

6. A Literary Approach to Biblical Text Analysis and Translation

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The Bible is literature, that kind of writing which attends to beauty, power and memorability as well as to exposition. It is like a rich chord compared to a single note. ...The Bible requires profound attention to style when it is translated ... [W]hen the original is beautiful, its beauty must shine through the translation; when it is stylistically ordinary, this must be apparent. (Hargreaves 1993: 137-138)

Over the past few decades, a wide array of studies have supported the claim in the above quote: the Bible is literature.² Far less attention has

¹ One does not begin to appreciate the limits of one's personal knowledge concerning a subject as complex as this until an early draft is submitted for criticism to some expert colleagues. I wish to acknowledge many insightful comments, along with some welcome encouragement, from the following individuals in particular: Simon Crisp, Andre Desnitsky, Paul Ellingworth, Eric Hermanson, Lenart de Regt, Philip Stine, Alfredo Tepox, and Lynell Zogbo. They all contributed in a significant way to the final form and content of this chapter; they are not responsible of course for any errors or infelicities that may remain.

² For a varied sample of such recent studies, see Breck 1994; Dorsey 1999; Harvey 1998; and Wilson 1997. If Leviticus and Numbers have been convincingly shown to manifest a literary character (cf. Douglas 1999, 1993), can any other biblical book be excluded?

Analysis of biblical literature can be from a wide variety of approaches. Those of formalism and of functionalism seem to produce the most helpful results for Bible translators. The former typically analyses a given literary text as a whole in terms of its major stylistic features and conventions. There are several distinct varieties of formalism; the Bible translation consultant should be acquainted with at least the following, a suggested starting-point is the work in parentheses:

- *Narrative*: Focus on the literary techniques of narrative discourse in particular (Powell 1990);
- *Poetic*: Focus on the literary strategies of biblical poetry or the 'poetic' features of other types of discourse (Alter 1985).
- *Linguistic*: Focus on noteworthy phonological, grammatical, and semantic features and what these contribute to the significance of various Scripture texts (Berlin 1994).
- *Canonical*: Focus on groups of formally and semantically related pericopes and how these serve to delineate the composition of a larger

been given to translating the Bible as literature.³ This chapter is offered as an encouragement to translators to work at having the literary nature of biblical texts 'shine through the translation'.

Our focus in this chapter is on identifying prominent stylistic and rhetorical features of biblical literature, with occasional suggestions of how they might be represented in a translation aiming for functional equivalence. The assumption is that an in-depth appreciation of the source text's features contributing to its literary quality needs to precede the attempt to produce a literary translation, especially in an approach such as functional equivalence where 'faithfulness' to the source text is viewed as a primary goal. Even if translators are not aiming for a literary translation, some knowledge of the techniques of literary analysis is still necessary in order to carry out an adequate study of the biblical text to be translated.⁴ We do

book or corpus, such as the Psalms or the Minor Prophets (McCann 1993).

Functionalism is prominent in several literary schools that have influenced biblical studies, notably *Rhetorical Criticism* (Muilenberg 1992 [1969]). This approach analyzes the manner in which the author selected, structured, and shaped various textual forms in order to carry out specific communicative objectives in relation to his intended audience, 'persuasion' in particular:

- *Classical*: Focus on the use of ancient Greco-Roman oratorical principles, categories, and techniques (Watson 1988).
- *Neo-Classical*: Focus on more contemporary methods of discourse analysis in the development of a text's meaningful structure and thematic 'argument' (Trible 1994).

³ Some characterizations of 'literary versions' discouraged Bible translators from viewing them as compatible with the goal of producing translations for a large audience. For example, Wonderly defined 'literary language versions' as those that "are fully contemporary, are *oriented to the general public* (not just the Christian in-group), and vary from regular to formal in their functional variety. They make free use of all the resources of the language at all levels which are considered acceptable for published materials, and are thereby *not intended to be fully accessible to the uneducated reader*" (1968:30, italics added). There is an apparent contradiction in the preceding description (i.e. 'the general public' versus 'the uneducated reader'), one that clearly needs to be resolved within the diverse communication settings in which such literary translations are planned and produced today.

⁴ The importance of analyzing the literary features of biblical texts has been noted in works dealing with Bible translation, but not in a very detailed or systematic fashion, and without an adequate theoretical framework of communication. In de Waard and Nida, for example, while reference is made to some important 'rhetorical' features and functions (1986: chs. 5-6), relatively little attention is given to the study of discourse genres or larger text structures or to how literary features can be handled in translation.

not attempt to provide models or analyses of literary Bible translations in English, although it is hoped that this chapter might be an encouragement for others to do so.

Our presentation of stylistic features is organized in terms of three sets:

- unity, diversity, rhetoricity (6.1 – 6.3)
- structure, patterning, foregrounding (6.4 – 6.6)
- imagery, phonicity, dramatics (6.7 – 6.9)

The first set includes factors that are general and foundational in nature; they are thus presupposed to varying degrees by all of the others. The second set pertains largely to the macrostructure of a text, while the third is associated more with the microstructure of literary discourse. These perspectives are of course complementary and closely interrelated, even overlapping on occasion with respect to their manifestation in the diverse texts of the Bible. Other features could have been selected for discussion of course. But these nine are especially prominent in the biblical literature and will therefore have to be dealt with by translators both in their analysis of the original text and also when deciding how to handle them in the target language. We will especially look to the book of Jonah for illustration of these literary features, but also to other parts of the Bible.

6.1 Unity

A multifaceted unity is perhaps the most important characteristic of literature. Such compositional integrity is established in particular by a significant *recursion* of form and content. This fundamental feature is highlighted by most literary analysts who approach biblical texts from a holistic perspective, preferring to treat a given document or pericope as a complete whole rather than as a patchwork of parts of disparate compositional origin. They do not discount the possible presence of structural and thematic differences or the importance of diachronic and source critical studies of the text and its formation. However, apparent formal or semantic disparities are interpreted from a unified perspective, while historical concerns assume relatively minor importance within the hermeneutical enterprise and its application in an actual translation. The biblical text as it has been canonically received (and transmitted via various critical

editions) is the basis of analysis, interpretation, and evaluation.⁵

Three basic contributors to literary unity are: connectivity, intertextuality, and archetypes.

6.1.1 Connectivity

Discourse connectivity, or ‘*intratextuality*’, may be analyzed in terms of form and/or meaning, which normally operate together in good literature. *Cohesion* refers to the formal component of such textual integration. It may be manifested by phonological, lexical, or syntactic means within a text, usually involving some sort of *recursion* – for example, certain reiterated sound motifs, the repetition of key words, lexical substitution, ellipsis, or the use of preferred grammatical constructions. Cross-referential devices, such as *anaphora* (back reference), *cataphora* (forward reference), and *deictic* words (spatial and temporal indicators), are other prominent promoters of connectivity. These serve to clarify the logical relationships of references to participants and events, thus organizing a work’s larger discourse structure. Equally important are literary techniques like flashback, anticipation, and intertextuality. All of these features are realized at some point or other in the book of Jonah. This is most evident in the parallel verse panels that begin each of the two halves of the text: 1.1-3a and 3.1-3a. Within such obvious patterns of recursion, it is the differences that naturally stand out (cf. 6.2): e.g. “And Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish...” (1.3a) – “And Jonah arose and he went to Nineveh...” (3.3a).

Coherence refers to the underlying semantic and pragmatic aspects of textual connectivity. It complements cohesion in that it is normally, but not always, a product of the manifestation of the various ties of linguistic cohesion within a literary work.⁶ A primary contributor to the coherence

⁵ The translators and communities involved in the translation must of course first agree on which Hebrew and Greek texts are considered to best represent that canonical ‘original’.

⁶ For a fuller discussion of the distinction between cohesion and coherence, see chapters 6 and 7 of Baker 1992. “The coherence of a text is, in essence, a question of whether the hearer can make it ‘hang together’ conceptually, that is, interpret it within a single mental representation. ... [T]he speaker will plant linguistic signals in the text as clues to assist the hearers in coming up with an adequate mental representation. This phenomenon is called *COHESION*, and can be defined briefly as the use of linguistic means to signal coherence” (Dooley and Levinsohn 2000:17).

of a literary text is the grouping of its essential content into a number of key semantic ‘fields’, which may extend either throughout the work as a whole or within an included section. These areas of conventionally related meaning function to evoke certain familiar dramatic scenes, socio-religious settings, and interpersonal situations in the minds of the intended audience and thus facilitate the task of interpretation – for example, that of a ship being tossed about on a stormy sea (Jonah 1); the man of God in fervent prayer (ch. 2); a demonstration of communal penitence before YHWH (ch. 3); the passionate irrationality of ethnic prejudice (ch. 4). Such evocation is not often so automatically or extensively triggered in the minds of people who are unfamiliar with the biblical background of different documents that comprise the Scriptures. In such cases, translators can create at least a partial context for facilitating interpretation by means of footnotes, sectional headings, or descriptive illustrations.

6.1.2 Intertextuality

The unified nature of the Scriptures as a diverse but interrelated collection of sacred texts is enhanced by the large amount of *intertextuality* that it features. Any given book typically contains many quotations, allusions, echoes, and motifs of religious texts that were composed earlier in time, especially texts that were more or less canonized.⁷

In works like Jonah, such textual reflection plays a major role in developing the intended message of the author, who could expect his original audience to be familiar with the earlier texts. Several outstanding instances of intertextual connectivity occur in Jonah 4, for example, to reveal him as the *antithesis* of how a true prophet of YHWH ought to think, speak, and behave. The seemingly wonderful outcome of an entire city repenting

⁷ Such verbal echoing may occur in many different modes and degrees. V. Robbins, for example, distinguishes five distinct types of what he terms ‘oral-scribal intertexture’, namely: recitation (i.e. ‘marked’ quotation), recontextualization (unmarked citation), reconfiguration (rewording), narrative amplification, and thematic elaboration (1996:40). Hatim and Mason list the following seven, more concrete categories in their ‘typology of intertextuality’ (1990:132): reference, cliché, literary allusion, self-quotation, conventionalism, proverb and meditation; they further qualify these as being generic, thematic, structural, or functional in nature (*loc. cit.*). Familiar citations or allusions may be modified, even transformed to suit the rhetorical purposes of the current author, as appears to be the case in the prophecy of Joel (Wendland 1995:242-253; see also Beentjes 1996:31-50).

in sackcloth was such a scandalous experience for Jonah that it left him longing for death at the hands of YHWH (4.3). This is exactly what the prophet Elijah felt (1 Kings 19.4), but – ironically – for just the opposite reason: Jonah desired divine extermination because of the tremendous success of his proclamation; Elijah because of an apparent lack of success (1 Kings 19.10).

Such literary allusion manifests itself in greater or lesser clarity and density throughout the Bible, though it is often one of the least appreciated or used factors of interpretation. This feature not only adds semantic richness, thematic depth, plus a certain hermeneutical authority to any biblical text, especially where a ‘chain’ of intertextual references is involved, but it also serves to underscore the overall unity and connectivity of the Scripture canon as a whole.⁸ We see this, for example, in the succession of passages that Jonah cites or paraphrases from the Psalms in his prayer of thanksgiving to YHWH (ch. 2; cf. Ps. 42.8; 31.23; 5.8; 18.5; 69.2; 30.4; 22.26; 3.9; 50.14; 116.16-18). The heavy web of intertextuality in this case serves to heighten the ironic thread that runs through the entire book of Jonah: there is no doubt that Jonah knew well the form and content of Scripture; it was the application and implications that he had trouble with.

A crucial feature of intertextuality are the *cues* that signal its presence in a given discourse: “These are elements of text which trigger the process of intertextual search, setting in motion the act of semiotic processing” (Hatim and Mason 1990:133). In this connection, the analyst needs to determine the degree of *salience* or *relevance* of any instance of intertextuality to the current message being conveyed. In other words, how much meaning does the pre-text actually contribute to the text and of what type (thematic, topical, emotive, affective, associative)? How difficult would it be for the audience, either the original or the contemporary one, to recognize the presence of this literary device in the text? This is a major concern for the translator of an ancient document like the Bible. In

⁸ Several recent studies that investigate Paul’s diverse usage of Old Testament texts in his writings are Hays (1989) and Aageson (1993). The term ‘chain’, or con-catenation, is used to refer to a set of intertextual references that are taken from the same source text, as in the following example from Jonah (which I owe to de Regt). See Hatim and Mason 1990:121-123 concerning ‘sequences’ of intertextual references that are source-*unrelated*. The intentionality of an author concerning what is perceived to be an intertextual reference is of course often uncertain.

the case of relatively important occurrences where the target audience is unlikely to detect the pertinent markers in the text, what can be done to clue them in to the intertextual significance?

At present, footnotes are the most common, although less than ideal, method of indicating intertextuality. Crucial pre-texts could be quoted in these notes for easy access. Another extratextual method of revealing the presence of such allusive artistry is to indicate *pertinent* cross-references alongside the text in the vertical margin, close to the point where they actually apply. Some languages, like many in the Bantu group, have a demonstrative particle or similar device that unobtrusively signals the presence of a ‘known’ quotation or allusion.

6.1.3 Archetypes

Another closely related aspect of the unity of the Scriptures involves the recurrent themes, character types, images, and symbols that appear within the various books and larger groupings (the Pentateuch, wisdom literature, prophets, gospels, apocalypses, and epistles). A dramatic example is the recursion in the Bible’s last two chapters of images found in its first two:

Revelation 21-22

a new heaven and a new earth (21.1)

sun ... moon ... light (21.23; 22.5)

the river of the water of life (22.1)

the tree of life (22.2)

I am ... the beginning and the end (22.13)

Genesis 1-2

... God created the heavens and the earth (1.1)

light ... greater light/sun ... lesser light/moon (1.3-5,14-18)

a river watering the garden flowed from Eden (2.10)

the tree of life (2.9)

In the beginning God ... (1.1)

Also, ‘the Lamb’ in the canon’s vivid visionary conclusion (e.g. 21.9, 22; 22.1,3) is linked to pastoral images frequently occurring in the Bible to depict the covenantal relationship between God and his people (e.g. Exodus 12; Psalm 23; Isaiah 40.11; 53.6; John 1.29).

