

CHAPTER 11

THE TEV EVALUATED

The translators of the King James Version (1611) explained in their introduction why Bible translation was necessary (see above ch. 9). Shorn of their eloquent Elizabethan phraseology, their words might be summarized as a plea for readability or intelligibility on the one hand, and accuracy or faithfulness to the original on the other. "Readability" and "accuracy" would still seem to sum up the two most important aims of translation judging by the contents of the preface to each new version that is produced (see Appendix). The trouble is that every translator regards his version as the most readable and faithful. These terms leave us no wiser with respect to the criteria of readability and faithfulness. In fact they seem to have changed over the centuries (A. Newman 1978:160) and so when we turn to a linguistic theory of translation such as Nida's, we hope to find tools which make possible more rigorous description and comparison.

Robert Bratcher also has stressed that in producing the TEV New Testament, "faithfulness" was regarded as the translators' first, second and last duty. The aim is that the readers understand the text in exactly the same way as did the original receptors of the Greek text, though "obviously the translators' reach exceeds his grasp" (Bratcher 1973:146). However, the adjective "faithful" is not so opaque in Bratcher because, as we have seen in the preceding chapter, he regards his translation as an exemplification of Nida's theory. The TEV in turn has been explicitly acknowledged

as such by Nida (in Good News for Everyone, 1977). The TEV or Good News Bible is both a Common Language translation and a Dynamic Equivalence translation (Bratcher 1971:98-107 cf. in Skilton 1978:146-152).

The TEV as a common language version

The new emphasis on common language translations is, according to Nida, an important aspect of modern Bible translations and stems from his observation that for the major languages of the world the problems are no longer the multiplicity of regional dialects, but rather the emergence of socioeducational dialects, representing different levels of usage among the masses who are drawn into the technological, urbanized centres of population in so many parts of the world. As we have seen above (ch. 8) Nida and his colleagues have studied this "overlap language" which spans the ranges of social dialects so that this form of language can be utilized in the new translations. There is the assumption, too, that such common language versions are not only good communication strategy, but also reproduce the type of language that characterized the original text of the New Testament. We shall examine more carefully this second assumption subsequently in chapter 12. Common language translations have appeared in many major languages in the past fifteen years, including Spanish, English, German, Thai, French, Dutch, Indonesian, Javanese, Brazilian, Portuguese, Korean, Japanese, Swahili and Chinese, with a number of others being planned.

Our own focus has been restricted to the English version (i.e. TEV) but it must be noted that this translation has significance far beyond the English speaking community which is its target audience, since it is also being used as a model and even base, for translation

into many other languages.¹

As a common language translation we can only note the TEV's extraordinary popular appeal. This is due not only to its substantial intrinsic merits as a translation in lucid everyday English, but also to its excellent format, its section headings, outstanding illustration, useful word list and index.

Before commencing our evaluation of the TEV it is appropriate to point out that differences in translations spring not only from different interpretations and stylistic decisions, but also from differing views about textual problems in the available manuscripts. We have no intention of entering into problems of textual criticism in this treatment. Suffice it to say that the TEV is based on the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament (3rd edition, 1976). Bratcher mentions fifteen instances only, where the TEV differs from that UBS Greek text. The TEV approach seems a better one than that of the NEB (1961) translators who decided the text to be followed as they proceeded. As the TEV translation itself has undergone three revisions, the following comments are based on the 1976 edition known as the Good News Bible (British edition).

When the New English Bible was published in 1961 in a blaze of publicity, it quickly became the most widely sold modern version of the New Testament. However, the NEB has been completely eclipsed by the TEV which we are told sold 8 million copies in Britain in less than a year after its publication. In Australia, the TEV is now the

¹Concern has been recently expressed in TBT articles that national translators are producing in their own language what is virtually a literal translation of the TEV (or its French or Spanish equivalent). The DE is being used as a base instead of a model. See Fehderau, 1979, "The Robot Bases and Models in Bible Translations" TBT 30:401-419.

main rival for the RSV, even for use in the liturgy, though the Liturgical Commission of the Church of England recently opted to use David Frost's translation of the Psalms for its new Australian Prayer Book.

Certainly it is not difficult to demonstrate the superiority of the TEV over other English versions if clarity be the criterion. A comparison with another modern idiomatic translation such as the NEB is instructive. The NEB rendering is printed first. The TEV equivalent is in brackets.

Two verses illustrating the greater intelligibility of the TEV are as follows:²

"Do not give dogs what is holy; do not throw your pearls to the pigs: they will only trample on them, and turn and tear you to pieces" ("Do not give what is holy to dogs - they will only turn and attack you; do not throw your pearls in front of pigs - they will only trample them underfoot." Mt. 7:6); "Formerly you were yourselves estranged from God; you were his enemies in heart and mind, and your deeds were evil" ("At one time you were far away from God and made yourselves his enemies by the evil things you did and thought," Col. 1:21). The first verse shows how a rearrangement can clarify the meaning, and the second how details, in themselves small, can add to or detract from the readability of a translation. TEV has paid particular attention to the English usage followed, as a comparison of almost any section in the two translations will show.

²An article by Mr. Victor Perry, "Two Modern Versions Compared", in EQ vol. XLIX, no. 4, 1977, has provided much of this material.

Finally, we give without comment a list of words, phrases and an occasional larger quotation to illustrate the different vocabularies and styles of NEB and TEV. (Where an example occurs more than once, only one reference is given for the sake of simplicity). "Ascertained" ("found out," Mt. 2:7); "calumny" ("evil lies", Mt. 5:11); "Thy name be hallowed" ("May your name be honoured" Mt. 6:9); "took to their heels" ("ran away", Mt. 8:33); "Be off" ("Get out, everybody", Mt. (:24); "has become gross" ("is dull" Mt. 13:15); "darnel" ("weeds" Mt. 13:25); "it was all leavened" ("the whole batch of dough rises" Mt. 13:33); "one flesh" ("one" Mt. 19:5); "embellish" ("decorate", Mt. 23:29); "unclean spirits" ("evil spirits" Mk. 1:27); "you . . . truckle to no-one" ("you don't worry what people think" Mk. 12:14); "virtuous people . . . sinners" ("respectable people . . . outcasts" Lk. 5:32); "steward" ("manager" Lk. 16:1); "one dot or stroke" ("the smallest detail" Lk. 16:17); "in Holy Spirit" ("with the Holy Spirit" Jn. 1:33); "hailed" ("called" Jn. 2:9); "This is more than we can stomach" ("This teaching is too hard" Jn. 6:60); "sovereign over all mankind" ("authority over all mankind" Jn. 17:2); "endue with" ("pour out on" Acts 2:18); "extirpated" ("separated and destroyed" Acts 3:23); "This touched them on the raw" ("they were so furious" Acts 5:33); "his family connections were disclosed to Pharaoh" ("The King of Egypt came to know about Joseph's family" Acts 7:13); "invoke" ("worship" Acts 9:21); "hatched a plot" ("made plans" Acts 9:23); "without demur" ("without any objection" Acts 10:29); "You swindler, you rascal" ("you are full of all kinds of evil tricks" Acts 13:10); "obdurate" ("stubborn" Acts 19:9); "divine pre-eminence" ("greatness" Acts 19:27); "machinations"

("plots" Acts 20:19); "laid an information" ("made their charges" Acts 24:1); "anxious to ingratiate" ("wanted to gain favour" Acts 25:9); "rapacity" ("greed" Rom. 1:29); "evoked by" ("stirred up by" Rom. 7:5); "the gracious gifts of God and his calling are irrevocable" ("God does not change his mind about whom he chooses and blesses" Rom. 11:29); "loose livers" ("immoral people" 1 Cor. 5:9); "fornication" ("immorality" 1 Cor. 6:13); "if distress be our lot" ("if we suffer" 2 Cor. 1:6); "You bore the smart as God would have you bear it" ("That sadness was used by God" 2 Cor. 7:9); "I never sponged on you" ("I did not bother you for financial help" 2 Cor. 12:13); "I crave forgiveness" ("Please forgive me" 2 Cor. 12:13b.); "you take the shape of Christ" ("Christ's nature is formed in you" Gal. 4:19); "God's rebel subjects" ("the people who disobey God" Eph. 2:2); "incorporate in Christ Jesus" ("in union with Christ Jesus" Phil. 1:1); "for endless ages" ("for ever and ever" Phil. 4:20); "be consolidated in the faith you were taught" ("Become stronger in your faith Col. 2:7); "parricides and matricides" ("those who kill their fathers and mothers" 1 Tim. 1:9).

On the basis of such examples it is not difficult to understand why the TEV has surpassed the NEB in popular appeal. However, widespread popular appeal is not the determining factor in defining a good translation. It is possible that a simpler and clearer translation makes the Bible easy to understand at the expense of there being less to understand. Both Nida and Bratcher would say that a translation should communicate the same meaning as the original (e.g. Bratcher 1978:147). To what extent is the message conveyed by the TEV equivalent to that conveyed by the ST?

How can we measure this equivalence? Certainly we cannot

endorse the DE principle "that the translation should evoke from its readers the same reaction aroused by the original text from its readers" (Bratcher 1978:147 cf. Nida 1977a:13). This is an impossible objective. We know nothing of the response of the original readers. Moreover, while one might translate the NT documents so imaginatively as to create the illusion in the reader that he is the person being addressed yet it would not be possible to produce an identical reaction since our whole presuppositional background is so different. We also reject Bratcher's assertion that "a translation should not sound like a translation; it should sound as if it had been originally written in today's English" (ibid. p. 149). A translation should preserve a sense of distance between the biblical world and our own. This is also the logical implication of Nida's own position that the historical context must be preserved in translation.

Bratcher has singled out certain specific features of the TEV as a DE translation. We shall seek to respond to these in our assessment:

Contextual Consistency

In chapter 5 above, we have accepted Nida's argument for the priority of contextual consistency over verbal concordance with the qualification that sensitivity to the context provided by the biblical corpus will demand concordant translation of technical terminology. Bratcher, however, seems to go to the extreme of making a virtue of verbal inconsistency, in translating hoi Ioudaioi, in the Gospel of John, claiming "Verbal consistency makes translators traitors" (Bratcher 1978:148).

