

Approaching Paul's Use of Scripture in Light of Translation Studies
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Translation Studies is a young and very energetic field of study which applies a broad range of disciplinary approaches to issues in translation and interpreting services. There are numerous graduate programs offering masters and doctoral degrees in the field (often as part of literature or linguistics departments). There are also several professional organizations such as the American Translation and Interpreting Studies Association (ATISA, <http://www.atisa.org/>), the European Society for Translation Studies (ESTS, <http://www.est-translationstudies.org/>) and others. There are dozens academic journals dedicated to the field, including *Translation Studies*, *Translation: A Translation Studies Journal*, the *International Journal of Translation Studies*, *New Voices in Translation* and many more.¹ Routledge, Benjamins and St. Jerome publish numerous academic studies on the subject.²

The interdisciplinary field draws on insights and research done in comparative literature, linguistics, cultural studies, communication studies, critical theory and other fields to shed light on what translation and translators (as well as interpreters mediating between people(s) of different languages) do and the practical and theoretical implications.

While Translation Studies normally focuses on actual translations of texts or spoken discourse, the field has also looked more widely at translation as a very common phenomenon, including translation from one medium to another (“translating” a book into a film or a Broadway production) and to other ways in which humans “translate” cultural realities or ways in which translation may serve as a metaphor for much of what people communicate intentionally or unintentionally.

¹ See the links provided here: <http://www.monabaker.com/tsresources/links.htm> (accessed November 8, 2010).

² For an easy entry into the field I recommend Anthony Pym, *Exploring Translation Theories* (London: Routledge, 2010) or Jeremy Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications* (London: Routledge, 2008). Another option would be Lawrence Venuti, ed., *The Translation Studies Reader* (London; New York: Routledge, 2000).

This essay will explore some of the potential of the growing field of Translation Studies for the study of Paul's use of Scripture, including points of descriptive translation studies (e.g., polysystem theory), functionalist approaches (Skopostheorie), postcolonial approaches to translation and the understanding of translation as cultural mediation. Particular approaches and perspectives will be considered that may broaden the scope of issues that inform our understanding of Paul's use of Scripture including seeing that usage as part of his role as one of the key translators of the message of early Christianity for the Gentile communities to which he ministered. In the latter half of the essay we will focus particularly on the ways in which looking at Paul's use of Scripture in light of Translation Studies might help us as we think about his use of Scripture in light of his theology and vice versa.

Most studies of Paul's use of Scripture to date have paid most of their attention to comparing his quotations to their Vorlage. That is, they do much the same thing as when researchers study translations by making close comparisons between the resulting translation and the original text that was translated. Differences are carefully registered and catalogued and classified in terms of their faithfulness or lack of faithfulness to the original.

In the modern period such comparisons have usually been carried out under the assumption that the work should reflect the type of disinterested objectivity valued within the post enlightenment academic setting and from a prescriptive framework which assumed a strictly scientific analysis would discern and judge between proper/improper or appropriate/inappropriate citation or translation.

Before the development of the field of translation studies people teaching translation tended to assume prescriptive approaches which dictated what translators should or should not do based primarily on traditional translation practices and what were felt to be the best practices. In our field, scholars of every stripe tended to assume that our modern scientifically informed

historical methods serve as the proper point of departure for judging the appropriateness or inappropriateness of any ancient use of Scripture. Scholars of a more conservative stripe tended to argue that what Paul (and other NT authors) did was consistent with their own (unassailable) approach to interpretation. Scholars reacting to such approaches were tempted to suggest that it must have been Paul's opponents who were interpreting the text the way they would, since clearly Paul's interpretations were not consistent with their own. Either way, the study of Paul's use of Scripture was caught in the midst of a fight that assumed prescriptive perspectives that used our own approaches and lenses as the start and end point of the analysis.

From Prescription to Description and to Polysystem Theory

In the field of translation studies (henceforth TS) scholars have generally moved beyond their original prescriptive stance to various different positions recognizing that there are various translation strategies and approaches that might be adopted (although now we find different kinds of prescriptive approaches, as we shall see). The field has also developed an amazingly broad range of approaches to analyzing translations that might be helpful to us as we consider how we might more creatively assess Paul's use of Scripture in his writings. Within TS many scholars turned from telling students how to properly translate to developing more theoretical and analytical approaches to describing what it is that people actually do when they translate, analyzing why they do not all do it the same way and what might cause them to intentionally or unintentionally handle the same phenomena in different ways and what that might reveal about what people are doing when they translate.

