

TRANSLATION OFFICER'S MANUAL

Implicit Information

All extended communication involves implicit information. Consider the following statement that I might make in a conversation with another American:

“Let me tell you about my interests; since I was a young boy I have liked the Bears and Cubs.”

What does this mean? Use of the definite article “the” before “bears and cubs” is strange in English if I am referring to these animals in general. If you were to read this, you would see that Cubs and Bears are capitalized, which is also strange in English (though not in German). What I mean is, “I have liked the *Chicago sports teams called the Bears and the Cubs.*” I could be more specific and say, “I have liked the *Chicago Cubs baseball team and the Chicago Bears football team.*”

To make additional implicit information explicit is not necessary to communicate what I want to say about my interests, that is, that I enjoy sports. A fellow American would probably suspect that I grew up in the midwest, probably in Illinois, since these sports teams both play in Chicago, Illinois. So my initial statement probably carries more cultural information for another American than it would for someone, say, from Togo or Taiwan. So I could say, “Let me tell you about my interests; since I was a young boy *growing up a hundred miles from Chicago*, I have liked the Chicago Bears football team and the Chicago Cubs baseball team.”

If Hal Scanlin or David Burke were here, they would no doubt understand even more of the implicit cultural information. They would know that Ernie Banks was an all-star player for the Chicago Cubs in the 50's and 60's when I was a boy and they would assume that Ernie Banks was my hero. So I could revise my original statement to say, “Let me tell you about my interests; since I was a young boy growing up a hundred miles from Chicago, I have liked the Chicago Bears football team and the Chicago Cubs baseball team, *on which Ernie Banks, whose autographed photo hangs on my office wall, was a star player.*”

By now, most translators would feel that I have made so much of the implicit information explicit that I have changed the focus of my original statement. And I would agree.

Let me take another example, still using a reference to the Cubs:

a “Let me tell you something about myself; I am tenacious and optimistic. After all, I am a Cubs fan.”

What is the important implicit information here? Well, of course, the fact that the Cubs are a sports team is essential to understanding, but it is not the only important implicit information. Any American who is even a casual sports fan knows that the Chicago Cubs have a reputation of

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being losers. They have not been to the championship game, the World Series, since 1945 (a year before I was born!) and most years since 1945, they have finished at or near the bottom of the standings in their division. So to make my meaning clear for a person from Finland or Fiji, it may be necessary to say something like this: "Let me tell you something about myself: I am tenacious and optimistic. After all I am a fan of the Cubs *baseball team, even though they are always one of the worst teams.*" Or since it may not be important or necessary for someone in another culture to know the name of the team, I could say, "Let me tell you something about myself: I am tenacious and optimistic. Why, all my life I have remained a fan *of a baseball team which seldom wins.*"

But it would be making too much implicit information explicit if I were to say, "Let me tell you something about myself: I am tenacious and optimistic. After all I am a fan of the Cubs baseball team, even though they are always one of the worst teams *and haven't been to the World Series since 1945 even though they have had many all-star players since then.*"

So the question in functional equivalence translation is not "Can implicit information be made explicit in translation?" Rather, the question is, "How much implicit information needs to be made explicit in translation for the meaning to be clear?"

Sometimes we don't know the significance of what remains implicit. We may not know the significance because we lack adequate knowledge of the biblical world. Or we may not know the significance because, as Unger (1996, p. 26) notes, "there are so many possibilities of combining the linguistic input with items of world knowledge and previous utterances from the same discourse." And even when we do know, sometimes we may have to admit that there is so much cultural information implicit that it cannot be made explicit in translation without changing the focus of a passage. In such instances, translators must use footnotes.

Paul Ellingworth has recently written (*TBT*, Jan. 1998, p. 132), "As always with making implicit meaning explicit, there is a degree of risk involved in coming to an exegetical decision as to *what* meaning is implicit: conflicting exegetical decisions can be found...The risk is generally worth taking, since translators, by virtue of their function, should be better qualified than most of their readers to assess the meaning of the original text."

Back in 1970, Chuck Taber wrote a *TBT* article called "Explicit and Implicit Information in Translation" (vol. 21[1]:1-9). He states that explicit information is openly conveyed in the words, sentences, and intonations used; implicit information is that which does not need to be made explicit because it is known to be shared already by both parties and is therefore understood by both to be present. The translator must ask himself three questions. (1) What information did the author make explicit, and why? (2) What information was implicit for the original readers, and from what sources did they derive it? (3) What are the practical consequences of this for translation?

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A couple of years later, in 1972, Taber again addressed the topic in an article called “Why Don't Writers Say Everything?” (*TBT*, 23[2]:207-211). He considers the distinction between explicit information and implicit information and poses the question whether a translator is justified in

adding implicit material to the text, and suggests two criteria for including such material: (1) the reader will actually use it; (2) the material was implicit in the language of the text itself. There are several guides for deciding what material to make explicit, which are listed.

Two years later, 1974, Glenda Giles address the issue of implicit meaning in the article “Excluding Right Meaning” (*TBT*, 25[2]:238-239). She argues that apparently accurate translations may exclude right meaning in two situations: (1) where implicit information needs to be made explicit, and (2) where literal translations, because of the culture, may be misunderstood, which happens frequently with pronoun usage.

Ten years later Phil Stine of UBS and Lars Lode of SIL had a lively exchange on this topic. Lode (“The Presentation of New Information,” *TBT*, 1984, 35[1]:101-108) argued that implied information must be made explicit in translation if its absence results in misunderstanding. The audience of the translation is the deciding factor in determining what must be made explicit, and the receptor language patterns must determine how new information is presented. Examples: facts pertinent to the whole of biblical culture should be put at the end of the book; cultural information or grammatical restructurings relating to a specific text may be included in the text.

