A Media Ecology of the King James Version

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Abstract: The media ecology approach to communication study proposes the analysis of the environments of communication—technological, historical, linguistic, psychological, and so on—in an attempt to better understand how sometimes hidden aspects of communication work together to affect the understanding, impact, and use of communication and communication products. As with any environment, the interaction of the elements offers new opportunities; an unstable or changing environment provides a particularly fruitful laboratory to understand communication. This essay applies the media ecology methodology to the translations project of the King James Version of the English Bible, first published in 1611, during a tumultuous period of change in communication media and social relations. It examines eleven of the contexts of that translation project—Gutenberg's invention, the book trade, the scholarly world, the practices of translation, libraries, politics, language, rhetoric, the media, theology, and reception. Each of these involves some aspect of communication and the social practices that developed along with it. In addition to its relevance to communication study, the method also offers a set of tools for translation studies, which inhabit a world similar to that of communication.

As far as material objects go, a personal or family Bible differs from most.

> Even though it is an important spiritual text, it is also an object of mass production with a vast circulation. At odds with the status of a sacred text, a Bible originates from nowhere special, essentially having the same qualities as any other mass-produced textbook or magazine. (Woodward 2007, 11)

Of course, the content, not the properties of the object matter, but as an object, the Bible was not always the mass-produced object familiar to contemporary culture. It existed and exists in oral memory; written upon skins (vellum) or papyrus rolls; bound in carefully illuminated and preserved manuscripts; and among the first products of the printing press. And it existed and exists in ancient Hebrew and Greek. Apart from its material condition, the Bible provides both a record of theology (that is, faith reflecting on its meaning) and a source for further theology. As a combination of spiritual and material, the Bible offers a glimpse into media ecology, particularly at the moment that transformed the Bible into a mass-produced object: the translation into a vernacular destined for publication as an "authorized" version for a national church.

Media ecology refers to an approach to communication study that "looks into the matter of how media of communication affect human perception, understanding, feeling, and value." It examines "environments: their structure, content, and impact on people." Building on the biological metaphor of the ecosystem, media ecology regards communication media themselves as parts of a larger system, which they in turn affect. Such an ecosystem specifies what people and their communication do and can do. "In the case of media environments (e.g., books, radio, film, television, etc.), the specifications are more often implicit and informal, half concealed by our assumption that what we are dealing with is not an environment but merely a machine" (Postman 2009). Media ecology aims to illuminate the environments and to help people understand how the ecology works and how communication structures human lives.

As a communication phenomenon, the Bible in this sense holds interest for study and opens communication study to alternative means of examining the object. Rather than addressing environments *per se*, communication theory or communication study historically begins with messages and audiences. Rhetoric, as Aristotle proposes, deals with finding the available means of persuasion (Aristotle, 1.2). He lists three main headings: ethos, pathos, and logos—characteristics of the speaker, of the audience, and of the message. The three find their way into more contemporary communication study, with ethos and logos often collapsed into studies of persuasion or media technology, and pathos firmly fixed as audience studies, especially studies of message reception or the measurement of the effects of messages upon audiences.

Each of the three (ethos, pathos, logos) does offer a way to understand the ecology of communication intertwined with Christian theology—the translation and dissemination of its texts. Almost from its beginnings, Christianity depended on translation: the Aramaic stories of Jesus quickly spread in the Greek-speaking Jewish Diaspora (who themselves used the Septuagint Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures). Then, as Christianity spread both farther west and farther east, its adherents and missionaries rendered the sacred texts from Greek into Latin, Coptic, Syriac, or other languages with, as Jaroslav Pelikan (1974, 41) points out, doctrinal significance found in word choices and linguistic differences. These texts, and the debates flowing from them, offer yet another opportunity to think about how communication and theology interact. And while they do suggest places to examine persuasion and audience effects, they also even more strongly suggest the fruitfulness of a media ecology approach that expands the scope of communication studies.

Translation and any particular translation—like any other aspect of communication—does not exist in a vacuum, lying open to examination separate from a wider context. As the media ecology metaphor suggests, each communication act or artifact exists in an ongoing and living set of relationships both with other communication acts, tools, or products and with things that coexist with them in the human environment. As the biological metaphor of media ecology makes clear, all of these interact: change one and all the others adjust. The introduction of a new means of communication will affect everything else.

The sixteenth- and seventeenth-century context of the King James Bible offers precisely this situation of a changing environment, where communication technologies and social practices interact to create a new balance. Here a revised English translation of the Bible emerged in the midst of major shifts in communication practices, which in turn fed the ferment of religious debate. And the theological world took advantage of the affordances provided by the new communication infrastructure. The most immediate of these communication tools is, of course, the printing press. But the "printing press" entails a much larger world of social practices. People had to find ways to use the printing press before it could have an effect on everyday life, religious practice, and theological understanding. Those uses fit into a number of contexts.