In the study of Paul's use of Scripture we might make some productive steps forward if we were to declare a (temporary) moratorium on judging whether Paul is (or his opponents are) interpreting Scripture in ways that we consider appropriate or acceptable today and spend more

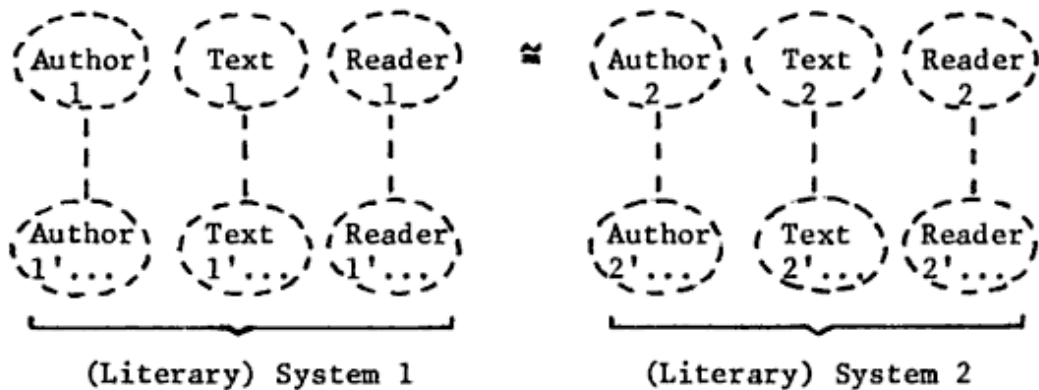
time seeking to gain a better understanding of how he (and they) interpreted and were interpreted and how that work fit within his own context. Francis Watson's *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith* was a valuable start in this direction inasmuch as he compared Paul's interpretations of Scripture with other ancient Jewish interpretations of the same texts or themes. One of the things that stands out in such an analysis is that no one was interpreting Scripture at that time the way we would interpret it today (as we should have expected, with a little more historical self-awareness). Too much of previous discussion of the subject was tainted by the shadow of the fundamentalist-modernist debate and apologetic interests that all tended to assume modern presuppositions as a starting point for defending or critiquing Paul's work.³ This is not to suggest that critical judgments should not be made, but that more subtle work should first be carried out in which Paul's interpretations might be more fully and broadly analyzed in light of his own context and competing interpretations of his own time rather than ours. I will return to other types of evaluative approaches later in this essay.

One of the ways in which TS theorists expanded their approach to analyzing translations was by moving beyond the simple comparison of the translation to the original text, to finding a broader range of relationships with which translations could be compared. In the 1970's Itamar Even-Zohar introduced "polysystem theory" in which he used the the term "polysystem" "for the aggregate of literary systems (including everything from 'high' or 'canonized' forms (g.e.,

³ The same could be said of the debate regarding whether or not modern interpreters should follow the example set by Paul and other NT authors (see G. K. Beale, ed., *The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Text?* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994], 387-404; Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* [New Haven; Yale University, 1989], 178-92; Richard N. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999], xxxiv-xxxix, 193-8). Since interpreters are not agreed on exactly how NT authors like Paul interpret Scripture it would seem premature (or to close the door on further analysis of the subject) to give a definitive affirmation or negation of the proposal. While both Beale and Hays both affirm that contemporary Christians should follow the interpretive example of the authors of the NT, they do not think the same thing is going on, and thus find themselves giving different kinds of permission to their readers.

innovative verse) such as poetry to 'low' or 'non-canonized' forms (e.g., children's literature and popular fiction) in a given culture. Even-Zohar recognized both the 'primary' (creating new items and models) as well as 'secondary' (reinforcing existing items and models) importance of translated literature in literary history."⁴ Gideon Toury took the polysystem idea and used it to establish "the larger framework of a comprehensive theory of translation" in his *In Search of a Theory of Translation*.⁵ As Edwin Gentzler points out, their ideas built on the foundation of the Russian Formalists and their "correlations between central and peripheral literature as well as between 'high' and 'low' types" as "one of their major hypotheses in explaining the mechanism of change in literary history."⁶

This approach was adopted and adapted, for example, by José Lambert and Hendrik van Gorp. In their essay, "On Describing Translations"⁷ they present the following diagram and explanation of some of the questions and issues it raises for the analysis of translations.⁸



⁴ Edwin Gentzler, *Contemporary Translation Theories* (Topics in Translation; Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2001), 106, referencing Itamar Even-Zohar, *Papers in Historical Poetics* (Tel Aviv: Porter Institute for Poetics and Semiotics, 1978), 7-8.


⁵ Gideon Toury, *In Search of a Theory of Translation* (Tel Aviv: Porter Institute for Poetics and Semiotics, 1980).

⁶ Even-Zohar, *Papers in Historical Poetics*, 11, cited in Gentzler, *Contemporary Translation Theories*, 109.

⁷ José Lambert and Hendrik van Gorp, "On Describing Translations" in Theo Hermans, ed., *The Manipulation of Literature: Studies in Literary Translation* (London: Croom Helm, 1985), 42-53.

⁸ Lambert and van Gorp, "On Describing Translations," 43.

Explanation:

- Text 1: source text;
- Text 2: target text;
- Author 1 and Reader 1 belong to the system of the source text;
- Author 1 is to be situated among the authors of the source system;
- Text 1' and Reader 1' are to be situated within the source system;
- System 1 refers to the system of source text, source author and source reader (this system is not necessarily a strictly literary one, since literary systems cannot be isolated from social, religious or other systems);
- Author 2, Text 2, Reader 2 etc. are to be situated within the target system;
-  : all elements of this communication scheme are complex and dynamic.
- The symbol \cong indicates that the link between source and target communication cannot really be predicted; it stands for an open relation, the exact nature of which will depend on the priorities of the translator's behaviour - which in turn has to be seen in function of the dominant norms of the target system.