Stine (“A Response to Lars Lode,” *TBT*, 1984, 35[1]:109-111) agrees with Lode in principle but claims that Lode is not clear as to the degree of application of the principle. The text must not be over-loaded with information such that the main thrust is obscured. The theological thrust and style of the author must be preserved. The translation ought to complement (not replace) a teaching ministry in the Church. “...much of this information [cultural, historical, and geographical] is in fact superfluous, and obstructive to the clear flow of a passage. Translators must limit themselves to including only information that were it not included would result in loss of understanding of the passage *as a whole*” (p. 111).

In 1985, Wayne Gill (“Further Considerations for the Presentation of New Material,” *TBT*, 36[1]:134-135) continued the discussion. He argued that when introducing new material, (1) it is impossible to insert in brackets all the background information implicit in the gospels; (2) adding enough implicit information for understanding will result in a very different text from the original. Since the gospels were built on OT truths, New Tribes translators now translate OT portions before the gospels thus providing background information for the readers.

SIL consultant Ellis Deibler, Jr. (“Adding Contextual Information,” *NOT* 1988, 2[3]:24-34) approaches the matter of implicit information through an interaction of Ernst-August Gutt's relevance theory. Deibler attempts to provide a theoretical basis for adding contextual information by determining what contextual information was available to the receptor language

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audience, what contextual information is available to the source language audience, and what contextual information the communicator expected the source language audience to supply. (See the accompanying page called "Contextual Information Available to Audiences" which is attached to the end of this paper.)

More recently, Tim Farrell and Rich Hoyle ("Translating Implicit Information in the Light of Saussurean, Relevance, and Cognitive Theories, *NOT* 1995, 9[1]:1-115 have argued that "both relevance theory and cognitive theory support our argument for translating implicit meaning explicitly in the text whenever it is necessary to communicate the original meaning" (p. 15).

Christopher Unger ("Types of Implicit Information and their Roles in Translation," *NOT*, 1996, 10 [4]:18-30) claims that Farrell and Hoyle oversimplify and notes that "implicit information contributing to implicatures should not be treated in the same way as implicit information contributing to explicatures" (p. 29).

Stine suggests following five areas in which implicit information may be made explicit: (1) implicit classifiers, (2) implicit participants in grammatical constructions or verbs, (3) implicit events, (4) implicit qualities or quantities, and (5) cultural information or symbolic meaning of some action. I would add a sixth area: when the context (paragraph, chapter, book) provides the necessary implicit information.

I. Implicit classifiers

Leviticus 20.2

RSV: Say to the people of Israel, Any man of the people of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn in Israel, who gives any of his children to Molech shall be put to death; the people of the land shall stone him with stones.

TOB: livre un de ses enfants au Molek

TEV: to say to the people of Israel, 'Any of you or any foreigner living among you who gives any of his children to be used in the worship of the god Molech shall be stoned to death by the whole community.'"

FC: offre un des ses enfants en sacrifice au dieu Molek

Joshua 1.2

TOB: le Jourdain

FC: la rivière du Jourdain

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Joshua 2.1

RSV: And Joshua the son of Nun sent two men secretly from Shittim as spies, saying, "Go, view the land, especially Jericho."

TOB: le pays et Jéricho

TEV: Then Joshua sent two spies from the camp at Acacia with orders to go and secretly explore the land of Canaan, especially the city of Jericho.

FC: le pays et la ville de Jéricho

2 Samuel 24.15

RSV: So the LORD sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning until the appointed time; and there died of the people from Dan to Beersheba seventy thousand men.

TOB: de Dan à Béer-Shéva

TEV: From one end of the country to the other

FC: D'un bout à l'autre du pays

GECL: im ganzen Land zwischen Dan und Beërscheba

ITCL: da Dan a nord fino a Bersabea a sud

Ezekiel 30.6

RSV: Thus says the LORD: Those who support Egypt shall fall, and her proud might shall come down; from Migdol to Syene they shall fall within her by the sword, says the Lord GOD.

Segond, TOB: Ainsi parle l'Éternel: / Ils tomberont, les soutiens de l'Égypte, / Et sa force orgueilleuse s'affaîssera; / De Migdol à Syène ils tomberont par l'épée.

TEV: The LORD says, "From Migdol in the north to Aswan in the south, all Egypt's defenders will be killed in battle. Egypt's proud army will be destroyed. I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken."

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FC: Je l'affirme, moi, le Seigneur, de Migdol au nord jusqu'à Assouan au sud, les défenseurs de l'Égypte seront tués dans la bataille et l'orgueilleuse puissance égyptienne s'effondrera. Oui, c'est moi, le Seigneur Dieu, qui le déclare.

II. Implicit Participants in Grammatical Constructions or Verbs

Matthew 17.24

RSV: When they came to Capernaum, the collectors of the half-shekel tax went up to Peter and said, "Does not your teacher pay the tax?"

Segond: Lorsqu'ils arrivèrent à Capernaüm, ceux qui percevaient les deux drachmes s'adressèrent à Pierre et lui dirent: Votre maître* ne paie-t-il pas les deux drachmes?

TEV: When Jesus and his disciples came to Capernaum, the collectors of the Temple tax came to Peter and asked, "Does your teacher pay the Temple tax?"

FC: Quand Jésus et ses *disciples arrivèrent à Capernaüm, les percepteurs de l'impôt du temple s'approchèrent de Pierre et lui demandèrent : 'Votre maître ne paie-t-il pas l'impôt du temple ?'

Luke 2.38

RSV: And coming up at that very hour she gave thanks to God, and spoke of him to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

TEV: That very same hour she arrived and gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were waiting for God to set Jerusalem free.

III. Implicit Events

Obadiah 15

RSV: For the day of the LORD is near upon all the nations. As you have done, it shall be done to you, your deeds shall return on your own head.

Segond: Car le jour* de l'Éternel est proche, / Pour toutes les nations; / Il te sera fait comme tu as fait, / Ta rétribution retombera sur ta tête.

TEV: The day is near when I, the LORD, / will judge all nations.