However, the referential unity of the Scriptures goes far beyond this vital text-internal harmony. It concerns the added conceptual, emotional, and sensory resonance that the books of the Bible have with other works of world literature, both religious and secular. The term *archetypes* refers to significant symbols, images, or figures that occur in the literary traditions and verbal lore of cultures around the world or within a large region

and epoch, such as the Mediterranean Middle East at the time of Christ: for example, sun, moon, light, darkness, angel, demon, lion, lamb, purification, pollution, prodigal, prince, mountain, and valley.⁹ “These master images are the building blocks of the literary imagination – the forms to which the imagination gravitates when it organizes reality and human experience” (Ryken 1992:26). The primary relevance of such archetypal study for translators lies in its potential to unlock the disparate localized connotative overtones and symbolic values as well as the actual literal significance of much of the imagery of the Scriptures.¹⁰ The problem is to determine the degree to which this semantic grid of connections corresponds between the two language-cultures concerned and to consider how gaps of denotation and connotation that inevitably appear might be bridged, whether within the translation or by supplementary materials.

Symbolic archetypes (i.e. conventional images of expanded denotative and connotative significance) are frequently paired in a dialectical pattern of *contrasts* that presents a graphic depiction of human nature and behaviour in the world, reflecting either an ideal or its corrupt antithesis.¹¹ It is important to investigate the positive and negative connotations and

⁹ This would include the use of “‘mythopoetic language’ which uses as metaphors and allusions well-known images or expressions from the popular myths”, such as Leviathan, the mountain of God (or holy hill), the divine king, a climactic cosmic battle, the great trumpet call to judgement, and a divine victory banquet, all of which (except the first) are prominent in the prophecy of Ezekiel (Boadt 1996:211-231). Shekel notes that “[t]he most frequent [mythological] motif is the struggle of god with chaos as he creates or imposes order on the world” (1988:17).

¹⁰ As a recently published dictionary on the subject states: “Many of the images and motifs discussed in this dictionary are archetypes. They recur not only throughout the Bible but in literature generally, and in life. Being aware of them will help us draw connections – between parts of the Bible, between the Bible and other things we have read, between the Bible and life” (Ryken *et al.* 1998:xvii).

¹¹ Here ‘mythopoeic’ (as distinct from ‘mythopoetic’, see above) imagery comes to the fore in poetic discourse that forges “opposing human experiences of the immanent and transcendent, the natural and the supernatural, the explainable and the unexplainable, into a coherent relationship with each other” in an effort to “describe or portray *new* divine activity” but using the familiar categories of primordial divine activity, such as, creating, ruling, warring, and protecting/providing for human devotees or punishing apostates (Boadt 1996:219). “Thus, the allusions to mythological themes in [Ezekiel] chapters 1-24 are more than simple rhetorical embellishments. They are part of the prophet’s elaborate and sustained condemnation of the policies and attitudes of Judah” (ibid:230). Obviously, it would require a study Bible to reveal this rich underlying significance to most audiences today.

associations of biblical images in the context of a given contemporary culture to determine where attitudinal mismatches might occur. For example, are all traditional ‘prophet-figures’ viewed positively, or does such an evaluation depend upon the social circumstances? And what about ‘foreign (ethnically alien) authority-figures’ (such as captains and kings) – are they typically regarded as being ‘bad’, dangerous, or at least untrustworthy? The answers to questions such as these are important when exploring the significance and implications of a provocative book like *Jonah*, for example, in which conventional character expectations and stereotypes are continually upset. In addition to this sort of general topical imagery, we also find literary archetypes in the form of typical characters, plot elements, event sequences, settings, and situations. For example:

[T]he suffering servant, the outcast, the refuser of festivities (usually in the form of the ... Pharisees), master and servant, and the pilgrim are recurrent figures in the New Testament. Among plot motifs, images of journey, quest, initiation, the lost and found, death and resurrection are prominent. (Ryken 1992:364)

The parables of Christ are especially important in terms of their archetypal constitution and significance, particularly with respect to the contrastive personages that people them: for example, the older/younger brother, rich man/poor beggar, faithful/foolish manager, religious paragon/outcast. This wealth of cross-culturally relevant symbolism undoubtedly contributes to their worldwide popularity, even in translation where their succinct, vivid, and incisive style contributes to the effect and thus needs to be duplicated if at all possible.

The Hebrew poets provide another rich lode of ancient Near Eastern archetypes found in religious literature. For example, the imagery of YHWH’s self manifestation (theophany) in the face of the psalmist’s enemies combines the familiar powerful phenomena of nature with those of fierce battle scenes to heighten an overall aura of great hope and assurance for the faithful (e.g. *Psa* 18.6-15). The short prophecy of *Joel*, on the other hand, presents a complex combination of graphic but traditional images to underscore its message of warning and comfort: destructive locusts, drunkenness, drought, fasting, military siege and conquest, a darkening of sun and moon, a solemn penitential assembly, life-giving rains and abundant harvest, the inspiration of dreams and prophecy, celestial

portents, and finally, eschatological judgement and its outcome – a fertile holy land as opposed to a desolate wilderness. This may be compared with the fantastic archetypal imagery that is typical of apocalyptic literature, for example in Revelation 12, where we view in succession: a semi-divine pregnant woman giving birth, a malevolent dragon-like creature bent on oppression and destruction, spectacular heavenly calamities that mirror deep spiritual antagonism, a stark wilderness sanctuary, a cosmic battle pitting angelic against demonic forces, a defeated serpentine foe seeking vengeance upon the earth via a cataclysmic flood.¹²

A detailed investigation, in both the source and target languages, of the *denotative* content of such poetic images must be carried out in order to assess the most likely impression that will be evoked in the minds of the target audience.¹³ One will have to decide how to deal with significant referential mismatches: for example, in the main text, by footnotes, or by some other reader's aid? This procedure needs to be complemented by a corresponding examination of the images' respective *connotative* associations. 'Connotation' refers to the diverse emotions, attitudes, values, and other implications that tend to be conventionally connected with certain words and phrases, especially those bearing a special symbolic import. Such resonant connotative overlays may be positive or negative in nature (e.g. angel – demon) as perceived in relation to a given book, corpus, or literary tradition. Both the denotation and the connotation of such terms are culturally defined and hence not always easy to convey in another language.

For example, in some languages of Africa, 'demons' or 'evil spirits' have been rendered by the closest local cultural equivalent – a 'spirit of possession'. The problem is that to be 'entered' or 'grabbed' by such an ancestral spirit often turns out to be a desirable experience: rather than making a person ritually 'unclean', as in the Scriptures, it enables the 'owner' to perform various acts of divination by means of her/his familiar spirit. Similarly, the mythological 'Leviathan' (a dangerous, serpentine sea creature) has a rather close cultural analogue in a traditional Chewa

¹² For a useful overview of the symbolism of Revelation, see Beale 1999:50-69.

¹³ In cases where leading biblical scholars disagree in their interpretation of such imagery, i.e., with regard to how the biblical text's poetic images impressed or stimulated the original audience, then a consensus or a majority opinion should be sought, with major alternatives recorded in footnotes.

mythic setting – namely, the mysterious *napolo* monster that is believed to cause great natural disasters (floods, mudslides, earthquakes), especially during the annual rainy season. However, the translation team felt that this reference could not be used in the Bible due to its close association with ancient ancestral religion, to which most contemporary Christian churches do not wish to accommodate.

Even in the Bible itself, the connotation of a particular image may vary from one text to another. There is certainly a difference, for example, between the divine 'shepherd' of Psalm 23 and Isaiah 40.11 in contrast to the royal 'shepherds' referred to in certain passages of Ezekiel and Jeremiah (e.g. Jeremiah 25.34; Ezekiel 34.2). The connotative force of a term tends to be communicatively stronger than its denotation, a linguistic feature that is especially obvious in the case of euphemisms: for example, those that replace references to the deity, such as 'heaven' for God (Matthew 13.11,24,31). It is the culturally-conditioned emotive overlay of connotation, in this case negative, that prevents the indigenous term for 'shepherd' (literally, 'herdsman/boy') being used as a translation for 'pastor' in some Bantu languages. Likewise the associative colouring of ancient ancestral worship disqualifies a number of ancient religious expressions from being used in a contemporary Bible translation to render terms such as 'Holy Spirit', 'priest', 'sacrifice', 'prophet', or even the word 'worship' itself.

6.2 Diversity

A wide range of devices creates the diversity necessary to complement the overall unity of literary discourse. Features that mark any sort of a significant *difference* in the text are needed for aesthetic variety, to distinguish and delineate genre structures, to create discourse patterns, to highlight points of special prominence, and to facilitate memorability or actual memorization. Diversity in terms of form or content naturally accumulates as a text develops – but at a greater or lesser rate, depending on the degree of difficulty or novelty intended, resulting in more or less semantic and formal density as far as the process of interpretation is concerned. The macro-feature of diversity is represented by a number of the literary techniques described in subsequent sections, foregrounding for example, and therefore it does not have to be treated in as much detail here.

One important type of diversity is the discourse disjunction that is brought about due to some alteration in expectancy or the termination of a previously established textual pattern. The purpose may be to create a pause or point of transition within the account for the sake of emotive release or simply to begin a new structural-thematic unit in the progressive development of the author's message (e.g. "And Jonah arose to run away..." [1.3]; "And Jonah arose and he went..." [3.3]). Or the disjunction may be used as a foregrounding technique to distinguish some point of message prominence, such as its thematic peak or emotive climax (cf. 6.6.2), or the opposite, such as a backgrounded explanation or an elaborative digression.¹⁴

The formal means of marking structural or thematic interruptions within the text may be quite regular in terms of literary or linguistic function. In Hebrew narrative, for example, a syntactic element that is advanced to pre-verbal position after a series of *wayyiqtol* constructions often announces the onset of a new stage in the account (paragraph, episode, 'chapter', etc.); for example: "And-YHWH he-sent a-wind a-great-one upon-the-sea..." (Jon 1.4). Similarly, a direct quotation within a psalm is frequently used to call attention to an area of structural and/or thematic importance. In Jonah's psalm, for instance, such a speech segment, one pronominally emphasized, introduces the central bicolon of the chiasmus according to which this entire thanksgiving to YHWH is organized (cf. Wendland 1996:366), "And-I, I-said..." (2.4a; Hebrews 2.5a). In Chichewa, the structure "So then as for me, I said..." is used for this discourse demarcative function.

Literary diversity within a given document, corpus, or tradition may involve different contrasts, emphases, assumptions, and implications with regard to form, content, or function. Normally, these are quite obviously marked stylistically as they appear on the surface of discourse. However, they may also be conveyed by some very subtle linguistic devices in the original text. For example, YHWH first commissions Jonah to "call out against [*/] the people of Nineveh – the second time to "call out unto [*/] them (1.2; 3.2). On the first occasion Jonah 'arose' to flee "from

¹⁴ The rhetorical and structural implications of the disjunctive devices of rhetorical questions, participant ordering, and the literary insertion (A-X-B) pattern are described in two important essays by de Regt and one by Tsumura in the collection on Hebrew discourse analysis by de Regt *et al.* (1996).

before the face of Yahweh" (1.3); later he 'arose' to travel "according to the word of Yahweh" (3.3). There are two references to Jonah's being 'inside the belly of the fish', first as a result of his disobedience (1.16), then as a prelude to prayer (2.1). An exclamatory particle (*ak* 'nevertheless', 2.4b) contributes to distinguishing the emotional and thematic turning point of Jonah's poetic prayer in the fish's belly. Obviously, it is important for Bible translators to retain as many of these disjunctive features as is meaningfully possible in their language, by means of the appropriate discourse signals according to the literary genres that are available.

Sometimes a literary text is constructed in an exceptionally diverse manner; that is, it departs radically from the norms, in order to highlight a point of special salience with regard to the message as a whole or its larger organization.¹⁵ For example, the thematic peak of the book of Jonah occurs at the very end of the text in an unusually long didactic-admonitory speech by YHWH, artistically distinguished by poetic parallelism, topical contrast, intratextual recursion ('Nineveh, that great city'; cf. 1.2; 3.2) figurative language, and pronounced rhetorical phrasing (4.10-11).

The various unifying elements of denotative and connotative content within the Scriptures discussed under archetypes (section 6.1.3) must also be investigated in terms of their culturally and religiously specific manifestation where some curious anomaly or conspicuous variation from the norm is concerned. For example, Jonah's being the negative inverse of what would be expected of the typical prophet of YHWH contributes to the underlying *irony* of the text. Many Hebrew women depicted in the Old Testament frequently stand out for their drive, determination, and common sense in contrast not only to relatively weaker or duller male personages, but also with respect to contemporary cultural stereotypes.¹⁶ Jesus' ministry and social relationships are depicted as contrasting with

¹⁵ The well-known literary school known as Russian Formalism termed such manifest stylistic diversity 'defamiliarization'. An early practitioner, Shklovsky, described the process as follows: "The purpose of art ... is to force us to notice. Since perception is usually too automatic, art develops a variety of techniques to impede perception or, at least, to call attention to themselves" (1965:4).

¹⁶ For example: Sarah (Abraham, Genesis 12), Rebekah (Isaac, Genesis 26), Moses' mother (her husband, Exodus 2), Rahab (the spies, Joshua 2), Deborah (Barak, Judges 4), Jael (Sisera, Judges 4), Jephthah's daughter (Jephthah, Judges 11), Delilah (Samson, Judges 12), Ruth (Boaz, Ruth 2-3), Hannah (Elkanah/Samuel, 1 Samuel 1), Michal (David, 1 Samuel 19), Abigail (Nabal/David, 1 Samuel 25), the medium at Endor (Saul, 1 Samuel 28).

those of other religious leaders of his time and the message proclaimed by the apostle Paul as contrasting with that of contemporary religious philosophers (cf. 1 Corinthians 1.16; 2.1,4; Acts 18.4,13).