Now it so happens that the lexical item Ioudaios is an extremely important one in the Gospel of John. It occurs seventy one times,

whereas in Matthew there are only five occurrences; in Mark six and in Luke five. Moreover, in the Synoptic Gospels (i.e. Matthew, Mark, Luke), it occurs almost exclusively in speech attributed to non-Jews. But in the Gospel of John it is used by the writer himself to designate the participants. Bratcher has analyzed out four different meanings of Ioudaios in John (Bratcher 1975:401-409), viz.

1. its natural sense meaning simply Jewish people
(16 occurrences);
2. Judaeans, people who live in and near Jerusalem
(10 occurrences);
3. people hostile to Jesus (14 occurrences);
4. the authorities in Jerusalem (22 occurrences).

Apart from the fact that 9 occurrences of the term are not treated, Bratcher's study is also marred by his assumption that the deep differences shown between Jesus and "the Jews" reflect the hostility between Church and Synagogue in a later age when the author wrote his gospel (ibid. p. 402).

The use of the term Ioudaios in the fourth Gospel has been a subject of dispute among students of the NT at least since the middle of the nineteenth century. However, in a recent exhaustive study which utilizes linguistic insights, Schram has claimed that Ioudaios has only one referential meaning. It is used to refer to one specific group of people (or some members or a member) of that group (Schram 1975:24) and it is not used to refer to any other class of things.

It may at first seem extravagant to claim that the sense of IOUDAIOS during the first century A.D. was the same as the sense of the English item JEW today. But the facts that: (1) the hierarchical relations among English lexical items like JEW, MANKIND, ROMAN, etc. (in a discourse about

the world of the first century) are still completely clear and proportionate to the relations noted above in regard to the corresponding items in the Fourth Gospel; and that (2) modern translators have no difficulty in deciding which English lexical item to use to represent IOUDAIOS in modern translations, indicate that the senses of the two terms are similar. In a not unusual sense of "means," IOUDAIOS "means" JEW to the English speaker just as the Dutch item JOOD "means" JEW to him. Naturally the experiences of the Jewish people in recent times and the awareness of these experiences in the minds of modern readers adds something which was not in the competence of the writer of the Fourth Gospel; and conversely, his experiences in connection with the Jewish people shaped his competence in a way which was different from his modern readers. Nonetheless, the sense relations (within IOUDAIOS and Jew) are similar, and in regard to potential to refer in performance to an identifiable class of phenomena in the world of experience (the Jewish people or some or one of its members) the two items are equivalent. The semantic relations holding among the English and Greek lexical items and the other items respectively with which they may be sensibly contrasted show that the two languages are semantically isomorphic at this point. More exactly perhaps, this is the case when modern English is used (as it often is) to discuss the events of the first century. The divisions of mankind in religious and national subgroupings is largely changed of course. But the apparent ability of the Jewish subgroup to maintain its identity from that time to this is the phenomenon in the world of experience which accounts for the language fact that both the Greek of the Fourth Gospel and modern English have lexical items to refer to them. That is, Greek and English are alike in that each provide a sense component which matches this continuous class of objects in the world of experience (Schram 1975:31).

Bratcher assents that hoi Ioudaioi usually refers to the Jewish authorities. Bratcher's interpretation is probably correct, but his translation obscures something important. If there is a certain ambiguity in "the Jews", this is equally present in the original. The author's own absolute usage of hoi Ioudaioi implies a certain attitude and perhaps a certain relationship to Judaism.

³ However, note that Schulze could not retain "Jew" (Judio) in his Qechua translation because it is a Spanish loan word that means "demon", "unbeliever".

The significance of John's pointed designation is thus lost in Bratcher's "more intelligible" rendering. The TEV's preoccupation with contextual consistency leads to the disappearance of some important link concepts in the New Testament. For instance the term martyria in John's writings provides a thread of thought linking a series of concepts and conveying the author's understanding of the gospel of Jesus. There is no great difficulty in preserving this in English, generally speaking, by the consistent use of "witness". Because the TEV does not translate the term concordantly the reader will not realize the connection linking a large number of passages.⁴

The TEV's practice here is even more questionable when it comes to the translation of Technical terminology which the New Testament writers inherited from their Bible (i.e. our Old Testament). Terms such as "grace", "truth", "life", "salvation", "redemption", "inheritance", "name" (e.g. of God), "sacrifice", "propitiation" all have a kind of definitive significance from their place in the history of God's revelation to Israel, and in the sacred text. The New Testament writers took over the Old Testament terminology and utilized it to express their understanding of the Gospel of Jesus. But in the TEV these terms which firmly anchor the New Testament message in the mainstream of Israel's historic faith tend to be dissipated in unmemorable paraphrases. The signposts pointing to the Old Testament context are removed. This is one of the most crucial points at which the TEV and other DE translations part

⁴See A.A. Trites, 1977, The New Testament Concept of Witness, Cambridge University Press.

company with the older English translations of the Bible.

Naturalness

The second feature that marks out the TEV as a DE translation according to Bratcher is that it seeks to express the meaning of the original as naturally and clearly as possible in English. In chapter 10 we compared the rendering of the Parable of the Prodigal Son in the RSV and TEV showing in detail how the latter achieved a style which is simple, contemporary, and natural. It must be admitted, however, that the TEV's rendering of parables is less likely to be controversial than its translation and reconstruction of other types of literature (e.g. involving doctrinal teaching). Innumerable examples could be given. We shall choose two that are repeatedly mentioned by Nida and Bratcher as examples of SL forms that must be altered in English to preserve the original meaning of the Greek (e.g. TAPOT: 5,36,51).

1. Mark 1:4

Greek: egeneto Ioannes ho Baptizōn en tē erēmōi kērussōn baptisma metanoias;

RSV: John the Baptizer appeared in the wilderness preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

TEV: So John appeared in the desert baptizing people and preaching his message: "Turn away from your sins and be baptized," he told the people, "and God will forgive your sins."

Nida may well be right when he says that the average person is unable to understand what is the relationship of "baptism" to "repentance" if the nominal structure of the Greek is retained as in FC translations. But that in itself does not justify such a radical restructuring. Apart from interpretative issues - and the TEV rendering involves quite a few controversial exegetical decisions

(see Williamson 1978:158) - Nida does not come to terms with the fact that Mark could have put it like the TEV in Greek had he wished to, as does Luke in his report, in direct speech, of Peter's call to baptism in Acts 2:38. But Mark preferred the brief general summary which English is quite capable of reproducing. There is no evidence that the meaning of the original was any more transparent to the average uninstructed Greek than it is to the "average person" today. Nor is it clear why if the participants can remain implicit in Greek they have to be made explicit in English. It has been pointed out that a sentence like "the salesman offered a reduction for cash, for clearing his stock" is quite possible in English and does not need to be restructured as "The salesman cried, 'Hurry, hurry, hurry . . . etc.'" (Robinson 1979:4). The FC "a baptism . . . for the forgiveness of sins" is quite adequate. If Mark chose not to specify the relations between participants and events more than that, why should the translator?

2. Romans 1:17

Greek: dikaiousunē gar Theou en autō apokaluptetai ek pisteos eis pistin, kathos gegraptai, Ho de dikaios ek pisteos sozetai

FC: For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith. As it is written: 'He who through faith is righteous shall live.'

TEV: For the Gospel reveals how God puts people right with himself: it is through faith from beginning to end. As the Scripture says: 'The person who is put right with God through faith shall live.'

The TEV rendering is more natural and clear. But Bratcher claims more for it. A study of Paul's use of dikaiousunē Theou ("the righteousness of God") he says, shows that the apostle "is not talking about an abstract quality in God, but of His activity in saving man. Paul is saying the gospel reveals how God puts people right with himself (Bratcher 1978:149). The passage is one of great

complexity which it is not appropriate to explore here. Suffice it to say that many commentaries on Romans would completely reject the TEV interpretation as does the new International Critical Commentary which holds that theou is a genitive of origin and that dikaïosunē is not an event word as Bratcher assumes following Nida (cf. Nida 1977a:72-73), but an object word (to use DE terminology) designating the righteous status bestowed by God. But the TEV rendering excludes such a possibility even being considered (and this well illustrates its practice of opting for one interpretation only). The ICC commentator's conclusion is significant. "The last word in this debate has clearly not yet been spoken. It would therefore be irresponsible to claim that the question has been conclusively decided either way" (Cranfield 1978:98). The FC translation, it could be argued, is superior insofar as it keeps the options open. Similarly there have been various understandings of ek pisteōs eis pistin e.g. "from the faith of the preachers to the faith of the heavens", "from God's faithfulness to man's faith", "from present faith to future faith", or as indicating a growth of faith. The literal translation "from faith to faith" would retain all these exegetical possibilities. The TEV's "it is through faith from beginning to end" represents one interpretation.

Sexist language

In passing we may note the TEV's avoidance of "sexist language" in Romans 1:17. Thus the FC translation "He who is righteous" (reflecting the masculine form of the Greek adjective dikaïos in this case) becomes "The person who is put right." The audience focus of DE theory means that translators must be sensitive to the influences of "women's lib". Nida has acknowledged that one of the most

extensive and subtle changes in the TEV reflects the concerns of the women's liberation movement. In the book of Proverbs "man"/"men" occurs some 119 times in the KJV, but only five of these demand specific reference to an adult male. Accordingly the TEV is careful to use "persons", "people", "someone", "anyone", or "mankind" instead. Nevertheless, we are assured that the translators have resisted the demands of those militants who wanted the pronouns "it" or "they" to be used in references to God (Nida 1977a:70). Earlier editions of the TEV were not wholly consistent in avoiding "sexist language" and even inserted "he" and "men" (e.g. in Romans 3:11 and Galatians 5:1) where the traditional EC translations simply use the adjective (e.g. "The just shall live by faith").

The fourth edition (1976) seems to have ironed these out. However, the issue suggests a potential weakness in DE theory where the terminology or categories of Scripture may be repugnant to the receptors whose favourable response is so necessary. There are indications that this problem may lurk behind DE theorists' reluctance to translate literally some terms (e.g. "propitiation", "blood", "jealous" (of God), "the Jews" (in a polemical context).

Semitic idioms

Nida has provided an important service for biblical studies, and translation in particular, by his analysis of Semitic idioms (particularly the use of Greek genitive constructions) and restatement of their meaning by means of one or more propositions (TAPOT:35-37). This has been further refined in Beekman and Callow (1974:249-266).

