

**“THE BREADTH, AND LENGTH, AND DEPTH, AND HEIGHT”  
OF EARLY MODERN ENGLISH BIBLICAL TRANSLATIONS**

by

**M. Elise Robbins**

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**STATEMENT OF COMMITTEE APPROVAL**

**Dr. Angelica Duran, Chair**

Department of English

**Dr. Shaun Hughes**

Department of English

**Dr. Manushag Powell**

Department of English

**Approved by:**

Dr. Manushag Powell

*Dedicated to Chris and to our sweet daughter, without whom this work would not exist.*

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## ABSTRACT

The significance of early modern Bible translation cannot be overstated, but its “breadth, and length, and depth, and height” have often been understated (King James Version, Ephesians 3.18). In this study, I use three representative case studies of very different types of translation to create a more dynamic understanding of actual Bible translation practices in early modern England. These studies examine not only the translations themselves but also the ways that the translation choices they contain interacted with early modern readers.

The introductory Chapter One outlines the history of translation and of Bible translation more specifically. It also summarizes the states of the fields into which this work falls, Translation Studies and Religion and Literature. It articulates the overall scope and goals of the project, which are not to do something entirely new, per se, but rather to use a new framework to update the work that has already been done on early modern English Bible translation. Chapter Two presents a case study in formal interlingual translation that analyzes a specific word-level translation choice in the King James Version (KJV) to demonstrate the politics involved even in seemingly minor translation choices. Chapter Three treats the intermedial translation of the Book of Psalms in the Sternhold and Hopkins psalter. By using the language and meter of the populace and using specific translation choices to accommodate the singing rather than reading of the Psalms, the Sternhold and Hopkins psalter facilitates a more active and participatory experience for popular worshippers in early modern England. Finally, Chapter Four analyzes John Milton’s literary translation in *Paradise Lost* and establishes it as a spiritual and cultural authority along the lines of formal interlingual translations. If we consider this translation as an authoritative one, Milton’s personal theology expressed therein becomes a potential theological model for readers as well.

By creating a more flexible understanding of what constitutes an authoritative translation in early modern England, this study expands the possibilities for the theological, interpretive, and practical applications of biblical texts, which touched not only early modern readers but left their legacies for modern readers of all kinds as well.



## **CHAPTER ONE: THE “QUICK, AND POWERFUL” WORD: EARLY MODERN ENGLISH BIBLE TRANSLATION AS A MALLEABLE CONDUIT FOR CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY AND PRACTICE**

The task of Bible translation is a weighty one, as the entire fraught history of Bible translation has clearly demonstrated. After all, for many, the Bible is a sacred text, believed not only to acquaint its readers with their deity but also to shepherd them to their eternal destiny.

Translations become the vessels that transmit this crucial information to readers. Even for those who do not consider the Bible a sacred text, the cultural significance of the Bible cannot be overstated, particularly in England and the United States. It has shaped and woven itself into cultural assumptions, practices, and values in countless ways. Translators of the Bible take upon themselves the weight of that cultural burden as they undergo their translation endeavors.

Early modern England is a particularly compelling site for studying the relationship between the Bible, cultural institutions, translators, and readers. Translation, conservatively defined, is “the rendering of a source language (SL) text into the target language (TL) so as to ensure that (1) the surface meaning of the two will be approximately similar and (2) the structures of the SL will be preserved as closely as possible but not so closely that the TL structures will be seriously distorted” (Bassnett 14). For translations of the Bible, these matters have been complicated by the addition of “evangelistic criteria” to concerns regarding content and style in which translation is already embroiled (Bassnett 56). The proliferation of English Bible translations has ebbed and flowed throughout its long history, but Bible translation in various forms uniquely abounded amid early modern England’s religiopolitical turmoil and the simultaneous blossoming of vernacular English literature. The increased dissemination of Bibles thanks to the printing press, particularly the King James Version (KJV), which eventually came to dominate, expanded the readership and listenership of the Bible. Readers of all kinds stretched their creative muscles as they rendered the Bible into the formal interlingual translations of the Latin, Hebrew, and Greek scriptures into English and the artistic and literary translations between media and genres, like those found in the late sixteenth-century psalters of Philip and Mary Sidney, John Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress* (1682 and 1684), and the art that made its way into the KJV, to name a few.

Most scholars who study translation choices of the period focus particularly on treating the former type of translation, translations ostensibly touted as formal or official Bible translations. These are typically viewed as more authoritative because of their proposed goals and methodologies as more straightforward translations. These are certainly crucial to translation study, as their translation choices get passed on to readers. Canonical Bible translations, like the KJV of 1611, take on the authority of God's Word to humanity in churches and at home. Translations created for more ostensibly artistic or literary purposes, like metrical psalters or religious poetry, are rarely granted the same kind of authority; rightly so, since the label *artist* or *witness* carries significantly less freight and danger than does *biblical translator*. Indeed, in the dangerous world of Bible translation, the perception of lesser authority may have made these artistic translations more palatable to many writers interested in Bible translation. They are studied, by and large, as literature, but far less emphasis is given to them as translations in and of themselves. While early modern—and modern—readers may not have consciously received these literary translations with the same authoritative weight as they did the Bible, whether heard or read, these texts carry significant spiritual weight for their readers. Take several of the angels of John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, one of the literary translations I will treat in this study, as one representative example of this phenomenon. As John Shawcross points out, many readers of Milton believe that the angels Uriel, Ithuriel, and Abdiel are biblical figures, when, in reality, Milton created them (27–28). In instances like this, the creative interpretation of writers has become spiritually and culturally authoritative.

Part of this authority comes from the ways that the texts seek to interact with their readers, which is largely made apparent by the ways they reference those very readers. For instance, the translators of the KJV address their prefatory letter “to the *Reader*” (emphasis mine). In referring to a singular reader, a move made by many formal Bible translations, these letters create an abstract, ideal reader without fully acknowledging the plurality of real *readers* that will encounter the text. By contrast, in their titles, different editions of the Sternhold and Hopkins psalter declare the range of their readership, announcing, in early editions, that the text is “Very meete to be used of all sorts of people” and, in later editions, for the use of “All the People Together” (Sternhold, Hopkins, and Others; 1565 ed. and 1654 ed.). Similarly, rather than create a single ideal “man” to understand his work, Milton claims that his work in *Paradise Lost* seeks to “justify the ways of God to *men*” (*PL* 1.26; emphasis mine).<sup>1</sup> Both of these examples

demonstrate an attention to the plurality of readers encountering their texts, which explains the resonances of both of these texts as Bible translations.

In this study, I posit an accurate understanding of Bible translation in early modern England that enables us to appreciate its textual genealogy and literary qualities with three representative case studies that demonstrate the dynamism of translations in this period, particularly as they seek to interact with readers in different ways. As the KJV's translation of the Book of Hebrews 4.12 claims, "the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword," as echoed in the title of this introductory chapter.<sup>2</sup> Early modern English translators of all varieties understood the Bible as such: a tempered, constructed, and powerful document with resonance in their time; a text with the ability to alter lives; and a weapon or tool for reinforcing religious power in the midst of a theologically-charged environment. I challenge some of the more static, limited notions of what Bible translation means to some and what qualifies as a Bible translation in order to illustrate the incredible "breadth, and length, and depth, and height" of spiritually authoritative material that early modern readers would have experienced and passed on to modern readers (Eph. 3.18). In doing so, I aim to create a more flexible understanding of translation, one that helps to account for the numerous new lives that the texts of the Bible received from early modern English writers as they scholastically, linguistically, aesthetically, and creatively interpreted an ancient source into an early modern target. Whether they were touted as authoritative or not, these various translations were received by popular audiences seeking religious guidance. By expanding our understanding of these texts as authoritative translations, we can understand how early modern audiences developed a more flexible understanding of Christianity that allowed for greater possibility in textual interpretation, received theology, and spiritual practice.

My goal here is not to uncover a new translation or create a new theoretical framework, to do something new per se, but rather to delimit ideas of strict conservatism as the only way of understanding translation that communicates theology to readers. In their letter "The Translators to the Reader," the translators of the KJV describe that their purpose in their translation project was never the "need to make a new translation, nor yet to make of a bad one a good one" but rather to "make a good one better" (KJV lxxv). My endeavor is quite similar: not to do something new but to take a current good understanding of the reality of early modern Bible translation and, through the lens of these three examples, make it better. In doing so, I also follow in the steps of

other early modern scholars. In his seminal work *Psalm Culture and Early Modern English Literature*, Hannibal Hamlin concerns himself with what he calls “*mis*-translation, or at least with ‘translation’ in a more comprehensive sense than is normally intended,” for instance, literary and metrical translations (11). Doing so allows him to explore the “imaginative boldness” with which the Book of Psalms is “transformed—adapted and assimilated—by being ‘carried across’ from one language and culture to another” (Hamlin, *Psalm Culture* 11). Gordon Campbell’s *Bible: The Story of the King James Version, 1611–2011*, far from the first history of the KJV, innovates as it builds off previous works, adding to the story information from the “large body of recent scholarly material at [his] disposal” (vii). Indeed, early modern scholars whose purviews are outside of the Bible express similar concerns as well. One notable example is Blair Hoxby, who in his *What Was Tragedy?: Theory and the Early Modern Canon* creates a “historical reconstruction” of early modern tragedy in order to create alternatives to current definitions of tragedy that were theorized after the French Revolution (7). In this study, I combine Hamlin’s, Campbell’s, and Hoxby’s uncovering approaches and use a valid understanding of translation combined with new scholarly insight and a reconstruction of actual translation events to broaden how we understand the task of Bible translation in early modern England. As the Apostle Paul frames theology in the Book of Ephesians to help his readers “comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height” of Christ’s love, I similarly reframe translation to understand the breadth of its applications, the length and height of its reach, and the depth of its influence on early modern readers.

## **Literature Review**

### **A Brief Translation History**

As long as there have been networks of people interested in each other’s texts, there have also been translations. As long as there have been translations, there have been conflicting opinions on how translations should be done and what even constitutes a translation. These debates are still ongoing in the field of Translation Studies. While I provided a definition in the beginning of this chapter, it hardly covers the entire scope of translation, but rather provides a baseline of how translation is generally understood, which translation scholar Susan Bassnett readily admits when she calls the definition she provides “restricted” (15). In this section, I provide a brief

background on some of the key translation discussions and controversies throughout the history of translation to give a greater context for the fluidity and conflict surrounding early modern English translation.

The debate over classifying translation stems from the fact that translation is inherently subjective, variable, and inexact. There is no one-to-one relationship between languages because they are situated within cultures, which also have no one-to-one relationship. A translation cannot perfectly replicate the unique spatial, temporal, and cultural moment from which the source text emerged. As biblical scholar Jennifer Eyl describes, “translation is an inexact thing: it necessarily misses its mark, and the success of a translation is measured not by whether it hits its mark (which it cannot do), but by degrees of proximity to that mark” (317). However, “proximity to that mark” is not an easily agreed upon metric.

Translation taxonomies are typically created either based on the types of texts being translated or the relationship between meanings in the source and target texts created through the translation act. The former type of classification is generally more straightforward to identify. Twentieth-century linguist and literary theorist Roman Jakobson theorized three types of translations based on the language and medium of the source and target: interlingual, intralingual, and intersemiotic (Bassnett 25). Interlingual translations take place when verbal signs are interpreted from one language (source) into another language (target) (Bassnett 25). This is typically seen as “translation proper,” or what most people think of when they consider what translation is (Bassnett 25). Intralingual translation takes place within a language, as verbal signs are re-interpreted using different verbal signs within the same language (Bassnett 25). Examples of this would be a contemporary English translation of a text written in late-nineteenth-century English, for instance, or a text that must translate between two types of English slang. Intersemiotic translation involves interpretation between a system of verbal signs and a system of non-verbal signs, for instance visual art, music, or dance (Bassnett 25). An example of this would be Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* translated into a ballet. These types of translations can be broken down into further sub-categories, but, due to the flexibility of translation, such sub-categories are widely variable and less systematically catalogued.<sup>3</sup>

In this study, I examine translation in two of these sub-categories. The first is intermedial translation, an intralingual translation between media. Specifically, I look at translation between a strictly written verbal medium and a sung verbal medium. The second is intergeneric

translation, or translation between two genres of writing, here, biblical prose and poetry and epic poetry. Even with these definitions, I hesitate to categorize because translation, in practice, need not fit into a neat designation. For instance, English Bible translators would often perform a hybrid interlingual-intralingual translation, as they looked to both source texts in foreign languages and source texts in English to inform their translations. Nonetheless, such classifications are helpful in identifying a fuller breadth to translation than merely between two languages.

Classifications in line with Jakobsen are a relatively newer way to categorize translation. Before translation began to be more formally theorized, translation classifications more often centered around how translations interpreted and interacted with the source text. The earliest written records of Western translation come from the Romans, who translated what they saw as their inheritance from the Greeks in order to continue in Grecian literary, linguistic, and cultural models (Bassnett 53–54). Roman writers and translators Horace and Cicero were some of the first to distinguish between word-for-word and sense-for-sense translations, subordinating literal, word-for-word translations to sense-for-sense translations focused more on speaking to readers in the target language in forms that were recognizable and understandable (Bassnett 54–55). The debate between the word-for-word approach, which tries as much as possible to maintain the literal integrity of the source text, and the sense-for-sense approach, which allows for more aesthetic license to interpret the spirit of the source text into forms and terms of the target culture, has persisted across the centuries into today. In the translation principles and procedures that biblical translation theorist Eugene Nida theorized in the 1960s, he affirmed that the core debate of translation generally comes back to these two sides, dubbing word-for-word translation “formal equivalence” and sense-for-sense translation “dynamic equivalence” (12–26).<sup>4</sup>

Formal and dynamic equivalence have taken on different names at different times and in different contexts. Formal-equivalence translation is sometimes referred to as “literal,” while dynamic-equivalence translation is referred to as “free.” Literal translation has also been set in opposition to literary translation. One example is the disdain early English Bible translators demonstrated for literary translation because they largely saw literature as “a lying alternative to the book of truth” (Norton 2). To translators like these, the aesthetic concerns of literature threatened to detract from fidelity to the literal content of the source text. Unlike the Romans, who saw creative potential in the act of translation, these late medieval and early modern English

translators saw translation primarily as a tool for preservation. For translators translating within their faith tradition (e.g., Christian translators of the Bible), this literal preservation was a sign of faith. In other contexts, literalism was evidence of a more general tendency toward creating a hierarchy between texts, in which the source text took on an elevated position over the target text. This issue would continue to figure into translation debates in later centuries as well. Poet John Dryden turned this binary classification into a trinary one, creating the categories of “metaphrase” or word-for-word, “paraphrase” or sense-for-sense, and “imitation” or complete freedom, even allowing for the complete abandonment of the source text (Bassnett 69).

These concerns continued beyond the seventeenth century and were joined by concerns about translators’ roles and obligations. Concerns over the translator’s “moral duty [...] to his contemporary reader” began to come to the forefront of translation practice (Bassnett 70). In the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, translators began to concern themselves more with treading the line between the source text and target audience, as Bassnett says, “fus[ing] the uniqueness of the original with a new form and structure” to give the audience an accurate representation of the original’s “spirit” in a way that specifically considers them (71). The Romantic period saw a shift to considering whether translators play a creative role in translation or merely a “mechanical” role that presents the original text without any creative adjustment (Bassnett 74). Victorian translations often treated the translator as a guide meant to introduce readers to a foreign time and culture by preserving the uniqueness of the source text (Bassnett 77). However, this contributed to an archaizing of language and a veneration of the source text to such an extent that translation came to be seen as a secondary literary activity (Bassnett 79).

Modern conversations about translation, particularly English translation, are focused on making translation a primary rather than a secondary literary activity and grappling with the ethnocentrism and colonizing tendencies of translation. Lawrence Venuti has been at the center of these conversations. He argues against what he labels “domesticating” translation, which elevates the needs of the target culture and attempts to render the fact of translation invisible. Rather, he encourages “foreignizing” translation, a type of translation that highlights the interpretive act of translation by “deviating enough from native norms to stage an alien reading experience.” Venuti promotes the ethics of foreignization, purporting that it resists the ethnocentrism and racism that has pervaded translation and foregrounds the subjective position of the translator (20). Bassnett claims that the debates over matters like equivalence and

questions about whether translation is a primarily creative or mechanical endeavor are being phased out as modern translation theorists concern themselves with the process of translation over prescriptions for translation (48).

With the exception of Jakobsen's classification, most of the conversations regarding translation, particularly historical translation, focus on interlingual translation. Furthermore, no matter the theorized systems of classification, translation is always fluid. While the categories are useful, they are less rigid in practice. For instance, Dryden's system of categorization helps us understand how writers and translators thought about literary and translation in early modern England, but Hamlin reminds us that translation, in practice, was "fairly haphazard" at the time (*Psalm Culture* 8). In this study, I think both with and beyond formal interlingual translation and questions of equivalence to update and attend to the actual practices in the limited time period and geographical space of early modern England. Despite the focus of translation conversations often lying elsewhere, translations in broader and more flexible spaces, like intralingual translation, deserve equal critical respect because of the significance they carry for their readers and the literary heritage they represent.

## **Bible Translation**

Bible translation has been deeply involved in the controversies and conversations outlined above, with the added stakes of its status as a sacred text. In Bible translation, translators must participate in not only lingual and aesthetic interpretation but also theological interpretation. Because of this added layer, many Bible translators come to see their work as a kind of religious devotion. The monumental significance of Bible translation coupled with the wide-ranging translation purposes and methodologies of individuals and institutions have contributed to a long history of controversy regarding translation practice. A brief history of philosophies and methodologies in Bible translation bring into sharper focus the inheritance and innovations of the practice in early modern England.

Bible translation philosophies and practices have varied widely over several millennia of documented translation in Western nations (Nida 11). In chronicling the practice of translation as far back as the polyglot empires of the second and third millennia BCE, Nida cites the early example of controversy over Bible translation of Aquila's "painfully literal" second-century-CE translation of the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek, which garnered criticism for neglecting to



convey the original text's "spirit" (12). In contrast to this example, in general, across the history of Bible translation, formal equivalence is taken as the more traditional method of translation, as many allege it remains "truest" to the source language and leaves less opportunity for individual subjectivity (Nida 179).

This tendency toward conservatism in translation is compounded by scriptural precedent. 2 Timothy 3.16 tells its readers that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God." Revelation 22.18–19 more ominously communicates the stakes of accurate translation: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." Statements like these imbue biblical language with an air of sacredness, which, to many, makes any manipulation of the text, including translation, inherently risky and threatening to the divine power it contains. They further claim that there are serious consequences for mistranslation, making translation dangerous as well.

There is also the matter of sacred language. Stuart Robertson points out that many throughout history have believed that Hebrew is not only the language of all people before Babel but also the language of God in Creation, and he notes that "the idea of this divine touch on Scripture has lingered" (70–72).<sup>5</sup> This assertion naturally prompts the question of whether translators are likewise "divinely inspired" in their acts of translation or whether they act out of their own humanity, doing the best they can with the sources they have been given. Such tensions have elicited great resistance particularly to formal interlingual Bible translation and intense conservatism when translation occurs, typically resulting in formally-equivalent renderings that attempt to preserve the sacred source language (Nida 28; Hamlin and Jones 9–10). As translations engage with the source text in different ways, friction erupts between conflicting groups who believe their translation is the most accurate, even the most divinely inspired. When these groups collide in attempts to preserve the power of their preferred versions, translators often stand in the middle: heroes or heretics depending on which translation is deemed "authoritative." Such friction has led Eyl to summarize the contentious nature of formal Bible translation in this way: "I venture to suggest that the problem of translating the Bible is

more anxiety, debate, and argument riddled than probably any other translation project in history” (319).

Two of the most influential early non-English Western Bible translations were composed with the intention of bringing the text to the people. The Septuagint, the translation of the Hebrew Bible into Koine Greek, was conducted during the third through fourth centuries BCE (S. Harris 9; Good 17).<sup>6</sup> It was translated by and for a Jewish colony in Alexandria, Egypt, who, due to the Hellenization of most of the Mediterranean world, needed a translation in the vernacular of their community (S. Harris 9). “Septuagint” refers to the fact that it was a work of approximately seventy Hebrew scholars (S. Harris 9). Roger Good describes their method for this collaborative translation as an endeavor to bring “the reader of the translation to the original text” for educational purposes, thereby creating a functionally equivalent rendering (17). Translators knew that access to the Hebrew language was becoming increasingly difficult for the Jewish population, and they sought to rectify that, leading to a popular translation that eventually became the Bible of the early Christian church (Good 8; S. Harris 2). Jerome’s famous Latin translation, the Vulgate, was conducted for similar reasons. Stephen Harris notes that the Bishop of Rome commissioned Jerome to translate the text between about 385 and 405 CE “to make the Scriptures accessible to the Latin-speaking public” (23). In alignment with earlier Roman translators like Cicero, Jerome favored a dynamically equivalent, or sense-for-sense, translation as he sought to make the Bible resonate with the target audience (Bassnett 56). Despite differing approaches, the goal of both of these translations was access for the laity.

English Bible translations were more piecemeal until the end of the Middle Ages. Old English manuscript evidence is scant. Sermons using passages from Latin were often translated for an English audience (Campbell 7). Evidence indicates only a handful of translations of full or partial Books of the Bible: the Venerable Bede’s translation of the Gospel of John, which has been lost, and King Alfred the Great’s translations of Psalms 1–50, the four canonical Gospels, and Exodus 20–23 (Campbell 7–8). We can understand more about Bible translation in English from the Middle English translations following the Norman Conquest. The rhythms of the Bible were explored through the popular practice of metrical translations of the Books of Psalms, Genesis, and Exodus in the thirteenth century (Campbell 8). Richard Rolle undertook a prose translation of the Psalms in the fourteenth century, but, in his functional-equivalence efforts to preserve the word order of Latin, his prose read strangely to English audiences (Campbell 8).

At the same time, translation was becoming hugely controversial as the Roman Catholic Church forbade Bible translation in an attempt to preserve the authority of the Latin Vulgate and, by extension, themselves as religious authorities. This is discussed in much greater depth in Chapter Two. In this milieu, many of the first formal interlingual Bible translations were conducted for political purposes. John Wyclif, whom Milton argued started the Reformation in the fourteenth century, relied on the Vulgate for his translation (Campbell 10). His purpose was to bring the Bible to English people in their own language for the first time (Norton 7).<sup>7</sup> His translation gradually moved away from very strict formal equivalence to more readable English, even as Wyclif sought formal equivalency with the Latin as much as possible (Norton 7). During the Reformation proper, in the early- to mid-sixteenth century, William Tyndale set to work on his translations, for which he returned to the original Hebrew and Greek texts (Campbell 13). Tyndale is particularly notable in my study because his concern for the “boy that driveth a plough” to fully understand the Bible was his driving force in creating a simple translation meant to be understood by the populace (cited in Campbell 10). He maintained great reverence for the source text, thus, he sought to bring the source text to the target audience while, like Wyclif, still maintaining functional equivalence as much as possible (Norton 16). More than perhaps any other translation, Tyndale’s translation choices made it into later Bibles, including the KJV (Campbell 13).

As Bible translation was legalized in the 1530s, Miles Coverdale published the first politically commissioned English Bible translation, a contrast from the illegal, life-threatening translations of Wyclif and Tyndale. Before he was officially commissioned to translate by King Henry VIII, Coverdale published the first full English translation out of Latin, German, and Tyndale’s English (Campbell 16). As England distanced itself from Rome, this became an important piece of pro-English and pro-Protestant propaganda (Campbell 17). Coverdale is also responsible for translating the psalter that would become widely known by the English people in the *Book of Common Prayer* (Campbell 17). John Rogers’ Matthew Bible of 1537 served a similar purpose as propaganda for Protestantism, this time overtly seeking the acceptance of ecclesiastical authority (Campbell 18). Like Coverdale, his methodology was to look at past English translations; for him, it was less about translation creativity and more about a political statement (Campbell 18). In 1538, Coverdale’s Great Bible was commissioned by Henry VIII. This translation, again, looked to other modern translations for its sources (Campbell 22–23).