A media ecology of the King James Bible involves at least eleven contexts: those of Gutenberg's invention, of the book trade, of the scholarly world, of the practices of translation, of libraries, of politics, of language, of rhetoric, of the media, of theology, and of reception. Each of these involves some aspect of communication and the social practices that developed along with it. Culture scholar Roger Silverstone's remark about the analysis of television as a communication technology applies here as well as to television, "It involves a consideration of technology as being a part of, and not separated from, the social institutions that produce and consume it" (Silverstone 1994, 80). The King James Bible, coming as it does in 1611, in the relative early maturity of the printing press, offers a privileged look at the social institutions surrounding this mass medium of the pre-Enlightenment era.

The Gutenberg Context

Johannes Gutenberg introduced printing from moveable type in the West in the middle of the fifteenth century; in 1455 he printed the 42-line Latin Bible. Though popularly identified with that edition of the Bible, the Gutenberg press issued many other texts. In so doing, the invention dramatically transformed learning and life in Europe, if in no other manner than by making books widely available. Before Gutenberg, copyists produced books in multiple copies but even the best scriptoria could only produce a limited number of books each year (Bobrick 2001, 82). Increasing the speed of making copies meant not only that more copies of a given book circulated, but also that a greater variety of books circulated. The time saved in copying meant that those producing books could print more things, that is, a greater selection of things (Eisenstein 1979, 169). And at this time, there was no shortage of things to print. Historian Benson Bobrick notes that Gutenberg's invention "was launched on a rising tide" of demand for material. In the century before him, the wealthy, who could afford manuscripts and the education to read them, drove the market. "Books of all sorts—cookbooks, medical manuals, educational treatises, tales of courtly love, and so on—appeared, variously illustrated and in a number of different calligraphic styles" (Bobrick 2001, 82). After the printing press, mass market forces take over as demand shifts from the wealthy to a wider group of readers.

The making of multiple copies from a single master set in type also meant that workers could more easily find errors and correct them—an important aspect of quality control and one that helped establish the reputation of printers. On the other hand, making multiple copies from a single master also meant that when errors occurred they became widely circulated, as several well known instances attest, even in the first editions of the King James Bible (the "he" and the "she" Bibles, after an error in gender in the book of Ruth; or the "wicked Bible" after an edition that omitted "not" in the commandment regarding adultery).

The timing of the invention of the Gutenberg press also meant that it became a tool for the Renaissance and served the Humanist rediscovery of Greek and other language texts from the East. Among other things, the early printers issued the texts of Greek philosophy, drama, and poetry; commentaries on language and learning; dictionaries; and, of course, the Hebrew and Greek texts of the Bible, along with translations into vernacular languages. The Gutenberg context meant that the King James version translators had not only the original language editions before them but also several English-language translations to consult.

The Book Trade Context

Printers built on an existing network of a book trade, a trade that existed at least since the stationers in thirteenth-century Paris who sold and traded manuscript copies. The sixteenth-century printers increased that trade dramatically, with more editions and copies for the market. Clearly, printers published texts in order to sell them, something they did both locally and through traveling sellers. Italy alone produced 10,000 printed works in the fifteenth century; the printers of Venice some 27,000 editions in the sixteenth century (Nuovo 2010). These ranged from devotional works to educational texts to poetry and popular stories, anything to satisfy the tastes of the buyers. During the course of the sixteenth century, the proportion of books printed in Latin to those printed in the vernacular shifted, with a decided preference for vernacular material (Nuovo 2010). Similar things occurred in other cities and regions, with centers of printing well known in Venice, Paris, Mainz, Strasbourg, Nuremberg, Zurich, Augsburg, Cologne, London, Oxford, Cambridge, Basel, and Geneva (Hoffmann 1999). Even today scholars still recognize the names of the leading sixteenth-century printers Aldus Manutius, Johann Froben, William Caxton, and Robert Estienne.

The Renaissance printers combined business and scholarship, though in different degrees. Some focused more on quickly issuing editions to capture the market; only later did printers recognize that their sales depended on the quality of their books. Printing also grew with governments' fostering the print trade, through various licensing schemes; traders organized book fairs to promote the exchange of books and create a kind of European market. The book fairs also benefitted from the Reformation, with works by key reformers like Martin Luther selling widely—according to Dickens, quoted in Eisenstein (1979, 303), "between 1517 and 1520, Luther's thirty publications probably sold well over 300,000 copies." The competing religious groups quickly took to printing to spread their respective ideas, something that increased the book trade itself (Eisenstein 1979, 407). Of course, the printers' output ranged far beyond the religious or the Scriptural or even the classical languages. The mix of texts led to a vibrant business, with printers setting up in every major city and selling books even in remote areas through the services of book peddlers (Eisenstein 1979, 376).