The point is that translations need to be analyzed not only in terms of their relationship with the source text, but also in terms of how the target text's place within its adoptive literary system (as well as the social, religious and other systems of which it is a part) relates to the source text's place within its adoptive literary and other systems and the place of the author of the source text within his culture and context relates to his place within the target text culture and context, etc., etc. As they suggest,⁹ “[a]ll relations mentioned in the scheme deserve to be studied”:

- T1 --- T2 (relations between individual texts, i.e., between the original and its translation)
- A1 --- A2 (relations between authors)
- R1 --- R2 (relations between readers)
- A1 --- T1 \cong A2 --- T2 (authorial intentions in the source and target systems, and their correlation)

⁹ Lambert and van Gorp, “On Describing Translations,” 44.

- T1 --- R1 \cong T2 --- R2 (pragmatics and reception in the source and target systems, and their correlation)
- A1 --- A1', A2 --- A2' (situation of the author in respect of other authors, in both systems)
- T1 --- T1', T2 --- T2' (situation of both the original and the translation as texts in respect of other texts)
- R1 --- R1', R2 --- R2' (situation of the reader within the respective systems)
- Target System --- Literary System (translations within a given literature)
- (Literary) System 1 --- (Literary) System 2 (relations, whether in terms of conflict or harmony, between both systems).

This is just a way of arguing that analysts should look not just at the relationship between the original text and the translation, but at all the relationships between the original text and its literary, linguistic and socio-cultural context and the translated text within its own literary, linguistic and socio-cultural context. In considering a translation of Shakespeare into Japanese, for example, it would look at the place and status of Shakespeare's work in the English literary, linguistic and socio-cultural context and the place of the translation within the Japanese literary, linguistic and socio-cultural context including the difference between the impact of Shakespeare's work in English literature and culture and the impact of the translation in Japanese literature and culture, or the status of knowledge of Shakespeare in English versus the status of knowledge of Shakespeare in Japanese culture (to arbitrarily name a few of the very numerous possibilities). It would also look at the status of translated works as a whole within the Japanese literary system/world and the place of the particular translation of Shakespeare within that literary system, etc., etc.

Applying an extension of this approach to Paul as one "translating" the early Christian message for the sake of his Gentile communities (and his use of Scripture as part of that work of translation) we would go beyond comparing his interpretations of Scripture with what we might take to be the original meaning of those texts, to also looking at questions like how the original texts fit within a larger literary system and how his interpretations of them fit (or not) within the

literary system(s) of his readers. We could also compare the place of his interpretations in their readers' contexts with the place that alternative interpretations (Jewish or Christian) of Jewish Scriptures (or of other works being translated/interpreted into those same contexts. We could think about the difference between the demographic of the readers (or consumers/recipients) of the original texts, or of Palestinian Christian consumers of early Christian interpretations of those texts with the demographics of Paul's own audience. Where do the consumers of Paul's "translation" fit within their socio-cultural context and how does that compare to the place of the consumers of the "original" Christian message within their own socio-cultural context, etc. How similar to or different from "consumers" of other ancient Jewish or Jewish Christian interpretations of Scripture are those to whom Paul is presenting his interpretations? We could also examine how Paul's authority in relation to his readers relates to the authority of the authors of the texts in relation to their readers and how that affects the reception of Paul's interpretations and his need to engage in certain types of interpretation.

The authors of the texts Paul cites would be located within the systems (literary, religious, political, economic, etc.) of which they were a part (A1 – A1') and Paul would be located within the systems (literary, religious, political, economic, etc.) of which he was a part (A2 – A2'). The texts Paul cites would be located within the systems (literary, religious, political, economic, etc.) of which they were a part (T1 – T1'), and his use of them would be located within the systems (literary, religious, political, economic, etc.) of which his writings were a part (T2 – T2'). The original readers of the texts Paul cites would be located within the systems (literary, religious, political, economic, etc.) of which they were a part (R1 – R1'), and Paul's own readers would be located within the systems (literary, religious, political, economic, etc.) of which they were a part (R2 – R2'). The relationships and differences between each of the elements within and between each system would also be taken into consideration.

Most studies of the use of the OT in the New have focused purely on the perceived relationship between T1 and T2 (or between A2 and T1). Some notable exceptions include Chris Stanley's *Paul and the Language of Scripture*, which compared Paul's quotation technique with other ancient approaches to quotations and, even more significantly, Francis Watson's *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith*, which is an example of an approach that pays attention to the relationship between T2 and T2' (how Paul's interpretations relate to other interpretations of the same texts in his environment) with some attention to how these relate to T1 (the meaning of the texts in their OT canonical context).