As the Catholic Queen Mary I took the throne, Bible translation shifted, as Catholic policy against vernacular translation once again prevailed in England. As Protestants went into exile, the Geneva Bible was created and persisted outside of the ecclesiastical structure, and religious authorities often criticized what they perceived as “anti-episcopal” notes in the paratext (Campbell 28). Protestants fled England to avoid persecution and execution, and Protestant exiles in Geneva, Switzerland created their own translation that looked to contemporary translations as well as the original Hebrew and Greek (Campbell 25). It also included a plethora of paratextual notes and additional materials for personal study (Campbell 26). As Elizabeth I took the throne, the Geneva Bible was brought back to England and became incredibly popular, particularly among the Puritans (Campbell 27). To offset the popularity of the Geneva Bible, bishops in the Church of England had the Great Bible revised into the Bishops’ Bible, and, in 1570, it became the official version for all churches (Campbell 30). Their desire for authority meant that many translation choices were intended to sound serious and holy as opposed to clear and accessible; this stilted, formally equivalent translation made it quite unpopular (Campbell 30). Much like the Bishops’ Bible was the English Protestant response to the Geneva, the Douai-Reims was the Catholic response. This translation preserved a formally equivalent rendering of the Latin meant to be more linguistically and theologically accurate than readable (Campbell 31).

The KJV, which will be discussed at much greater length in Chapter Two, was born out of a perceived need to supplant the Geneva Bible and replace the Bishops’ Bible with a translation with more popular appeal. Though it had an initially lukewarm reception, the KJV became the main authoritative Bible translation for the next three centuries. It has been prepared by numerous different printers across the world over the years, each of whom slightly adjusted the text (Campbell). It was revised in the 1880s but still existed under the umbrella of the Authorized Version, though the new version came to be known as the Revised Version (Campbell 223). Only within the last century have completely new English Bible translations, such as the New American Standard Bible of 1963 and the New International Version of the 1970s, begun to gain real traction (Robertson 78; Campbell 259).

Alongside these formal interlingual translations have been intersemiotic translations that reveal certain interpretive angles, such as the paratextual illustrations found in Bibles, particularly their title pages.<sup>8</sup> Many notable writers, such as John Milton, Sir Philip Sidney, Mary Sidney, the Duchess of Pembroke, and Sir Thomas Wyatt created their own literary translations

of the Psalms (Hamlin, “My Tongue Shall Speak”). Milton, Sternhold, Hopkins, and others performed intermedial metrical psalm translations to be sung aloud. Milton and John Bunyan created Bible imitations to be read as literature, Milton in *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained*, and *Samson Agonistes* and Bunyan in *Pilgrim’s Progress*. These are just a few examples, many of which have not been fully studied as translations, even though they demonstrate that the early modern field of translation was ripe and that their fruits are plentiful for scholars of translation.

### **The State of the Field: Translation Studies**

The field of translation studies is a growing and promising one. It only began to be considered a “discipline in its own right” within the last half of a century, and, as it takes on its own identity, it is exploring its reach as an interdiscipline that Bassnett claims covers “stylistics, literary history, linguistics, semiotics and aesthetics” (14, 19). It is defining itself as a field in which theory and practice are inextricably linked, since theoretical study helps actual translators address the problems they face in the translation act (Bassnett 19). To address these real-world tensions, the field also looks to concerns in cultural studies, gender studies, postcolonial studies, and critical race studies to more fully understand the practical ramifications of translation choices. Two scholars at the forefront of defining and theorizing the field as a whole are Venuti and Bassnett, whose practical and theoretical works have built a framework for discussing Translation Studies. Venuti’s *The Translator’s Invisibility* (1995), *The Scandals of Translation* (1998), *The Translation Studies Reader* (2004), *Translation Changes Everything* (2012), and *Contra Instrumentalism* (2019) have been vital to my understanding of the history of the field as well as current critical conversations in the field, as have Bassnett’s *Translation Studies* (1980), *Reflections on Translation* (2011), and *Translation* (2013).

Most germane to this study are the four general areas Bassnett demarcates in Translation Studies: history of translation, translation in the target language culture, translation and linguistics, and translation and poetics (20). This study falls into the first category, since it is concerned with questions like “the theories of translation at different times, the critical response to translations, the practical processes of commissioning and publishing translations, the role and function of translations in a given period, the methodological development of translation and, by far the most common type of study, analysis of the work of individual translators” (Bassnett 19–20). Given the scope of my concerns, I further define the category of this study as “history of

early modern Bible translation.” Key scholars who have published significant work that falls into this category include Naomi Tadmor, Hannibal Hamlin, David Norton, and Gordon Campbell. Tadmor, Norton, and Campbell are primarily concerned with formal interlingual Bible translations of the period. Hamlin is one of the few interested primarily in translations, particularly of the Psalms, that fall outside of this category. Each of them, in methodology and content, have significantly influenced my own research and findings, as the chapters duly record.

### **The State of the Field: Religion & Literature**

Religion and literature as a formalized critical approach is relatively recent and continuing to grow. Debates about the role that religion and even discussions of religion should play in the academy has been ongoing since at least the late-nineteenth century (Fish). In his 2005 article for the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Stanley Fish observes that the study of religion is “where the action is,” particularly in American universities. Universities and scholars are increasingly concerned with research at the conjunction of religion with other fields, such as literary studies, sociology, and anthropology. On their webpage for the study of Religion and Literature within the Department of English, Washington University in St. Louis claims that this critical approach “asks how these impulses [religious institutions, ideas, beliefs, and practices] compete, coordinate, or otherwise inform one another and other practices and traditions.”

In addition to concerns unique to translation, this study considers questions unique to the overlap of religion and literature. It explores how literary works, translation practices, politics, and individual and institutional belief systems and practices inform one another in early modern England. A religion and literature perspective allows us to engage in a dispassionate discourse for a particularly passionate subject, providing a scholarly platform to explain the monumental stakes created in the complexity of the early modern English environment.<sup>9</sup> The growth of scholarly concern over religion and literature has happened to coincide with the quatercentenary of the KJV in 2011, which saw a proliferation of scholarly work on this translation and its place in religious and literary history. Some key works coming out of this anniversary are Campbell’s *Bible: The Story of the King James Version 1611–2011* (2010), Hannibal Hamlin’s and Norman Jones’ *The King James Bible after Four Hundred Years: Literary, Linguistic, and Cultural Influences* (2011), and Angelica Duran’s *The King James Bible across Borders and Centuries* (2014). These volumes have significantly updated and expanded the scholarly material available,

enabling current scholars to build even further as we move forward. The blossoming of translation studies, formalizing of religion and literature as a legitimate critical approach, and broadening of early modern biblical studies coming out of the KJV's quatercentenary create the perfect environment for studies like this one, which seek to expand our understanding of the intersection of these areas: early modern English Bible translation.<sup>i10</sup>

### Chapters Overview

The subsequent chapters of this study are essentially three in-depth case studies that demonstrate different early modern biblical translation philosophies, goals, methodologies, and effects in action. They progress from word-level translation in the stricter, more authoritative translation context of the KJV; to the book-level translation of the Psalms in the Sternhold and Hopkins metrical psalter; to John Milton's condensation of the entire Bible, with an emphasis on Genesis 1.26–3, into *Paradise Lost*. These represent drastically different types of translation in different contexts and at different levels (word, Book, or Bible) and, incidentally, also follow a progression in translation freedom as they respond to translation needs. Chapter Two examines a specific word choice of the English from the Greek Gospel of John, “And the Word was made flesh and *dwelt* among us,” and investigates the political and theological stakes of such choices as they are passed onto Bible readers (John 1.14, emphasis mine). Chapter Three explores how translation choices in the Sternhold and Hopkins metrical psalter in particular engage with the dual personal and communal themes of the Psalms to enact worship experiences for readers. Chapter Four treats the embedded Psalm 148 in Book 5 of *Paradise Lost* in order to consider how Milton interprets the overall storyline and theology of the Bible through his literary translation of primarily Genesis 2–3 in *Paradise Lost*, infusing his own personal theology and worship ideals into what would become a wildly popular and influential poem.

To give due attention to my research, findings, and interpretations, other related matters are sidelined, but some deserve mention here. I place relatively less emphasis and focus on the translators themselves. They figure into my analysis, but they are not the primary subject, as scholars have already conducted sufficient work on understanding the translators behind many translations, particularly the ones in my study.<sup>11</sup> I have also limited the scope. First, though translation was, as Bassnett asserts, a phenomenon that “exert[ed] a shaping force on the intellectual life of the age” across Europe, my study is limited to translation by English

translators into the English language (67). Second, this study is limited exclusively to Bible translation, though the translation of other texts, specifically many classical literary texts, also proliferated at this time, often using different methodologies. Third, my selection of depth rather than breadth results in neglecting, for instance, the biblical translation acts of such writers as Sir Philip Sidney, Mary Herbert, the Countess of Pembroke, Queen Elizabeth I, and John Bunyan. Fourth, while I look to earlier translations to provide historical context, I focus my study on translations from the early- to mid-seventeenth century, resulting in no lack of material. Finally, while I reference both general trends in reader response and use the poetry of George Herbert and Milton as examples of reader response, we lack data on the specific responses of lay readers. I hope to expand this area of the study with future archival research to establish additional ways that readers received these translations. These all provide exciting and promising pathways for future expansion of the material at hand.

The methodologies of each individual chapter are as varied as the translations themselves and respond to the unique ways each text—the KJV, the Sternhold and Hopkins psalter, and *Paradise Lost*—represent translation acts and interact with their audiences. All chapters make extensive use of close reading for grammatical, stylistic, and thematic purposes. They all also rely on the establishment of significant historical and cultural context to fully understand the ramifications of the translation acts in each. Chapter Two takes a more philological approach, as it engages in a word study that makes semantic and cultural connections between ancient Greek and early modern English (also with some ancient Hebrew) interpretations of a specific word in the Bible. Chapter Three adds both archival research and the filter of a specific modern theoretical approach, Speech Act Theory, to explore popular engagement with metrical psalm translations. Chapter Four relies on biblical hermeneutics, specifically how the hermeneutics of Milton guide his aesthetic and theological purpose in Bible translation. These varied methodological angles highlight the variety of translational angles that the three texts represent.

In Chapter Two “How God ‘Dwelt among us’: Limiting Subversive Interpretation via the KJV’s Authorized Translation of *Skēnoō* into ‘Dwell,’” I examine in-depth a word-level, interlingual translation choice in a formal translation context in order to establish the interpretive strictures around such translations.<sup>12</sup> The Greek word in question, *skēnoō*, is translated into English in John 1.14 “And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us” as “dwell,” when, in its source context, the meaning most often denoted dwelling communally in tents. I analyze the



controversy surrounding formal interlingual translation at the time to explore why the translation choice of “dwell” was likely made. Because “pitch a tent” has semantic value that can be read more subversively in the context of John 1.14, it might have proven more threatening than “dwell” as King James sought to stabilize his religious power through the KJV.

In Chapter Three ““Bless the LORD, O my soul’: Intermedial Psalter Translation and Enacting Spiritual Experience in Early Modern English Worship,” I turn to intermedial translation. I read the metrical psalm translations of the Sternhold and Hopkins psalter, which were meant to be sung aloud, as performative speech acts in line with Austin’s Speech Act Theory. These translations were written with a popular audience in mind, using words and phrases closer to colloquial English than other translations and following a popular metrical form of the time. I argue that translation choices in the psalter not only facilitated speech acts but facilitated them in a way that was uniquely accessible to the laity, providing lay readers with innovative pathways to spiritual expression that became uniquely theirs.

Finally, in Chapter Four, ““If art could tell’: Reimagining Bible Translation via Psalm 148 in *Paradise Lost*,” I make a case for Milton’s *Paradise Lost* as an intergeneric literary translation that carries the authority of a formal interlingual translation. I establish Milton as a translator with his own particularly flexible and experimental translation methodology by examining his earlier works of translation. From there, I argue for an interpretation of *Paradise Lost* as a Bible translation. I use the representative example of Adam and Eve’s morning hymn, modeled closely after Psalm 148, to demonstrate both how we can consider *Paradise Lost* a translation and how Milton’s personal theology informs the translation. In this specific passage, Milton’s translation offers new interpretive possibilities for the practice of worship through song. As *Paradise Lost* gains popularity and makes its way into the canon of English literature, it also starts being conflated with the Bible in the minds of many readers, so that Milton’s translation in *Paradise Lost* becomes, in effect, an authoritative Bible translation that can impact readers’ spiritual experience of God or give them insights into such experiences.

### **The Legacies of Translation Choices**

Translation choices have enduring repercussions on the audiences that receive them, which is why each translation choice made in every translation, particularly the most popular, must be treated with due gravity. Take, for example, even parts of the legacies of the three texts I will

treat in this study. For early modern and modern readers alike, words and phrases in the KJV became part of the cultural idiom, though many today may not be aware of the source. Think of phrases like “a man after his own heart” (1 Sam. 13.14), “my brother’s keeper” (Gen. 4.9), and “out of the mouth of babes” (Psalm 8.2); they have made their way past the bounds of the text and woven themselves into our language. While most churches today do not sing from the Sternhold and Hopkins psalter, as early modern churches did, many do sing the hymns that arose from them. Modern Christian songwriters also follow in the tradition of translating psalms into popular music. A band called The Sing Team has translated both Psalm 42 and Psalm 63 into songs entitled “Satisfied in You” and “As Long as I Live,” respectively. These songs are often sung in churches, continuing in the translation tradition of writers like Sternhold and Hopkins. *Paradise Lost* is still read today, and many envision Satan as the Satan of Milton rather than the Satan of the Bible, whether they have read *Paradise Lost* or not. In giving due attention to Bible translation in all of its forms, we can comprehend the fuller reach of the Bible as interpretations and re-interpretations of it spread through time and through religious and non-religious contexts alike.

As translation theorist Walter Benjamin asserts in his 1923 essay “The Task of the Translator,” “it is the task of the translator [...] to liberate the language imprisoned in a work in his re-creation of that work” (22). The work of translation study strikes me as quite similar. The current study is an exercise in liberation, releasing our conceptions of early modern Bible translation from the limited, formal definitions that are typically understood. In doing so, we can expand our awareness of the Bible interpretations early modern readers would have received from the plurality of translations they encountered. As just a few examples among many yet unexplored, translations in this project demonstrate that the possibilities are open for the subversion, liberation, and reimagination of readers’ relationship to Bible language, religious practice, Christian theology, and their complex heritage.

## CHAPTER TWO: HOW GOD “DWELT AMONG US”: LIMITING SUBVERSIVE INTERPRETATION VIA THE KJV’S AUTHORIZED TRANSLATION OF *SKĒNOŌ* INTO “DWELL”

Much remains hidden beneath the familiar and polished prose we find in the King James Version of the Bible (KJV). Each sentence, each phrase, even each individual word choice is conditioned by multilayered and culturally contextualized meanings translated from the original languages, as well as the complex historical moment that contributed to translation choices. More importantly, each of these choices contributes to how readers are able to interpret what the text is communicating about God, Christianity, and their individual and communal spirituality. Given the enduring popularity of the KJV, those translational choices and early interpretations cemented specific spiritual ideas in the belief systems of lay readers, leaving little room for alternatives that could carry potent spiritual significance, and served as the foundation for artistic and literary images.

In the beginning of the Gospel of John, the translators of the KJV render the description of the incarnation of God into early modern English as “the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us” (John 1.14). The text paints a poetic picture: a disembodied divinity adopting the truly human quality of flesh and living among humanity. When one peers beneath this elegant image, however, the word translated here as “dwell” becomes a complex example of freighted translation choices.<sup>13</sup> Despite intense scholarly focus on individual translation choices in formal interlingual Bible translations, translation scholarship largely overlooks “dwell,” or *skēnoō* as it appears in the original Greek text (*The New Testament in the Original Greek*).<sup>14</sup> Perhaps because “dwell” is not a term explicitly loaded with theological implications—as opposed to such lighting-rods translated as “church,” “sin,” “marriage,” and the like—it may appear universal and neutral enough to render its mistranslation innocuous. A similarly non-theological example would be the word translated in the KJV as “kill” in Exodus 20.13 “Thou shalt not kill.” Some English translations have used the word “murder” instead, creating intense controversy and even denominational rifts over whether only specific kinds of killing are prohibited and raising questions like whether war killing or killing as justice are permissible (Yoder).<sup>15</sup> Even less explicitly theological or controversial translation choices like “dwell” can occlude significant

nuances of the original language, nuances that influence interpretations of the text and the beliefs that arise from them.

In this chapter, I use *skēnoō* as a case study to outline important influences on early modern Bible translation purposes and methodologies and to elucidate what lies within translation choices that are outwardly unassuming, like this one. I compare the first verses of the Koine Greek Gospel of John in the Byzantine text form with its English rendering in the KJV.<sup>16</sup> In doing so, I demonstrate that the combined institutionalized forces of early modern linguistic tradition, accepted translation practice, and political anxiety buried a translation of the Greek *skēnoō* that would have reinforced a radically democratic reading of incarnation in John 1. The more accurate English rendering of *skēnoō* as “pitch a tent” rather than “dwell” casts God as a communal and anti-authoritarian figure who topples his own precedence within a hierarchy by giving up his seat of power to live among lay people. In the lingering power struggle that characterized the religiopolitical atmosphere of post-Reformation Jacobean England, this translation would have subverted both the goal of the KJV translation project and the paradigm for power in early modern Christian leadership. As I uncover the fuller interpretative potential of this word, I demonstrate the limitations of such early modern formal interlingual translations in allowing readers to engage with the full spectrum of theological interpretation. The poetry of theologically and linguistically educated Bible readers George Herbert and John Milton provides us with a limited, real-world perspective of the spiritual range opened up by “pitch a tent,” giving us an idea of what was lost in translation to lay readers without the same level of education and access. By uncovering the latent subversive potential of this one word, I illuminate the promising nature of investigating other ostensibly uncontroversial words passed down in the tradition of English Bibles. Studying individual word choices found in the Bible can resurrect interpretations that may shed new light on biblical authors and audiences, the formation of church doctrines, and the complex relationship between the Bible and the institutions seeking to control its use. These considerations are all essential if we are to be responsible readers of a text that has had as much widespread influence as the KJV.<sup>17</sup>

The inherent fluidity and subjectivity of translation enables the very interpretive latitude that this chapter considers; it also makes the task of Bible translation a uniquely tricky business, a point to consider if we are to treat translations with due fairness. Nida asserts that, as skilled and well-intentioned as translators may be, “no translator can avoid a certain degree of personal

involvement in his work” (154). Individual and institutional agendas may, consciously or not, seek to exert control over the text, its distribution, and its reception in ways that manipulate or countermand possible interpretations. Examining even a small piece of the scholarship treating such translation concerns quickly reveals how translation choices both reflected and contributed to early modern English culture and its legacy in a variety of ways, from perpetuating misogyny to artificially bolstering political and religious authority and practice.<sup>18</sup> Scholars are now undertaking the arduous process of unwinding inherited notions of the Bible’s language to expose its influence on Christian traditions and beliefs. As I engage in this process for the *skēnoō*, I examine the key semantic features of the word and its surrounding passage in the source and target languages, the historical contexts surrounding the source and target texts, factors influencing translation choices, and the potential ramifications of those choices that reverberate through time.

### **Control and Subversion in Formal Interlingual Bible Translation**

The first several centuries of English Bible translation leading up to and culminating in the KJV revolve around the efforts of institutional authorities to mitigate subversion and maintain control in a shifting religiopolitical environment. For the first translation projects of the late Middle Ages and onset of the early modern period, “translation” came to be synonymous with “subversion,” as the most influential English translators harnessed their translations to oppose the Roman Catholic Church’s restriction of lay access to the Bible. The Latin Vulgate Bible had been the uncontested authoritative translation in England, but this Vulgate, originally the language of the “vulgar,” or common folk, had become “the occult language of the Church,” which most laypeople could not speak (Norton 1). Further, through a series of resolutions in the thirteenth through fifteenth centuries, the church banned both the translation and reading of the Bible in the vernacular (Freedman 76, 84).<sup>19</sup> These mandates constituted an effort to preserve the Vulgate as the authoritative text and the Latin-speaking church as the “infallible guardian and interpreter” of the text (Norton 2). Thus, through both law and language, institutions sought to restrict the laity’s access to biblical texts. Fourteenth-century religious reformer John Wyclif and his followers, disillusioned with what they saw as corrupt church authority and convinced of the right and ability of all people—not just the Latin-educated elite—to interpret the Bible for themselves, sought to provide people with a translation they could understand (Hamlin and Jones

3). To them, giving people access to the text in their own language would pressure church authorities to be accountable for their actions, as people would actually be able to read and know the biblical requirements for Christian leaders (Ng 324). Though Wyclif did not suffer consequences for his translational acts and beliefs in his lifetime, as the threat of vernacular translations and their subversion of church authority grew, his body was exhumed and burned for heresy in 1428, forty years after his death (Hamlin and Jones 3).

Continuing in this tradition of translation-as-subversion, William Tyndale set to work on a similar project during the early years of the Reformation. Su Fang Ng describes Tyndale's motivation similarly to Wyclif's: to Tyndale, "clergy have no knowledge superior to laymen if translation makes scripture accessible [...] Tyndale want[ed] to remove the clerical obstruction to scripture [...] so that scripture itself m[ight] serve as a mediating translator [...] to bring the people to God" (329). Tyndale too trusted the authority of laypeople to read and interpret the Bible on their own. In contrast to Wyclif and his followers, however, Tyndale scrupulously looked to the Hebrew and Greek texts as his source texts, turning away from the linguistic and spiritual authority of the Latin language (Ng 319–20). His translation's preface demonstrates the disdain he developed for the authorities he knew were against him.<sup>20</sup> He rails against church authorities and the state authorities who enabled them, claiming they silenced vernacular translation "to the intent they might sit in the conscience of the people, through vain superstition and false doctrine, to satisfy their filthy lusts their proud ambition, and insatiable covetousness, and to exalt their own honour above king & emperor, yea and above god himself" (Tyndale 69). For his brazen and vehement opposition, the Roman Catholic Church kidnapped and strangled him in 1536 and had his body burned (Hamlin and Jones 3). The persistent subversion of translators and the intimidating public displays against them, even against their long-dead bodies, demonstrate the critical stakes of Bible translation at the time: church authorities were convinced that their power depended on their ability to control Bible reading and interpretation, whereas translators staked their lives on the belief that lay reading and interpretation of the Bible were spiritually essential.

Over the next century, English church and state anxieties surrounding the subversive act of translation began to shift significantly as threats to their authority changed. While the Bible became more accessible to lay readers, regulation and control of translation remained of primary importance. Just a few short years after Tyndale's execution, as the newly established Church of

England distanced itself from the Roman Catholic Church, Henry VIII—now the head of both church and state in England—reconsidered his stance on vernacular translation. In 1539, Miles Coverdale conducted the first officially sanctioned English translation project, and Henry VIII mandated that all churches own this Great Bible (Hamlin and Jones 4–6). At this point, then, the nationalistic impulse to affirm England’s religious authority in opposition to the Latin-speaking Roman Catholic Church supplanted its anxiety about lay access to the Bible, so long as the state endorsed the version of the text laypeople received.<sup>21</sup>

By the advent of the seventeenth century, the two most popular translations in England were the Geneva Bible and the Bishops’ Bible. The Geneva Bible was an unsanctioned translation undertaken by Protestant exiles living in Geneva, Switzerland during the reign of the Catholic Queen Mary I (Campbell 23). Upon their return to England under the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, they brought the Geneva Bible with them, which became the most popular translation for much of the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth century. Composed by translators outside of the institutionalized church, the Geneva Bible was filled with marginal notes and other paratextual materials to enhance the private study of the faithful (Campbell 26). It was also particularly popular among the Puritans, a diffuse dissenting Protestant faction who wanted to reform the structure of government in the Church of England, among other things (Campbell 27). The Bishops’ Bible was a response to the rogue Geneva Bible. It was produced under English church authority as a revision of the Great Bible (Norton 36–39). While the Bishops’ Bible was designed to supplant the Geneva Bible, its stilted style, attempted high language, and functionally equivalent translation kept it from winning popular appeal (Campbell 30).

The KJV was born out of tension over the Church of England’s future and a desire to replace both of these translations with one authorized translation. Religious tensions had been mounting in England as the Puritans became increasingly unhappy with the Church of England and the hierarchies and ceremonialism they believed emulated the Roman Catholic Church (Campbell 32). In an effort to address this tension, King James I called a conference at Hampton Court, wherein a new translation of the Bible was proposed. James agreed, specifically eager to overthrow the Geneva Bible with its “marginal notes that he found politically, theologically, and personally offensive” (Hamlin and Jones 6). Church authorities, including James, argued that these notes implied a denial of the power of those in positions of church authority. Furthermore, the translation would be dedicated to him, cementing a “monarchical national church of which

King James was the head” (Campbell 34). Consequently, a rigorous set of translation rules—including an injunction against marginal notes—was established and a group of roughly fifty scholars was commissioned to use their combined theological, literary, and linguistic expertise to create the KJV. Although not widely accepted at first, it became the authoritative English Bible for the next four centuries (Hamlin and Jones 6–7).

