evaluation" Effectively, the TO should be the final arbiter of faithful equivalence in the original concept, treatments, scripts and story boards, rough cuts, field testing and final approval of any translation. Translation Officers' authority rests not on a superior knowledge of the various processes of film production, but on the traditional position they hold, and the respect they command because of that position, within the field of Bible translation and publication represented by the United Bible Societies.[20] (I hardly need point out the implicit criticism in this description. One

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possibilities available to them as stakes and who deploy every sort of strategy to make one set or the other prevail." (p 34)

[19] This declaration formulated at the UBS triennial translation workshop in 1997 is reproduced in the technical papers for *The Bible Translator*. (Hodgson and Thomas, January 1998)

[20] This position is reinforced by translation officer recruitment criteria and training policies in the United Bible Societies which, in turn, guarantees the TO's unique position in the organisation as final arbiter of a translation's quality. The TOs occupy the pinnacle of a hierarchy of cultural and

needs to pause only momentarily to recognise the glaring ambiguities of a particular professional and occupational group claiming authority in a field about which they know relatively little if anything.) Bourdieu's theory of fields emphasises the importance of attending to the significance of social relations and their discourses in the creation of semiotic value in any form of cultural production. This applies as much to translation as social definitions of art or literature. The following analysis is an attempt to evaluate the experimental nature of the ABS New Media Translation Project by describing the "properties of being and behaving" that determine its function. This entails an analysis of the discourses of innovation and conservatism in the textual, cultural, and social contexts of Bible Society translation.

The American Bible Society (ABS) was founded as a benevolent society in 1816 on the wave of a revival in Protestant religious fervour and Federalist reform. Its purpose was to encourage the wider distribution of Bibles without note or comment. From its inception, the Society's corporate identity reflected the mood in America of Bible-based civic and religious reform. As Robert Hodgson notes, quoting Wosh: "The Federalist reform program drew heavily on the Bible for form and substance, and in its view, 'placing the Good Book in every household in the minds of many, might lay the foundation for a common Christian social consensus.'"[20] While the founding principles of Bible Society work are deeply conservative of a particular set of social values, the means to achieving those goals reveals a history of innovation whose central narrative force is the interaction of translation and media. Throughout its history, the American Bible Society has supported research and experimentation. What is normative in the twentieth century was often quite radical and innovative in the nineteenth. The ABS' history of translation and publication is published on their web site.[21] The history documents experiments in print technology, media communication, film production, and translation theory that were a constant source of innovation in the society. The

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social networks, as opposed to the formal organisational structures of the Bible Society. They form an elite corps that is marked by its difference from the overall cultural identity of the organisation. In Weberian terms of the dialectic of orthodoxy in a social institution, the TOs as a group favour a process of heresy rather than one of routinization.

[20] (Hodgson, 1997, p 5; Wosh, 1994, p 13)

[21] http://www.americanbiblesociety.org or http://www.researchcenter.org, "History of Media and Technology at ABS"

newmediabible and ABSi (internet publication) programme are the most recent forms of experimentation.[23] There is nothing exceptional about the Society's use of innovation as a strategy for corporate survival. As economic historians would point out, technical innovation in corporations frequently serves the purpose of preserving existing corporate markets rather than producing new ones. (See Brian Winston in Downing, Mohammadi, and Sreberny-Mohammadi, (eds.) 1995, pp 54-74) In this case, the American Bible Society functions just like any other large corporation in a capitalist economy. An assessment of the value of innovative experiments such as the *newmediabible* project needs, therefore, to take account of whether it was seen by the ABS at large to serve its conservative instincts. (See note 23 above)

Today the ABS is part of a world-wide group of inter-confessional, not-for-profit Bible translators and publishers - the United Bible Societies (UBS) - with national offices in 135 countries.[24] The UBS has an annual subsidy of US $ 60 million and a global distribution in 1999 of over 20 million Bibles and 20 million New Testaments.[25] The Bible Society's mission is to reach every man, woman, and child with a portion of Scripture in a language they can read, at a price they can afford. Traditionally, Bible Society work involved three principal activities: translation, publication, and distribution. For the first 150 years of its existence, Bible Society corporate culture has been print-based. Institutional translation and publishing norms have evolved around the possibilities and constraints of print media. For example, Bible Society translation principles of clarity and accessibility were arguably informed by assumptions about the transparency of the "text" which took for granted the stability of language and the neutrality of print media. The extent to which these assumptions have shaped the Society's corporate vision of the "widest

[23] It is worth noting that the ABS has also revealed the fundamentally conservative force of its founding mission through its retrogressive association as a co-production partner with the *Visual Bible* project. (See chapter 2 and the Visual Bible web site: http://www.visualbible.com) This association contradicts the commitment of Bible Societies to inter-confessional partnerships and doctrinal neutrality. It has been interpreted by other members of the United Bible Societies as a hostile act of American cultural imperialism.

[24] See the UBS web site, http://www.biblesociety.org for a history of the UBS and links to national Bible Society web sites. From hereon, to avoid confusion, "Bible Society" will be used as a generic term that reflects the global reach of the organisation and the heterogeneity of its membership. Individual national Bible Societies will be referred to by their company name or acronym, for example the American Bible Society or ABS.

[25] 1999 *World Report*, United Bible Societies, http://www.biblesociety.org

possible effective distribution" of Scripture may account for a routine practice within the Society of evaluating and quantifying "effectiveness" in terms of its distribution statistics. Over the past two decades, however, this vision of "effectiveness" has changed in response to a more general interest in social pluralism and cultural diversity that characterises intellectual trends of the latter part of the twentieth century. The extent to which pluralism is a function of the global reach of electronic communication technologies, or to which the globalising tendencies of their social uses may encourage or diminish cultural diversity, has been a central feature in debates about technology and social change.[25] In Bible Society, these debates have encouraged a more composite picture of the function of Bible translation and a more plural conception of the Bible's interpretive communities. (Hodgson, 1997; Soukup, 1999); Boomershine in (Stine, 1995)[26] Changing scholarly definitions of "text" and "reader" have prompted new attitudes to translation. For instance studies in missiology (the history and sociology of Christian missionary evangelism), as well as anecdotal evidence, have generated new insights into the cultural effects of Bible translation. (Stine, 1990) The translational goals of clarity and accessibility have been reinterpreted in light of these broad intellectual shifts. Emphasis has shifted from a conception of transparency between source and target texts to the "readability" of a translation that aims at facilitating comprehension but does not necessarily assume interpretation will be straightforward or univocal. (Louw, 1991; Newman, 1996) The conception of readability acknowledges people can no longer assume a common interpretive tradition, dominated in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by Western academic authority. Bible Society has translated its altered conception of a translation's readability into new programme activity, the provision of educational "Scripture engagement materials", which aims to make the biblical text both meaningful and relevant for different audiences. Indeed, for some Societies such as the BFBS, (British and Foreign Bible Society) "Scripture engagement" has become the primary focus of its business.

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[25] (Morley, 1995)

[26] The debates often assume greater intensity at the triennial meetings of Translation Officers. Sometimes these debates spill out into the public sphere through publication in the *Bible Translator* or at meetings such as the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature and the American Academy of Religion.

Bible Society has also attempted to reposition itself within the field of Bible translation and publishing, in particular, and media use in general. National societies' programmes have expanded to include audio and audio-visual materials, and popular print forms such as comics. Societies have reinterpreted "effective distribution" as an effort to target a broader spectrum of any population with appropriate publications, in favour of a blanket distribution of the printed text. Effective distribution includes a new concept of accessibility understood as the necessity to exploit opportunities, created by new communication technologies, as well as to pay attention to the formal characteristics of different translation or publication media. Media shifts have had an important impact on Bible Society translation theory and practice because the characteristics of any technology are not inherent, they have developed as a result of their particular social uses. Departures from the canonical limits of textual authority upheld by print have inevitably affected the organisation's conception of its credibility. Nevertheless, many people working within Bible Society have argued in defence of these changes that they are following the example of ancient Biblical authors, who took advantage of popular communication forms, when creating biblical materials for audio-cassette, video, or the internet. They frequently quote the Bible to justify their argument.

The vision of "effective distribution" is not without contradiction. For instance, the ABS is currently seeking rapidly to transform its outreach programmes into ".com" companies through the initiatives of the ABSi (interactive) project. One of the significant differences between the book and the web page is the constraints of space relative to the costs of production and distribution. The apparently limitless horizons of internet bandwidth generates the temptation to fill this space that, in turn puts enormous pressure on programme producers.[27] As people involved in the ABSi initiative struggle to come to terms with this phenomenon, technological considerations dominate thinking about how the technical, economic, and cultural imperatives of the new medium will shape future programmes. It is hardly

[27] The phenomenon is not unique to Bible Society. It is an effect of the social uses of a new technology. Technological, economic, and cultural imperatives are interlinked. Histories of the introduction of new technologies into the social matrixes of communication reveal a limited repertoire of responses to their anticipated social and cultural effects. For example, patterns of media regulation as a function of definitions and images of media publics have been remarkably consistent. (Williams, 1990)

surprising, given the social and cultural development of any new media form, that ABS has translated its discourses of "effectiveness" into the e-commerce jargon of "interactivity", which in reality is the ability to "track" web users' social profiles, cultural preferences, and purchasing power with all the sophisticated tools of electronic marketing feedback. The world of e-commerce has transformed "Bible readers" into "consumers" and "Scripture programmes" and "translation research" into "content" or "product". While a new corporate vision of "effective distribution" may be articulated in carefully prepared and rehearsed public statements, it is clear from off-the-cuff statements by individuals throughout the hierarchy that the repertoires and culture of e-commerce have pervaded the thinking and judgement of ABSi programme development. In many ways, ABSi marks the latest site of conflict between the conservative vision of the Society's foundation and innovations designed to reposition the ABS as a significant communicator within American culture. Translation, from one language to another and from one medium to another, functions on several levels in this context because it exists at the very heart of the Society's endeavour to transform itself to maintain its assumed position at the cutting edge of Christian communication. Significantly, the ABS now regards Christian media organisations, rather than other Bible translation organisations, as its principal competitors . It is, therefore, hardly surprising the Society joined forces in the earlier part of 2000 with the commercially aggressive and theologically conservative Visual Bible International inc. (currently valued at US $ 127.5 million on the stock exchange) who have bought exclusive film and television rights to the CEV. One cannot help noticing the contradictions and ambiguities of current American Bible Society corporate decision-making *vis à vis* their founding vision. Nevertheless, it is perhaps worth pointing this out.

While any national Bible Society publication programme (including that of the ABS) reflects primarily local interests, its translation programme reflects the primarily global interests and associations of an internationally organised and funded activity. Discussion about what is the definition and function of translation occurs in an international forum coordinated through United Bible Societies' scholarly

research and publications.[28] The pull between the globalising tendencies of UBS translation policy and practices and the localising pressures of vernacular translation programmes; the tensions between the conservatism of the Bible Society's founding principles and innovation in its publishing programmes; the position of a Bible Society *vis à vis* the cultural politics of its national context on the one hand and, on the other, its membership of a global, inter-confessional organisation are important contributory factors in the development of any Bible Society enterprise. The ABS New Media Translation Project is no exception. While the UBS provides a normative context in which The Project has tested the limits of translation, the ABS as its patron has provided the normative context against which The Project has tried out innovations in publishing form. The Project's status within the UBS organisation as a whole, and within the ABS in particular, provides an especially interesting case for tracing a translation through the institutional and social contexts that confer semiotic value. Rather than describe the textual and contextual factors that delimit the boundaries of translation in the *newmediabible*, it will be more interesting to treat them as the ground on which various contesting intellectual, institutional, and social positions are negotiated. In other words, to understand the *newmediabible's* function as translation, it is necessary to trace how the complex dialectics of conservatism and innovation, and the local and global factors that distinguish Bible Society corporate culture, produce the translation's semiotic value. Such an approach carries the force of criticism defined by Morot-Sir as the "*explicitation of the implicit* ... which will attempt to evaluate, that is, to make us conscious of, the referential energy concentrated into any sort of texts and works of art."[29]

Although Bible Societies have produced visualisations of biblical narrative as cartoon illustrations, illustrated children's books, comics, and selections (pamphlets presenting a fragment of biblical text together with an illustration of some variety)[30] for several decades, a variety of factors, some internal to the organisation itself,

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[28] See the UBS web site http://www.biblesociety.org for a catalogue of UBS scholarly publications.

[29] Morot-Sir, 1993, pp 140 and 149 (and see note 1 in my introduction)

[30] See Gregor Goethal's study and criticism of the history of Bible illustration (Soukup, 1999, pp 133-172)

others external to it have generated the motivation for diversification into audio-visual publishing. The late twentieth century displacement of print media by electronic media (in particular, the ubiquity of television and PCs as platforms for electronic communication) provides the principal legitimation for diversification in an organisation, that has for a century and a half of its existence been wedded ideologically to the printed word. New forms of media use have contributed to changes in the ways information is organised and retrieved, the integration of sound, vision and writing in multi-media environments, and the development of new forms of literacy amongst its users.[32] The issue of literacy, so fundamental to the traditional *raison d'être* of a print publisher such as the Bible Society, has not been limited to an apparent transition among some of its constituencies, notably young people, to a preference for electronic forms of communication. Potential users of Bible Society audio-visual publications are divided between the "post-literate" - people who can and do read, but prefer other forms of communication - and the "pre-literate" - people for whom the printed form is a closed book.[33] These different conceptions of literacy contribute to various notions about the purpose and function of translation. In the latter case, Bible Society has concentrated its resources on developing audio and New Reader materials.[34] Conceptions of literacy, in this case, are tied to the primacy of orality in cultures for whom these translations have been developed. This function gears translation to an acquisition or substitution of literacy where the dominance of writing and print as a set of cognitive skills defines literacy. In this case, a translation's value is produced partly by discourses of development within a global political economy of "Westernisation".[35]

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[32] See Burke and Scott in (Soukup, 1999), and Mullins and Shreve in (Hodgson, 1997)

[33] Burke (in Soukup, 1999, pp xiii-xiv). For a study of the social effects of the internet see [Hawisher, 2000 #5]

[34] The UBS finances a substantial literacy programme which involves publication of new reader materials - graded translations specially adjusted to the developing literacy skills of adults and children. These publications form a significant percentage of annual sales.

[35] It should be noted, however, that in Bible Society circles translation as a function of literacy co-exists with an extensive programme of translation for audio-cassette motivated by considerations that contradict an equation of literacy with economic and social development. The distinction between the "missionary" model of translation and "modern" Bible translation made by William A. Smalley (Smalley, 1991) could usefully be extended the modernisation of Bible Society publishing programmes.

By contrast, discourses of technological and media determinism dominate conceptions of literacy in so-called media saturated societies. On the one hand, the ubiquity of television as the popular form of entertainment is cited as a cause of illiteracy, typically

> Figures reported by "Reading is Fundamental", a group operating the largest literacy program in the U.S., indicate that up to 21 million Americans may be illiterate, and that "fewer than 25% of high school seniors read for pleasure; 90% of grade school children find television more appealing than reading, and 82% of these pupils prefer video games to reading.[35]

On the other hand, television and the internet are held accountable for emergent new literacies dominated by ever decreasing attention spans among readers. For example, the ABSi style manual begins its section on "Writing for the Internet" with the following advice:

> The web is a medium in which people can click off and on in seconds. Don't assume they will stay with your lengthy prose, no matter how brilliant ... Remember: you are one click away from losing your audience. Avoid overwriting. Use crisp, short sentences. Use punchy, simple language ... Edit as if you got a dollar for every word you take out.

The diminution of conventional forms of literacy presents a significant challenge to Bible Society definitions of biblical textuality, coherence, and authority. If the cultural imperatives of the internet reduce Bible translation to byte-sized chunks of no more than two screens in length, held hostage to the clicking mouse of an impatient reader, how will the Bible Society maintain its idea of the Bible as a textual unity and manage the linked conceptions of unity and literacy? UBS guidelines on translating for comics, audio-cassette, or video tape suggest this has become a central issue each time they publish fragments of the Bible in a new format. (Stine, 1995)

Another important contributory factor to diversification is the altered perception of the Society's markets in conjunction with a sense that media saturated societies have also become more visually oriented.[36] In many respects, changing

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[35] Quoted from *The New York Times*, Sunday, June 21, 1992, "Romancing the Book ... Once Again" in a document circulated by the ABS Multi-media Translation Program.

[36] See Gregor Goethals in (Soukup, 1999)

perceptions of Bible Society markets are a logical outcome of the organisation's vernacular translation programme and the intellectual disciplines, such as socio-linguistics, semiotics, and discourse analysis, that inform its communication models and practices. The need to recognise the importance of individual reading communities and target selected audiences with appropriate materials has become a priority in Bible Society corporate vision. Within the organisation, translation without doctrinal note or comment and the widest possible distribution of Bibles is no longer an adequate description of its mission. Communication must also be "effective" in recognition of the social and cultural contexts of reading and reception. Effectiveness is described in terms of the translation strategy, communication media choices and presentation style, and the inclusion of commentaries intended to bridge cultural, temporal, and geographical gaps between the original and its twentieth century audiences.