Depending on the country, the printing and book trade business also depended on government patronage, permission, or licensing. In England, the crown could seize illegal copies and destroy the presses that produced them. During the century prior to the King James or Authorized Version, English translations of the Bible took place mostly outside of England and depended on smugglers to reach their intended audience. The sixteenth-century book trade became a huge business, spurred on by profits, of course, but also by religious conviction when it came to the Bible, and by imaginative ways to deliver finished or partly finished texts to the market. The history of the translations includes the accounts of numerous smugglers, secret agents, spies, and scholars.

Later, with a change of monarch and an authorized version, printers and the printing business had a strong commercial motivation to promote that version. Literary scholar David Norton comments:

> In spite of the later perception of the KJB's superiority, this publishing triumph owed nothing to its merits (or [the] Geneva [Bible]'s demerits) as a scholarly or literary rendering of the originals: economics and politics were the key factors. It was in the very substantial commercial interest of the King's Printer,

who had a monopoly on the text, and the Cambridge University Press, which also claimed the right to print the text, that the KJB should succeed. (David Norton 2000, 90)

Like the text, the relatively new communication medium of printing succeeded less on its own merits than on those of the industry it joined.

In the end, this context and the competition among printers and traders led to an environment that increased the availability of books, improved the quality of those printed, promoted sales, and lined up alliances with state and trade. This provides a good example of Silverstone's idea that communication technology, like any successful technology, must become part of social institutions for it to succeed. For the printing press and the printing of vernacular Bible translations, the social institutions included business, both legal and illegal.

The Scholarly Context

Having readily accessible texts in sufficient numbers led to an explosion of study and of language skills. Some of the printers mentioned already produced dictionaries and lexicons. Henri Estienne II "carried on the pioneering lexicographical work that his father had begun in the *Thesaurus linguae latinae* of 1531 and the Latin–French and French–Latin dictionaries of 1538 and 1539–40, with his own monumental *Thesaurus linguae graecae* in 1572–73" (Hoffmann 1999, 390). These dictionaries provided one foundation for general and translation education. Another foundation appeared in the educational system itself. No longer did students have to travel to find a text; in fact, the sixteenth-century printers increased the availability of school texts. Hoffmann recounts the innovation of the Parisian printer Thomas Brumen, "three-quarters of whose production consisted of interfoliated and double-spaced quarto editions in which the student copied the translation between lines and their teacher's literary and grammatical commentaries in the margins and extra leaves" (Hoffmann 1999, 386).

The printers aided scholarship in two other ways, one of which would have great significance. The lesser contribution came first from Aldus Manutius, who introduced Greek fonts; a Venetian type-cutter, Francesco Griffo, "surmounted the technical problems associated with designing Greek fonts which included all the necessary diacritics" (Hoffmann 1999, 387). Even more valuable was the practice of producing corrected critical editions of the Greek and Latin texts. Erasmus led the way. "The publication of an emended Greek text of the New Testament with a parallel Latin translation in 1516 established Erasmus as the premier evangelical humanist" (Boyle 1999, 44). Not only did he provide a text, but he corrected it in subsequent editions. Despite his criticism of the sloppiness of early printers, Hoffman explains a key point:

> Printing in fact boasted an undeniable advantage over manuscripts: if one proofread early enough, one could reset type, whereas a scribe enjoyed fewer options with regard to a pen stroke already indelibly committed the page. In other words, although the initial typesetting could easily prove inferior to scribal work, movable type afforded the opportunity to achieve a level of correction unattainable even in the best scriptorium. (Hoffman 1999, 388)

Such scholarly collaboration between Humanists like Erasmus and his successors and the best printers (particularly Manutius, Froben, and Estienne) led to the establishment of accurate texts. Hoffman gives the example of Estienne, whose careful work led to the situation

> that his editions remained standard references centuries afterwards. He introduced innovations such as verse numbering still in practice today, and for his 1550 edition of the Greek New Testament, he collated no fewer than fifteen manuscripts—demonstrating just how far the quality of printed editions had come in the hundred years since Gutenberg's 42-line Bible. (Hoffman 1999, 390)

But as in any social practice, the collaboration between scholars and printers amplified the importance of the communication technology and spilled over into other areas as well. The availability of the materials to study language and texts went hand in hand with the expectation—indeed the demand, at least by Erasmus—that theologians know the Scriptures. Marjorie O'Rourke Boyle explains:

> Although grammatical knowledge did not make a theologian, neither did its ignorance. Erasmus corrected the scholastic neglect and abuse of grammar by requiring a classical trilingual education and by commending its utility. The

comprehension of the mysteries of Scripture often depended on knowing the nature of the thing designated. Knowledge was double: of things and of words. (Boyle 1999, 46)

The renaissance of texts and of classical languages also influenced the great educational institutions, which promoted the study of these new materials. Such educational reform in the sixteenth century prepared the way for a later generation of Bible translators, giving them the social practices of education, textual emendation, and ongoing correction that has come to define learning. By the time King James called for work on the Bible translation to commence, he could draw translators from Oxford and Cambridge and entrust the work to these universities.

