

## Negotiating an Eco-conscious Translation of the Hebrew Bible: Jonah 3:1–10 as Test Case<sup>1</sup>

C.J. (NEELS) REDELINGHUYS (UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE)

### ABSTRACT

*The last two centuries have seen a growing focus on matters concerned with the natural environment. This is not only true for the natural sciences, but all fields of inquiry, including that of theology and religion. Building on the work of eco-theologians and scholars of eco-hermeneutics, this article aims to determine whether, and to what extent, translation has a role to play in promoting these efforts. Consequently, using Eco’s (2004) notion of “translation as negotiation” as blueprint, the author first delineates what an eco-conscious translation entails before showing its practical application in Jonah 3:1–10. In the end, such a rendering does not diverge too much from the Hebrew text or other more established English translations. However, the changes it introduces are ideologically significant. Moreover, the process may prove to be an important tool if the Judeo-Christian tradition still has a role to play in battling different environmental challenges.*

KEYWORDS: Bible Translation; Translation as Negotiation; Bible and Ecology; Eco-hermeneutics; Eco-theology; Jonah 3:1–10

### A INTRODUCTION<sup>2</sup>

The last two centuries have seen a growing focus on matters concerned with the environment and environmental care. Starting in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, by way of quasi-lyrical prose, various Nature writers introduced a degree of mindfulness into their deliberations about the human-Nature relationship.<sup>3</sup> The themes

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<sup>1</sup> For an earlier version of this paper, see C.J. (Neels) Redelinghuys, “From the Earth Bible to the Green Bible and the Possibility of an Eco-conscious Translation” (paper presented at the annual meeting of the OTSSA, NWU Sports Village, Potchefstroom, 22–24 August 2018).

<sup>2</sup> The author would like to extend his sincerest gratitude to everyone involved in the review and editorial process for their comments and suggestions that contributed to the final draft of this paper.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. Henry D. Thoreau, *Walden*, ed. Jeffrey S. Cramer (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006); Ralph W. Emerson, *Nature*, Great Ideas Series (London: Penguin Books, 2008); John Muir, *Wilderness Essays*, Revised Edition (Layton, UT: Gibbs Smith, 2015).

touched on, questions raised, and criticisms posed by these and other thinkers formed the bedrock for the environmental movement that came to blossom in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Continuing into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and ever increasingly, scholars from different fields — beyond just the natural sciences — saw the need to consider if, and to what extent, Mother Nature fits into their respective frameworks.

With respect to the Bible, few works have received more interest than that of Lynn White Jr.<sup>4</sup> Especially widespread is White’s claim that Christianity, especially in its Western form, is “the most anthropocentric religion the world has ever seen.”<sup>5</sup> It remains a matter of debate whether this indictment is accurate, though one can hardly deny White’s influence on the study of the relationship between the Bible and ecology. Ever since White (and others with similar views), there has been a proliferation in literature seeking to make sense of humankind’s role and/or place in the created order and the ethical implications that follow.<sup>6</sup> In terms of the Hebrew Bible (HB), this then includes, but is not limited to, an exploration of texts such as Genesis 1–3, Psalm 104, Proverbs 8:22–31, and Job 38–41.<sup>7</sup>

While a plethora of approaches have emerged in the exploration of said texts, one can roughly divide them into three groups:<sup>8</sup>

- One can classify the first group as the “apologetic approaches”. Included here are those that seek to defend the HB against the accusations of White (and others). One strategy, for example, is to explain that humans are not despots, but called to a dominion of loving rule in service of God.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Lynn White Jr., “The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis”, *Science* 155 (1967): 1203–1207.

<sup>5</sup> White, “The Historical Roots”, 1205.

<sup>6</sup> cf. Ernst M. Conradie, *Christianity and Ecological Theology: Resources for Further Research*, Study Guides in Religion and Theology 11 (Stellenbosch: Sun Press, 2006), 59–151.

<sup>7</sup> cf. William P. Brown, “Biblical Accounts of Creation,” in *The Old Testament and Ethics: A Book-by-Book Survey*, ed. Joel B. Green and Jacqueline E. Lapsley (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 165–170.

<sup>8</sup> I base this trichotomy on the work of Ernst M. Conradie, “Towards an Ecological Biblical Hermeneutics: A Review Essay on the Earth Bible Project,” *Scriptura* 85 (2004): 126–127. Consider also the extended analysis of Kivatsi J. Kavusa, “Ecological Hermeneutics and the Interpretation of Biblical Texts Yesterday, Today and Onwards: Critical Reflection and Assessment,” *OTE* 32/1 (2019):238–248. <https://doi.org/10.17159/2312-3621/2019/v32n1a13>.

<sup>9</sup> E.g. John Barr, “Man and Nature — The Ecological Controversy and the Old Testament”, *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library* 55/1 (1972): 9–32.

- The second group consists of those who attempt to “mine” the HB for ecological wisdom. Generally taking a thematic approach, this group, for example, tries to identify different references to the natural world; hoping to show that the HB celebrates creation in different ways.<sup>10</sup>
- The third, and final, group consists of approaches that follow a critical, interdisciplinary methodology in an attempt to reread selected texts from the HB in light of contemporary ecological values and/or norms.<sup>11</sup>

While these three groups differ quite significantly in terms of their respective methodologies, they tend to agree on one particular goal: reorienting the attitude of the biblical interpreter. For the most part, they also have the same starting point: the biblical text.

## **B RESEARCH QUESTION AND METHODOLOGICAL OUTLINE**

Given that these three groups take the Bible as their focal point, the main objective of this investigation is to determine if, and to what extent, translation has a part to play in fostering an eco-conscious attitude. In other words: can one conceivably translate a text from the HB that is not only “reasonable”, but also credibly “green” or eco-conscious?

Framed in this way, the first step will be to delineate what an eco-conscious translation entails and to deal with some ancillary matters that come to the fore (e.g. questions about equivalence and the like). Second, the aim will be to acquaint the reader with some basic principles employed by those who strive to read the Bible from an eco-conscious perspective. This is an important step given that the chosen frameworks will inform —whether explicitly or implicitly— a number of the translator’s choices when dealing with different ecological features. Finally, the text of Jonah 3 will serve as an example of what an “eco-conscious translation” might look like in practice.

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<sup>10</sup> E.g. Jannie du Preez, “Net Maar Diere? ‘n Tematiese Oorsig van die Plek van die Diereryk in die Skepping Volgens Geselekteerde Skrifgedeeltes”, *NGTT* 52/1 (2011): 83–93. <https://doi.org/10.5952/52-1-8>.