The complexities of the genitive absolute construction have already been discussed in some detail in chapter 9. In dealing with them, the translator must clarify not only the function of the genitival

relationship but also the function of the abstract noun(s). The problem is compounded when the genitive constructions found in the NT involve figures of speech, and the metaphor has to be considered first and then the significance of the genitive studied within the metaphorical setting. Traditional analyses of the genitive construction found in biblical commentaries often give little help to the student. There is no unanimity in the use of classificatory labels, (e.g. subjective, objective, possessive, adnominal, appositional etc.) and the relationships involved are seldom satisfactorily clarified. The TEV has utilized Nida's analysis. For example a number of noun-noun constructions belonging to the so-called genitive of quality have been interpreted and restructured in idiomatic English. "The mammon of unrighteousness" in Luke 16:9 (KJV) which had already been rendered "unrighteous mammon" in the RSV (replacing the Semitic structure but retaining the Hebrew loan word) becomes "worldly wealth" in the TEV. But it must be acknowledged that even the KJV had sometimes rendered a qualifying genitive by an adjective, e.g. Luke 4:22 tois logois tēs charitos was translated "gracious words" not "words of grace". The TEV, however, is not wholly consistent: "a crown of glory" (1 Pet. 5:4) becomes a "glorious crown" but "the Lord of glory" (Jas. 2:1) is not restructured as "the glorious Lord".

Other forms of imagery present a special problem because of the disparate natures of modern and Semitic cultures. According to Bratcher clarity is often best served by either changing, abandoning, or, more frequently, restructuring images. Yet sometimes the restructuring of the imagery seems unnecessary and inferior to a literal translation. Thus in Matthew 6:2 Jesus uses two vivid images:

"When you give alms, sound no trumpet before you . . . but . . . do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing."

TEV translates: "When you give something to a needy person, do not make a big show of it . . . but . . . do it in such a way that even your closest friend will not know about it."

Occasionally the DE principle produces a rendering which is more vivid than the original. Matthew 5:41 is a startling instance. The RSV reads: "If any one forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles." Jesus' words in the TEV, however, become: "If one of the occupation troops forces you to carry his pack one mile, carry it another mile." Nida has defended this highly imaginative rendering by appeal to componential analysis of the Greek verb aggareuo, translated "compel to go" in EC versions. He claims this one Greek verb combines at least the following specific components of meaning: (1) "Burdensome activity" (2) "which is compelled" (3) "by officers or soldiers of occupation forces", and (4) "on non-citizens or persons without high status". To express any less than what is communicated by the TEV, he says, would be to short-change the Greek text (Nida 1977:97f.). But the text implies nothing about occupation troops or carrying packs. Aggareuo requires no more garnishing than 'compel' or 'conscript' or 'commandeer' does in English. It seems extremely subjective and misleading to attribute to Jesus a loaded expression like "the occupation troops".

Style

DE also determines how the translator will deal with stylistic features. The example given by Bratcher is the rhetorical question.

- 1) In the TEV these are usually replaced by declarative statements lest they be misinterpreted as a request for information (Bratcher 1978:149). However the well known example in Mark 8:37 does not quite disappear:

RSV: For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? For what can a man give in return for his life?

TEV: Does a person gain anything if he wins the whole world but loses his life? Of course not! There is nothing he can give to regain his life.

The restructuring seems to underestimate the intelligence of the reader.

Our culture is dominated by the technical and the analytical; a milieu that is profoundly unpoetic so we would not have great literary expectations of a common language version. But it is difficult to understand Nida's praise of the TEV's restructuring of John 1:13:

RSV: who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God."

TEV: They did not become God's children by natural means, by being born as the children of a human father; God himself was their Father.

He says, (Nida 1977:103) "To begin a sentence with 'who were born' and then to insert three negative contrasts before coming to the contrastive conclusion, 'but of God', poses real problems for the average church congregation as it listens to the reading of this passage of Scripture." But this is surely debatable. The problem is not with the TEV's interpretation. Rather all power that style and diction can give has evaporated: not only the evocative nouns "blood", "flesh", "man"; but the suspense and thrust of the three negative phrases which the KJV/RSV preserve almost exactly from the Greek.

We can sympathize with Bishop Robinson's complaint:

The components of meaning can indeed be analyzed and rearranged, as Nida says. But the writer could have arranged it that way himself had he wished to; the TEV rendering would go quite well into Greek - though it would not be the Greek of John 1:13!

The translator needs more than a science of analysis; he needs to sense the power of words and style, and where the original reveals such, it should where possible be preserved. I believe the RSV of John 1:13 has far more power to grip the mind of the average congregation, and to do so again and again as it is read e.g. in the Christmas prologue, than has the GNB rendering. The GNB prologue as a whole does not reflect either the simple dignity or the pithy style of John. Where John is declamatory, GNB is didactic. And there are questionable renderings: "Before the world was created" for "In the beginning" (the clear echo of Genesis 1:1 is muted); "he was the same as God" for "the Word was God"; "the darkness has never put it out" as a rendering of ou katelaben; the disappearance of the concept of John's "witness" (marturia), and of "the Word becoming 'flesh'" (now "a human being"). (Robinson 1979:4).

The TEV's explicitness

According to Bratcher a third feature which marks out the TEV as a DE translation is its provision of information which is implicit in the original message either because the writer and first receptors have certain shared knowledge or because the information may be understood from the context. In chapter 10 we noted the provision of classifiers (e.g. "city of Antioch", sect Pharisees), and the clarification of ellipses, most of which improve the readability of the translation.

As one would expect in a DE translation such as the TEV, there is much more explication of information regarded as implicit in the ST. In most cases the additions are uncontroversial and enhance the translation making it more intelligible and idiomatic. But inevitably it is more boldly interpretative where FC translations often retain in the RL the ambivalence of the source.

We may illustrate the point by comparing the renderings of 1 Corinthians 12:1 where a questionable but cautious interpretation by the KJV is taken over and developed in modern translations of the DE type.

Greek: peri de tōn pneumatikōn

KJV Now concerning spiritual gifts

RSV Now concerning spiritual gifts (or spiritual persons)⁵

JBP Now I want to give you some further information in spiritual matters

NEB About gifts of the Spirit

JB Now I want to clear up a wrong impression about spiritual gifts

TEV Now the matter about the gifts from the Holy Spirit

LB And now I want to write about the special abilities the Holy Spirit gives to each of you.

The translator cannot avoid interpreting these four Greek words. But we see the difference between the FC approach exemplified by the KJV and RSV on the one hand, and the DE approach employed in the five modern translations. The KJV used italics to make clear that it was interpreting the adjective pneumatikon to refer to gifts (charismata) which are discussed subsequently by Paul a few verses later. The RSV also preserves something of the text's ambiguity by providing a footnote showing that pneumatikon may in fact mean "spiritual persons" as it does earlier in the letter. Other commentators have suggested that Paul is actually using the Corinthians' own term for "tongues" or "speaking in tongues".⁶ The DE translation selects the meaning that the translator regards as most likely and closes all other interpretative options. As this phrase

⁵The RSV printed gifts without italics but in a footnote acknowledged that the Greek could equally mean "spiritual persons" (cf. 1 Cor. 2:15; 14:37; Gal. 6:1). If a neuter form, however, is understood, another possibility is that Paul uses it not for gifts (charismata) in general but in the limited sense of "speaking in the Spirit".

⁶D.W.B. Robinson, 1972 "Charismata Versus Pneumatika" in RTR Vol. XXI, No.2.

is Paul's introduction to a treatment of some considerable length (chs. 12-14) the choice has much influence on the reader's understanding of the whole section.

Interpretation is often unavoidable. This may be because the grammatical or lexical forms of the RL require it; or because the natural style in the RL makes it desirable; or in the interests of accurate communication of the meaning of the ST (Barnwell 1974:93). But should not a translation, in principle, attempt to communicate the total meaning potential of the original?

The problem is that the ST may be vague or indeterminate for many reasons ranging from some inadequacy in the text itself to what is more probable differences between the SL and the RL. Presumably too, the ST may be deliberately vague just as it may be deliberately emphatic. The DE translator, in the interests of explicit idiomatic language, may amplify the original, pinpoint a vague time reference, supply a proper name where the pronominal reference is indeterminate.

A simple example of this is provided by the rendering of Exodus 32:17-18 in the OT section of the TEV, as has been pointed out by Aryeh Newman (1975:29-35). There we have a dialogue between Moses and Joshua as to what is happening in the Israelite camp as they approached it, in the account of the golden calf.

When Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted,
he said to Moses: There is a sound of battle in the camp.
And he said: It is not the sound of a song of victory,
neither is it the sound of a song of defeat . . .

Who said? Is Moses correcting Joshua, or Joshua modifying his first impressions after Moses has reacted with ominous silence? Both interpretations are to be found in the commentaries. The KJV preserved the vagueness of the ST. The RSV in rendering the Hebrew conjunctive vav by "But" instead of "And" seems to imply that it was

Moses. This is reinforced by the use of the word "answer" in place of the general category verb "said". The TEV (like the Jerusalem Bible and NEB before it) removes all doubt by inserting the speaker's name: "Moses".

The changes made by modern translations such as the TEV in the direction of greater specificity often have considerable stylistic justification, being dictated as much by the grammatical exigencies of the target language as by anything else. But it must be recognized that the FC versions such as the RSV often preserve better the range of interpretative options encapsulated in the ST.

At times the TEV seems over zealous in its passion for explicitness and intelligibility. The rendering of Genesis 4:1 is an example of this. A simple Hebrew sentence comprising a noun subject phrase and verb phrase: ve-adam yada' et-hava ishto is rendered as follows:

KJV: And Adam knew Eve his wife

RSV: Now Adam knew Eve his wife

NEB: The man lay with his wife Eve

JB: The man had intercourse with his wife Eve

TEV: Then Adam had intercourse with his wife

The KJV is the most literal. It adheres to the Hebrew word order and consistently transliterates the proper names "Adam" and "Eve". All translations except the TEV preserve the woman's proper name "Eve", presumably inferring an emphasis on "Eve" as a person rather than as a generic term for womankind. Some apparently regarded the Hebrew adam as the more impersonal "man" rather than "Adam". The idiomatic translations find it necessary to be more explicit in signifying exactly what action was performed between Adam and Eve. The Jerusalem Bible and the TEV are the more explicit and knowing! But are their

renderings really an improvement? The Shorter Oxford Dictionary gives one meaning of "know" as: "to have carnal acquaintance", noting that it is a Hebraism. Newman sums up:

"Know" would seem to provide the more appropriate equivalent for the elemental Hebrew verb used to describe the first intimate relationship that Adam had with Eve. What it leaves unsaid is by far the most effective aspect of the choice. All the other substitutes underestimate the reader and do not convey the force and delicacy of the original. The latter could have used the Hebrew shakav, usually rendered "lay", often used in the Bible for intercourse. It seems that the passion of lucidity and unambiguity has overridden itself. (A. Newman 1978:170).