The combined forces of these internal and external factors cohere in the translation of the Contemporary English Version (ABS 1996)[37] which is, in all respects, a proto-type for the ABS New Media Translation project and the ABSi initiative. Initially conceived as a translation for children that employed levels of language acquisition and use considered appropriate to the target audience, focus group testing in the early stages of translation revealed its popularity among adults. The CEV uses language that aims at familiarity for audiences raised on the poetics and rhetoric of mass media communication in the twentieth century. A close analysis of the discourse structures of popular media was an important part of the translation process.[38] The translation is intended for public rather than silent, internalised reading and reception. Consequently, translators paid attention not only to the rhythms and tonal qualities of the language used - the way the translation

[37] See (Newman, 1996) for an introduction to the principles of translation in the CEV. (Burke, 1998) for a discussion with examples about specific translational strategies in the CEV.

[38] This principle is based on a well-established procedure in the UBS that gives equal credit to the reception contexts of translation and recognises: "a gradual shift in focus from the situation of origin, via the structural features of the text, to the situation of reception or realization of the text ... [in which] reception is a creative process, with implications for the understanding of texts ..." B.C. Lategan in (Louw, 1986, pp 83-95), (Burke, 1998) on a summary of the theoretics and practice of translation in relation to reception.

sounds - but also to the ways they presented the translation on the page.[39] Layout and punctuation place emphasis in places that make reading and comprehension in an oral/aural context easier.[40] Language use and the presentational form of the translation indicate a broader appeal and acceptability beyond the Bible Society's traditional Bible-reading publics. The CEV represents the popularising impulse of vernacular translation initiated by Martin Luther and realised through the capacities of print technology and mass produced paper. The influence of UBS translation practices in combination with changing media environments on altered perceptions of audience is an important factor in the development and design of The Project. The cultural assumptions that inhere in successive popularisations of the Bible; the conservative tendencies of attempts to create a new unified civic and moral order through Bible translation and publication; and the willingness to exploit each new introduction of communication technology underpin the ABS New Media Translation Project.[41] Translation and publication are inextricably wedded in a vision of broader and heterogeneous accessibility.

The New Media Translation Project was formed in 1990 after a year-long process of consultation within Bible Society on the feasibility of translating the Bible into electronic media. Several questions were considered. Is it possible to remain faithful to the Bible Society's non-sectarian policy of producing Scriptures "without doctrinal note or comment" when moving from one medium to another, ("transmediatization")?[42] What models exist already for translating the Bible into other media? How can working models of multi-media translation adapt principles

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[39] (Hodgson, January 1992). This is another example where perceptions of media specificity, i.e. differences between oral and print communication, have influenced translation strategy in the Bible Society by creating a translation that is intended for public reading. This change in translation strategy highlights the important point that media form is a factor of social practice not something intrinsic to media technology.

[40] The style and format of the CEV is informed both by local (American) cultural contexts and an already established practice of "meaningful" translation based on knowledge about reception in predominately oral cultures. (Louw, 1991)

[41] This combination is not unique to Bible Society translation and publication. (Crossan, 1998) on New Testament writing and codices, (Jardine, 1996) on print and the book; (Pym, 1998) on paper and translation practices. The idea that mass media technologies and popular entertainment forms can be harnessed to mold a civically responsible population is a recurrent theme in literature and film.

[42] The term "transmediatization" was coined by Dr. Thomas Boomershine, who was one of the original consultants for the ABS New Media Translation Project. (Boomershine in *UBS Bulletin*, 170/171)

of equivalence and how can these assure the integrity or quality of products? Finally, in what respects could "transmediatizations" be termed "translation"? The outcome of this consultation was a statement of the priorities and criteria for making faithful audio-visual translations. The guidelines on translating for comic strips, originally published in 1987, were adopted and adapted as the ground for "faithfulness" in the new media translation project. The full text of these guidelines is reproduced as an appendix. (See appendix I) The following is an attempt to summarise the thinking behind those guidelines.

Several Bible Societies had debated questions about faithfulness and equivalence raised as a consequence of diversification in their publishing programmes. The move from print into audio-visual formats, where apparently words cease to anchor the meaning of a biblical text, was seen as especially problematic on two counts: firstly, there was a widely shared assumption that images are multi-valent and that their meanings are difficult to control.[43] Discussions about textual indeterminacy are more muted within Bible Society circles where clarity is a fundamental aim of translation. However, the linguistic and rhetorical structures that produce ambiguity in a text and the translation solutions applied are frequently analysed in the pages of the UBS scholarly translation journal, *The Bible Translator*.[44] The problem of indeterminacy produced by the multi-valence of images is judged a more practical problem than a philosophical one in the terms discussed in my first section. Images present a whole new set of challenges, particularly in instances where they risk introducing unwanted or ambiguous interpretations. Secondly, translation from one medium to another presents a particular problem of authority. Arguments on this topic link practical questions about equivalence between word and image with the canonical authority of the

[43] We have already explored the fallacies of this assumption insection one of my thesis. There is no need to re-iterate them here.

[44] The causes of ambiguity are neither universal nor homogeneous, and approaches to their solution are varied. Sometimes ambiguity is caused by transcription errors in early texts, in which case clarity becomes an issue of whether or not to correct these early transcription errors. In other cases ambiguities have been introduced in modern translations because account has not been taken of the use of a particular grammatical construction by the author. In yet further cases, modern translations have been criticised for diluting the shocking effects of ambiguous constructions such as aphorisms. However, this conception of textual indeterminacy is more likely to be applied to translations than to the original text itself.

written word. This approach concerns the Scriptural authority of a translation. In his address to the UBS Video Consultation in New York in February 1994, Dr. Basil Rebera, UBS Global Translation Services Coordinator, argued that any discussion of faithfulness should recognise that "Christians and people of other faiths alike recognise only a written text as the Christian Scriptural source of revelation and authority." Additionally, a translation cannot be faithful simultaneously to the written and audio-visual medium because the two media function in different ways to communicate meaning. For example, a pig, or a cow, or a sheep, or whatever, must always represent a fat "animal" because it is impossible to show an "animal". The debate is wrapped up in the Society's discourses on "faithfulness." Since this has been central to discussions about translation from one medium to another, a summary of what the term signifies in Bible Society circles will be helpful. This discussion is also important to give balance to frequent narrow stereotyping of Bible Society as a fundamentalist Protestant evangelical organisation constructed through a superficial reading of some of its translations or of E.A. Nida's writing on the theory and practice of translation. One must remember that, globally, the Bible Society's constituents include the Catholic and Orthodox Churches[45] and that many new Bible translations are inter-confessional projects. It is hardly necessary to point out the tensions that arise from theological differences between translators involved in such projects.

The debate considers "faithful" translation in broader terms than a substitution of words or discourse units by equivalents in another language (a linguistic conception), or an unmediated representation of the original authorial intent (a literary conception). Fidelity in Bible Society translation is a praxis, a delicate task of balancing the power of an original text, the technical difficulties (both linguistic and cultural) of translation, and the acceptability of the final product. Since Bible Society publishes its own translations, the issue of acceptability extends to presentation formats (including paper quality, print face, binding, illustrations, and so on) and the constraints of a translation's sponsoring agency (such as the

[45] Contracts of cooperation have been negotiated between the United Bible Societies and these churches at the highest pinnacle of their respective hierarchies, i.e. the Vatican and Patriarchates of the Greek and Russian Orthodox Churches.

American Bible Society). A translation's acceptability stems from an endorsement by ecclesiastical power for its *use*, a recognition of the translation's legitimacy within the target community, assurance of the reliability of source texts, support for the choice of linguistic medium and, finally, its comparison with pre-existing translations. The Bible's status as a sacred text polarises positions on many factors that contribute to the acceptability of a translation.[46] As Stephen Batalden concludes in his study of modern Russian biblical translation,

> Modern biblical translations inevitably arise out of particular political and cultural contexts. Translators are themselves products of one or another political culture. The ability to publish and disseminate the result of translation activity is also governed by local publishing conventions. Even the textual bases selected in translation and the linguistic medium employed rarely are entirely outside the influence of local political and cultural constraints.[47]

For Bible Society translators, the issues of translation and power are an everyday reality.[48] The particularities of modern Bible translation involves managing the pull between the conservative forces of Christian faith and its sacred texts and intellectual developments in modern linguistics, anthropology, biblical criticism, and communication theory that underpin Bible translation. The present-day image of modern Bible translation is a normative theological process in which interpretive authority is determined by the choice of source text, the translation's strategy and function on the one hand and on the other hand, a dialogical confrontation between the universality of Christian belief and the particularity of its vernacular articulation, between the Bible as literature and its canonisation as divinely inspired sacred text, and between the world-view contained within the source text and the world views contained within its rewriting.[49]

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[46] This is not unique to attitudes among Bible translators. The same kinds of polarisations can be observed in criticisms of "functional equivalence" in the field of translation studies. (Gentzler, 1993; Prickett, 1986; Venuti, 1995) Here the apparently populist philosophy that motivates Nida's theory of equivalence is compared unfavourably with the literary pretensions of formal translation. The cultural relativism of these positions is brought home by a comparison of Gentzler and Venuti who respectively accuse Nida of populism and elitism on the same technical grounds. In effect, these contrasting positions do not move beyond the old literal/free dichotomy in translation theory. For a critical discussion about the difficulties of cultural relativism see (Fish, 1994; Fish, 1999)

[47] (Batalden, 1990, p 68)

[48] See (Stine, 1990) for a variety of case studies relating to this topic.

[49] See Lamin Sanneh in (Stine, 1990) and Joy Sisley, *Transforming the Canon: biblical narrative and popular culture,* 1999, ABS Research Centre Web Site: http://www.researchcenter.org/

"Faithfulness" in Bible Society translation terminology is a theological perspective and refers to a process of biblical hermeneutics that aims at establishing the contemporary relevance of the Christian Bible. "Equivalence", which is not a synonym for "faithfulness", is a term for the technical aspects of translation that underwrite the principles of faithful translation. The term is understood and used in the sense proposed by Eugene A. Nida. In practice, it consists in a set of established institutional procedures that set the parameters for exegesis of both the source text and target culture textual forms and conventions. Source text exegesis is an interdisciplinary exercise based on close textual analysis and interpretation that aims to uncover the socio-semiotic contexts of the original text as a communication event. This involves paying attention to the paratextual, and non-verbal elements of any text, as well as the cultural contexts that gave it coherence in the first place.[50] A wide range of scholarly disciplines informs the concept of equivalence in Bible Society translation programmes. It is the technical means by which Bible Society manages the disparate and conflicting doctrinal positions of its constituents and aims to produce "acceptable" translations for its linguistically, culturally and dogmatically heterogeneous audiences. Far from a "Protestant subtext" that illuminates the "manipulation of a text to serve the interests of a religious belief"[51] the principle of equivalence effectively amounts to a discursive repertoire for negotiating the Society's institutional neutrality as a non-sectarian translation organisation and maintaining a delicate balance of power between Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Protestant churches who are its primary constituents. In this context, one cannot reduce Bible Society discourses that aim to maintain a status quo between these competing interests to a caricature of religious ideology. To do so misunderstands

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[50] See *The Bible Translator*, UBS scholarly journal on Bible translation, and UBS Handbook Series on Bible translation. The distinctions made between faithfulness and equivalence are reflected in the separation in *The Bible Translator* of practical and technical papers. The journal demonstrates the ways theory and practice inform each other in the Bible Society translation programme. A similar pattern is followed in the format of the UBS Translation Handbooks. See the UBS web site http://www.biblesociety.org for a catalogue of UBS scholarly publications on translation.

[51] (Gentzler, 1993, pp 59-60) Gentzler's criticism of Nida betrays a similar belief in the integrity of the original text (p 59). However, his criticism completely misses the point because he abstracts Nida's theory from the interdisciplinary and inter-confessional contexts within it was developed. Gentzler's discussion is exemplary of the dangers of abstracting texts from the social and cultural contexts of their production and of abstracting signification from its ground (p 53). It is also a perfect example of what Bourdieu means by position taking in a field of cultural production.

and misrepresents the social and institutional contexts of Bible Society work and its global reach.

The linking of the two terms, faithful equivalence, in Bible Society descriptions of their translation principles points to the textual and social contexts of their work. On a hermeneutic level, a perception of the Bible as a textual unity grounds the Bible Society's concept of faithfulness.[53] It places a high priority on the contextual significance of biblical texts in terms of both their internal coherence and their original reception - the 'theme' and 'meaning' of the text, or its discoursal settings which "often provides essential clues to the meaning of the passage, not only in the content of what precedes and what follows, but also through giving a better understanding of the setting and background of the book as a whole and a passage in particular."[54] In this respect, the notion of faithfulness is strongly source oriented and reflects a particular understanding of textual authority. But the principles of Nida's functional equivalence, adopted by the UBS translation programme, are also unequivocally target oriented. "The translator's goal is to produce a text that will communicate the message of the source text effectively and accurately to the audience. He/she must therefore have a good understanding of the audience and their situation, and use the form of language that they will understand and accept."[55] In this case, fidelity rests on a conception of the authority of interpretive communities or the circumstances in which a translation can be meaningful to contemporary audiences. The *experience* of Bible translation has resulted in a more composite understanding of relations between audiences, text, and society than a structuralist reading of Nida's model communication model would infer.[56]

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[53] One may quibble with any number of conceptions of the Bible as a textual unity, (see Alter, 1981, Josipovici, 1990) but this does not alter the fact these readers' interpretations are based on a particular perception, whether literary or theological, of the unity of the Bible as a text. The critical methodology of this thesis, however, aims to trace the effects on interpretation of particular representations of the Bible, not to engage in rather overworked debates about the truth of falsity of textual unity. Such value judgements are antithetical to an exploration of the referential power of translation because they divert attention from an analysis of *how* people read and interpret the Bible.

[54] Fry (in Soukup, 1999, p 9) Note Fry's qualification of the concept of coherence as both a whole pericope or complete discourse unit (p 11) and the intertextual contexts of the passage in the Bible as a whole.

[55] Fry (in Soukup, 1999)

[56] See Soukup (in Hodgson, 1997; Soukup, 1999) and Boomershine (in Stine, 1995)

In summary, Daniel Arichea's discussion about the relation between theology and translation (in Stine, 1990) typifies the intellectual complexities of the Bible Society's concept of faithful equivalence, while Stephen Bataldan's essay in the same book on modern Russian Bible translation provides an account of the political realities of translation. Both essays deal with the complex nature of textual authority that Bible Society definitions of faithful equivalence seek to negotiate. Arichea makes a distinction between the Bible as literature written by human beings, which he argues is assumption of biblical and textual scholarship, and the Bible as divinely inspired sacred literature, which he argues is an assumption of theology.[57] Arichea's distinction is an interesting one because it uncouples the composition of the Bible as literature from its function as a sacred text within Christian communities. This reflects a highly political move because it claims interpretive authority for academic scholarship, which does not necessarily align itself with a particular theological viewpoint. In his discussion about the task of the translator, he asks "what is the relationship between the descriptive and the theological tasks, that is between analyzing the Bible as literature and regarding the Bible as normative for Christian faith and life?"[58] Batalden, in his essay, traces the intervention of Church and State in Russian Bible translation. Bataldén demonstrates that authority is not intrinsic to the text but arises from a combination of political, textual, cultural and institutional factors. His conclusion that a highly structured Russian and Soviet politicised environment has drawn modern Russian biblical translation inevitably into politically controversial questions of authority - in which the authority of translations and publishing, of texts, of the language itself, and the authority to distribute scripture all form part of this political context - underscores Avni's argument that the signifying value of an object (in this case a translation) cannot be reduced to an intrinsic significant quality. Rather, the social relations of production and distribution are what give translation its force. This point is central to my analysis of the relation between theory and practice in the ABS project.

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[57] He notes: "Inspiration should be related to the various functions of Scripture understood as sacred literature ... An aspect of the functional approach to inspiration is the recognition that somehow inspiration is related to the way the biblical material was used in the community of faith. The inspiration of Scripture ... arises out of the appropriation of these materials by the Christian community. (Stine, 1990, p 60)

[58] (Stine, 1990, p 62)

The initial consultation phase for the New Media Translation Project concluded with a great many questions unanswered.[58] For example: what were the ABS goals in new media use and who were its audiences? If one of the main criteria for 'faithful' translation was the textual unity and coherence of the Bible, what were the textual implications of selection and fragmentation imposed by the economic constraints of a vastly more expensive audio-visual translation programme? Could one call audio-visual representations of biblical narrative translation? Is it possible to create "faithful" translations in sound and image, or do these levels merely constitute interpretations? How should an organisation that stakes its reputation on the integrity of its translations - underwritten by a policy of high level research in translation theory and biblical exegesis, recruitment of an elite corps of highly educated translation personnel, rigorous translator training, high standards in checking and approving translation, and finally, a commitment to inter-confessional, non-doctrinal translation principles - maintain rigorous standards in audio-visual translations? (The consultation process involved a review of existing audio-visual products on the market, many of which were judged to be of poor quality in terms of Bible Society principles of faithful equivalence). These questions reflected a tension between the conservatism of Bible Society mission and the challenges of responding to the impact of an emergent global electronic communication environment. They had a fundamental influence on the development of project goals; the recruitment of advisors and creative people into the project; the organisational structures evolved to manage the diverse interests and professional competencies of this group; the position of the project within the organisation as a whole; and the translation models and production values adopted to assure the continuation of established Bible Society standards. Ironically, the adoption of a particular set of production values, driven in large part by the professional expectations of its creative and production personnel, resulted in a high profile for the project and especially its video elements within the professional world of film-making, while the project has met with incomprehension and criticism as regards its function as translation within the immediate sphere of Bible Society.