Translators must first of all be able to detect these different points of diversity in the biblical text and to determine their relative prominence as well as the purpose for being placed where they are. The next essential step is to faithfully represent these same communicative objectives in their translation, to the extent possible, depending on the formal resources available and the hierarchy of *skopos* goals that have been determined for the version at hand.

6.3 Rhetoricity

Rhetoric may be defined as the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion ... Of the modes of persuasion furnished by the spoken word there are three kinds. The first kind depends on the personal character of the speaker; the second on putting the audience into a certain frame of mind; the third on the proof, or apparent proof, provided by the words of the speech itself. – Aristotle¹⁷

Aristotle's definition is frequently used as the starting point for contemporary discussions of rhetoric, and we will use it to guide this section's brief discussion of rhetorical features in literature.¹⁸ It is especially important that translators recognize and effectively represent strategies and expressions used in the second and third 'modes of persuasion' identified

¹⁷ Quotes of Aristotle are taken from McKeon (1941).

¹⁸ Most Greco-Roman rhetorical studies naturally favour the New Testament literature, but see Duke (1990) on Chronicles and Gitay (1991) on Isaiah for several Old Testament applications (cf. also Watson & Hauser 1994:21-97). Hebrew 'literary structure and rhetorical strategies' are also investigated in de Regt *et al.* (1996), but these adopt a broader form-functional perspective on the biblical text. The overview presented here, which deals with just a limited facet of the field, is merely a sample of how rhetorical studies might possibly be applied in a literary approach to Bible translation. We do not wish to imply that the texts of Scripture, the New Testament letters in particular, were necessarily composed with the canons of Greco-Roman rhetoric explicitly in mind. Such specific techniques of argumentation may indeed be reflected in some passages, but other literary influences were undoubtedly also present, for example, certain prominent features of Semitic rhetoric (as reproduced in the LXX) and contemporary rabbinic discourse.

in the above quote.¹⁹ In one sense, *persuasion* in the form of an explicit or implicit *argument* is an objective of all discourse. For example, those reciting a psalm of praise desire to persuade YHWH that they need or appreciate his help, as well as to express their feelings about him and their joyful or stressful situations in life. The narratives of Scripture serve the theological purpose of advocating perspectives on the character, will, and plan of God in relation to his creation. Even the seemingly straightforward expositions on how to celebrate a religious festival or perform a sacrifice (e.g. Leviticus 22-23) are in a certain sense efforts to convince the audience that the method prescribed is better than any other way. However, our discussion of the techniques of persuasion will focus on texts that most clearly involve argumentation.²⁰ In other words, they manifest a relatively greater degree of the literary quality of rhetoricity.²¹

We cannot go into detail about the various strategies for producing deductive and inductive 'proofs' in biblical literature.²² We will simply

¹⁹ The first mode, which concerns the credibility and authority of the author/orator, is not of so much direct relevance to Bible translators – that is, unless it affects the form and content of the original text. This feature is most prominent in Paul's letters, for example, in the aggressive defense of his person and message in the first two chapters of Galatians, or in the mollifying tone which prefaces his efforts to deal with the problems at Corinth (e.g. 1 Cor 1.4-9). In the book of Job, Elihu's speech starts off in a self-effacing, deferential, mollifying tone (Job 32.6 – 33.7), which is a style that needs to be rendered in a functionally appropriate way in the target language. This factor of the source's credibility may be of even greater text-external significance since it concerns the competence, reliability, and in some cases even the morality of the translators themselves. Any doubts with regard to such qualities can seriously affect the acceptability of a translation on the part of its intended audience.

²⁰ The problem here is relevant to all literature: a text, or even one utterance of a larger text, is often produced with several, basic communicative functions; however, one must often focus on the primary goal(s) of an utterance, especially when deciding how it will be best represented in translation.

²¹ De Waard and Nida (1986) use the term 'rhetorical' in a very general sense, viewing it in terms of the optional linguistic operations of selection and arrangement that effect the communicative functions of wholeness, aesthetic appeal, impact, appropriateness, coherence, progression, cohesion, focus, and emphasis (ch. 5). They further identify the following literary 'processes' that serve to convey these functions: repetition, compaction, connection, rhythm, shifts in expectancies, and the exploitation of similarities and contrasts (ch. 6). This concept of rhetoric appears to encompass many if not all of the textual features investigated within the framework of 'discourse analysis' or textlinguistic studies of a wide variety of genres.

²² For details, see Kennedy (1984:14-23). Crisp (1999:3) provides a helpful overview of rhetorical criticism in New Testament studies. His conclusion is worth quoting:

note that three of the basic methods discussed by Aristotle are used throughout the Scriptures: the citation, the enthymeme (or logical syllogism),²³ and illustration. The prominence and importance of intertextual quotations in biblical literature have already been discussed (6.1.2), so we will comment here only on the rhetorical use of enthymemes and illustrative examples.

An enthymeme is composed of three parts: a major premise (M), a minor premise (m) and a conclusion (C). A key translation problem is that one of the three parts, usually the *major premise*, is often left implicit.²⁴ Thus while the original audience would probably have understood it, contemporary audiences can be confused or misled because of their lack of background knowledge pertaining to the original situation. For example, when the stricken ship's sailors ask Jonah, "What shall we do to you, that the sea may quiet down for us" (1.11), they appear to have the following enthymeme in mind:

- (M) Punishment of a guilty person can be a means of appeasing God.
- (m) Our treatment of Jonah can be punishment of a guilty person.
- (C) Our treatment of Jonah can be a means of appeasing God.

In some cases, the *conclusion* of an enthymeme may be left implicit. Jonah 4.2, for example, suggests one that repels Jonah:

- (M) Sinners may be beneficiaries of YHWH's mercy.
- (m) Ninevites are sinners.
- (C) Ninevites may be beneficiaries of YHWH's mercy.

"... in its unfolding of the techniques of persuasion used by the biblical authors [rhetorical criticism] provides insight into both the purposes of these authors and the means by which these were achieved – and an understanding of these is a necessary foundation for any attempt to produce the same effects in new Bible translations".

²³ Aristotle uses 'enthymeme' to refer to rhetorical argumentation and 'syllogism' to the same phenomenon but in the context of 'dialectic' – 'the art of logical discussion' (McKeon 1944:1325).

²⁴ When proceeding from premise to conclusion, an enthymeme is sometimes (not always) overtly marked in the biblical text by the Hebrew conjunction *kiy* as in Jonah 4.2b and 1.12, or in Greek by the conjunctions *oun*, *ara*, or *gar* ('therefore', 'thus'); e.g. Gal 3.6-7. When the movement is reversed in Greek, from conclusion to premise, the conjunction *hoti* ('since', 'because') is common; e.g. Gal 3.11. The reasoning

In other instances, an enthymeme may lie even more deeply buried within the text. For example, the sailors' fearful question of Jonah in 1.10 ("What is this that you have done?") suggests the following implicit enthymeme:

- (M) Objects of divine punishment are guilty of having offended God.
- (m) Jonah, as determined by casting lots (1.6), is an object of divine punishment – thereby endangering the crew.
- (C) Jonah is guilty of having offended God.²⁵

Several adaptations of the standard enthymeme may be found in the biblical literature, for example, the 'hortatory enthymeme'²⁶ in paraenetic discourse, which features an imperative 'exhortation' instead of a conclusion: for example, "Watch out that you are not led astray..." (Luke 21.8).²⁷

It may be necessary for translators to render such covert reasoning more explicitly in the text so that their audience does not arrive at the wrong conclusion or miss the fact that a specific singular or compound conclusion is being made. Alternatively, in the case of probable misunderstanding, a fuller explanation may be given in a footnote. The same tactics may be employed in the case of a complex logical argument, which so often occurs in the epistles (e.g. six interlocked instances of the explanatory particle *gar* in Romans 1.16-20). In some cases, the use of a

process is often rendered more implicitly, however, through the use of participles and relative clauses.

²⁵ Notice that this enthymeme is logically prior to that expressed in 1.11, as discussed above. Thus we observe that syllogistic 'chains' or sequences, both individual and combined, may be formed within a given text. This appears much more frequently in an argument-based discourse such as a prophetic exhortation than in a narrative account as we have in this case. Translators must therefore be alert to the possible presence of logical reasoning in the direct speech of biblical narrative simply because it is less expected and noticed there.

²⁶ I have borrowed the term from Bloomquist (1999:189), but not this author's method of analyzing these rhetorical structures. He does make the interesting observation however that in the apocalyptic discourse of Luke 21 'Greco-Roman rhetorical style' is combined with "paraenetic warning, fleshed out by expanded 'imitation' of the Old Testament prophetic utterances" (*loc. cit.*).

²⁷ The enthymeme of this verse could be expressed as follows: (M) many deceivers will come to attack Christ's disciples in the last days; (m) [*gar*] some will say, 'I am he [Christ]' or 'the time is near'; (C = command): do not be deceived by such people [= do not follow them].

special typographical format may help the reader see how the argument at hand has been arranged in the original text, as Peng (forthcoming) shows in his discussion of the rhetorical structure of Romans 12.9-21.²⁸

The use of life-related *examples* in inductive argumentation is well illustrated by Jesus' frequent use of simple comparisons, similes, and parables, often one after the other (Matthew 6; Luke 15-16), to support his point. Paul piles up instances of human wickedness to support his argument that "God gave [those who by their wickedness suppress the truth] up to a debased mind and to things that should not be done" (Romans 1.23-31). He cites cases from secular life to underscore his claim that he deserves material support (1 Corinthians 9.1-14) and examples of his personal qualifications, sufferings, divine revelations, and mighty works to demonstrate his right to boast as a genuine apostle of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 11.16ff). The prophets referred to common instances of sociopolitical injustice to argue that God's punishment was deserved (e.g. Isaiah 1.21-23), or to examples of national affliction to argue that it was even now being realized (e.g. Isaiah 1.6-8).

The 'second mode' of persuasion that Aristotle identified was putting the audience into a certain frame of mind, through appeals to their emotions and basic values. This tactic is of course found in many passages of the Scriptures: for example, the psalmists' invoking God's righteousness in persuading him to show mercy and defend them; YHWH's interrogative reminders to Job of his surpassing wisdom and power to defend his refusal to enter into debate concerning divine justice; Jesus' frequent citations of Torah and the Prophets, viewed as authoritative by his audience, to support his claims; YHWH's verbal and non-verbal efforts to disabuse Jonah of his rank prejudice against the people of Nineveh (Jonah 4).

Also relevant here are the varied politeness strategies used in dialogues throughout the Scriptures (cf. 6.9; 4.6). In Chichewa, for example, the appropriate pronominal references must be used in direct speech to indi-

²⁸ Along with a number of important thematic insights and implications for translation, Peng (forthcoming) gives this practical advice: "The appreciation of the structure and themes of this passage ... primarily relies upon the readers' or hearers' awareness of the rhetorical techniques used in it. To translate a passage such as this, one of the major issues that translators should consider will be how the rhetorical arrangement can be preserved according to which readers can be made aware of the structure of the passage, or at least how the structure of the passage can be hinted at in the translation."

cate varied degrees of respect, formality/familiarity, social status, and the exigencies of the current interpersonal circumstances. Thus when the ship captain first addresses Jonah, peacefully sleeping away in the hold, the translation has him employing 'familiar' second person singular forms (minus respect, superior to inferior) to express irritation with his seemingly untroubled passenger (1.6). Later, however, when Jonah is revealed to be a devotee of the God who has caused the storm that has befallen them, the sailors show their deference to him by using 'honorific' (+ respect) second plural pronouns (1.10-11). A still higher level of esteem may be indicated through use of third person plural forms ('they'), as when Paul addresses various rulers in Acts 23—26 (except for Ananias, the Jewish high priest, 23.3!). Speakers of the different Bantu languages of Zambia adopt varied honorific strategies also when offering their prayers to the supreme deity, whether traditional or Christian: one is not going to persuade a superior, including God, of anything if one does not speak to him or her in socially and emotively suitable terms. Translations of the Bible that do not take this seemingly minor politeness factor into consideration may sound offensive, at best strangely unnatural, to speakers of the language (see section 4.5 for further discussion of this aspect of translation).

Aristotle observed in his third book on rhetoric that "It is not enough to know *what* we ought to say; we must also say it *as* we ought ... producing the right impression of a speech." Some of the favoured stylistic devices used to emphasize as well as to embellish the key aspects of biblical argumentation are:

- *Rhetorical question*: perhaps the rhetorical device most discussed in Bible translation literature,²⁹ but still frequently missed by translators in terms of its context-specific impact and implications (e.g. Jon 4.4,9).
- *Irony*: "In verbal irony ... one meaning is stated and a different, usually antithetical, meaning is intended ... Dramatic irony is a plot device according to which (a) the spectators know more than the protagonist; (b) the character reacts in a way contrary to that which is appropriate or wise; (c) characters or situations are compared or contrasted for ironic effects, such as parody; or (d) there

²⁹ For example, New Testament: Beekman and Callow (1974:229-248); Old Testament: de Regt (1996).

is a marked contrast between what the character understands about his acts and what the play demonstrates about them” (Preminger 1993:635). An ironic contrast is evident in YHWH’s concluding argument with Jonah: “You are concerned about the bush ... And should I not be concerned about Nineveh ... ?” (4.10-11). Jesus was a master of irony in his disputations with the religious leaders of his day (e.g. Mat 7.4; 15.5-6). Irony can be generated between someone’s words and the situation in which they are uttered, like Jonah’s pious confession of the merciful attributes of YHWH although he is upset by YHWH’s display of these attributes (4.2-3).