At each stage in this history, then, formal Bible translation is framed by a power struggle, which affects how the text is both translated and received. Ng describes the phenomenon thus: “the ban and its termination are both attempts at social control. The debate over Bible translation is about social contest as much as it is about theology” (337). At first, the church co-opts Bible translation to mitigate the danger posed to its authority. Later, the crown uses translation to transfer religious authority to itself. In both instances, institutions manipulate translation as a tool to combat and silence whatever opposition they face, even if that silencing is retroactive. While the most obvious example of this is the exhumation and desecration of Wyclif’s body, there are other, more subtle examples as well. For example, scholars have determined that about ninety percent of the Tyndale Bible wound up verbatim in the KJV (Hamlin and Jones 3). Tyndale’s anti-establishment work was co-opted for the benefit of an institution that rejected him, and his subversion was redefined under the terms of that institution. Tyndale and King James have even come to be categorized under the same tradition; a popular modern Bible translation, the English Standard Version (ESV), describes in its preface that it follows the “Tyndale–King James legacy.” With these few words, Tyndale and the Crown are given a joint history and mission, and Tyndale’s subversion is effectively subdued.

David Glowacki observes a similar effort to exert control in the KJV’s prefatory material. The dedication to the 1611 edition of the KJV reads: “to the most high and mighty prince, James, by the grace of God, King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, Defender of the faith, etc. The translators of the Bible wish grace, mercy, and peace through Jesus Christ our Lord” (KJV lxxi). To Glowacki, this dedication underscores that “the human power matrix in which the text is situated is divinely arranged. The economic forces, the political forces, and the effort of the translators are ultimately sanctioned by God” (197). Before readers open to the first page of Genesis, they are reminded of the power structure under which they and the book in their hands exist, and they are told that that power comes from God. While readers themselves are also addressed with a letter, “The Translators to the Reader,” they are subordinated to the king by the



later placement, and therefore status, in the text. Unlike texts like the Sternhold and Hopkins psalter, to be discussed in Chapter Three, which were written with the laity at the fore, this is not a book primarily for the people. It is a book for King James and his English citizens. This decided hierarchy is only further reinforced by “The Translators to the Reader” itself, as the translators continue to situate King James in a position of ultimate power. They paint him as a hero of the people, whose “royal heart was not daunted or discouraged” by those who criticized his pursuit of the translation project but who “stood resolute [...] for the glory of God, and the building up of his Church” (KJV lv). The translators apply the logic used by men like Wycliff and Tyndale to advocate for lay access to the Bible with the rhetorical questions: “But how shall men meditate in that, which they cannot understand? How shall they understand that which is kept close in an unknown tongue?” (KJV lvi–lvii). The clear answer is through King James, the benevolent monarch who confronts “every evil eye” and “every sharp tongue” for the ultimate good of providing lay people a translation in their language (KJV lv). Translation thus becomes a tool of politics and power, as the Authorized Version, another name for the KJV, is cast as unapologetically pro-establishment. In this heavily regulated and politicized environment, the options for interpretations of biblical texts, particularly those that could subvert institutional authority, are narrowed, subordinating fullness of translation to institutional agendas and limiting the theological instruction readers may glean.

### **Interpretive Possibilities in the Greek Gospel of John**

To explain exactly what was altered when *skēnoō* passed through the politics of early modern English translation, I establish the breadth of interpretive potential of John 1.14 in its Greek source text. In its original context, this passage can be read as highly subversive to dominant power structures. For early modern translators and theologians familiar with the Greek language and with the context of the Gospel of John, such oppositional echoes may very well have haunted their own translation endeavors. In its original context, *skēnoō* creates a more anti-establishment God than the “dwell” of the KJV, as it communicates a more intimate and humble relationship between God and lay people through his incarnation as Jesus. The sentence in which this word appears, John 1.14, is translated in the English of the KJV as “the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.” In usages like the one here, the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines “dwell” as: “to remain (in a house, country, etc.) as in a permanent residence; to have one’s

abode; to reside, ‘live’” (“Dwell, v.7”).<sup>22</sup> This is one of the few denotations in attested use during the period and closest to the sense of literal residence. In the John passage, this denotation conveys the general sense of God, as Jesus, taking up some kind of residence among people. However, according to lexicographers Henry Liddell and Robert Scott, *skēnoō* would have usually denoted a more specific dwelling situation, carrying the meanings “to pitch tents, encamp; to dwell in a tent; to settle, take up one’s abode; to live or be” (“σκηνώω, v.1, v.2”). In his detailed linguistic analysis of every attestation of *skēnoō* in documented classical usage, M. Morgan asserts that this word would have had particular significance in military and religious contexts in ancient Greece: as a military campsite where soldiers would set up camp next to each other and as a communal camp set up for people to stay in during Greek religious festivals, respectively (76–77). While it could also be used in the sense of “to fix one’s dwelling,” the connotation is typically a more specific, communal dwelling.<sup>23</sup>

The specialized use of *skēnoō* can be derived from its rarity within the text in contrast to the commonality of “dwell,” which is used gratuitously throughout the KJV. The KJV translates 32 different Greek and Hebrew words into “dwell” 338 times (“Dwell”). While differentiation is not always necessary because of synonymity, *skēnoō* is a markedly different word with greater semantic specificity than the much more general “dwell” and synonymous words like “inhabit,” “abide,” and “remain.” *Skēnoō* is rare among other Greek words used to describe living in a place, as it appears, even in its prefixed forms, only nine times in the entire Greek New Testament (“σκηνώω”; “κατα-σκηνώω”; “ἐπι-σκηνώω”). By contrast, the Greek word *katoikeō*, which carries the more general meaning of “to dwell” or “settle” in a place, appears forty-eight times in the Greek New Testament.<sup>24</sup> Had the word been intended to convey the sense of geographically-situated residence, another, more common word existed. Thus, the source text creates an apparent distinction through the particular choice of *skēnoō* that the target text does not follow. Already, we can observe key semantic differences between these two words: “dwell” conveys the general sense of residence alongside people, but *skēnoō* concretely roots readers to a specific, physical dwelling space and underscores the inherently communal nature of that type of dwelling.

In its semantic similarity to the Hebrew dwelling place of God, the tabernacle, the connotation of *skēnoō* also elicits a controversial connection between Jesus and the Hebrew God. While in early modern England, this connection would have been benign, even poetic, in the

religious climate described in the Gospel of John, it would have subtly defied established theology. In its reference to tents, *skēnoō* evokes the Hebrew concept translated most often into English as “tabernacle.” As an English noun, a “tabernacle” is a “temporary dwelling; generally movable, constructed of branches, boards, or canvas; a hut, tent, booth,” and the verb (now obsolete) is similar, essentially meaning to reside in such an abode (“tabernacle, *n.* 1a,” “tabernacle, *v.*”). The Book of Exodus describes how God had his people make such a portable place for him to live among them. In the KJV, this reads, “And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it” (Exod. 25.8–9). Multiple Hebrew words from the Old Testament have been translated into English as “tabernacle,” but one of the most common of these Hebrew words is *’ôhel*, which, in its most basic meaning, is “tent.”<sup>25</sup> *’Ôhel* also describes laypeople’s homes, such as when it is translated as “tent” in Genesis 18.6: “and Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah.” Thus, the name for the dwelling place of God would have been the same as the name for the dwelling place of everyday people. While God’s dwelling became quite elaborate as the tradition developed and was eventually all but replaced by the temple, it was nonetheless a significant religious symbol for the Hebrew people and their history.<sup>26</sup>

A key translation choice in the Septuagint (3<sup>rd</sup> C. BCE) forges a crucial linguistic connection between the Hebrew tabernacle and the Johannine tent. The Septuagint was the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible expanded over time with several deuterocanonical writings (S. Harris 2).<sup>27</sup> It was a massive translation project that eventually became the most widely-used Bible in the Greco-Roman Jewish community (S. Harris 9). The Septuagint often uses the noun form of *skēnoō*, *skēnē*, to translate *’ôhel* (“σκηνώω”). Because this version predates the Gospel of John by several centuries, the religious connotation of *skēnē* in Hellenistic Judaism would have been well-engrained by the time of the Gospel of John, making the author’s choice to use *skēnoō* a strategic one. Thomas Gardner summarizes the association thus: “John is thinking about the way God’s glory dwelt with his people in the tabernacle (Exod[.] 25:8) or tent of meeting (Exod[.] 33:7) as Moses led Israel through the wilderness after they had been freed from captivity in Egypt. In the same way, John writes, in Jesus, God’s glory took residency among them in a tent of human flesh” (16). Thus, through this word choice, Jesus becomes the flesh and blood incarnation of *’ôhel*, the tent of God situated alongside the tents of the people. This

connection in and of itself is not subversive; Jewish religious leaders in Jesus' time were well-aware of the period in their early history when God dwelt among them, his chosen people. Similarly, the Hebrew people had been waiting for Emmanuel, "God with us," who would likewise dwell among them (Matt. 1.23). However, the Gospel of John's subversive Jesus defined the "us" of "God with us" far more broadly than the text's religious authorities endorsed. The text's anti-establishment author, the Apostle John, harnesses the *skēnoō-ôhel* connection to provocative effect when his language cleverly situates Jesus as the modern embodiment of tabernacle.<sup>28</sup>

Much of the characterization of Jesus and the narrative of the Gospel of John highlights the ways that Jesus and his followers subvert the religious authority of Hebrew religious leaders. These events are told from the perspective of the layperson-turned-religious leader and close confidant of Jesus, the Apostle John, who is described by the author of the Book of Acts as an "unlearned and ignorant [man]" when it came to religious matters (Acts 4.13). As a witness, supporter, and contributor, John documents the events of Jesus' movement and his participation with Jesus in moments of tension with the religious elite, the Pharisees. John foregrounds Jesus' frequent theological arguments with Pharisees, whom he sees as hypocritical because they espouse commitment to God and the people of God while behaving judgmentally and, at times, violently against those who do not hold with their teachings. Jesus publicly challenges key pieces of doctrine, for example when he heals a man on the Sabbath (John 1.9–17). Further, in claiming that he is the Son of God, he claims spiritual authority over the Pharisees, thereby threatening their hold on the religious hierarchy (John 7.25–34, 11.45–57). As John describes, this tension culminates in Jesus' martyrdom, making him a subversive hero for the masses and John a supporter of his cause.

John's Gospel captures the subversion that was characteristic of "the Way," the title Jesus' followers gave their movement, which extends far past the events he describes.<sup>29</sup> Much like the first English Bible translators, the Bible describes that early adherents to Christianity were the objects of political repression and often even martyrdom. John's brother, James, was one of the earliest Christian martyrs (Acts 12.1–2), and, though John was not martyred, ecclesiastical tradition holds that he was persecuted by the Roman emperor Domitian (Farmer). Nonetheless, he upheld his radical religious claims, eventually composing the Gospel of John and at least one epistle later in his life.<sup>30</sup> According to Paul Cefalu, the Johannine writings have

historically been considered comparatively more anti-establishment than other biblical texts, for example, those of the Apostle Paul (22–23). The first-century Johannine church formed after being cut off from the synagogues and harnessed the theology of the Gospel of John to “cultivate an identity distinct from the Jewish and Gentile dominant powers,” an “anti-community contending with the hostilities of the world of unbelievers” (Cefalu 22). Early adherents to Johannine Christianity thus placed this text firmly in a subversive context as they used it to contend with what they saw as their own marginalization at the hands of religious authority.

From this milieu concentrated on the subversion of religious power comes the unprecedented image of God coming to earth as Jesus in John 1.14: “the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.”<sup>31</sup> In this brief sentence, the Gospel of John establishes a radical theology wherein God’s character and politics are drastically redefined. It also creates three contentious unions: between Jesus and God, between the Hebrew tradition and Jesus, and between Greek philosophy and Jesus. While I have exclusively been treating “dwell” in this study, we must add the crucial “word” to understand the full significance of John’s remarkable depiction of incarnation. “Word,” referring to Jesus, in the target language is the Greek word *logos*, which, though including the meaning “word,” has far more significance in ancient Greek.<sup>32</sup> In Hellenistic Judaism, *logos* aligns with “wisdom,” and, in Greek philosophy, it also carries the meaning of “ordering principle of the universe” (“logos”). *Logos* is used just a few verses earlier, at the beginning of the Gospel: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1.1). The “In the beginning” structure partners with the association of speech and God to evoke the first chapter of Genesis: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Gen 1.1). With this single word choice anchoring Jesus to both Gentile philosophy and Hebrew theology, the Gospel of John employs the Greek to imply two heretical claims: that pagan Gentiles have a place in the fold of God’s people and that Hebrews must consider the divinity of Christ.

In addition to reconceptualizing traditional theology, the Greek of the Gospel of John also democratizes God. As established, when the verb *skēnoō* is understood as “pitch a tent,” the Hebrew concept of *’ōhel*, the “tent of God,” is transferred to Jesus, making him a flesh and blood incarnation of God. While the Hebrew tabernacle was a place where the presence of God could abide among the people, only the high priest was allowed to enter the portion of the tabernacle, the holy of holies, where the presence of God actually resided. Thus, experiencing God face-to-

face was traditionally limited to the highest religious authority, who was always a Hebrew male.<sup>33</sup> However, in the Gospel of John, when the tent of God goes from being a static object to a person with agency, we see deific-human interactions change. As accounts of Jesus' life and relationships in the four canonical Gospels demonstrate, rather than remaining restricted to the religious elite, God, through Jesus, chooses a rather marginalized, common "us" to "pitch a tent" with. For the most part, he pitches a tent with people who would have been seen by the powers-that-be as other: laymen, like John and the other disciples; women, like Martha and Mary; and a man with leprosy, whom no one else will touch (John 12.1–11; Matt. 8.1–4). He even breaks the social and cultural barriers of the Hebrew people and pitches a tent with a Samaritan woman, who belongs to an enemy ethnic group (John 4.1–42). Some of the only people left out of Jesus' campsite are the religious leaders, with the exception of certain Pharisees like Nicodemus, whose interactions with Jesus and his community are described in John (see John 3.1–21, 7.50–51, 19.39–42). Jesus does not automatically affirm religious authority. Rather, as Jesus gives his presence to the marginalized and the powerless, he affirms them instead, giving himself and his word to the laity.

Thus, the Gospel of John characterizes Jesus as a remarkably anti-elitist divinity. God, the *logos*, leaving his seat of authority to *skēnoō* in flesh and blood in a community of common, othered people creates a new paradigm for those in seats of power, whereby they give up power in order to elevate the less powerful. Being rooted in both the material and communal senses of pitching a tent, *skēnoō* draws attention to two important facets of God's incarnation: the community of marginalized people who directly receive the presence of God and the massive disconnect between God's heavenly courts and the lowly tent of common humanity. By looking scrupulously to the original word and its context, we thus uncover a new theological message that would likely resonate for lay readers, particularly those in a tumultuous and hierarchical power structure like early modern England. At the same time, the subversion it suggests stands in stark opposition to some of the intended goals of the KJV. This dissonance is where we see the freighted nature of translation choices in action to subdue certain theological interpretations while elevating others.

### **The KJV's Translation Purpose and Methodology in the Choice of "Dwell"**

As most Bible translations of the time do, the KJV contains a prefatory section, "The Translators to the Readers," in which the translators explain their choices throughout the whole translation project. In this letter, the translators describe an approach that, outwardly, tends more toward the characteristics of a sense-for-sense translation (dynamic equivalence, in Nida's terms), which seeks to translate the essence of the source text into forms (e.g., words, stylistic features, and syntax) that the target audience will best understand. Bible translation, particularly at this time, largely followed the conservative tendency toward word-for-word translation (formal equivalence, in Nida's terms), which attempts to maintain fidelity to the original by preserving as much of the original forms of words and phrases as possible. While the KJV translators are certainly not claiming a drastic reimagining of translation, the way they frame their translation describes an apparent deviation from previous, formal-equivalence methodologies.

English Bible translators before those of the KJV almost exclusively chose "dwell" in their translations of John 1.14.<sup>34</sup> While there were undoubtedly numerous layers to these choices, I posit that a combination of formal equivalence and linguistic tradition was one strong influence. The Latin Vulgate translates *skēnoō* into the verb *habito*, which means "to dwell, abide, reside, live" (Vulg., John 1.14.; "habito"). Translators, like Wyclif, looking to the Vulgate for their own translations or even those using it as a source to help translate from Greek were likely influenced by this long-standing translation choice in Latin. This tradition was aided by the conservative norm of formal-equivalence translation, which would seek the simplest literal translation that replaces one word with one word. Coming out of the Latin tradition, translating *skēnoō* as "dwell" would have been the more conservative choice, as it does not radically reinterpret what has been done before. Furthermore, it satisfies the desire of formal equivalence to replace one word with one word. Of the literal (formal-equivalence), single-word choices available, "dwell" is semantically simple, broad, and neutral and fits well with established tradition.

The KJV translators, however, claim no allegiance to this kind of established tradition, which would tend to free up the potential for different, dynamic-equivalence translation options. They promise, "wee have not tyed our selves to an uniformitie of phrasing, or to an identitie of words, as some peradventure would wish that we had done" (KJV lxvii–lxviii). By implying that they are not committed to consistency and rigidity in their translations, they suggest a departure

from traditional translation practice toward greater freedom, in line with what Norton calls the “looseness in the spirit of the age” (68). The translators even ask, “why should we be in bondage to [the words], if we may be free?” (KJV lxviii). In their methodology, they affirm their flexibility in translating as the context necessitates instead of being tied to words that may not best fit the context. Their proposed philosophy should, in theory, remove any pressure to bend to formal equivalence or linguistic tradition in translating *skēnoō*, especially since we know that *skēnoō* is markedly different from the Greek translated in other places as “dwell.” While the influence of “dwell” in previous translations may have been strong, it seems likely that a meaning so different from “dwell” would have caused some pause, especially given the translators’ purported freedom in translation. If they claim that they seek to enable “the Scripture [to] speake like it selfe, as in the language of Canaan, that it may bee understood even of the very vulgar,” a unique word like *skēnoō*, a word that connects to “vulgar” people in a particular way, would be a prime opportunity to let the original language speak (KJV lxviii). If they are moving toward translating the sense of the word in a freer way, we could expect a culturally relevant phrase that captures the dual communal and physical nature of “pitch a tent”—perhaps “build a home” or something similar—rather than the more conservative, formal-equivalence translation into “dwell.”

Despite the translators’ claims, King James’ own comments and mandates about the translation project seem to have won out to restrict the freedom the translators profess in their translation philosophy. In laying out his plans for his translation project, King James himself demanded conservatism: “as better a King with some weaknesse than still a change; so rather a Church with some faults than an Innovation” (Barlow 36). He admitted that he would rather have faults with the translation than risk doing something new. Perhaps building off the anxiety caused by the marginal notes in the Geneva Bible, he saw innovative translation as risky in some way. Indeed, these marginal notes were expressly forbidden by one of the fifteen prescribed translation rules for the translators of the KJV (Campbell 37). Whatever the overall degree of freedom intended by the translators, the resistance to innovation in the case of *skēnoō* is apparent in the fact that the legacy of “dwell” and its limited interpretive options persists. In the case of *skēnoō*, it appears that interpretive innovation may have provided just the type of risk King James sought to mitigate.



### **Subduing Subversive Interpretations in the Early Modern English Gospel of John**

In the earlier history of English Bible translation, John 1.14 could be read as opposed to the control institutions sought to exert over the Bible. It speaks of God as Word, adjusting his form from the heavenly to the human so that he may commune with lay people and be understood by them. When read in this way, linguistically separating the Bible from lay people proves antithetical to the will of God. This interpretation rings very much of the type of speech used by Wyclif and Tyndale in their attacks on church authority. Even once the translation act itself is no longer subversive, the anti-establishment character of Jesus is closer to a Tyndale or a Wyclif than a King James, no matter the pseudo-rebellious language used in support of the king. The subversive God, who humbles himself to the social level and physical situation of the common lay person, has no logical place in the court of a king like King James, for whom affirming his divine right as a ruler in the midst of religious dissent was of chief importance. Consequently, there would have likewise been no place for translations that tended toward this democratic, subversive interpretation of God.

Despite any political pressure against a democratic reading, the Geneva Bible contains important evidence to indicate that early modern English translators would have recognized the “pitch a tent” sense of *skēnoō*, specifically in relation to John 1.14. Notwithstanding an awareness of the accurate sense of *skēnoō*, it remains absent in the KJV, perhaps owing to this very connection with the contentious Geneva Bible. In their translators’ preface, the Geneva translators claimed authority for their translation by indicating that they drew directly from the source languages, Greek and Hebrew (Norton 39). Discussing their translation practice, they also claimed that they chiefly observed the sense of each word and “laboured always to restore it to all integrity,” at times choosing to maintain the original sense of the language even when it sounded less natural in English (as cited in Norton 40). In addition, they promised to supply extensive marginal notes to help provide “that diversity of speech or reading which may also seem agreeable to the mind of the Holy Ghost and proper for our language” (as cited in Norton 41). The chief concern of these translators was a holistic understanding of the text and context of the Bible, which could furnish lay people with helpful paratextual tools for interpretation that they may not otherwise have had. However, King James claimed that many of these marginal notes were “partial, untrue, seditious, and savouring too much of dangerous, and traiterous conceits” (Barlow 35). The KJV, conversely, would be restricted to as few marginal notes as

possible, effectively silencing whatever threatening elements that might exist therein (Norton 61). It is in these marginal notes, so detestable to King James, that, in a 1599 version of the Geneva Bible, translators acknowledge, in reference to *skēnoō*, “the word which [John] useth is taken from tents.” The surrounding notes demonstrate a particular focus on God’s humanity and relationships with other humans, noting that he was “conversant” with the “many witnesses that saw him” (GNV, John 1.14). In notes like this one, the translators’ exegesis reinforces the breakdown of the power structure that Christ’s incarnation enacted. It is impossible to say whether this was one of the marginal notes that angered King James. However, in compelling the eradication of such potentially subversive notes, King James’ mandate may very well have been a key contributing factor to the occlusion of interpretive possibilities for words like *skēnoō*, for both translators seeking to provide interpretations and readers seeking to make them.

In its limited interpretive scope, the word “dwell” is broad and neutral enough to countermand the subversive potential of *skēnoō*. If Jesus abstractly “dwells” with a general “us” in the world, lay readers are not directed to consider the specific community of people God chooses when he becomes embodied as a human and physically “pitches his tent.” The nonspecific nature of “dwell” distracts from the disconnect between his prestigious heavenly dwelling and the humble human abode he builds with John and outcasts like him. Furthermore, there is an intentionality implied in choosing where one “pitches a tent” that calls attention to God’s choice of community. The lack of communal specificity of “dwell” makes it is less likely than *skēnoō* to encourage readers to consider with whom God did not create a home: the earthly authorities, whom he actually sought to bring down in some ways. “Pitching a tent” is temporary and mobile and calls attention to the fact that Jesus wandered rather than staked out territory. “Dwelling” has a permanence that reinforces longstanding tradition. Moreover, as the “us” of “dwelt with us” comes under the authority and control of the elite, through some of the means discussed above, John’s marginalized, common, and subversive “us” is co-opted under the joint powers of church and state. English speakers coming across the KJV for the first time, most of whom having little to no knowledge of Greek or Hebrew, much less access to biblical texts in these languages, would have had no concept of these interpretive nuances. Careful readers concerned with larger and more in-depth biblical exegesis could arrive at an interpretation akin to this democratized God with consideration of the larger context of the Gospel of John. Thoughtful reading and meditation could encourage the personal connection of God dwelling

with the individual readers. However, the translation choice here does nothing to open up these options, leaving that entirely to the reading habits of its audiences, many of whom were only just able to access biblical texts on their own because of the greater availability of printed texts thanks to the printing press. If King James and his court hoped to use this translation project to consolidate his authority, any echoes of political subversion like those in John 1.14 would need to be mitigated, which is precisely what the interpretation of “dwell” as *skēnoō* accomplishes. It presents a poignant image without unnecessarily risky interpretive potential.