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FC: Car il est proche, le jour / où le Seigneur jugera tous les peuples. / Alors on te traitera / comme tu as traité les autres. / Le mal que tu as commis / se retournera contre toi.

Zachariah 7.3-5; 8.19

RSV: And to ask the priests of the house of the LORD of hosts and the prophets, "Should I mourn and fast in the fifth month, as I have done for so many years?"

TEV: and to ask the priests and the prophets this question: "Should we continue to mourn because of the destruction of the Temple, by fasting in the fifth month as we have done for so many years now?"

TOB: et de poser la question suivante aux prêtres et aux *prophètes: 'Devons-nous continuer à pleurer et à *jeûner pendant le cinquième mois de l'année, comme nous le faisons depuis si longtemps?'

(FC and ITCL are rather literal but explain the implicit information in footnotes to verses 3 and 5. GECL has a footnote for verse 5 only.)

Isaiah 9.4

RSV: For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, thou hast broken as on the day of Midian.

TOB: Car le joug qui pesait sur lui, / le bâton à son épaule, / le gourdin de son chef de corvée, / tu les as brisés comme au jour de Madiân.

TEV: For you have broken the yoke that burdened them and the rod that beat their shoulders. You have defeated the nation that oppressed and exploited your people, just as you defeated the army of Midian long ago.

FC: Ainsi que tu le fis autrefois, quand tu mis les Madianites en déroute, tu brises aujourd'hui le joug de l'oppression qui pèse sur ton peuple, la barre qui écrase ses épaules, le gourdin dont on le frappe.

IV. Implicit Qualities or Quantities

Ézékiel 45.10-15

Segond: **10** Ayez des balances justes, un épha* juste et un bath* juste. **11** L'épha et le bath auront la même mesure: le bath contiendra la dixième partie d'un homer* et l'épha la dixième partie d'un homer; leur mesure sera réglée d'après le homer. **12** Le sicle* sera de vingt guéras*. La

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mine* aura chez vous vingt sicles plus vingt-cinq sicles plus quinze sicles. **13** Voici l'offrande que vous prélèverez: la sixième partie d'un épha sur un homer de froment, et la sixième partie d'un épha sur un homer d'orge. **14** Prescription pour l'huile, pour un bath d'huile: la dixième partie d'un bath sur un kor*, (qui est égal à) un homer de dix bath, car dix baths font un homer. **15** Une brebis sur un troupeau de deux cents dans les gras pâturages d'Israël (sera donnée) pour l'offrande, l'holocauste* et le sacrifice* de communion, afin de servir à l'expiation, -- oracle du Seigneur, l'Éternel.

FC: **10** Que chacun se serve de balances et de mesures justes. **11** L'éfa pour les grains et le bat pour les liquides doivent avoir la même capacité, soit le dixième d'un homer, qui sera la mesure de base. **12** La pièce d'argent d'un sicle vaudra vingt guéras et il faudra soixante de ces pièces pour faire une mine. **13** Vous prélèverez vos offrandes de la manière suivante: vous donnerez un soixantième de vos récoltes de blé ou d'orge, **14** et un centième de votre production d'huile. Vous

mesurerez l'huile avec un bat, qui est le dixième d'un homer, et également le dixième d'un kor. **15** Enfin dans les pâturages d'Israël, sur deux cents moutons ou chèvres, vous prélèverez une bête. Ce que vous aurez prélevé sera présenté en offrande végétale, en sacrifice complet ou en sacrifice de communion, en vue d'obtenir le pardon de vos péchés. C'est moi, le Seigneur Dieu, qui l'ordonne.

TEV:

Everyone must use honest weights and measures:

11 The ephah for dry measure is to be equal to the bath for liquid measure. The standard is the homer. The resulting measures are as follows:

1 homer = 10 ephahs = 10 baths

12 Your weights are to be as follows:

20 gerahs = 1 shekel

60 shekels = 1 mina

13-15 This is the basis on which you are to make your offerings:

Wheat: 1/60th of your harvest

Barley: 1/60th of your harvest

Olive oil: 1/100th of the yield of your trees

(Measure it by the bath: 10 baths 1 homer = 1 kor.)

Sheep: 1 sheep out of every 200 from the meadows of Israel

You are to bring grain offerings, animals to be burned whole, and animals for fellowship offerings, so that your sins will be forgiven. I, the Sovereign LORD, command it.

V. Cultural Information and Symbolic Meanings of Actions

Taber (1970, pp. 8-9) writes,

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...it is finally impossible to lay down any hard and fast rules about what is or is not permissible in making cultural information explicit. We do aim to produce a translation which is maximally intelligible; this would seem to argue for the fullest and most explicit impartation of details. But two difficulties attend this course. First of all, the resultant text will be monstrous in terms of normal text structure, so that it will create an immediately negative reaction on the part of people who know and cherish the language; second it turns out even in terms of intelligibility to be very difficult to understand an excessively explicit text.

Matthew 17.24:

RSV: When they came to Capernaum, the collectors of the half-shekel tax went up to Peter and said, "Does not your teacher pay the tax?"

TEV: When Jesus and his disciples came to Capernaum, the collectors of the Temple tax came to Peter and asked, "Does your teacher pay the Temple tax?"

FC: Quand Jésus et ses disciples arrivèrent à Capernaüm, les percepteurs de l'impôt du temple s'approchèrent de Pierre et lui demandèrent : "Votre maître ne paie-t-il pas l'impôt du temple ?"

Jeremiah 7.21-22

RSV: Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices, and eat the flesh. 22 For in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, I did not speak to your fathers or command them concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices."

TEV: My people, some sacrifices you burn completely on the altar, and some you are permitted to eat. But what I, the LORD, say is that you might as well eat them all. 22 I gave your ancestors no commands about burnt offerings or any other kinds of sacrifices when I brought them out of Egypt.