Some of our questions about why Paul interprets the Scriptures the way he does may never get answered if our focus simply continues to shift back and forth between those interpretations and the texts being interpreted. They are being "translated" into a completely different context, and interpretations that may have made perfectly good sense in the original context may not be found to be relevant or coherent in the context into which they are being introduced. The better we understand the whole host of complex relationships entailed in a translation (or interpretation) process, and their implications, the better prepared we will be to understand aspects of that translation that may have been previously overlooked or misunderstood. The cognitive environment into which the interpretation/translation is being launched differs in innumerable ways from the cognitive environment in which the original text/message was formulated. The challenges this poses have been a primary concern of the application of relevance theory to the work of translation.

Translation and Relevance Theory

“Relevance Theory,”¹⁰ has been proposed by Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson and applied to translation theory by Ernst-August Gutt.¹¹ The theory argues that human communication does not take place through a strict process of coding and decoding of meanings by use of language but is largely dependent upon the human “ability to draw inferences from people’s behavior.” Language is a form of human behavior that allows for relatively more explicit inferences to be made, but the general principle that communication takes place through inference remains the same.

According to relevance theory, an individual infers the meaning of a person’s speech and/or other behavior based on information found in their “total cognitive environment” which is “is the set of all the facts that he can perceive or infer: all the facts that are manifest to him. An individual’s total cognitive environment is a function of his physical environment and his cognitive abilities.”¹² Communication works on the basis of the “principle of relevance,” namely, that “every act of ostensive communication communicates the presumption of its own optimal relevance.”¹³ That is, people observe the speech and actions of those communicating with them and infer their meaning on the assumption that the message is relevant to them and their context.

For a person to interpret a statement or a text in the same way that the original listener or reader was expected to interpret it they would need to share the same cognitive environment as the original listener or reader. Since readers of translations (especially readers of translations of ancient literature) naturally do not share the same cognitive environment as the original texts, it

¹⁰ See Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson, *Relevance: Communication and Cognition* (2nd ed.; Oxford: Blackwell, 1995; idem, “Relevance Theory” in Laurence R. Horn and Gregory L. Ward, eds., *The Handbook of Pragmatics* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2004), 607-632.

¹¹ See Ernst-August Gutt, *Translation and Relevance: Cognition and Context* (Manchester, U.K.: St. Jerome, 2000).

¹² Sperber and Wilson, *Relevance*, 39.

¹³ Sperber and Wilson, *Relevance*, 158, cited in Gutt, *Translation and Relevance*, 32.

becomes quite difficult to see how they will interpret a translation in the same way that the original text was expected to be interpreted.

One approach is to explicate in the translation information that is understood to be implicit in the original communication situation but that would not be implicit for the reader of the translation.¹⁴ Gutt argues, however, that the multiplying of explications within the translation itself cannot be counted on to lead the readers to the same implicatures as suggested to the original readers. In fact, he suggests that one of the problems with the explications given in domesticating translations is that they often provide a meaning that is more determinate and closed than is actually appropriate given the “indeterminacy and open-endedness of implicature.”¹⁵ The solution may also overlook the fact that problems in interpretation come not only from a failure to recognize implicit information from the original communication situation, but also from interference caused by inferences drawn by the readers of the translation from their own cognitive environment which are not easily canceled out.¹⁶ The translation may also end up being filled with what will amount to an unacceptably high level of information processing that does not seem relevant to the reader of the translation, resulting in its disuse.¹⁷

Gutt uses the analogy of direct and indirect quotation to suggest that we think in terms of two kinds of translation: direct translation and indirect translation. Just as a direct quotation attempts to preserve exactly what the other person said, direct translation seeks to attain complete interpretive resemblance. That is, with direct translation the translator works on the assumption that the readers have access to the same cognitive environment as the original listeners/readers and will make the same inferences that they would, if the translation includes all of the same communicative clues found in the original text. In the case of a direct translation the

¹⁴ See the detailed discussion of this issue in Gutt, *Translation and Relevance*, 83-98.

¹⁵ Gutt, *Translation and Relevance*, 92.

¹⁶ See Gutt, *Translation and Relevance*, 94-95.

¹⁷ Gutt, *Translation and Relevance*, 96-97.

translator's task is to ensure that the translation would convey "all and only those explicatures and implicatures that the original text was intended to convey"¹⁸ if its readers shared the same cognitive environment as the original readers. Clearly such an approach has its advantages for the translator:

For the translator, one of the important consequences of [carrying out a direct translation] is that it makes the explication of implicatures both unnecessary and undesirable. It makes it unnecessary because the reason for such explication was mismatches in contextual information in the cognitive environment of the receptors. Since in direct translation it is the audience's responsibility to make up for such differences, the translator need not be concerned with them. It also makes such explication undesirable because it would be likely to have a distorting influence on the intended interpretation.¹⁹

It seems apparent that interpretation is such a ubiquitous activity in part precisely because so many of those wanting to engage certain texts or cultures do not share the same cognitive environment required for direct access. Even the provision of extended commentaries, footnotes or other paratextual materials cannot provide new readers with the complete cognitive environment of the original.

Gutt describes indirect translation on the analogy of indirect quotations, which are reworded (and typically marked as reworded) in such a way that they only partially resemble the original discourse, retaining only those parts of the discourse or its meaning that are relevant to those to whom the indirect quotation is transmitted. In the same way, indirect translation is translation which does not aspire to complete interpretive resemblance with the original, but only to partial resemblance, with alterations made in order to adapt the text in ways that optimize its relevance for the receptors.