### Liberating Bible Translation Possibilities

Despite the erasure of “pitch a tent” from the KJV itself, we see glimpses of evidence that this sense of *skēnoō* was not lost completely on English poets. The early modern poet and priest George Herbert illuminates this interpretative sense of the word in his poem “Anagram” (1633) which represents God as Jesus, residing first in Mary’s womb then among her people. Figure 1 demonstrates how the title formatting itself works from the beginning to create a sense of enclosure and togetherness around Mary, Jesus, and her people, as both literal womb and more figurative community:

$$Ana \left\{ \begin{array}{c} MARY \\ ARMY \end{array} \right\} gram.$$

Figure 1: Reproduction of the title formatting from Herbert's 1633 *The Temple* (69). The brackets enact the communal nature of *skēnoō* as they enclose both Mary and the Army, which we soon learn is God’s community. The text of the poem itself reinforces this sense of community:

How well her name an *Army* doth present,  
In whom the *Lord of hosts* did pitch his tent. (69)

Even in its brevity, this poem brims with linguistic and theological significance. First, this poem is only possible in English, that is, the words “Mary” and “army” only have an anagrammatical relationship in English. By aligning his biblical poem with a uniquely English word play, Herbert claims the meaning “pitch a tent” for the English people. Second, Herbert alludes to the military sense of *skēnoō*, demonstrating a keen awareness of the Greek, not a vague understanding of the word. Third, Herbert describes the physical incarnation of Jesus by emphasizing his temporary residence in Mary’s womb, which enables him to later reside among Mary’s people. He firmly

places Jesus within a human's humble and fragile first dwelling-place, putting him on an equal footing with the rest of humanity. Finally, he focalizes his poem on Mary, a young, working class female who would have occupied a marginal space in the world in which she lived. Stephen Harris notes that it is typically the Gospel of Luke that is more associated with Jesus' relationship with women and other dispossessed groups, with the Gospel of John being generally considered the more cerebral Gospel (373, 381). Here, however, Herbert specifically connects dispossessed people, like Mary, with the word choice from the Gospel of John, linking concern for the marginalized to this Gospel as well. In references to the physical tent, bodily reality of Mary's pregnancy, and people with whom God "pitches a tent," Herbert makes plain the accurate sense of *skēnoō* as both communally and physically grounded. Herbert imagines himself and his fellow Englishmen as part of a spiritual and physical community tied to both Jesus and to Mary, the first person with whom God physically resided.

John Milton employs the same interpretation for a different purpose in his unfinished 1645 poem "The Passion," which is about encountering and processing the weightiness of Christ's passion.<sup>35</sup> The third stanza of this poem reads:

He [Jesus] sov'reign priest stooping his regal head  
That dropped with odorous oil down his fair eyes,  
Poor fleshly tabernacle entered,  
His starry front low-roofed beneath the skies;  
O what a mask was there, what a disguise!

Yet more; the stroke of death he must abide,  
Then lies him meekly down fast by his brethren's side. ("The Passion," lines 15–21)

Milton's interpretation is particularly compelling because it is certain that he understood Greek. He learned to read and compose in it from a young age and continued to do so to varying degrees throughout his life (Lewalski 1).<sup>36</sup> In these lines, Milton embeds the passage from the Gospel of John into his reading of Christ's life focalized through his passion, a translation method of Milton's that will be further analyzed in Chapter Four. Milton employs the image of Jesus entering the tabernacle or tent of the human body to create a poignant identification with his humanity. The imagery of the physical dwelling-place is heightened by Milton's use of the architectural image "low-roofed," as opposed to a grand, tall piece of architecture, further

solidifying the connection of Jesus with a humble physical place. Milton establishes an opposition between Jesus' heavenly and earthly dwellings with further physical details. He says that the "fleshly tabernacle" is "poor," and that the "regal head" would have "stoop[ed]" to enter. Stooping indicates a bending motion, further indicating that, in his move to earth, Jesus was bending away from the glory and riches of heaven toward the humbleness of humanity. Jesus' stooping is a leveling with humanity. Milton makes a very similar move in his poem "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity," when he says:

That glorious form, that light unsufferable,  
And that far-beaming blaze of majesty,  
Wherewith he wont at Heav'n's high council table,  
To sit the midst of trinal unity,  
He laid aside; and here with us to be,  
Forsook the courts of everlasting day,  
And chose with us a darksome home of mortal clay. (lines 8–14)

Milton reminds us of the contrast between Jesus' residences in heaven and on Earth, underscoring this with physical details of light versus dark and claiming his human body to be a "home of mortal clay." The image of a home made of clay lends physical specificity to Jesus' abode, much like the image of a tent. Further, we must remember, as Herbert reminds us, that, at the incarnation, Jesus is a baby. He begins his life at the same level as the rest of humanity despite being God. He is vulnerable and dependent, like the rest of humanity. He is on the same level as "us." We get the very clear sense here that Jesus' humbling of himself by taking on the tent of humanity as a baby has impacted Milton's spiritual understanding of Jesus and his passion.

At least in more creative uses such as poetry, we see that translating *skēnoō* as "pitch a tent" was not only acknowledged but practiced and activated to high aesthetic and theological effect. We know part of Milton's captivation with Christ's passion, as illustrated by the passage in "The Passion," is the humbling of this "sov'reign priest" to live and die alongside common people whom he considers kin. Milton's choice to convey this through the concept of tabernacle (*skēnoō*) rather than "dwell" illustrates the theological intensity of the word lost with the choice of "dwell" in the authoritative KJV translation.

If a different sense of this word could give new significance to the incarnation or passion for learned men like Herbert and Milton, one can only imagine the significance of a Bible translation carrying this sense to lay people in early modern England, particularly in light of the political power dynamics surrounding them. They might have found not a God that dwells with the powerful, but rather a next-door God that builds a humble home just like they do. It is impossible to say what the impact of semantic nuances like “pitch a tent” might have had if received by greater numbers of early modern English readers. What other nuanced differences exist and how might they individually and in aggregate influence our understanding of the Bible and the complex milieu of culture, tradition, and politics that encircle it? What other interpretive possibilities might be suppressed by the specific contexts and agendas encircling translation choices of the Word?

### CHAPTER THREE: “BLESS THE LORD, O MY SOUL”: INTERMEDIAL PSALTER TRANSLATION AND ENACTING SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES IN EARLY MODERN ENGLISH WORSHIP

The impact of the Book of Psalms in early modern England is large and undeniable. This particular Book of the Bible was certainly the most accessible to a lay audience, as it was the first portion of the Bible made legally accessible in vernacular English. Similarly, it was also the Book that church-goers most frequently encountered, as the Church of England’s *Book of Common Prayer* called for monthly readings the Psalms in its entirety. Most significantly for this study, the Psalms inspired numerous translations into poetry, prose, drama, sermons, and songs by a range of both lay and clergy writers, more than any other single Book of the Bible.

Scholars have speculated as to what features of the Psalms account for their incredible popularity, their widespread reading, and translation. Clare Costley King’oo, for instance, identifies Penitential Psalms as carry-overs from important medieval Latin Church traditions, which persisted even through the theological debates regarding penance in the Reformation (1).<sup>37</sup> Beth Quitslund cites the malleability of the entire Book of Psalms for different audiences and purposes as its particular appeal to the burgeoning Protestant faith in the shifting climate of the Reformation, Marian exile, and Elizabethan settlement (5). As examples, she describes their use in creating a communal identity for Protestant exiles during the reign of Queen Mary I and, subsequently, in creating unity in the church of Queen Elizabeth I (Quitslund 6). Similarly, Hannibal Hamlin discusses the influence of church reformers who “stressed how applicable the Psalms were to the contemporary concerns of all sixteenth-century Protestants, which may have been why an exception was made for the Psalter in Henry VIII’s 1542 injunctions against lay Bible reading.” Hamlin also points to the personal nature of the Psalms and the many voices in which the Psalms are spoken as key factors that enabled these texts to be readily adapted to varying individuals, communities, and contexts (“My Tongue Shall Speak” 511). He demonstrates that the multiple layers of voice in the Psalms complicate our understanding of whose voice is speaking, layers that also invite readers and audiences to adopt the voices of the Psalms as their own.

I am likewise intrigued by the nature of speech in the Psalms as a way to understand both their unmatched influence and their widespread translation, particularly given the controversy

and translational foment of formal Bible translation in early modern England, as discussed in Chapter Two. Psalm translations are a singularly fascinating phenomenon in an environment where rigid legislation was placed on Bible translations and heavy criticisms were levied against them. Psalm translations were largely able to fly under the radar of translation restrictions particularly as poems of the written text were translated into the form of the psalter, a lyrical medium meant to be spoken and sung aloud in private and public devotional life. In similar fashion, these translations often do not count among the ranks of Bible translations in the same way that the formal interlingual translations of Chapter Two do. Indeed, the Sternhold and Hopkins psalter, the most popular English psalter of the time, has often been dismissed as a joke on account of what many see as the poor quality of its poetry. It received heated criticism as early as the seventeenth century. John Phillips, John Milton's nephew, called it a "Common Nuisance to the Service of the Church," a legacy that has continued (as cited in Quitslund 1).

Popular psalm translation is crucial, however, if we are to understand the reach of psalm translations as a whole and the interpretive maneuvers they make into the spiritual experiences of readers. They are textual vessels that allowed numerous readers to engage with biblical texts in novel ways, both practically and theologically. Thus, I read the early modern intermedial translation of the Psalms, from written poetry to sung lyric, found in the Sternhold and Hopkins psalter through the lens of Speech Act Theory to understand how translations choices to facilitate the verbal utterance of psalms in English create a performative enactment of spiritual devotion on both individual and communal levels.<sup>38</sup>

### **Translation of the Psalms in Early Modern England**

Long before the Reformation, the Psalms were central to English Christian life. As noted in Chapter 1, the verses of the Psalms were some of the most commonly translated biblical texts into Middle English and even Old English. In Old English, these include the prose translations of Psalms 1 through 50 associated with King Alfred the Great as well as later metrical translations of the last 100 psalms (Campbell 8; Quitslund 10). Metrical translations of the Psalms continued in the early Middle Ages. According to Quitslund, they served as "more accessible forms of private devotion for laypeople with imperfect Latin" until they began to be superseded by Books of Hours and were largely banned along with other forms of Bible translation (10).



As bans against translations of biblical Books eased during the Reformation, the Psalms were taken up once again as a popular source text for translation. The Psalms owe their centrality in Bible translation endeavors at this time to two key, yet sometimes oppositional, factors: aesthetically, the Psalms were considered poetic art, and, theologically, the Psalms were considered “essential teaching” (Norton 115).<sup>39</sup> While translators usually valued both the theological and aesthetic elements of the Psalms, the balancing of these divergent values tended to result in different translation methodologies and outcomes. Norton categorizes the two types of psalm translations that arose from this disparity “poetifications” and “versifications” (Norton 115). Poetifications were the domain of the educated and elite who most admired the stylistic and aesthetic qualities of the Psalms as poems (Norton 115). Sir Philip Sidney and his sister, Mary Herbert, the Countess of Pembroke, are two key psalm translators whose collaborative translations would fit into this more literary category (Norton 129). Milton’s psalm translations—to be examined in more depth in Chapter Four—also largely fall into this category. From an aesthetic perspective, Hebrew poetry was only meagerly understood in early modern England even for those who could read Hebrew, meaning that translators were largely working with a combination of content understanding and previous translations (Hamlin, *Psalm Culture* 4). While the confusion over the style and language of the source text complicates how these fit into the definition of translation—for both the translators and us today—they also left significant latitude and freedom in how poetifications were done (Hamlin, “My Tongue Shall Speak” 519).<sup>40</sup>

This chapter is primarily concerned with Norton’s other type of translation, versification, which adapts the source text for “easy understanding and simple form” in order to convey biblical “truth at the expense of literary or linguistic quality” (Norton 118). With the primacy placed on theological communication, versified psalms became a key tool used by religious reformers during the Reformation. As the centrality of the Bible to the Christian faith and the emphasis on lay access took root in the Reformation, church reformers saw in the Psalms a unique opportunity to communicate spiritual truths to a larger audience.<sup>41</sup> The Psalms were considered an ideal vessel for such communication because there was both an understanding that they contained all the necessary doctrine of the Bible and a longstanding tradition of their popular use among the laity (Hamlin, *Psalm Culture* 23; Norton 115). Protestant reformer Thomas Becon claimed that the Psalms “‘containeth whatsoever is necessary for a Christian man

to know” (cited in Norton 115). John Calvin also found great personal, spiritual value in the Psalms. He conducted metrical translation of his own for the Genevan church (Hamlin, *Psalm Culture* 2). Further, in Calvin’s prefatory epistle, “to the godly Readers,” found in his commentary on the Psalms, he calls this Book the “Anatomy of all the partes of the Soule, inasmuch as a man shalnot find any affection in himselfe wherein the image appear not in this glasse.” Psalmody, or the singing of psalms, expanded opportunities for early modern audiences to explore this “anatomy” within themselves and within the larger church body.

The result was the numerous metrical psalters of the period, either series of psalms or the whole Book of Psalms translated into the same meter, such as that of the popular English ballad, which made them accessible for both lay and clergy audiences of all classes (Hamlin, *Psalm Culture* 24).<sup>42</sup> The practice of English psalmody was largely inspired by Martin Luther’s German psalms and hymns, which he considered useful in spreading doctrine to a broad audience and in diverting people’s attentions away from less wholesome songs (Hamlin, *Psalm Culture* 22–23). In England, the first popular and most enduring metrical psalter was begun by Thomas Sternhold, who served in the courts of Henry VIII and Edward VI (Hamlin, *Psalm Culture* 25).<sup>43</sup> According to Quitslund, he originally began his translation of nineteen psalms with the intention of strengthening the Protestant agenda for Edward VI but soon saw that their popularity made them an excellent venue for communicating Protestant theology to the populace as well (4). After Sternhold’s death in 1549, the clergyman John Hopkins augmented Sternhold’s translations with several of his own (Quitslund 4–5).

Metrical translation gained popularity in England until the succession of the Catholic Queen Mary I in 1553 forced avowed Protestants to leave the country. For the English Protestant diaspora, metrical psalms, particularly those of Sternhold and Hopkins, became a source of comfort and symbol of “godly polity and community” with other English Protestants in exile (Quitslund 5). After Elizabeth I’s succession, Sternhold and Hopkins’ psalter remained a powerful symbol of the Protestant English Church and was expanded to the entire Book of Psalms and published in 1562 to be used for psalm-singing in the Elizabethan Church (Quitslund 5). This “Sternhold and Hopkins” psalter, as it has come to be called, was hugely popular, finding its way into countless churches and homes and being published in at least 1,000 editions before it ceased publication (Quitslund 1).

The Sternhold and Hopkins psalter thus occupied a significant place in English church history and spiritual experience. It was a text that the laity found accessible and that the ecclesiastical hierarchy determined to be an acceptable communicator of Protestant doctrine; it was also firmly rooted in a sense of community and shared spiritual experience. Because of their accessibility, through the common meter and language, these psalters were able to form a bridge of sorts between church liturgy and popular culture.

An intermedial translation, the Sternhold and Hopkins psalter is generally seen linguistically as an unimpressive intralingual or literary translation. Indeed, as mentioned, its methodology focused more on communicating content in a straightforward way than creating an aesthetically complex experience. The literati denigrated this translation for what Norton calls its “lack of variety, the general banality of the versification, and the tendency to expand and explain the text” (117). The Sternhold and Hopkins psalter is seen as an uninventive and painfully simple translation that overexplains the theology within the Psalms, often to the detriment of poetic quality. This criticism belittles an apparently effective intermedial translation methodology—if its popularity is any indication of its efficacy. Unlike many formal interlingual translations, the different editions of the psalter do not contain lengthy translators’ prefaces. The title contains the essentials of the methodology, as shown in this example from a 1654 Sternhold and Hopkins psalter: *The Whole Book of Psalms: Collected into English Meeter, by Thomas Sternhold, John Hopkins, and Others. Set Forth and Allowed to Be Sung in All Churches, of All the People Together, before and after Morning and Evening Prayer, and Also before and after Sermons, and Moreover in Private Houses for Their Godly Solace and Comfort: Laying Apart All Ungodly Songs and Ballads, Which Tend Onely to the Nourishment of Vice, and Corrupting of Youth.* The key methodological considerations we can see here are 1) the ability to transition from church to home, 2) a flexible fit into church liturgy, as needed, 3) a comprehensible source of solace for individual readers, 4) a clear communication of wholesome biblical truth, and 5) an effective substitute for less wholesome popular songs.

In essence, this translation was meant to meet the practical needs of the people, those who would go between church and home, who would need a suitable, economical option for both contexts, and who would be seeking spiritual material and biblical interpretation that they could easily access. Here, we see a methodology primarily concerned with the people. Its incredible popularity is a testament to its impact on the people, who did not seem overly concerned with its

lack of poetic sophistication. Norton cites Bishop William Beveridge to explain its popularity: ““everything necessary for mankind to believe and do is delivered there in such a plain and familiar *style* that all sorts of people may understand it. When Almighty God Himself speaks of Himself, He condescends so low as to use such words and expressions as we commonly use among ourselves”” (cited in Norton 122, emphasis mine). The methodology of the Sternhold and Hopkins translators allowed the Psalms to speak the language of the people and allowed them to participate in the Bible in a way that other contemporary translations did not; the people responded by adopting them as their own and learning them by heart (Norton 121). This translation enabled the laity to experience a new ownership of and identification with the Psalms in both public and private devotion that opens up the text to a more immersive spiritual experience.

### **The Sternhold and Hopkins Psalter in Public and Private Devotion in Early Modern England**

Creating a bridge between the public church and the private home and between institutionalized religion and popular culture, Sternhold and Hopkins psalters came to serve dual, practical communal and individual purposes. Before printed texts were widely available, physical Bibles were largely restricted to lectern Bibles in churches and family Bibles to be kept at home—for those who had the money to buy them. For most laypeople, this meant that the spiritual experience enabled by interaction with the Bible was largely limited to public church worship, which, though in a language they could understand, was mediated by the clergy in formal language and translations that were not theirs own. Thanks to the proliferation of printing, however, the Sternhold and Hopkins psalter, along with texts like it, became financially accessible to a wider swathe of society and were published in small editions that could be kept on one’s person, enabling private devotion in a new way.

A 1654 Sternhold and Hopkins psalter housed in Purdue University’s Archives and Special Collections is a telling case in point.<sup>44</sup> It exhibits some unique material features that demonstrate physical intimacy with the text, reflecting a trend toward greater personal investment in and personal ownership of the Bible, particularly the Psalms. It measures only about four inches in height, providing a key example that obviously evinces psalters’ individual

use. The font of the psalter is miniscule. For scale, I have rewritten the previous sentence in the approximate size of the font found in the psalter:

<sup>45</sup>  
The font of the psalter is miniscule.

Readers must get very close to the text to read it properly, necessitating literal physical intimacy with the text. Further, readers need adequate light to read such small font. This means that they would have to approach a light source—by moving near a window, lighting a candle or lantern, or actually going outside—necessitating another personal, physical experience with the text. The logical extension of this is that the movement could often take individuals outside the church, reinforcing the relationship between individual and text rather than solely the relationship between individual and religious institution.

The most distinctive feature of this particular psalter—one that illustrates another level of individual, private connection—is the intricate embroidery adorning the cover.<sup>46</sup> As shown in Figure 2, the front and back cover are encased in cream linen embroidered with an elegant pattern of green vines and pink flowers, complete with the embroiderer's initials on a back corner.<sup>47</sup> Handcrafted material artifacts like this one made their way into homes in vast numbers



Figure 2: Unknown tailor / seamstress, book cover, from *The Whole Book of Psalms* 1654, linen and thread. Courtesy of the Purdue Archives and Special Collections.

during and after the Reformation. As Andrew Morrall discusses, this time period saw an increase in Bible texts and imagery incorporated into domestic décor, as “the home, as much as the church, bec[ame] an important locus of spiritual and moral instruction” (578). Similarly, he describes individuals’ roles in creating this décor as a means of internalizing biblical virtues, citing as a particular example young women who would embroider biblical images onto book covers and the like as part of their spiritual education (Morrall 590). While the floral pattern on this psalter may not be ostensibly biblical in theme, it brings the embroiderer closer to the text through a physical activity—here embroidering *on* the biblical text rather than embroidering a scene *in* the Bible. Further, in the early modern period, needlework was an important skill for young women to learn and an indicator of moral virtue, as “it kept women in the home, away from idle pursuits, and focused on pious devotions” (Morrall 590). With the action of embroidery spiritualized in this way, the embroiderer of this particular psalter could view their work as a spiritual act, a very personal, private act of devotion.

The psalter certainly illustrates the private dimension of early modern psalm reading, but it nonetheless involves its hypothetical owner on a public level as well. On the one hand, its size encourages private engagement with the text; on the other, its size also makes it quite easy to transport between church and home. The title page alludes to such dual usage, as quoted earlier. Hamlin further reinforces this point by indicating that different editions of Sternhold and Hopkins psalters contained an array of paratextual materials (e.g., treatises, songs, and prayers) reinforcing private and public worship to varying degrees (*Psalm Culture* 29–30).<sup>48</sup> Personal editions were also often bound up with additional texts, like Bibles, parts of Bibles, or Books of Common Prayer, to save on printing costs (Hamlin, *Psalm Culture* 33–34). The physical text, thus, not only facilitates but rather encourages both communal and individual reading and recitation and enacts a continuous transfer between church and home, spiritual and domestic, public and private.

As the English Protestant church began to wrestle with the question of whether public devotion might be fraudulent, a performance with no real impact on the internal self, this type of bridge between public and private worship took on greater importance (Targoff 55). Religious thinkers like William Tyndale had begun to justify public spiritual practice by claiming that authentic, internal spiritual reality would manifest externally in the body (Targoff 56). As this thinking developed, Protestants began to believe that this outward, physical performance both

reflected and caused internal spiritual devotion, even as they witnessed it in others and were moved by it (Targoff 60). This is to say that outward devotional performance was inextricably bound up in internal spiritual reality, whether it was done in a social setting or in private. The Sternhold and Hopkins psalter explicitly invokes both the public (outward) and the private (inward), creating an essential nexus where outward, communal performance can be linked with internal spiritual meditation and transformation

### **The Psalms as Rituals and as Speech Acts**

A large part of the translational and spiritual appeal of the Psalms is their incredibly personal nature. They largely employ the first-person rather than the third-person point of view prevalent in most other parts of the Bible. Similarly, while other biblical genres are relatively outwardly focused and convey specific practical and theological information (e.g., history, law, and prophecy), the Psalms are poetry that uses a more personal, intimate voice. They often employ intensely emotional language to convey stories of the psalmists' physical, mental, and spiritual struggles and victories. Hamlin points out that, even though an early modern audience would have been aware of the ascribed individual (Davidic) authorship of the Psalms—and often reminded by paratextual notes—this did not hinder them from but indeed may have prompted their feeling a personal connection to these poems, assimilating them into their own religious experience (“My Tongue Shall Speak” 516–17). Roland Greene posits that this highly ambivalent dynamic is made possible by the ritual nature of the Psalms. He categorizes them under the genre of “ritual poetry,” which he defines as a type of poem in which readers can transcend the original context of the poem and understand its content as universally relatable, even to readers in their particular contexts (Greene 20). Thus, the source author and context are subordinated to the divine experience that the poem enables, making an individual's experience with the poem “timeless,” “infinitely repeatable,” and connected to every other person who has had a similar experience with the poem (Greene 20–21). The Psalms' ritual nature, thus, allows them to be adopted by individuals and congregations as a form of devotion. The internalizing and verbalizing of the Psalms' content in this fashion thus corresponds with the definition of a speech act as theorized by British philosopher J. Austin. Indeed, employing his Speech Act Theory enables us to accurately understand psalm recitation as a powerful ritual that can enact a new spiritual reality.