The problem of ambiguity

The above discussion highlights a major difference between the FC and DE approach. In practice the FC translation seeks to preserve all the exegetical potential of the ST even at the risk of ambiguity or awkwardness. The DE translation, on the other hand, because of its communication focus, cannot tolerate any ambivalence:

Ambiguity is the tool of the diplomat, and of the politician or of anyone else who wishes to conceal meaning, not reveal it. But the New Testament writers were interested in communicating effectively and what ambiguity there is in the Greek text for today's exegete was certainly not intended by the authors and probably, in many instances, at least not felt by the original readers . . . A translation fails its purpose if the passage is not clear to the reader (Bratcher 1978:152).

Certainly no translator would normally regard ambiguity as desirable. But Nida and Bratcher oversimplify the situation. The ST is at times ambivalent. The Dutch biblical scholar Van Unnik in the Nida Festschrift, takes Romans 12:8 as an example (ho metadidous en haplotēti), and describes the considerable number of interpretations of those four Greek words. He goes on to say "it may be that even an excellent translation made according to this (DE) principle must remain unclear, since the original text is ambiguous. In that case footnotes are indispensable" (in Black and Smalley eds. 1974:170).

Van Unnik does not seem to realize that he has parted company with Nida at this point.

The whole subject of ambiguity is a complex one. Catford provides a good treatment showing that linguistic untranslatability occurs typically where an ambiguity peculiar to the ST is a functionally relevant feature e.g. in SL puns (Catford 1965:94-96). However, pace Catford, even this is more or less translatable because important ambiguities such as polysemies or cultural features can always be translated in the text, in parenthesis or in a footnote as appropriate (Newmark 1973:11). One could even say that this is what Catford himself does in explaining his Russian examples. The English reader can observe the linguistic ambiguity and imagine its effect on a Russian reader.

Sometimes, the ambiguity may be intentional and important, as often in the teaching of Jesus. Vagueness, strange images and the evocation of multiple associations are utilized to force the hearer to introspect or to stretch his imagination and to draw his own conclusions. One of Nida's colleagues seems to confess the inadequacy of DE theory at this point:

Under the principles of dynamic equivalence, translators are told that in cases of ambiguity they should translate with the meaning that the original writer probably intended, that ambiguity is in the mind of the receptor and in the surface structure, not in the intention of the writer. And for information function this is usually correct, but it is not correct for evocative function, where the ambiguity and vagueness is part of the purpose and leads the perceptive reader beyond itself (Smalley 1974:365).

Smalley himself mentions Jesus' talk with Nicodemus about being "born again". One could add many other expressions which Jesus used, that puzzled and worried his disciples, as no doubt they were intended to do, as for instance when he warned them to beware of "the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees" (Mt. 16:6), or his

evocative pronouncements known as the Beatitudes (Mt. 5:3-11). Again the Book of Revelation contains many bewildering images with oblique references to terrible events and God's intervention and final victory. Many generations of believers have found meaning for their own situation from the multiple interpretations which such use of language makes possible.

The point of all this is not to recommend unintelligibility as a virtue in translation, but to underline the fact that the Bible is a work of literature and literary language always exhibits considerable ambiguity and vagueness. Lachermeyer (1972:97-106) has shown that ambiguity and vagueness is generally avoided in scientific language (though its complete elimination would make abstraction, organizational elegance, analogous thought and efficiency, difficult to attain), tolerated in conventional language, and is an essential ingredient in literary language systems. He assumes that the common objective of all literature is to elicit 'feeling' in the consumer, and vague expressions provide an open-endedness that makes this attainable. If Lachermeyer's analysis be accepted, how ironic it is that DE translation theory deliberately avoids the very device that would enable it to elicit response from the receptor!

Cultural consistency in translation

The issue of cultural adaptation in translation, especially Bible translation, is a particularly sensitive one. For some eight years now there have been references in UBS publications to a forthcoming book by Nida and Reyburn setting out the central principles for handling cultural adaptation, but apparently because of the controversial nature of its material it has still not got beyond the stage of private circulation. In TAPOT the treatment is fairly cautious: cultural conditioning should not be employed unless:

- (1) the text is likely to be misunderstood by the receptors
- (2) the text is likely to have no meaning to the receptors
- (3) the resultant translation is so "overloaded" that it will constitute too much of a problem for the reader to figure it out.

But even within the range of these three types of expressions there are certain specific problems relating to the historical significance of the event and the importance of the religious symbolism involved (TAPOT:110)

Bratcher's articles on the TEV provide little information on the subject or his own approach. He acknowledges that the question of currency is particularly difficult, since here the problem of anachronism is particularly obvious. Jesus did not talk about dollars and cents; but a translator is not an antiquarian seeking to convey the facts about 1st century A.D. culture. Footnotes are the obvious way to supply any additional information that the modern reader needs. Weights, measures and hours of the day, however, should be given their modern equivalents (Bratcher 1978:151).

In his popular introduction to the TEV, Nida distances DE translation from a "cultural translation" such as that of Clarence Jordan's Cotton Patch Version of the New Testament, which utilized not only the language of the Deep South but also substituted "Washington⁹ D.C." for "Rome" and gave the name "Rock Johnson" to "Cephas, son of John" etc. Nida stresses that the TEV attempts no such time-space transpositions, "for the historical context of the Scriptures is an integral part of the unique message of the Bible" (Nida 1977a:17). Accordingly we cannot speak of Abraham "the wandering Aramaean" (Deut. 26:5) as "a homeless refugee", or of David defeating Goliath with a slingshot (1 Sam. 25:29), or of Jesus "being lynched", or of "demon possession" as "mental stress". These would all be anachronistic.

No translation can be completely free of cultural adaptation. Even the KJV talks about undoing the latchet of Jesus' shoes (Mk. 1:7) which, if understood at all today, would cause the reader to imagine

the Lord with his stout Elizabethan shoes on. But one would expect to find much more adaptation in a DE translation because of its communication focus. The Nida Festschrift includes a relevant article by Norm Mudhenk, "The Subjectivity of Anachronism", the burden of which argues that people with differing cultural and biblical sophistication react to translations in different ways and therefore the amount of adaptation should be related to this awareness of other cultures and particularly the biblical culture. He proposes five different groupings ranging from those with no awareness of cultures they have not experienced first hand, to those who understand the biblical culture quite well. He makes the interesting point that for this fifth group a "Cotton Patch" type of translation can be very useful even though it sacrifices much of the original historical context of the Scriptures:

Other translation, limited by the need to maintain the historical facts, simply cannot create in us the emotions which were stirred up in the original readers. Eating meat sacrificed to idols remains a serious issue today for Christians in certain parts of the world. But most Americans have trouble enough understanding why there should be objections in first place - it's still meat, after all, whatever nonsense someone may have put it through. We agree too facilely with what Paul is saying. His readers either found his comments hard to take, or else they agreed only after a serious struggle over the issue in their own lives. It is simply impossible for most Americans, for instance, to read these passages with any real feeling for what he is saying. But these were emotional issues, and to fail to communicate the emotion is to fail in the translation (Mudhenk 1974:273).

Do we see here the logical conclusion of DE translation theory which gives such a determinative role to the response of the receptor? In what sense is the concept translation now distinct from communication (or sermon!)? But Mudhenk is more realistic than Nida. One cannot retain the strange historic context of the Bible and, at the same time, guarantee impact on modern readers. Yet the

DE model regards the translation as unsuccessful if it does not evoke a response similar to that posited for the original readers.

What about cultural adaptation in the TEV itself? We have already noted its sensitivity to the demands of "women's lib" and imagined the consequences if the cultural climate cannot tolerate masculine categories being used to describe God. One could find fault with renderings which mention "the police" in Matthew^w 5:25 (though this is better than the NEB's "the constable"), or "the bank" in Matthew 25:27, both of which bring to our minds scenes different from those the writer envisaged. However, it is of more importance to look at what have been called the "cultural nodes" of the ST (Kelly 1970:171), that is those predominant cultural features which set the general milieu for the matter of the text. This means in the case of the translation of the NT writings that the reader will be taken back into the alien world of 1st century Judaism where the Christian movement began. A good translation will convey how the gospel of Jesus appeared to those Jewish writers, and not how they would have thought had they been Australians or Americans.

Nida has defended the TEV for its translation of hamartoloi by "outcasts" instead of "sinners" as in traditional translations (e.g. in Mk. 2:15,17; Lk.7:34). He explains that the reference is to those who no longer identified with the Jewish religion and hence had been virtually excommunicated from Jewish society. The TEV in fact provides this useful information in its note on "Outcasts" in its Word List. But it would have done better still to have retained "sinners" in the text. From the point of view of the biblical writers hamartōloi referred to offenders against God's law, and in that context it is more significant that Jesus should have welcomed "sinners" than that he should have welcomed "outcasts". The TEV rightly retains

the Hebrew loan word "sabbath" in its renderings, but for some reason substitutes "Saturday evening" with a footnote "or Sunday" for "the first day of the week" (e.g. Acts 20:7). If the Jews thought in terms of "the first day of the week" it is a distinct loss to render this as "Sunday" or "Saturday evening" - the connotations are quite different.

Even more central is the translation of "Israel" and related terminology in the NT documents. This is worthy of a study in itself. Here we simply record some obvious deficiencies in the TEV (and other similar DE translations that have been checked, e.g. the Indonesian, Malay and French, but not the Dutch).