CEV: The LORD told me to say to the people of Judah: I am the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, but I won't accept sacrifices from you. So don't even bother bringing them to me. You might as well just cook the meat for yourselves. 22 At the time I brought your ancestors out of Egypt, I didn't command them to offer sacrifices to me.

ITCL: Così dice il Signore dell'universo, Dio d'Israele: "Mangiatevi pure tutta la carne dei vostri sacrifici, anche quella che siete soliti bruciare completamente in mio onore! 22..."

Jeremiah 22.6-7

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RSV: For thus says the LORD concerning the house of the king of Judah: "'You are as Gilead to me, as the summit of Lebanon, yet surely I will make you a desert, an uninhabited city. **7** I will prepare destroyers against you, each with his weapons; and they shall cut down your choicest cedars, and cast them into the fire.

TEV: To me, Judah's royal palace is as beautiful as the land of Gilead and as the Lebanon Mountains; but I will make it a desolate place where no one lives. **7** I am sending men to destroy it. They will all bring their axes, cut down its beautiful cedar pillars, and throw them into the fire.

CEV: The palace of Judah's king is as glorious as Gilead or Lebanon's highest peaks. But it will be as empty as a ghost-town when I'm through with it. **7** I'll send troops to tear it apart, and its beautiful cedar beams will be used for firewood.

Matthew 5.41

RSV: and if any one forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.

TEV: And if one of the occupation troops forces you to carry his pack one mile, carry it two miles.

CEV: If a soldier forces you to carry his pack one mile, carry it two miles.

FC Si un représentant des autorités t'oblige à porter une charge sur un kilomètre, porte-la sur deux kilomètres. NOTE: "Allusion probable aux réquisitions pratiquées par les militaires ou les fonctionnaires romains." ITCL has a translation like FC with a similar note.

VI. When the context (paragraph, chapter, book, Bible) provides necessary information

Romans 14.10 (chapter)

RSV: Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God.

TOB: Mais toi, pourquoi juges-tu ton frère? Et toi, pourquoi méprises-tu ton frère? Tous, en effet, nous comparaîtrons devant le tribunal de Dieu.

TEV: You then, who eat only vegetables--why do you pass judgment on your brother? And you who eat anything--why do you despise your brother? All of us will stand before God to be judged by him.

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CEV: Why do you criticize other followers of the Lord? Why do you look down on them? The day is coming when God will judge all of us.

NIV: You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat.

FC: Mais toi, pourquoi juges-tu ton frère ? Et toi, pourquoi méprises-tu ton frère ? Nous aurons tous à nous présenter devant Dieu pour être jugés par lui.

Isaiah 52.12

(BJ has a note which reads: "Le nouvel Exode se fait sous la protection de Dieu, comme le premier, Ex 14.19. Mais ce ne sera plus une sortie hâtive, Ex 12.11, une fuite, Ex 14.5. Ce sera une procession où l'on portera non plus les bijoux pris aux Égyptiens, mais les vases sacrés du Temple restitués par Cyrus.")

SEGOND: Ne sortez pas avec précipitation, / Ne partez pas en fuyant; / Car l'Éternel va devant vous, / Et le Dieu d'Israël sera ton arrière-garde.

FC: Pour vous, cette fois, ce n'est plus / un départ en catastrophe, / vous ne partez plus dans la panique, / car c'est le Seigneur / qui est votre avant-garde, / et c'est le Dieu d'Israël / qui sera aussi votre arrière-garde.

TEV: This time you will not have to leave in a hurry; / you will not be trying to escape. / The LORD your God will lead you / and protect you on every side.

1 Corinthians 5.12-13 (Old Testament)

Segond, TOB: Qu'ai-je, en effet, à juger ceux du dehors? N'est-ce pas de ceux du dedans que vous êtes juges? Ceux du dehors, Dieu les jugera. Expulsez le méchant du milieu de vous.

RSV: For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? God judges those outside. "Drive out the wicked person from among you."

FC: Ce n'est pas mon affaire, en effet, de juger ceux qui ne sont pas chrétiens. Dieu les jugera. Mais ne devriez-vous pas juger les membres de votre communauté ? Comme le déclare l'Écriture : "Chassez le méchant du milieu de vous."

2 Corinthians 10:17 (Old Testament)

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RSV: "Let him who boasts, boast of the Lord."

TEV: But as the scripture says, "Whoever wants to boast must boast about what the Lord has done."

FC: Cependant, comme le déclare l'Écriture : "Celui qui désire se vanter doit se vanter de ce que le Seigneur a accompli."

2 Corinthians 13.1 (Old Testament)

RSV: This is the third time I am coming to you. Any charge must be sustained by the evidence of two or three witnesses.

TEV: This is now the third time that I am coming to visit you. "Any accusation must be upheld by the evidence of two or more witnesses"--as the scripture says.

FC: C'est la troisième fois que je vais me rendre chez vous. Comme le déclare l'Écriture : "Toute accusation doit être appuyée par le témoignage de deux ou trois personnes."

Romans 16.3 and 2 Timothy 4.19 (New Testament)

Segond: Saluez Prisca et Aquilas, mes compagnons d'oeuvre en Christ-Jésus.

FC: Saluez Priscille et Aquilas, mes compagnons de travail dans le service de Jésus-Christ.

GECL: Grüßt das Ehepaar Aquila und Priska

1 Corinthians 16.1; 2 Corinthians 8.4 and 9.1 (New Testament)

RSV: Now concerning the contribution for the saints:

Segond: Pour la collecte en faveur des saints*

"aux croyants de Judée" (FC); "de christenen in Judea" (*Groot Nieuws Bijbel*) "die Gemeinde in Jerusalem" (*Die Gute Nachricht*); "ai credenti di Gerusalemme" (*Parola del Signore*); "les fidèles de Jérusalem" (Pierre de Beaumont); "les chrétiens de Jérusalem" (FF); "the Christians in Jerusalem" (New Living Translation)

Exodus 3.22 (paragraph)

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RSV: But each woman shall ask of her neighbor, and of her who sojourns in her house, jewelry of silver and of gold, and clothing, and you shall put them on your sons and on your daughters; thus you shall despoil the Egyptians."