Just as indirect quotations may either modify the original statement only slightly or may transform it significantly, so also indirect translation may make only slight accommodations for the sake of the intended receptors, or it may make more significant accommodations for the sake

¹⁸ Gutt, *Translation and Relevance*, 99.

¹⁹ Gutt, *Translation and Relevance*, 175.

of relevant communication with the receptors. In any case, it is expected that indirect translation, like indirect quotation, resembles the original “closely enough in relevant respects.”²⁰

Gutt also stresses that “The importance of ensuring that the intended resemblance be known to both parties, and the danger of relying on tacit assumptions in this matter, can hardly be overemphasized” since “insufficient awareness in this area has contributed greatly to the misunderstandings, unjustified criticism, confusion and frustration that tend to accompany translation. Mismatches in these expectations do matter, sometimes only a little, but sometimes very much so.”²¹

Leaving the translation metaphor behind for just a moment, Paul's letters may be understood as providing a combination of direct quotation and indirect quotation, as he sometimes directly quotes from the LXX or other Greek versions and sometimes adapts the texts to a greater or lesser extent. The material surrounding his quotations may properly be understood as paratextual material, intended to guide and inform the interpretation of those direct and indirect quotes. Returning to translation as a metaphor again, we may consider Paul's overall engagement with Scripture (in direct and indirect quotes, allusions, echoes, use of concepts and ideas, etc., etc.) to generally function as a type of indirect translation rather than direct translation.

If polysystem theory helps us recognize, among other things, the tremendous extent to which the cognitive environment of Paul's readers/hearers differs from that of the original recipients of the original texts, relevance theory might remind us that the interpretive equivalent of a direct translation would be unlikely to have been comprehensible by Paul's audience. Although we may debate the extent to which he expected his readers to be familiar with the contexts and original meanings of the texts he cites or alludes to, it would clearly be expecting

²⁰ Sperber and Wilson, *Relevance*, 137, cited in Gutt, *Translation and Relevance*, 191.

²¹ Gutt, *Translation and Relevance*, 193.

too much of his audience to hope that he could usually simply provide unadapted quotations of key texts and they would both understand their original meaning and how Paul thought they were relevant for them. Paul's interpretation provides a closer parallel to the idea of an indirect translation – one that that only partially resembles the original text and its meaning, retaining only those parts that are relevant to those to whom his interpretation is being transmitted. He may well not be aspiring to complete interpretive resemblance with the original, but only to partial resemblance, with alterations made in order to adapt the text and its message in ways that optimize its relevance for his congregations.

Some of our judgments about Paul may have been based on misunderstandings of the intended resemblance intended by him, resulting in just the sort of misunderstandings, unjustified criticism, confusion and frustration that tend to accompany translations where expectations are not met. As Gutt says, “[m]ismatches in these expectations do matter.”

***Skopostheorie* and the Question of Purpose in Translation (and Interpretation)**

One of the more influential approaches in TS are the functionalist approaches, the most well-known being *Skopostheorie*/Skopos theory.²² Skopos theory may be used as a descriptive or normative approach. It is part of several different kinds of movements that shift away from a narrow focus on the relationship between the translated text and the original text to one that gives more emphasis on the relationship between the translated text and its intended readers or between the readers of the translation and their relationships with the original text and its translation.

²² Drawing on the metaphorical extension of the Greek, *σκοπός* with the meaning ‘aim,’ or ‘end.’ For the theory, see Hans J. Vermeer and Katharina Reiß, *Grundlegung einer allgemeinen Translationstheorie* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1984. Christiane Nord, *Translating as Purposeful Activity: Functionalist Approaches Explained* (Manchester, UK: St. Jerome, 1997), and idem, “Scopos, Loyalty, and Translational Conventions,” *Target* 3/1 (1991), 91-109.

Skopos theory argues that the intended function of any translation will and should be a determining factor in the translation approach adopted. The register adopted and vocabulary used, the rigidity or freedom in the translation of key terms, the preservation, omission or transformation of idiomatic expressions in the original text and the extent to which idiomatic expressions from the receptor language are introduced, the preservation or transformation of literary forms and genres, modification of names of people or places, and much more will be decided in light of the intended audience and function of the translation. In fact, Skopos theory argues that a translation is to be evaluated primarily on the basis of whether or not it satisfies purposes of the intended readers and allows them to do with the translation what they wished.

Within Skopos theory the *Skopos* rule states that one should “translate/interpret/speak/write in a way that enables your text/translation to function in the situation in which it is used and with the people who want to use it and precisely in the way they want it to function.”²³ Nord, one of the key advocates of Skopos theory, argues that “the *Skopos* of a particular translation task may require a ‘free’ or a ‘faithful’ translation, or anything between these two extremes, depending on the purpose for which the translation is needed. What it does *not* mean is that a good translation should *ipso facto* conform or adapt to target-culture behavior or expectations, although the concept is often misunderstood in this way.”²⁴ She also recognizes that there is a type of negotiation that may need to take place between the translator, a client and the receivers of the translation (since typically it is not those who will receive the translation who commission the translator to begin with).