- *Sarcasm*: the barbed brother of irony, used either in personal ridicule or rebuke, is less discussed and often misrepresented in translation. There are many instances of sarcasm in Paul’s defence of himself in 2 Corinthians 10-13 (e.g. 10.1).³⁰ One can also detect a note of sarcasm in YHWH’s rhetorical question to Jonah: “Is it right for you to be angry about the bush?” (4.9).
- *Enigma*: may be local, i.e., deliberate verbal ambiguity, or global, i.e. thematic in nature; it may also be total or partial, affecting only a part of the audience – either those inside or outside of the biblical account. This rhetorical device serves to raise hermeneutical questions in the listener’s mind.³¹ The speeches of Christ as recorded by John are filled with such double meanings: for example, the ‘bread-of-life’ discourse (John 6.26-51; note the outcome: vv. 41-42,52). The story of Jonah illustrates thematic enigma: for example, the prophet tried to run away from God once (1.1-3) → will he try it again? (3.1-2); YHWH spared the pagan sailors on account of Jonah’s action (1.12,15) → will he do it again for the Ninevites? (3.3-4).³²
- *Paradox*: an apparent contradiction: “Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it” (Matthew 10.39).

³⁰ Discussed in Omanson and Ellington (1993:176ff).

³¹ The enigma for an audience outside the text is often resolved once they have heard or read the complete discourse. However, these questions, puzzles, and conundrums are by no means always fully or even partially answered, resolved, or explained in the text at hand, for example, in the example of Jonah (cf. Job). In such cases, the adoption of a canonical, intertext-based hermeneutic supports the familiar principle of allowing the ‘Scriptures to interpret themselves.’ The enigma of literary ambiguity may also serve to stimulate greater theological reflection on a particular issue; see, e.g. Raabe (1990:213-227).

³² The account of Genesis 18 gives a good example of a partial enigma: those outside of the biblical narrative, the readers/hearers, know from the beginning that it is YHWH who appears to Abraham, whereas those inside of the account only learn this in verse 14 or perhaps verse 10; for them initially the visitor being welcomed is ostensibly only ‘my lord’ (verse 3).

- *Hyperbole*: deliberate overstatement. This occurs throughout the conversations recorded in the Scriptures. Jonah, for example, was clearly very upset, but was he actually ‘angry enough to die’ (4.9)? Many commentators see an element of hyperbole in the reference to Nineveh’s great size, i.e. ‘a three days’ walk across’ (3.3, *New Revised Standard Version* (NRSV)). The city was indeed large, but it certainly would not take a healthy adult male that long to traverse it.
- *Proverb*: a maxim, commonplace, or any ‘wise saying’ supported by oral or literary tradition, whether secular or religious. Jonah appears to cite such an authoritative ‘Scriptural’ saying in defence of his person in 1.9 and his plan to elude God in 4.2.
- *Oxymoron*: a figure in which seemingly incongruous or contradictory terms are combined in a way that highlights, emphasizes, or enhances the sense of the utterance as a whole. Paul was especially fond of this device (e.g. 1 Corinthians 1.25; 2 Corinthians 6.8-10). From a local religious perspective, there may be an oxymoron present in the Ninevite king’s appeal to a god, Jonah’s God, whose ‘compassion’ can negate his ‘fierce anger’ (3.9).

Each of these rhetorical features, which often occur together as shown above, may present difficulties for translators. To begin with, they must be recognized in the biblical text and their contextual import clearly discerned. There is normally some kind of contrast or contradiction involved – namely, literal versus non-literal meaning; alternatively, one may be dealing with a deeper level of semantic or pragmatic significance. In any case, they cannot simply be ignored or rendered in literal fashion if it seems likely that people will misunderstand the translation. Potential problems in this regard need to be handled either textually or extra-textually so that the rhetoricity of the original message is somehow preserved. As a general rule then, “[a] better study of rhetorical means ought to help translators produce a text with better rhetorical focus for its readers [or hearers]” (Sim 2000:59).

There are of course many other discourse strategies and stylistic devices used in argumentation to evoke the appropriate attitudes and to convey the right impact in keeping with the type of persuasion required. But these frequently occur in other types of speech as well, and have largely to do with the so-called *poetic* function of communication, “enhancing aesthetic appreciation of language use” (1.2.1), which is exemplified in the different literary techniques that follow.

6.4 Structure

The description of textual organization is a crucial component of any literary analysis. Since it has not been fully appropriated and applied in earlier models or methodologies of Bible translation, especially with regard to higher levels of text structure, we give some attention to this matter here.

6.4.1 Genres

'Genre' may be generally defined as a certain type or class of something, but more specifically as "[a] category of *artistic* composition ... marked by a distinctive style, form, or content" (Soukhanov 1996:656). In the present context we are of course talking about the organization of *verbal art* in its diverse manifestations – from prose to poetry. 'Form' in this case may be seen as denoting the larger structure and/or the rules of arrangement of a particular discourse or even a corpus of texts. A given genre may be described with reference to different levels of specificity (*sub-genres*) or to particular sociocultural settings in which certain types of text typically appear or are regularly performed. Two different perspectives may be adopted with respect to the study of genre in a given sociocultural context – that of the foreigner or universalistic observer (a generalized *etic* viewpoint) or that of the indigenous insider (a specific *emic* view). Due to our relative lack of knowledge about the various *emic* (sub-)genres recorded in the Bible and how to define them, I have adopted a largely *etic* perspective in the following discussion.

Any audience approaches a given discourse in their language, whether oral or written, with a certain literary (as distinct from linguistic) *competence*, based on learning and past experience, which enables them to discern and interpret the various stylistic features that are present in the text (Barton 1984:11-19). The more experienced the readers or listeners, the greater is their *active*, critical competence. The recognition of genre and expectations associated with it are a fundamental part of this competence. Genre refers to a cognitive template, an interpretive framework, that facilitates an audience's processing and evaluation of a text's form (e.g. poetic devices), content, purpose, and significance. Enjoyable or disconcerting surprise may occur when a genre's norms are deliberately flouted, altered, or ignored.

The diverse codes and conventions associated with different genres

"are capable of different kinds of meaning and offer different kinds of information to a reader" (Tate 1991:64). However, such a significant meaning potential exists only in a virtual state until it is actualized by someone who is familiar with the formal system of linguistic and literary signals of the genre and related sub-genres or tropes built into the text by the original author. Alter (1981:46) describes the process thus:

A coherent reading of any art work, whatever the medium, requires some detailed awareness of the grid of conventions upon which, and against which, the individual work operates ... An elaborate set of tacit agreements about the ordering of the art work is at all times the enabling context in which the complex communication of art occurs. Through our awareness of convention we can recognize significant or simply pleasing patterns of repetition, symmetry, contrast; we can discriminate between the verisimilar and the fabulous, pick up directional clues in a narrative work, see what is innovative and what is deliberately traditional at each nexus of the artistic creation.

Knowledge of generic organization and operation can lessen the likelihood of one's misinterpreting an artistic piece of literature, for example one in which the use of irony or hyperbole is a prominent feature:

The genre provides the literary context for a given sentence [text] and, therefore, partly determines what the sentence [text] means and how it should be taken ... Genre thus enables the reader to interpret meaning and to recognize what kinds of truth claims are being made in and by a text. (Vanhooser 1998:50)

Ignorance of or disregard for the formal and semantic norms associated with a given genre can lead to what Barr (1963:125) terms a 'literary category mistake':

Failures to comprehend the literary genre lead to a use of the biblical assertions with a wrong function ... Genre mistakes cause the wrong kind of truth values to be attached to biblical sentences. Literary embellishments then come to be regarded as scientifically true assertions.

Thus it is clear that special attention devoted to both the generic and the specific literary-rhetorical forms of biblical discourse can direct one

more confidently along the path of a meaningful interpretation of such artistically composed theological literature. This is not merely a matter of structural identification, for the conventional form is merely the primary means to a more important end – namely, a better understanding of the author’s message in terms of conceptual content and affective intent (function) as well. It is not surprising that an accomplished secular translator and literary critic concludes: “[R]ecognition of genre and its rules is the translator’s most important task” (Katan 1999:150).

Etic genres may be categorized and described with respect to different levels of generality. Most analysts distinguish two basic macro-genres, *prose* and *poetry*. In some literary traditions, the difference between these two types is relatively clear-cut and easily specified. This normally occurs in cases where the various kinds of poetry are strictly defined in terms of fixed linguistic/literary categories – most commonly, some combination of the following features: meter, rhyme, line length (syllable count), versification (balanced lines, strophes, stanzas), and are designated by particular technical terms (e.g. ‘sonnet’, ‘choric ode’, ‘epic’). However, in the case of other, perhaps most, world literatures, including biblical Hebrew, the distinction between prose and poetry is quite a bit more flexible and depends more on a particular concentration or combination of what may be termed ‘poetic’, as opposed to ‘prosaic’ stylistic features.

Poetry characteristically foregrounds the phonic, or auditory, as well as the imagistic, or visual, dimension of a given language. In the Hebrew corpus of *relatively more poetic* discourse would be found a greater incidence of devices such as: figurative language; word order variation; word-play; sound-play (alliteration, assonance); condensation (e.g. ellipsis of elements in the second of parallel lines); patterned repetition; exclamation; intensification; rhetorical/deliberative questions; archaic, dialectal, or religious in-group vocabulary; direct speech; and various forms of covert allusion. In addition to a greater frequency, density, and intensity of usage with respect to these characteristics, Hebrew poetry is also distinguished by a significantly reduced occurrence of the so-called ‘prose particles’: the sign of the direct object (‘*th*’), the definite article (*h-*), the relative clause marker (‘*shr*’), and the inseparable prepositions (*m-*, *l-*, *k-*, *b-*).³³

³³ Berlin regards the ‘elevated style’ of Hebrew poetry to be “largely the product of two elements: terseness and parallelism” (1985:5). It is not really possible to strictly

A given text may be classified or interpreted as being more or less poetic on the basis of the relative amounts of such features as well as their distribution in the discourse. Some indeterminacy and hence controversy occurs, for example, in a number of prophetic and wisdom texts (e.g. Jeremiah, Ecclesiastes) as well as in certain epistolary passages (e.g. 1 Corinthians 13, Philippians 2.6-11, Colossians 1.15-20), including those that quote Old Testament/Septuagint poetry, such as Hebrews (e.g. 1.5-13; i.e. how ‘poetic’ are these verses in Greek?). Even in texts that are predominantly narrative in nature, distinctive poetic ‘inserts’ occur for the purposes of highlighting: for example, in many of the crucial speeches of Genesis (e.g. 1.26; 2.23; 3.14-19; 4.23; 8.22; 9.6,25-26; 12.2-3). Here it is not so much the form or classification that is important for interpreters, but rather the function, especially where the poetically heightened style of discourse is being used to foreground or emphasize a particular portion of the text (e.g. the central subject/theme of the three epistles mentioned above).

6.4.2 Prose

There are various ways of classifying prose in terms of some etic literary grid.

These different schemes are distinct from, and need to be complemented by, more linguistically-based ones, such as Longacre’s differentiation of narrative, predictive, expository, and hortatory discourse in biblical Hebrew by means of diverse systems of verb usage (tense/aspect/mood) and participant (object) reference (1989:59-63, 139-140).

A literary format tends to be descriptively less rigorous and is formulated more according to purpose and to a lesser extent on content, for example:

- *Narrative* (historical, fictional),
- *Hortative* (prophetic, epistolary),
- *Predictive* (revelatory, apocalyptic),
- *Descriptive* (scenic, panoramic),

define ‘poetry’ per se, only to characterize it with regard to a particular literary tradition in terms of a set of distinctive, relatively more ‘poetic’ (versus ‘prosaic’) features. For a general characterization, Schoekel’s description is excellent: “Poetry takes full advantage of and concentrates the resources of a language [i.e. in terms of frequency, predominance, density, intensity] and widens its possibilities...” (1988:19).

- *Legislative* (juridicial, instructional),
- *Explanatory* (to clarify, justify, define, etc.),
- *Enumerative* (genealogical, listing).

As suggested by the terms in parentheses, there are different ways of designating these etic genres and also of subdividing them into more specific categories: for example, ‘biography’, ‘diatribe’, ‘midrash’, ‘aphorism’, ‘admonition’, ‘vision/dream’, ‘royal decree’. The prophecy of Jonah, for instance, may be more precisely defined (e.g. when searching for a genre equivalent in another language) as a “didactic, typological, tragicomic narrative” (Wendland 1996:198). Similarly, certain pericopes found within the narrative gospels may be analyzed as belonging to one or more of the following form-functional sub-categories: *pronouncement* stories (of correction, commendation, objection, quest, inquiry), *parables*, *wonder* accounts (of exorcism, healing, provision, controversy, rescue, epiphany), *promise* and *commission* declarations, genealogy, hymn, prayer, apocalypse, liturgy.³⁴

It is also important to point out that most, if not all, biblical books as well as certain of their larger constituent sections are mixed (compound or complex) in their generic composition. The text of Genesis, for example, includes all of the major kinds of discourse: narrative, genealogy, legislation, prediction (poetry!), and exhortation. Any one of the four gospels too will include clear instances of many of the subtypes listed above. Furthermore, one may observe that there is a particular style of discourse that may occur within each of the larger genres – as well as in the various kinds of poetry – namely, *direct speech*. This important feature, which may in fact comprise most of a given pericope, not only dramatizes and popularizes a text, but it also makes possible a more ready incorporation of other discourse types (such as Jonah’s prayer in ch. 2 of that book). New Testament narrative is frequently composed of smaller units that are distinguished by a particular alternation or mixture of action and speech (cf. Bailey 1995:205-206).

The New Testament epistles may often be elucidated with reference to specific generic forms (types and patterns) that go back to the categories of ancient Greco-Roman rhetoric and letter-writing: for example, aspects

of argument, diatribe, paraenesis, encomium, topoi, virtue-vice lists, the household code, liturgical fragments, salutation-blessing-doxology, travelogue (Bailey and van der Broek 1992:21-86; Bailey 1995:206). The value of these systems of literary classification lies not in their static use as a means of formal identification (e.g. ‘utterance X is an aphorism’), but in their dynamic application to more adequately reveal the compositional organization, movement, and purpose of a given pericope. Knowing the standard form is also helpful in determining where and why an author modifies an expected typical pattern in order to achieve some special communicative effect: for example, in criticism of the text’s initial addressees as when Isaiah transforms a love song into an oracle of divine judgement (Isaiah 5.1-6), or when Paul omits the opening ‘thanksgiving-and-prayer’ section in his letter to the Galatians (Galatians 1.6ff). Similar effects may accordingly be sought in the language of translation.