<sup>11</sup> E.g. C. J. (Neels) Redelinghuys, “Creation Utterly Consumed? Towards an Eco-Critical Rereading of Zephaniah 1:2–6,” *OTE* 30/3 (2017): 805–820. [https://doi.org/ 10.17159/2312-3621/2017/v30n3a15](https://doi.org/10.17159/2312-3621/2017/v30n3a15).

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## C WHAT IS AN ECO-CONSCIOUS TRANSLATION (ECT)?

### 1 Eco-conscious

Employing the term “eco-conscious” serves to denote an approach that is mindful of a range of guiding principles, underlying beliefs, and even proposed ideals that come to the fore in literature dealing with eco-theology and eco-hermeneutics. Moreover, the aim is to apply said matters in the context of Bible translation. For the purpose of this particular investigation, *The Green Bible* (a category 2 approach) and the *Earth Bible Project* (category 3) will respectively serve as representatives of such an approach. The reason for drawing on these two projects is threefold:

- i. Both frameworks will be familiar to those who devote their time to the study of eco-theology and biblical eco-hermeneutics.
- ii. Both present a far-reaching, yet concise framework for grappling with the text that one can distil in such a way that anyone should be able to follow along.
- iii. Finally, and perhaps most important of all, both frameworks are deliberate about the language they use in describing the various relationships that come into play in an eco-conscious approach to the text.

### 2 Translation

Due to the proverbial *smorgasbord* of available options (and different domains of application), it proves to be somewhat complex to define the “translation” part of the proposed equation.<sup>12</sup> A select few of the possible options include the following:

- “Translation may be defined quite simply as the attempt to represent in one language what was said in another”.<sup>13</sup>
- “A translation is a text derived from another text in another language, exhibiting qualities of equivalence to that source text, such that the derived text can be taken as a substitute for the original text”.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> cf. David Bellos, *Is that a Fish in Your Ear? Translation and the Meaning of Everything* (New York: Faber and Faber, 2011), 24–36; Matthew Reynolds, *Translation: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 1–15.

<sup>13</sup> Tim Wilt, “A New Framework for Bible Translation”, *Acta Theologica Supplementum* 2 (2002), 154. Wilt (*ibid.*) continues: “It is difficult to move beyond this definition without producing a prescriptive or value-laden statement of limited applicability to the diverse situations in which translation occurs.”

<sup>14</sup> David B. Frank, “What Kind of Theory Do We Need for Translation?” (Paper presented at the Bible Translation Conference: Translator and Audience, UK Campus of the European Training Programme, Horsleys Green, England, 4–6 February 2008),

- “Translation is a procedure where an original text, often called ‘the source text’, is replaced by another text in a different language, often called ‘the target text’”.<sup>15</sup>

It is important to recognize that the terminology matters insofar as “[the] definition of ‘translation’ adopted by a particular translator will have a critical impact on the course taken by the translation process.”<sup>16</sup> With this sense of significance in mind, this investigation will primarily employ Eco’s notion of “translation as negotiation” as blueprint.<sup>17</sup> Secondly, it will seek to incorporate select insights from the functionalist and hermeneutical models of translation. Consequently, the definition adopted here is as follows: (textual) translation is the negotiation of meaning between the different language worlds of different stakeholders.

### 2a “Negotiation”

The notion of “negotiation” starts with two assumptions. First, translation is in fact possible (and desirable) — a matter often taken for granted. Second, more than just a product, it is a complex process in which the translator will have to make a number of (often competing) decisions.<sup>18</sup> Reynolds, for example, writes that “translation never provides an exact reproduction, of any element of the source text. It is always a matter of shifts and alterations...”<sup>19</sup> Consequently, an ECT rules out the viability of a “literal” translation.<sup>20</sup> In this regard, Grossman rightly dismisses “literalism” as “a clumsy, unhelpful concept that radically skews and oversimplifies the complicated relationship between a translation and an original.”<sup>21</sup> The relationship between source text (ST) and target text (TT) will come to the fore again in the discussion about equivalence (see § C.3.).

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#6, Accessed 08 June 2018, [http://dbfrank.net/papers/What\\_Kind\\_of\\_Theory\\_Do\\_We\\_Need\\_for\\_Translation.pdf](http://dbfrank.net/papers/What_Kind_of_Theory_Do_We_Need_for_Translation.pdf).

<sup>15</sup> Juliane House, *Translation: The Basics* (London: Routledge, 2018), 9.

<sup>16</sup> Jan G. van der Watt and Yolanda Kruger, “Some Considerations on Bible Translation as Complex Process”, *Acta Theologica Supplementum* 2 (2002), 118.

<sup>17</sup> cf. Umberto Eco, *Mouse or Rat? Translation as Negotiation*, Paperback Edition (London: Phoenix, 2004).

<sup>18</sup> cf. Bellos, *Is that a Fish*, 319–322; Eco, *Mouse or Rat*, 32–60; Jan van der Watt, *Waarom Soveel Bybelvertalings? Die Hoe, Wat en Waarom van Bybelvertalings* (Vereeniging: Christelike Uitgewersmaatskappy, 2014), 77–101.

<sup>19</sup> Reynolds, *Translation*, 51–52.

<sup>20</sup> cf. Bellos, *Is that a Fish*, 102–116; Gordon D. Fee and Mark L. Strauss, *How to choose a Translation for all its Worth: A Guide to Understanding and Using Bible Versions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 25.

<sup>21</sup> Edith Grossman, *Why Translation Matters*, Why X Matters (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 67.

## 2b “Meaning”

“Meaning” provides the subject matter for this negotiation and applies to two levels of understanding. First, on a textual level, the translator has to make sense of the interactive relationship between the text as a whole and its constituent parts (e.g. words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, genres, etc.).<sup>22</sup> To this one can add two “key determinants”: “the situation in which it is uttered [...] and the identities of the participants, together with the relationship between them”.<sup>23</sup> Second, on an existential level, the translator is an active participant in the construction of meaning by bringing “different language worlds” into contact with one another and facilitating a dialogue between them.<sup>24</sup> In the case of an eco-conscious translation this dialogue will necessarily focus on a range of ecological matters.