1. The TEV drops "Israel" from its translation and replaces it with "the chosen people" in five passages in Paul's writings, (viz. Rom 9:4,6b,31; Gal. 6:16; Eph. 2:12). I know of no previous Bible translation that has done this. Is this in the interests of reader response so that the modern receptor can feel included? The result is a distortion of the meaning in each case because Paul is discussing the constitution of the people of God and the respective roles of Israel and the Gentiles in the Divine purposes as any commentary will confirm. "Israel" is the main self-designation of the Jews in the NT, a term with tremendously favourable connotations (which "Jews" often does not have, though each writer's usage has to be noted). As Paul says of his kinsmen in Romans 9:4-5 "They are Israelites and to them belong the sonship, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the Law, the worship, and the promises: to them belong the patriarchs, and of their race according to the flesh is the Christ." (RSV).

2. The translation of hoi Ioudaioi ("the Jews") by the "Jewish authorities" in John's gospel has already been commented on above.
3. In James 1:1 "To the twelve tribes in the dispersion" (tais dōdeka phulais tais en tē diaspora) becomes in the TEV "To all God's people scattered over the whole world". Likewise 1 Peter 1:1 "To the exiles of the dispersion" (parapidēmois diasporas) becomes "to God's chosen people who live as refugees scattered throughout . . ." Again presumably the translation is seeking to help the modern reader identify with the original addresses. But his generalized renderings obscure the provenance of the letters which could be regarded as having important bearings on their interpretation (and application to the modern reader too). The technical term diaspora (which has in fact come over into English - though perhaps not common English) is also found in John 7:35 where it is rendered "our people". As the speakers are Jews the paraphrase there does not obscure the referents as it does in the other two occurrences above.
4. The TEV translates peritomē ("circumcision") by "Jews" (e.g. Rom. 15:7; Gal. 2:9). The reference is correct but peritomē has arresting connotations that "Jews" does not have. The modern reader might be startled to read of "the circumcision" but the context supplies all the clues he needs. The reference is particularly pointed in Galatians where the issue is: Should they be circumcised or not as Gentile believers?
5. The TEV translated hoi hagioi ("the saints" in traditional versions) by "God's people" e.g. Eph. 1:18; 2:19; 3:8; 4:12. Many commentators would have no problem with this interpretation.

Admittedly too, "the saints" has unhelpful connotations in modern English (not to mention those Sydneysiders who may assume the referent is a well known Rugby League club!). Nevertheless there has been a tradition of commentary⁷ which sees this term as having special reference to Jewish believers. That interpretation is not available to the reader of the TEV.

6. There is no suggestion that the TEV is deliberately obscuring the Jewish setting of the NT documents. On the contrary, in many places this is made more explicit by frequent insertions of "Jewish" or less frequently "Israelite" (where there is no corresponding item in the ST) e.g. in Galatians 4:4 God's Son "came as the son of a human mother and lived under the Jewish law." In Romans 3:9 the insertion makes clear that an exclusive "we" is intended by Paul: "Well then are we Jews in any better condition than the Gentiles?" (Paul is not including all his readers), an intelligent addition where the interpretation is uncontroversial. A similar insertion is not, however, made in Galatians 3:23 to clarify the exclusive nature of the "we" there. But often one feels the insertions underestimate the reader, or, worse still, distort the meaning of the ST. For instance the frequent insertion of "Jewish" before law, e.g. Galatians 4:4, is surely unnecessary in the context of the Bible or even that letter by itself, not to mention the letter to the Hebrews (e.g. 8:4; 10:1). In fact the insertions in the Letter to the Hebrews are very strange: The letter is written to Jewish believers and the document constantly appeals to the OT Law and sacrificial system. But the TEV from the eighth chapter onwards suddenly starts inserting "Jewish" e.g. in 8:4 we have

⁷Especially among Continental scholars .e.g. Raynar Asting (1930), Karl Holl (1921), O. Proksch in TDNT (1933), L. Cerfeux (1948), J.L. Leuba (1953).

"the Jewish Law". But the subject of the Law has already been mentioned in 7:19 where the TEV translated literally "the Law of Moses" (anyway, "Jewish Law" sounds derogatory - Scripture always speaks of "the Law", "the Law of Moses" or "the Law of God"). Again in 9:25 we find the Jewish High Priest. But the High Priest has already been mentioned in 8:3 and 9:7. No-one has ever suggested a different referent. "Jewish priest" reappears in 10:11 and "Jewish High Priest" in 13:11. Again in 13:10 we read of the "Jewish Tent". This also has appeared earlier translated literally just "Tent". Less serious is the insertion of "Israel" at 7:5 ("people of Israel") and "Israelites" at 11:29 (e.g. "It was faith that made the Israelites able to cross the Red Sea" (cf. 11:30)). It is doubtful that these insertions help the modern reader in view of the haphazard nature of the insertions. More seriously, they completely change the atmosphere of the Epistle. No one would ever guess from the TEV rendering of the Epistle to the Hebrews that it was written by a Jew to fellow Jews!

In summary, the TEV is much more conservative in its cultural adaptations than we might have expected from the receptor-oriented translation theory that inspires it. Many of its adjustments (e.g. the addition of classifiers) are helpful. However, our preliminary survey above indicates one area where serious distortion of the ST message has occurred viz. the references to Israel and the Jewish context of these documents. These are "cultural nodes", cultural data in the ST on which all other cultural material depends for its validity. An FC translation such as the RSV modulates these nodes far more competently.

SECTION IV

SPECIFIC PROBLEMS IN THE TEV AND KINDRED DE TRANSLATIONS

CHAPTER 12

THE PROBLEM OF LANGUAGE IN DE TRANSLATIONS

A. Language Varieties and the Demand for Intelligibility and Naturalness

(i) Language Varieties

In any speech community there are different varieties of language. No language is completely homogeneous. Nida has pointed out that varieties differ in terms of time (older vs. newer forms, archaisms, neologisms etc.), geography (dialects), socio-economic classes or castes, circumstances of use, oral or written usage, types of discourse and literary genres (TAPOT:120-123 cf. Wonderly 1968:6-19). Catford has categorized these varieties into two major classes: (i) those which exemplify permanent characteristics such as Idiolects (language variety related to the individual performer) and Dialects (language variety related to geographical, temporal or social provenance); (ii) those which are transient in that they adjust to the situation of utterance such as Register, Style and Mode. Register is the variety related to the wider social role being played by the performer at the moment of utterance e.g. 'scientific', 'religious', 'civil service' etc. Style refers to the performers' relation to the addressees: e.g. 'formal', 'colloquial', 'intimate'. Mode is the variety related to the medium (e.g. spoken or written) in which the performer is operating (Catford 1965:84-85).

All languages can be described in terms of a number of varieties then, but the number and nature of these differs from one language to another - a fact of great importance to be noted in connection with translation. Bible translators have to recognize this fact both with regard to the ST and to the RL. Nida himself has devoted much study

to the subject. Thus in his earlier book, Bible Translating (1947) the third chapter discusses the problem of translating the Bible into pre-literate languages. Similarly in TAPOT (ch.7) he focuses on the question of the literary status of the RL, differentiating situations in which a language has a long literary tradition, from those where the language has only recently been reduced to writing, or has only an oral literary tradition, and he proposes appropriate strategies.

Consistent with this analysis of the varieties of language found in every speech community Nida has pointed out: Firstly, with regard to the Biblical corpus itself "one must recognize certain quite different styles and attempt to produce something which will be a satisfying dynamic equivalent." (TAPOT: 129). Accordingly this should be reflected, he says, even in common language translations such as the TEV:

The common language range is not a narrow band of monotonous usage. It contains a relatively wide variety of forms, so that a common language translation of the Gospel of Mark sounds different from the common language translation of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Mark and the writer to the Hebrews used widely differing literary styles when they wrote in Greek, and the differences are clearly carried over in a common language translation. Likewise, the narrative style of Joshua is quite distinct from the poetry of Job and the Psalms, both in the original Hebrew and in the common language translation (Nida 1977a:107).

Secondly, Nida recognizes the varieties present in the RL and he advocates a number of different Bible translations in accordance with the needs of each group. Thus a major language such as English needs a number of different translations:

- (a) A translation with ecclesiastical orientation;
- (b) A common language translation which will reach out beyond the church constituency;

(c) A translation on a literary level which will exploit the total resources of a language.¹

(ii) The Concern for Intelligibility and Naturalness

Despite this theoretical sensitivity to language varieties in both the ST and the RL, one might well be sceptical, on the basis of the TEV and other Common language versions produced so far, as to whether in practice DE translations can do justice to the language varieties found in the ST. Furthermore there would seem to be a problem inherent in DE theory itself, namely the assumption that the ST always exhibits the qualities of naturalness and intelligibility.

One must immediately acknowledge that the concern for intelligibility, naturalness and simplicity is not a novel one in the history of the English Bible. Following Luther and Erasmus, William Tyndale, according to the well-known account, maintained that if God spared his life, before many years had passed he would cause a ploughboy to know more of the Scriptures than the learned men with whom he was contending. It has been said of Tyndale that he "fixed the type according to which the later labourers worked" and that "his influence decided that our Bible should be popular and not literary, speaking in a simple dialect, and that so by its simplicity it should be endowed with permanence" (Westcott 1927:158). Thus the KJV translators in their Preface to the Reader, acknowledged their debt to their predecessors and showed themselves true heirs of Tyndale by expressing their desire that the Scripture "may speak like itself, as in the

¹Personal letter from Dr. Nida, September 25, 1979.

language of Canaan, that it may be understood even of the very vulgar". The powerful advocacy of the need for clarification and revision which produced the ERV (1881) and its American counterpart ARV (1901) helped prepare the way for the host of modern translations which were to follow in the twentieth century. In fact it was precisely the widespread feeling that these revisions had failed to fulfil the need they had publicized that encouraged others to try their hand (Skilton 1978:179).

However, in addition to the Tyndale tradition of simplicity and intelligibility in the history of the English Bible, another powerful influence in this direction has been of fairly recent origin. I refer to the manuscript discoveries of Greek papyri at the close of the nineteenth century and the consequent growing conviction that the New Testament was written, at least in the main, in the vernacular dialect of the market place.