The Translation Context

The scholarly context of "Biblical humanism, which received a new impetus after typefonts could be cast" (Eisenstein 1979, 331) and of critical editions, opened the way for translations. Key elements came together: the increased study of classical languages, the availability of corrected texts, interlinear editions, a willingness to revise existing translations (as seen, for example, in Erasmus's work on the Vulgate), and a market for comparing translations. By the early sixteenth century, scholars had two critical editions in the works of Erasmus and of Cardinal Ximenes. In addition, they had wider access to a number of vernacular language translations. In the period of the Reformation many groups published translations of the Bible, since they encouraged Bible reading among the people, most of whom did not read Latin.

In the English-speaking world, translations or partial translations had existed for centuries, with texts first prepared in Old English. By the fourteenth century the English-speaking world had the translation of Wycliffe in manuscript form, and in the sixteenth century William Tyndale began work on a complete English translation (English New Testament printed 1526). Others soon followed: the Coverdale Bible (1535), the Matthew Bible (1537), the Great Bible (1539), the Geneva Bible (1560), the Bishops' Bible (1568), the Rheims New Testament (1582), and the Douai full Bible (1610). In addition, revisions and new editions appeared regularly, with or without crown approval (Metzger 2001, 56–67).

The translators and revisers working on the King James Version drew on all these translations and more. Bobrick points out some of the translation resources:

> They pored over all previous English versions; consulted the Complutensian Polyglot of 1517; the Antwerp Polyglot of 1572 (which included a fresh interlinear Latin translation of the Hebrew by Arias Montanus); the Tremellius-Junius Bible of 1579 (which contained a Latin translation of the Old Testament from the Hebrew and the New Testament from Syriac); Sebastian Munster's Latin translation of the Old Testament; Theodore Beza's Latin translation of the New; Latin translations of the whole Bible by Sanctus Pagninus, Leo Juda, and Castalio; the Zurich Bible; Luther's Bible; the French translations of Lefevre (1534) and Olivetan (1535); the Spanish translations of Cassiodoro de Reyna and Cypriano de Valera (1602); and Giovanni Diodati's Italian Bible (1607). (Bobrick 2001, 238)

The translators themselves clearly understood that they acted in a long tradition of Bible translation. In the preface, "The Translators to the Reader," of the 1611 edition, one section, "The Translating of the Scripture into the Vulgar Tongues," provides a brief history of translation from Jerome to at least the fourteenth century.

The media context for the King James Version translators consists, then, of a variety of printed books in the original biblical languages, Latin, and the key languages of Europe and of an interpersonal network of scholars and translators. Indirectly, the communication ecology also includes the expectation that people should have the Bible in translation and that some, at least, should develop the language skills for translation.

Libraries

Libraries provide another element in the media ecology of the King James Version. While libraries had long existed in monasteries and cathedral schools, they had limited and noncirculating collections. Printing and the book trade led not only to an increase of books but to an increase of private libraries. Printers, scholars, and noble families kept collections of books, thus making reference easier. James I, who authorized the translation,

> was a true bibliophile. He built up a considerable private library in the classics; owned a host of theological works (including those by Calvin, which he read

in Latin); was especially well read in the French poets, such as Ronsard, Du Bellay, and Marot; and of course had many writings in English and Scots. (Bobrick 2001, 206)

Such collections add another dimension to the communication background of the King James Version: the habit of having books in many languages available increases the likelihood or the expectation of people's knowing those languages and being prepared to translate them. Private libraries also made it more likely that the translators themselves had access to a fairly broad spectrum of sources, in a number of languages.

The Political Context

The existing English translations raised a number of theological and political issues, another circumstance that constitutes the larger environment of the King James Version. These extend beyond the specific communication contexts, but they do affect the communication. Some of the areas of contact illustrate how media ecology works.