## 2c “Different Language Worlds”

The notion of “different language worlds” proceeds from the perspective fact that a language (whether natural or artificial) is not something that exists in a vacuum.<sup>25</sup> There is no language without a language user, but the language user also fits into a broader community of like-minded people. In other words, while people use languages in different ways and for different purposes, they tend to do so in conjunction with the conventions or habits of their particular community and/or culture.<sup>26</sup> In this regard, Eco writes,

...translation is always a shift, not between two languages but between two cultures — or two encyclopaedias. A translator must

<sup>22</sup> cf. van der Watt and Kruger, “Some Considerations”, 120–129.

<sup>23</sup> Bellos, *Is that a Fish*, 74.

<sup>24</sup> cf. Radegundis Stolze, “The Hermeneutic Approach in Translation”, *Studia Anglica Posnaniensia* 37 (2002), 283–285; Bernd Stefanink and Ioana Bălăcescu, “The Hermeneutical Approach in Translation Studies”, *Cadernos de Tradução* 37/3 (2017): 23–30. <https://doi.org/10.5007/2175-7968.2017v37n3p21>.

<sup>25</sup> Concerning the reference to artificial languages, there is much one can learn about languages by considering the various attempts at inventing new ones, also in terms of the “worlds” accompanying them. In this regard, cf. Arika Okrent, *In the Land of Invented Languages: Adventures in Linguistic Creativity, Madness, and Genius* (New York: Spiegel and Grau, 2010).

<sup>26</sup> cf. Okrent, *In the Land*, 256–262; Daniel Everett, *Language: The Cultural Tool* (London: Profile Books, 2013). Discussions about language death also exhibit the importance of this relationship. Here, for example, Anderson explains, “When a language dies, a world dies with it, in the sense that a community’s connection with its past, its traditions, and its base of specific knowledge are all typically lost when the vehicle linking people to that knowledge is abandoned.”; Stephen R. Anderson, *Languages: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 58.

take into account rules that are not strictly linguistic but, broadly speaking, cultural.<sup>27</sup>

Similarly, House expresses this viewpoint as follows,

...language is viewed as embedded in culture such that the meaning of any bit of language can only be understood with reference to the cultural context enveloping it.<sup>28</sup>

This proves to be an essential matter in Bible translation,<sup>29</sup> one that underlies the discussion about foreignization versus domestication (see § C.4.).

## 2d “Different stakeholders”

As the notion of different language worlds suggests, the process of translation involves a number of participants or stakeholders.<sup>30</sup> For the purpose of this particular investigation, the focus will be on four stakeholders: the biblical author, the first audience, the translator, and the second (i.e. contemporary) audience. The first three of these prove to be obvious participants in the translation process, but the role of the second audience — with its own needs and expectations — warrants further consideration.<sup>31</sup>

Who exactly is the intended audience of an ECT? As the focus here is on producing an experimental translation, there is no formal audience as in the case of commissioned translation projects. However, one can posit that (at least) four distinct groups of people might have some interest here:

- i. Scholars who devote their time to the study of eco-hermeneutics.
- ii. Eco-theologians of various persuasions.
- iii. Scholars of religion who have an interest in the relationship between the Judeo-Christian tradition and matters of ecology.
- iv. Ecologists who have a philosophical interest in religion and/or mythology.

It is conceivable that each of these four groups might have a different agenda when it comes to an ECT. However, the aim here is to consider where

<sup>27</sup> Eco, *Mouse or Rat*, 82.

<sup>28</sup> House, *Translation*, 47.

<sup>29</sup> cf. J.A. Naudé, “An Overview of Recent Developments in Translation Studies with Special Reference to the Implications for Bible Translation,” *Acta Theologica Supplementum 2* (2002): 56–59; Harriet Hill et al., *Bible Translation Basics: Communicating Scripture in a Relevant Way* (Dallas, TX: SIL International, 2011), 157–162.

<sup>30</sup> cf. Frank, “What Kind of Theory”, #4–6.

<sup>31</sup> cf. House, *Translation*, 54–55; E.R. Wendland, “Towards a ‘Literary’ Translation of the Scriptures: With Special Reference to a ‘Poetic’ Rendition,” *Acta Theologica Supplementum 2* (2002): 183–185.

their needs overlap and direct the project accordingly. Consequently, one can formulate the following translation brief:

- Produce a translation that shows an appreciation for the Hebrew language and culture, but also takes into account the various stylistic and grammatical features of modern English.
- It must illuminate the text in an ecologically interesting and responsible way; clearly indicating where the language worlds might diverge from one another in terms of philosophy and ethics.

### 3 Equivalence

Any discussion about translation inevitably leads to the notion of equivalence.<sup>32</sup> Grossman, for example, succinctly captures this notion when she writes, “[fidelity is the] ongoing, absolutely utopian ideal of translation”.<sup>33</sup> In the past this unfortunately installed a restrictive either/or in the minds of some: either the translator stays faithful to the source text or they depart from it.<sup>34</sup> It soon becomes clear, however, that fidelity or loyalty means different things to different people, depending on the factors they choose to prioritize in the translation process.<sup>35</sup> Accordingly, it seems more appropriate to think of equivalence in terms of a continuum or a grid.<sup>36</sup>

One example of a grid approach comes from Floor who focuses on the relationship between form and semantic content — with some room to move within these domains.<sup>37</sup> On the one hand, if the translator makes minimal adjustments on the level of form, one can consider it a “close” reading. Conversely, more adjustments mean a more “open” rendering. On the other hand, on the level of semantic content, the translation can be either “resemblant” or “interpretative” depending on how much the translator decides to make explicit along the way. With this in mind, Floor goes on to distinguish between four translation types: (1) Close Resemblant, (2) Open Resemblant, (3) Close Interpretative, and (4) Open Interpretative.

<sup>32</sup> cf. Anthony Pym, “Natural and Directional Equivalence in Theories of Translation,” *Target* 19/2 (2007): 273–286. [https://doi.org/10.1075/target.19.2.07\\_pym](https://doi.org/10.1075/target.19.2.07_pym); Jeremy Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Routledge, 2008): 36–53.

<sup>33</sup> Grossman, *Why Translation Matters*, 67.

<sup>34</sup> cf. Reynolds, *Translation*, 52–53.

<sup>35</sup> cf. House, *Translation*, 31–45; Mona Baker, *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (London: Routledge, 2018), 10–306.

<sup>36</sup> cf. Fee and Strauss, *How to Choose*, 26–28, 147–156; van der Watt, *Waarom Soveel Bybelvertalings*, 112–115; Wendland, “Towards a ‘Literary’ Translation”, 180–183.