Speech Act Theory posits that words do not just say things; they do things. While the foundations of this notion stretch much further back in time, Austin formalized it in a series of lectures in the 1950s and 1960s, in which he pushed back against the longstanding idea that language can only describe something in true or false ways (Austin 1). He proposed instead that statements are “performative”; “the issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action” (Austin 6–7). The quintessential example of this is the person who says “I promise to do x.” In stating the word “promise,” that person also enacts the promising. In this way, statements can be “instruments that allow speakers to change the state of affairs” (Baicchi 213). Eventually, he collapsed the dichotomy of statements that perform versus statements that do not and concluded that “to say something equals to perform something” (Baicchi 216). He qualified this by asserting that other conditions must be met in order for the statement to actually have performed something, namely that the performer or other people involved in the speech act supply some supplementary action(s) that imbue the speech act with its intended meaning and effect (Austin 8). Applying this to the example of “I promise,” the promiser supplements the words with an inward intention—something not phenomenologically measurable, much like spirituality—to keep the promise. Similarly, in order for the promise to enact the binding of two individuals, the receiver of the promise must accept the promise and behave accordingly. In instances like this, Austin connects the outer and inner states of the individual, as “for many purposes the outward utterance is a description, true or false, of the occurrence of the inward Performance” (9). Essentially, the externalized utterance has an inextricable connection to the internal processes that precede and follow it.

The nature of a text like the Bible leads to a logical partnership with Speech Act Theory. Biblical scholar J. Eugene Botha argues in favor of the application of Speech Act Theory to understanding the performative aspects of biblical texts, particularly given the fact that the Bible is a collection of texts “with a view to persuade, to change attitudes, to get people to do things and to act in a specific way” (276). Botha’s perspective here places the performers as the original authors and the texts, first oral and then written, as the vehicles of their performances, which are intended to catalyze additional actions in their receivers: Bible hearers and readers. For faithful hearers and readers, much of the Bible is interpreted as intending to compel action, with the text serving as the commander and hearers and readers as followers of the command. The Psalms work differently. The Psalms maintain less of a distance between the author/text and the readers



by collapsing the roles of the two. The experience of the author in the text becomes the experience of the hearers and readers as they ritually adopt the words of the Psalms in their own experience.

Through their first-person, introspective, ritual nature, the Psalms compel action by inviting readers to participate in them instead of simply respond to them. Calvin articulates this distinction between the Psalms and the other Books of the Bible by saying that, while the rest of the Bible details the “commaundmentes God hath enioyned to his servantes to be brought unto us,” in the Book of Psalms, “the Prophets themselves talking with God, bycause they discover all the inner thoughts, do call or draw every one of us to the peculiar examination of himself” (“John Calvin to the godly Readers”). He considers this a particularly crucial spiritual model because “if the calling uppon God bee the greatest defence of our welfare: in asmuch as a better and more certeine rule thereof cannot be fetched from elsewhere than out of this booke” (Calvin, “John Calvin to the godly Readers”). Instead of simply receiving the prophetic command, as in the rest of the Bible, the joint reader-reciter of the Psalms is automatically involved in the spiritual process of the prophets. This makes the songs particularly active when it comes to spiritual practice, another feature that Calvin notices. In his preface to the Geneva Psalter, he says that sung psalms “will be like spurs to incite us to pray to God and praise Him, and to meditate upon His works in order to love, fear, honor, and glorify Him” (Calvin, “The Epistle to the Reader” 348). In the early modern English liturgical practice of singing the Psalms aloud, the speech acts of the Psalm’s original authors, understood in early modern England to be King David, are thus remade into the speech acts of early modern worshippers as they assume the first-person position the Psalms invite them into. Translation choices—like those in the Sternhold and Hopkins psalter—that seek to bring these lyrics into the popular meter and language more easily facilitate this powerful spiritual experience for a popular audience, since they most closely correspond to their expressional styles.

### **Translating Communal and Individual Worship Acts in the Psalms**

As vehicles for both public and private devotion, the sung psalms of the Sternhold and Hopkins psalter facilitate worshippers’ assimilation of the psalmists’ conversations and meditations into their own spiritual experiences as individual voices and as the communal voice of the church body. Greene connects the ritual poetry of the Psalms to speech, saying such poems are

“[adaptable] to various speaking voices, so that lovers, worshippers, and others may quote lyric discourse as though it were their own speech,” often with the effect of perpetuating ideological belief (21). Through ritual recitation of the Psalms, doctrine is articulated in the worshippers’ own speech and, hence, that doctrine is reinforced. However, the first-person language of the Psalms goes further than simply declaring doctrine; it enacts something in the worshipper. If, like Austin, we take speech to be a performance, an enacting, and if we also involve the unique first-person voice of the Book of Psalms, we can posit that, as early modern worshippers assimilate the words of the psalmists into their spiritual practices, they likewise assimilate the psalmists’ actions that are activated through those words. This is particularly potent in the Sternhold and Hopkins translation given that it is a translation meant for the voices (i.e. language and common meter) of the populace.

Herein lies the incredible generative potential of the Sternhold and Hopkins metrical psalm translations: they are capable of facilitating the actions of a lay worshipper’s spiritual experience. If, in line with Austin’s theory, a worshipper approaches the recitation of the Psalms with the requisite internal conditions (e.g., sincerity, faith, or repentance), that are not phenomenologically measurable, the verbal utterance can enact a spiritual devotion that resolves existing internal tensions (e.g., a desire for forgiveness or pain in need of lament). Hamlin helps us understand how this is possible. As is the case with ritual poetry, “these psalms were meant to be applied to the reader or singer’s own situation; they were specifically recommended as prayers or songs of praise for those in need of them” (Hamlin, “My Tongue Shall Speak” 517). He goes on to reference Psalm 116, in which David prays in thanksgiving to God despite being in a life-threatening situation. Hamlin says that, though the historical David is far removed from the early modern audience, “David’s story made the psalm and the emotions it expressed more real and more ‘relatable’[...] not less” (“My Tongue Shall Speak” 517). The Psalms are framed so as to invite worshippers to identify their life experiences with the experiences of the psalmists. With this ready-made intimacy, the Psalms likewise extend the invitation to adopt the very words of the psalmists to their worship as well. Much like the original Psalms demonstrate some kind of spiritual transformation in the psalmist, as worshippers place themselves in the subject position of the Psalms, similar transformation can be enacted through their vocal performance.

The first-person language of the Psalms, emphasized and simplified through intentional translation choices in the Sternhold and Hopkins psalter, depicts numerous spiritual exercises

undertaken by psalmists, such as praise, lament, repentance, or thanksgiving.<sup>49</sup> As early modern worshippers assimilated these exercises through speech acts, they facilitated the enactment of a variety of spiritual transformations, making psalmody a fruitful spiritual performance from a variety of angles. I examine a few representative examples here, comparing them to their counterparts in the KJV to demonstrate key differences when the Psalms are meant to be verbally articulated by the populace and how those differences reinforce the speech act.<sup>50</sup>

Some psalms enact thanksgiving, as in Psalm 34. Yet the performance of thanksgiving is distinct in the KJV and the Sternhold and Hopkins psalter, as we can see in comparing the first two verses of the KJV and the corresponding text in the psalter:

I WILL bless the LORD at all times: his praise *shall* continually *be* in my mouth.

My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear *thereof*, and be glad. (KJV, Psalm 34.1–2)

I Will give laud and honor both  
unto the Lord alwayes:

And eke my mouth for evermore  
shall speak unto his praise.

I do delight to laud the Lord  
in soul, and eke in voice:

That humble men and mortifi'd

may hear, and so rejoyce. (Sternhold, Hopkins, and Others, Psalm 34.1–2)<sup>51</sup>

The Sternhold and Hopkins version makes the actions even more explicit and accessible to worshippers. Its verbs are consistently active (“shall *speak* unto his praise,” [emphasis mine]), whereas the KJV version employs the passive construction “his praise *shall* continually *be* in my mouth.” The active construction makes the performative action the central feature of the phrase, and the verb chosen, “speak,” calls attention to the performative verbal action. Further, the psalter version keeps the worshipper in the subject position more often than the KJV version does (e.g., “my mouth” versus “his praise” as subjects). The combination of active verbs and more deliberate first-person subjects makes the speech act more straightforward for the worshipper and also places the worshipper at the center of the act as the clear doer of action.

Several psalms further highlight the performativity of the speech act as they involve the psalmist giving a command to his soul, which enacts multiple levels of spiritual experience. A

key example is the praise-focused Psalm 103.1–2. The Sternhold and Hopkins underscores the communication between the individuals and their souls, which we can see by comparing the corresponding verses in the two:

BLESS the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, *ble*ss his holy name.  
Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. (KJV, Psalm 103.1–2)  
MY soul give laud unto the Lord,  
my spirit shall do the same:  
And all the secrets of my heart,  
praise ye his holy Name.  
Give thanks to God for all his gifts,  
shew not thy self unkinde:  
And suffer not his benefits  
to slip out of thy minde. (Sternhold, Hopkins, and Others, Psalm 103.1–2)

When worshippers utter such commands aloud, they perform the psalmist’s command for their own souls. In essence, they also command their souls to praise, making them aware both of their own praise and active participants in modifying their behavior to align with the spiritual practice of praise through worship. The metrical psalm underscores the worshippers’ communication with their internal selves with references to the “soul,” “spirit,” “secrets of my heart,” and “mind,” where the KJV references only “soul” and “all that is within me.” The metrical psalm also continually reminds worshippers of the command nature of the utterance with the use of second-person pronouns, “ye,” “thyself,” and “thy,” which are absent from the KJV. Psalms like this enact both a command and a hyper-awareness of self, as the worshippers become both the performers and recipients of the speech act. The speech act then becomes cyclical, turning the utterance back on the utterers’ souls in a way that catalyzes self-reformation through meditation on the command issued to the soul.

In late medieval and early modern England, a growing emphasis was placed upon personal meditation as a means for spiritual growth. Walter Melion and Karl Enenkel describe how “meditation often consisted of internal exercises that mobilized the sensitive faculties of motion, emotion, and sense (both external and internal) and the intellective faculties of reason, memory, and will, with a view to reforming the soul” (1). While at first meditation remained a largely Catholic practice, religious writers like Joseph Hall sought to bring it into the English

Protestant tradition by seeking to marry Calvinist theology with Jesuit mystical practice (Van Dijkhuizen 212). In most religious meditation, but particularly in its combination with Calvinist theology, meditation became an active process meant to bring the *meditans* into moral alignment through self-reflection and subsequent behavior modification (Van Dijkhuizen 212). Thus, it served a dual communal and individual function, as church doctrine was reinforced as a vehicle for better individual understanding of and alignment with Christ. In its hyper-reflexivity, focused on telling the self to engage in specific new behaviors (e.g., “give laud” and “praise”), Psalm 103 provides an example of a lyric that enacts this specific spiritual practice.

Some actions in the Psalms can be fully enacted individually, as described so far. Many psalms, however, expand the performance from an individual to a community, rendering communal experiences necessary for the speech performance to be effective. Psalm 34 again provides a key example. It begins as an individual blessing to God but, in verse 3, takes a communal turn, which is more strongly reinforced in the Sternhold and Hopkins version:

O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together. (KJV, Psalm 34.3)

Therefore see that ye magnifie  
with me the living Lord:

And let us now exult his Name

together with one accord. (Sternhold, Hopkins, and Others, Psalm 34.3)

The first verse in the Sternhold and Hopkins psalter fronts the second-person plural pronoun “ye” to emphasize the community and even places “with me” before the object of magnification, “the LORD.” Both the KJV and the Sternhold and Hopkins psalter emphasize community with the word “together,” but the latter creates an emphatic redundancy by adding “with one accord.” The Sternhold and Hopkins psalter uses the adverb “now” to underscore that, via the communal speech act, this praise is happening concurrently with the reading of the words. Incidentally, with the communal, as opposed to individual, performance of the speech act, the Lord is literally “magnified” in volume. The congregation singing the psalm together also enacts the “accord” and “together” of the second verse. Neither this magnification nor this accord would be possible in an individual speech act. This agrees with Bible passages outside the Psalms that underscore the necessity of community, like Matthew 18.20, “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” and Hebrews 10.24–25, “And let us consider one

another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is.” The translation choices paired with the vocal performance of psalms like this one reminds worshippers that holistic spiritual experience is both individual and communal; some spiritual experiences can be enacted only through speech acts performed by a group of people.

### **Worship and Speech Acts in Two Poems by George Herbert**

We see evidence of the sort of spiritual transformation that the Psalms, particularly the Sternhold and Hopkins, propelled. We see it not just in the numerous formal translations of the Psalms described at the beginning of this chapter but also, for example, in the devotional poems of early modern priest and poet George Herbert. Though Herbert does not necessarily represent a typical popular audience member, the way he describes the sung worship experience is nonetheless informative for this study, as it provides one reader-reciter’s experience that likely extends to other reader-reciters in similar situations.<sup>52</sup> Christopher Hill reminds us that Herbert was concerned with not only “the private space of the believer’s heart but also [...] the necessarily corporate nature of the church,” and the exploration of these matters features prominently in his anthology *The Temple* (237–38). Herbert’s poems fit the mold of what Greene calls “fictional” poetry—poetry that clearly contains the words of a specific author rather than poetry assimilable to other readers and speakers.<sup>53</sup> In two of his poems that reflect on singing in church, “Church Music” and “A true Hymne,” Herbert meditates on the ritual poetry of the church service in ways that illuminate what happens internally and externally during the singing act (Greene 21).

In Herbert’s “Church Music,” the speaker describes the effect that singing in church has on their soul. In doing so, they make an argument not only for the act of singing to produce transformation but also the importance of he or she, as an individual, joining a church community in order to experience that transformation. The poem in its entirety reads:

Sweetest of sweets, I thank you: when displeasure  
Did through my body wound my mind,  
You took me thence, and in your house of pleasure  
A dainty lodging me assigned.

Now I in you without a body move,  
Rising and falling with your wings:  
We both together sweetly live and love,  
Yet say sometimes, *God help poor Kings*.

Comfort, I'll die; for if you post from me  
Sure I shall do so, and much more:  
But if I travel in your company,  
You know the way to heaven's door. (Herbert 57)

We are introduced from the title “Church Music” to the fact that this poem is about music in a religious setting. Herbert’s speaker immediately confirms that this music will come from the human mouth—rather than another musical instrument—with the gustatory image, “Sweetest of sweets,” which immediately draws readers to the mouth, the gatekeeper of the speech act. Noting their distressed state upon entering the church, they credit their past experience singing music in the church as being what “took me thence.” They articulate the transformative effect on them in a physical way, saying that they become one with the song in body. Expanding this image of oneness and also indicating that this oneness has a purpose and effect, they describe moving in the same direction as the song via flight. The speaker approaches church feeling displeased, but the performance of the song enacts a new spiritual reality in which they can imagine approaching heaven. Specific members of the church are not mentioned, but the communal aspect of devotion is foregrounded in the words “together” and “company.” Further reinforcing the significance of community is the return of the opening gustatory image via the word “sweetly” in the second stanza. This time, the stanza is focalized on “we” rather than the “I” of the first stanza, conveying the speaker’s transition from individual to community. They explicitly acknowledge the transformative spiritual power of music in the last lines, that lead to “to heaven’s door.” The fact that the entire poem is called “Church Music” continually reinforces that this journey is made possible only via the sung act of communal worship. The communal speech acts of church music allow for Herbert’s narrator, and the other members of the church, to approach God in a physical/performative way and an internally spiritual way. Presumably, without this public worship experience, the speaker’s internal tensions would have remained unresolved, and their spiritual state would have remained the same. Herbert does not clearly assign any specific

demographic features, like gender, class, or age, democratizing the experience of the poem, much like the experience of singing psalms is democratized, and allowing readers of all kinds to identify with the experience of the speaker.

In another poem, “A true Hymne,” Herbert’s speaker unpacks another necessary aspect of the fully realized worship speech act: the internal reality necessary for spiritual transformation through song. This poem in its entirety reads:

MY joy, my life, my crown!  
My heart was meaning all the day,  
Somewhat it fain would say:  
And still it runneth mutt’ring up and down  
With onely this, *My joy, my life, my crown.*

Yet slight not these few words:  
If truly said, they may take part  
Among the best in art.  
The finenesse which a hymne or psalme affords,  
Is, when the soul unto the lines accords.

He who craves all the minde,  
And all the soul, and strength, and time,  
If the words onely ryme,  
Justly complains, that somewhat is behinde  
To make his verse, or write a hymne in kinde.

Whereas if th’ heart be moved,  
Although the verse be somewhat scant,  
God doth supplie the want.  
As when th’ heart sayes (sighing to be approved)  
*O, could I love!* And stops: God writeth, *Loved.* (Herbert 162–63)

In the second stanza, the speaker defends the simplicity of a refrain as ostensibly basic as “*My joy, my life, my crown.*” Their defense maintains that it is the internal condition that makes



something beautiful. More than aesthetic beauty, Herbert's speaker declares that the true efficacy of sung worship is only realized when the internal condition of the soul aligns with the words being sung. Here, the speaker implies that the internal reality with which the verbal performance is approached will make that performance effect transformation even if the individual words are simple. While it is not clear that Herbert was a proponent of the Sternhold and Hopkins psalter, this poem defends simplicity so long as it leads to an authentic spiritual experience, which was the goal of the psalter. Herbert engages the controversial question of whether the outward performance is enough, acknowledging the aesthetic and spiritual beauty of this performance when supplemented with sincere internal reality. In opposition to those who would rationalize public performance by arguing it affects internal change, the speaker insists that it is the reverse: the external act matters if internal conditions are met. In the third stanza, they reinforce this by saying that a pretty song in and of itself does nothing for the singer's soul; it leaves them "behind." Herbert's poem demonstrates the crux of an effective speech act: it only performs that which it purports to when the performer's intentions match the words.

The speaker closes by providing a compelling argument for internally motivated worship. They indicate that something supernatural happens when the external performance and the internal motivation are properly aligned: God is present in the speech act to create a new spiritual reality for the worshipper. In a way, God completes the speech act ("supplie[s] the want"). After outlining the proper procedure for the worship speech act, the speaker then provides us with an example. They describe a person who enters worship with an unresolved internal state with a heart "sighing to be approved" and verbalizes that state with "*O, could I love.*" Here, where the performed hymn is undergirded by the sincere intentions of the heart, the honest cry of the worshipper fits the prerequisites of the speech act. As promised, spiritual transformation is achieved through the intervention of God, when, in the final line, "God writeth, *Loved.*" Much like the word "sweet" of "Church Music" signals important shifts in poem, the italics of this poem do the same. Herbert italicizes speech acts, first the internal "*My joy, my life, my crown*" and then the speech exchange with God, in which the heart sighs "*O, could I love!* And stops: God writeth, *Loved.*" The important transformation these italics signal for the speaker is from the internally sincere motivation to praise to the satisfaction given by God through a sincere speech act.<sup>54</sup> In this specific example, we see the performative speech act of song, in alignment with internal desire and intention, enacting a spiritual experience as fundamental as understanding the

love of God. Since passages like 1 John 4.19 tell us that “We love him, because he first loved us,” we can also conclude that, given the true intentions of the worshipper, this new spiritual reality resolves their internal tension by allowing them to love. Herbert thus uses this poem to outline specifically how a speech act works in sung worship and provides a practical example for his readers to follow.

### **Inviting the Laity into King David’s Community<sup>55</sup>**

If Herbert’s experience describes a larger pattern, metrical psalm translations sung at home and in church community became practical and powerful devotional guides. They provided a means for early modern English people of faith to take up the voice of King David to inspire their own spiritual acts of worship. Rather than the elite voice of formal translations and poetifications, these translations provided a crucial link between the people and God by affirming the legitimacy and dignity of popular words and styles to participate in divine communication. In these translations, the words of a king (David) became the words of English individuals and congregations, giving them new ownership over the biblical text and an accessible pathway to participate in the spiritual inheritance of the Psalms both at home and in the larger church body.

Furthermore, the translation choices of the Sternhold and Hopkins psalter facilitated verbal action and performance in a way that formal prose translations and even poetifications did not. The action of verbalizing the Psalms facilitated meaningful interactions both vertically, with God, and horizontally, with fellow worshippers. Greater access to the Psalms in physical forms like psalters made the experience newly personal and helped underscore the individual’s active role in both of these relationships. Attesting to the impact of psalmody, the era of metrical psalms inaugurated intermedial translations in the form of religious lyric. The role of first-person communication, both spoken and read, in individual and communal devotional experience would continue to be explored by devotional poets like Herbert and hymnists like Isaac Watts and George Whitefield, even as religious lyrics expanded past the Psalms alone. Such songs and poems still serve a crucial and powerful role in religious communities centuries later. Perhaps it is this capacity of the Psalms to articulate and enact, that is to perform, the things that may lie too deep for words, both for the elite and the masses, that was so essential to the spiritual experience of early modern audiences, enabling the popularity that the Psalms have experienced for so long.

## CHAPTER FOUR: “IF ART COULD TELL”: REIMAGINING BIBLE TRANSLATION VIA PSALM 148 IN *PARADISE LOST*

Key among the countless new lives the Bible found in the hands of early modern English writers and translators was the literary translation of John Milton. Like many of his contemporaries, Milton was inspired by the Book of Psalms and created several versions of individual psalms more or less recognizable as translations. He also looked to the Bible as a source of great inspiration in other, more ostensibly literary works. In his epic poem *Paradise Lost*, Milton takes on the task of creating an epic primarily out of the first three chapters of the Book of Genesis. The poem *Paradise Regained* and the drama *Samson Agonistes* are likewise inspired by passages from the Bible: Gospel accounts of Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness and the story of Samson in Judges, respectively.<sup>56</sup> Each of these works is far longer than their corresponding Bible stories, with Milton supplying intricate and thoughtful theological, narratological, and poetic elaboration and expansion. To define its unique status in world literature over the years, readers and critics have called his masterworks imitation, midrash, and even fan fiction.<sup>57</sup> For instance, Genesis 1–3 along with the scant and vague biblical references to the expulsion of Satan from Heaven is about 2,200 words in the KJV, whereas *Paradise Lost* is over 60,000 words. Within *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained*, and *Samson Agonistes*, it is also easy to pinpoint verse forms and genres that heavily emulate biblical verse, as well as direct Biblical quotations and paraphrases.

In this chapter, I justify my definition of *Paradise Lost* as a literary translation by demonstrating how Milton uses one specific story (Gen. 1–3) as a platform to communicate an extensive portion of his theology and to gain new theological insights by interpreting the events of the rest of the Bible through that single story. For instance, Book 3 includes a straightforward declaration from God about the theological correctness of free will over predestination (*PL* 3.92–134), and in Books 11 and 12, the angel Michael unfolds Old and New Testament history to Adam. Milton was a writer who intensely and passionately studied the languages and theology of the Old and New Testament, so it is no surprise that they figure so heavily in his literary works. However, given Milton’s signature interpretive latitude, it quickly becomes clear that Milton strives to preserve the essence and meaning of the text rather than the literal words, forms, narrative order, and the like. Much like he says in reference to Wisdom when he calls her by the

name Urania in Book 7, Milton's biblical interpretations follow "the meaning, not the name" of the source texts (*PL* 7.5).<sup>58</sup>

Given Milton's attention to conveying biblical sense in his target texts, albeit in different forms from the source, to what extent can we call his latter works, in whole or in part, literary translations? And what effect do they, particularly the massively popular *Paradise Lost*, have as Bible translations? Milton makes the famous argument in his opening invocation to *Paradise Lost* that he seeks to "justify the ways of God to men" (*PL* 1.26). Milton takes the literal meaning of translation, the Latin *translatio* or "to carry across" very seriously.<sup>59</sup> In his opening, he calls on the Holy Spirit as Muse to help him narratively and theologically carry meaning across from the source text (the Bible) to the target text (*Paradise Lost*) to his early modern readers and those he imagined, and hoped for, far into the future. Incidentally, Milton's famous thesis comes just lines after he has embedded a translation. In the opening invocation, "it pursues / Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme" (*PL* 1.15-16) is almost a direct translation of Canto 1, lines 9–10 of Ludovico Ariosto's sixteenth-century Italian epic poem *Orlando Furioso*: "*Dirò [...] / cosa non detta in prosa mai, né in rima,*" which roughly translates to "I will say [...] things never said in prose nor in rhyme." Though this is not specifically an example of embedded Bible translation, Milton pointedly alerts readers to his translation acts in instances like this one.

Later, in Book 4, he makes another lesser-cited but no less poignant proposal about his poetry's power to translate. While detailing the flora and fauna of the sublime prelapsarian world, he suspends his description to ponder "But rather to tell how, if art could tell" before going on to detail more of Paradise (*PL* 4.236). The implicit question is, can art, specifically this poetry, accurately depict something as divine as places like Paradise and meanings like those in the Bible? To translate into the main concerns of this study, can this kind of God-inspired art, as Milton articulates is his thesis, reveal or translate something new about God to its readers?