The religious and political elite recognized that the Bible formed a teaching tool and that it communicated particular expectations to the people. King James himself objected to glosses in the Geneva Bible that implied a limitation on the power of the monarch. He also recognized the problem of keeping both the established church group and the Puritan group aligned with the monarchy and the church. At the Hampton Court conference in 1604, most of the decisions supported the Anglican group. Some commentators suggest that one reason James commanded a revised translation was to offer something to the Puritan group. When John Rainolds (or Reynolds), the Puritan head of Corpus Christi College, asked for a new translation, the King quickly agreed. This "group process" model suggests that a political communication influenced the King's actions.

Another political factor also played a role: the fact that the King "authorized" the revision meant that the translators could both work freely and draw on royal support. This has at least two consequences for the work. On the one hand, in contrast to the sixteenth century, the translators did not need to work outside of England, in places free from persecution or other external constraints

(Ellingworth 2007, 108). On the other hand, the royal authorization of the work implied a possible interference or at least a subtle influence on the work. James already had reservations about the Geneva Bible—when Rainolds requested a new translation, the King replied that he "could never yet see a Bible well translated in English; but I think that, of all, that of Geneva is the worst" (Bruce 1978, 96). The translation/revision teams working under royal command would have understood the political limits to their charge. The guidelines for their work included instructions about lexical items and about the use of marginal notes, including

> 3. The old ecclesiastical words to be kept; as the word church, not to be translated congregation, &c. . .
>
> 6. No marginal notes at all to be affixed, but only for the explanation of the Hebrew or Greek words, which cannot, without some circumlocution, so briefly and fitly be expressed in the text. (Campbell 2010, 36–37)

In addition to royal politics, ecclesiastical politics played a role. The Anglican and Puritan groups differed theologically and each used a Bible to support their positions. The more radical reformers, those influenced by Calvin and Knox, rejected church hierarchy and translated key terms differently: "elder" rather than "priest" for the Greek *presbyteros*; "overseer/manager" rather than "bishop" for *episcopos*; "assembly" rather than "church" for *ekklēsia*; and so on (Ellingworth 2007, 109). The choice both supported an ecclesiology and presumed one. "The decision to retain 'bishop' (instead of 'elder' or 'senior') reflects a decision to favor episcopacy rather than presbyterianism as a model of church government; as disagreement about the form of government was a gaping fault line between the church hierarchy and the Puritan minority, this decision was critically important" (Campbell 2010, 82). The Roman Catholics, in their Douai-Rheims translation, often chose Latinate terms, opting to maintain a continuity with accepted theological usages (Norton 2000, 45–47). Each transmitted its position in the word choices of their translations. Here, ecclesiastical politics guided linguistic choices in the King James Version.

A final aspect of the political context emerges only after the translators completed their work. Done at royal command and funded by the crown, the translators produced an "authorized version," commanded to the churches and commended to the people. But it took time for the Authorized Version to gain favor. "It is one thing to be the Bible of the official Church, another to be the Bible of the people. In 1611 the people had their Bible, the Geneva, and the KJB was simply the Church's third attempt to produce its own Bible" (Norton 2000, 90). Within forty years the situation changed. "The last regular edition of the Geneva Bible was published in 1644. Thereafter, to buy a Bible meant to buy a King James Bible" (Norton 2000, 90). Norton acknowledges that the eventual triumph of the King James Version arose not from any sense of its superiority, but from "economics and politics." The "authorized" certification made it attractive and profitable to printers.

Linguistic Context

The translators' wrestling with word choices in their work—something of concern for English Bible translators from Tyndale in the 1520s to Gregory Martin working on the Catholic Rheims New Testament published in 1582 (Norton 2000, 41–45)—serves an a reminder that the English language itself was still developing and evolving as a language in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Unlike many languages, English has freely adopted (and adapted) words from other languages (Crystal 2010), leading to its huge vocabulary today. Largely German and Celtic, English received an influx of French words at the Norman conquest in 1066, with the upper classes bringing their French across the English Channel. The tradition of Latin in academic, learned, legal, and administrative circles added yet another set of often specialized vocabulary. Trade across the English Channel brought renewed contact with German and Dutch peoples and words. Regional dialects added more variation. William Caxton, the first English printer, "was keenly aware of the impact of his work on English diction, then in considerable flux, and in his own translations tried not to overemphasize unusual words (or 'curious terms,' as he called them) while not wanting his language to seem too plain" (Bobrick 2001, 83).