<sup>37</sup> cf. Sebastian J. Floor, “Four Bible Translation Types and Some Criteria to Distinguish Them,” *Journal of Translation* 3/2 (2007): 12–16.



This scheme also makes it easy to plot the different trajectories of some well-known English translations of the Bible:<sup>38</sup>

- KJV (Close Resemblant, ‘Archaic’); NRSV (Close Resemblant, ‘Modern’)
- NIV (Open Resemblant)
- NLT (Close Interpretative)
- CEV (Open Interpretative)

Does it automatically follow that an ECT will be one that aims to be Open Interpretative? Or even move beyond this type to carry the pejoratively attributed label of paraphrase? Not necessarily. As stated earlier, the goal is to produce a translation that is “reasonable”. This is a deliberately abstract guideline given that the notion of negotiation, as used here, applies to meaning in dialogue with a number of participants (see § C.2b–d). This dialogue, of course, is not static, but continues to evolve as mutual understanding increases. Nevertheless, Floor’s framework will be helpful as a comparative tool once the translation is finished.

#### 4 Foreignization vs Domestication

Focussing on different language worlds (whether ancient or modern) naturally brings to the fore the issue of foreignization versus domestication.<sup>39</sup> Simply put, the translator faces the choice of bringing the world(s) of the source text to the modern reader(s) or taking the modern reader(s) into the world(s) of the source text. Ideally, one would aim for a mixture between these approaches.<sup>40</sup>

On the one hand, an ECT proceeds as any other in the sense of considering a strategy for dealing with a number of foreign customs, institutions, *et cetera*, portrayed in the Bible.<sup>41</sup> For example, how will the translator deal with the different names used for the Israelite Deity? Overall, the strategy adopted here will rely on a mixed approach, but one that leans more toward foreignization insofar as it concerns important names, places, and customs. This means, for example, that the ECT will use the *Tetragrammaton* (YHWH) where the English translations might use “LORD” and “Elohim” where those same ones prefer “God”. Ultimately, as Bellos notes, “A genuine educational and social purpose can be served by maintaining items of the source text in the translation.”<sup>42</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> cf. Eco, *Mouse or Rat*, 89–96.

<sup>40</sup> cf. Reynolds, *Translation*, 53–57.

<sup>41</sup> cf. Hill et al., *Bible Translation Basics*, 169–177; Van der Watt, *Waarom Soveel Bybelvertalings*, 97–101; David G. Horrell, “Familiar Friend or Alien Stranger? On Translating the Bible,” *The Expository Times* 116/12 (2005): 403–408. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0014524605056802>.

<sup>42</sup> Bellos, *Is that a Fish*, 49.

On the other hand, an ECT faces a unique challenge when it comes to different ecological references. Here the problem is not so much a linguistic one (e.g. correctly translating the names of different animals and/or plants) as it is ideological. For example, how will the translator deal with instances of anthropocentrism? This is not limited to the text alone, but is equally applicable to the approach followed by the translator and/or interpreter. Ideally, an ECT would strive for a rendering that is ecologically inclusive and egalitarian. However, there are times where such a rendering would dramatically alter the meaning of the text (e.g. in Gen. 1:26, 28). In these instances, the ECT would yield to the original author and instead incorporate different paratextual features to indicate the divergence in philosophical viewpoints.

## D READING THE BIBLE IN AN ECO-CONSCIOUS WAY

This section will briefly introduce the reader to the *Green Bible* and the *Earth Bible Project* as two approaches that grapple with the Bible from an eco-conscious perspective. Both frameworks have their strengths, but as will become clear later on both also fall remarkably short when it comes to the chosen example of Jonah 3. However, both present a serious attempt to reorient the beliefs of the reader.

### 1 The Green Bible (GB)

Taking a similar approach to the red-letter editions in the Christian tradition, the GB presents a “green-letter” edition of the NRSV which strives to highlight a number of core environmental themes. As such, it prints in green “passages speaking directly to the project’s core mission”.<sup>43</sup> Considering the preface, one can formulate the core mission as follows: the project “encourages you to see God’s vision for creation and helps you engage in the work of healing and sustaining it”.<sup>44</sup> In the hope of achieving this mission, the GB includes a number of paratextual features, such as a “Green Subject Index” for easy navigation, a “Green Bible Trail Guide” for bible-study, a variety of essays, and suggested resources for further study and engagement.<sup>45</sup>

Of particular interest for an ECT are the principles the GB employs in deciding which texts fit with the project’s core mission. Here, then, the emphasis is on texts that directly or explicitly demonstrate the following matters:<sup>46</sup>

- “how God and Jesus interact with, care for, and are intimately involved with all of creation”

<sup>43</sup> Michael G. Maudlin and Marlene Baer, eds., *The Green Bible (NRSV)* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2008): I-15.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> cf. Maudlin and Baer, *Green Bible*, I-16.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

- “how all the elements of creation — land, water, air, plants, animals, humans — are interdependent”
- “how nature responds to God”
- “how we are called to care for creation”

In this regard, two things are worth noting. First, these principles are not mutually exclusive. Second, these principles inadvertently present the reader with a key to deciphering the (ecological) meaning or message of any text printed in green.

## 2 The Earth Bible Project (EBP)

The EBP is an interdisciplinary approach that critically considers “whether there is justice for Earth in the orientation, ideology, or focus of the text or its interpreters.”<sup>47</sup> In contrast to the GB, the EBP has no interest in a thematic approach. Rather, in an “ecojustice approach”, as Habel explains, one of the aims is “[to identify], as far as possible, with Earth or the Earth community, as we converse with the text.”<sup>48</sup>

In the process, the Earth Bible Team formulates six “ecojustice principles” that provide the foundation for an ecological rereading of the biblical text.<sup>49</sup> These principles, in short, are as follows:

- i. Principle of Intrinsic Worth
- ii. Principle of Interconnectedness
- iii. Principle of Voice
- iv. Principle of Purpose
- v. Principle of Mutual Custodianship
- vi. Principle of Resistance

Since its inception the ecojustice approach has evolved from a singular focus on the abovementioned principles, to a framework that incorporates these principles into a three-step model of “suspicion”, “identification”, and “retrieval”.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Norman C. Habel, “Introducing Ecological Hermeneutics,” in *Exploring Ecological Hermeneutics*, ed. Norman C. Habel and Peter Trudinger (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), 2.

<sup>48</sup> Norman C. Habel, “Introducing the Earth Bible,” in *Readings From the Perspective of the Earth*, ed. Norman C. Habel, *The Earth Bible 1* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 34.