6.4.3 Poetry

There are four major etic categories of biblical poetry, which are briefly described below:

- *Lyric*: highly expressive and emotive; ‘natural’, realistic imagery (as opposed to apocalyptic images); used to worship and praise, pray and appeal to, thank and commemorate God, the king, or some other focal participant. The Song of Songs is the clearest instance of lyric poetry in the Scriptures. Many of the Psalms would also fall into this category, including those portions found in the New Testament (e.g. Luke 1; Hebrews 1).
- *Didactic*: informative and commemorative in nature; more concrete ‘facts’ than literary ‘figures’; intended to instruct, remind, and enjoin concerning both the God of Scriptures and the godly life. Examples are in Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and several Psalms (e.g. 1, 119) as well as in major segments of the discourses of Christ and of the New Testament epistles.
- *Paraenetic*: strongly affective, even imperative in force with regard to one’s beliefs and behaviour; intended to encourage (strengthen, comfort, motivate) or to admonish (rebuke, warn, indict) God’s people. Examples are found in most Old Testament prophetic texts and a large proportion of the epistolary literature.
- *Apocalyptic*: visionary and evocative; ‘fantastic’, otherworldly imagery and cosmic symbolism; intended to give God’s people a dramatic, inspiring and/or reassuring vision of the future according

³⁴ For some details, see Tannehill 1995; Bailey and van der Broek 1992:91-209; Bailey 1995:207-8.

to his foreordained plan for the world and his coming Kingdom. Examples appear in certain prophetic passages, such as Ezekiel 38-39, Daniel 6-12, Joel 3, and most of Revelation.³⁵

Not only may these four principal classes be combined within a given document, but they are also normally subdivided into a number of more specific form-functional types.³⁶ For example, in the Psalter we find lyric psalms of petition, thanksgiving, praise, instruction, and profession – along with overlapping subcategories of repentance, remembrance, retribution, royalty, and liturgy (Gerstenberger 1988:9-20; Wendland 1998:ch. 2).

Prophetic hortatory discourse, which occupies such a prominent place in the Hebrew Scriptures, includes all of the poetic types listed above, along with various more ‘prosaic’ portions of discourse. It may be divided into ‘reports’, ‘prayers’, and the largest category, ‘speeches’.³⁷ The speeches are often distinguished with regard to smaller text units such as: announcement of judgment/reprieve/salvation, disputation, indictment speech, instruction, oracle and oracle fulfilment, paraenesis (admonition, prohibition), prophecy (punishment, deliverance), judgement speech, revelation, and vision report.³⁸ These are typically signalled by distinctive verbal formulas, commonly termed for example: announcement of divine message, attestation, call to attention, commissioning, emissarial self-introduction, messenger, oracle, prophetic word, recognition, and fulfilment.³⁹ ‘Didactic’ and ‘apocalyptic’ types of poetry are similarly classified, but not usually in as much detail. An awareness of these distinctions enables the literary analyst to carry out text studies that are more precise in terms of form and function. However, taken to an extreme, such attempts at classification tend to become highly subjective and to lead readers astray in the forest of discourse by looking at each and every one of all the different trees. Similarly, the search for possible literary equivalents in a

³⁵ It is interesting to observe that in many passages the text of Revelation manifests a poetic style of prose which includes all of these four types: *lyric* = 5:9-10,12-13; *didactic* = 22.1-6; *paraenetic* = 2-3; *apocalyptic* = 16.1-3,8-14,17-21. Ezekiel 38-39 too is probably more accurately classified as a form of poetic prose discourse.

³⁶ The generic functional designations here are not that diagnostic, for they may also be used when describing biblical ‘prose’ discourse, except for the first, ‘lyric’. Thus poetry, or a ‘poetic’ text, is distinguished largely on the basis of formal-stylistic criteria.

³⁷ Tucker 1987:29, who follows Westermann 1967:90-92 here.

³⁸ For definitions, see Long 1991:291-318.

³⁹ Again, see Long 1991:318-324.

given language of translation can be taken too far, with the result that the text becomes stylistically unnatural, or worse, incoherent due to serious collocational clashes in terms of genre.

To close this section, I will mention a general way of classifying the various types of literature in the Old Testament. It offers a broad perspective that also distinguishes the mixed, or overlapping category of ‘prosaic poetry’ (or ‘poetic prose’, i.e., prophecy), which often closely combines or juxtaposes prose and poetry. This scheme is shown in summary form below:⁴⁰

PROSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Law</i> (commands, ritual instructions, covenantal language) – <i>Report</i> (straight sequential chronicling of events, persons, places; the minimum form = genealogy) – <i>Narrative</i> (dramatic plot, character, setting/scene, speech/dialogue)
Prosaic Poetry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Prophecy</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Apocalyptic Visions</i> (decorative and distant salvation oracles; symbolic and visionary; requires a hermeneutical key) <i>Salvation oracles</i> (promises of blessing, restoration, fruitfulness) <i>Judgment decrees</i> (predictions of punishment for sin/impenitence) – <i>Wisdom Verse</i> (Proverbs, Ecclesiastes) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Proverbial</i> (concise and concentrated mnemonic microform) <i>Didactic</i> (parabolic, sapiential, instructional, enigmatic poetry) – <i>Lyric Verse</i> (Psalms, Song of Solomon) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Lament</i> (appeal for protection, rescue, healing, and other kinds of help) <i>Eulogy</i> (praise the nature, attributes, and actions of a person or God)
POETRY	

By way of comparison, in the New Testament prose is clearly predominant, but important (though debatable) instances of poetry, or ‘poetic prose’, also occur, most often in the form of Septuagintal citations (as in Luke 1), early Christian liturgical or hymnic compositions (e.g. Phil 2.6-11), and highly rhetorical passages of praise or blame (e.g. the seven ‘letters’ of Rev 2-3). The gospels manifest a distinct combination of Christ-focused ‘narrative’ and ‘report’, while the sub-category of ‘law’ is replaced by a great deal of epistolary ‘exhortation’ and doctrinal ‘instruction’ (paraenetic literature).

Of course, much finer generic distinctions than these can – and perhaps must – be made, depending on the indigenous literary categories

⁴⁰ Adapted from Giese 1995:18-23.

into which a given text of Scripture is being transferred. But the preceding general scheme (modified for the New Testament) may be sufficient to guide translators along the path of initially differentiating the types of literature that they encounter in terms of form, content, and function (the last being often the least apparent but most important feature). This will better prepare them to find correspondences in their language in a reverse order of priority/significance, that is, from the greatest to the least: *function* → *content* → *form*. Thus a comparative functional analysis may indicate that a poetic, accusatory prophecy such as Obadiah may be more effectively rendered as heightened prose in a given target language – or vice-versa, for example, the genealogy of Genesis 5 recast in the form of Bantu ‘praise poetry’. A functional focus in the study of genre is well complemented by a *speech act* approach to the analysis of texts and text constituents (section 4.4.2), especially where direct discourse is involved, which is the preferred, dramatic mode of biblical composition (6.9).⁴¹

6.5 Patterning

‘Patterning’ refers to the basic compositional units and relations that comprise the hierarchy of discourse organization, in any genre. In particular, it deals with the overall balance and symmetry (discourse *design*) that is created within a text by different types of positioned *repetition* – phonological, syntactic, lexical, and semantic (logical). The result is a manifold textual framework that is typically manifested in a given literary work on both its macro- and micro-levels of structural arrangement. The following is a summary of some of the more common patterns of structural (formal and/or semantic) development that may be observed in the literature of Scripture:⁴²

- *Parallelism* presents a recurrence of similar or identical elements to form two or more balanced units: [a – b / a' – b' / a'' – b'' / ...].
- *Alternation* involves a regular interchange of discourse elements to form a longer pattern of parallel development: [a – b – c...n // a' – b' – c'...n'].
- *Chiasmus* is formed by a repetition of significant elements in inverted order past a certain structural midpoint in the sequence: [a – b – c...n // n'...c' – b' – a'].
- *Intercalation* refers to the complete insertion of one distinct literary unit within another which thus encloses it: [A – B – A'].
- *Inclusio* is constructed by a reiteration of material (form/content) at the beginning and ending of a given unit of discourse, that is, a ‘frame’ or ‘sandwich’ construction: [a–X–a']. Note also the important variants of *inclusio*, namely: repetition at the ending and beginning, the respective beginnings, or the respective endings of *different* units, termed *anadiplosis* [X–a/a'–Y], *exclusio* [X–a /Z/ a'–Y], *anaphora* [a–X...a'–Y], and *epiphora* [X–a...Y–a'].⁴³
- *Contrast* combines, usually by juxtaposition, distinct text units that are dissimilar, contrary, or the opposite in meaning and/or functional significance: [A ⇔ B].
- *Comparison* forges an explicit association between two or more text units that are analogous or similar in nature, whether in literal or figurative terms: [A ~ B].
- *Causation - Substantiation* involves an ordering of literary units on the basis of the logical movement cause → effect (causation) or effect → cause (substantiation): [A → B, B → A].
- *Climax* forms a progressive semantic movement of units from lesser to greater intensity, importance, and/or implications for the message: [a < a' < a'' <... → A].
- *Pivot* manifests a sudden or unexpected change in the conceptual direction of the discourse, e.g. from a positive to a negative denotation or connotation, or vice-versa: [...A ∧ B...].
- *Particularization - Generalization* presents a sequential development of structural and/or thematic units towards an explication or

⁴¹ An increasing number of biblical scholars are adopting a ‘speech-act’ approach to the interpretation of the Scriptures (e.g. Vanhoozer 1998:ch.6). However, it may be important, especially for Bible translators, to distinguish between ‘strong’ and ‘weak’ speech acts, with a focus upon the former, “which ... entail serious obligations on the part of the speaker” (Thiselton 1999:237), and presumably the audience as well.

⁴² For a similar listing, see Powell (1990:32-33). Due to the relatively large segments of text normally required for a display, it is not possible to illustrate these various types of patterning here; for some examples with reference to Jonah, see Wendland (1996:373-395).

⁴³ For further explanation and exemplification of these structural patterns, see Wendland 1995:ch.2. It should be noted that some scholars would regard *parallelism* to be the preeminent instance of patterning, especially in poetry (e.g. Kugel 1981:ch.1). Yet more than mere parallel lineation is involved in Hebrew poetry: “[Line] B, by being connected to A – carrying it further, echoing it, defining it, restating it, contrasting with it, *it does not matter which* – has an emphatic, ‘seconding’ character, and it is this, more than any aesthetic of symmetry or paralleling, which is at the heart of biblical parallelism” (ibid:51; cf. Alter 1985:ch.1).

resolution that becomes either more specific or more comprehensive in outcome or effect: [a + a' + a''... → A].

- *Purpose* structures the text by units that move perceptibly from means to end (or from reason to intended result): [a → a' → a'' → ... → B].
- *Anticipation* refers to the inclusion of material in a former part of the discourse that serves to prepare readers/hearers for something significant that will occur in a latter portion (sometimes referred to as 'foreshadowing'): [a-f'-b-c-d-e-f...].
- *Retrospection* is the reverse of the preceding, that is, material in a later part of the discourse serves to refer or reflect back upon some event(s) that actually occurred earlier in point of time (i.e. 'flash-back'): [a-b-c-d-e-a'-f...].
- *Summarization* presents a synopsis or abridgement of content that is treated in more detail in another place, either before or after the point in question: [A-B-C-a...].
- *Interrogation* is a patterning technique whereby a thematically crucial question, problem, or puzzle (enigma) is followed by its answer, resolution, or solution, either immediately or at some later point in the discourse: [a-b?-c-d-e-b!...].

The manner in which these different structural and logical patterns are selected, expanded, contracted, combined, and/or transformed within a particular text, whether prose or poetry, subtly reveals the literary artistry of the biblical author (and of the text itself). But more important, such architectural arrangements also serve to indicate the focal thematic elements (e.g. the centre of an extended chiasmus) as well as the dynamics of his intended theological message. Whether or not such structures can or should be retained in an audience-centred, meaning-based translation depends on a number of factors: their *nature* (whether more formal or semantic in essence), *credibility* (how well supported by reliable biblical commentators), *scope* (greater or lesser in textual range), the *language* concerned (nearer or farther from the original in linguistic constitution), and the *publication* process (whether modifications in the printed format would be allowed in order to display a particularly important pattern). However, the main concern is that their primary discourse *function* (e.g. demarcation, junction, foregrounding, textual embellishment, etc.) can be satisfactorily duplicated in the vernacular language text.⁴⁴ One way of

⁴⁴ For some convincing examples of the hermeneutical, hence also translational significance of such discourse patterning, see the studies by Kenneth Bailey and J.P.

doing this at least visually in a translation would be to set off texts such as Jonah 1.1-3 and 3.1-3, for example, in parallel fashion and as separate paragraphs, with a footnote explicitly referring the second patterned sequence back to the first.⁴⁵

6.6 Foregrounding

The notion of foregrounding in verbal discourse is a rather difficult issue to deal with in biblical studies and literary analysis alike due to the inconsistency and lack of clarity with which it is often defined and described. I will therefore attempt to steer a middle course by adopting what seem to be the most helpful and commonly used categories of what is obviously an important consideration when evaluating the overall artistry of a certain biblical pericope. I present the notion of foregrounding in terms of 'prominence' and 'progression'.

6.6.1 Prominence

The linguistic and literary marking of prominence is an essential aspect in the construction of any well-formed text, for it serves to differentiate various segments and aspects of the discourse with regard to relative salience. Such signals alert readers or listeners as to what they ought to be centring their attention upon as they mentally perceive and process the intended message. There are two basic types of prominence-foregrounding that need to be noted in literary discourse: topic and focus, and a corresponding pair of processes that serve to indicate a shift in topic or point of

Fokkelman in de Regt *et al* (1996:14-30,152-187); cf. also Dorsey (1999:*passim* (OT)) and Harvey (1998:*passim* (NT)).