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[58] See Haggerdorn in (Soukup, 1999)

The outcome of consultation was the formation of a core translation team who in a spirit of praxis, embarked on an experimental audio-visual translation. The first translation went into production in 1990. It was a translation of Mark 5:1-20, a story about the miracle healing of a man possessed by a thousand evil spirits. *Out of the Tombs* was conceived as an interactive study programme at the heart of which is a translation of the biblical text rendered as music video. At the time, *Out of the Tombs* was made for laser disk, a system that gave little scope for mass distribution. The programme was later transferred to CD-ROM. The story was chosen through focus group testing with the projects' target audience, American teenagers. The project aimed to find innovative ways to present biblical narrative in attractive and exciting forms that could compete with the entertainment preferences of its target audience. Music video as an aesthetic form, and CD-ROM as the delivery platform seemed obvious choices in the climate of change that confronted the ABS research project. The experimental nature of the project meant that many of the challenges of translating from one medium to another provided questions for research, whose solutions were fed back into the group's practices. Gradually, the core translation team gathered together a highly eclectic advisory group of scholars, media professionals, and other consultants who became an active part of the translation process.[60] It is worth pointing out that most, if not all, members of this group do not necessarily identify with theological, or intellectual positions held by people in other parts of the organisation. In fact, many of them would feel uncomfortable with some of these views. This oppositional stance is a distinguishing feature of the group.

At the outset, the project boldly asserted the first production to be a translation because it had initiated new biblical and scholarly research in source text exegesis.

> Such a video is a "translation" because it faithfully transfers into the target language of film and video the meaning of a source text, though it does so using

[60] An impression of the diversity of this group and the scope of their expertise can be formed from the biographies published in (Hodgson, 1997; Soukup, 1999). The group reflects up to a point the religious and ethnic pluralism of the ABS and American society at large. The group includes among its members Protestant, Catholic and Jewish advisors as well as people with no particular religious affiliation.

> not just the words of the source text, but also the contemporary sounds and images that are invited by that text.[60]

The project adopted the principles of faithful functional equivalence that provide the foundation for translation and publishing norms in the Bible Society. These principles were applied to every aspect of project design and its research procedures. The functional equivalent conception of faithfulness also included perceived characteristics of the new medium. "What is appropriate, natural, and correct in the printed text will not always be the most appropriate, natural and correct expression of the meaning in an oral text."[61] Additionally, the requirements of fidelity involved paying attention to the "total presentation" of the text in relation to the meaning of the biblical text, including *formal elements*, such as closing and opening statements, credits, topic or theme; *audience helps* such as historical background, geographical or cultural information and the wider context of the selected material; and *application elements*, material relating to the contextual coherence of passages for modern audiences.[62] In recognition that media shifts would force a re-evaluation of existing practices of faithful translation, and perhaps even new definitions of what constituted 'equivalence', 'text', and 'audience', one of the project's primary aims was to "test the limits and possibilities of translation."[63] The translation project was, and still is, experimental, driven by research more than marketing priorities. Besides, the extent to which different departments in the ABS consider the series a marketable product reflects the different positions taken up within the organisation about what constitutes "effective" distribution and, consequently, how to evaluate the series as translation. The conflicting positions occupied on this issue constitutes one of the main arenas of the pull between conservatism and innovation within the ABS. As a result of its experimental nature, the series has remained marginal to the organisation's mainstream publishing activities. The project represents a moment of change in translation and publishing practice, where their re-assessment makes the repertoires and models of translation in the organisation more visible.

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60 (Hodgson, 1997, p 7)
61 (Soukup, 1999, p 14)
62 See Fry in (Soukup, 1999)
63 (Hodgson, 1997, p 6)

Before describing and analysing the project's translation processes it may help to have an idea of the general look of the series. Several essays (in Hodgson, 1997; Soukup, 1999) describe the production processes and the principles behind them. The following is a brief summary of the translation and design issues that these essays explore. The *newmediabible* presently consists of 4 interactive programmes at the heart of which is a translation of a selected biblical text presented as music video. Two further programmes are still in production.[65] To date, six videos have been completed. They are, in the order of their production: *Out of the Tombs* (Mark 5:1-20), *A Father and Two Sons* (Luke 15:11-32), *The Visit* (Luke 1:39-56), *The Neighbor* (Luke 10:25-37), *Resurrection* (John 20:1-31) and *Nativity* (Luke 2:1-21). The project began life as a CD-ROM publication but moved to the internet part way through. *The Neighbor* and *Resurrection* can be viewed on the research center's web site: http://www.newmediabible.org linked to the American Bible Society web site: http://www.AmericanBibleSociety.org. The other programmes are available on CD-ROM from the ABS. The New Media Translation Project is called "The Life of Christ" and was conceived originally as a series of thirteen passages selected from the four Gospels. The selection of individual passages was designed to give the project textual unity. The interactive material which links the individual programmes to the Gospels as a textual unit and to canonical formations of the New Testament is also supposed to reinforce the project's textual unity. However, funding was withdrawn from the project at the end of 1999 after only 6 videos were completed and before the interactive elements of *Resurrection* and *Nativity* were written so the original conception of the series' unity has not been realised.

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[65] The option of music video was chosen to appeal to a teenage audience as well as get around the problems identified by research in the group with dramatisation or animation. Dramatisation as a model was considered problematic because of its association with Hollywood adaptations of biblical narratives but also of another possible association with the idealised style of Doré illustrations popular at the turn of the century. See Goethals (in Soukup, 1999). Animation was rejected because it was considered unsuitable for the tastes of the age range envisioned. The dominance in American culture of Disney animation as an available model is an important factor here. In Europe, film animation has a more eclectic history. In Britain, the wider range of styles and broader appeal of European animation have found their way into the mainstream of animation with popular films like Aardman Animation's Wallace and Grommit series, or the satirical series *Spitting Image* that creates caricatures of political figures with latex puppets. It is unlikely, for example, that an animated series like *Testament* would have been conceived in an American cultural context.

The interactive elements of the *newmediabible* consist of essays on the cultural, historical and geographical background of the text, a "dig deeper" section that imitates the close textual analysis prepared for the translation, and other representations of the text in music and art. Each programme has an exercise designed to engage the user interactively and suggest approaches to "reading" and "evaluating" the translation.[66] The interactive elements are connected to each other via hypertext links. *The Neighbor* contains a short promotional video on the making of the story in its "video room" along with other video materials that give the user an insight into the theory and practice of Bible translation for electronic media. While the CD-ROM versions are self-contained, the internet versions are linked to other web sites of potential interest to the user. Each programme is embedded in a symbolic structure, or "mega metaphor" designed to unify the various elements of the interactive design, such as study helps, user activities, and background essays. For example, the mega metaphor for *The Father and Two Sons* is a shopping mall. The metaphor symbolises a space, or context in which teenagers often meet. But its visual design contains traces of other public spaces from other times and places where people gather. (fig. I) The mega metaphor of a nautilus in *The Visit* symbolises growth and life as well as a principle of construction in humanly created forms.[67] The graphic representation of the mega metaphor on the first screen of the programme incorporates the various points of access to the rest of the programme. See the first screen of *The Father and Two Sons.* (fig. ii)

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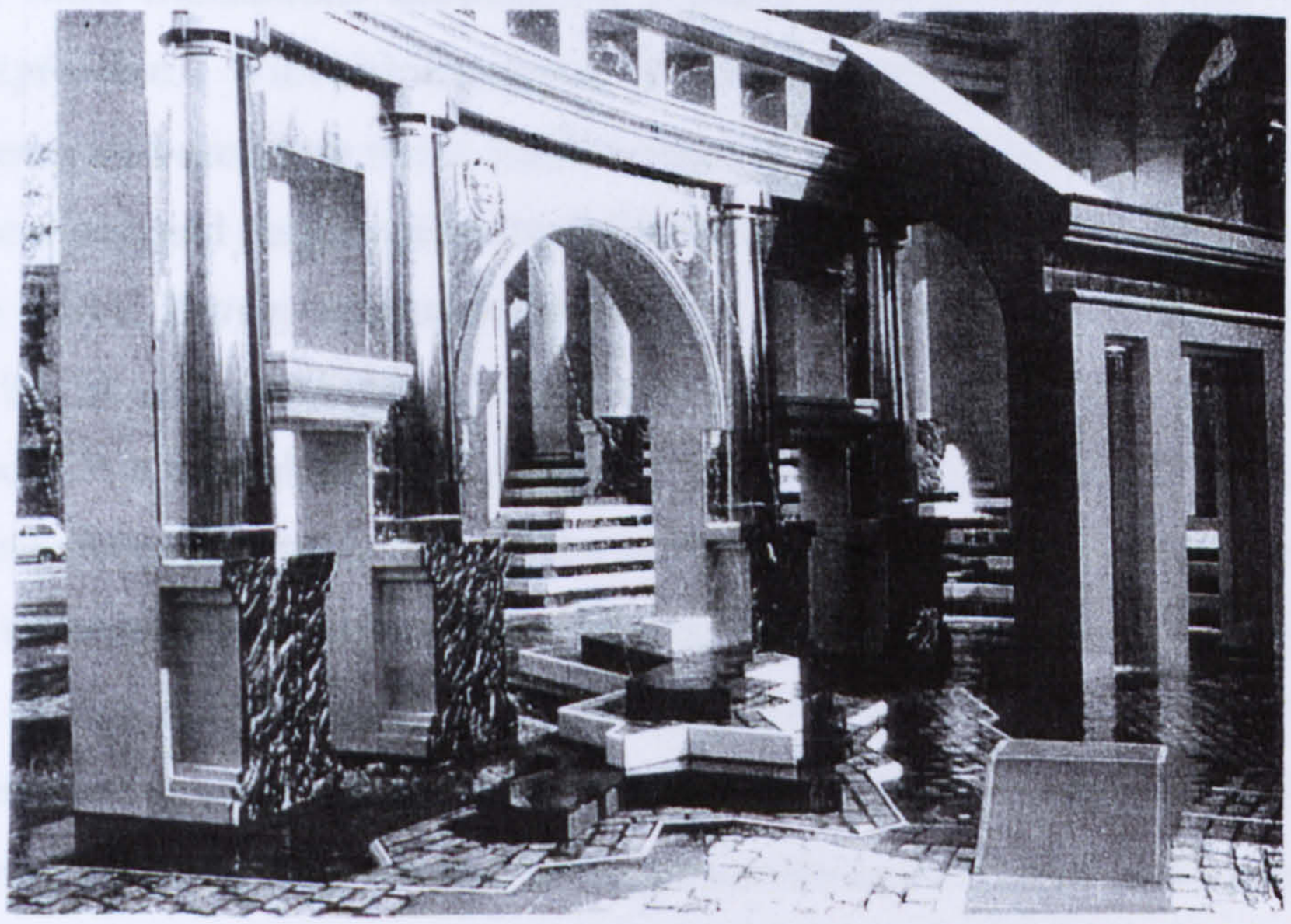
[66] See also Mona Baker (in Soukup, 1999) for an evaluation of the translation project included in *The Visit.* By using the KJV and the CEV, this exercise becomes a contrastive one between "literal" and "free" translation. The principle of this exercise is overlooked in Baker's evaluation.

[67] See Goethals (in Hodgson, 1997) for a fuller description.



(fig. i) Megametaphor for "A Father and Two Sons)

(fig. ii) A Father and Two Sons - home page

The video translations adopted the popular form of music video as their idiom of expression. With the exception of *The Neighbor* and *Resurrection* the visual elements are based on a music track created by a popular singer or group. For example, the music and performance for *A Father and Two Sons* is by country blues singer Rory Block, *Nativity* was created by Sweet Honey in the Rock, *The Visit* was performed by an archepella group called Women of the Calabash. In each case "performance" is a central signifying element of the video. While the visuals and music are individual interpretations of the word track they are carefully integrated. The visual elements are an attempt to render in contemporary idiomatic form some of the key themes and elements of the passage. This is exemplary of a "sense for sense" translation strategy. Care has been taken to avoid a "literal" interpretation through "one-to-one correspondence" or "representational" forms (actors dressed up in flowing robes and sandals) on the grounds that "non-restructuring, ... [attempts to present] a rendering of the text which matches the printed text word for word, ... will almost certainly result in distortions of one kind or another for receptors who are not already familiar with the text in printed form."[67] A variety of visual styles have been adopted: *Out of the Tombs*, *A Father and Two Sons*, and *The Neighbor* predominately feature a narrative shaped around a dominant visual metaphor, such as the sea in *Out of the Tombs*, and a horse as a symbol of wealth and property in *A Father and Two Sons*. *The Visit* and *Nativity* focus on the performers, while *Resurrection*, filmed as a wake in a funeral parlour, attempts a kind of visual poetry by intercutting the actor's performance with sets of recurring images. Although the videos are populist, post-modern, even kitsch as some Bible Society translation officers have suggested, stylistically their dominant inter-textual references lean to sacred art and music as much as to popular culture and music video. For example the scenes in the "inn" in *The Neighbor* resonate strongly both with images of the pietà and contemporary news media images of refugees.[68] When the Samaritan leaves, the doors of the warehouse, which served as a set for the inn, open to bright light through which the Samaritan steps evoking both the beginning of the trial scene in

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[67] (Soukup, 1999, p 14)

[68] The blurring of boundaries between 'sacred' and 'secular' images is also evident in current media constructions of exile and grief, or popular representations of the Madonna and Child. See articles in my media file.

Zeffirelli's *Jesus of Nazareth* (1977) and the generic shot at the end of Hollywood Westerns of the cowboy riding into the sunset. **(See clip 18)** In this respect, music video is very suitable for the kinds of ideas with which the project was experimenting. The plasticity of music video as a generic form makes it possible to include a heterogeneity of images without disrupting the narrative constraints of coherence. It also focuses the word track as the source of coherence to the kaleidoscope of images and their symbolism. Overall, despite the translation project's populist intentions, imagery in the videos is semiotically rich and historically eclectic. The project places heavy demands on the cultural and visual literacy of its audiences. But behind its stylistic eclecticism there is a deliberate attempt to avoid the polarisations of "popular" and "high" religious art and to blur the lines between "sacred" and "secular" imagery.[69] One could argue that the project is intellectually elitist. Such an evaluation would, however, be out of character with the critical methodology of this thesis and contains an implicit value judgement about the cultural knowledge of the project's target readers, which can only be "proved" by ethnographic audience research which is beyond the scope of this thesis.

The *newmediabible* production structures reflect the programme's translation principles and values. Three principal groups are involved: a small core team of creative designers, translators, and producers; an advisory group of scholars and media professionals; a film director who is contracted for each production and a computer programming and design studio. The "core team" is responsible for music and art direction, translation, production, and graphic design. The videos are all directed by Merle Worth whose distinctive style contributes to the particular identity of the series. The technical design of the web site has been created by Modus Design. The biblical scholars in the advisory group write the articles that provide the interpretive background for translation and production. This material becomes part of the "text base" which has two functions: it provides a body of

[69] See Gocthals article on popular culture as ritual space in (Hodgson, 1997). The intellectual force behind the blurring of sacred and secular imagery in the project may be attributed to Gocthals historical understanding of this process in twentieth century popular culture. Gocthals is a member of the project's core team and the web site's graphic designer. Her knowledge of art history and repertoire in graphic design is one of the dominant discourses in the visual style of the video translations.

detailed textual analysis which assists development of an audio-visual treatment and it forms the basis for the programme's interactive material. Since 1998 the New Media Translation Project has awarded two research scholarships each year.[70] The fellowships are given to people whose research interests are considered to complement or extend existing research in the group. They are expected to contribute new and different research perspectives to the project. As with the virtual nature of the project's delivery platform, with the exception of a small administrative centre based in Springfield, Missouri, the project itself is located within the virtual space of the internet. The advisory group meets face to face with the core team twice a year for a total of six days to share research and work on whichever project is current. In the intervening period, members of the advisory group and core team communicate with each other via a special chat room set up on the Research Center's web site, or by telephone or teleconference. During production, the core team have more contact with the director and artists, but even in this case, much of the decision making is done via telephone and the internet. Communication therefore occurs in a virtual space that has an important effect on the way people think about the project. The Research Centre has adopted patterns of teleworking that are part of its organisational identity. The website has become an important site for the development of the group's production repertoire. One of the essential paradoxes of this site is that a lot of visual ideas are reduced to exchanges written in a shorthand that has become a signature of the chat room.[71] Despite the geographic dispersal of the project's members and its professional and intellectual eclecticism, the group prides itself on its cohesion and the collegiality of its decision making processes. The project presents a model of interdisciplinarity that in many cases provides a sharp contrast to the institutional environments in which individual members work.