Here is Nord’s summary of the translator’s role:

²³ Vermeer, cited in Nord, *Translating as Purposeful Activity*, 29. According to Nord, “loyalty” to the original text “means that the target text purpose should be compatible with the original author’s intentions” (Nord, *Translating as Purposeful Activity*, 125).

²⁴ Nord, *Translating as Purposeful Activity*, 29.

In the case of a translation, the translator is a real receiver of the source text who then proceeds to inform another audience, located in a situation under target-culture conditions, about the offer of information made by the source text. The translator offers this new audience a target text whose composition is, of course, guided by the translator's assumptions about their needs, expectations, previous knowledge, and so on. These assumptions will obviously be different from those made by the original author, because source-text addressees and target-text addressees belong to different cultures and language communities. This means the translator cannot offer the same amount and kind of information as the source-text producer. What the translator does is offer another kind of information in another form.²⁵

Before translating Shakespeare into Japanese a translator informed by Skopos theory would seek to find the answers to a long list of questions, including the following: What do the Japanese readers of this translation of Shakespeare want from it or what to do with it? Do they want to sense the flavor of his prose? Do they want to understand the ideology of the text? Are they interested analyzing his historical imagination? Do they want a crib to help them read Shakespeare in English?

It is in thinking about the extension of functionalist approaches to translation to Paul's use of Scripture that we begin to engage more directly with the issues related to the role of Scripture in Paul's theology. Too often Paul's use of Scripture has been discussed as though he simply read Scripture to further or deepen his own understanding of what the texts mean and commented on them in order to deepen his readers' understandings of the original meanings and contemporary applications of whatever texts he happens to use. That is, one often has the impression that Paul's primary commitment would or should have been to the plain and simple exposition of the meanings of biblical texts without being influenced by any other agenda. In thinking about an extension of Skopos theory to Paul as an interpreter of Scripture we are reminded that Paul understands himself to be commissioned by God to proclaim the (biblical/Jewish) good news of Christ to non-Jewish people living in the Roman Empire. His approach to Scripture is qualified by the commission he has received from God to proclaim the

²⁵ Nord, *Translating as Purposeful Activity*, 35.

gospel to the Gentiles, and his reading of Scripture will be (and clearly is) guided by his understanding of the needs of his (mainly) Gentile Christian readers. His readers are not interested in his interpretations of Scripture as historical or scientific feats or artifacts. In Paul's understanding God expects him, and his readers need him, to "translate" the message of the gospel so that Gentiles can understand how they also fit into God's plans and how they can (literally and metaphorically) sit at the same table with Jewish believers as they follow Christ in their own cities and culture. There may be innumerable aspects of the meanings of scriptural texts that would not engage the needs and interests of Paul's readers and Paul's goal, aim or end is not so much to show them how to be carry out exegesis of the type we might recognize and endorse, but to help them understand Scripture as a book which has them and their needs in mind and which addresses their particular challenges. Paul has often been described as a "task theologian" and that applies just as well to his reading and interpretation of Scripture. And in his task he is loyal not merely to the texts of Scripture as objects of interpretive interest, but also to "translating" (i.e., interpreting) them in such a way that the particular ways in which they may be helpful to his readers and their challenges may be most fully exploited. In this he reflects his loyalty to the one who has commissioned him to do that work of translation and to those for whom his "translations" are being prepared. The extension of Skopos theory to Paul points us towards the need for greater focus being given to the needs and interests of Paul's readers and how his use of Scripture is conditioned by their concerns and interests in engaging the Scriptures. Rather than given specific examples at this point it will be better to move to the next development in recent approaches to TS, which is related to the points made here, and then to discuss a few specific examples which will relate to Skopos theory as well as issues of power and activism in translation.

From Disinterested/Objective Translation (and Interpretation) to Questions of Power, Agency, Resistance and Activism in Translation (and Interpretation)²⁶

In the modern world, at least, translation has traditionally be thought of as something undertaken with objectivity, even if one needed to decide how literally or freely to translate. Even with Skopos theory one might consider the translator's role as being fairly objective. Once the translator discovers the commissioner's purpose and the target groups needs and purpose for the translation they should carry out the work in a way that conforms to those requirements.

In recent years, however, much more attention has been given to the place of translators as interested and committed agents whose ideological commitments play a significant role in what they do. Translators have been understood to play significant roles as inter-cultural mediators. TS scholars have focused on the key role that translators and translations may have in promoting mutual understanding between peoples of very diverse languages and cultures and to avoiding the problems that arise when people of different languages and cultures misunderstand each other.²⁷ Even where there is no significant conflict translators are more likely to think about how their translation of Shakespeare's works from English into Japanese or of Japanese works into English might help English- and Japanese-speaking people understand each other

²⁶ On this subject see especially Maria Tymoczko and Edwin Genzler, eds. *Translation and Power* (Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002), Maria Tymoczko, ed., *Translation, Resistance, Activism* (Amherst and Boston, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 2010), and Maria Tymoczko, *Enlarging Translation, Empowering Translators* (Manchester, UK: St. Jerome, 2007).