TOB: chaque femme demandera à sa voisine et à l'hôtesse de sa maison des objets d'argent, des objets d'or et des manteaux; vous les mettrez sur vos fils et sur vos filles. Ainsi, vous épouillerez les Égyptiens.

TEV: Every Israelite woman will go to her Egyptian neighbors and to any Egyptian woman living in her house and will ask for clothing and for gold and silver jewelry. The Israelites will put these things on their sons and daughters and carry away the wealth of the Egyptians.

FC: Chaque femme israélite demandera à toute Égyptienne habitant chez elle, ou dans le voisinage, des objets d'argent et d'or, ainsi que des vêtements; vous en chargerez vos fils et vos filles, et vous dépouillerez ainsi les Égyptiens.

Ideology in Translation

In an article written for a Festschrift in honor of Robert Bratcher, Heber Peacock¹ wrote the following:

It has to be recognized, of course, that "[a] real translation is in the main an interpretation."² But interpretation in translation, which intends to be an accurate presentation of the meaning of the original text, must avoid the highly personal viewpoint or the "special theories or dispositions"³ of the translator or translators.

As Peacock points out, sometimes translators are not aware that their personal viewpoints or ideologies influence their translation. But often translators are very much aware of their ideologies and deliberately impose them on the text. Ideologies are of different kinds. One common ideology is theological.

Theological Ideology

Several years ago, Daniel C. Arichea, Jr., wrote an article entitled "Theology and Translation."⁴ One point which he makes without providing examples is that "The doctrines of verbal inspiration and inerrancy can be said to be counter-productive when related to the translation task." He continues by writing

It can be argued, for instance, that the doctrine of inerrancy leads to attempts of harmonization. Since inerrancy tends to be contradicted by the biblical material itself, then this creates some real problems for the translator. Should he or she translate in order to be true to the doctrine of inerrancy, or should he or she translate the text as it is, regardless of whether it proves or disproves inerrancy? Often, when the former course is followed, there are adjustments made in the translation in order to allow for possible harmonization of the passages in question....It is clear from the above that inerrancy as a presupposition...deters rather than aids in the production of translations that are faithful to the meaning and intention of the biblical text (p. 13).

¹ "Extra-textual Interference in Bible Translation," in *I Must Speak to You Plainly: Essays in Honour of Robert G. Bratcher*, ed. Roger L. Omanson (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster Press, forthcoming in 1998).

² James Moffatt, *A New Translation of the Bible Containing the Old and New Testaments* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1935), p. vii.

³ "The Editors' Preface," *The New English Bible with the Apocrypha: Oxford Study Edition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. vii.

⁴ Daniel C. Arichea, Jr. "Theology and Translation," in *United Bible Societies Bulletin*. No. 140/141. Third/Fourth Quarters, 1985, pp. 7-24.

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The translators of the NIV explicitly commit themselves to "the authority and infallibility of the Bible as God's Word in written form,"⁵ and this ideology is sometimes reflected in the

translation itself⁶. Any synopsis of the Four Gospels reveals striking parallels among the texts of Matthew 9.18-25, Mark 5.21-43, and Luke 8.40-56. If one may assume with the majority of scholars that Mark wrote his gospel first and that Matthew and Luke used Mark in the writing of their gospels, one notes that Matthew has made an interesting change in the story concerning Jairus' daughter and the woman with the flow of blood.

According to Mark (and Luke), Jairus comes to Jesus and says that his daughter is about to die. As Jesus starts off for Jairus' home, the woman with the flow of blood interrupts his journey. After Jesus has healed the woman and is still talking, someone comes from Jairus' home with the news that his daughter had died after Jairus had left home.

Now Matthew has the ruler himself when he first arrives tell Jesus that his daughter was dead. Since the ruler already knew this, Matthew omits the material found in Mark 5.35f., that is, that someone came from Jairus' house with the news that his daughter had died. In Matthew's telling of the story it would make no sense for someone to come and tell Jairus that the daughter had died since Jairus already knew that. Both the verb $\mu\epsilon\tau\epsilon\beta\alpha\lambda\epsilon\iota\tau\epsilon$ in Matthew 9.18 and the omission of the parallel material found in Mark 5.35f. leave no doubt that in Matthew the ruler says that his daughter has died.

Why, then, did the first edition of the NIV New Testament (1973) translate Matthew 9.18b as follows: "My daughter is at the point of death"? The answer is simple: a desire to harmonize this passage with those in Mark and Luke and thereby avoid any contradiction in the stories. The NIV translation has been guided by theological concerns of inerrancy and not by the best scholarship. Even the NIV translators could not continue to justify such a translation. The NIV edition of 1978 reads, "My daughter has just died." But the translators still try to harmonize the text of Matthew with Mark and Luke by including a note which says, "Or *daughter is now dying*." Later editions of the NIV have wisely dropped the note and make no attempt to harmonize the text of Matthew with those of Mark and Luke.

Marvin Tate, one of the NIV Old Testament translators, cites Exodus 20.4 (same in Deut. 5.8) as another passage where the ideology of the NIV translators manifests itself. The translation reads "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below." As Tate notes, the Hebrew says "Anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters beneath the earth." How is one to explain the NIV rendering? To quote from Tate:

I slowly realized [in heated discussion of the translation of this passage] that this is the only verse in the Old Testament which *explicitly* refers to what we commonly call the "three-storied universe." The text of this verse speaks of the world in a form which is in conflict with undeniable evidence of the nature of the earth. The NIV translation

⁵ From the preface to *The New International Version of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), p. vii.

⁶ See T.A. Boogaart, "The New International Version: What Price Harmony," *RefRev* 43:189-203, 1990.