Each production follows a similar path. Since The Project has adopted the label "translation" for the interactive programme as a whole, several new terms have

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[70] Of the four research fellows to date, three are translation studies scholars from Europe.

[71] An analysis of the discourses that have developed within this decision-making semiosphere and its impact on the final production are unfortunately beyond the scope of the present study as is the impact of teleworking on translation. It does however constitute an important site for the development of the group's production repertoire.

been invented to distinguish the various elements of the translation: "word track", "image track", "music track", "text base". The "text base" consists of all the research and scholarly materials gathered in the process of source text analysis. The text base is thus foundational to an interpretation of the passage chosen for translation. Text base materials include other representations and interpretations of the passage, for example in sacred art, music, film and dance.[72] A translation of the "word track" is made from the UBS Greek New Testament.[73] Since the "word track" is intended for performance, the translators pay close attention to the oral features of the Greek text. Several techniques have been developed to facilitate the process. For example, Kenneth Thomas recommends, "Familiarity with the content, form, sound and image characteristics of the source language text will be gained through listening to recital in the source language and frequent readings of the text aloud."[74] Another member of the research group, Brandon Scott, has developed a system that he calls "colometric testing".[75] Colometric testing involves mapping the basic grammatical units of Greek prose composition: the κοωλον (colon: what can be said in a breath) and the περιοδοσ (period: a complete expression that can be taken in at a glance).[76] As the basic auditory units of a composition emerge, a translator can begin to see how they were organised to aid interpretation. Scott argues that the Greek New Testament was a predominately oral text and that print radically changed reading and reception from a public declamatory experience into a private, interior experience. He claims that silent reading encouraged by print is based on a metaphorical model of a container which reduces the biblical text to a "signified, an abstract concept, a message ... Translation models conceived within this hermeneutics and epistemology of print deal with only one dimension of the

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[72] See individual articles in (Hodgson, 1997; Soukup, 1999), the *Neighbor* web site (http://www.Newmediabible.org/1goodsam/default.htm) and archive material on the Research Center web site (http://www.researchcenter.org)

[73] (Aland et al., 1966) The GNT, which is used in all United Bible Society translations, is an attempt to "reconstruct the most authentic possible text from the oldest and most reliable sources" established through detailed text critical analysis.(Smalley, 1991, p 101) This is different from the manuscripts used for the King James Version of the New Testament, known as the "majority text" because until late into the nineteenth century it was effectively the only text type available in Europe. See Arichea in (Stine, 1990) for a longer discussion about and bibliography on text-critical issues in Greek versions.

[74] (Thomas, 1994, p 46)

[75] See Scott in (Soukup, 1999, pp 101-118)

[76] ibid., p 112

composition ... they translate only half of the composition, the silent half."[77] By contrast, he describes the dominant metaphor for communication in the ancient Greek world from which the Gospels emerged as an amphitheatre. The literary culture of this world was a rhetorical one based around the public performance of a composition which was intended to be read out loud. The signifiers in the composition therefore give instructions on its performance. On the basis of this argument, Scott recommends, to understand how ancient Greek audiences understood the Gospel it is necessary to discover how they "heard" the text by making a detailed analysis of its rhetorical features in the context of an Aristotelian definition of rhetoric. This involves paying "close attention to the clues the Greek offers for its performative translation" in which the rhetorical features of composition may be treated as "stage directions for its performance on the stage of an ampitheatre"[78]

Once the word track has been agreed by the advisory group, the translation moves into its next phase where the "word track" becomes the "source text" for the image and sound tracks. The content of the image track is worked on collaboratively by the advisory group, the core team, and film director. In many senses, the transformation from written to audio visual version represents the real moment of creative struggle. The procedure for finding an acceptable representational form for the video translation consists of an extended period of brainstorming structured around the search for a "*mega metaphor*" which will give coherence to the whole composition and determine many of the visual tropes in the video. The brainstorming is conducted partly on the basis of collective research into representations of the *mega metaphor* in other cultural forms: film, performance, dance, sacred art, architecture - the net is cast wide in the search for an appropriate repertoire. During this process, the director suggests treatments, based on her own knowledge of film styles and her reading of the "word track", which are checked by the biblical scholars in the advisory group against their knowledge and interpretation of the Greek original. Eventually, the group agrees on a treatment and the translation

[77] ibid., p 103 Elsewhere, Scott insists on using the term "composition" which includes the notion of rhetorical and performance features, in favour of "text" which implies a much narrower conception of writing.

[78] (Soukup, 1999, p 111)

moves on to the creation of a detailed shooting script which is shared with the core team and members of the advisory group who have been assigned to this stage of production. The final content of the video is the result of a complex negotiation that reflects the particular professional preoccupation and values of the parties involved. This procedure represents one of the greatest points of tension in the process and clearly demonstrates the dialogical nature of translation in general. Whereas the scholar's conception of professional integrity, acquired within the fields of biblical scholarship and translation, rests on the quality of their analysis which is justified by the academic and normative criteria of their field,[79] the director's priorities are located centrally in the application of high production values and an intuitive grasp of what "works" for a chosen genre. Her integrity rests on concepts of professionalism acquired within the cultural field of film and television production which supply the evaluative criteria forher occupational group. The two sets of values do not necessarily conflict, in fact a commitment to high technical and creative quality in the filming is shared by both groups. (High production values are also imposed by the genre expectations of commercial music video production). In spite of this shared commitment, the translations are not immune from individual interpretive idiosyncrasies. In the case of *The Neighbor*, for example, audiences have commented extensively on two images: the approaching train in the opening scene and the pillow fight. The ambiguity of these images are partly a consequence of different approaches to visual interpretation in the project. They are analogous to "mis-translations" resulting from the individual "translator's" inexperience or lack of fluency in the other's "language". Such misunderstandings arise sometimes because the director does not fully grasp how the advisory group has interpreted the text, or the advisory group has not fully appreciated how or why the director is using a particular image. However, there is a danger that treating these images as "mis-translation" lays too great an emphasis on the mechanical aspects of translation and undermines the collaborative and intuitive aspects of the interpretive process that sustains the project's openness to experimentation.

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[79] See essays on each section of the translation written for web site users.

Filming the word track is a flexible process, a collaboration between the director and her crew, the core team, and members of the advisory group who are present on location to advise on the acceptability of any last minute changes. A final edit is screened at one of the twice yearly meetings and comments invited. As the version shown at this meeting is the on-line edit,[80] it is usually too late to incorporate comments made at this stage into the final programme. Decisions made during shooting and editing are sometimes presented as a *fait accompli* to the whole research group. The different parties in the project have developed a certain arm's length, partly perhaps because of professional jealousies, partly to forestall unwanted criticism, or partly through a simplification of working practices.[81] The idea that the director's presence at research meetings may contribute to a greater mutual understanding of the translation task is raised regularly but, after ten years, the project has developed routinised work patterns and lines of communication that are in the main accepted as workable and the division of labour organised along professional lines is maintained.

Despite The Project's innovations, translation did not happen in a vacuum. UBS translation policies provided a ready model with minimal adaptation of its principles and familiar working practices. Members of the advisory and production teams also had to adapt to the working methods of fields outside their own professional experience. The essays in (Soukup, 1999) document the impact of these new experiences on individual members. In general, however, the project probably had a more significant influence on the ways people think about translation than on their working methods. In practice, people tended to fall back on their own professional repertoires in response to change. This type of collective behaviour is consistent with descriptions of social and cognitive repertoires of social action. (Burman and Parker, 1993; Traugott, 1995) One feature of The Project's organisational structures and established patterns of work was a neglect of some of the key aspects of the group's definition of "faithfulness". Faithfulness to the

[80] Distinctions between "off-line" (rough) edits, and "on-line" (the final) edit are driven by the economics of film or video production. Given the extremely high expense of setting up and running a professional video editing studio, the final phase of the on-line edit is generally considered irreversible, the moment in which certain elements of a production are fixed.

[81] Haggerdorn in (Soukup, 1999)

source text and source text analysis (as well as the history of its interpretation) became the primary preserve of the biblical scholars in the advisory group, while knowledge about the translation medium became the primary preserve of the director and artists. There was a relative absence of critical analysis of the popular culture models used. Equally, the Project gave only passing commentary on existing models they rejected, such as the "representational" forms of Hollywood biblical epic and Jesus films. The Project relied primarily on the director's intuitive grasp of the genre; feedback from formal and informal focus group testing; peer opinion, for example, from film and television festivals. This relative absence of critical interest in the genres and repertoires that constitute the "language of translation" used in The Project reflects the conservative nature of Bible translation and its habitual focus on the source text or message.

The contradictory pulls of innovation and conservatism that shaped the project reflect a model of translation and power built into the ABS organisational culture, in particular the position it takes within the field of Bible translation and publication and, more generally, the position it takes as defender of moral values based on its founding vision of a Bible-based social consensus. In this context, one may read the *newmediabible's* semiotic value through an understanding of the function of translation, where function consists of relationships between producer, text, and society. From the producer's point of view (in this case the American Bible Society and the people it recruited into The Project) the rhetorical and discursive strategies that identify the ABS as conservative of certain repertoires of social and Christian pluralism and maintain that position in the face of social and cultural change, reveal the function of translation. These discourses extend beyond individual translations into the ABS's projection of a corporate image through its organisational structures and working practices. In this context, faithful equivalence is a discursive strategy that both maintains a neutrality *vis à vis* the Society's Christian constituents and makes an intervention within the broader sphere of American public life. Such intervention may, as some critics have suggested, characterise the Society's evangelical purposes, but it also arises from the recognition that a translation's reception depends on expectations shaped by the Christian *and*

secular cultural worlds its audiences inhabit. It is naive to imagine that Bible translation does not engage the repertoires of secular communication or persuasion in an ongoing dialectic between the sacred and profane of these two worlds.

From society's point of view, the socially discursive nature of programme form and content and its reception reveal the function of translation. In the absence of any extensive audience research of the kind done in media sociology,[83] a discussion about the discursive strategies of reception is partial and limited. However, two important conclusions can be drawn from The Project's restricted audience testing. First, the *newmediabible's* value differs widely depending on the context of its reception. Within the film industry, the videos and web site have received critical acclaim for their production values and creativity. In the field of Christian education, reactions to the translations' aesthetic and their function have been more cautious. A qualitative research study conducted by Greanleaf Associates Inc. on behalf of the ABS, reports that its respondents tended to judge the video in generic terms, i.e. in relation to other products that the *newmediabible's* target audience might use, thus:

> *This audience, these kids, are so sophisticated in terms of looking at that kind of video. I think the competition, in the form of MTV, is just so severe, that if you don't nail it, you're in trouble.*

and

> *Cinema in America is so sophisticated that you really need to work hard. They need to learn the lessons to attract kids to that media, because kids see the best, and if it doesn't measure up, they'll know.*[84]

Anecdotal evidence of the ABS Marketing Department's objections to the length of the videos (8-10 minutes as opposed to the norm of 3.5 minutes on MTV) suggests that similar generic comparisons were made. Second, it is important to pay

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[83] For example see audience research studies in television (Livingstone and Lunt, 1994; Morley, 1992)

[84] (Greenleaf Associates, 1999, pp 20 and 23) It is not clear from the Greenleaf report how far these judgements are based on actual experience of watching MTV and other music channels. Nevertheless, high production values are a feature of the music video industry. E.g. see (Fenster, 1989) The report acknowledges the limited statistical value of its sample audience. However, it is also important to note that the report was commissioned to obtain feedback on how a particular group, Christian educators, would evaluate the project. Thus statements about how the series may function as translation are fairly limited in this report.

particular attention to how different reception contexts affect the project's semiotic value. It is fairly unlikely that reception is unmediated, since the primary channels of distribution are religious education in schools and churches. It is important, at least, to distinguish between such mediated contexts and unmediated ones where an individual buys the CD-ROM to watch at home, or logs on to the *newmediabible* web site. The contexts in which the *newmediabible* translation is viewed, therefore, function as important filters in the reception process. Religious educators in a school or church are important opinion formers. The Greenleaf focus group research commissioned by the American Bible Society indicates religious educators perceive the translations primarily as vehicles to stimulate discussion about social morals and Christian ethics. Thus

> *Connection with current events is something that really works. Discussion of what happened at Columbine High, for example, or Kosovo. How do you make moral decisions, how do you evaluate whether something is right or wrong.*

and

> *For high school, the text must stimulate discussion ... The (resource must) help them begin to see the difference faith makes to their lives.*[84]

At the same time, perceptions of the Bible Society's neutrality as a patron of translation are considered an important feature of videos' integrity. Their doctrinal neutrality as translations that are "true to the text" reveals the shared cultural values of faithful translation, but paradoxically also the relativity of this concept. The Christian educators interviewed (and possibly the Greenleaf researchers as well), understand faithfulness in diametrically opposite terms to Bible Society principles of functional equivalence:

> The sense that these video translations remain "true to the text" seemed consistent with a perception of ABS as dedicated to *word-for-word* translation, without Scriptural interpretation. For some, this ABS imprimatur was very reassuring. (Emphasis added)

[84] (Greenleaf Associates, 1999, p 17)

> *I feel comfort and trust (knowing it is ABS) I wouldn't have to listen really carefully, I wouldn't need to see each and every one to make sure the text was correct.*

and

> *From my experience, ABS is so Scripture-content oriented, that it wouldn't surprise me at all to find that they were behind it because it was, like we said, word for word ... It doesn't try to bring you into it, it just presents the story, as it is.*[85]

Finally, from the text's point of view, acceptability of the project's innovations reflects on the ABS' corporate image and provides an important clue to how a translation may mediate between producer and society. In this case, acceptability is a function of the producer's attempt to establish or maintain a particular position in relation to its audiences, its competitors, and related cultural fields. Whereas the project's apparent neutrality seems to have been read as significant of faithful translation among ABS clients, who are more interested in how they will use the videos, within Bible Society circles the imagery and music are criticised for their apparent lack of neutrality and failure to conform to received principles of equivalence.

In summary, even so limited a review of the discursive spheres in which the project has circulated points to some important ways in which a translation acquires semiotic value in different contexts. However, if as I suggested earlier, the project becomes the ground on which various contesting intellectual, institutional, and social positions are negotiated, the programmes themselves may provide evidence of the different ways in which they function as translation. The following attempts to clarify this notion of function by exploring The Project's models and repertoires of translation, beginning with an analysis of the music video genres that provided one of the principal translation models. Of course, my focus on genre shifts in the *newmediabible* series goes to the heart of ambiguities in the translation project. It points up the differences between what the translators and producers thought they

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[85] ibid., p 38. Here is an example of another interpretation repertoire. "Faithful" translation is linked to a "word for word" (literal) translation strategy irrespective of the project's visual treatment of the biblical text. The perception quoted above is linked both to the ABS credibility as a translation organisation and the generic plausibility of the video.

were doing, in the context of the Bible Society's translation principles, and the interpretive effects of their efforts. The extent to which members of the Project were aware of this and modified their own actions is a measure of the reflexive nature of the Project as an experiment.

Sociological approaches to descriptions of film and popular music industries describe genre as the product of three groups of interconnecting forces: the economics and production practices of a particular industry; the narrative conventions of genres themselves; and the audience's reception of generic texts.[86] Industrial practices of cultural production include commissioning, production, and marketing. They consist of a whole set of relationships between financing institutions, creative teams, publicity agents, critics and consumers. Social theorists look at the ways in which these practices and relationships contribute to the formation of a particular genre, its aesthetics and poetics, its narrative themes, and its cultural representations. Genre theory covers the whole spectrum of signifying and production practices from the rules and conventions of a generic style, the way performers and stars behave in public, the way audiences and fans behave, and how journalists and critics evaluate a particular production.[87] Genres are "constructed systems or orders of meanings and signifying practices that must continually be restructured, redefined and adapted in order to remain culturally and economically viable."[88] They constitute a set of repeatable narrative, thematic and aesthetic characteristics that function on several different levels. First, a successful generic formula is central to a producing institution's economy. It is a product of commercial imperatives created as a consequence of the ways the industry gathers knowledge about audiences and promotes productions and artists. The codes and conventions of a genre serve an important function of differentiating one generic form from another.[89] Genre characterises a structural relationship between industry and audience which also constructs social categories in which, as Negus suggests, rap

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[86] For example, see (Fabbri, 1985; Fabbri, 1982; Frith, 1996; Negus, 1999) on popular music industries and (Altman, 1999; Neale, 1980; Neale, 1995) on questions of film and genre.