The Bible translators could choose from a variety of words and themselves introduced both words and phrasing. The English penchant for importing words and the resemblance of Anglo-Saxon's stress rhythms to Hebrew patterns in some ways made the translators' work easier. Bobrick comments on both as he discusses the work of Tyndale. First, the Anglo-Saxon patterns enabled

> Tyndale to draw on traditions of native expression to give the Hebrew an English feel. His fidelity to the original also gave rise to the quintessential "noun + of + noun" construction of English biblical prose. Instead of "Moses' book" we have "the book of Moses"; instead of "a strong man," "a man of strength." This extended to the way superlatives were expressed: instead of "the holiest place" or "the best song," Hebrew had "the holy of holies" and "the song of songs." This imparted to English a certain rhythmic sonority it had not formerly possessed. (Bobrick 2001, 119)

He continues, addressing the easy ability to bring new words into English:

> Tyndale also boldly adopted a number of Hebrew words and compounds, such as "scapegoat," "passover," and "mercy seat," which English has kept, as well as various Hebraic turns of phrase among them, "to die the death," "the Lord's anointed," "the gate of heaven," "a man after his own heart," "the living God," "sick unto death," "flowing with milk and honey," "to fall by the sword," "as the Lord liveth," "a stranger in a strange land," "to bring the head down to the grave," and "apple of his eye." It is said that he also introduced into English the adjective "beautiful." (Bobrick 2001, 119)

Later translators, both the King James Version team and the Douai-Rheims team, did the same, though not all their choices successfully entered the language. Many of Martin's terms in the Rheims New Testament (especially the Latinate ones) come into English through the King James Version, which took them over. However, other terms like "exinanited" were not accepted into English (Norton 2000, 46).

The freedom and the necessity with which the translators imported words comes as a heritage of Elizabethan England. Ebel notes that an earlier generation *had* to import a vocabulary.

> But it is useful to recall here that at the outset of English printing, and well into the early years of Elizabeth's reign, translators were apologetic and uneasy about their "inadequate" language; that their embarrassment was justified by the real poverty of the English vocabulary; and that in the course of the century, as vocabulary and idiom seeped into English from the continental vernaculars (partly by means of translations), English actually experienced a resplendent triumph. (Ebel 1969, 596)

Motivated by a desire to make learning available in English and not restricted to universities and Latin speakers (Ebel 1969, 598), Elizabethan translators extended Tyndale's and the Reformers' desire to make the Bible available in common English to a desire to make everything available in English. But it required a linguistic flexibility. "Florio prefaces his translation of Montaigne with a list of neologisms which includes 'conscientious, endeare, tarnish, comporte, efface, facilitate, ammusing, debauching, regret, effort, emotion'" (Ebel 1969, 596 note 17). That practice of listing new words in prefaces appears in tables at the end of Tyndale's work as well as at the end of Martin's Rheims New Testament (Norton 2000, 45).

Rhetorical Context

The religious, political, and linguistics contexts of language choice highlight yet another part of the media ecology of the King James Version: the rhetorical context. "Rhetoric" here refers to the sixteenth-century usage, indicating the decoration of language, belles lettres, the arrangement of words, the use of imagery, and other stylistic things, rather than to the classical Greek and Latin understanding of rhetoric as the finding of available arguments or the use of probable proofs.

Every language has its canons of style. For a translator, a key question emerges as to how to render such aspects of language as well as the verbal meaning of a given text. This challenge for Bible translators dates back at least to Jerome's work on the Vulgate: how much of the style of the Hebrew or Greek should become a part of the translation (into Latin, in Jerome's case), particularly when "style" itself differs from one language to another? That is, a given turn of phrase or word arrangement (or alliteration, assonance, etc.) may prove elegant and meaningful in one language but not in the other. A given word arrangement, alliteration, or assonance may prove impossible to recreate in another language. Bible translators face a choice between translating words in the word order of Greek or Hebrew or translating the high (or low) style into Latin or English, even though that means that they have to abandon the "literal" approach. Jerome, who translated both classical Greek texts as well as the Bible, followed different principles at different times. "In his letter to Pammachius, he says that while translating literary works he followed the classical idea of a 'free translation,' with one exception, the Bible. He saw 'mystery even in the word order of the Bible'" (Jinbachian 2007, 33). At the same time, Jerome was not slavish, recognizing with Cicero, Horace, and Boethius that a word-for-word correspondence could betray the original text (Jinbachian 2007, 32). As justification for this, he cites the Scriptures themselves:

> The Apostles and the Evangelists in quoting from the Old Testament sources have tried to communicate the meaning rather than the literal words, and that they have not cared greatly to preserve exact phrases and sentence constructions, so long as they could clearly present the substance of their subject to men's understanding [...] In dealing with the Bible one must consider the substance and not the literal words. (Jinbachian 2007, 33)

The situation takes on greater complexity with the variety of material in the Bible. "The contrasting forms of the Bible made it necessary to render it 'word-for-word' (*verbum e verbo*) where it was a legal document, and to translate 'sense-for-sense' (*sensus de sensu*) where it was a literary work" (Jinbachian 2007, 34; see also Burke, 2007, 88–89). This marked a change from the Old Latin (that is, pre-Jerome) translations, which "is largely 'word-for-word,' probably because that was understood to have been the Septuagint approach, and because it was, after all, the word of God being translated" (Burke 2007, 84).