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represents dissemblance in translation in order to shield literalist interpretations of biblical inerrancy.⁷

Another place in which the NIV translators were guided by the ideology of inerrancy is in harmonizing Old Testament and New Testament texts. Bruce K. Waltke writes,

With a high view of the text's inspiration by one Author, the NIV translators sought to harmonize the Old Testament (OT) with the New Testament (NT) as much as possible (where the textual and lexical evidence would allow for it).

The writers of the NT often cite in one way or another the Septuagint (LXX)...Occasionally the Hebrew text behind the LXX differed from the received Hebrew text, known as the Masoretic Text (MT). In these cases the NIV, in contrast to some of the other translations, sometimes opted for the LXX in preference to the MT.⁸

Other examples may also be mentioned to show how the NIV translators were motivated by theological ideology to harmonize the Old Testament and the New Testament writings. R. Laird Harris, for example, explains why NIV translated Sheol as "Grave." Referring to other ancient near eastern views, Harris states, "The Bible has none of these rather weird views."⁹

Other translations are also guilty of forcing theological ideologies onto the translation. The faults, for example, of *Living Bible* in this regard as so well known as to need no discussion here. The CEV rendering of Isaiah 7.14 may also be mentioned, although here it is not so much the ideology of the translators that guided the translation but rather the ideology of the intended readers.

Other ideologies such as **gender inclusiveness**, and **Africa(ns) in the Bible** also press to be heard in Bible translation. *The Inclusive New Testament*, published by Priests for Equality, focuses on those whom society has marginalized: women, ethnic and racial minorities, lesbians and gay people, and people typecast in terms of their afflictions. "A cripple," for example, becomes "someone who couldn't walk" and "a leper" becomes "a person with leprosy."

Anti-Semitism and the Bible

In recent years another kind of theological ideology has entered the discussion. It is not motivated by concern for correct dogma or a desire to defend a certain view of the Bible. It is rather an ideology motivated by the desire correct the misuse of the Bible as a weapon against modern-day Jews. I expressed my views on this issue in the July 1992 issue of *TBT* in an article

⁷ Marvin E. Tate, "The New International Version: The Old Testament," *Review and Expositor* 76 (1979):367.

⁸ Bruce K. Waltke, "Translation Problems in Psalms 2 and 4," in Kenneth L. Barker, ed., *The NIV: The Making of a Contemporary Translation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), p. 89.

⁹ R. Laird Harris, "Why Hebrew She ol Was Translated 'Grave,'" in Kenneth L. Barker, ed. *The NIV: The Making of a Contemporary Translation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), p. 59. For a perspective which takes seriously the ANE environment of the OT, see Theodore J. Lewis, "Dead, Abode of the," *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 2 (New York: Doubleday, 1992), pp. 101-105.

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entitled “Translating the Anti-Jewish Bias of the New Testament.” I took the position that we must not translate the text in a way that makes it more anti-Jewish than it is, but neither can we make it less so than it is. I argued for the use of notes and introductions to books to help the reader understand the historical context for passages such as John 8.39-47.

I authored the notes in the *Good News Study Bible* on 1 Thessalonians, and wrote the following note in the heading to 1 Thess 2.1-16:

The tone and sweeping generality of 2.15 concerning the Jews is surprising. Some interpreters think that 2.14-16 are not by Paul but were added later, perhaps after the destruction of JERUSALEM in AD 70 by the Roman army; but there is no independent evidence of this. Others would remove the comma at the end of 2.14 (the Greek text had no commas or full stops) and understand the reference to be not to all Jews, but only to those responsible for Jesus' death.

If Paul did write these words, it must be remembered that he wrote them in a time of persecution and frustration. Alongside these words one must read his later and more fully developed thoughts in Rom 9-11 (especially Rom 11.16-18, 25-32) concerning God's will for the Jewish people. It is a sad fact that throughout history some Christians have used 2.15 to help justify persecution of the Jewish people.

It is interesting that some scholars want to go much farther than this. In the forthcoming book *Removing Anti-Judaism from the New Testament* (Philadelphia: The American Interfaith Institute, 1998), Jim Sanders has an article entitled “The Hermeneutics of Translation,” in which he argues the following: since most readers assume the red letters of Jesus in their Bibles are the very words of Jesus, then they will understand Jesus to have distanced himself from Judaism when he says “their law” or “their synagogue,” etc. Of course, Sanders says, scholars recognize that these words represent the period of the evangelists and not the words of Jesus. So translators should, in order to remove anti-Judaism from the NT, translate these texts the way that Jesus would actually have spoken, i.e., “our laws,” “our synagogues,” etc.

And Barclay Newman has recently written in *Explorations* that “Bible translation must give way to Bible transformation.” He defines “Bible transformation as “the **application** of what is known about God through the person and work of Jesus Christ the Living Word, especially as regards matters of race, gender and social status.” He further writes, “These collected writings that we call Sacred Scripture become word of God only to the extent that the message they communicate, whether directly or indirectly, is consonant with the forgiveness, acceptance and love revealed in a God who sacrifices self for the redemption of **all** humanity”¹⁰ I confess that I do not see how we can legitimately move from translation to application *in the text itself*.

In the forthcoming (1998) Festschrift for Bob Bratcher, Paul Ellingworth argues against views such as those by Sanders and Newman. I agree with Paul completely: it is not acceptable

¹⁰ Barclay Newman, “Challenging the Curse on the Chosen Ones,” *Explorations* 11 (Number 3, 1997), p. 7.

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to change what the writer said; we keep it warts and all. I do not think it is appropriate to change what the text says. As for inclusive language, for example, I think it is appropriate to say “brothers and sisters” when the context seems to indicate that the writer intended both men and women to be included. It is not appropriate when the context seems to be addressing men only, even if our modern sensibilities find it oppressive or insensitive on the part of the writer.

Ideologies and public forums

What about speaking in public conferences about issues that are related to UBS translation theory and practice?”