[87] (Altman, 1999; Fabbri, 1985; Fabbri, 1982)

[88] (Fenster, 1989, p 124) This view of genre also provides for a concept of media specificity grounded in social and cltural pratice in preference to a concept of specificity based on cognitive differences of reception.

[89] (Fenster, 1989)

cannot be separated from the politics of blackness, nor salsa from latinness, nor country from whiteness.[90] Second, genres represent a structural relation between text and audience. The narrative conventions of a genre provide the grounds for how a story will develop as well as how audiences make sense of the narrative and predict its outcome.[91] The particularities of narrative convention are central to generic plausibility and its function. For example, the final gun battle is pivotal to the Hollywood Western's narrative resolution of the genre's central oppositions between good and evil. Even apparent challenges to generic conventions acquire their significance from an established set of generic codes. For example, the characterisation of the gun fighter as an anti-hero in Clint Eastwood's film *Unforgiven* (1992) relies on the audience's knowledge of these codes to subvert the film's generic construction of the Western hero. Third, a genre must be culturally credible, not in any direct sense of narrative truth, but in the sense that the narrative themes of a genre resonate with audiences' own social and cultural experience. For example, the frontier thesis of Hollywood Westerns, characterised by its antinomies of garden and wilderness, provides the central narrative platform on which American social and cultural identities are worked out.[92] Similarly, as noted in chapter five, the conventions of children's adventure stories in the Hanna-Barbera stories allow for characters plausibly to cross cultural and geographic boundaries without any loss of narrative verisimilitude. I also observed how, in translation, the generic conventions of adventure construct the discourses and politics of social and cultural difference. Whereas the Hanna-Barbera series embeds a model of translation as colonisation and the politics of empire in its narrative structures and cultural representations, the *Story Keepers* attempts a model of regeneration, that suggests an application of

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[90] (Negus, 1999). This view is sustained on the basis that music genres arise out of a particular social and cultural context. Consequently they encode these contexts within their discourses. The appropriation of a genre by another social group (its translation into a new context) may result in a transformation of the genre's cultural politics but some aspect of the original still retains a signifying value for new audiences. See (Bogatyrev 1982) and (Avni, 1990) on the social contexts of semantic shifts in the signifying value of an object. The popularisation of rap music among white audiences by white superstars such as Eminem is significant of a broader trend of the cultural appropriation of black youth culture by white youths for whom the repertoires of dress, language, and music adopted by their black peers signify an attitude of "cool". Indeed, the association of black culture with these repertoires is an element of their signifying force for white audiences. It is a quintessential form of translation.

[91] (Neale, 1995)

[92] (Pye, 1955)

Walter Benjamin's definition of translation to its methods of story telling and invention of reliable story tellers.[93] While popular music genres do not function in precisely the same ways as the narrative genres of film, parallel generic expectations structure relations between audience and performer, or between audience and text. For example, Negus comments on the construction of authenticity in country music through accent and styles of singing voice, instrument, clothing (especially the hat), body movement, and the artist's lifestyle.[94] To summarise, genres are empirical and historical categories constructed by producers, audiences, and critics to serve communicative and aesthetic purposes. As "systems of orientations, expectations and conventions that circulate between industry, text and subject"[95] they are not neutral categories. Repetition and change are a central dynamic of the relation between a genre's signifying and production practices and audiences' expectations and comprehension.

The mediating function of any particular genre raises a question about the effect on a translation's reception of appropriating a generic style and the interpretive possibilities introduced by this form of "rewriting". The ABS' translation of the parable of the Prodigal Son from Luke 15:11-32 as a song about *A Father and Two Sons* reveals how narrative and aesthetic conventions borrowed from another genre introduce new cultural themes that influence audience expectations by their generic inter-textuality. A translation of the parable (the word track) is set to music written and performed by blues singer Rory Block. Although frequently described as "country and western", the country blues track bears little resemblance to mainstream country music. Possibly people have labelled the music track's genre country music because the image track's setting, costume, and imagery literally denote "Country" and "Western". The main part of the story is set on a horse ranch in Georgia and the opening images of riders and horses galloping across prairies evokes comparisons with similar scenes in Hollywood Westerns. **(See clip 19)** An initial identification of the music as country and western that provides a

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[93] It is perhaps no coincidence, given the writer's own intellectual background and interests, that the series' central narrating character is named after Walter Benjamin. Conversation with series writer Andrew Melrose.

[94] (Negus, 1999, pp 128-130)

[95] (Neale, 1980, p 19)

frame for viewers has important consequences for subsequent inferences they make about the text's thematic significance and world view. As Mary Gerhart notes,

> Genre is a hypothesis regarding an entire text, relating the single text to one or more other texts with similar structures, styles, topics, effects.[96]

Mark Fenster's summary of country music themes suggests some potential interpretive effects of such genre shifts. He lists a number of key characteristics that define the genre and distinguish it from other forms of music video. The central narrative frame of country music video is the filmed or taped performance intercut with visual segments that illustrate the plot of the lyrics. The performance is seen as a crucial aspect of the music's communicative and emotional powers. The visual representations complement and enhance the music which traditionally focuses on the family, or the community, and places value on the country as opposed to the city. Country music video adopts a visual iconography of simplicity and ordinariness that draws on imagery of small town community and family rituals. *A Father and Two Sons* uses imagery that resonates with Fenster's description of Randy Travis' "Forever and ever, amen" (1987) and the Forester Sisters' "I fell in love again last night" (1985).[97] The scenes at the party to celebrate the younger son's homecoming draw on mythical representations of small town communities in music video and film. Glimpses of a fiddle player and the ranch house in the background contrast with the earlier party scene dominated by strobe lighting that culminates in a police line-up. The final scene in which the father pleads with the elder son is intercut with a series of romanticised flash-backs of the two brothers playing with each other and with their father. The image of the boys clinging to their father's neck as he spins and bucks evokes scenes of the rodeo that are part of the iconography of country music video. The images flicker as if the elder brother is playing back his memories captured on 8mm home movie. **(See clip 20)** The narrative and visual realism in the video serve to underwrite its plausibility. It is believable because it conforms to viewers' genre expectations. In some respects this choice is apposite in *A Father and Two Sons* because the narrative themes and discourses of country music converge with a popular reading of the Lucan parable as a redemption

[96] (Gerhart, 1992, p 13)
[97] (Fenster, 1989, p 118)

narrative.[98] The generic imagery of country and western in the video lend a particular thematic twist to this redemption narrative. The rules of the genre celebrate every-day, down-to-earth, ordinariness fabricated through a visual iconography and musical aesthetic that reflect a particular way of life. As Keith Negus' discussion about country music genre and its audiences suggests, *A Father and Two Sons* may be interpreted as an appeal to "beliefs and sentiments about the family, community and the common people [that are] still to a great extent grounded in the experience of white, rural, blue-collar, working-class life."[99] The cultural politics of the video translation reflect those of country music which provides an interpretive frame for people familiar with its generic conventions.

This kind of interpretive effect depends on the viewer's knowledge of country music and its thematic significance. It does not mean, however, that the video will be meaningless to other viewers. It is reasonable at least to expect any viewer who has watched music television, to recognise the promotional function of music video. In this case, one must ask what Rory Block's performance adds to the story's significance and what the effect is of her presentation as the video's central star especially in light of Gerhart's description of genre as a hypotheses about an entire text, and Negus' view that genre categories serve a particular function in the economy of music video production. At its most basic level, video is used in the popular music industry is to promote an artist, an album, or a genre. For example, whatever the visual treatment of a song, whether narrative or performative, the central figure in country music video is always the singer. According to Negus and Fenster, the promotional function of video production has had an important influence on the development of aesthetic forms in music video. Form and function are therefore inseparable. The economics of promotion become part of the signifying conventions of music video. One of the important signifying elements of *A Father and Two Sons* is the manner in which it has packaged and promoted Rory Block by trading on her star quality. As the central narrator of the story, her performance style is an essential part of the story's interpretation. Rory Block's combined role of performer of her own music and narrator of the parable

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[98] (Josipovici, 1988)
[99] (Negus, 1999, p 129-130)

raises the question whether her performance is keyed to an interpretation of the parable or the music and how the plausibility of her characterisation as narrator and blues singer bears upon the significance of the story. Viewers who were interviewed by the Bible Society, thought these two roles were contradictory. They were distracted by Rory Block's presence in the video in two ways. First, her dominant presence in the video emphasises the music in a way that detracts from the story itself. Second, her performance is perceived as "over the top".[100] In this case, however, the audience that was tested was more interested in the plausibility of the translation than the singer's authentic representation of a genre. Consequently, the particular expressiveness of Rory Block's performance interfered with an alternative set of genre expectations about the neutrality of the narrator, or the translator's invisibility, generated by the ABS' public image as a reliable translator. Criticisms of this nature, however, obscure a more important signifying element imported with the project's appropriation of the music genre. As Negus suggests, music video is about "overtly socially, technologically and spatially mediated relationships" between performers and their fans.[101] Rory Block's performance privileges this relationship in a way that displaces her characterisation as a narrator and makes her performance implausible for some viewers. Focus groups interviewed by the ABS have made similar criticisms about the narrator/performer's credibility in other videos in this series suggesting that, where audiences are concerned, genre shifts can create a set of conflicting expectations that may or may not work in the producer's/translator's favour.

While the creators of the *newmediabible* used music video to appeal to the popular tastes of American youth and while they have arguably imported the cultural values of each music genre through their appropriation of its visual iconography, their reliance on a performer's star quality to sell the Bible story represents a distortion of the commercial function of music video. The blurring of boundaries between sacred and secular, commercial and non-commercial intentions, inevitably means representations abstracted from one social and cultural context and

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[100] (Greenleaf Associates, inc., 1999)

[101] (Negus, 1999, p 130). See also Jody Berland (Berland, 1993) on the displacement by audio and video recording industries of the "social context of music itself".

made to circulate within another semiotic sphere create a different semiotic value. The reciprocal effects of this cultural exchange are neither simple nor straightforward. (See note 82 above). The appropriation and transformation of music video genres also constitutes a translation of sorts. In this context, The Project's eclectic construction of a particular type of "ritual space" through its combination of popular music with imagery from sacred and secular traditions counteracts the localising specificities of music genres that were used as the principal model translation.[102]

Genre criticism usefully highlights some of the tensions within the video, but does not necessarily account for its function as translation because it leaves open the question of what precisely has been translated. Since the project as a whole has applied Bible Society translation practices and principles, it is reasonable to analyse *all* elements of the series to explore the repertoires of transfer and transformation, cultural difference, and social agency that register on the site of the *newmediabible*. *The Neighbor*, a translation of the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) published on the internet, provides a suitable starting point since its mega-metaphor of travel encodes a semiotics of cultural difference and transfer,[103] while its treatment of the story and its visual style embed the theme of social agency.

The web site structure consists of a series of frames around the central text of *The Neighbor* (see fig. iii). The home page presents the user with three options for access to the content of the web site: "Travel", "Explore" and "Locate". These options represent different ways of organising the programme's content that lead the user along different paths of discovery. The "Travel" option is primarily linear, "Explore" suggests a more interactive approach through its non-linear structure, and "Locate" is a topical index of the web site. Each option is a frame that directs the user's gaze and guides her interpretive choices in a particular direction. Graphically, "Travel" appears as the first choice on the home page. The textual forms of the translation are ranked equally on the first screen of the "Travel" option.

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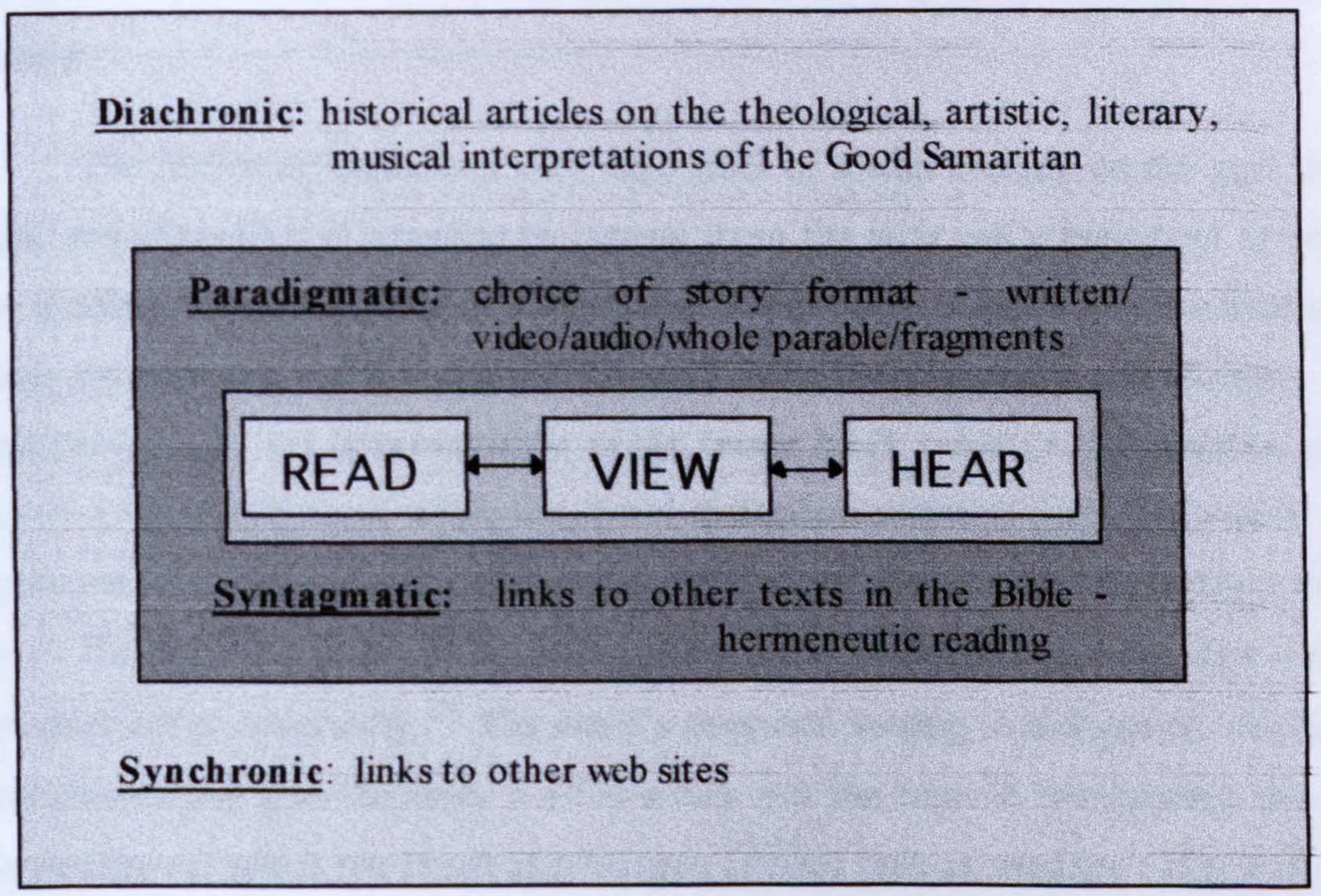
[102] See Goethals in (Hodgson, 1997) on New Media translation as ritual space.
[103] (Cronin, 2000)

(fig. iii) The Neigbour - home page

The user has the choice of reading, viewing or hearing the parable through links from this page to the video and sound studios or the text base. The "Travel" option functions as a particular unifying element for the web site as a whole. As a feature of the site's mega metaphor of the journey, "travel" suggests a more purposeful sense of direction than the idea of "exploration" which has no definitive end in sight. The "Travel" option inscribes the semantics of location which functions as a mapping exercise drawing attention to the spatial relationships between elements of the web site. In contrast, the "Explore" option is designed round the idea of a game or puzzle that users have to solve before they gain access to the next level of the programme. Access through this option is therefore more random.

The web site's narrative frames present two reading strategies. (See fig. Iv) One consists of paradigmatic and syntagmatic options for interpretation. The user may click on any one choice of story presentation, or on the links to other related texts in the Bible and engage in a sort of hermeneutic reading. The other narrative frame consists of diachronic and synchronic dimensions options for interpretation. This



(fig iv)

frame presents a choice of either going to the text base articles, which describe the reception history of the parable in music, art, literature, and theology, or of clicking on links to other web sites belonging to contemporary Church communities. The essay on the history of interpretation, for example, shows how over time commentators from Augustine onwards have treated the story as allegory, history, language of metaphor, or have used reader response theory or deconstruction to explain the parable. Hypertext links connect users to other commentaries on the parable that link users virtually to interpretive communities with whom they can enter into a dialogue about the contemporary function of the parable. This narrative level introduces the idea that the meaning of the parable is not fixed for all time but acquires different semiotic value at different times in its history. Finally, the Sound and Video Studios provide links to other representations of the parable in music and film. The Video Studio also contains the equivalent of a translator's preface in the form of a short documentary about the making of the video translation. Many of the para-textual and meta-textual elements of translation are incorporated in the web site

and become part of users' experiences in whatever way they choose to use the material.