⁴⁵ Even more might be done typographically to call attention to the various similarities and contrasts that appear in these two divine commissionings of the prophet Jonah (or in his two appeals to YHWH for death, 4.3-4.8-9), e.g. through the use of different types styles. Some scholars caution against such textual displays, whether or not accompanied by explanatory notes, on the grounds that they may offer or suggest only one of several possible structural arrangements or points of comparison. This is a valid concern; however, so is the alternative – that is, to leave an important textual pattern, like the parallels noted in Jonah 1 and 3, completely unmarked and hence invisible to or unheard by a contemporary readership or audience. Which procedure represents the greater loss to or distortion of the original text? The difficult answer to this question can be determined only within the context of a specific Bible translation project and with respect to the *skopos* that is guiding the work.

focus. ‘Topicalization’ is placing emphasis on a *known* bit of information; ‘focalization’ is placing emphasis on a *new* bit of information (Wiesemann 2000:66).

The *topic* of a text (also called ‘given’ or ‘old’ information) is the principal subject that is being talked about, whether in a sentence, a paragraph, or in some larger unit of compositional structure. A major topic expressed in the form of a complete predication is sometimes termed a ‘theme’ (e.g. *topic*: ‘Jonah’s anger’ → *theme*: “Jonah becomes angry because YHWH reprieves Nineveh” [Jonah 4.1-5]). A topic is a natural sort of prominence in that it is an expected and necessary feature of any coherent and cohesive text (6.1.1). If the topic of discourse is not clearly indicated, then receptors are obviously going to have difficulty in comprehending the intended message.

Once established in the discourse, a topic may be referred to or substituted for by means of various pronominal forms or deictic particles/expressions (e.g. ‘that’, ‘this one’). The topic normally occurs *before* any new information that is supplied in a particular sentence. It is usually signalled or formally distinguished in the paragraph and larger structures: for example, by repetition. A topic line is formed by a sequence of sentences or paragraphs that refer to the same subject. In a prophetic or epistolary work, this may be designated as the ‘argument line’. In a narrative account, the topic of discourse may be regarded as the whole series of main actions (the ‘event line’, e.g. the *wayyiqtol* progression in Hebrew) that are consecutively linked within a certain ‘episode’ (i.e., same temporal or spatial setting, cast of characters, etc.). These diverse formally cohesive and semantically coherent sequences may be regarded as foregrounded information in a discourse, while other material (descriptive, explanatory, subordinate, etc.) comprises different types of textual background.

Since a topic(-line) represents the normal, or default, mode of literary composition (i.e. every intelligible text must have such a semantic thread), it is the least prominent in terms of impact or attention value. Thus while it is an essential aspect of the discourse, it makes its impression (hence memorability) more by indirection – simply by ‘being there’ verbally for a perceptible amount of text-time/space. A current topic may be changed and later resumed, with the appropriate text markers: for example, through a front-shifting of some ‘new’ information to the head of a sentence (i.e. topicalization).

The chief or most prominent topic is normally the one that subsumes the most content of a given text. Thus relative levels of *sub-topic* may also be possible, depending on the length of the composition concerned. These may be strongly or weakly related semantically to the principal topic, resulting in greater or lesser coherence throughout the discourse. A *co-topic* (or *co-theme*) is one of equal importance to another within a given text span or book (e.g. “The city of Nineveh repents at the word of YHWH” + “The prophet Jonah is called to repent over his ethnocentric pride”). An ‘implied topic’ (or theme) is one that is presupposed, implicated, inferred by an explicit topic (e.g. “Jonah is faced with the religious question of: ‘Who is my neighbor?’”). The analysis of topical (and related) prominence in a literary text is a good way of learning how its message is composed in terms of a hierarchy of interrelated thematic elements. The goal of translators then is to ensure that this same pattern or network of foregrounding is also apparent in or derivable from (at the very least is not obscured by) their version.

The term *focus* may be used to refer to particular areas of the topical structure of a text that the author wishes to call attention to for a limited or extended period of ‘discourse time’ (the relative amount of text devoted to it). It is information that is called into greater prominence in relation to the topic (line) and may pertain to such discourse features as these: one of the central characters of a narrative (in the ‘spotlight’), the culminating events of a plot (‘peak’), a high point in the emotive development of an account (‘climax’), or the most important aspects of some exposition, description, or argument. Such a text focus is usually marked overtly by various linguistic or literary devices, for example: a critical point within a larger structural pattern (e.g. the centre of a chiasmic arrangement), a shift in word order (e.g. object fronting, subject backing), repetition, parenthetical commentary, textual condensation (e.g. asyndeton, ellipsis), a concentration in content (e.g. through intertextual allusion) or figuration (e.g. an extended metaphor), and so forth. As noted earlier (see section 6.2), several of these devices are used in the focal point of Jonah: the final, didactic utterance of YHWH. The various types of focus that are manifested in the Scriptures make it imperative that even translators who are not competent in the biblical languages have access somehow to the original text, whether through personal instruction (e.g. a team exegete) or published guides (e.g. translators’ handbooks). Identified focal points need to be marked by devices with similar functions in the target language so as to well represent the source text.

6.6.2 Progression

As noted in the discussion of literary 'unity' (section 6.1.1), the basic structure of any meaningful verbal discourse consists of a coherent and cohesive set of discrete *units* of linguistic and/or literary organization (e.g. sentence, paragraph, stanza, episode, oracle). These structural constituents are linked to one another in linear (horizontal) and/or hierarchical (vertical) fashion within the complete text by means of various semantic *relationships* (e.g. condition-consequence, stimulus-response, topic-comment, specific-general), and they also manifest different degrees and types of prominence (e.g. scope, inclusion, importance, frequency, density) with respect to one another. This inventory of textual elements is not communicatively static in nature, but the whole always displays some dynamic manner of logical, topical, or thematic progression, or development, as the discourse unfolds from beginning to end. In other words, there is a continuity of synchronic categorization and diachronic movement towards some sort of goal, closure, completion, solution, or resolution – sometimes termed 'end stress'. Thus one segment of text recalls, fulfils, augments, answers, or anticipates another as the literary work proceeds from start to finish.

The manifestation of discourse progression is most obvious of course in the case of a *dramatic* narrative account (not all are of this type), where the text unfolds according to a sequence of *plot* elements: for example, initial state → complication/crisis → development → climax → [+/-] denouement → resolution/final state. The book of Jonah is particularly interesting in this respect because it incorporates two basic plot sequences – the second proceeding from and building upon the first, that is, chs. 1-2 → chs. 3-4. The first event cycle features a long denouement, that is, Jonah's psalm (the 'resolution' is an ironic expectation, 2.10), while the second cycle concludes with a 'climax' in YHWH's final speech (4.10-11) and lacks an overt resolution. Certain structures of argument also create a logical (deductive) progression within the diverse hortatory texts of Scripture, such as we have in the Old Testament prophets and New Testament epistles (e.g. from judgement/crisis to deliverance/resolution in Jonah ch. 2; from the 'lesser to the greater' in 4.10-11).

Progression may also be detected in the case of a purely descriptive passage in the sense that a completed visualizable scene (or any distinct stage along the way to creating a full image) always depicts or evokes more than the sum of its individual components (or earlier stages): for

example, the conventionalized customary behaviours demonstrating humble public repentance (Jonah 3.6). In this respect too even an instance of exact repetition does not convey precisely the same literary significance as a prior occurrence, for it will have accumulated additional semantic resonances along the textual way proceeding from its initial appearance, including those connotations derived from its present context. So it is that "the word of YHWH" which "came to Jonah a second time" (3.1) brings to bear a very different implication and impact upon the audience than the corresponding utterance in 1.1. This added significance derives from Jonah's initial rebellious response and his consequent harrowing experiences at sea – whether above or below water – including his egocentric lyric expression in reaction to these events (chs. 1-2).

This artistic feature of progression involving a diverse, but unified (albeit often implicit), accumulation of discourse significance also has special importance for translators. They must endeavour to ensure that the various distinct, but interrelated aspects of paradigmatic and syntagmatic content – that is, based on semantic analogy or contiguity (e.g. temporal/spatial/causal) respectively – which underlie the original discourse, remain intact also in their representation of that same text. It will probably not be possible to retain all of the discernable thematic threads and verbal echoes in a stylistically natural way due to the formal differences that exist between two distinct languages. This is especially true where overt phonological, lexical, or syntactic recursion is concerned, for example in the case of the plant, the worm, and a scorching desert wind that God 'provided for' Jonah as the account builds to its climax (4.6-8; cf. 1.16 – where a 'great fish' was provided as well!). But the more of these constituent elements that can be preserved in the translation (supplemented, if need be, by deictic, descriptive, or explanatory comments), the greater the relative degree of connectivity as well as progression that the translated text will present to the audience.

Where certain unintentional breaks in the intratextual flow of discourse do occur (as opposed to deliberate disjunctures, cf. 'diversity', 6.2), it may be possible to compensate in part for these in other ways. In Chichewa, for example, a progressive build-up may be maintained through the reiteration of various demonstrative pronouns referring to the divine agent of each of the events of 'provision' mentioned above. An extratextual (and hence less desirable or helpful) alternative would be to point out the sequence and its textual significance in a footnote, perhaps also making use of a diagram or lexical flow-chart.

6.7 Imagery

This literary characteristic involves an author's use of pictorial imaging techniques to stimulate both the cognitive and emotive capacity of his audience as well as their visual imagination. Thus it is also a way of giving prominence to a certain concept. Such literary figuration may be comparative or associative in nature and relatively more or less novel and important in biblical usage. *Comparative* figures such as *metaphor* and *simile*, the pre-eminent images of the Scriptures, establish an analogy, likeness, or correspondence between two seemingly different entities, events, or realms of experience.⁴⁶ The key to interpreting and hence also translating such comparative expressions is to determine in what way(s) the topic and the image are seen to be related, correspondent, or alike – that is, the ground(s), or basis(-es), of the analogy. Thus the 'lamp' of God's word illumines – lights up – my 'path' (also figurative) in life (Psa 119.105).

This interpretive ground is often compound or complex in nature; that is, it may consist of several levels or options, each of which may apply in a given context to a greater or lesser degree; for example "YHWH is my rock" (Psa 18.2a) evokes a variety of notions such as steadfastness, permanence, protection, and solidarity. One image may also lead or expand into another, topically-related one as a passage unfolds so that an even

⁴⁶ 'Comparison' may also be manifested on the larger plane of discourse structure, as noted in section 6.5 on 'patterning'. Two related kinds of implicit comparative figure are *personification*, which describes inanimate things in terms of human attributes and activities, e.g. "and the sea ceased from its *raging*" (Jon 1.15), and the more important *anthropomorphism-anthropopathism*, which applies such features and feelings to God, e.g. "When God *saw*...God *changed his mind* about the calamity..." (Jon 3.10). The latter does not usually cause great translational difficulties, but certain personifications may cause collocational difficulties in some languages, requiring a shift in the type of verb that is used, e.g. 'the sea stopped storming and became quiet.' For an older, yet still useful treatment of biblical imagery, see Caird (1980); cf. also Beekman and Callow (1964: chs. 8-9). E. Hermanson (1995) applies conceptual metaphor theory to translation problems in Amos. 'Symbols', which are figures that carry additional denotative and connotative significance due to the multiple literary (textual) and extratextual (sociocultural) associations that they create, may be either local or global in nature. The former are particular to a given literary work or author and may be considered as a type of imagery; global symbolism, on the other hand, is current within the entire literary corpus of a language or the literature of a whole region (e.g. Ancient Near East; cf. the discussion of archetypes in section 6.1.3).

larger or fuller picture is painted in the attentive listener's mind (e.g. cliff + fortress + rock + shield + horn + stronghold in Psa 18.2; contrast the images of death in vv. 4-5). In such instances, the primary correspondences and connections should be recoverable in the translated text, implicitly if possible but explicitly if necessary: for example, by unobtrusively introducing the common function of defence or protection.

Metonymy is the main *replacement* type of figure used in biblical literature. It involves the substitution of one term for another to which it is typically associated or related in some conventional way, for the culture concerned: for example, 'feet' for a person's 'walk', an image of one's characteristic behaviour in life. Metonyms, like metaphors, may suggest multiple associations. For example, in 2 Sam 1.19a, "your *glory*, O Israel, lies *slain* on the *heights*", the noun 'glory', which in other passages may be translated 'weight' or 'weightiness', is figuratively associated with heroic leadership, with national reputation, with godly attributes, with divine election and empowerment – worthy to be exalted in the 'heights', symbolic of mountainous Israel as a nation, but now 'slain'. A specific type of metonymy is the *synecdoche*, in which references to a part of something evoke the whole, or vice versa. The subject of "My *mouth* will speak wisdom" (Psa 49.3) represents the speaker's complete identity, as well as the organ employed in the act of speech. In "[T]hey leave their *wealth* to others" (Psa 49.10), the term 'wealth' (literally, 'strength') suggests any type of possession that can lift a person up in this life.

Euphemism is related to metonymy in that a certain sad, shameful, disagreeable, or dangerous concept⁴⁷ is replaced, or rather disguised, by an expression that is sociolinguistically safer or more pleasant and acceptable for the language-culture concerned. For example, "Saul went in to *cover his feet*" (1 Sam 24.3) becomes 'to relieve himself' in several English versions and 'to help himself' in Chichewa.