A few years ago when I was in Philadelphia at Irv Borowsky's invitation, I spoke one evening to a group of wealthy Jews who were donors to the American Interfaith Institute. I stated that we in UBS were concerned about the kinds of notes that have appeared in some Bibles over the years regarding the Jews. I mentioned a translation in W. Africa (not the name of the language or the country) that I had checked. The missionary translator had written bridge material between the OT and NT explaining who the Pharisees, Sadducees, etc. were, but the explanation said that the Jewish leaders had no desire to please God but were concerned only with insignificant details of the law. I told these Jewish people that such a note was not acceptable when written as a supposedly objective historical statement and that I had told the translators that the note had to be rewritten. So I do think it is appropriate for us as TCs to speak on issues such as gender, Judaism, Africa in the Bible, etc. in public conferences, seminars, churches, and so on.

The bottom line surely is this: we **can't change what the text says**, but we can use notes and introductions to individual books to clarify the historical context. And equally important, **the translation and notes must be based on sound scholarship**. I realize that one person's sound scholarship may be another person's nonsense. But this seems to be a place to begin.

Roger L. Omanson
10 March 1998

Check Lists for Translators

When it comes to the use of check lists for translators, Harold Fehderau was a pioneer in UBS circles. He presented a paper at the 1984 TTW in Stuttgart called "Toward Systematic Translation Checking Procedures." He followed this up at the 1987 TTW in the U.S. with a paper called "The Importance of Problem Identification in Bible Translation."

Harold was systematic and thorough in all aspects of his work; in fact we who worked with him in Africa in the 1970s, first as a colleague and then as our RETCO, sometimes kidded him about this. But on this point of checking lists and systematic checking Harold was right. We need to be sure that translators are well trained to deal with issues arising both from the SL and from the RL. And when we sit down to work with translators, we need to be sure we check in a systematic way to be sure they have developed the necessary competency to deal with the various kinds of problems they face.

Use of checking lists will not turn up some common problems. Ellis Deibler of SIL (*Notes on Translation*, 1996) estimates that omissions make up five percent of the problems he finds in translations and that extraneous material that is added and unnecessary makes up another five percent.

Use of base-model approach to checking.
Use of marked up RSV/Segond/RVR Bible.

A. SOURCE LANGUAGE PROBLEMS

1. Text

Variant Readings
Septuagint vs. MT
Septuagint vs. MT parallel passages
Textus Receptus problems
Harmonization
Passages requiring brackets
Versification/numeration in SL
Punctuation problems of the SL text
Conjectures
Emendations
Interpolations
Other textual problems/difficult texts
Problems from versions

2. Exegesis

Alternate interpretations
Identical parallel passages
Similar parallel passages
Recurrent passages/expressions
OT passages in the NT
Exegesis/interpretation difficult
Import theme (recurring)
Unintentional ambiguity/implication
Intentional ambiguity/implication
Church doctrine (important passage)
Passage well known
Difficult adjectives/qualifiers
Implicit/explicit information
Implicit O/P
Implicit E
Implicit Q
Implicit premise
Implicit cultural information
Implicit lexical information
Implicit historical information
Ambiguous reference

B. SOURCE-RECEPTOR LANGUAGE TRANSFER PROBLEMS

3. Grammar

Voice problems: active and passive
Semitic passive
Middle reflex
Tense vs. Aspect
Tense usage
Present/future Hebrew
Conditional
Gender (word classes)
Optional possession
Obligatory possession
Positive/Negative (implied replies)
Double negatives
Conjunctions
Coordination/Subordination
Paratactic/hypertactic construction
Impersonal constructions (It is...)
Ambiguous relationships between words
Ambiguous relationship of-phrases
Ambiguous relationship other prepositional phrases
Secondary agent (causative)
Ellipsis
Inclusive/Exclusive
Apposition
Adjective degree: comparatives and superlatives
Indirect/Direct discourse, several layers of direct discourse
Indirect question
Quotation forms (reported speech)
Grammatical order of words and phrases
Complex sentence constructions (imbedded clauses)
Subjunctive
Optative
Redundant construction
Repetition
Temporal expression
Causative
Reflexive
Adverbs
Purpose clauses

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Generic summary and list
Collocation of words
List of names
Diminutive

4. **Lexicon**

Extended meaning
Key term
Several [contextual] meanings
Label density (30 words for snow)
Different area of meaning
Consistent translation (ex: Scribe)
Hebraism (semitisms)
Son/daughter of [Heb]
Foreign loan term (Amen)
Synonym
Connotative meaning [pejorative/vulgar]
Emotive meaning
Anachronism
Formal expressions (cursing, bless)
List of words from common domain
List of sins
List of precious stones
Idioms [in SL]
Numerals/numbers [including symbolic use]: big numbers, numerals or words
Possessives
Interjections (behold, lo)
Exclamations (ho, oh)
Term of address
Number shift (Hebrew shifts between singular and plural)
Inclusive/Exclusive gender
Inclusive/Exclusive pronoun
Substitutes of pronouns for nouns
Substitutes of names (Ephraim/Israel)
Unknown words to RL, foreign borrowings
Kinship terms
Genealogies
Days/months/years
Seasons, festivals
Material culture
Constructions/Buildings

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Clothing/ornaments
Artifacts
Material culture activities
Economic culture
Plants and animals
Money
Religion
Social culture
Worldview
Spiritworld
Government
Agricultural activities
Geography/topography
Place names
Proper names
Groups, professions
Proper names with meaning
Minerals, stones, metals
Church language
War, military
Archaic forms
Sexist vocabulary
Biblical titles
Medical/health/illness
Circumlocution
Seat of emotion
Food and drink
Law and judgement
Political
Nautical
Secret language

5. **Figurative language**

Figurative expression
Simile
Metaphor
Metonym [replacement by related noun]
Synecdoche [part vs. Whole]
Hyperbole [exaggeration]
Allegory [extended metaphor]
Parable [extended simile]

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Personification [non-personal agent]