²⁷ See, e.g., Raymond Mopoho, "Interpreters and translators as political mediators in colonial Sub-Saharan Africa" (UNESCO International Symposium on translation and cultural mediation; February 22-23, 2009; <http://www.unesco.org/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CLT/languages/pdf/MOPOHO-NUOVO.pdf>); Anthony Pym, "Localization and the Training of Linguistic Mediators for the Third Millennium" (paper presented to the conference "Te Challenges of Translatoin and Interpretation In the Third Millenium", Zouk Mosbeh, Lebanon, May 17, 2002; <http://www.tinet.cat/~apym/on-line/translation/beirut.pdf>); Rainer Schulte, *The Translator as Mediator Between Cultures* (http://translation.utdallas.edu/translationstudies/mediator_essay1.html; accessed November 12, 2010).

more clearly and reduce unnecessary conflicts between them. We might ask to what extent Paul hoped that his “translation” of the gospel message through his scriptural interpretations would promote (among other things) mutual understanding between the Jewish and Gentile members of the communities to which he wrote. If the collection for the church in Jerusalem was intended, among other things, to build trust and bonds of brotherhood between his churches and the Jerusalem community, might his biblical interpretations be intended, among other things, to do the same? One could also ask whether Paul as a “translator” of the Christian messianic Jewish message to Gentile communities (and interpreter of Scripture as part of that translation role) effectively promotes or undermines mutual understanding between his readers and the Palestinian Christian (or other) communities and the Diaspora Jewish communities or the wider Roman world and try to come up with effective ways of answering the question.

Translation studies has given great attention to postcolonial criticism in light of the perception that translators and translations have played key functions in the advancement of the interests of modern colonizing empires and has shown interest in the place that translators and translation can play either in advancing or resisting those interests or in marginalizing or advancing the distinctive perspectives of colonized peoples. R. S. Sugirtharajah points out that “Bible translation has long been implicated in diverse imperialist projects in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, and South America.” Translators and translations are seen as tools of imperial ambitions. “Since the invader and invaded spoke different languages and practiced different religions, translation played a crucial role in conquering and converting the other.”²⁸

Contemporary approaches to translation also tend to be much more fully marked by awareness of problems of cultural bias or distortion and concerns about ideological issues and abuses in the past and a commitment to translate in ways that do not promote injustice or

²⁸ R. S. Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism and Biblical Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) 156.

alienation or serve cultural agendas, especially the interests of the powerful at the expense of the powerless. Translators, like writers/readers and speakers/listeners, have become more sensitive to ethnic, cultural, gender and other types of bias or manipulation²⁹ and either try to avoid perpetuating them in their translations or seek to use the power of translation to advance what they consider to be a more just agenda and social structure.

Activist translators promote social, religious or other agendas in variety of ways. Perhaps the most obvious way is through the selection of materials to be translated. In Western culture we quickly recognize that the decision to “translate” (i.e., adapt) a book into the “language” of film often reflects a political and social agenda (a commentary on the ethics of extraordinary rendition, or of the dangers of religious [or some other kind of] intolerance, etc.). A decision to translate Peter Pan or Don Quixote into the language of a nation under an oppressive dictatorship can be a subversive move since “they can be seen as anarchic figures, failing to respect authority.”³⁰

TS scholars are in the midst of a debate over the ethics of domesticating a foreign text. Is it more ethical to recognize and respect the ‘otherness’ of the voice of another, or to assimilate it so that it sounds much like one’s own voice? Laurence Venuti recognizes both advantages and problems with domesticating translations:

²⁹ In the introduction to their book on *Translation and Power*, Edwin Gentzler and Maria Tymoczko suggest that in the second part of the last century translation became even more intentionally tied up with issues of ideology and manipulative power: “In the 1950s and 1960s, as Madison Avenue tightened its grip on the United States and the world and pioneered techniques for using mass communications for cultural control, practicing translators began consciously to calibrate their translation techniques to achieve effects they wished to produce in their audiences, whether those effects were religious faith, consumption of products, or literary success. In short, translators began to realize how translated texts could manipulate readers to achieve desired effects” (Edwin Gentzler and Maria Tymoczko, “Introduction” in Maria Tymoczko and Edwin Gentzler, eds., *Translation and Power*, xi).

³⁰ John Milton, “The Resistant Political Translations of Monteiro Lobato” in Maria Tymoczko, ed., *Translation, Resistance, Activism*, 190-210 (here 201).