Later generations of translators would further distinguish, for example, between formal correspondence translation and dynamic equivalence translation, resembling in some ways these two approaches, though drawing on contemporary social science (anthropology, ethnology), as Pym points out in regards to the work of Eugene Nida (Pym 2007, 202). While informative, Pym's substantive criticism of these approaches as following a "representational epistemology"—that there exists a meaningful source text with an existence independent of language such that its meaning can be separated and reinserted into another language—raises more questions than it settles about the role of rhetoric. It does, however, support the wider media ecology approach, which indicates that all factors play a role. While not taking sides, media ecology does affirm that the translation choice itself is meaningful. The communication event or experience consists of all aspects of the ecology.

The rhetorical choices taken by the various translators leave their marks. Tyndale's identification of Hebrew poetic structure with that of Middle English led him to translate the Psalms, for example, with a more literal dependency on the Hebrew texts (Bobrick 2001, 119). The use of the Psalms in the daily prayer of the church in turn established a preference for this style of poetic translation, which itself influences the later development of English stylistics. The King James Version similarly cultivates a growing preference for Elizabethan expression and vocabulary among subsequent generations of English speakers, long after Elizabethan and Jacobean English had passed from popular usage.

The Media

The King James Version, like the earlier English versions since Tyndale's, appears as a printed book rather than as a manuscript or other form of communication. That matters for media ecology. The book form itself also involves any number of communicative choices: the page size, the type face(s), decorative capitals, the use of images, the quality of the paper, the quality of the editing, the use of white space (that is, the arrangement of type on the page, with or without marginal notes), the binding, and so on. Each of these contributed to the look and to the cost of the book. And each of these things communicates something about the book itself. For example, the Great Bible, intended as a pulpit Bible, had a size too large for personal use. The King James Version appeared first as a pulpit Bible "of great volume" or size and only later in smaller sizes for individual use. Bobrick describes the first editions:

> The text itself, printed Gothic type and folio format (16 inches by 10½ inches), was laid out in double columns enclosed within rules. Ornamental capitals adorned the beginnings of chapters, but the chapter summaries, headings, and marginal notes were set in roman type. Also in roman were those words not in the original but inserted to make the meaning clear. (Bobrick 2001, 253)

This latter usage led to the unintended consequence in later editions of people misinterpreting the change of typeface to signal importance rather than addition.

During the early years of its publication, though, the King James Version appeared as one among several other Bible translations, with the most popular alternative the Geneva Bible favored by the Puritans. Anglican Bishops commended the King James Version to the people, using phrases referring to the book's appearance. Norton comments on an interesting consequence of this. "It may have gone without saying that Bibles 'of the largest volume' and Bibles without notes meant the KJB, but such phrases do suggest that people found it difficult to distinguish the KJB from the Geneva Bible as a version, but relatively easy to distinguish it as an artefact" (Norton 2000, 92). The physical appearance of the text acted as a carrier of meaning or identity. The printer and the translators may have deliberately used the physical appearance to signal other things as well. "In keeping with the idea that the new version was but a revision of the old, there were emblems of continuity; for example, some of the general ornamentation of the title page had been borrowed from the Geneva Bible, while the Bishops' Bible supplied a figure or two as well" (Bobrick 2001, 253).

The Theological Context

The King James Version was produced during a period of intense theological dispute, starting with the Reformation debates about Catholic practices in the early sixteenth century and continuing throughout Europe and England. Those debates became increasingly public with controversialists on every side publishing tracts and books, which became best sellers for both private and public reading. "Under the aegis of patrons like the Earl of Leicester, corps of translators labored to convert useful and edifying works of every kind into the mother tongue. The missionary zeal of lay evangelists, who objected to withholding Gospel truths from any man, was completely compatible with the new movement" (Eisenstein 1979, 360). Not only did the Reformers want the Scriptures translated, they wanted to highlight passages that supported their positions. Thus, as noted already, they and their Catholic opponents debated over how to translate words—for example, was *ecclesia* better rendered "church" or "assembly"? But they also fought a war over marginal notes, with the Geneva Bible, among others, taking a strident tone against the papacy. The same theological urgency marked out the parties in England, the Puritans arguing for a position more compatible with that of Continental reformers and the Anglicans remaining closer to Roman positions. The theological competition most likely improved the overall translation enterprise as more and more individuals undertook translation. Whatever the particulars, this heated theological atmosphere spurred translators on. King James, as we have seen, approved the translation/revision project for theological as well as political reasons.