We can draw one affirmative answer in Adam and Eve's morning hymn as a translation of Psalm 148, as others have more or less tentatively done in the past (*PL* 5.153–208). I consider this to be one of the more easily-recognizable moments of translation in the poem. Further, it provides a representative example of Milton's translation of the passages, stories, and concepts found in other parts of the Bible into the story of Genesis 1–3. Through instances like this one, we see how Milton creates, in effect, a translation of the entire Bible through the focalized moment his story elaborates. I classify this literary translation, which represents the rest of

Milton's translation work in *Paradise Lost* in microcosm, as an intergeneric translation, as Milton translates Hebrew poetry and prose into the Greek epic poem form. To underscore the significance of all of *Paradise Lost* as an authoritative translation, I identify the interpretive angle this specific passage provides for the theology of sung worship, particularly as *Paradise Lost* becomes canonized and effectively a Bible translation for Milton's readers. I use Milton's psalm translations to establish Milton's general translation framework, from which I argue for *Paradise Lost* as a translation along the same lines. I go on to identify what the morning hymn and its context reveals about Milton's theology before then describing what new insight it reveals to the poem's readers when received as an authoritative translation. Thus, I not only establish it as a viable translation but also demonstrate that, to Milton and his readers as well, this kind of artistic interpretation can tell of biblical truth in the same way a formal interlingual translation does.

### **The Fluidity of Early Modern Translation**

To claim with validity that Milton's hymning in *Paradise Lost* is a Bible translation, we must first establish what translation meant for Milton and his contemporaries. As discussed in Chapter One, the definition of translation was and is very fluid; this was overwhelmingly the case in early modern England. While there were ongoing debates about fidelity to the original, literal translation, and the like, there seemed also to be significant flexibility, particularly when it came to translations not claiming to be formal interlingual translations of the whole Bible, like those discussed in Chapter Two. The intermedial translation of the Psalms, as discussed in Chapter Three, only fortified such fluidity and flexibility. Whereas formal Bible translations were highly scrutinized, more literary translations, even of biblical texts, did not receive the same critical scrutiny, particularly as the controversy over Bible translation simmered down in the mid- to late-seventeenth century. Due to Milton's role in the Interregnum government and given his precarious political stance during the Restoration, literary evasion was one of the few options available to him in seeking to publish his religious thoughts.<sup>60</sup>

While most individual translators were left to articulate their own translation methodology, if they articulated one at all, several writers did theorize general translation philosophies during the period.<sup>61</sup> John Dryden's perspective, outlined briefly in Chapter One, has resonated with many translators at the time through today. Miltonist and translator John Hale

breaks down the translation categories Dryden articulated during the Restoration as follows: “Writing in 1680, Dryden distinguished three sorts of rendering into English: ‘metaphrase,’ ‘paraphrase,’ and ‘imitation.’ Metaphrase keeps close to the words, and word order, of the original. Paraphrase, to Dryden, means ‘translation with latitude, where the author is kept in view by the translator, so as never to be lost, but his words are not followed so strictly as his sense.’ Imitation, of course, is freer still: it verges on adaptation and recreation” (Hale, “Milton as a Translator” 240). By these definitions, *Paradise Lost* would fall into the final and most fluid category: imitation. While these classifications lend a relatively organized framework to translation, in practice, things were not necessarily as clear-cut as these formal designations might indicate. Much early modern translation ended up as some hybrid of Dryden’s formal types. Hannibal Hamlin discusses “Dryden’s taxonomy” and calls it a “belated attempt to organize a fairly haphazard practice in which ‘metaphrase,’ ‘paraphrase,’ ‘imitation,’ and other terms, such as ‘translation,’ and, most simply, ‘Englishing,’ were used interchangeably to describe acts that we would probably consider degrees of paraphrase” (*Psalm Culture* 8). The most basic definition of translation we can draw from this fluidity is that a translation is a text that accurately—though parameters for accuracy vary—interacts with its source to transfer its meaning, and thus make it more accessible, to target readers.

Furthermore, authorized Bible translators were, at first, far less concerned with the literary quality of biblical texts, largely subordinating aesthetic concerns to those of how the language would affect doctrinal implications and lay readers’ understanding (Norton 53–55). Hamlin asserts that the inattention to aesthetics in formal translations gave those translating biblical texts like the Psalms more literary latitude in their own approaches, particularly as they sought to experiment with aesthetic forms (*Psalm Culture* 10). One result of this approach were psalm translations that became “creative interpretation somewhat akin to the Hebrew tradition of midrash, the rabbinical explication of biblical stories by means of further stories” (Hamlin, *Psalm Culture* 11). Particularly in these freer, literary translations, then, individual biblical interpretation for the sake of creativity was a valid *modus operandi* for translation. When I refer to literary translation, I accord with Hamlin’s use of the word: “a primary concern with aesthetic criteria, as opposed to those of linguistic or doctrinal accuracy. This is not to say, of course, that poets were uninterested in accuracy, or that otherwise ‘literary’ versions of the Psalms could not sometimes be used in worship or devotional activities, nor that the experience of reading ‘non-

literary' translations could not include an aesthetic dimension" (*Psalm Culture* 11). As we will see, while Milton is a poet concerned with the aesthetic qualities of his work, his translations demonstrate thorough attention to linguistic and doctrinal concerns as well. The distinction is important to note since a literary approach to translation creates space for doctrinal and linguistic variation not available in strict interlingual translation. The interpretive freedom of ostensibly literary translation coupled with Milton's linguistic expertise and devoted theological study opens pathways for an authoritative translation, infused with Milton's own brand of theology.

### **Milton's Early Inspiration in Translating Psalms**

The Psalms was a particularly important Book of the Bible to Milton throughout his life and career. Looking to his translations of this Book can help us understand his intergeneric biblical translation work in *Paradise Lost*. Milton revered the written word as vital, in its original sense, an extension of the author's life, as he explains in his written speech against censorship, *Areopagitica*: "Books are not absolutely dead things, but doe contain a potencie of life in them to be as active as that soule was whose progeny they are [...] hee who destroys a good Booke, kills reason it selfe, kills the image of God." He goes on to say that "Many a man lives burden to the Earth; but a good Booke is the pretious life-blood of a master spirit, imbalmd and treaur'd up on purpose to a life beyond life" (185).

As a poet and Christian, he saw part of the value of the written word as its ability to aid in experiencing and processing the highs and lows of his life, spiritually, vocationally, physically, and otherwise. It is no wonder that he was inspired by the legend of a very similar poet from ages past, who uses the verses of psalms to put words to his joy, distress, gratitude, praise, and more: David.<sup>62</sup> Mary Ann Radzinowicz makes a clear case for the intimacy Milton felt with this particular Book of the Bible in her research on the thematic and aesthetic connections between the Hebrew Psalms, Milton's psalm translations, and his epic poems *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*. Milton sees multiple layers of personal meaning and significance in this poetry. First, according to Radzinowicz, he sees the Psalms as a narrative arc of the human spiritual journey: "the generation of each psalm from an occasion in the life of its speaker gave him examples of the impassioned voices in which human beings record significant moments in their life's journey. He thoughts its [the Psalms'] whole course showed the power of experience to ripen the human soul" (3). He also sees in the Psalms a model for his poetry: "Psalm reading was of enormous

value to Milton in showing him models both of intense lyricism and of comprehensive heroism, just as it was of value in showing him models of generic multivocality and of an intellectually unified journey toward abstract comprehensive knowledge” (Radzinowicz 6). Milton conveys both the theological and aesthetic significance of the Psalms through the character of Jesus in *Paradise Regained*. Right after Jesus has argued that classical works of philosophy do not contain “True wisdom,” he points to the Psalms as an ideal of beauty and wisdom:

where so soon  
 As in our native language can I find  
 That solace? All our Law and story strewed  
 With hymns, our Psalms with artful terms inscribed,  
 Our Hebrew songs and harps in Babylon,  
 That pleased so well our victors’ ear [...]  
 In them is plainest taught, and easiest learnt,  
 What makes a nation happy, and keeps it so,  
 What ruins kingdoms, and lays cities flat;  
 These only with our Law best form a king. (*PR* 4.318, 332–37, 361–64)

Milton placed a good deal of significance in the content and style of the Psalms. They can be considered as a kind of anchor for Milton’s spiritual and professional life.

Milton directly engages with the Psalms through his early psalm translations, but the form of the psalm also heavily influences his later epic poems. We can use examples from Milton’s psalm translations to construct his translation philosophy and begin to contextualize his translation of Psalm 148 in Book 5 of *Paradise Lost*. Milton’s first recorded works of psalm translation are his translations of Psalms 114 and 136, which he conducted at the age of fifteen (Norton 179). David Norton points out that, even at such a young age, Milton “show[s] a strong desire to rewrite the originals” (179). Hale agrees, indicating that the young Milton is developing a translation philosophy that links the practice of “translation” with “imaginative discovery” and “make[s] use of the freedom which imitation offers” (“Milton as a Translator” 246).

We can see this methodology in action if we compare these psalms to the corresponding psalms in the KJV, with which Milton was quite familiar and which was written to be a simple yet linguistically and doctrinally equivalent translation of the original Hebrew. For example, Psalm 114.3a in the KJV reads simply: “The sea saw *it*, and fled.” Milton’s 1624 version



expands the line to “That saw the troubled sea, and shivering fled, And sought to hide his froth-becurlèd head Low in the earth” (“A Paraphrase on Psalm 114” lines 7–9).<sup>63</sup> Milton draws out the moment with an extended personification of the sea, a “he” with a “head,” resulting in a more interpretive and sensory image than the image of the sea in the KJV. His interpretation and expansion accords with the creative freedom involved in literary translation. Later in the psalm, Milton demonstrates his proclivity toward theological adjustment and interpretation. The KJV’s Psalm 114.7 reads: “Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob.” Milton transforms this into: “Shake earth, and at the presence be aghast Of him that ever was, and ay shall last” (“A Paraphrase on Psalm 114” lines 15–16). Here, the heritage implied in “God of Jacob” is replaced by the more expansive theological idea of God’s eternity, which steps out of the strictly Hebrew context to encompass all nations under the kingdom of God. This contains nothing heretical. Rather, it exemplifies a young Milton’s willingness to adjust or clarify doctrinal implications in his translations. In this case, such changes may be attributed to experimentation with words in order to attain certain poetic effects (i.e. “be aghast” rhyming with “ay shall last”) rather than a specific theological commentary. Most importantly, his flexibility with the source text of Psalm 114 demonstrates the beginnings of Milton’s developing philosophy of translation.

Milton seems to have been uniquely drawn to Psalm 114, as he returns to it years later in 1634, this time producing an apparent outlier among his other psalm translations: he chooses to render this version of Psalm 114 into ancient Greek. Miltonist John Leonard notes that this seems to be the poem Milton was referring to in a letter to Alexander Gill that says he had “recently translated one of the psalms into Greek heroic verse” (964). Hale indicates that Milton gives no concrete reason for his translation, making it perhaps more of a spontaneous creative project, opposed to other projects where Milton indicates a clear goal and motivation (“Milton as a Translator” 250). Milton’s passion for and expertise in Greek and in classical poetry, coupled with his demonstrated desire to exercise his creativity with translation, makes his fusion of Greek and Hebrew forms a logical, if unexpected, choice. Hale posits that Milton, ever-deliberate in all literary choices, saw in this Greek form an opportunity to marry his stylistic and thematic desires for the poem (“Milton as a Translator” 250–51). Hale also points out that the choice to render biblical material into Greek heroic verse serves as an interesting foreshadowing of his later biblical epics (“Milton as a Translator” 251). Milton uses this form to foreground and expand

some aspects of the psalm, making this another of Milton's creative interpretations with potential theological implications.<sup>64</sup>

Comparing some representative verses in Milton's version to the corresponding verses in the KJV elucidates Milton's translation philosophy. The KJV's Psalm 114.1–2 reads: "When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language; Judah was his sanctuary, *and* Israel his dominion." This version foregrounds two key narratological and theological concepts. It underscores the movement of the people by repeating the concept of leaving a foreign nation. It also highlights the role of God among the people by repeating two ways that God interacts with them, seeking "sanctuary" and exerting "dominion." Milton's version reads, "When the children of Israel, when the glorious tribes of Jacob left the land of Egypt, a hateful land of barbarous speech, then indeed were the sons of Judah the one devout race, and among these peoples Almighty God was king" ("Psalm CXIV" lines 1–4). In this translation of Psalm 114, Milton chooses to foreground the community of the devout by repeating terms referring to kinship: "children," "tribes," "sons," "devout race," and "peoples." Hale claims that Milton's invocation of community accords with the use of heroic verse, which was often employed to describes epic feats of men and their comrades and creates a "vision of the life under God of the heroic community" ("Milton as a Translator" 251). Again, Milton expands the original for an interpretive purpose: here, the emphasis of an honorable community of spiritual devotees, perhaps a vision for his own life and community. The translation demonstrates Milton's proclivity toward what Hale calls "highly charged experimenting" in translation ("Milton as a Translator" 256). Its experimentation in genre, form, and length coupled with its innovation in content and theme, prefigure the translation creativity and flexibility that he would later employ in his translation endeavor in *Paradise Lost*.

Milton's freer translation methodology appears to undergo a slight yet significant shift in his mid-seventeenth-century psalm transitions. He translates two series of eight psalms, Psalms 80–88 in 1648 and Psalms 1–8 in 1653. Norton indicates that both these series demonstrate "an increasing fidelity both to the originals and to the KJB, and have much in common with the literal versifications that so dominated English psalmody" (179). Psalms 80–88 specifically appear to be versifications into the common meter, as was used in early modern psalters. As discussed in Chapter Three, translating psalms into the common meter, often to be used in church liturgy, was a popular early modern translation practice. It is unclear why exactly Milton

might have forayed into metrical translation like this, aside from wanting to take part in the popular practice.<sup>65</sup> Hale posits they may have been occasional translations of a “civic-minded” Milton in response to the Westminster Assembly’s call for “pious bards” to write new versions of the psalms for use in liturgical worship (“Milton as a Translator” 247). He also speculates that Milton may have found these nationalistic psalms about Israel particularly meaningful in the midst of the political unrest in his own country during the English Civil War (Hale, “Why Did Milton Translate” 61).

Regardless of the reason, Milton did perform what was a largely popular form of translation. He specifically labels his Psalms 80–88 “Nine of the Psalms done into metre, wherein all but what is in a different character, are the very words of the text, translated from the original” (Milton, “April, 1648, J. M.” 97). Milton is conscious of his translation methodology being a bit more literal, more aligned with a common metrical translation method, and a bit less experimental than translations like the Greek Psalm 114. His claims to fidelity are somewhat corroborated by a comparison between a portion of the KJV’s Psalm 80, the Sternhold and Hopkins Psalm 80, and Milton’s Psalm 80 (listed one after the other for ease of comparison):

Thou has brought a vine out of Egypt: thou has cast out the heathen and planted it.  
(KJV, Psalm 80.8)

From Egypt, where it grew not well  
though brought a vine fulle deare:

The heathen folke thou didst expel,  
And though didst plant it there. (Sternhold, Hopkins, and Others, Psalm 80, verse 9)

A vine from Egypt thou hast brought,  
*The free love made it thine,*  
And drov’st out nations *proud and haught*

To plant this *lovely* vine. (Milton, Psalm 80, lines 33–36)

Milton’s version conveys the basic content of the verse from the KJV: a vine brought out of Egypt that God planted where “heathens” had been, a symbol for God’s deliverance of Israel from their enslavement in Egypt. He also matches the meter and rhyme of the Sternhold and Hopkins verse. The Sternhold and Hopkins psalter expands the content of the verse, presumably to fit the meter, by adding the concept that the vine “grew not well” in Egypt—a reference to

Israel's slavery—and that the vine was “fulle deare”—a reference to the people of Israel being dear to God. Milton likewise makes additions, particularly the addition of the line “Thy free love made it thine.” Milton provides a more theologically interpretive expansion of the original than the Sternhold and Hopkins psalter, as he argues that God's love, freely given and freely accepted, is what makes someone part of God's people.<sup>66</sup> This example accords with Hale's assessment that while, yes, Milton does perhaps reign in his interpretation in these psalms, he still provides his own additions, “which makes them an intriguing combination of metaphrase with imitation” (“Milton as a Translator” 240). Norton similarly sees the number of additions that make their way into Milton's translations and comments that “the sheer amount of italics—which does not represent the full extent of paraphrasing—suggests a continued difficulty with the bareness of the text” (179). Even in Milton's ostensibly more metaphrasal translation, then, he maintains the inventiveness that characterizes his translation methodology as a whole.

Based on these key examples from Milton's more formal interlingual translations of psalms, we can derive a translation *modus operandi* to apply to the literary translation of the Bible in *Paradise Lost*. It becomes clear that, no matter what Milton claims, he revises the Bible in order to justify, often in drastic ways. All translators interpret a text as they translate, but some use their creative and interpretive license to reimagine and recontextualize more than others.<sup>67</sup> Such translators create something very new in their translations by altering genre, style, and content to fit—that is to justify—their creative, theological, and political interpretations and goals. Norton goes so far as to say that Milton found it “difficult though not impossible to accept biblical literature, in the original or in translation, as it was” (179). Perhaps this is because of the personal relationship he felt with the text; perhaps it is because of his skill as a poet in his own right. Alternately, perhaps it is because of his distrust of the institutionalized Church and his understanding of the corruptibility of translations. Angelica Duran reminds us that “Milton acknowledges the prevalence of tampered works by Church Fathers,” which he scathingly references in both *Of Reformation* and *De Doctrina Christiana* (30). Milton's concern for conveying theological understanding untainted by corrupt politics guided much of his work, especially later in life, and translation presented him another venue in which to do so. Whatever the reason, as Hale points out, “he is not self-effacing, even as a translator. His performances are like his attitudes: changing, personal, experimental, and, sometimes, passionate” (240). Milton seems convinced of his unique potential in his specific context to make the Bible authoritatively

and accurately speak something new, or at least speak it in a new way to his early modern readers. In this way, he defines his role as translator as someone aware enough of their unique voice and experience to render a source text into a rich and meaningful target text for their audience. In combining the above attitudes and features, Milton's Bible translations overall adhere to the following principles: 1) aesthetic and linguistic experimentation that leads to novel forms and creative interpretations and additions, 2) theological interpretation, apparently based on his own study of the Old and New Testament, 3) expansion of the original rather than contraction, and 4) a persistent infusion of himself into his work.

### ***Paradise Lost* as Bible Translation**

Supported by decades of poetic, linguistic, and theological experience and translation practice, Milton builds off of his work with the Psalms and takes on the monumental task of “justifying the ways of God to men” with *Paradise Lost* via his creativity, spirituality, and biblical knowledge. For him to outright call this work a translation would have required an audacity greater than he had shown in his radical life and works. As discussed in Chapter Two, the scrutiny on formal translations was intense, even suffocating for translators. By choosing the broad genre of “poem” or even more broadly in the opening invocation “advent’rous song” to “[pursue] / Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme,” he can work around the scrutiny while still creating a text of aesthetic merit and spiritual weight (*PL* 1.13, 15–16).<sup>68</sup> Radzinowicz sees the combination of these uniquely Miltonic features thus: “each epic [*Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*] reveals both a powerful, unifying, personal impulse urging Milton to express in poetry a lyrical act of worship and an equally powerful, comprehensive, impersonal impulse urging him to express poetry in a fullness of knowledge” (4). In the opening invocations of both epics, the narrator references his singing, creating out of Milton's poetry a continuous act of sung worship. In *Paradise Lost*, the narrator labels his performance an “advent’rous song,” and he carries this sung worship into the opening of *Paradise Regained*, when he says “I who erewhile the happy garden sung, / By one man's disobedience lost, now sing / Recovered Paradise to all mankind (*PL* 1.13; *PR* 1.1–3). If we consider *Paradise Lost* as a translation, it becomes a translation that marries the aesthetics of literary translation (Milton's “lyrical act of worship”), the performative model of sung worship, and the linguistic and doctrinal scrupulousness of formal interlingual Bible translations, reflective of Milton's desire to convey “fullness of

knowledge.” This marriage, built on the methodical treatment of form, source content, and exegetical purpose combine to create a solid translation framework for his literary yet biblically conscious, even authoritative, rendering of his source texts.

*Paradise Lost* is attuned to the stylistic forms and principles in the poetry of the Bible.<sup>69</sup> As Milton describes in the prefatory paragraph “The Verse,” *Paradise Lost* is written in unrhymed English heroic verse, emulating the verse form of Greek and Latin epics (119). Outwardly, this would seem decidedly un-biblical, as these epics fall outside of genres found in the Bible. While Milton, being well-versed in classical poetry, was certainly inspired by the form of that poetry, Radzinowicz claims that his veneration of classical poetry also points to an appreciation for even older Hebrew poetry, even though many of its stylistic features were not fully understood or agreed upon at the time (119). She claims: “Milton once again reads through the classical writers whom he admires back to the previous excellences of Hebrew verse; when he says his verse is without rhyme like that of Homer and Virgil because the old classical practice is freer and more beautiful than the modern ‘jingling sound of like endings,’ he suggests that the imitation of scriptural rhythm is also a liberation” (Radzinowicz 120). She goes on to elaborate upon this point by providing examples of the poetic features of the Hebrew psalms that Milton incorporates into his own poetry, for example parallelism—the echoes of sounds, similar words, or similar themes throughout a psalm (119). Milton’s Jesus fully articulates his thoughts on the primacy of Hebrew poetry in *Paradise Regained*. A version of this passage is mentioned earlier in the chapter, but I have copied the relevant portion here again for ease:

where so soon

As in our native language [Hebrew] can I find  
That solace? All our Law and story strewed  
With hymns, our Psalms with artful terms inscribed,  
Our Hebrew songs and harps in Babylon,  
That pleased so well our victors’ ear, declare  
That rather Greece from us these arts derived. (*PR* 4.332–38)

While Milton utilizes a Greek form, in *Paradise Lost* as well as *Paradise Regained*, it is not that he considers it superior to Hebrew. Rather, it fits the less scrutinized literary form of what he is creating, an epic. The biblical language of God is the ultimate source of the form in which he writes. Moreover, the epic form would have been recognizable to early modern readers familiar

with classical poetry but also unexpected in its use of biblical, as opposed to classical, content. For readers more familiar with other verse forms, the movement away from end rhyme would have been startling as well. His choice to use Greek heroic verse, then, becomes an opportunity to use genre to grab the attention of his early modern readers as he translates from a genre that was not fully understood at the time.

Radzinowicz also delineates the different genres that Milton finds in the poetry of the Psalms and points to examples of his emulations of those genres throughout *Paradise Lost*, such as the morning hymn (4). While the use of these poetic psalm forms does not necessarily concur with the form of Milton's source material of Genesis 1–3, his attention to these forms implies an attempted fidelity to the use the limited early modern knowledge of Hebrew form in his own poetic context. His target text of poetry remains faithful to the source text: he emulates aspects of the poetry of the source culture to convey the content, making for a more imitative form of translation.

In addition to considering how to transfer form, a translator is expected to be intentional about carrying across source content into the target text, an expectation Milton fulfills. Radzinowicz and Norton both demonstrate the connection between *Paradise Lost* and the KJV, the “authorized” Bible translation of Milton's day. Radzinowicz describes these resonances as “verbal echoes,” whereas Norton goes a step further to indicate that Milton's text exhibits “intima[cy]” and “open familiarity” with the KJV (9; 175–76). There are moments of direct equivalence between the KJV and *Paradise Lost*, as when Adam explains to God why he ate the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. In *Paradise Lost*, this reads: “This woman whom thou mad'st to be my help [...] She gave me of the tree, and I did eat” (*PL* 10.137, 143). Genesis 3.12 in the KJV reads quite similarly: “And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest *to be* with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.” While the first portions are only mostly alike, the latter portions are identical. Milton thus nods to an authoritative Bible translation as part of his source material. However, as a “faithful and formidable” scholar of both Hebrew and Greek, he primarily draws his content from the original sources, as he does with his formal interlingual translations as well (Norton 176). Many formal Bible translators of his day had a similar methodology, drawing from Greek and Hebrew originals along with the Latin and English translations of their predecessors, in order to arrive at the most accurate and accessible translations. Milton's treatment of his source texts thus aligns with these translation practices,

even if they are put to the use of creating a target text not openly heralded as a formal bible translation.