Many biblical figures are semantically complex and may therefore be classified in more than one way. An exercise in categorization is simply a

⁴⁷ A common instance of the last category involves various replacements for the personal name of the God of Israel, YHWH, in biblical narrative texts, whether spoken (*adonai*) or written (e.g. *kurios*). It is interesting that the lexical form of such 'positive euphemism', some alternative reference, does not occur in the book of Jonah, not even in the speech of pagans (e.g. 1.14-16). This is another feature that serves to underscore the universal salvific perspective and action of YHWH as represented in this book.

tool to help recognize and deal with these figures whether in exegesis or translation. In “Will the *dust* praise you?” (Psa 30.9), for example, the apparent personification ‘dust’ is probably more accurately understood as a metonym referring to a *dead person*: if I die and become a ritually *unclean* corpse that gradually rots away into dust, how will I be able to praise you, an utterly holy God? In some cases it is not a matter of either/or, but both/and as far as the possibilities of interpretation go. For example, in Jonah 1.14, ‘innocent blood’ suggests *both* the sailors’ killing (making blood come out) of Jonah *and* Jonah’s current life (blood, the essence of life); the sailors’ use of ‘innocent’, then, may suggest *both* the sailors’ desire to be considered innocent in throwing him overboard *and* their belief that Jonah might be innocent.⁴⁷

The use of imagery is a fundamental artistic technique found in literatures all over the world. When creatively used, such images add impact, beauty, evocative power, or a certain mood to the text in which they are manifested, thus rendering the message more attractive, compelling, and memorable. But biblical figures, both the well known as well as the unfamiliar, also serve other important functions. They enable an author to speak, albeit only partially and suggestively, about what cannot be understood, explained, or described in full, especially the wonderful nature and works of God in dealing with his creation. They also encourage listeners (or readers) to mentally conceive and emotively experience for themselves a particular situation or event by supplying them with a vivid picture or even an entire scene into which they can enter by way of their imagination.

There is no easy solution or ready set of procedures for translating such imagery. How, for example, should the string of metaphors in Psalm 18.2, mentioned above, be represented in Chichewa, where ‘rock’ is com-

⁴⁸ See Sasson (1990:134). There may be a problem of source text ambiguity, as in “people who cannot distinguish between their right hand and their left” (Jon 4.11), which may refer either to ‘innocent children’ or people who are ‘as innocent as children’. In such cases, translators will try to reproduce the ambiguity of the original text in their version, with other interpretative possibilities suggested in a footnote. If this is not possible, then the most strongly supported interpretation may be rendered in the text and the others in a footnote. In texts where it is determined that the ambiguity is deliberate and that two possible interpretations are *both* intended, then another option is to attempt to express both in the translation, *if* it can be concisely and naturally done (e.g. ‘love of God’ in both a subjective and objective sense in 1 John 2.5,15; 3.16; 4.12).

monly used as a metaphor for a ‘hard’, stingy person and ‘cliff’, left unqualified, is meaningless to most listeners? One possibility in such cases is to poetically introduce the most salient feature of the image, as indicated by reliable scholarly interpretation, and to record others in a footnote: for example, “Chauta *protects* me like a great cliff” (note the shift to a *simile*) or “Chauta is my cliff of *defense*”. A better option for such frequently occurring and complex images may be to explain them at greater length in a supplementary help for readers, such as the introduction to a book, the glossary, or an initial prominent note to which subsequent occurrences could be cross-referenced.⁴⁹

Sometimes the figurative imagery of the Bible closely matches what is available in the language of translation, both denotatively as well as connotatively, but it has been hidden in the translations of interposed languages on which the translators depend. For example, in Jonah 4.4, NRSV and *Good News Bible* render the ‘burning’ metaphor by ‘be angry’, while it could be effectively represented in Chichewa by ‘enflamed heart’. At other times, a literal rendering of such figures may result in the wrong meaning or no meaning at all. An attempt to literally reproduce ‘the belly of Sheol’ (Jon 2.2), for example, is understood in Chichewa as a reference to the big fish that swallowed Jonah (1.16); ‘violent hands’ (3.8) implies crimes committed only by that specific physical means; and “people who cannot distinguish their right from the left hand” suggests individuals who are mentally incompetent.⁵⁰ Exactly what decision can be made or which set of options is available in a given instance will depend on the project *skopos*

⁴⁹ In this respect, the advantage – indeed, the absolute necessity – of publishing study Bibles, which allow for more detailed explanations of such imagery, or Scripture products in alternative media, such as the illustrated comic format or videos, is clearly evident.

⁵⁰ The Chichewa equivalent for this last idiomatic expression is “those who cannot say which things are good – which things are bad”. The presence of literary features and their effects, including rhetorical power and aesthetic appeal, in the biblical text is a controversial issue. How does one know for sure, especially when the scholars themselves disagree? In my experience, there is a strong tendency for the amount of figurative language to be reduced in the text of a translation, as compared with the original text, due to either literalism or simplification (as in ‘common language’ versions). It is difficult to get translators used to the idea of introducing local figures of speech into the discourse where stylistically natural and contextually appropriate, e.g. for the Hebrew expressive particle *na* ‘please!’ in Jon 4.3, where Chichewa uses *ndlapota nanu* “I have become twisted together with you [in my present appeal]”.

and the general translation principles that have been established to guide the team's daily working procedures.⁵¹

6.8 Phonicity

The artistry of biblical discourse, poetry in particular, incorporates a noticeable phonological dimension, for much of it appears to have been composed with *oral* elocution and *aural* reception in mind (Harvey 1998:vii). This was an important aspect of the rhetorical style of both Hebrew and Greek discourse. Thus in addition to many oral compositional structures based on repetition (cf. 6.5), the text manifests the presence of many audible patterns, such as, alliteration, assonance, rhythm, rhyme, and wordplays. Naturally this auditory aspect is most prominent when the original text of Scripture is orally articulated for an attentive and appreciative listening audience. Unfortunately, this important feature, contributing to general as well as specific message meaning, is not often given adequate attention in commentaries or standard versions, either ancient or modern.⁵²

A stylistic element of this language-specific nature, along with the audio symbolism and connotations that it conveys, is of course rarely reproduced directly, sound-for-sound in a translation.⁵³ Nevertheless, a skilful translator may be able to represent it to a greater or lesser degree through the creative use of analogous phonological features in his/her language. Alternatively, the functional (including aesthetic) properties of the origi-

⁵¹ For a more detailed discussion of the various options involved when dealing with figurative language and imagery in biblical poetry, see Zogbo and Wendland (2000:126-131).

⁵² An outstanding exception is the recent (not yet completed) *Berit Olam* series of commentaries (Collegeville, MN: Michael Glazier/Liturgical Press). Their attention to phonicity stems from their laudable aim to "focus on the final form of the texts [of the Hebrew Bible], *approaching them as literary works*, recognizing that the craft of poetry and storytelling that the ancient Hebrew world provided can be found in them and that *their truth can be better appreciated with a fuller understanding of that art*" (from the dust jacket of Ruth and Esther, my emphasis).

⁵³ Some of the best examples of the associative meaning connected with instances of phonicity are popular biblical etymologies (e.g. Gen 19.22, 21.31, 25.25). Although the etymological explanations may not be credible or convincing according to modern linguistic principles, they were valid and meaningful for listeners within the ancient literary tradition of Hebrew, and from a functional perspective, that is all that matters.

nal text – such as the use of selected sounds for the purposes of highlighting, intensifying, contrasting, or beautifying selected aspects of the message – may be replicated through other means (e.g. simple repetition, cognate words, deictic or exclamatory particles, or an appropriate idiophone).

There are a number of examples of artistically motivated phonicity in the book of Jonah, some of which are cited below to illustrate the density and diversity of which many translators are unaware. Most subtle and hence easy to miss (at least for the contemporary reader of ancient texts) are the occasional *rhythmic*-accental patterns which serve to reinforce the content that is being conveyed. For example, Jonah's psalm (chapter two) consists exclusively of five-stress lines, thus rhythmically unifying the entire piece.

The *alliterative* repetition of selected vowels (assonance) and/or consonants (consonance) in certain words functions to foreground the respective concepts concerned. For example, a sequence of /a/ vowels in 1.2b seems to extend from the initial command *qera* 'cry out', intensifying the solemn import of YHWH's message. There are several instances of evocative *onomatopoeia*: for example, *hishevah lehishev* in 1.4, which "captures the sound of planks cracking when tortured by raging waters" (Sasson 1990:96). There is also some rhyming, such as the commonly co-occurring pair *hannun werahum* 'gracious and compassionate' in 4.2 (cf. the subsequent *weniham* 'and relenting').

The presence of *rhyme* in Hebrew is a debatable issue due to its ubiquitous pronominal suffixes, but certain concentrations and arrangements of vowel-consonant combinations seem more than fortuitous. As Jonah and the sailors dialogue in 1.10-13, for example, "the sounds, positions, juxtapositions, and preponderance of twelve pronominal objects dot the wordscape as they interrelate the characters" (Trible 1994:145).

Most important of all thematically are the various passages in which a significant sound pattern is used to play one sense against another to rhetorically heighten the discourse. Such *punning*, or paronomasia, periodically appears to artistically unify the account and to accent its essential content. For example, the sudden and unexpected 'believing' of the people of Nineveh (*wayya'aminu*) in 3.5 calls to mind what in 1.1 seemed to be the extraneous name of Jonah's father ('*amittay*').⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Thus, "the unstable 'calling' of the son of Belief (*Amittai*) elicits belief in God" (Trible 1994:181).

In addition to underscoring key aspects of the theological message, deliberate phonic enhancement such as that which pervades Jonah and many other biblical texts serves to augment the overall auditory impact and appeal of the discourse. Phonicity may also be used to create an additional level of cohesion within the text, to focus on certain key concepts, or on occasion to suggest some underlying ironic implication. The attempt to duplicate such 'sound effects' in translation by means of phonic devices indigenous to the target language may be most readily appreciated by the speakers of a predominantly oral-aural society, similar to that of the original biblical setting. However, this literary effort calls for translators who are both keenly sensitive to the phonology of the biblical text and also skilful speakers as well as proficient writers of their mother tongue.

6.9 Dramatics

Our last category of artistic representation differs from the rest in that it may either incorporate or be included within any of the other literary features. Indeed, from a theological perspective the Bible as a whole might be regarded as a dramatic discourse – one addressed by God to all humanity, of every age and language.⁵⁵ The term 'dramatics' refers to a penchant for the diverse, true-to-life texts of Scripture to be encoded in the linguistic/literary form of direct speech, even in several layers of embedded quotation, such as we often have in the prophetic literature (e.g. Ezekiel 33.23-25). This is true of both prose and poetry in the Bible. In the Old Testament of course we have the examples of psalmody and prophecy – urgent religious messages uttered for many different purposes from people to God or from God to people. In the New Testament, we have the Gospels (John in particular), which are largely comprised of the various teachings and dialogues of Christ, and which like biblical narrative in general tend to prefer a presentative, or performative, mode of

⁵⁵ On the possible occurrence of the hybrid form of 'free indirect discourse' in the Old Testament, see Miller (1996:81-91). Miller also calls attention to the prominence of the presentative deictic *hinneh* in Hebrew narrative, which initiates an utterance that may approach the dramatic immediacy of direct speech. "It is an important device for signaling point of view (or focalization) and for introducing new characters into the narrative" (ibid:90). This important issue of the subtle but powerful rhetoricity of speech and thought (meta-)representation in Hebrew discourse has been thoroughly explored by Follingstad (2001).

telling its story. In other words, the account is formulated in a manner that is oriented towards a public, oral delivery – and a method of characterization that represents direct thought as well as direct speech (outstanding examples being the parables). Finally, we have the Epistles, which may be viewed as apostolic instruction and pastoral exhortation in a literary mode. These discourses, spoken as it were from a distance, are powerfully directed in a very personal manner to God's people, albeit conveyed in writing (similar in many respects to the speeches that we find also in the books of Acts and Revelation).

As an excellent example of the importance of dramatic effects in biblical discourse, one might call attention to the preponderance of direct speech in Jonah: the tense exchanges between Jonah and the sailors (ch. 1); Jonah's psalmic prayer (ch. 2); his harsh one-line 'sermon' in contrast to the king's expansive, penitential response (ch. 3); and the final acrimonious debate between a patient God and his petulant prophet (ch. 4). The first and last utterances of the book, which both correspond and strongly contrast with each other, belong to the voice of Yahweh (1.2; 4.10-11).

In view of the great challenge to render in *writing* a text that was initially composed, and/or subsequently edited, to be publicly uttered *aloud*, the oral-aural quality of the translated text should be carefully tested for both sonic as well as lexical naturalness.⁵⁶ How idiomatic, realistic, or

⁵⁶ The very term 'literature', from the Latin word for letter of an alphabet or a written document, implies the medium of *writing*, and the received Hebrew and Greek Scriptures do indeed exist in printed form. "Although much of the text originated in an oral setting, the process of written transmission is significant from a very early stage in the tradition" (Simon Crisp, personal correspondence). However, it is important also to discern the prominent *oral-aural* character of many segments of biblical literature, that is, its underlying *orality*, as has been recently emphasized by a number of biblical scholars, for example Niditch (1996:8-24) and Dorsey (1999:15-20) on the Old Testament and Davis (1999:29-62) and Harvey (1998:35-59) on the New Testament. The early Church Fathers also recognized the oral-aural character of many portions of the New Testament and analyzed the Pauline epistles, for example, in terms of Greco-Roman rhetorical patterns and principles (Harvey *ibid*:22). Although they were often too rigid in their application of classical categories and standards to biblical texts, these early theologians were actually the first to systematically apply a literary-critical methodology to the Scriptures (Longman 1999:100-101).

Oral features include: the use of ancient oratorical techniques, a prominent image-based and sensory component, rhetorical formulas and epithets, a preference for dramatic, contrastive, hyperbolic, and polemical discourse, graphic figurative language, repetition of all types, periodic text compaction (e.g. ellipsis), varied patterns of larger discourse arrangement (e.g. ring composition, chiasmus, inclusio, intercalation, parallel

even 'dramatic' does the text sound when pronounced or, better, proclaimed (e.g. recited, chanted, sung) before a live audience? What are the feelings, moods, and attitudes that are conveyed along with the verbal text itself and how does this all harmonize with the extratextual and interpersonal setting (sociocultural, religious, etc.) that has been recorded? Have the translators consciously and creatively tried to imagine themselves in an analogous sociocultural setting and then to speak out their

frames), and much phonic embellishment (including punning).