Euphemism

Play on words

6. **Style**

Redundancy [repetition (pleonasm/hendiadys)]

Formulas [ex: epistle openings]

Special lexical effects

Rhetorical questions

Pronoun shifts

1st person plural for 1st person singular (editorial/majesty)

3rd person for 1st (majesty)

3rd person for 1st (polite)

Special grammatical effects

Chiasmus

Poetic passages

Intentional ambiguity/implication

7. **Discourse**

Types of discourse (genres)

Discourse units

Setting: Focus/background (foregrounding)

New/old information

Participant reference [clarity of pronoun reference]

Tense sequence

Transition marker [cohesion]

Order of events [temporal/logical]

Setting (author perspective of action)

8. **Orthography**

Punctuation of RL

Use of parentheses

Quotes; degree of quotes

Proper names, passages with lists of

Proper names [translation/transliterate; old/modern]

Hebrew/Greek words in text [translate/transliterate]

Borrowed words: system of adaptation

Capitals [ex: pronouns for deity]

Old Testament names in NT

Numbers/Numerals (letters vs. Figures)

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Length of words (conjunctive/disjunctive)
Language level

C. SOURCE CULTURE BACKGROUND PROBLEMS

History
Cultural theme [symbolism]
Social custom [behavior]
Religious custom [and beliefs]

D. RECEPTOR LANGUAGE PROBLEMS

SL explicit > RL implicit
RL idiomatic usage
RL ellipsis
New figure of speech
Preferred/required order
RL requires redundancy
RL reduplication
Marking specific meaning
SL figure > non-figure
Only generic component (+ function/+ description/+ loanword/+ local comparison)
Reduce SL parallelism
Reduce SL doublets
Cultural translation

E. THIRD LANGUAGE PROBLEMS

Translation model problems
Misleading TEV/FC lexical language
Church language
Secondary textual base problems
Secondary exegetical base problems

F. RECEPTOR LANGUAGE SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

Textual [marginal] note
Exegetical [marginal] note
Cultural/historical [marginal] note
Glossary item
Section headings [wording/placement]

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Introductions and bridge material

Book titles

Maps

Historical charts

Illustrations

Checking Exercise

2 Corinthians 1.12—2.13 in LUANIUA (Solomon Islands)

Paul delays his journey

12 We (dual excl) are happy/excited. We (dual excl) know well that God purifies our (dual excl) lives. And so we (dual excl) truly follow his ways. While we (dual excl) are living in this world, especially while we (dual excl) live with you, we (dual excl) follow those good ways. And/but we (dual excl) do not follow human wisdom. Instead we (dual excl) depend-on God to care-for us (dual excl) well. **13-14** We (dual excl) write to you things that you are able to read and understand well. And/but even if you do not understand-well these words, we (dual excl) believe that you will understand-well at the time when our (incl) Lord Jesus will return. At that time, you will be happy with our (dual excl) ways, and we (dual excl) will be happy with your ways also.

15-16 I am certain that you will be happy with our (dual excl) ways. Which is why I planned to go to you to see/visit you when I go to Macedonia, and/then go to see/visit you when I return. And so I will be able to help you again/twice. And I thought that you might also be able to help me to-journey to-reach Judea. **17** And/but when I thought-about not going to you beforehand, do you think that I was fickle? Not at all. I cannot be double-minded. If I agree that [the decision is] “Yes,” then I cannot change to tell [you] “No.”

18 We (incl) believe that all the words of God are true. And our (dual excl) words are like that also. And so I cannot tell you “Yes,” and/then change to tell you “No.” **19** I [myself], Silas and Timothy, we (plural excl) three preach [to you] the ways/character of Jesus Christ the child/son of God. He cannot tell [you] “Yes,” and/then change to tell [you] “No.” He always tells [you], “Yes.” **20** Because Jesus himself reveals that all the words of God are true. Which is why we worship God, and pray to him [saying] “Amen” in the power of Jesus Christ. **21** God himself causes us all to stand firm to be joined with Christ. And God also chose/selected us (incl), **22** and marks us like this. God gave [us (incl)] his Holy Spirit to live inside us, to show that we (incl) are his true children.

23 God knows-well the ways of my life, and also knows that these words of mine are true. I did not arrive-to you in Corinth, because I did not want you to suffer **24** It is not as though we (plural excl) are ruling over your faith. Instead we (plural excl) work with/for you to make you happy. If you continue to believe, then you will continue to stand firm.

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2 So my thinking/intention is this. If I return to [visit] you, I do not want you to be-distressed. **2** If I make you distressed, it will be difficult for you to make me happy. Because we will all be distressed. **3** Previously, I wrote you these thoughts. If I were to be distressed with your ways, then I will not go to [visit] you. I should rather be happy/pleased with your ways. I know this. If I am happy/pleased with your ways, then you will be happy too. **4** When I wrote you that book, I was troubled/depressed, and was always crying from sorrow. But I do not want to make you troubled/depressed. Not at all. I want you to know that I really love you all.

Forgive people who persecute you

5 If anyone makes you sorry/depressed, it is not as thought he has made me sorry/depressed. No he has rather made you sorry/depressed. But I am not saying that it is a great wrong. **6** It is probably enough that the majority of you have already rebuked him. **7** And so now, you should forgive/be-kind-to him, and/then comfort him. Lest he be very troubled/depressed. **8** And so I tell you to show [him] that you really love him. **9** Previously, I wrote you that book to test you, to know that your are really obeying God. **10** If you forgive someone, I will also forgive that person. If he has done something wrong, then I will forgive him before the face of Christ. Because I want to help you all. **11** And so Satan will not be able to mislead us. Because we already understand his tricks/temptations.

Pol works in Troas

12 When I arrived-in Troas to preach the good news of Christ, I discovered that the Lord had already opened that door for me. **13** At that time, I was very busy because I did not find out our brother Titus there. And so I said farewell/sorry to those people, and went-on to Macedonia.