B. The Appeal to NT Koine as a Model for Contemporary Bible Translators

The discovery in Egypt of masses of Greek papyri in the early decades of this century, written mainly in the unliterary, spoken Koine, led at that time to the claim that the main feature of New Testament Greek was that it was the ordinary vernacular Greek of the period. Until then the Greek of the NT stood almost alone as a peculiar form of Greek, perhaps even a special "dialect of the Holy Spirit". True, there had been scholars who showed remarkable perceptiveness. J.H. Moulton in his *Prolegomena* (1908:242) cites a lecture by Bishop Lightfoot in 1863. Lightfoot, referring to a Greek word occurring in the NT but not found in classical literature outside the fifth century B.C. writer, Herodotus, said:

You are not to suppose that the word had fallen out of use in the interval, only that it had not been used in the books

which remain to us; probably it had been part of the common speech all along. I will go further, and say that if we could only recover letters that ordinary people wrote to each other without any thought of being literary, we should have the greatest possible help for the understanding of the language of the New Testament generally.

Lightfoot's prophecy was soon to have a remarkable fulfilment. From the 1880's onwards large numbers of the very sort of ordinary letters and documents he referred to have come to light after two millenia of burial in the sands of Egypt. Scraps of papyrus and pieces of pottery recovered from ancient rubbish dumps provide witness to a kind of Greek strikingly similar to the Greek of the NT.

The person responsible for first pointing out the affinity between vernacular Koine Greek and the NT idiom was the great German scholar, Adolf Diessmann, whose monumental Licht vom Osten was translated into English as Light from the Ancient East (1927). In Britain the study of the papyri was taken up by some distinguished scholars, outstanding among whom were J.H. Moulton and G. Milligan, joint editors of The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament, a work in which the lexical information supplied by these papyri and other non-literary sources is arranged alphabetically.

The wonder that Divine Revelation should come via the language of the common man was something which gripped the imagination and perhaps suited the spirit of the age - the Age of the Common Man. Nida himself, who received his Master's degree in Greek New Testament in 1939 (before taking up studies in linguistics under Charles C. Fries at the University of Michigan) was clearly inspired by this perspective:

Putting eternal truths in the speech of everyday life reflects exactly the style of the Greek New Testament. The New Testament books were not written in the high flown Asian style of the schoolmasters of the first and second centuries A.D.; they were couched in the words of the common people, who were seeking the truth about the living, risen Christ.

For those who sought life, the dead forms of outmoded grammatical styles were useless (Nida 1952:23).

This view of NT Greek was also assumed by Nida's former colleague and distinguished linguist, Kenneth L. Pike. (They worked together for some twenty years as principal teachers in the Summer Institute of Linguistics. Nida taught the morphology-syntax strand while Pike took the phonetics-phonemics). With regard to "Axioms concerning the Language of Scripture" Pike writes:

It is observed empirically - by linguistic methods - that the language of the Scriptures is natural language. One cannot differentiate the Greek used in the NT from the language of the time. It is not even elevated style, but the language of the man in the street. It is ordinary language, spoken by ordinary linguistic rules such as those studied at the Summer Institute of Linguistics by persons preparing to analyze unwritten languages (K.L. Pike 1971:77).

However, few scholars now, if any, would give unqualified assent to this view of the nature of NT Greek. Few would be so bold in the use of the word "natural" and fewer still would equate it with "the language of the man in the street" - the view that encouraged Nida and other DE practitioners to promote contemporary Bible translations for which "Koine, the common Greek of the writers and the receptors of the NT writings, presents not only the content but the model" (Schulze 1979:38).

Here we can do no more than trace the gradual modification of Diessmann's theses and portray what seems to be the current consensus. As early as 1933 Professor A.P. Nock of Harvard was writing:

Any man who knows his classical Greek authors and then looks into the papyri is astonished at the similarities he finds. Any man who knows the papyri first and then turns to Paul is astonished at the difference (Nock 1933:138).

A British scholar, E.K. Simpson, was to be more specific (though from his English style we might doubt his capacity to be objective in discussing Common language!):

In recent years we have been flooded with testifications to the vernacularity of the New Testament; so much indeed that methinks the balance needs to be somewhat redressed. Unquestionably we owe a debt to the Egyptian papyri and inscriptional lore that cannot be ignored. They have shed light on many incidental points in the sacred text and supplied parallels to many anomalous grammatical forms. When we wish to ascertain the exact sense of logia or apographē, or of a phrase like synairein logon (Mt. 18:23) 'to square accounts', or hoi anastatountes hymas (Gal. 5:12), 'your upsetters', the papyri stand us in good stead. They illustrate the language of the market place or the courts of law, wherever such aspects of life crop out in the Gospels or Epistles. In wayside episodes popular diction suits the speakers. Ti skylleis ton didaskalon? (Mark 5:35), 'Why do you bother the teacher,' matches with the lips in which the sentence is placed. It tallies perfectly with its popular environment, and, needless to say, can be plentifully paralleled from the papyri, so large a proportion of which are scribbled waste-papers, which betray by their misspellings the hand of illiterate scrawlers. As long as Scriptural writers hug the coast of mundane affairs, the Egyptian pharos yields a measure of illumination to their track, but when they launch out into the deeps of divine counsels, we no longer profit by its twinkling cross-lights (E.K. Simpson 1944:6).

Other writers (e.g. B.F.C. Atkinson 1930:280f; C.F.D. Moule 1959:1-4; N. Turner 1974:107-112) have joined E.K. Simpson in pointing out that there are wide differences in style within the NT, and that one must not exaggerate the extent to which NT Greek resembles the idioms of the vernacular papyri as was done by earlier writers impressed by Diessmann's researches. They have also drawn attention to suggestive parallels in style and diction not only with famous Hellenistic writers such as Polybius, Strabo, Epictetus, Lucian, and Plutarch, and the Jewish writers Philo and Josephus, but also with less important writers such as Vettius Valens the astrologer and Philodemus, the Palestinian rhetorician.

However, it is not so much the parallels with the literary Koine of the Hellenistic writers that is underlined by modern scholars. It is rather the Semitic cast of Biblical Greek which is seen to set it apart from the language of the market place. Thus in 1935 Britain's

distinguished Biblical scholar, C.H. Dodd, published his The Bible and the Greeks in which he provided many examples of the modification of Greek terms through their use in the Septuagint translation of the Jewish Bible. In the 1940's the Swedish scholar Albert Wifstrand was claiming that Luke had modelled his style very clearly on that of the Septuagint. As to the authors of James, I Peter and Hebrews, he claimed they had mastered the grammar of Koine Greek as it was written by educated people, but their stylistic home was the edifying language of the hellenized synagogue (Wifstrand 1947:170-182). In America Henry Cadbury of Harvard was acknowledging that the Greek of the NT "is not always a native Greek but a Greek from which another idiom shines through". He acknowledges the fact of the "Semitic element" but says "Today no unanimous appraisal of its source and extent is forthcoming" (Cadbury 1951:154). His contemporary of the University of Chicago, F.W. Gingrich, claimed that the Greek NT was a landmark in the course of ^Semantic change and instanced a distinctly Christian usage of words like agape, pistis, charis, koinonia, diatheke, dikaioo, kleronomia, etc. (Gingrich 1954:189f). Metzger of Princeton was more definite still:

The meaning of many of the richest and most significant words in the New Testament cannot be found in the ordinary Greek dictionary. Instead of going to Athens for help the interpreter must go to Jerusalem for in the pregnant phrase of Albert Ritsch 'the Old Testament is the lexicon of the New Testament'. It is a fact that most of the religious terminology of the New Testament can be understood only as it is read against the background of the Hebrew Old Testament and its Greek translation the Septuagint (Metzger 1951:151).

In the last twenty years the research has taken account not only of the vocabulary but more so of the syntax and style of NT Greek. As a result of the writings of British and Continental scholars such as G. Johnston, N. Turner, H.S. Gehman, M. Black, P. Katz, J.N. Sevenster and K. Beyer (see works cited) a new consensus has

developed that biblical Greek has a character of its own which was imparted to it by Semitic influences. I am aware of only one recent protest against this prevailing viewpoint, viz. that of a classicist Lars Rydbeck who feels that the reaction against Diessmann and man-in-the-street Greek has swung the pendulum too far in the direction of a "peculiar language of a peculiar people" (so Black 1970:11 cf. Turner 1965:9). He points out, "The NT texts were written down in Greek and they were understood by Greek speaking pagans in the second century A.D. Still there is much to say for a peculiar Jewish tinge to NT Greek." He has appealed for a reappraisal of the evidence from both the Hellenist and Jewish materials and more balanced integration (Rydbeck 1975:425).

Inevitably there arises the tantalizing question as to what language Jesus and his apostles used in their daily lives. Was it Palestinian Aramaic, Koine Greek or even Hebrew? The question has more significance than the mere satisfaction of pious curiosity. If Jews spoke Aramaic rather than the Greek of the NT writings then this means that the records we have are already a translation. This may well influence our interpretation of them. Many scholars have adopted this view so impressed have they been by the Semitisms of the Gospels - great names like those of J. Wellhausen, G. Dalman, C.C. Torrey, C.F. Burney, M.H. Segal, T.W. Manson and Matthew Black. These have held that Jesus and his disciples normally used Aramaic although they were probably acquainted with Greek and perhaps Hebrew. Black sums up the conclusion of Dalman which he regards as firmly established: "Jesus may have spoken Greek, but he certainly did speak and teach in Aramaic" (Black 1967). The question is impossible to resolve with absolute certainty. We do not even have any written records of this language from the period 100 B.C. - 100 A.D.

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the brother of the Lord, could write an epistle in good Greek (ibid. p. 190). J.A.T. Robinson has recently gone even further by questioning the common assumption that Aramaic-speaking Christianity was prior to Hellenistic Christianity. He suggests that the growing weight of evidence indicates that the majority of the early Jewish Christians whether from Galilee, Jerusalem or the Diaspora spoke (or even most naturally spoke) Greek. "There is nothing inherently impossible about the notion that both the epistle of James and the first draft of the gospel of John could be very Jewish and very early and be written in Greek." (J.A.T. Robinson 1976:346-7).

C. The Role of the Greek Septuagint Translation

It has long been a commonplace that Luke, the main writer of the NT (in terms of length), and "the most versatile" (Plummer 1922:XLIX) together with the writer to the Hebrews is steeped in the Septuagint (Birdsall 1962:714); Bruce 1971:154; Rydbeck 1975:427). But in the Introduction to the Volume IV of A Grammar of New Testament Greek (Turner 1976), we read in addition that "the style of Mark recalls parts of the Septuagint" (p.2); the Gospel of John "is directly influenced by the Septuagint"; the Greek of the Pauline letters is Jewish, much influenced by the Septuagint"; "I Peter firmly Septuagintal and Semitic despite the likely efforts of a lettered amanuensis" (p.3); "2 Peter is more Semitic in style" (than Jude) "more patently influenced by the Septuagint, and a degree more pompous" (p.4). Accordingly in view of the significant influence on the NT writings that the Septuagint is increasingly assumed to have had (cf. Filson 1972:142-145), we shall consider it briefly.