The Neighbor assumes a very high level of media literacy on the part of its users, and although it is tempting to assume from the web site's hypertext structure that it offers a virtual infinity of interpretive choices (the ultimate postmodern text), in fact the meaning and function of the story have been carefully constructed. The characteristically rich intertextuality of the image track connects the parable to its history of representation, while the travel metaphor connects with the user's own experience of social and cultural mobility inviting an allegorical interpretation of the story. The look and style of the video translation is modelled on Lewis Hine's social documentary photography.[105] The story's temporal setting is ambiguous: the actors wear clothes that give the story a 1930's feel, but the train in the opening shot and the bicycles on which the Priest and Temple Official ride are modern. The style and *mis-en-scène* refer to mythical constructions of social migrations in 1930's America giving the video a certain "Grapes of Wrath" feel. One of the most striking aspects of the word track is the description in vs 33 of the Samaritan as a "*foreigner* from Samaria". The character is clearly flagged as Other. The use of "foreigner" is a departure from representations of the Samaritan in other major English language translations of the Bible.[106] This departure from a translation norm has the interesting effect of constructing an unambiguous point of view in the story. An analysis of the photographic repertoires on which the video is modelled together with its representation of the Samaritan as a "*foreigner*" in the word and image tracks provides an insight into the function of translation on this web site. It will be helpful for readers to bear in mind the social and cultural attitudes behind the founding vision of the American Bible Society as my chapter develops.

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[105] Lewis Wickes Hine, 1874-1940. Photographer, writer, humanist. Best known for his photographs of immigrants at Ellis Island and his views of housing and labour conditions in the U.S.A. Hine participated in several welfare agency campaigns including the Pittsburg Survey (1907) and the National Child Labour Commission, for whom he worked as a staff photographer. He also photographed the construction of the Empire State Building 1930-31. He is credited with creating the social documentary style of photography at the turn of the century.

[106] However, I understand that it is not uncommon for Bible Society translators to use the word "foreigner" in modern vernacular translations in other languages. My informant is Dr. Philip C. Stine, formerly United Bible Societies Translations and Publications Director.

The key to *The Neighbor's* function as translation is its incorporation of the word "*foreigner*" in the word track, a choice that establishes its discourses of difference and structures the user's identification with the different characters in the story. The image track's representation of the foreigner adds another layer to the parable. The video's focalisation of difference departs radically from that of the word track. This is achieved in two principal ways. The first is its manipulation of the gaze that structures the story's point of view. The word track tells the story from the point of view of an expert in the Law of Moses (the parable's narratee) who asks Jesus who is his neighbour. In this case, the story constructs the Samaritan as other to the narratee's social identity. The expert is, therefore, the principal focaliser of difference. Readers' notes in the Good News Study Bible explain that the parable "removes any limits to the definition of "neighbour", which Jews used to refer to fellow-Jews."[107] *The Neighbour's* word track is an important device for achieving this effect. Midway through the story point of view shifts to the man from Samaria and the reader looks at the traveller through his eyes. Vs 33: "*Then a foreigner from Samaria traveling along that road happened upon the man, and when he saw him, he was filled with compassion.*" This shift in point of view dramatises the relationship between the Jew and Samaritan and shifts the balance of power in the story. The "foreigner" gazes at the man who has identified him as other through the expert's question - "who is my neighbour?" The foreigner's gaze therefore challenges the narratee's subjectivity. The exchange of looks that structures the story's point of view and the content of the gaze in the image track is quite different. There are several significant shifts in point of view. The first occurs when the Samaritan and the traveller recognise each other as opponents in a flash-back to the fight scene. In this little scene, the grammar of shot and reverse shot locates the dominant point of view with the traveller not the Samaritan. Then the point of view shifts back to the narrator/camera, but with a framing that establishes empathy for the Samaritan. **(See clip 21)** The second significant shift in point of view occurs in the scene at the inn. This shift has a similar function to that of the word track where the narratee's own subjectivity is challenged. The principal narratee of the image track, however, is the viewer. This difference is significant.

[107] (GNB, 1994, p 1599)

Characters at the inn engage the viewer's gaze by looking directly into the camera. The look implicates the viewer in the video narrative itself as a witness to the violence perpetrated on the traveller. The characters' gazes compel the viewer to take a moral position on this violence. At the same time, the nature of the characters' looks and the *mis-en-scène* at the inn invites inter-textual reference to constructions by news reportage of natural and human disasters (wars, floods, famine). The references cue the viewer to wider social perspectives on some of the video's narrative themes. The characters at the inn appear as more than travellers, they stare back at the viewer in the same way victims of crisis stare back at news cameras. The gaze has a distancing effect which challenges the viewer's subjectivity in relation to the identity of the story's characters.

Whereas the word track structures the discourses of difference around an historical enmity between Jew and Samaritan which Jesus uses to challenge the law expert's lack of inclusiveness in his definition of neighbour, the image track reworks this discourse as a contemporary theme in far more complex ways. The image track's representation of difference is crucial to understanding how the translation's focalisation of self and other functions to confront the narratee with her or his own subjectivity. The introductory scroll that frames the video translation ostensibly creates an historical context for the story and explains the causes of a centuries' old enmity between Jews and Samaritans as "differing religious practices, ethnic identity, and land claims." This frame radically repositions the story's conception of difference by giving it the title of "ethnicity", which itself is qualified in terms of religious practice and land claims. The causes of difference are thus explained in anthropological terms, not historical ones. *The Neighbor's* historicity is couched in terms of modernity and the viewer's subjectivity in terms of "western culture" through the post-colonial discourses of ethnicity mobilised by the frame.[107]

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[107] The cultural connotations of otherness framed by the discourses of ethnicity are discussed by Tim Ingold in his essay "The art of translation in a continuous world". (Pálsson, 1993) In this essay he shows how ethnicity is associated with the anthropological Other who is defined as the product of a culture of tradition and nature in opposition to the western Self who is defined as the product of the Culture of civilization and reason. The anthropologist adopts a position outside this anthropological distinction between culture as civilization and culture as tradition through the Western discourses of modernity. "If western culture is a culture of Culture ... to be western .. is not to be the bearer of yet another tradition, but to disclose a condition that is utterly opposed to the traditional - the condition of modernity." (p 215) The condition of modernity, he argues, is a state

Moreover, I would argue the fight scene particularises and localises the discourses of ethnicity in *The Neighbour*. The fight which is intended to refer to the traditional enmity between Jews and Samaritans embeds the connotations of "ethnic conflict". The contending parties are represented by two racially mixed groups of actors. The image track's characterisation of difference, therefore, depends on its appearance. Ironically, this representation of "ethnicity" is a literal, image-for-word translation of "ethnic" and "conflict" (/ethnic conflict/ functions here as a supersign). The video dramatises and contextualises the multi-ethnic, multi-racial politics of American society that are personified by casting a Native American as the Samaritan. This further localises the story within the recent political history of American Indians, notably on the issue of land claims. In this context, James Clifford notes that ethnicity emerges as "a weak conception of culture suitable for organizing diversity within the pluralist state".[108] Ethnicity, in its modern usage, is about the discursive construction of the identity of self and other based on political, national, or religious boundaries. Depending on who is making the claim to ethnicity, it can be a term of derogation, or of democratisation.[109] Thus although the gaze structures the relationship of the viewer to the story, it cannot predetermine the viewer's interpretation. This depends rather on whether the viewer identifies with the video's characterisation of the ideal viewer as anthropologist which places her outside culture, or with the anthropologist's construction of otherness which places her inside whatever definition culture or ethnicity she chooses. One of the weaknesses of the story's framing by an anthropological rather than a historical discourse is that it reinforces the status quo of a particular construction of social difference given by the frame's definition of culture. As Ingold notes of anthropological definitions, culture tends to be something that is inherited already fully formed.[110] *The Neighbor's* translation of difference, framed by the word

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of alienation, of not belonging in which the West figures as 'the outside world', the 'wider society', 'the majority'. (p 214) On the strength of this argument, I would contend that by reframing the story in anthropological terms *The Neighbor* characterises its ideal viewer as an anthropologist.

[108] (Clifford, 1988, p 339). He also notes that the political identity asserted by Indian tribes "is more subversive than that of Irish-Americans or Italian-Americans: Native Americans claim to be both full citizens of the United States *and* radically outside it." (p 339). If this is the case, the role of the Samaritan in *The Neighbor* gives the story yet another twist.

[109] See Levon H. Abrahamian, "The anthropologist as shaman: interpreting recent political events in Armenia" in (Pálsson, 1993)

[110] Tim Ingold in (Pálsson, 1993)

"foreigner" into an image of racial pluralism makes it harder for viewers to challenge the social construction of difference because the image track's reliance on appearances rather than history presents it as given.[112]

The images of racially mixed groups are a recurring motif in the new media video translations. They are borrowed from a larger repertorial representation of the multi-cultural mix of American society, in advertising for example. These images serve a variety of purposes, not least of which is to support the notion of a plurality of Christian communities bound together by the universality of the biblical message. This is part of a strategy of inclusive translation which aims to accommodate the Society's heterogeneous interpretive communities.[113] The image of social and cultural pluralism is as much part of Bible Society (particularly ABS) organisational structures as it is of its publications. A closer look at the function of translation in the Society through the concept of repertoire may account for the extent to which the New Media Translation Project reflects, or is a product of, the discourses of plurality in Bible Society. The analytical model I propose here is intended to explain both the consistencies of The Project as well as its many contradictions. The Project does not merely reflect a wider set of social and organisational structures, it is the ground on which those structures are discursively negotiated. The Project, therefore, produces certain sets of social relationships. An analysis of the function of *The Neighbor* in these terms may help to elucidate the relevance of repertoire as an appropriate metaphor for describing and evaluating the "limits and possibilities" of translation that serve as an implicit set of instructions for the *newmediabible*.

One of the most interesting aspects of *The Neighbor* is its resolution of the narrative of ethnic conflict set up by the video frame and the fight scene. This is

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[112] That differences based on appearance are social constructions, and that these constructions can be used to explain conflict and overwrite the historical causes of conflict is demonstrated extremely well by Philip Gourevitch's book about the origins of genocide in Rwanda. (Gourevitch, 2000)

[113] The term "inclusive" translation used by Bible Society is a politically correct attempt to create a universally acceptable translation. The policy specifies the use of gender generic language and an avoidance of anti-semitism where appropriate. See (Newman, 1996, ch 6 - "Taking on Sensitive Issues"). Inclusive translation reflects a sensitivity to contemporary cultural discourses on gender and difference, but it also has a tendency to encourage a cultural relativism that reinforces the status quo in the story (see Fish, 1999). Some people argue that inclusive translation strategies sanitise the original text by overwriting its gender, race, and class politics. However, as the history of Bible translation reception shows, neither side of this argument is conclusive.

where the full force of the concept of repertoire can be applied. In her book *Symbols of an Ideal Life: social documentary photography in America 1890-1950*, Maren Stange traces the development and use of documentary photography in the publicity campaigns of the American social reform movements during that period. She argues in her chapter on the use of Lewis Hine's documentary photography in social reform campaigns, that the utopian ideology of American liberal reformers who proposed a programme of social change through increased technocratic and industrial efficiency eventually subordinated the complexity and social realism of Hine's and other's camera practices. Stange notes, for example, how Tugwell reframed the economic and social realities of Hine's subjects by cropping and captioning the photographs for his economic textbook *American Economic Life and the Means of Its Improvement* published in 1924. The publication promotes social reform through rationalised, efficient production and the bureaucratisation of corporate welfare programmes. Thus the conditions of social and economic inequality portrayed in Hine's photography were overwritten by a progressive ideal of integration that has become one iconographic vision of American identity. *The Neighbour* has borrowed images of American rural classes already framed and captioned by a discourse of progress that obscured the social and economic realities of those people. Stange's book demonstrates the considerable deconstructive effort required to see past that discourse. This suggests *The Neighbor's* reference to the repertoires of early documentary photography reinforces a particular vision of social reform that concurs with the founding principles of the ABS.

There are some interesting parallels between the ideological effect of documentary idealism developed by the social reform publicity campaigns of the 1930's and *The Neighbor*. The video has apparently imported the ideologies of those repertoires by appropriating the representational repertoires of rural poverty and migration in the early part of the twentieth century in America . In the video, the narrative resolution to ethnic conflict becomes one of "integration", which glosses over its origins. There is no motivation for the fight scene which sets up the video narrative. It just happens. The groups seem to appear from nowhere and begin to yell at each other across the railway track. Because the racial mix of the two

groups is identical, viewers have no access to the possible social causes of conflict. The imagery suggests that conflict is a function of social pluralism. The video displays an historical amnesia similar to the one encouraged by news reports of civil conflict by Western media institutions.[113] Intertextual reference to the American social reform movement via reference to Hine's photographic style is only one of the repertoires mobilised in this video, but one of the effects of this choice from among other representations of the same period and topic is to present an idealised solution to conflict. This effect highlights a particular ideological tension arising from an attempt to visually represent a principle of inclusive translation by casting racially mixed groups for the crowd scenes. In conclusion, where the image track loses some of the force of the parable through its representational repertoires, the word track retains the full force of the text through its innovative use of "foreigner". The innovation jars the reader into thinking about the social politics of difference and exclusion whereas the image track tends to meliorate this effect.

The dialectical contradictions of word and image in *The Neighbor* raises the question what factors have shaped the transfer practices, and how they can account for the textual effects of the translation. While the foregoing analysis has dealt primarily with what Toury would term operational textual norms,[114] it still leaves open the question of how those repertoires work. Sheffy suggests in her discussion of the term, that a "repertoire" should include all the skills and knowledge deployed in encoding or decoding a communication event. Her reference to the rules of football in this context is interesting because it implies that a repertoire also includes knowledge of technical skills - the "materials" which govern the making of a product - and, ultimately, the cultural or professional values invested in the acquisition of those skills. As Maren Stange demonstrates when she writes about Lewis Hine and the establishment of a documentary style, a repertoire is thoroughly grounded in the social relations of its formation and use:

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[113] It would be fair to say, however, that many of these gaps are filled in by the text base, and that abstracting the video from its textual contexts constitutes an analytical reductionism. But, in defence of my abstraction of the video, it should also be pointed out that there is no guarantee either that a user will read the text base articles.

[114] See Chapter 2 "The Nature and Role of Norms in Translation" in (Toury, 1995).

> Hine's mastery of a flexible yet identifiable documentary style helped to reify it: the style itself - rather than "scientific"-looking graphic representation or the actual subject matter of photographs - was to become the symbol not only of a concern to discover and disclose social reality, but also of liberal reformer's authority and ability to explain and ameliorate that reality.[115]

A repertoire, therefore, cannot be separated from the social context within which repertorial knowledge is acquired and manipulated. However, Sheffy's definition of repertoire as "pre-organised options" that constrain action and her view that repertoires develop a relative autonomy, are too narrow to account for the interesting contradictions of word and image in *The Neighbor*. As with Toury's theory of norms, Sheffy's repertoire cannot explain the function of innovation within a set of social practices. Neither can it accommodate the symbolic value of the repertoires of social photography used in *The Neighbor*. A formulation of the concept of repertoire is required that explains how the ABS's willingness to invest in the translation project's exploratory nature functions to maintain the Society's corporate vision of social reform but, at the same time, how this vision acquires new value through the discourses of ethnicity mobilised in *The Neighbor*. The conceptual use of repertoire by social scientists to account for the surprisingly limited and ordered patterns of collective action or protest in moments of apparently disorganised social movement is more useful in this context. Charles Tilly, who introduced the term to social science research, describes it as :

> A limited set of routines that are learned, shared, and acted out through a relatively deliberate process of choice. Repertoires are learned cultural creations, but they do not descend from abstract philosophy or take shape as a result of political propaganda; they emerge from struggle.[116]

According to Tilly, repertoires designate means of *inter*action among actors or groups of actors. They include a range of styles of collective action such as strikes, public protest, barricading, legal action, as well as the discourses that accompany these various forms of action. They are "the established ways in which the actors make and receive claims bearing on each other's interest."[117] Mark

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[115] (Stange, 1989, p 55)
[116] Charles Tilly in (Traugott, 1995, p 26)
[117] Charles Tilly in (Traugott, 1995, p 27)

Traugott summarising Tilly's work on repertoire, notes that repertoires have a metaphorical similarity to a game in that they involve a necessary amount of extemporisation around a basic set of rules. This allows for a combination of ritual and flexibility in which "neither element must be allowed to displace the other, lest the performance lose either it creative edge or its ready communicability."[118] The consistency of repertoires over a long period time gives them the appearance of relative stability, and naturalness. However, Tilly is also interested in the changes that repertoires undergo over a cycle (which may span several generations). Traugott argues that to understand the dynamics of collective action repertoires it is important to examine both their discursive and instrumental dimensions. He claims by "mediating between consciousness and action, discourse shapes the conception of just claims and their legitimate pursuit and the targets for their redress."[119] Discursive and instrumental repertoires interact in mutually reinforcing and stabilising ways. However, "to the extent that the two repertoires are not mutually reinforcing during contention, groups may be pressed to reexamine the cogency and validity of each. Stasis and change in both repertoires are functions of reciprocal affirmation."[120]