Translators who articulate some kind of philosophy and methodology often express a clear purpose in their particular translation, something that Milton also conveys in his rendering of *Paradise Lost*. Milton succinctly describes this in his opening invocation, which we can envision as a kind of translator's preface, especially paired with his comments on "The Verse." A translator's preface typically points to the innovation of a particular translation, and Milton claims that his "advent'rous song [...] pursues / Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme" Milton's word choice in "things" is vague, reflecting an experimental spirit, which is apparent in his poetry, his politics, his theology, his storytelling, and, as discussed in previous sections, his translation methodology. Because of this, I interpret "Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme" to encompass his particular Bible translation approach. Directly following his claim to innovation, Milton articulates what he innovates in: "to assert Eternal Providence, And justify the ways of God to men" (*PL* 1.25–26). The result is a two-pronged translation purpose: to create a new song innovative in both form and biblical interpretation and to provide a practical theological guide to his readers.

Radzinowicz reads Milton's purpose in *Paradise Lost* as creating a model of worship, citing Milton's attentiveness to psalm genres as evidence of this: "The large mimetic scope afforded Milton in *Paradise Lost* only partly explains the richer presence of psalm genres in *Paradise Lost*. Just as important is Milton's awareness of the interconnections among psalm genres as acts of worship. Milton not only draws on lyric at affective points in the narrative mode of *Paradise Lost*, both to vary and to structure it, he also shapes the epic itself into a mode of worship" (137). His multiple invocations of the Holy Spirit throughout the text further solidify his poetry as a serious devotional act (*PL* 1.1–26; 3.1–55; 7.1–39; 9.1–47). In these invocations, he articulates a sense of the stakes for his audience in addition to himself: wanting to articulate these truths to humankind. He uses the invocations to center himself and the text around a connection to the Holy Spirit, which he believes allows him to convey truth.

Effective translators demonstrate an awareness of their context and audience, as Milton shows here and in other biblical translations. In considering his purpose for his translation, he engages deeply with some of the key concerns of his age, from cosmology to technology, placing his source text of the Bible into his target context. Radzinowicz describes his consideration of the



target audience thus: “He designs his diffuse epic [*Paradise Lost*] to engage the interest of the seventeenth-century reader in geography, medicine, astronomy, physics, physiology, and psychology quite as much as in theology and philosophy” (170). In attempting to “justify the ways of God to men,” Milton also highlights his purpose in making theology logical and accessible to his target audience. In this matter, I concur with Achsah Guibbory, who says that Milton is not just interested in expansion for expansion’s sake but rather for the spiritual edification of his readers: “Milton seemingly feels impelled to fill in the lacunae of the biblical story not just to enrich his poetry or to give range to his imagination, but also so that the Fall can make better sense, so there is a logic, a reason, and psychological plausibility” (131). As his frequent invocation of the Holy Spirit would suggest, Milton seems compelled by his desire to bring biblical understanding to his audience. The popular appeal of poetry at this time makes the poetic form an obvious vessel through which to do so. Milton’s contemporary Abraham Cowley held a very Miltonic idea of poetry like *Paradise Lost*, that, through it “men will be reformed and [...] the kingdom of God established by the reunification of poetry and religion [...] literary pleasure will lead to religious improvement” (Norton 174). Though Milton was already well into his literary career when Cowley articulated this philosophy, Cowley was supposedly one of the “three English poets Milton most approved of,” indicating a likely kindship with his ideas (Norton 175). Milton’s poetry translations, then, provide multilayered pathways to engage the concerns of his seventeenth-century audience by providing them a new means to understand and engage with God in both ancient and contemporary concerns.

Finally, Milton demonstrates a clear sense of his authority to interpret and communicate (read: translate) biblical texts and theology to his audience. In his treatise on Christian doctrine, *De Doctrina Christiana*, Milton creates a basis on which he, along with any other Christian, can claim scriptural authority, using biblical evidence to claim that “every believer has a right to interpret the Scriptures for himself, inasmuch as he has the Spirit for his guide and the mind of Christ is in him” (*A Treatise On Christian Doctrine* 472). Official Bible translators generally needed to claim some type of biblical authority, which Milton does here. He continually turns to the Holy Spirit for guidance as he seeks to “assert Eternal Providence” in his poem, which, in his view, is the most important prerequisite for communicating biblical truth. This is in addition to his already demonstrated mastery of the original biblical texts, which began in a concerted study of them in his boyhood (Norton 176). We even find justification for his inventiveness as a

translator in his treatise *Eikonolastes*: ““it is not hard for any man who hath a Bible in his hands to borrow good words and holy sayings in abundance; but to make them his own is a work of grace only from above”” (as cited in Norton 182). Thus, through a combination of spiritual inspiration, God-given creativity, and a lifetime of accumulated knowledge, Milton sets himself up as a superior translator of God’s word in the Bible, which is made manifest in *Paradise Lost*.

### **Psalm 148, Adam and Eve’s Morning Hymn, and Milton’s Worship Theology**

Adam and Eve’s morning hymn illustrates Milton’s translation practice in microcosm, particularly his creative and theological interpretations that provide an unorthodox theology for his audience.<sup>70</sup> If this is considered a Bible translation, the different model of worship depicted here goes beyond creative play to convey an authoritative alternative to institutional worship. Indeed, Milton’s picture of worship is perhaps the most authoritative, as it imagines pure worship in the perfection of prelapsarian Paradise. This passage in particular takes on the authority of translation in its comparative equivalence to an existing psalm: Psalm 148.<sup>71</sup> Despite the latitude Milton takes in this act of translation, Norton places the Psalm 148 translation in the same category as Milton’s other psalm translations. Comparing this psalm to his comparatively more literal translations of Psalms 1–8 and 80–88, he says, “none of either of these groups of Psalms is a notable success, and it is no surprise to find that his last Psalm paraphrase, Adam and Eve’s dawn hymn (*Paradise Lost*, book V: 153–208), is so loosely based on Psalm 148 and the song of the three children in Daniel as hardly to be a paraphrase at all” (Norton 180).<sup>72</sup> Though, as Norton attests, it is a rather loose translation, I read it as a psalm translation.

The two passages appear quite different at first, but their areas of overlap and of difference both point to the translator’s hand. Milton’s expansion of biblical material is the most apparent feature to observe between these two translations; the KJV psalm is 14 verse lines, whereas the hymn in *Paradise Lost* is 55 verse lines. Despite this disparity, both follow a more-or-less similar pattern. Below, I break down Psalm 148 in the KJV and the morning hymn into like portions, analyzing the relationships between each. The KJV verses are predetermined; I interpret verse breaks for the morning hymn based on thematic and theological connections with the KJV.

<sup>1</sup>Praise ye the Lord. Praise ye the Lord from the heavens: praise him in the heights. (KJV, Psalm 148.1)

<sup>1</sup>These are thy glorious works, Parent of good,  
 Almighty, thine this universal frame,  
 Thus wondrous fair; thyself how wondrous then!  
 Unspeakable, who sitt'st above these heavens  
 To us invisible or dimly seen  
 In these thy lowest works, yet these declare  
 Thy goodness beyond thought, and power divine. (*PL* 5.153–59)

Psalm 148.1 in the KJV opens the psalm with the command to praise. Verse 1 of the morning hymn is similar, focusing on human worshippers' compulsion to praise; however, it also becomes more active as it describes Adam and Eve actually participating in praise rather than simply commanding it to be done.

<sup>2</sup>Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts.  
<sup>3</sup>Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light.  
<sup>4</sup>Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens.  
 (KJV, Psalm 148.2-4)

<sup>2</sup>Speak ye who best can tell, ye sons of light,  
 Angels, for ye behold him, and with songs  
 And choral symphonies, day without night,  
 Circle his Throne rejoicing, ye in Heav'n,  
 On earth join all ye creatures to extol  
 Him first, him last, him midst, and without end.  
<sup>3-4</sup>Fairest of stars, last in the train of night,  
 If better thou belong not to the dawn,  
 Sure pledge of day, that crownst the smiling morn  
 With thy bright circlet, praise him in thy sphere  
 While day arises, that sweet hour of prime.  
 Thou sun, of this great world both eye and soule,  
 Acknowledge him thy greater, sound his praise  
 In thy eternal course, both when thou climb'st,  
 And when high noon hast gained, and when thou fall'st.  
 Moon, that now meet'st the orient Sun, now fli'st

With the fixed stars, fixed in their orb that flies,  
And ye five other wand'ring Fires that move  
In mystic dance not without song. (*PL* 5.160–78)

Both psalms call the angels to praise God in verse 2, followed by the sun, moon, stars, and heavens more generally in verses 3 and 4. However, Milton's version extrapolates relationships, such as calling the angels "Sons of light" versus the more militant "hosts," and intensifies the literary tropes, such as the repetition of "Him first, him last, him midst."

<sup>5</sup>Let them praise the name of the Lord: for he commanded, and they were created.

<sup>6</sup>He hath also stablished them for ever and ever: he hath made a decree which shall not pass. (KJV, Psalm 148.5-6)

<sup>5</sup>resound

His praise who out of darkness called up light. (*PL* 5.178–79)

In verse 5, both versions move to a reminder of God's creative power as a reason for praise, but Milton chooses to convey God's creative acts with the reference to a specific moment of creation: when God calls light out of darkness, a more direct reference to Genesis 1.3–4. A connection between verse 6 of the KJV version and *Paradise Lost* is less clear.<sup>73</sup> Milton's Psalm 148 seems to jump from verse 5 to verse 7 without a specific reference to Creation as eternal. Alternatively, the later references to "Perpetual Circle" and "ceaseless change" could hint at the eternality of God's decree in verse 6.

<sup>7</sup>Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps:

<sup>8</sup>Fire, and hail; snow, and vapours; stormy wind fulfilling his word:

<sup>9</sup>Mountains, and all hills; fruitful trees, and all cedars:

<sup>10</sup>Beasts, and all cattle; creeping things, and flying fowl.

<sup>11</sup>Kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth:

<sup>12</sup>Both young men, and maidens; old men, and children:

<sup>13</sup>Let them praise the name of the Lord: for his name alone is excellent; his glory is above the earth and heaven.

<sup>14</sup>He also exalteth the horn of his people, the praise of all his saints; even of the children of Israel, a people near unto him. Praise ye the Lord. (KJV, Psalm 148.7-12)

<sup>7-8</sup>Air, and ye elements the eldest birth

Of Nature's womb, that in quaternion run  
 Perpetual circle multiform; and mix  
 And nourish all things, let your ceaseless change  
 Vary to our great Maker still new praise.  
 Ye mists and exhalations that now rise  
 From hill or steaming lake, dusky or grey,  
 Till the sun paint your fleecy skirts with gold,  
 In honour to the world's great Author rise,  
 Whether to deck with clouds the uncoloured sky,  
 Or wet the thirsty earth with falling showers,  
 Rising or falling still advance his praise.  
 His praise ye winds, that from four quarters blow,  
 Breathe soft or loud; <sup>9</sup>and wave your tops, ye pines,  
 With every plant, in sign of worship wave.  
 Fountains and ye, that warble, as ye flow,  
 Melodious murmurs, warbling tune his praise.  
 Join voices all ye living souls; <sup>10</sup>ye birds,  
 That singing up to heaven gate ascend,  
 Bear on your wings and in your notes his praise.  
 Ye that in waters glide, and ye that walk  
 The earth, and stately tread, or lowly creep;  
<sup>13</sup>Witness if I be silent, morn or even,  
 To hill, or valley, fountain, or fresh shade  
 Made vocal by my song, and taught his praise.  
<sup>14</sup>Hail universal Lord, be bounteous still  
 To give us only good; and if the night  
 Have gathered aught of evil or concealed,  
 Disperse it, as now light dispels the dark. (*PL* 5.180–208)

In verses 7–10, both versions embark on a list of the aspects of nature that are to praise God, with the KJV ending with humankind. This is where we see the biggest difference, as the morning hymn makes no references to the “kings,” “princes,” “judges,” “young men,”

“maidens,” “old men,” or “children” of the KJV’s verses 11 and 12. Here, the logic of the narrative accounts for the adjusted translation. At this moment in the story, Adam and Eve are the only humans, and they are in the act of praise. Not only are they unaware of what a “king” or “judge” is, they do not need to call any other humans to worship because they, the only humans, are both worshipping. Their omission of “Israel” in verse 14 comes from a similar logic: Israel does not yet exist. Thus, while Milton obviously makes some intense expansion and interpretation so as to render very little linguistic equivalence, he actually maintains a fairly close thematic equivalence, with areas of non-equivalence aligning with the logic of the target text. With this frame in mind, his translation act becomes much more similar to his earlier psalm translations.

In addition to this thematic alignment, there is also an alignment of genre between Psalm 148 and the morning hymn. According to Milton’s system of psalm classification, there are six genres of psalms in the Psalms: hymns (praise), laments, wisdom songs, prophetic psalms, blessing psalms, and thanksgiving (Radzinowicz 135).<sup>74</sup> Milton’s treatment of Psalm 148 accords with his previously established classification system, in which Psalm 148 is considered a hymn (Radzinowicz 154). In Milton’s own study, he concludes that hymnal psalms are “Addresses to God [...] frequently accompanied by singing, and hymns in honour of the divine name” (*A Treatise on Christian Doctrine* 577). In *Paradise Lost*, the morning hymn lauds God’s character and Creation and coincides with morning worship, similar to matins, a canonical hour of worship in the Church of England. The introduction of the morning hymn makes it clear that Adam and Eve are, in fact, singing when the narrator says, “such prompt eloquence Flowed from their lips [...] More tuneable than needed lute or harp [...] and they thus began” (*PL* 5.149–52). Through these generic and thematic equivalences, then, we can read Milton’s morning hymn as a biblical translation offering a new reading of a particular worship poem.

The mode of worship offered by this translation becomes especially charged with significance when we consider the effect that Milton’s personal theology has on this translation, particularly via the way the psalm is framed in the text. Much of Milton’s theology throughout his life centered around the freedom of individual Christians outside the church establishment. He understood the Holy Spirit working within individuals as the ultimate source of authority in spiritual matters, as long as individuals also pursued a study of the Old and New Testament. The authority of the individual as interpreter was incredibly empowering for him. As Radzinowicz

comments, “he called this manner of breaking out of the hermeneutic circle manly freedom; he thought the alternative of submitting interpretation to any established church to be childish and monkish” (25). Furthermore, especially later in his life when he wrote his great epic, Milton developed a strong disdain for institutionalized religion, following the Restoration of the monarchy and the subsequent reinforcement of its role as the head of the institutionalized church. Guibbory contends that Milton seems to have ultimately concluded that “clergy were all after power, glory; all sought to restrict the spirit of God and restrain the conscience” (138). She goes so far as to say that *Paradise Lost* “might well be seen as a meditation on the varieties, prevalence, and persistence of idolatry and false worship, which Milton characteristically associates with material buildings, formal ritual, and institutions” (Guibbory 138). The morning hymn may thus serve as a Milton’s answer to this “false worship.”

Milton articulates some of these key aspects of this theology in *De Doctrina Christiana*. He scripturally supports the authority of the individual Christian over the church, contending that “with regard to the visible church, which is also proposed as a criterion of faith, it is evident that, since the ascension of Christ, the *pillar and ground of the truth* has not uniformly been the church, but the hearts of believers, which are properly *the house and church of the living God*” (Milton, *A Treatise on Christian Doctrine* 477). Here, he redefines the concept of the church not as a social and political institution but as an individual condition, without the prescriptive form of the hierarchical Church of England. Similar beliefs extend into his theology of worship, which he believes should not be constrained by form or timing. He calls “set forms of worship” “superfluous” because “with Christ for our master, and the Holy Spirit for our assistant in prayer, we can have no need of any human aid in either respect” (Milton, *A Treatise on Christian Doctrine* 562). He also invokes a time before the Law of Moses was given to the Hebrew people when worship “was not confined to any definite place,” and says that now, once again out from under the law, “any convenient place is proper” for worship (Milton, *A Treatise on Christian Doctrine* 600). As a ready-made act of worship (a praise psalm), the morning hymn modeled after Psalm 148 offers a logical foundation upon which to articulate this theology and propose an alternative to the worship prescribed by the Church he saw as corrupt.

Milton creates his alternative by supplementing the biblically authoritative psalm translation of Psalm 148 with theologically prescriptive and emotionally compelling context for his alternative. First, the environment of worship is prelapsarian Paradise, which he describes in

sublime detail in Books 4 and 5 in particular. In the Christian ideal, this is a space uncorrupted by sin and in perfect alignment with the will of God. This pre-existing context coupled with Milton's own aesthetic and theological infusions into the description of Paradise establish it as a theological, moral, and aesthetic ideal, a true church space. Subconsciously for readers, then, whatever takes place in such a space must also be ideal. Norton cites this as a key reason for Milton's incredible expansion of Psalm 148: "The looseness is far greater than adaptation to the narrative context would require: it is principally the result of Milton's need to create with all due eloquence a fitting example of prelapsarian hymnody. Here the received art of the Bible is, in effect, rejected for Milton's own conception of appropriate art" (Norton 180). Milton is conscious of using his art to set up this biblical ideal. Within this framework, he prescribes what ideal worship looks like in the prologue to the hymn:

Lowly they bowed adoring, and began  
Their orisons, each morning duly paid  
In various style, for neither various style  
Nor holy rapture wanted they to praise  
Their Maker, in fit strains pronounced or sung  
Unmeditated, such prompt eloquence  
Flowed from their lips, in prose or numerous verse,  
More tuneable then needed lute or harp  
To add more sweetness, and they thus began. (*PL* 5.144–52)

Radzinowicz observes that it is in passages like this one that Milton's "Puritan dislike of fixed forms of worship" becomes most apparent (135). Milton underscores the spontaneity and variability of acceptable worship, saying that, in their daily praise, Adam and Eve make use of "various style," reinforcing Milton's theology that all spiritually-inspired worship carries spiritual authority. This "various style" also reinforces and justifies Milton's own demonstrated stylistic variety in his translation. This could also provide evidence for why he varies Psalm 148 so much in his translation; he himself is demonstrating that, even within a certain genre and translation context, variation in style still reflects the essence of the biblical text. Milton also calls Adam and Eve's worship "unmeditated," or spontaneous, claiming the authority of the praise that springs from the hearts of the devout. Reinforcing the value of spontaneity in worship, the invocation of Book 9 calls the narrator's work "unpremeditated verse" inspired in him by the



Holy Spirit in dreams or in the moment (*PL* 9.20–24). Guibbory rightly notes that Milton’s cumulative effect here is to demonstrate how “unfallen, true prayer is spontaneous, inspired, from the heart, a debt of gratitude cheerfully paid. It is not, Milton implies, like the formal prayers of the Church of England, or Jewish or Catholic liturgies” (136).

This spontaneous prayer, moreover, is unified. The text implies that Adam and Eve sing together, reinforcing spiritual community in the worship act. Finally, the text indicates that Adam and Eve sing their hymn in “the field,” reinforcing the irrelevance of an established church framework, represented by the church building, which, of course, did not exist in the completely natural Paradise (*PL* 5.136). Both the communal nature of their hymning and its accessibility outside the confines of a church reinforce what Milton’s readers would have also experienced in the Sternhold and Hopkins psalter, discussed extensively in Chapter Three. The Sternhold and Hopkins psalter essentially became the Book of Psalms in the eyes and ears of the populous, and their experiences with metrical psalms became deeply personal because of how they uniquely engaged all people through form and language choices. Milton experimented with metrical translation himself, so perhaps he had this very type of translation in mind with his hymn. With this framework, Milton creates a worship ideal that is free, spontaneous, harmonious, accessible to all people, and in communion with God through Creation. This worship provides an alternative to the prescribed worship of the organized church. Using the immediately subsequent translation of Psalm 148, Milton supplements his theological argument with a concrete example of such worship enacted through a formal psalm translation.

### ***Paradise Lost* as Biblical Authority: Expanding Possibilities for Early Modern Bible Translation**

In this instance, Milton’s art *can* tell an authoritative and theologically significant interpretation of the Bible. This telling, or interpretation, presents alternatives to the prescribed form of worship most of his readers would have understood. The type of worship described in the morning hymn is particularly impactful to early modern readers if Milton’s poetic epic effectively is understood to be a Bible translation, as I argue it is. If readers can experience *Paradise Lost* not only as an interesting aesthetic and narrative framing of biblical events but also as a compelling alternative to the theology they receive from institutional authorities, they, like Milton, can come to understand their own agency and authority as worshippers outside of an

institutional system. While I have sought to construct a framework through which to read this passage as an authoritative translation, the impact and identity of a translation is often more about how it is received. If the reception of *Paradise Lost* is any indication, it has, in many ways become an authoritative translation of the events in the Bible.<sup>75</sup>

Unlike many of the works of literature in the English canon, *Paradise Lost* was popularized and canonized early on. The prominent London publisher Jacob Tonson published a heavily-annotated edition of *Paradise Lost* in 1695, which, in the early modern period, was a symbol that *Paradise Lost* had succeeded as a part of the canon of vernacular literature (Poole 1). Roy Flannagan contends that for popular readers *Paradise Lost* became a “guide to Christian theology, dramatized” as it, “for some readers, began to take the place of the Bible as a source of sanctified theology” (46). John Shawcross likewise notes that “Many in the eighteenth century and later seem to have learned their Bible not from the Bible itself but from *Paradise Lost*” (27). As mentioned in Chapter One, characters invented by Milton—specifically the angels Uriel, Ithuriel, and Abdiel—are nowhere in the Bible yet believed by many readers to be biblical characters (Shawcross 27–28). Similarly, Norton comments that, in *Robinson Crusoe*, Daniel Defoe’s titular character treats the fall of Satan described in a very Miltonic way as biblical canon (175). The Bible itself never definitively describes this fall. For many, the Miltonic depiction of Satan’s fall, from a theological perspective, persists into the modern day as well. These examples all serve to demonstrate that, effectively if not officially, *Paradise Lost* has become a version of Bible translation. While the examples mentioned are some of the most obvious and measurable ways that Milton’s translations of biblical events have made their way into the popular conscious, they represent how all aspects of the text, including the worship experiences of Adam and Eve, have similarly woven themselves into popular Bible understanding. At the very least, *Paradise Lost* has provided a narrative of biblical events that people hold onto as they explore the stories in their original forms, which are comparatively vague.

Thinking of the morning hymn as a Bible translation provides new, innovative possibilities for readers’ spiritual experiences. Milton believed in the spiritual power of religious poetry. In *Of Education*, he lauds its instructive power: “what Religious, what glorious and magnificent use might be made of Poetry both in divine and humane things” (179). Through the aesthetic innovations and interpretations of poems like *Paradise Lost*, a different perspective on

theology could be realized. If strict, heavily institutionalized English Bible translations like the KJV have potentially limited their readers' possibilities for spiritual interpretation, as in the case of "dwell," as discussed in Chapter Two, then literary translations like Milton's, in taking on biblical authority via an aesthetically conscious reading experience, allow readers to envision broader "divine and humane" possibilities. Further, they allow us to liberate translation as a means of envisioning alternative spiritual pathways for early modern readers, in theology and in practice. They add alternative voices to the Bible translation pool, even voices of religious dissidents like Milton. Perhaps, sitting alone with a copy of *Paradise Lost*, an early modern reader disillusioned with the fracturing of their nation and conflict in the church, paused as they read Milton's rendering of Psalm 148. Perhaps, their disillusionment waned in the light of an alternate possibility that felt more biblical than fictional. Perhaps, they found that art could, in fact, tell of another, more paradisiacal way to be.

### **"Deep Calleth Unto Deep": Echoes Across Translations**

Despite the fact that much of Milton's epic feels quite different from the formal interlingual Bible translation of the KJV, he never fully lets us forget the connection of *Paradise Lost* to that text. He peppers his poetry with echoes that trigger remembrance of the iconic phrases with which so many readers have been familiar for centuries. This happens frequently in his invocations, the moments when the narrator speaks most personally of himself, his translation endeavor, and what the story he is telling means to him. In these moments of intimacy and vulnerability, the speaker, perhaps a stand-in for Milton, speaks the essence of the KJV. As just one key example, in Milton's opening invocation, the narrator recites that simple but memorable phrase in the words of the KJV, "In the beginning" (*PL* 1.9). And just like that, readers are brought not only to Genesis 1.1 but also to John 1.1, themselves echoes across the centuries and the miles that separate the Hebrew Genesis and the Greek Gospel of John.<sup>76</sup> With this echo, "In the beginning," we hear another echo, reminding us that it is "in the beginning" that God, the Word, speaks. Milton, being blind at the time he composed *Paradise Lost*, spoke his poem, including his intergeneric literary translation, to amanuenses. He had to use his voice to call forth this new take on an old word. As we are reminded that Milton spoke his translation in order for the worship within it to be made manifest, we are also reminded of the psalms in metrical psalters like the Sternhold and Hopkins that were spoken and sung by voices both separate and

together. These voices added theirs to those throughout history singing the ritual songs of the Bible, and they did it in a tongue that was their own, like the moment on Pentecost in the Book of Acts when the Holy Spirit descends and the people begin to hear the words of the faithful in their own languages (Acts 2.4–6).