<sup>49</sup> The Earth Bible Team, “Guiding Ecojustice Principles,” in *Readings from the Perspective of the Earth*, ed. Norman C. Habel, *The Earth Bible 1* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 42–53.

<sup>50</sup> cf. Habel, “Introducing”, 3–8; Norman C. Habel, *An Inconvenient Text: Is a Green Reading of the Bible Possible?* (Adelaide: ATF Press, 2009), 56–60; Norman C. Habel,

Of particular importance for an ECT are the underlying assumptions of the ecojustice approach which one can summarize as follows. First, non-anthropocentrism is a key concern. Second, on an interrelated note, humans are rooted in an Earth community where different members are mutually dependent on one another. Third, one may exercise what Bauckham refers to as a “cautious degree of anthropomorphism” insofar as it concerns personal pronouns, capital letters for Earth, *et cetera*.<sup>51</sup>

## **E TOWARDS AN ECT OF JONAH 3**

Thus far the focus of this investigation has been on a number of theoretical matters and the different ways in which it relates to the description of an ECT. In this section, the focus starts to shift towards a practical attempt and it starts by gaining some insight into the Book of Jonah as a whole.

### **1 The Book of Jonah: A synopsis**

To get a sense of the sense of the inner workings of the Book of Jonah, this section will provide an overview which accounts for the dating of the book, authorship and the first audience, the narrative structure, as well as the overall message.

Dating the Book of Jonah proves to be a complex matter given that it offers very little in terms of verifiable details. In Jonah 1:1, the author simply notes that the word of YHWH came to “Jonah, son of Amittai”. 2 Kings 14:25 is the only other text in the HB that mentions a prophet by this name, and his ministry to some extent aligns with the reign of King Jeroboam II of Israel (ca. 786–746 BCE). This textual reference generally provides the earliest possible date while one near the start of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE provides the latest.<sup>52</sup> Within this time-frame, scholars have proposed a plethora of dates, all while offering arguments that range from the exegetical to the linguistic and everything in-between.<sup>53</sup>

The view adopted here is that the narrative setting is not synonymous with the compositional setting. In other words, while the text loosely portrays events taking place in the Assyrian period, the compositional setting is the Persian

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“Ecological Criticism,” in *New Meanings for Ancient Texts: Recent Approaches to Biblical Criticisms and their Applications*, ed. Steven L. McKenzie and John Kaltner (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2013), 47–54.

<sup>51</sup> cf. Richard Bauckham, *Bible and Ecology: Rediscovering the Community of Creation* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2010), 53.

<sup>52</sup> Sirach 49:10 being the key here: “May the bones of the Twelve Prophets send forth new life from where they lie, for they comforted the people of Jacob and delivered them with confident hope” (NRSV).

<sup>53</sup> cf. Phyllis Trible, “The Book of Jonah,” in *Introduction to the Apocalyptic Literature, Daniel, the Twelve Prophets*, ed. Leander E. Keck, NIB 7 (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996), 466–467.

period.<sup>54</sup> As for the question about authorship, the later date automatically rules out that the prophet himself could have been the author. Ultimately, it proves to be impossible to identify any specific person (or perhaps even persons) therefore we can simply refer to him as the narrator. It proves to be similarly complex to identify the purported first audience. Apart from stating that they were a group of people living in a time after the Babylonian exile, there is not much more to deduce with absolute certainty.

In terms of the narrative structure, one can divide the Book of Jonah into a number of scenes. Tribble distinguishes between two neatly divided scenes — chapters 1-2 and chapters 3-4 — each with its own focus, yet also symmetrical.<sup>55</sup> For example, both scenes start and end similarly: some kind of interaction between YHWH and Jonah. Another example is the symmetry between the unnamed ship captain and the sailors in scene one and the unnamed king of Nineveh and the Ninevites in scene 2. Nogalski identifies four scenes based on a number of location changes: on the sea (1:1–16), in the sea (1:17–2:10 [2:1–11 MT]), in Nineveh (3:1–10), and outside of Nineveh (4:1–11).<sup>56</sup> Finally, Bruckner focuses on seven scenes, which again illustrates a measure of symmetry:<sup>57</sup>

- Jonah’s call and reaction (1:1–3) // Jonah’s call and reaction (3:1–3a)
- In the storm at sea (1:4–16) // In Nineveh (3:3b–10)
- Prayer in the fish (1:17–2:10 [2:1–11 MT]) // Prayer in Nineveh (4:1–5)
- God’s questions outside Nineveh (4:6–11)

What is the message of Jonah? As Stuart points out,<sup>58</sup> one could conceivably distil the message into a warning: “Don’t be like Jonah”. However, as he also writes, the book proves to be as much about God as it is about this character called Jonah. Given this focus on God, along with the dynamics of the narrative, it might be prudent to consider instead that there are different themes or theological points rather than a singular message.<sup>59</sup> However, one theme

<sup>54</sup> cf. Leslie C. Allen, *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah*, NICOT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1976), 185–186; Paul L. Redditt, *Introduction to the Prophets* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 257–258; Victor H. Matthews, *The Hebrew Prophets and their Social World: An Introduction*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 201.

<sup>55</sup> cf. Tribble, “Jonah”, 474–476.

<sup>56</sup> cf. James D. Nogalski, *The Book of the Twelve: Hosea–Jonah*, Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary (Macon, GA: Smyth and Helwys, 2011), 403.

<sup>57</sup> cf. James Bruckner, *Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 31–32.

<sup>58</sup> cf. Douglas Stuart, *Hosea–Jonah*, WBC 31 (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1987), 434–435.

<sup>59</sup> cf. Nogalski, *The Book of the Twelve*, 406–409; Tribble, “Jonah,” 480–488; J. Gordon McConville, *Exploring the Old Testament (Vol. 4): A Guide to the Prophets* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 189–191.

proves to be pertinent for an eco-conscious reading and translation of Jonah 3: God's compassion and care extends beyond his chosen people, and includes Nature.

## 2 Jonah 3 and Ecology

The Book of Jonah, in general, lends itself well enough to a discussion about the Bible and ecology.<sup>60</sup> This also proves to be the case with Jonah 3 — especially verses 7 and 8.