Applied to an understanding of the consistencies and contradictions of translation, this view of repertoire, with its emphasis on cyclical change and the interaction of ritual and flexibility, provides a more flexible approach. Translations are products of the real relations between interested parties - publishers, translators, distributors, readers. Thus, it is impossible to abstract texts from the social, political and economic circumstances of their production and reception. The New Media Translation Project is exemplary. The Project is characterised by tensions inherited from the intellectual and occupational dispositions of the various academic and professional fields represented by its members. The whole translation process from selection of the source text to its completion as a hypertext document on the world wide web is highly complex. To examine how tensions in decision-making processes cohere in the project, I have focused on the video translation, but to understand how

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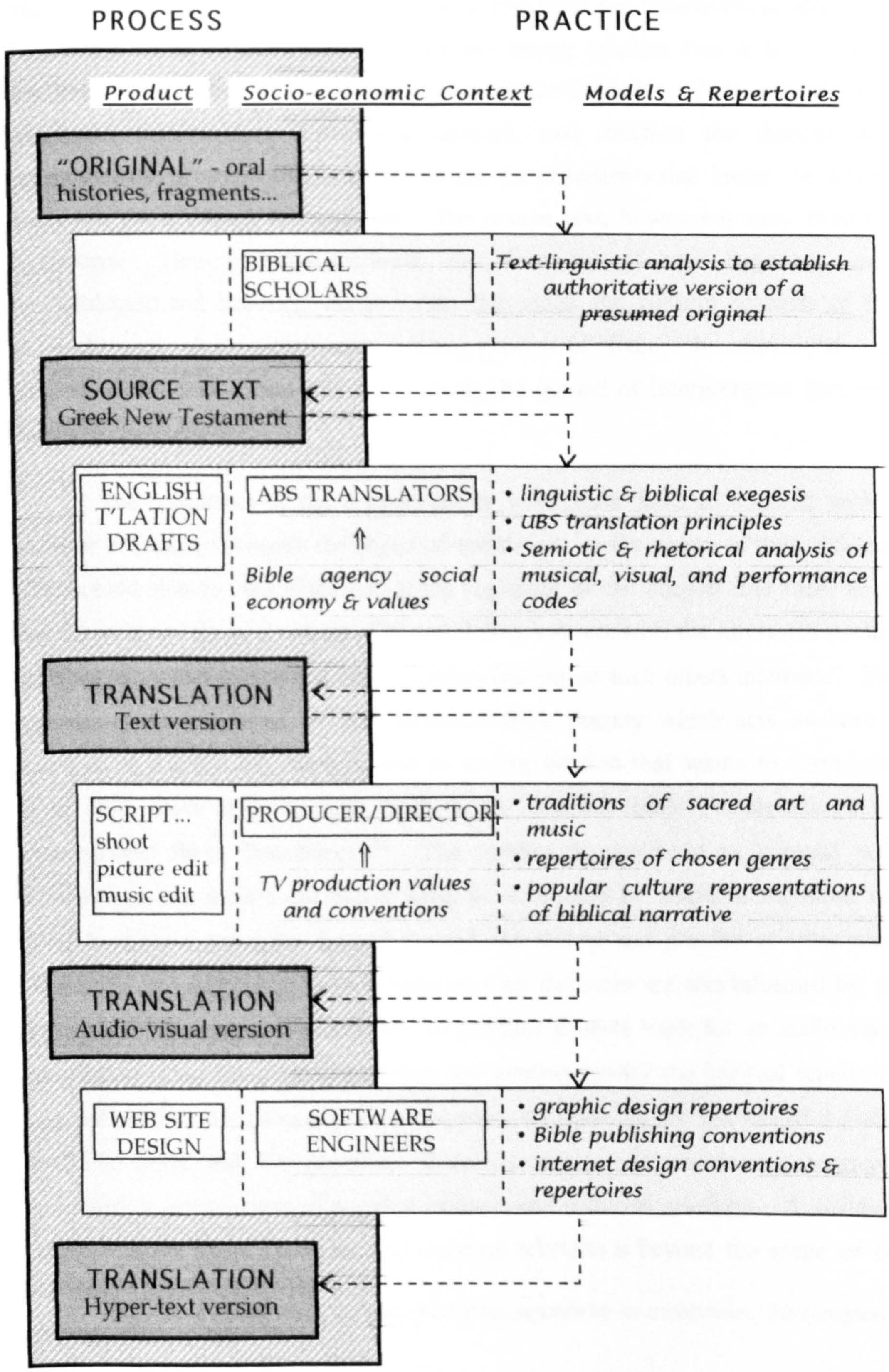
[118] (Traugott, 1995, p 44)
[119] ibid., p 60
[120] ibid., p 61

the project acquires symbolic value through its repertoires and models of translation it may help to locate the video within the larger frame of its production contexts. The following map attempts to account for the social and historical contexts of the repertoires of translation. (fig. v)

The left hand column of the chart shows the various stages through which the translation progresses: creation of an authoritative source text, preparation of English language drafts and word track, video production, creation of the web site, and so on. The dotted lines indicate the path that the text takes through the various stages of translation and modification. The boxes that intrude into the left hand column show how decisions at each successive stage (left hand column of the box) are filtered through the models and repertoires (far right box) of different cultural fields occupied by the various occupational groups involved (centre column). Each stage represents a point at which some aspect of the text is fixed during the production process, for example, once everyone has agreed the final form of the word track, they use it as the script for video production. Although the process is presented diachronically in the scheme, it should be borne in mind that each successive stage considerably modifies, but does not displace, the "original" text. By specifying the network of social relations and the models and repertoires of translation, the chart attempts to show how in each successive stage the text acquires a different semiotic value. The chart is an exemplification of Peirce's theory of semiosis, where

> The interpretant is nothing but another [sign] to which the torch of truth is handed along; and as a [sign], it has it has its interpretant again. Lo, another infinite series.[121]

[121] Peirce in (Gorlée, 1993, p 57)



Joy Sisley, *Translating from One Medium to Another*
BCCS, University of Warwick, 2000

It also attempts to show the ground of interpretation for each succeeding moment of sign interpretation. Thus the Greek source text used for translation is already a translation based on authoritative agreement among scholars that it is the most accurate representation of the earliest known written fragments of the original. The academies that support text-critical research, and sanction the theories and methodologies of text criticism constitute the social contexts that invest the source text with the authority of originality. The source text, however is only fixed by agreement. New research methods, the discovery of new fragments, new archaeological and historical insights into the social and cultural contexts of the original stories, all contribute to an ongoing process of "fixing" the source text. As any review of text critical literature reveals the ground of interpretation here is a heavily contested one.

The translators of the *newmediabible* word track have to contend with a number of factors as regards the object of translation, or the nature of their referent. These have already been discussed at the beginning of the chapter and there is no need to reiterate the points here. The translators *inter*act with the interested parties of translation who "make and receive claims bearing on each others interests." The translators are employed by the American Bible Society which acts as both a member of a global organisation, and as an organisation that wants to distinguish itself from other Bible agencies, such as the Wycliffe Bible Translators, or the International Bible Translators.[122] The translators also have to contend with conventions of linguistic and biblical exegesis established by academic traditions and UBS translation principles formed through the theory and practice of translation. The social and cultural contexts bearing on their decisions are also informed by the purpose of this stage of translation: to produce a word track for an audio visual translation. Thus the exigencies of their new context modify the habitual repertoires that inform their decisions as print translators. As noted, in my analysis of *A Father and Two Sons*, and *The Neighbor*, these repertoires and models are themselves grounded in various sets of social, economic, and technical relations. A sustained analysis of the social, economic and technical relations is beyond the scope of this

[122] The ABS distinguishes itself from these other agencies by its translations. See (Hargreaves, 1993 and Duthie, 1985)

chapter, but obviously, it would add to the thick description of this project. My summary of these two stages adequately make my point about the conventional character of translation except, once translation moves into the creation of an image track, the ground of interpretation shifts dramatically. The director has learned her professional and intellectual competencies in a totally different cultural field. She does not have the benefit of the translators' linguistic or biblical training. Consequently, her interpretation of the word track is informed by other interpretive/translative repertoires and other priorities. The process of translation is therefore not cumulative as suggested by my map. It is subject to radical shifts in unforeseen directions. The ground of interpretation therefore becomes a proliferating network of different social relationships and professional and intellectual contention which may seem to the casual observer like shifting sands.

To an outside observer, the decisions that fix each stage of translation may appear quite arbitrary and lacking in any of the constraints of Toury's translations norms. Even members of the translation project have difficulty reconstructing, in any more than vague terms of what works, the decision processes that led to a particular choice.[123] However, the apparently arbitrary nature of decision making can be misleading. The final form and content of the project reflect the tastes and preferences of individuals working on the project. Decisions are generally reached through consensus, so that these preferences have to be negotiated. There are, however, a number of shared principles that have evolved during the project's development. The group has a list of "do's and don'ts" of translation invoked in a short hand that has become part of the translation process. The dominant ones are that "*one-to-one correspondence*" and a "*representational*" style should be avoided. These are in fact sanctions formed in the early days of the programme when the American Bible Society sought to position itself in the field of Bible story adaptation by making unfavourable comparisons with other video products on the market. *One-to-one correspondence* means any attempt to represent the words in the text literally. *Representational*, simply refers to narrative and representational

[123] "I don't remember who actually came up with the idea of children, but I think it was a stroke of genius" (Amy-Jill Levine, background video, Video Studio, http://www.newmediabible/7/1goodsam)

styles of Hollywood biblical epics in which actors are dressed in a way (flowing robes and head dress) presumed to be faithful to the period of the "original" text. This disinclination to use dominant repertoires of cinematic and televisual biblical representation stems from a commitment to innovation as a highly valued principle that The Project's members strongly defend in the face of other more conservative factions within the organisation on the grounds that the New Media Translation Project is positioned at the cutting edge of innovation in Bible translation and media use. The principle of innovation, a desire to put the organisation at the forefront of developments in Bible translation, results in a high degree of experimentation sometimes at the expense of other translation or market considerations and provides justification for a lengthy production schedule. This dynamic is not unique to The Project. It is an important element of ABS corporate culture. The Society's pursuit of the modernisation of Bible translation practices is one of the driving forces of this culture, and one which the organisation has been willing to underwrite both materially and socially.[124]

In summary, while a principle of innovation has led to a rejection of the dominant repertoires of biblical representation in American popular culture and the appropriation of a different set of genres and repertoires, a conservative tendency may account for an overdetermination of discourses of identity and difference in the translations and a particular idealisation of social integration. One may readily observe how these constructions and the principle of inclusive translation are linked when placed within the broader discursive frame of the organisation's culture. If the project's motivation for inclusive translation makes it acceptable to different interpretive communities, ideologically it redefines the concept of community, both through its presentation of multi-culturalism and the acclaimed collegiality of its working practices. The moral order expressed in the videos is one which reflects a contemporary American preoccupation with social integration and civil rights. As with the social reform programme that used Hine's photography, the tensions

[124] The ABS's support of innovation in translation is not entirely parochial. The society's sponsorship of Eugene Nida's research on translation has had a much broader impact on modern translation theory than its narrower contextualisation within Bible translation practices. See (Simon, 1990) It is also worth noting that Nida continues to command a very privileged status in the ABS since his retirement.

between the utopian vision of reform and the economic and political realities of American society are visible in the project.

As artistic director of the image track, Merle Worth is like a traveller in a foreign land where her lack of familiarity with the language spoken and her own social pre-conditioning make her ignorant of the nuances of the cultural landscape through which she journeys. The same holds for the scholars and translators who ventured into the world of film making. If the ground of interpretation for these two groups is so radically different, arguably they have not worked on the same text at all. In that case, the model of faithful equivalence the project used to "test the limits and possibilities of translation" amounts to little more than an ideological posture that points to the impossibility of translation. However, if as I suggested earlier, equivalence is not an absolute, a set of pre-organised structures that delimit the similarities of different languages in translation, but a method for managing inter-relationships within the community of the faithful across time and space, then faithful equivalence points to the possibility of translation. Translatability from from one medium to another has acquired a new metaphor that moves The Project beyond the constraints inherited from an epistemology of time and narrative. Time and narrative belong to the conceptual boundaries of print, to a linear process of communication, a cumulative progression of events whose causes are rooted in a particular perception of history. If the conventional translation repertoires rejected by The Project are characterised by their versions of historiography, the translation repertoires adopted by The Project are characterised by a version of ethnography whose narrative structures are predominately spatial rather than temporal. A review of the project's history shows a distinctive and progressive shift from linear modes of expression to spatial ones. By the time *Resurrection* and *Nativity* were made, the transition was complete. The dominant narrative theme of *Resurrection* is space, outside and inside. The visual theme of *Nativity* is purely architectural from its setting, to the performers' costumes, to the way they move in and out of the film space. Herein lies the radical innovation of the New Media Translation Project. The metaphors used to describe faithful translation in the ABS publication "Fidelity in Translation" reveal a stronger interest in the logic of space; architectural,

performative, auditory, and ritual rather than an Aristotelian logic of time, plot, and structure. These spatial metaphors privilege the continuity of connections between different points in the translational landscape over the discontinuities of time. Even the choice of music video as the idiom of translation reflects this definitive shift, for as Berland and Negus argue, the significance of music video is the "spatially mediated relationships" of the genre. If translation in the ABS functions to forge social cohesion in a changing, heterogeneous and plural world, then the spatial metaphors of translation also suggest a redefinition of the translator's task. I have already remarked on how the anthropological frame for *The Neighbor* repositions ideal viewers in relation to the text. The anthropological metaphor also brings into play a re-evaluation of the epistemological and methodological terms of translating cultural difference provoked by criticisms of ethnographic writing in the field itself.[125] For example, in his essay "The Art of Translating in a Continuous World" Tim Ingold contrasts the discourses of homogeneity in which difference is the property of constructed boundaries which serve to delineate distinctions between "us" and "them", with the discourses of heterogeneity where cultural collectivity inheres in a network of interpersonal relationships in which "the category *we* ... expands indefinitely outwards from the centre where *I* stand to embrace others ... rather than rebounding inwards on myself from an exterior opposition with *them*."[126] Reflecting on the same distinctions constructed by anthropologists, Unni Wikan asks how the ethnographer faithfully translates the observations of her field work, or how ethnography expresses similarity in diversity without constructing a false homogeneity. Wikan proposes an attitude of "resonance" as a solution to her question about the limits of translation, a methodology that she finds difficult to describe in conceptual terms other than a rather vague "Resonance is what fosters compassion and empathy; it enables appreciation; without resonance, ideas and understandings will not spring alive."[127] Merle Worth describes her task similarly as developing a sense of empathy for her subject. "Usually the greatest challenge for me is to first imagine the *emotional* line of development ... I need to first imagine: How and *why* does this experience continue to reverberate? Only then can I address

[125] (Clifford, 1988; Geertz, 1993)
[126] (Pálsson, 1993, p 228)
[127] ibid., p 194

the actual meaning of it. Again, it is working from the inside out."[129] This anthropological model of translation suggests an alternative interpretation of the gaze in *The Neighbor* that is consistent with the parable's redefinition of "neighbour". Rather than staring out across the boundaries constructed by concepts of cultural difference, the looks of the characters in the inn embrace the viewer drawing her into the story and its moral and social implications.[130] The New Media Translation Project has turned Jakobson's problem on its head in its search for new repertoires and innovative ways to represent biblical narrative. Within the continuous space of the virtual page, members of the Project's production and advisory team discovered the limits of translation are defined by its possibilities.