I have spent much of this study establishing key differences between the three representative translations—the KJV, the Sternhold and Hopkins psalter, and *Paradise Lost*. They are indeed quite different and open up different interpretive possibilities for their readers. However, seeing each of these as translations also allows us to see their similarities, or, at the very least, the ways that they lead interconnected lives, depending on one another to articulate even a fraction of the fullness of narrative, theology, aesthetics, and experience that a text as passionately charged as the Bible contains. They call to each other across chasms of differing purpose and methodology, “deep call[ing] unto deep,” as the psalmist writes (Psalm 42.7).

No matter the legislation placed against translation or the already saturated pool of Bible translation, still new translations are made. The deep within the human heart calls out to the deep of this ancient text, and, for many throughout history, that call has led to a response, a chance to add the Bible in their voice to the Bible in the voices of others. Understanding the “breadth, and length, and depth, and height” of these endeavors means counting them as viable translations, viable means of “carrying across” a text that has meant so much to so many. Considering them as such gives due credit to the messy, fluid, and uncategorizable but deeply beautiful ways that early modern English translators and, indeed, translators of all kinds throughout the centuries, have bravely flung out their voices into the deep.

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## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Alexander Pope's "Essay on Man" alludes to and revises John Milton's wide-ranging readers with "vindicate the ways of God to man" (1.16). All quotations from Milton's poetry, including his translations, are from *John Milton: The Complete Poems*, ed. John Leonard, cited parenthetically in the text. Translations from languages other than English are Leonard's.

<sup>2</sup> From the *Oxford English Dictionary*, "quick" in the sense of "living" or "animate," here a figurative usage ("Quick, *adj.*, *n.* 1, and *adv.*"). Unless otherwise indicated, all Bible references are from *The Bible*, Authorized King James Version with Apocrypha, cited parenthetically within the text. Subsequent citations from the KJV are made in-text with traditional book abbreviations followed by the chapter and verse.

<sup>3</sup> An example of one translator's system of classification is André Lefevere's catalogue of seven approaches to translating poetry (Bassnett 93).

<sup>4</sup> As Nida explains, "a formal-equivalence (or F-E) translation is basically source-oriented; that is, it is designed to reveal as much as possible of the form and content of the original message." On the other hand, a dynamic-equivalence translation "is directed, not so much toward the source message, as toward the receptor response" (165–66).

<sup>5</sup> Future study on this topic will see the analogous but stronger impetus in the use of Arabic for the Qur'an, which was published into English for the first time in the 1640s.

<sup>6</sup> Koine Greek, from *koine* meaning "common," is a hybrid form of Greek, between classical Greek and the vernacular language.

<sup>7</sup> Campbell points out that Wyclif likely relied on his followers to translate rather than conducting translation himself. The Bible translation nonetheless bears his name—The Wyclif Bible (7).

<sup>8</sup> Future study would examine these illustrations and other Bible illustrations that develop over time. I am particularly interested in how these paratexts are incorporated into the KJV, a text which specifically resisted paratextual material.

<sup>9</sup> For additional work in the sub-field of religion and literature, the journal *Religion and Literature* is an excellent place to start. The work of Susannah Monta is especially informative for my topics.

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<sup>10</sup> A project of this scope certainly cannot include every meaningful piece of work written on these subjects. Scholarly works that were consulted but not included in this piece and will be valuable for future study include but are not limited to: Paul Ayriss's "Miles Coverdale and the genesis of the Bible in English" (2015), Donald Davie's "Psalmody as Translation" (1990), Daniel W. Doerkson's *Conforming to the Word: Herbert, Donne, and the English Church before Laud* (1997), Kenneth Fincham's *Prelate as Pastor: The Episcopate of James I* (1990), Jaine Goodrich's *Faithful Translators : Authorship, Gender, and Religion in Early Modern England* (2013), Polly Ha's *English Presbyterianism, 1590–1640* (2010), Massimiliano Morini's *Tudor Translation in Theory and Practice* (2006), Karen Neman and Jane Tylus' *Early Modern Cultures of Translation* (2015), Jacob Neusner's "Translation and Paraphrase: The Differences and Why they Matter" (1986), and Charles W. Prior's *Defining the Jacobean Church: The Politics of Religious Controversy, 1603–1625* (2005).

<sup>11</sup> Many of the texts cited in this study include important biographical information that informs the translations work of these translators. In particular, Norton's *The History of the English Bible as Literature* pays heed to this, as does Su Fang Ng's "Translation, Interpretation, and Heresy: The Wycliffite Bible, Tyndale's Bible, and the Contested Origin" and B. C. Pardue's "'Them that furiously burn all truth': The Impact of Bible-Burning on William Tyndale's Understanding of His Translation Project and Identity." There are numerous biographies of Milton, which include an exploration of his identity as a translator, including the one used in this study, Barbara K. Lewalski's *The Life of John Milton : A Critical Biography*. Some works even focus specifically on his biography as a translator, such as John K. Hale's "Milton as a Translator of Poetry."

<sup>12</sup> This chapter is under revision for *Studies in Philology*, and, as it needs to stand on its own in publication, it includes more specific context than might otherwise be included in a study like this one.

<sup>13</sup> While the past tense form appears in John 1.14, when referring to the verb outside of its biblical context, I refer to it in its base form "dwell" for ease of reading.

<sup>14</sup> All references to the Greek New Testament in this chapter are from *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, Byzantine text form. *Skēnoō* is transliterated into English from classical/Koine Greek σκηνόω. In John 1.14 in the Byzantine text form, the conjugated form of *skēnoō* (σκηνόω) is *eskēnōsen* (ἐσκήνωσεν), which is an aorist active indicative, or simple past tense, verb

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indicating a completed action. I will not be analyzing this grammatical feature in depth, as it accords with the tense of the verb in the KJV. For ease, I refer to the verb in its base form *skēnoō* throughout the chapter.

<sup>15</sup> In this case, the Hebrew itself is ambiguous. For more on this fascinating example, see John H. Yoder's "Exodus 20:13 — 'Thou Shalt Not Kill.'"

<sup>16</sup> Erasmus' *Textus Receptus* was the most widely utilized version of the Greek New Testament in early modern England, and it is based, in large part, on the Byzantine textform ("Textus Receptus").

<sup>17</sup> In future study, I plan to expand my analysis of the use of this verse past strictly Bible translations into other texts, like the *Book of Common Prayer* and sermons, to see how the verse is treated in these different yet related genres.

<sup>18</sup> Naomi Tadmor treats such culturally influenced translation choices in some of her research. Of particular importance to my own approach are her research on translations of "covenant" and marriage language in the KJV. See her articles "People of the Covenant and the English Bible" and "Women and Wives: The Language of Marriage in Early Modern English Biblical Translations." For a similar approach, see also Jennifer Eyl's research on the translation of the Greek *ekklēsia* into "church" in early modern England: "Semantic Voids, New Testament Translation, and Anachronism: The Case of Paul's Use of Ekklēsia."

<sup>19</sup> See Harry Freedman's discussions of the 1229 Council of Toulouse and the 1408 Synod of Oxford (76, 84). The former forbade the laity from owning translations of any part of the Old or New Testament and further forbade them from reading anything except the Psalms in the original languages (Freedman 76). The latter, a direct response to Wyclif, specifically banned translating the Bible into English (Freedman 84).

<sup>20</sup> Tyndale did, in fact, attempt to seek the patronage of the noteworthy Bishop Cuthbert Tunstall and thereby remain within the bounds of the system, following an acceptably legal process in order to create an authorized English vernacular translation. At the time, he was cordially rejected, but, three years later, this same bishop oversaw the public burning of Tyndale's translation. It is speculated that this further inspired Tyndale's efforts against a heretical church, especially given that he once heatedly accused the institutionalized church of being "them that furiously burne all trueth" (Pardue 147–49).



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<sup>21</sup> Even then, as David Norton points out, authorities sought to control how the lay populace read the Bible. A proclamation by Henry VIII and a prologue to the text by Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, similarly encourage caution in lay reading and deference to local religious authority on matters of contention or confusion about the “mysteries” of God (Norton 36).

<sup>22</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, all definitions of English words are taken from the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

<sup>23</sup> In a footnote, Morgan cites Thayer’s Greek-English lexicon and mentions the places in the Bible where a form of *skēnoō* is used, claiming these all refer to the sense of “to fix one’s dwelling” (78). He does not explore this further. While it is true that this is how the word in these passages has come to be interpreted, possibly thanks to the very translation practices discussed in this chapter, I do not equate this with a negation of the very prevalent sense regarding tents and the possibility of that meaning at work in John, particularly given the similarity between the word used in John 1.14 and the Greek word carrying the tense of “tent” or “tabernacle” in the Septuagint, discussed later in this chapter.

<sup>24</sup> Transliterated into English from classical/Koine Greek κατοικέω.

<sup>25</sup> Transliterated into English from Hebrew לָאֵל.

<sup>26</sup> See 1 Kings 6 for a description of Solomon’s Temple.

<sup>27</sup> In this chapter, I generally refer to the parts of the Bible that were recorded in Hebrew before the time of Jesus as the Old Testament because that is how early modern readers would have encountered it. The designation “Old Testament” is an invention of Christendom to designate which texts came before and after Jesus, who established a “New Testament.” Strictly speaking, the Hebrew Bible, or Tanakh, uses a different order than the Protestant Old Testament and includes fewer books than Roman Catholic and Orthodox Old Testaments (S. Harris 2–5).

<sup>28</sup> Despite some controversy about authorship, David Hugh Farmer, a scholar of biblical saints, concludes “there seems no compelling reason for rejecting the identification of John with the beloved disciple of the Gospel who was a witness of the events he describes.” For the purposes of my analysis, I consider the Apostle John as author, narrator, and character of the text. Regardless of modern debates about the subject, the Apostle John as author of the text was the accepted tradition of most early modern audiences, especially given that they did not define or legitimate authorship in the same way a modern audience does. Furthermore, While John the

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Apostle is never specifically mentioned in the Gospel of John, a popular tradition holds that the “disciple whom Jesus loved” (see for example John 21.20) is John the Apostle.

<sup>29</sup> Jesus’ followers would persist as an underground, subversive band of rebels until Constantine made Christianity the religion of the Roman Empire in 313 CE.

<sup>30</sup> The Gospel of John and 1 John are generally accepted as being written by the same author.

The authorship of 2 John, 3 John, and Revelation is contested. What scholars believe to be the earliest extant manuscript of the Gospel of John, Ryland Library Manuscript P52, or St. John’s fragment, dates from the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE, placing John’s text within this rebellious movement. See “P52” from The Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts and “St. John Fragment: What is the Significance of this Fragment?” from The University of Manchester Library.

<sup>31</sup> None of the other canonical Gospels, the Synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, describe the incarnation of Jesus in such a way. They employ a biographical account of Jesus’ birth rather than the poetic, heavily theological depiction in John.

<sup>32</sup> Transliterated into English from classical/Koine Greek λόγος.

<sup>33</sup> In addition to this formal system of experiencing God, the Old Testament also describes instances of theophany, in which God briefly reveals himself in some form to a human or humans. These humans were predominantly male, with the exceptions of Eve and Sarah. Groups could also experience theophany, as with the Israelites who saw God manifested as a pillar of fire as they fled Egypt. The theophany of God through Jesus differs markedly from these Old Testament theophanies (S. Harris 85, 88–89, 97, 100–4).

<sup>34</sup> See Tyndale’s Bible, the Wyclif Bible, the Bishops’ Bible, the Great Bible, and the Geneva Bible. The methodologies of these translators are outside the scope of this chapter, but they can shed important light on why the meaning of “pitch a tent” may have been left out of these specific translations, for instance, for reasons of ease of comprehension and interpretive freedom. Norton’s *A History of the English Bible as Literature* summarizes the approaches and methodologies used for these and other translation projects.

<sup>35</sup> Milton, a scholar of Greek, uses the peculiar phrase “pitch a tent” in his polemic against literary censorship, *Areopagitica*: “‘Tis not denied, but gladly confessed, we are to send our thanks and vows to Heaven louder than most of nations, for that great measure of truth which we enjoy, especially in those main points between us and the Pope, with his appurtenances the

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prelates: but he who thinks we are to *pitch our tent* here, and have attained the utmost prospect of reformation that the mortal glass wherein we contemplate can show us, till we come to beatific vision, that man by this very opinion declares that he is yet far short of truth” (205; emphasis added). He follows this in the next paragraph with a reference to the incarnation: “Truth indeed came once into the world with her divine Master, and was a perfect shape most glorious to look on” (Milton, *Areopagitica* 205). This juxtaposition indicates a connection between “pitching a tent,” incarnation, and how they might point to a different, more subversive and anti-institutional kind of truth. Milton demonstrates a clear comfort with Greek in other places in his work. I discuss in Chapter Four that he translated a Psalm into Greek. He had such a familiarity with the language that he was even able to joke in Greek, as indicated by an epigram, “In Effigiei Ejus Sculptorem,” translated into English as “Against the Engraver of his Portrait,” in his publication *Poems* of 1645, which ridicules the poor quality of the engraving (Hale, “Milton’s Greek Epigram” 8–9). Such ease with the language indicates that his use of language related to tents was not coincidentally or superficially done.

<sup>36</sup> In her biography of Milton, Lewalski weaves Milton’s engagement with the Greek language throughout the rest of the story of his life and career. Future study will explore whether Herbert, like Milton, learned Greek and to what extent in order to better understand his engagement with the choice of *skēnoō*.

<sup>37</sup> Psalms 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, and 143 in most Protestant Bible translations (King’oo 1).

<sup>38</sup> This study is not primarily concerned with the Psalms as they were originally experienced in the Hebrew language and culture, which were as musical and lyrical expressions of worship.

<sup>39</sup> While Hebrew poetry was not fully understood at the time, and there was and still is debate about the exact form and genre of the Psalms, Renaissance writers were convinced that they were poetry and treated them accordingly (Hamlin, *Psalm Culture* 6).

<sup>40</sup> Many translators whom I would consider as such did not classify their own work as translations, largely owing to this confusion. For more on this, see Hamlin’s *Psalm Culture*, 9.

<sup>41</sup> Future study would look at the use of psalms by English settlers in the Americas among Native populations, which was done for a somewhat similar aim but in an entirely different context.

<sup>42</sup> According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, in this context, a ballad is “A popular, usually narrative, song, *spec.* one celebrating or scurrilously attacking persons or institutions” (“ballad, *n.*”).

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<sup>43</sup> For a fuller history of metrical psalm translations contemporary with Sternhold and preceding Sternhold, in England and abroad, see Quitslund, *The Reformation in Rhyme*, 8–14.

<sup>44</sup> Credit and catalog information for the psalter: General Rare, VSF BX2033.A4 S74 1654, Purdue University Archives and Special Collections, Purdue University Libraries.

<sup>45</sup> I could not make final measurements on the book or the font given the closure in the Spring 2020 and Summer 2020 semesters of the Purdue Archives and Special Collections due to the COVID19 pandemic.

<sup>46</sup> It should be noted that there is no specific indication of when the embroidery was done on the psalter. It is possible that the embroidery was done at a much later date than the psalter was published, perhaps in a later rebinding of the book. However, since we have no indication to the contrary, I treat it as if the embroidery was done in the same general time frame that this edition of the psalter was published, the mid-seventeenth century.

<sup>47</sup> I could not take additional, higher quality pictures or confirm the initials on the back cover given the closure in the Spring 2020 and Summer 2020 semesters of the Purdue Archives and Special Collections due to the COVID19 pandemic.

<sup>48</sup> In this study, I do not discuss how paratextual materials contribute to intermedial translation, but it should be noted that these additions run counter to the KJV's injunction against paratextual, intermedial materials.

<sup>49</sup> Many scholars have sought to categorize the Psalms by genre, function, or category. For one such taxonomy, see S. Harris' *Understanding the Bible*, 215–19. Mary Ann Radzinowicz provides an overview of Milton's system of classification in *Milton's Epics and the Book of Psalms*, 135–38. I am not particularly concerned with a specific system of classification in this study; rather, I am interested in the range of functions the Psalms serve to facilitate different spiritual experiences in worshippers.

<sup>50</sup> Though the KJV was also read aloud in church, it was not sung by the populace. I use the KJV for comparison to the Sternhold and Hopkins psalter because it serves as a helpful gauge when compared with versions specifically set in the meter of common verse for the people to speak. Because the KJV's is an amalgamation and culmination of previous formal prose translations, it provides a logical default to compare. It should be kept in mind that the first Sternhold and Hopkins translation predated the KJV.

<sup>51</sup> Quotations from individual psalms are all taken from the 1654 version of the psalter.

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<sup>52</sup> It is worth noting here that Milton also wrote a poem about his experience as a singer of sacred music in his poem “At a Solemn Music.” While this particular study focuses on how one poet can reflect distinctly on church music, future study would also look to how Milton articulates his experience via poetry as well.

<sup>53</sup> Greene points to Herbert’s *The Temple* as a quintessential example of “devotional fiction,” in which “the model of received language has burst and the poet is free to reorganize the relations of ritual and fiction.” As a different example, Greene points to Sir Philip Sidney’s psalm translations as a hybrid between fictional and ritual poetry because they engage with the ritual while taking on the particularized voice and context of the author (27).

<sup>54</sup> Italics were used in the KJV to signal words for which there were multiple meanings. Readers would have been reminded of that orthographical feature by the italics here. In further study, I would look further into the use of italics to see if there are specific connections or commentaries that can be drawn between the use of italics for different purposes in the KJV and texts in communication with the Bible, like Herbert’s poems, psalters, and the like.

<sup>55</sup> In an expansion of this study, I would like to look further into the significance of King David to an early modern popular audience. As a king with humble beginnings, the youngest son of a non-royal family, who tended sheep, his story would resonate with the laity in a different way than the story of their own monarchy. I would be interested to see how that interpretive angle would impact the people’s experience with the Psalms. The biblical stories of King David and his family inspired a lot of writing around the time, for instance, John Dryden’s *Absalom and Achitophel*; and, as we have seen, the Psalms, attributed to David, were incredibly popular. Why did he have such resonances?

<sup>56</sup> Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness is described in the Gospel of Matthew 4.1–11, the Gospel of Mark 1.12–13, and the Gospel of Luke 4.1–13. Samson’s story, including the context surrounding his birth, is found in the Book of Judges 13–16.

<sup>57</sup> Future work will incorporate Golda Werman’s *Milton and Midrash* (1995) and Jeffrey Shoulson’s *Milton and the Rabbis* (2001). For Milton as fan fiction, see the Milton-l listserv of May 2020.

<sup>58</sup> Future studies will integrate Milton’s statements about reading and sharing or witnessing to the Bible in his *De Doctrina Christiana*.

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<sup>59</sup> Further study would involve a more in-depth analysis of how *Paradise Lost* interacts with other translations and theological traditions with which his original audience would likely have been aware. Such resonances would have affected understandings and receptions of the text. Take, for instance, what L. A. Cormican has to say about *PL* 1.22-26: “Both in sense and rhetorical form, this prayer of invocation echoes the celebrated ‘Golden Sequence’, *Veni sancta Spiritus*: ‘*Veni, lumen cordium// . . . Lava quod est sordidum, / . . . Rege quod est drvium.*’ [. . .] *justify* does not mean ‘demonstrate logically but has its Biblical meaning and implies spiritual rather than rational understanding” (175). Here, associations with the Golden Sequence may have impacted how readers read Milton’s thesis.

<sup>60</sup> Milton’s impulse to make public this literary religious work is distinct from his treatment of other religious works, like his treatise *De Doctrina Christiana*, which was not published in his lifetime.

<sup>61</sup> Some of the earliest European writers to articulate theories of translation as a whole, rather than to discuss individual translation events, were Etienne Dolet (1509–1546), George Chapman (1559–1634), Sir John Denham (1615–1669), Abraham Cowley (1618–1667), and John Dryden (1631–1700) (Bassnett 63–70). These generalized theories are often documented in translators’ prefatory epistles, alongside individual goals and methodologies. Translators who formally translated the Bible often used such prefatory epistles to explain their approach to Bible translation, without necessarily theorizing generally. For examples, see “The Translators to the Reader,” especially pp. lxxv–lxxviii, in the 1611 KJV and the 1560 Geneva Bible’s brief epistle “To the Reader.”

<sup>62</sup> While current Old Testament scholars hold that the Psalms were not entirely composed by David, a common early modern assumption was that he was the author of the entire book. Indications of individual psalm authorship were largely relegated to headnotes to those psalms, which many authors of the time chose to ignore if they indicated authorship other than David (Hamlin, *Psalms Culture* 512–13). Milton alludes to the possibility of non-Davidic authorship in *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*: “And this is verif’d by *David*, himself a King, and *likeliest to bee* [emphasis mine] Author of the *Psalms* 94.20” (254). If David is “likeliest,” then there must be a possibility that he is not. However, Milton seems to ignore headnotes in other places that indicate non-Davidic authorship, as when he attributes Psalms 80–88 to David despite headnotes to the contrary (Radzinowicz 3).

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<sup>63</sup> Milton's psalm translations are classified under his poetry and all versions in this chapter are found in *John Milton: The Complete Poems*, ed. John Leonard, cited parenthetically in the text.

<sup>64</sup> For the full analysis of the stylistic and thematic features of the poem, including an analysis of Greek poetic form, see Hale, "Milton as a Translator," 250–56.

<sup>65</sup> Future work will explore Milton's family-of-origin and its influence on his work. For this study in particular, it would be of interest to study his father, who published musical works.

<sup>66</sup> Galatians 2.20 conveys a similar idea: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

<sup>67</sup> Aside from Milton, one example of a Bible translator who does this is William Patten, whose translation of Psalm 72 recontextualizes the content to become a prophetic poem about Queen Elizabeth I (Hamlin, "My Tongue Shall Speak" 521–22).

<sup>68</sup> Even with the freedom afforded him by the poetic genre, Milton still was almost denied license to publish *Paradise Lost* by the licenser Thomas Tomkyns, who saw opportunity for treasonous interpretation in Book 1, lines 594–99 (Lewalski 454).

<sup>69</sup> In further research, I would explore in more depth the relationship of Milton's innovation in meter and verse with his source content and his readers.

<sup>70</sup> By "unorthodox," I mean the strict sense of being outside Church of England orthodoxy.

<sup>71</sup> In the early modern schema, it would have most likely been closer to an imitation, perhaps paraphrase. Most importantly it exhibits the fluidity of early modern translation.

<sup>72</sup> In a longer study, I would look at the translation of "song of the three children in Daniel" as well.

<sup>73</sup> The difference may be due to a discrepancy with the content of the Hebrew source text. While the KJV translators did look to the Hebrew and Greek source texts of the Old and New Testament, they often also made use of what previous translators had written. Milton, who could read Hebrew, might have found his interpretation of Psalm 148.6 at odds with the KJV's, creating an apparent discrepancy between these two translations. Because I am not a Hebrew scholar myself, a study of the Hebrew of the passage is outside the scope of the current chapter.

<sup>74</sup> Other classifications have been theorized over the years. See, for example S. Harris' *Understanding the Bible*, 215–19. Milton's is not necessarily authoritative but is useful for this analysis.

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<sup>75</sup> See Dennis Danielson's 2020 article detailing his own scholarly and theological engagement with *Paradise Lost* over his lifetime, "Milton and the Search for Meaning."

<sup>76</sup> John Harris, former director of the Translators and Text Division of the Bible Society in Australia, affirms the significance of such seemingly small echoes even today when he tells the story of his mother. She often invoked the phrase "In as much" when she went to help those in need (164–65). Though this clause means very little on its own, it triggers the connection to Matthew 25.40, which says, "And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."