Trible considers ecology to be a prominent theological theme in the Jonah narrative.<sup>61</sup> Indeed, it does not take long before meeting the great wind and the storm on the sea in Jonah 1:4. Tribble continues in this vein; identifying the natural elements that play a role in each of the different episodes, all the way through to the "strong ecological note"<sup>62</sup> on which book ends in chapter 4. In the process, Tribble notices two distinct differences between chapter 3 and the rest of the narrative on this particular theme. On the one hand, the animals take their cue from the king and not from God. On the other hand, they are not mere instruments in the unfolding of God's plan. Here she remarks: "The intent is not to ridicule but respect, not parody but pathos."<sup>63</sup>

Moving on, it is noteworthy that the GB does not print any part of this text in green. It is unclear what their reasons were given that the text presents a perfect example of interdependence and would seamlessly fit into the GB's framework.<sup>64</sup> Moreover, the text also presents an example of how creation responds to God. Interestingly, the GB does something similar with Jonah 4:11; a text that epitomizes God's care for creation. Did the GB exclude these two texts because they place humans and animals on equal footing? One can only speculate whether this is the case, but van Heerden rightly observes that "[this] practice surely reinforces a sense of distance, separation, and otherness."<sup>65</sup>

Apart from a passing reference to Jonah 4:3, the Book of Jonah also goes unexplored in volumes 1 and 4 of the EBP.<sup>66</sup> Again, why this is the case is

<sup>60</sup> For an overview of a number of eco-conscious studies that pertain to the Jonah narrative, cf. Willie van Heerden, "Ecological Interpretations of the Jonah Narrative: Have they Succeeded in Overcoming Anthropocentrism?" *JSem* 23/1 (2014): 114–134. A select few of said studies will be included here and supplemented as necessary.

<sup>61</sup> cf. Tribble, "Jonah", 482–483.

<sup>62</sup> Tribble, "Jonah", 483.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> cf. van Heerden, "Ecological Interpretations", 131.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Volume 1 serves as a general introduction to the series as a whole while, in turn, the focus of volume 4 is specifically on selected texts from the Psalms and Prophets. In this regard, cf. Norman C. Habel, ed., *Readings from the Perspective of the Earth*, The Earth Bible 1 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000) and Norman C. Habel, ed.,

unclear. As part of a later iteration of the EBP's ecojustice hermeneutic, Person offers a rereading of the Jonah narrative that focuses on the role(s) played by the various nonhuman characters.<sup>67</sup> Among other things, he wishes to indicate that these various characters are active agents in the text that respond in ways that are perhaps more explicit than might initially be clear to the reader.<sup>68</sup> In his own way, Person also draws attention to the interconnectedness between the different characters.<sup>69</sup> However, here one also finds scant references to the Ninevite animals of Jonah 3 and their partaking in the described mourning rituals.

Separate from the EBP, but using its ecojustice principles as a starting-point, Conradie points, among other things, to God's "remarkable mercy that extends not only to human beings but also to their domestic animals".<sup>70</sup> According to Conradie, the natural world is intimately and actively involved as a number of themes unfold across the Jonah narrative, including, but not limited to, that of repentance in the case of chapter 3. Surveying these themes, Conradie goes on to remark, "God's shalom is aimed at establishing a comprehensive sense of well-being that includes the whole community of creation..."<sup>71</sup>

Finally, Simundson also considers God's care for the animals to be theologically and ethically significant.<sup>72</sup> Here he points to Jonah 3:7–8 and 4:11 as texts that demonstrate the Deity's inclusive compassion and reasons for refraining from destroying Nineveh. Ultimately, as Simundson remarks,

Texts like this are important for those who wish to use biblical resources to make a case for animal rights or for a healthy environment for all God's creatures.<sup>73</sup>

Bearing in mind this discussion and the ones that precede it, one can move on to the translation of Jonah 3.

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*The Earth Story in the Psalms and the Prophets*, The Earth Bible 4 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001).

<sup>67</sup> cf. Raymond F. Person Jr., "The Role of Nonhuman Characters in Jonah" in *Exploring Ecological Hermeneutics* (eds. Norman C. Habel and Peter Trudinger; Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), 85–90.

<sup>68</sup> cf. Person, "The Role", 86–87.

<sup>69</sup> cf. Person, "The Role", 89–90.

<sup>70</sup> Ernst M. Conradie, "An Ecological Hermeneutics", in *Fishing for Jonah (Anew): Various Approaches to Biblical Interpretation* (ed. Louis Jonker and Douglas Lawrie; Study Guides in Religion and Theology 7; Stellenbosch: Sun Press, 2005), 226.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> cf. Daniel J. Simundson, *Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah*, AOTC (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2005), 261–262.

<sup>73</sup> Simundson, *Hosea*, 262.

### 3 Translating Jonah 3:1–10

<sup>1</sup> The word of YHWH came to Jonah a second time, saying:

<sup>2</sup> “Stand up! You must go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim the message that I give you.”

<sup>3</sup> So Jonah stood up and went to Nineveh according to YHWH’s command. Now, Nineveh was a great city to Elohim, requiring a journey of three days.

<sup>4</sup> Then Jonah started into Nineveh, journeying for one day, and proclaimed the message: “Forty more days and Nineveh will be destroyed!”

<sup>5</sup> And the people of Nineveh believed Elohim; they proclaimed a fast and dressed in sackcloth — from the greatest of them to the smallest.

<sup>6</sup> As the word reached the king of Nineveh, he stood up from his throne, removed his cloak, and covered himself in sackcloth as he sat in the ashes.

<sup>7</sup> Then he called an assembly in Nineveh, saying: “By decree of the king and his advisors: ‘No member of the community — human or animal — may taste anything; they may not eat, or drink water.

<sup>8</sup> ‘Everyone must be covered with sackcloth and forcefully cry out to Elohim. Every person must turn from their evil ways and from the violence that is in the palm of their hands.

<sup>9</sup> ‘Who knows? Maybe Elohim turns back and shows regret; turning away from his anger so that we don’t perish.’”

<sup>10</sup> When Elohim saw their deeds — that they turned from their evil ways — he was sorry for the harmful things he said he will do to them, so he did not do it.

### 4 Translation notes and comparison

As noted previously, one of the major differences between the ECT and other translations will concern the rendering of verses 7 and 8. However, since the ECT presents itself as a regular translation, it will be prudent to include detailed translation notes on the translation presented above. Consequently, wherever the translator had to make significant choices, or the rendering diverges from the Hebrew text and/or the consulted English translations (NRSV, NIV, NLT, and CEV), a discussion will follow.