The Septuagint (LXX) is the name commonly given to the translation of the OT from Hebrew into Greek made in the third and second centuries.

Recent scholarship has been favourable to the idea that Jesus spoke a Jewish-Greek dialect. Thus Dr. Nigel Turner who completed the third and fourth volumes of Moulton's Grammar has taken a different view from that of his distinguished predecessor:

It is not inconceivable that, whatever the language of Jesus, it was influenced by all of those spoken in Galilee at that time, viz. Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek and perhaps Latin. It was biblical Greek, of a kind not very different from the Septuagint - a branch of the Koine, but very different from what we read in the Egyptian rubbish heaps or on the papyrus of more literate people. Since 1949, intense study of vocabulary and syntax seem to me to establish that there was a distinguishable dialect of spoken and written Jewish Greek. That is to say, the biblical language was more than a written product of those whose mother tongue was Semitic and who floundered in Greek because they knew so little of it that they must copy Semitic idioms as they permed it. I am not the first to suggest that the Greek of the Old Testament was a language distinct from the main stream of the Koine, yet fully understood by the Jews. Perhaps as Gehman suggests, those who used this dialect of Greek were bilingual; it may have been a temporary phase in the history of the language, representing a period of transition for those Jews who were passing from a Semitic speaking to a Greek speaking stage, and coinciding with the New Testament period. However, as works of much later date, like the Testament of Abraham, exhibit exactly this kind of diction, I do not think it was merely transitional. Certainly it was not artificial. Biblical Greek is so powerful and fluent, it is difficult to believe that those who used it did not have at hand a language all ready for use. This, I submit, was the normal language of Jesus, at least in Galilee - rather a separate dialect of Greek than a form of the Koine, and distinguishable as something parallel to classical, Hellenistic, Koine and Imperial Greek. (Turner 1976:114)

On the basis of recent diverse literary and archaeological data, the Dutch scholar, J.N. Sevenster (1968) concludes that the linguistic situation in Palestine was far more fluid and complex than previously assumed. The Dead Sea Scrolls show that Jewish scribes sent letters in Aramaic, Hebrew and Greek to the same Jewish leaders from the same Jewish centres. He concludes that there is no reason to reject that Jesus could have taught in Greek, particularly in areas such as the Decapolis of Trans jordan or when he faced Pilate, and that it can no longer be precluded that a Palestinian, Jewish Christian like James,

(the island otherwise famed for its lighthouse), where in seventy-two days they completed their task of translating the Pentateuch into Greek, presenting an agreed version as the result of conference and comparison. While the historical merit of the legend is slight, it does tell us how this Greek translation came to be known as the Septuagint from the Latin word for seventy and why it is frequently indicated by the Roman numeral sign LXX. Other ancient reports do verify that it was made in Alexandria and that it was begun in the third century B.C. (F.F. Bruce 1971:148). From at least the time of Ezra (i.e. 450 B.C.) it had been customary to translate into Aramaic the portions of the Hebrew Scriptures read in public. Actually these Aramaic Targums were oral interpretations rather than translations and were not at first written down. They gave the official view of what the sacred text meant and were intended to be used together with it (Rabin 1972:16). Some scholars such as the late Paul Kahle think that the Septuagint began in the same way as an oral explanation accompanying the public recitation of the Hebrew text in the synagogues.

The language of the LXX is not straightforward Koine Greek. At its most idiomatic it abounds with Hebraisms; at its worst it has been said to be little more than Hebrew in disguise (Gooding 1962: 1258). The Pentateuch (i.e. Genesis to Deuteronomy) is fairly idiomatic and consistent. It was for the Jews the most important of the three divisions of Scripture. It was read straight through in the synagogue, sabbath by sabbath, according to a triennial lectionary cycle (whereas only selections from other parts of the OT were read in public). Outside the Pentateuch some books, it seems, were divided between two translators working simultaneously, while others were translated piecemeal at different times by different men using widely different methods and vocabulary. As a result the style varies

It was primarily intended to meet the needs of the millions of Jews of the Dispersion. Acts 2 provides a list of countries represented by pilgrims to Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost and reminds us that in the century before the birth of Jesus, the Jewish diaspora extended from the west coast of India to the south coast of Gaul and probably to the major ports in Spain. There were a million Jews in Egypt alone² and it was in Alexandria, its great commercial and cultural capital (where two out of the five wards were known as Jewish districts), that the Septuagint translation was made.

The history of the translation is obscure, though the legend of its origin is preserved in an ancient document called the letter to Aristeeas (100 B.C.). This document purports to have been written over a century and a half earlier by Aristeeas, an official at the court of King Ptolemy Philadelphus of Egypt (285-246 B.C.), to his brother Philocrates. Ptolemy was renowned as a patron of literature and it was under him that the great library at Alexandria, one of the world's cultural wonders for 900 years, was inaugurated. The letter describes how Demetrius of Phalerum, said to have been Ptolemy's librarian, aroused the king's interest in the Jewish Law and advised him to send a delegation to the high priest, Eleazar, at Jerusalem. The high priest chose as translators six elders from each of the twelve tribes of Israel and sent them to Alexandria, along with a specially accurate and beautiful parchment of the Torah. The elders were royally dined and winned, and proved their wisdom in debate; then they took up their residence in a house on the island of Pharos

²Jeremiah 41-44 records how many inhabitants of Judah fled to Egypt after Nebuchadnezzar's destruction of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. Ptolemy I, heir to Alexander's Empire in Egypt, was to settle many more garrisons there.

from fairly good Koine Greek, as in Isaiah, part of Joshua, and 1 Maccabees, to indifferent Greek, as in Chronicles, Psalms, Sirach, Judith, the Minor Prophets, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and parts of Kings, to literal and sometimes unintelligible renderings as in Judges, Ruth, Song of Solomon, Lamentations and other parts of Kings (Gooding 1962:1259).

Nor does quality of translation necessarily coincide with quality of Greek style. The Pentateuch again ranks high. It is a generally competent translation, though as in the Targums it occasionally paraphrases anthropomorphisms objectionable to Alexandrian Jews. For example, "Enoch walked with God" (Gen. 5:22,24) appears in the LXX as "Enoch pleased God" (which is quoted in the NT at Hebrews 11:5f). Again, the Hebrew text of Exodus 24:10 says that the elders of Israel "saw the God of Israel", but the Septuagint reads, "they saw the place where the God of Israel stood." Few of the other books are translated as well as the Pentateuch and some, such as Isaiah, are very poor. Esther, Job, Proverbs and 1 Esdras are free paraphrastic renderings and the original version of Job was much shorter than the Hebrew. The Greek Proverbs contain things not in the MT at all, and Hebrew sentiments are freely altered to suit the Greek outlook. The LXX rendering of Daniel was so free that it was replaced in the 1st century A.D. by a later translation. One of the translators of Jeremiah sometimes rendered Hebrew words by Greek words that conveyed similar sound but utterly dissimilar meaning. Of the apocryphal books, some are not translations at all, but free Greek compositions.

With regard to the language of the LXX, then, Grant and Rowley (1963:348) sum up:

The general tendency of the LXX translators was to be very literal and they repeatedly followed Hebrew usage (notably in the use of pronouns, prepositions and participial constructions) to an extent which runs entirely counter to the genius of the Greek language.

The Jews themselves were to lose interest in the Septuagint altogether. For from the first century A.D. onwards, it was adopted by Christian Jews (and subsequently by Gentile Christians) as their version of the O.T., and they used it freely to support their contention that Jesus was the promised Messiah. We can see this taking place in several N.T. passages. For example in Acts 15:16-18, James, presiding over the Council of the mother church in Jerusalem, gives his decision that the mission to the Gentiles, as well as to the Jews, should be continued. He cites the prophet Amos to confirm the decision but uses the Septuagint version which gives more explicit support to his argument than the Masoretic Hebrew text. In the Hebrew the role of the Gentiles in the promised restoration of Israel is vague, whereas in the LXX the purpose of that restoration is "that the remnant of men, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called, may earnestly seek me, says the Lord." (Amos 9:11-12).³

Another reason for subsequent Jewish abandonment of the Septuagint was the establishment of a revised standard Hebrew Bible by Jewish scholars c. 100 A.D. This was the beginning of the process of revision and editing which lasted for several centuries culminating in the production of the Masoretic Text. Variant forms

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The LXX version quoted by James presupposes Heb. yidrēshu (will seek) for Masoretic yirēshu (will possess) and 'ādām (man) for Edōm; and it neglects the particle 'eth, the mark of the accusative case, which precedes sh'erith (remnant). But the LXX must represent a variant Hebrew text now lost.

of the Hebrew text which had existed before A.D.100 were allowed to disappear, with the exception of the Samaritan Pentateuch which was preserved outside Jewish circles. As a result of this standardization of the Hebrew consonantal text it was expected that versions in other languages conform to it. Clearly the existing Greek version did not. New translations of the Bible into Greek were provided in the second century A.D. first by a Jewish proselyte named Aquila and then towards the end of the century by another proselyte Theodotion. Inevitably they revised the translation of Isaiah 7:14, a Septuagint text much used by early Christians as a proof of the virgin birth of Christ. The LXX translation of Heb. 'almah was parthenos 'a virgin', which was quoted in Matthew's Gospel (1:23). The later Greek versions replaced parthenos by neanis 'a young woman'.⁴

What then is the significance of the LXX? Biblical scholars prize the Septuagint as a witness to an underlying Hebrew text over a thousand years older than the Masoretic manuscripts. F.F. Bruce gives three convincing examples where the LXX preserved the true text obscured in the (usually more reliable) Hebrew transmissions (Bruce 1971:157-8). But as has been pointed out (Barr 1975:383), a reading in the Greek is no infallible guide to the original Hebrew form. The evidence afforded depends on the translation techniques employed. As we have seen these do not seem to have been uniform.