As Davis (1999:11) observes: "since the acts of both writing and reading [the Scriptures] were normally accompanied by vocalization, the structure of [any given] text was marked by aural rather than visual indicators." Such markers must therefore be taken into careful consideration during the analysis and interpretation of virtually every biblical text. Whether or not the text originated as orature, that is, was composed orally in the initial instance, the text was most likely formulated with oral articulation in mind as the primary vehicle of message transmission. It is not surprising then to frequently find (hear!) various linguistic elements that reflect the dimension of sound in biblical discourse. Its authors were simply observing one of the basic principles of effective communication: keep your intended audience in mind as you speak/write.

This principle is just as valid when translating the biblical text into another language. It has often been noted that many more people confront the Scriptures in aural rather than written form. This is true especially in societies where the level of literacy is relatively low and where a strong oral tradition of verbal art is still practiced. In such settings, as well as in churches with a long liturgical tradition or indeed in modern societies that are increasingly shaped by audiovisual media, the critical competence of most people with regard to oral performance (sometimes termed 'oracy') tends to be very high. Thus they are able to sing or recite long liturgies by heart or to perform the popular oral artistic genres in public; furthermore they tend to be perceptive critics with regard to skillful or substandard verbal performances. Here one also tends to find a much higher incidence of text memorization, whether as originally written, in a paraphrased version, or restructured in the form of a song or rhythmic chant. Many of the oral-aural features of biblical discourse translate relatively easily into these language contexts.

On the other hand, translators will frequently be obliged to make certain linguistic modifications in order to adapt to the print medium, for example, through the use of devices such as: more elaborate transitional, structural, and logical connections; greater syntactic regularity and lexical variety, including evaluative expressions (to compensate for the loss of intonational features); more explicitness in terms of personal, deictic, spatial, and temporal references; fewer colloquialisms and less informality of language; and an overall reduction in the amount of overt repetition as well as sound symbolism (cf. Nida and Taber 1969:126). In some cases then, a translation team might find it easier to first prepare an oral draft, record it, and later write it down for the purposes of subsequent revision. Moreover, in these predominantly oral-aural societies, the final text must always be tested and evaluated via the same communicative mode – namely, *aloud*.

text accordingly, comparing one's vocal impression with another's for both accuracy and naturalness? In terms of the conversational norms of their language, for example the register restrictions associated with *politeness* (versus assertiveness) and *power* (versus solidarity), how should Jonah address the ship's sailors (e.g. 1.9) as distinct from the inhabitants of Nineveh (3.4)? How would they speak to him before and after the revelation that he is a prophet of YHWH (e.g. 1.6,8,10-11)? And how would Jonah himself speak to God when he is respectful (2.2ff.) as opposed to being wrathful (4.2-3)?

Depending on the nature of their literary tradition and associated conventions, translators may need to take special care to observe the principal differences between spoken and written discourse in their renderings – and recordings, in the case of audio Scriptures. The goal is to preserve the natural and/or appropriate impression ('sound') of speech, especially when composing for a constituency that typically accesses or prefers oral discourse rather than printed communication. Direct speech normally incorporates many different colloquial linguistic forms that are not present in any sort of indirect, reported, or purely 'written speech', especially if the latter is modelled after discourse patterns heavily influenced by literature produced by non-mother-tongue speakers. Included here would be features such as attitudinal particles and exclamatives, demonstratives, idiophones, phonological figures, repetition, ellipsis, and variations from the standard (printed) word order.

On the other hand, translators must also be careful not to include features that would sound inappropriate in a religious or devotional setting, for example dialogue or monologue that would generally be regarded as being too colloquial, common, or connotatively sub-standard. Furthermore, usage patterns within a given oral or literary tradition may give rise to a preference for, if not a prescription of, a mode of speaking in formal discourse (including a Bible translation) that is not really 'natural' according to the norms and models of everyday speech in the language. For example, quoted discourse in poetry may need to be rendered in a different formal style or situational register than the speeches that are cited in a narrative account. In such cases it is naturalness *with respect to a particular genre of literature* that is the crucial factor, not that which is based on everyday conversational usage. Thus the drama of direct discourse may be revealed by the conformity of its representation to a particular literary standard, oral or written, rather than to some colloquial model. Indeed,

the 'standard' that is being applied or approximated may well be mixed. This would seem to be the case also in the biblical literature, for example:

[T]he form and the use of speeches in Acts and certain elements of their content(s) are similar to Hellenistic historiography. But one also finds that the speeches in Acts are like certain speeches in the Septuagint; and, in turn, they share characteristics with the Jewish religious literature of the Hellenistic period ... (Soards 1994:15-16)⁵⁷

A good translation team will be intuitively aware of different, perhaps conflicting, conversational and literary conventions in the target language. Still, a special study devoted to their actual application in written discourse can help translators to keep from being overly influenced by models of translation in other languages that do not reflect such standards.

Skilled public speakers and recognized literary stylists may be invited to critically comment on the relative conversational naturalness and/or literary appropriateness of a discourse that has been confined, as it were, to a page of print.⁵⁷ This dimension may be investigated and reacted to, either with regard to a given pericope as a whole, or preferably with regard to specific characteristics within it, such as the argument structure, degrees of formality, sentence length and complexity, word order, transitional expressions, larger discourse markers, and potentially difficult lexical collocations. Are there other ways in which to dramatize the text (without *overdoing it*) as a means of manifesting the biblical message – direct speech in particular – in a manner that is as aurally compelling as it is convincing in terms of content? These kinds of considerations are especially important in the preparation of audio editions of the Scriptures.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Soards' study demonstrates how the various speeches of Acts, taken together, serve as 'a crucial factor in the coherence' of the book as well as an important structural and thematic device through the dynamic of comparative 'analogy' that creates a discourse-spanning sequence that links one speech intratextually with another (ibid:12).

⁵⁸ The comments and non-verbal reactions of such stylists need to be taken into serious consideration when a draft is being tested. These recognized verbal experts may not be able to fully articulate their doubts, concerns, and criticisms of the text in precise literary or linguistic terms, but each of their negative responses needs to be fully investigated, whether it concerns the sound, syntax, sense, or style of the translation, for these features all function together in the generation of an overall aesthetic impression and evaluation of a text.

⁵⁹ Detailed, language and area-specific studies like those of Sundersingh (1999) are especially helpful in developing a *literary* profile of recommended principles and procedures with regard to such audio renditions of the Scriptures.

6.10 Conclusion

The set of nine stylistic features discussed above is not intended to represent a complete inventory or description of the stylistic devices and rhetorical techniques that embellish and empower biblical literature.⁶⁰ Different arrangements and equally valid categorizations of the material could easily be made to complement or even replace the preceding. Our purpose has been simply to give an overview of some of the main components of the biblical text's verbal artistry so that its importance in conveying the larger message of the Scriptures can be better recognized, analyzed, appreciated, and represented in translation – whether partially or in a complete literary version, whether on a formal or an informal level of linguistic register.⁶¹

The approach to translation highlighted in this chapter is one that we might label '*literary* functional equivalence' (*LiFE*). 'Literary' somewhat redundantly qualifies 'functional equivalence', especially with regard to Bible translation, but its inclusion here enables one to distinguish this significant shift in perspective from earlier descriptions of functional equivalence, in which the literary character of the biblical texts has not been fully considered and focus has been on lower levels of text. This latter method could be referred to as 'first degree' functional equivalence, in contrast to the former 'second degree' level of overall interlingual discourse representation.⁶²

⁶⁰ For a more detailed overview study of such features and their functional application in secular literary translation, see de Beaugrande 1968: ch.11; de Beaugrande and Dressler 1981: ch. 1; Nord 1997: ch.5; Toury 1995: Excursus B; de Waard offers a number of important translational insights with reference to the Hebrew Bible and further calls for "a handbook on Hebrew rhetoric for translators" (1996:251).

⁶¹ This is not to suggest that the text of a translation – no matter how 'dynamic' or 'literary' in nature – can possibly convey the entire *communicative* (form-content-functional) *significance* of the biblical text. A full *study Bible* is necessary as a minimum to call attention to the main structural and stylistic features of the original that defy adequate interlingual representation in a translation, let alone all the other contextual elements that framed its message in the initial event and are thus also needed for an adequate and acceptable interpretation today.

⁶² The term 'dynamic equivalence' should not be used as a synonym for 'functional equivalence', but only as a historical reference to Nida and Taber's work on translation. In comparison with the holistic perspective of functional equivalence, dynamic equivalence places undue emphasis upon the contemporary target-language setting of the communication event (not to mention limitations with regard to its dated linguistic and communicational perspectives).

'Equivalence' too is a problematic term, as noted in sections 1.2 and 4.3. However, its continued use in translation studies and its indication to Bible translators of the importance of accurately representing the source text encourage us to retain it. The expression 'literary functional equivalence' indicates that our present approach is a development (and corrective) of, rather than a radical break from, earlier statements on Bible translation developed primarily through the influence of Nida. We believe it has the greatest potential for faithfully representing the biblical texts, but the degree to which translators can work towards this communicative goal is often considerably limited by the sociocultural and organizational frames within which they work, and/or by lack of training and/or qualifications.

The main characteristics of a literary functional equivalence approach are:

- A *discourse-centred, genre-based perspective*, viewing the parts of a text in terms of the linguistic and literary whole, and vice-versa – the overall communicative effect, including cognitive relevance, of the whole being greater than the sum of its constituent parts;
- A *prominent pragmatic-functional component*, whereby the producer of a text arranges its form and content to convey specific communicative goals, at various linguistic levels, ranging from the speech- to the text-act, within overlapping and superimposed frames of conceptual reference;
- A concern for how the overall *situational frames of reference* (intra-, inter- and extratextual environment) of a given passage would have influenced early interpretations of the original document and how the contemporary contextual setting of the translated passage will influence the intended audience's interpretation;⁶³
- A focus upon the interrelated *artistic and rhetorical* dimensions

⁶³ A literary approach, with its emphasis on the artistic and rhetorical features of the source-language text, must therefore devote considerable attention to an analysis also of the contextual characteristics of the original setting, i.e. the historical, cultural, political, social, ecological, economic, literary, and religious environment in which a particular document was initially composed and communicated. These frames of reference greatly influenced how the various biblical texts were first composed, interpreted, evaluated, and subsequently applied or otherwise reacted to by a succession of target audiences. This ancient perspective, where apparent and supported by reliable scholarship, serves as a valuable resource, guide, and corrective to our interlingual, cross-cultural communication of these same texts today.

of discourse, which concern the relative appeal (aesthetic attraction) and impact (persuasive power) of the biblical message as it was plausibly conceived, composed, and conveyed in the original act of verbal creation;

- A special interest also in the *oral-aural* dimension of the biblical message, with reference to the process of initial text *transmission* (including its creation and reception) as well as its *transformation*, or recomposition, within the communicative framework of a different language, literary tradition, sociocultural (including religious) setting, media network, and interpersonal situation.

Probably no competent translator would deny the importance of any of the above points, but the degree to which they are consistently respected and applied in a translation depends on a wide variety of factors. Not the least of these are the resources allocated to a project, including the qualifications of the translators and the support for their ongoing training as well as for periodic testing of the text. Another key factor is the degree to which a new translation is expected to look like already existing ones, either in the same language, a related one, or a regional lingua franca; this often entails limiting functional equivalence to the paragraph level, and reproducing traditional format items such as a double column of justified print and numbers prominently marking every verse. As of now we know of no published version of the Bible that could be said to consistently represent a literary functional equivalence approach to translation. However, we hope that our presentation will encourage some serious thinking along these lines.

This is not to suggest, however, that a complete 'literary' version is the only valid option. We have also emphasized the point that there is a broad *continuum* of translation types or styles to choose from, ranging from the relatively literal to the more idiomatic and dynamic in composition. A literary functional equivalence approach may thus be applied in a fuller or a more limited way during a given translation program, beginning with the immediately perceptible phonological and lexical levels of structure (e.g. by means of rhythmic, balanced, euphonious target-language renderings). Even a little *LiFE* is better than none, no matter what type of translation is being prepared. There are also different sizes of text that may be chosen for this exercise, from an individual selection (e.g. the book of Psalms) or pericope (e.g. 1 Corinthians 13) to the Bible as a whole. As already noted, the portion to be translated and the appropriate methodological approach will depend on many local situational

factors, including the medium of transmission.

Before any translation project is undertaken, the overall communication context must be thoroughly researched and an appropriate *skopos* formulated with regard to guiding principles and practical procedures. This needs to be done in consultation with a broad spectrum of representatives of the target language community. The appeal, or argument, of this chapter has been that, where the circumstances allow and are supported by the intended user group, a greater measure of *literariness*, that is, *literary* functional equivalence in terms of artistry and rhetoric, should be considered as a possible goal for which capable and creative translators may aim, thus rendering the Scripture stylistically as literature in the target language.

7. Conclusion

TIMOTHY WILT

When Nida and Taber published their popular book on Bible translation three decades ago, Bible translation consultants were almost exclusively white, male European and American Protestants. In the translation of non-European languages, the chief translators were often non-mother-tongue speakers attempting to learn as adults the culture of the potential audience. Church leadership in many parts of the world was dominated by foreign missionaries and the level of formal education of national pastors and opportunities for training were relatively low. Disciplines such as sociolinguistics, text analysis and pragmatics were in rudimentary stages of development: context-free analysis at the clause level and lower was the main focus of linguists. Biblicists were giving relatively little attention to the literary unity of the canonized texts and the voices of interpreters from countries that were not technologically and economically dominant were hardly heard. The computer was unknown by most and unavailable to practically all.

As the studies in this book have indicated, communicational, academic, sociopolitical, ecclesiastical and technological developments since that era have affected perspectives and practices concerning Bible translation.

- With regard to communication theory:
 - The wide variety of communication situations in which translation takes place encourages looking to a variety of approaches, experiences and theoretical perspectives to understand the translation process;
 - Attention to the informative function of language is supplemented by greater attention to other functions, especially textual, interpersonal, ritual, and aesthetic functions;
 - Cultural and theological biases and power relationships involved in translation theory and practice are more clearly recognized;
 - Organizational aspects of a translation project are viewed as a crucial part of the translation process and an essential subject for training;
 - There is a greater awareness of the complexity of intercultural dynamics in translation.