The translations became part of a virtuous theological circle, since those trained in theology undertook more education in Scripture. Moreover, since even the untrained could read the Bible, more people engaged in the reflection on faith that defines theology itself.

The Reception of the King James Version

Communication study often concerns itself with audiences and with audience reaction to and interpretation of messages—Aristotle's *pathos*. Lacking survey research for the seventeenth-century publication of the King James Version, we must turn to proxy measures in the publication history and contemporary discussion. Even here, the evidence remains slim. From the perspective of four hundred years, we see the success of the King James Version. However, this did not happen immediately. Norton comments:

> It is one thing to be the Bible of the official Church, another to be the Bible of the people. In 1611 the people had their Bible, the Geneva, and the KJB was simply the Church's third attempt to produce its own Bible. To become the Bible of the people it had to dominate the field of Bible production and to be the form of words habitually used when a text is quoted, for that is the hallmark of acceptance and the key to specific literary appreciation. (Norton 2000, 90)

The eventual successful reception of the Authorized Version depended on its authorization. The King's printer's exclusive contract (along with that of Cambridge University) made it very much in the commercial interests of these presses for the Authorized Version to succeed. In effect, they stopped printing the Geneva Bible "for 'private lucre, not by virtue of any public restraint, [and so] they were usually imported from beyond the seas'" (Norton 2000, 91), usually through Amsterdam. "The ultimate success of the new Bible would owe much to the enthusiasm of James. Published by royal authority, it 'swept forward with a majestic stream of editions'—in folio, quarto, and octavo—which eventually left all its rivals behind" (Bobrick 2001, 253). But it took time. And it had time, with editions regularly coming off the presses.

Popular opinion about the King James Version is difficult to determine. Norton offers an interesting observation: "If there was instant acclaim for the KJB, all evidence of it has been lost, whereas evidence of dissatisfaction has survived" (Norton 2000, 90). The latter evidence consists of critiques by contemporaries like Hugh Broughton and Ambrose Ussher. Broughton, a scholar omitted from the translation teams—some say because of his difficult personality—published a *Censure of the late translation for our churches*. In it, he writes "I had rather be rent in pieces with wild horses" than to recommend the King James Bible. He goes on to criticize everything from word choices to the translation of proper names. Given his personality and perhaps resentment at his exclusion, it is hard to know how much to credit his critique. Ussher, writing around 1620, sought to revise the translation. "He offers a large number of new interpretations not to be found in any other translations, and [...] he implies that he is offering a more elegant translation. Unlike the translators so far discussed, he suggests that elegance of style is to be found in the originals and preserved in the translation" (Norton 2000, 94). As Norton noted, little else remains in the record.

The eventual success of the King James Version comes partly from its monopoly position and, as a consequence of that, from its familiarity in the language of the church. As people heard it and prayed with it, its phrases and cadences helped shaped the linguistic practices of English speakers throughout the world. But that took time and appears more varied than many suppose. David Crystal, the eminent English linguist and historian of the language, specifically addresses the question of the influence of the King James Version on the language, noting that "if there is an influence on our present-day written language, it has to appear in grammar, vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, or the broader patterns of usage that we impressionistically refer to as matters of 'idiom' or 'style'" (Crystal 2010, 4). He discounts any influence on grammar, spelling, and punctuation as these do not show any appreciable influence of the King James Version.

Conducting a careful review of the text, Crystal concludes that he finds "only 257" stylistic influences, though he acknowledges that these far outnumber the idiomatic influences of the next ranking sources, the plays of Shakespeare (Crystal 2010, 258).

However, this inheritance as well as that of vocabulary comes from the set of translations that the King James Version team drew on. The greater influence, Crystal thinks, comes from an influence on spoken and written English—the result of people's hearing and reading the text in church or in school. Here he credits the King James Version as creating preferences for rhetorical expressions (bathos, chiasmus, hyperbole, irony, oxymoron, personification, and satire), language play, phonetic properties (iambic rhythms, alliteration, assonance, euphony, monosyllabicity, and rhyme), and brevity of expression (Crystal 2010, 261).

From a publishing perspective and from a communication perspective, the King James Version eventually had a most impressive reception. Other measures of influence find a substantial influence, but one perhaps measured more in perceived influence than grammatical or graphological characteristics.

The media ecology of the King James Version gives some idea of the complex interaction of communication and other factors that affected the translation. As with any human project, things did not have to turn out as they did, but the new communication technology and its associated social practices allowed them to take the path that they took. Without these communication technologies, that path would not have opened in the same way and the King James Version's production and subsequent history would not have been the same.

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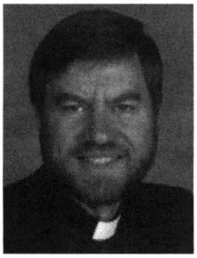

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