*Verse 1:* The first note concerns the translation of the divine name used in the Hebrew text. All four of the consulted English versions render it as “LORD” — all capital letters. The ECT opts for “YHWH” as a way of sticking to the cultural component of the translation brief, also delineated in the discussion about foreignization versus domestication (see § C.4). Although it would be fair to assume that all stakeholders will have some degree of familiarity with the divine name, it would be ideal to include a note explaining the usage of the *Tetragrammaton*. This discussion then also applies to the use of YHWH in verse 3.



*Verse 3:* The verse carries with it a certain amount of ambiguity.<sup>74</sup> In the Hebrew text the narrator first conveys to the reader that Nineveh was a “city great to Elohim” and then goes on to explain that it took a “journey of three days”. The NRSV, NLT, and CEV translate this supposed greatness in terms of size. The NIV, in turn, sees it as a proclamation of Nineveh’s importance. As part of this strategy, they tie its greatness into the next part by stating that Nineveh was so big that it took three days to go from one end to the other. Or, in the case of the NIV and NLT respectively, that one needed as much time to visit the city properly.

Akin to the different translations, exegetes have dealt with the narrator’s description in different ways.<sup>75</sup> Allen, for example, notes that the narrator comes from a tradition that is familiar with Nineveh in its prime.<sup>76</sup> Consequently, he goes on to explain that the phrase “great to God” is a rhetorical tool that draws a comparison between the Deity and the City: Nineveh is “God-sized”, so to speak.<sup>77</sup> Though size may play a role, Stuart instead interprets the phrase as a proclamation of Nineveh’s importance to God.<sup>78</sup> In terms of how to understand the “three days”, Stuart offers two suggestions.<sup>79</sup> On the one hand, it speaks of a specific socio-cultural practice rather than a confirmation of its relative size. On the other hand, this was the amount of time necessary to make sure the message reached everyone.

The ECT opts to preserve the ambiguity that is present in the Hebrew text, but would ideally include a footnote to elaborate slightly on the possible interpretative options.

*Verse 5:* Here two things are noteworthy. First, the Hebrew text offers the preposition “in” (בְּ) as part of its phrasing of events. In other words, “[they believed] *in* Elohim”, although the consulted versions diverge from the Hebrew here and so does the ECT. In this regard, Walton suggests it is appropriate to omit the preposition based on two reasons:

<sup>74</sup> cf. Stuart, *Hosea–Jonah*, 486–487.

<sup>75</sup> For the purpose of this investigation the focus will be mainly on the translation of the text and not an analysis of whether the narrator is describing Nineveh in literal or rhetorical terms.

<sup>76</sup> cf. Allen, *Joel*, 221.

<sup>77</sup> cf. Allen, *Joel*, 220, 221. From this then follows his translation: “Now Nineveh was a vast city, even by God’s standards: it took three days to cross.” Tribble follows a similar line of reasoning in terms of Nineveh’s greatness, but adds a few more theological dimensions. cf. Tribble, “Jonah”, 511.

<sup>78</sup> cf. Stuart, *Hosea–Jonah*, 483, 487. His translation is as follows: “Now, Nineveh was a city important to God, requiring a three-day visit.”

<sup>79</sup> cf. Stuart, *Hosea–Jonah*, 487–488. Similarly so also Bruckner, *Jonah*, 90.

First, the preposition *b<sup>e</sup>* can, and here does, simply introduce the direct object of the verb. Second, “believe in” has an idiomatic value in English that the verb-preposition combination does not carry in Hebrew.<sup>80</sup>

Second, there is prominent shift from “YHWH” to “Elohim” in verse 5 and onwards which warrants explanation. Here, from a narrative perspective, the shift in vocabulary accords well with the beliefs of the Ninevites and their limited (lack of?) knowledge of the Deity.<sup>81</sup> Consequently, it would be prudent to heed the caution that their apparent belief in the message from Jonah’s Elohim is not synonymous with a total conversion to YHWH.<sup>82</sup> Finally, the use of “Elohim” as opposed to “God” is akin to the “YHWH”/“LORD” discussion in verse 1.

*Verse 7:* In this verse the first ecological emphasis comes into play. The king’s decree specifies that no-one — no human person or any of their animals — may eat or drink anything during this time of mourning. All of the consulted translations render this decree in a straightforward way. However, the ECT strives to convey this sense of inclusiveness in a more explicit way; to show that the animals are also part of the community. Not only are humans and animals part of the same community in Jonah, they are also intimately connected and similarly affected by Jonah’s words of warning.

*Verse 8:* The decree continues here and warrants two notes. First, the king and his advisors call on both humans and animals to take part in the mourning rituals. The ECT reinforces the communal aspect by rendering this as “everyone”. Second, the decree implores more or less every inhabitant to turn away from their evil ways. The ECT renders this as “every person”. On the one hand, this serves to reflect the Hebrew text which adds אִישׁ (“man”/“person”) as the subject of the verb וַיִּשְׁבוּ (“and they must turn”). On the other hand, and coincidentally, it also emphasizes that the humans are responsible for God’s anger; not the animals or any part of the non-human creation. The four consulted translations omit the אִישׁ from their respective renderings.<sup>83</sup>

*Verse 9:* This note concerns the king’s hope that God will not punish the Ninevites and the narrator’s particular choice of expressing said hope. He uses two terms here: שׁוּב and נַחַם. The consulted translations approach their rendering of these terms in different ways but, in essence, it boils down to the notion that God might change his mind and show them mercy.<sup>84</sup> However, to translate נַחַם

<sup>80</sup> cf. John H. Walton, “Jonah”, in *Daniel–Malachi*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland, EBC 8 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), 484–485 n5.

<sup>81</sup> cf. Simundson, *Hosea*, 278.

<sup>82</sup> cf. Tribble, “Jonah”, 513; Walton, “Jonah”, 483.

<sup>83</sup> The 1983 Afrikaans translation offers an example of one text that does render the אִישׁ.

<sup>84</sup> cf. also Joel 2:14 and its various translations.

simply as God changing his mind dilutes the introspective and emotional dimensions of the term. As Holladay defines it, the term gives the impression of being regretful or sorry and subsequently reconsidering.<sup>85</sup>

*Verse 10:* In the end, YHWH does change his mind. The narrator first portrays this by again using the term נָחַם. In the process the narrator also creates a clever interplay between the Deity’s perception of the people’s actions and his own self-evaluation (for want of a better term). It is easy to translate רָעָה as “evil” when applied to the ways of the Ninevites, but the consulted translations refrain from doing the same with רָעָה when considering God’s intentions.<sup>86</sup> The NIV and NLT render it as God changing his mind about the “destruction” he threatened against the people, and similarly so the CEV. The NRSV instead uses the term “calamity”.