Secondly, although this version was intended to meet the needs of Greek speaking Jews, it did incidentally make the OT available to

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'almah is in fact strictly 'young woman' and bethulah is the term for virgin in Hebrew. Yet in the OT 'almah, which occurs seven times, does not seem to be used in a markedly different way from bethulah which occurs fifty times.

the Gentile world. The Hebraistic style of its Greek could never have been pleasing to a Greek ear, but its contents had their own appeal. That it was known and appreciated in some Greek circles is indicated by allusions to it in pagan authors (Bruce 1971:161). "It acts also as a linguistic and theological bridgehead between the Hebrew of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New" (Gooding 1962:1261).

This is the importance of the Septuagint for our purpose, namely that it was the Bible of the N.T. writers and their readers. Every part of the N.T. shows some knowledge and use of the Septuagint and the vast majority of O.T. citations are drawn from it. As Sidney Jellicoe states in his authoritative book The Septuagint and Modern Study:

For the Greek speaking Jew of the pre-Christian era and over a century beyond, and for the Christian church from the time of its birth, this Jewish-Greek Bible held its place as the inspired Scriptures (Jellicoe:353).

And when the N.T. was complete, they did not jettison the Old, but added the N.T. in the Greek original to the Old Testament in the Greek translation, thus making one Greek Bible. Thus the N.T. writers' task of communicating their message in Greek was facilitated by the role of the Septuagint. They did not have to invent a Greek theological vocabulary; such a vocabulary lay ready to hand in the Septuagint. Pagan vocabulary had been taken over by the Alexandrian translators and used as equivalents of the great words of the O.T. revelation. Thus in Greek speaking Jewish circles these words no longer bore their original pagan significance but acquired new senses in the context of the O.T. corpus and from the Hebrew vocabulary which they represented (Hill 1967:295; Bruce 1971:159; Shires 1974:82).

The Greek word nomos usually translated 'law' is an example of a term which acquires a new sense as a result of its use in the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew tōrāh. In non-Biblical Greek nomos means custom, convention. To the Greeks, in fact, law was codified custom. But in the O.T., law is divine instruction mediated through Moses and the prophets. The N.T. writers inherited and utilized this Septuagint usage (Bruce 1971:159-160).

A similar phenomenon took place with regard to a number of other words including names and titles of divine beings, psychological terms, and "salvation vocabulary". It is to the last of these that we shall turn in the following chapter because the existence of such technical terminology developed in the LXX, and deliberately appropriated by the N.T. writers, has important implications for Bible Translation and for our evaluation of DE translations in particular.

D. Conclusion

Nida's theory seeks to do justice to the fact of varieties in language both with regard to the Biblical text itself and the modern languages into which that text has to be translated. In practice, however, it is the latter that predominates in his writings - a feature which is consistent with his emphasis on communication. There is a problem here, which we mention in passing: the notion of group varieties knows no limit. As DE practitioners identify more and more groups of readers, so the number of types of translations must multiply. Thus we have not only special translations for children and for women but also Carl Burke's prison oriented texts. The notion of group varieties reduces ultimately to the language system of the individual - the idiolect (cf. Crystal 1976:326).

However, the concern of this chapter has been rather with the language of the ST, the Bible itself, which by Nida and his

associate is assumed to be "natural", "intelligible", "couched in the words of the common people", "the language of the man in the street" with "not even elevated style". The background to this assumption was the dramatic discovery at the end of the nineteenth century of vast numbers of papyri in the sands of Egypt, which proved to be written in Greek strikingly similar at many points to the Greek of the NT. These affinities were well publicized through the research and writings of Adolf Deissmann and J.H. Moulton and G. Milligan, and provided a timely caveat to those who were inclined to evaluate the Greek of the NT according to the canons of classical (Attic) grammar. But we have seen that Deissmann's thesis is now generally considered to have been overstated, and the extent to which NT Greek resembles the idiom of the vernacular papyri has been greatly exaggerated. Biblical scholarship over the past thirty years has increasingly stressed the Semitic cast of the language of the NT:

It is impossible to comprehend or characterise within a single formula the complex nature of the language of the New Testament. A substantial portion of the gospels, certainly the 'sayings-tradition', has been transmitted in translation-Greek, but more often in versions more literary than literal; the influence of the Greek Bible has been profound, especially in Luke, but also throughout the epistles, in Hebraic concepts like 'justification', 'propitiation', etc.; it has also left its mark on New Testament style and idiom, the type of hellenistic Greek employed by the authors of the New Testament scriptures. Some portions of these are written in the ordinary vernacular Greek of the period. But even this kind of Greek was probably 'Jews' Greek; and this applies especially to the Greek of Revelation, though the latter may have been of the 'literary' variety of Jewish Greek. Since the latter was almost exclusively concerned with 'sacred' or biblical themes, we are led to look rather to the language of the Greek-speaking synagogue, possibly itself a spoken 'Koine' Greek, as the matrix of New Testament Greek. And this language, like the Hebrew of the Old Testament which moulded it, was a language apart from the beginning; biblical Greek is a peculiar language, the language of a peculiar people (Black 1970:11).

Black's comment on the profound influence of the Septuagint on the Greek of the NT would command general assent though just how this

generally literalistic translation of the Hebrew Bible actually influenced later language is not clear. Presumably it was a factor in some continuing social process.

This brings us back to the issue of "naturalness". To what extent can we assume that even the writers of the NT used language that was natural to themselves (let alone to their receptors, many of whom were Gentiles for whom biblical Greek must have been a very strange dialect)? For instance, in the case of Luke, many commentators have noted that he frequently adopts a biblical style i.e. his Septuagintalism is the result of deliberate pastiche (Birdsall 1962:714). The truth is the NT was written in Hebraized Greek. Similarly the Bible which so profoundly influenced English culture came in Hebraized English. Thus a distinguished advocate of idiomatic translations Mgr. Ronald Knox, complained that "there are hundreds and hundreds of Hebraisms which we do not notice, because we have allowed ourselves to grow accustomed to them" (Knox 1949:8) - surely a salutary warning not to absolutize "naturalness"!

The same could be said of the DE theory's aversion to technical terminology which militates against "intelligibility". The original text was apparently not written on this assumption. The translator is confronted by words which occur only once in the Scriptures, words unattested in extra-biblical literature. He finds in the NT Hebrew loan words which supply the lack of certain technical terms in Greek (e.g. sabbaton). He is confronted by untranslated Hebrew or Aramaic words such as Sabaoth in the Romans 9:29 translation of Isaiah 1:9; marana tha in 1 Corinthians 16:22, not to mention the more well-known examples: e.g. mammon, hallelujah, hosanna, cherub, rabbi, Immanuel (cf. Weeks 1978:120).

The point is surely that a language is not a closed circle so uniquely shaped by the history of its speech community as to be totally incomprehensible to an outsider. Nor is it impervious to influence from other cultures.

What about the literary quality of the NT writings? Not every translation of a literary text is necessarily literature. Newmark says the difference between non-literary and literary texts, for the translator, is that the reference or information content in the former is real, whilst in the latter it is symbolical (Newmark 1977:164). This seems to be an oversimplification and the subject clearly demands a theoretical organization if it is not to remain at the level of unsystematic, scattered and subjective observations. Some would insist that stylistic studies should involve basically the same methods and the same categories as other non-literary descriptions (e.g. Halliday 1967:218). Others see the need to construct a theory of literary translation on the basis of a theory of literature (e.g. Lefevre 1970). Here we shall be content to recognize the importance of Stylistics for translation theory. Nida, too, would endorse this, but in practice his talk about "the conflict between the dictates of form and content (Nida 1964:91) and his portrayal of words as mere vehicles of meaning (1975:91), denigrates the form of the ST and with it the significance of style. Yet style is part of the total meaning of the text (Enkvist 1973:87).

Applying this to the translation of the NT writings the translator has not only to reproduce the higher literary level of language used in such writings as Hebrews, James, Luke-Acts and 1 Peter (Turner 1974:107), but also to recognize that even those compositions written in non-literary Greek are not devoid of literary merit. The Bible did not take on literary merit only in the King

James Version though it may be true, as has been suggested, that the KJV is a greater literary achievement than the original (Grant 1961:72). Thus in 1 Corinthians, an epistle in which Paul reminds his readers that his speech has been simple and unadorned, we find some of the most eloquent and moving passages ever written. In fact it has been said that in Romans 8:31-39 and 1 Corinthians 13 "the diction of the apostle rises to the heights of Plato in the Phaedrus" (Metzger 1951:51). The four Gospels, too, particularly Mark and John, were written in a simple Greek at the level of vocabulary and syntax, but the classicist E.V. Rieu has drawn attention to their literary art and rhythm, and says this must be reflected in "the best contemporary English at our Command" (Rieu 1955:155). Mark has been hailed as an artistic genius who invented the gospel genre (Metzger 1951:49). The Book of Revelation has been said to be written in barbarous Greek but Nigel Turner protests that its language "is not unliterary, but sophisticated, and that it is not full of solecisms but obeys at least its own self-imposed laws . . ." (Turner 1976:149). However unnatural its Greek, no-one could doubt the literary impact of the Apocalypse.

The point of the foregoing discussion of the nature of the language of the NT writings has not been to denigrate "intelligibility" as a worthy aim of Bible translation or to defend the use in our day of renderings such as "Jacob sod pottage". Rather, the aim has been to show that the Greek of the NT cannot be completely identified with the language of the man in the street. Apart from the strange Jewish imagery and thousands of OT allusions (Shires 1974:15) much of the NT is written in a biblical idiom which must have been quite unnatural and foreign to those who had not been nurtured in the

synagogue milieu. This fact should be fully appreciated by translators and help free them from any mistaken subservience to the speech of the market place. Nor should the usage of the church and of biblical devotion be excluded from the resources of contemporary English (cf. Skilton 1978:187f.). However much, too, one wishes to make his version clear and intelligible, the very nature of the original at times will mean the modern reader is sure to strike problems. The first readers of the Gospels probably found them just as difficult as we do (Rieu 1955:154). Certainly the writer of 2 Peter acknowledged that some of the things written by "our beloved brother Paul . . . (are) hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction as they do the other scriptures" (2 Pet. 3:16). It is not the job of the Bible translator to simplify the original to make it easier to understand. If he does this there will be less to understand. Furthermore, if the modern reader is to be presented with a Bible in the language of his pulp novel, he will have been deprived of so much that not only puzzled its first readers but also arrested and challenged them.