In terms of the Project's aim, "to test the limits and possibilities of translation," this conclusion is a radical and startling one, especially in the broader context of an institution whose cultural identity is based on a conception of the universality and unity of the Bible. It, however, confirms Petrilli's association of the iconic qualities of the translated sign with "dialogism, alterity, polyphony, polylogism and plurilingualism" (Ch 1 p. 37), in other words the creative nature of translation. If I have a particular general criticism of the New Media Project, apart from my sustained critique of genre shifts, it is that the producers did not push their discovery of the possibilities of translation far enough. This brings us back to the question of the limits of translation. In the context of my argument here, however, we are obliged to rephrase that question, not in terms of an intrinsic equivalence nor of the Project's aesthetic value, but as something imposed by the social context of translating. In other words, in terms of the function of translation within the American Bible Society. In the event, the ABS withdrew its funding from the Project before it was completed. By privileging the open-ended, creative character of translation, the Project undermined the very thing it was supposed to achieve, to reinforce the conservative mission of the American Bible Society in an era of rapid social and cultural change underpinned by rapid changes in technologies and forms of media communication. (This perhaps explains why the ABS as a sponsoring agency

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[129] (Soukup, 1999, p 66)

[130] For a parallel description of how framing encourages radically different interpretations of a look see (Stange, 1989, pp 95-96)

finds *The Visual Bible* translation project a more attractive prospect, because *The Visual Bible* encodes and attempts to neutralise a fear of the discursiveness of the iconic sign in its narrative and aesthetic structures.) But as Philip C. Stine points out, there are more fundamental ideological reasons for the American Bible Society's withdrawal of funding. He writes,

> Most translators (and translation consultants) believed that what they gave people should not be seen as a translation of an ancient document, but rather it should be "The Bible". The Incarnation occurred or became real in a language group when the Bible was translated. With that belief, how could they do any kind of translation other than one that was understandable and clear, and (in their understanding) equivalent? That being the case, could a translation in any medium other than print be "The Bible"? No. A video or audio rendering of the Bible could be said to communicate the message of the Bible, but it could not be The Bible. (Hence the requirement of the ABS Translation Sub-Committee to have the text read as part of the videos.) If we could get the Bible Societies to understand that distinction they could be freed up to produce all kinds of things that you and I and Venuti would see as translation, but which they would see as means of communicating the biblical message without actually being The Bible.[131]

In conclusion, I have shown the function of translation defines its limits where function consists of a constellation of action, experience and experimentation that allows for translation as an open, active, creative process without losing sight of action modelled on routine behaviour. I have also shown, through my discussion about genre shifts, how the content of the story may have altered through changes in the temporal and spatial elements of narrative organisation, while the function of translation and publication to sustain the Society's founding vision to promote moral and social cohesion remain relatively untouched. This is because the models of translation used, whether country music video or documentary photography of the 1930s, inscribe a similar set of social values constructed through the political economy of production and reception in each medium and their development as cultural forms. The translation models adapted and transformed by the New Media Project have shown a remarkable capacity to rework the Society's founding

[131] Personal communication. (8th May, 2001). Philip C. Stine retired in 1998 from his position as United Bible Societies Director of Publication, Translation and Distribution, He also worked as a consultant on Bible Society Translation for over 25 years.

principles in each new translation context. This then represents the referential power of translation that is both the title and topic of this thesis. There is, however, a paradox here. If the *newmediabible* is indeed so intellectually conservative, why did the ABS hierarchy cut its funding? I suggest they looked at the style of the videos, not the continuity of a set of social and cultural values inscribed in their form. In so doing, they failed to remark the *newmediabible's* referential power as translation.

CONCLUSION

The argument in this thesis has moved from the central problematic of translation as similarity within difference and the theoretical assumptions that underpin this problematic to an attempt to understand translation in terms of its referential power or function. While I cannot pretend to explore the question with the same philosophical rigour as Morot-Sir's meditation on language (which has provided an intellectual model for this study) my discussion has, I hope, made a tentative gesture towards considering the function of translation, without introducing the kind of tautologies that were found to mark Jakobson's, Steiner's, or Toury's discussion of language and translation. The lessons learned from the principles underlying this shift are worth reiterating:

First, if translation aims to give coherence and significance to a text in a context other than the one for which it was originally composed, a translation's reception becomes a centrally important issue. That translation entails a change of meaning in the content of texts, whether it involves transfers between languages, between different media, or even between different time frames, is not the point. Nor is the precise content of difference between one text and its translation necessarily significant in itself. In this respect, change as a factor of translation is something to be remarked in passing. Given the often unreliable manipulation of content inherent in translation, both word and image, it no longer seems feasible to evaluate the adequacy of a translation. It is perhaps more productive to examine the rhetorical codes that assure a translation's acceptability for its interpretive communities. The narrative and semiotic discourses that valorise a translation are a central factor in this process. At the same time, where the coherence and significance of a translation, and therefore the translation strategy, are at stake genre analysis serves as a powerful explanatory tool for observing the passage of a text from one interpretive context to another. Genre questions in this study have both alerted us to the power of interpretive traditions as well as enabled the location of individual translations within concrete inter-textual configurations that assure their

contemporary significance. Genre analysis has also accounted for the heterogeneity of translations with respect to the expectations of their reading or viewing communities rather than the indeterminacy of the original or the polyvalence of the translative medium.

Secondly, my exploration of a translation's reference in terms of its semiotic structures and value has required rethinking relationships between a translation and its original. An attempt to establish the ground of interpretation in this instance has involved introducing a new metaphor of translation as frame or *parergon.* The metaphor raises a question about what translation frames, what is the work for which translation functions as supplement. The question recalls one of the central paradoxes of translatability. If a *parergon's* function is to stabilise meaning or to provide closure to the otherwise open ended character of translation, the dialectic of a translation's derivative and creative character may not pull in opposite directions at all. Rather, they are complementary functions of reciprocal affirmation. The relevance of the metaphor of a *parergon* for considering whole texts such as the ABS *newmediabible* or the *Story Keepers* as translation also becomes clear. Like Derrida's *ergon* and its *parergon* the various elements of the production are not detachable. At this level, narrative framing serves a broader purpose of assuring the authority of a translation and the credibility of its translator, so that in cases such as the ABS *newmediabible,* the inscription of the codes of innovation and conservation serve to maintain the Society's social status and credibility with its constituents.

Thirdly, it is evident that the narrative and semiotic discourses of framing tie a translation and its textual function explicitly to its social and cultural contexts. By thus locating translations, it is possible to conceive the process as a competition between various stakeholders, hence the reciprocity of innovation and conservation, or creativity and derivation. This gives force to the conclusions drawn from Section Two that a translation's context gives it semiotic value as much as the formal structural relations between texts. In this instance, claims to authenticity embedded in the narrative and representational structures of a translated text and translators' statements about their work, or the promotional framing of translations, are powerful indications of the politics of translation and representation. Ultimately, it

is not the absolute value of a stable referent (the source text) but the complex networks of social relations that give rise to particular texts and authenticate them as translation. The significance of individual translations, therefore, lies in their power to narrate and interpret the social realities of their audiences so as to give coherence to the social circumstances within which translations are made.

Nevertheless, it is important not to lose sight of the original that lives on in translation. The difficulties of keeping the original in view when, as Peircean translation theorists argue, all translation is interpretation, constitutes the principal challenge to structuralist theories of equivalence and comparative methodologies. The alternative approach presented here of tracing a text's semiotic value, supplied by its ground of interpretation, through its various translations, not only avoids misleading and restrictive attempts to categorise translation, it also considerably broadens the scope of what may properly be called translation. Arguably, the semiotic value that lives on in the translation of religious texts is the universal human experience of transcendence that supplies the interpretive ground for such texts. But it is immediately apparent that literature such as the Bible narrates and interprets a far wider range of human experience and interaction. So that, irrespective of whether a series such as the *Turner Pictures* Old Testament epics represents a faithful equivalent version of the biblical narrative's content, it does appear to narrate politically and socially explosive themes that have deep historical roots whatever form their contemporary expression takes. Moreover, it appears that the stories about promised lands and frontiers live on to valorise contemporary constructions of identity and social interaction. The critical approach taken here means that it is much more difficult to make value judgements based on a translation's adequacy or acceptability. In fact, it reveals the culturally relative character of such judgements.

The real difficulty in understanding translation as translation, thereby distinguishing it from one or other of its basic constituents, interpretation and "rewriting", has been twofold: establishing its limits and determining its referent. My case studies have demonstrated the impossibility of defining translation either as a text type or a relational proposition, thereby being able to distinguish translation as a special form of rewriting. The examples used in this thesis have proved equally

resistant to comparison with an original event or authorial idea independent of the text itself. Yet to affirm translation as something more than mere interpretation, or a wholly creative act in its own right, seemingly requires the notion of a shared referent in source and target texts. Is this referent the language of the original text that lives on to affect the language of the target text as inferred by my discussion of Niranjana, or *Testament*? Or is one obliged to fall back on a notion of universals or an ur-text that functions as a standard for subsequent rewriting? The evidence of universals suggested by the ability of texts to translate fundamental human experience from one context to another does not help much in understanding translation or its power of reference.

Viewed through the lens of its referential power, translation has acquired a much broader focus than its restriction to language in translation studies. To show what is meant by a translation's power of reference in my corpus ideally requires a longer historical perspective than the scope of this thesis has allowed. For example, to trace the semiotic value of a Chosen people through it entextualisation as a theme of exile and restoration to an original homeland would involve an examination of its translation into biblical writing over its three thousand year history. Even so, the *Turner Pictures* epic series demonstrates that the ancient historical experience of population displacement apparently still resonates with contemporary American audiences.[1] Moreover, as a modern experience, it is still imagined in biblical terms. The enduring power of biblical narrative to translate this experience into new secular contexts is remarkable.

I stated in my introduction the purpose of my research was to investigate practices of translating from one medium to another. To achieve this it was necessary to challenge the epistemological and ontological boundaries constructed around concepts of translation. The examples I chose to illustrate the problematics of these intellectual constraints are interesting because they confront the limits and possibilities of translation by their inter-textuality. I stressed in my introduction that these audio-visual translations not only raise questions about the specificity of Bible translation as a practice but also about the particularity of translation as a

[1] See [Thompson, 1999 #308] for a discussion about history and exilic writing in the Bible.

process of inter-lingual rewriting. The purpose of my bibical examples was to examine the theory and practice of translation rather than controversies in Bible translation. Indeed, these controversies are incidental to the principal arguments of my thesis and apply very well to other central canonical texts such as animated translations of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales or Shakespeare's plays for British Television, or indeed Disney's version of Mulan.

To demonstrate the validity of my hypothesis about the general nature of translation and the wider applicability of my model it is necessary to use an example that does not belong within my corpus. My final example distills many of the translative issues raised by my biblical corpus - questions of authority, representation, space/time compression, generic expectations, framing, experimentation - but is also easier to see as a whole (as a textual unity in its various translations) because as an experiment in translation from start to finish it has a relatively shorter time span. Jesper Jargil's *The Exhibited* (Denmark, 2000), is a documentary film about Lars von Trier's live installation *Psychomobile 1: the World Clock.* Using the *cinema verité* principles of Dogma 95, Von Trier created an experimental drama in which an image of an ant colony was transmitted from New Mexio via satellite link to an art museum in Copenhagen. Actors portraying 53 characters and inhabiting 19 different rooms, took part in two months of non-stop improvised theatre in which the movements of the ants dictated their moods. Each of the different versions of the "text" kept within the generic conventions of its textual form, so that the video camera trained on the ants maintained a fixed, strictly observational perspective; the installation observed the conventions of dramatic improvisation allowing actors freely to explore their characters without the constraints of a predetermined script; and the documentary is an observational representation of the event. However, the form of each antecedent text interferes in the form of its translation, so that the installation, dictated by the ants' movements could not be wholly fictional, just as the documentary filming of the improvisation crossed over the boundaries of observation into drama. Note, this example is already characterised as a translation between media that involves a genre shift.

The 78-minute documentary film intercuts its record of the installation's dramatic development with scenes of production meetings held with the actors during the event and interviews made with actors after the installation's completion. The interviews reflect the actors' experience as subjects of the experiment. The terms of engagement for the live installation were very basic: each actor had a character script and four moods dicated by four coloured lights. The light changes were triggered by the ants via a grid, containing a number of boxes, placed over the image of the ant colony beamed from New Mexico . Each time four ants crossed one of the boxes, the lights changed to a different colour and the characters' moods changed correspondingly. Members of the audience could watch any part of the improvisation for as long as they chose. They could follow the development of a particular character or stay in the same room and watch the drama unfold in that particular space. The installation and its reception, therefore, mirrored the apparent randomness of the ant colony's daily activity.

The documentary demonstrates the difficulty of determining its own and the project's reference. Time in the two month installation followed that set by the anthill, not the logic or conventions of narrative time. As von Trier explains in the documentary, he was interested to see what would happen if nature became a kind of gigantic clock to which the rhythms of human nature were subordinated. Consequently, it is impossible to use narrative time or structure as a comparative value. Does this mean a real objective referent gives meaning to the installation and the documentary that was made of it? Of course, the randomness of the ants' activities is intelligeable as such because it is a sign given significance, not by the fact of a camera trained on the ant colony, nor by an image beamed half-way round the world, but by the grid placed over an image and projected in an art centre in Copenhagen which encouraged viewers and actors to *experience* the ants' movements as random. The grid's perspective creates the expectation of a certain significance. This gives force to Eco's and Ricoeur's arguments about signs and their significance presented in chapters one and five. As with the reconstructions of biblical history, the grid as interpretive frame constructs a geographical and temporal consciousness that enables audiences to imagine themselves in time and space.

Psychomobile I is a "translation" of the experience of randomness by actors who have no predetermined outcome for their character scripts. The experience of randomness is translated into an un-authored, open-ended improvisation, which together with the grid denies the possibility of a simple causal relation between the ants and the actors. The improvisation's subversion of narrative expectations of closure also gives significance to the experience. The documentary's interpretation of randomness, the most consciously constructed of all three texts considered here and in Peircean terms, the most transparent of the three interpretants, is partially built into the process of documentary filming. This genre is characterised to a great extent by the very nature of its unplanned recording of events as they unfold in front of the camera which encourages a denial of the productive character of its language. *The Exhibited* uses the adventitious nature of its recording practices to translate "randomness" as a sign into its central narrative theme. As a sign, randomness is made intelligeable because the processes of editing and post-production and the generic rules and expectations of *cinema verité* that frame both the installation and its documentation by the film maker feature randomness as a sign. Randomness is self-reflexive in both *Psychomobile I* and *The Exhibited*, it functions as a trope that gives a particular perspective to the installation's experimental exploration of reality and fiction and the documentary's exploration of the boundaries between fiction and reality. What is really at stake in the ants becoming a sign of randomness is the location of meaning, whether as a relation of the sign's object to its interpretant, or the structures that give their relation significance. The documentary highlights the ambiguities of this relationship in its own representational style when the *Psychomobile* imposes its dramatic form on filming. The documentary blurs the line between reality and fiction as it slides between sequences taken from the improvisation and the actors' interviews. This deliberate blurring forms the ground of interpretation that motivates the philosophy of *cinema verité* otherwise known as the creative interpretation of reality. To place the self-reflexive nature of randomness as a sign, thus its semiotic value (or its power to evoke the circumstances in which it became a sign and subsequently governs its evaluation[2]) in perspective, it is necessary to recall that an audience has to recognise the sign's referential function or its effect within a particular signifying system. In this case,

[2] See my discussion in chapter three.

the signifying system or code that gives coherence to the sign of randomness is the conventions of *cinema verité* that aim to capture the inner reality of its object rather than represent its surface appearance. Dogma 95 has translated this convention into a refusal of all forms of dramatic artifice or closure and their superficial representation of character.[3]

The parallels between *The Exhibited* and my biblical corpus are far from superficial. In fact, they highlight the common ground between translation and other forms of narrative representation such as history, ethnography, and documentary. *The Exhibited* inscribes some of the basic philosophical questions about translation and reference raised in my thesis, namely the relations of causality and experience and the language of experience and experimentation. Both the documentary and the biblical translations demonstrate there is no simple causal relation between reality and its experience, nor do they exist as independent entities in our representations of that experience. Similarly, we cannot establish a causal relation between source and target texts by stressing the translation's derivative character at the expense of its creativity. *The Exhibited* also reminds us that our representations are always translations. As Morot-Sir argues there is no experience independent of our language and there is no language independent of our experience.[4] This fundamental reciprocity of experience and language (in its broadest semiotic sense) provides the starting point for an analysis of translated texts and their interpretive grounds or reference that involves an emphasis on the text itself, its internal structures and unavoidable ambiguities, and rejection of simple causality between a work and its author. The critique of a text's reference offers a practical and theoretical approach that transcends the particularities of different textual forms and their intellectual boundaries. This approach extends the relevance of questions about translation beyond the frame of translation theory's conventional focus, language and writing, thus demonstrating the general nature of translation. At the same time, insights from other forms of intersemiotic translation illuminate the specificities and problematics of translation as a textual form that the historic logocentrism of writing has often obscured. The iconic and creative force of translation challenges the very terms that are used to describe it.

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[3] See Dogma 95 manifesto and Vow of Chastity on http://www.dogme95.dk/
[4] (Morot-Sir, 1993) pp 132-137

APPENDIX I

PROPOSED GUIDELINES FOR FAITHFULNESS IN AUDIO VIDEO MEDIA

[These are proposed guidelines as to what would be appropriate productions in audio video media to be sponsored by Bible Societies. Only the guidelines for the relationship between the visual, verbal, and musical aspects are proposed here.]

1. Faithfulness is defined as maintaining the horizon of the biblical text in relation to the visual and musical horizons in an audio video production.

2. The horizon of the biblical text should be essentially maintained in a holistic production with an interaction of language, music and images.

3. The audio media production should be a means of opening the biblical text to new insights and interpretations. The images and music should enhance and complement the biblical words.

4. The words of the biblical text with which there is interaction by the visual and musical aspects should be represented in the production in a translation appropriate for audio video media which takes into account the oral aspects of language.

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