In a broad sense all of these translations are correct. However, returning to the note of verse 9, the author seems to paint a picture in which God realises that his own intended actions are in need of correcting given the particular circumstances. Looking at רָעָה, “evil” is generally one of the first definitions that come up, but insofar as it signifies one party’s intentions against another, then “harm” might be equally appropriate.<sup>87</sup> Consequently, the ECT opts to render the term as “harmful”.<sup>88</sup> Moreover, this is an attempt to form a kind of parallelism with the aforementioned “evil” deeds of the people and maintain some of the wordplay of the Hebrew text.

## F CONCLUDING REMARKS

The question that guided this investigation is an easy one: is it possible to produce a “green”, or eco-conscious, translation of a text from the Hebrew Bible? In a sense the answer is also easy: yes, it is possible. Here Jonah 3 served as example of what such a translation might look like in practice. In the end, the changes it introduced, especially in verses 7 and 8, were not major in linguistic or theological terms, but ideologically speaking they are quite significant.

<sup>85</sup> cf. William L. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1971), 234.

<sup>86</sup> The reasons for this seem to be primarily theological in nature rather than linguistic. Two exceptions are the 1953 Afrikaans translation and the KJV. Also consider Baldwin’s rendering: “...so God repented of the evil that he had intended to do to them...”; Joyce Baldwin, “Jonah”, in *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary*, ed. Thomas E. McComiskey, single vol. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 578.

<sup>87</sup> cf. Holladay, *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon*, 342.

<sup>88</sup> Stuart offers a similar translation: “...he changed his mind about the harm he said he would cause them...”; Stuart, *Hosea–Jonah*, 484.

Now one more pressing question warrants consideration. Concerning the notion of equivalence, or relation between the ST and TT, the focus was on producing a translation that is “reasonable”. Did this particular attempt at an ECT succeed in the matter? One can approach this question from two different angles:

First, there are certain “values in connection with translation”<sup>89</sup> that might prove to be helpful in deciding how reasonable the relation is. These are “accuracy”, “appropriateness”, and “honesty”—

Is the ECT accurate? In this regard, Frank focuses on two features: linguistic skill and clarity. This is a good starting-point: the translator has to work hard at understanding what the original author wished to convey through the text, and similarly so at communicating this clearly to their target audience. However, given the nature and format of this particular attempt, it will be up to each individual reader to decide whether the rendering of Jonah 3 is accurate and clear. Consequently, it is difficult to circumvent the fact that accuracy is as contingent as equivalence. Not every reader will be part of the target audience and one has to acknowledge that the criteria for accuracy will differ from person to person. One can oversimplify this matter by pointing to certain accuracy equations: for example, proficiency + ideology, proficiency + theological orientation, *et cetera*.

Is the ECT appropriate for the target audience? While the translator will always have to make choices in rendering a text from one language into another, Frank rightly observes that they cannot do so without regard for the needs of the target audience. In assessing the viability of this project, it seemed that four groups of people could possibly benefit from such a translation. Their needs, however, will not be the same in every respect. The challenge, then, is to find points of convergence between them: a translation that stays as close as possible to the Hebrew text (with certain extra stipulations), but also illuminates the text in an ecologically interesting and responsible manner. Whether the ECT of Jonah 3 succeeds herein will also have to remain an open-ended question for the time being.

The final value is honesty. In this regard, Frank emphasizes that the onus is on the translator to be transparent about their endeavour. In terms of two maxims: (i) do not make unfounded claims and (ii) do not mislead your target (or any other) audience. In terms of the ECT, is it what it claims to be; nothing more and nothing less? Of all three of the values, this might perhaps be the only one to conclusively deal with here. In essence, the ECT claims to be a regular translation of Jonah 3 — similar in many ways to any other — with the exception of verses 7 and 8 given their distinct ecological foundation. In terms of their respective renderings, there are notes that explain the choices made and how it

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<sup>89</sup> cf. Frank, “What Kind of Theory”, #10–11.

influences the overall understanding of the text. In short, the ECT has been as open and transparent as possible.

Second, apart from these three values, one can return to Floor's contribution (see § C.3.) and ask whether it is possible to plot the ECT on his proposed grid. If so, then one might give further credence to the argument that this translation is of reasonable equivalence. At this stage, it should be clear, even from a cursory reading, that this particular rendering is not a paraphrase. On the one hand, in the domain of form, the ECT closely follows the Hebrew text, with minor alterations in those instances where it better accommodates the English style and grammar. In this sense, it presents a closer reading of the text. On the other hand, concerning the semantic content, it is neither completely resemblant nor interpretative. In terms of the consulted translations, then, the ECT is situated somewhere between the NRSV (Close Resemblant) and the NLT (Close Interpretative).

In conclusion, it will be prudent to return briefly to the work of Lynn White Jr. As much as White considered Christianity to be at fault for many of the environmental challenges faced today, he also believed it could be driving force for positive change.<sup>90</sup> In this regard, White calls for a reconsideration of those traditions within the religion that treats Nature with care and respect. In particular, he turns to Saint Francis of Assisi, noting among other things,

The key to an understanding of Francis is his belief in the virtue of humility —not merely for the individual but for man as a species. Francis tried to depose man from his monarchy over creation and set up a democracy of all God's creatures.<sup>91</sup>

More than fifty years have passed since White's paper was first published and there is still much work to do in terms of the environmental challenges faced. However, if he is right that religion has a part to play in this process, then it would be misguided to overlook the importance of translation. Put differently, it becomes a necessity to recognize the translator's ability to effect change in a variety of circumstances.<sup>92</sup> Baker eloquently captures this matter when she writes in a passing comment on semiotic equivalence:

...translation is one of the main ways in which change enters our lives: it introduces new modes of thinking and of viewing the world, in large part by adapting and extending the established functions of semiotic resources in a given culture to accommodate new meanings. With time, the novel uses introduced through translation become part

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<sup>90</sup> cf. White, "The Historical Roots", 1206–1207.

<sup>91</sup> White, "The Historical Roots", 1206.

<sup>92</sup> cf. Baker, *In Other Words*, 320–323.

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of our native cultural system and develop their own dynamic within it...<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Baker, *In Other Words*, 288.

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Mr C. J. (Neels) Redelinguys, Research Fellow, Department of Old and New Testament Studies, University of the Free State (Bloemfontein). *Email*: neelsred@gmail.com. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0309-9547>.