The popular aesthetic requires fluent translations that produce the illusory effect of transparency, and this means adhering to the current standard dialect while avoiding any dialect, register, or style that calls attention to words as words and therefore preempts the reader's identification. As a result, fluent translation may enable a foreign text to engage a mass readership, even a text from an excluded foreign literature, and thereby initiate a significant canon reformation. But such a translation simultaneously reinforces the major language and its many other linguistic and cultural exclusions while masking the inscription of domestic values. Fluency is assimilationist, presenting to domestic readers a realistic representation inflected with their own codes and ideologies as if it were an immediate encounter with a foreign text and culture.³¹

He clearly comes down in favor of foreignizing versions but he recognizes that all translations are domesticating to one extent or another. Translation “inevitably domesticates foreign texts, inscribing them with linguistic and cultural values that are intelligible to specific domestic constituencies.” “Bad translation shapes toward the foreign culture a domestic attitude that is ethnocentric: ‘generally under the guise of transmissibility, [it] carries out a systematic negation of the strangeness of the foreign work.’”³² “Good translation aims to limit this ethnocentric negation: it stages ‘an opening, a dialogue, a cross-breeding, a decentering’ and thereby forces the domestic language and culture to register the foreignness of the foreign text.”³³ In his view a translator can and should limit the ethnocentric movement inherent in translation by taking into account “the interests of more than just those of a cultural constituency that occupies a dominant position in the domestic culture.” In contrast to the “loyalty” that should govern translation according to *Skopostheorie*, a translator should be “prepared to be disloyal to the domestic cultural norms that govern the identity-forming process of translation by calling attention to what they enable and limit, admit and exclude, in the encounter with foreign texts.”³⁴ His view is that

³¹ Laurence Venuti, *The Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 12.

³² Venuti, *The Scandals of Translation*, 81.

³³ Venuti, *The Scandals of Translation*, 81, citing Antoine Berman, *The Experience of the Foreign: Culture and Translation in Romantic Germany* (trans. S. Heyvaert; Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992), 5, 4.

³⁴ Venuti, *The Scandals of Translation*, 83.

such an approach may “create a readership that is more open to linguistic and cultural differences.”³⁵

Maria Tymoczko argues that Venuti's position is insufficiently nuanced:

Although at times foreignization may be an appropriate resistance technique in dominant cultures such as the United States, it is not at all suited to subaltern cultures that are already flooded with foreign materials and foreign linguistic impositions (often from the United States or other Eurocentric cultures) and that are trying to establish or shore up their own discourses and cultural forms. Foreignization has also been rightly criticized as potentially an elitist strategy, more appropriate to a highly educated target audience than to a broad readership or a cultural situation in which the normal education level is more modest than it is in Europe or the United States.³⁶

Tymoczko discusses resistant and assertive approaches to writing and translation. She points out that authors

may choose to present cultural material with absolutely no explanation, taking the position that the audience should be able to understand the material on the basis of general knowledge, absent which it will fall to the readers to do the homework necessary to fill in the cultural background for themselves. Colonized populations are often in this position, needing to acquire enough education about the colonizers' culture to understand “metropolitan” texts whether in the original language or in translation.³⁷

When a similar approach is taken by writers from colonized nations it is seen as “resistant” writing. She gives James Joyce as an example: “In *Ulysses* all manner of cultural material about Ireland is presupposed, from the history of the country to the geography of Dublin, from religious contestations to cultural habits and demotic speech. The result is a steep learning curve for readers who are not Irish (and for many Irish readers as well).”³⁸ Such a strategy is seen “to position the reader within limits, thus decentering the power and privilege of readers from dominant cultures.”³⁹

³⁵ Venuti, *The Scandals of Translation*, 87.

³⁶ Maria Tymoczko, *Enlarging Translation, Empowering Translators*, 211-12.

³⁷ Tymoczko, *Enlarging Translation, Empowering Translators*, 229.

³⁸ Tymoczko, *Enlarging Translation, Empowering Translators*, 229.

³⁹ Tymoczko, *Enlarging Translation, Empowering Translators*, 230.

What light might the issues raised by activist approaches to TS and the questions of power and agency in the work of translation shed on the topic that most interests us – Paul's use of Scripture? How does Paul's translation of the Christian message (and his use of Scripture as part of that translation process) relate to these kinds of interests and concerns? Paul is not a disinterested interpreter of Scripture. He believes God has given him a particular mission and that leads him to play the role of the key advocate for the full inclusion of Gentiles in the early Christian churches. His reading, pondering and interpretations of Scripture are, more often than not it seems, guided by his activist role in explaining and defending the place of Gentiles along side of Jews in God's redeemed community. As he says in Romans 11:13, he magnifies/glorifies (or makes much of) his ministry as apostle to the Gentiles. Paul intentionally exerts power through his scriptural interpretations for the sake of his readers (and for the sake of the survival and advancement of his own ministry agenda).

We can start by looking at a number of issues more carefully. For instance, Paul's choices of texts to quote and the scriptural themes that he brings into his letters reflect his particular agenda in each case. Apart from the precise wording of his scriptural citations and allusions, his choice of topics such as Abraham and his justification, of texts accusing Jews/Israelites of being sinners (as well as Gentiles), of texts speaking of Gentiles or all nations worshipping God along with Jews, etc., reflect his activist commitment to defending the Gentiles' place in God's redemptive plan on an equal footing with Jewish believers in Christ. With a text like Habakkuk 2:4 we may wonder about his omission of any pronoun (and about the relationship between the LXX version and the Hebrew), but the text is important to Paul because it establishes a basis for justification that applies to Gentiles as well as it does to Jews.

Paul tends to choose texts that defend Gentiles and that place Jews on an equal footing, that humble the arrogant (or those who think of themselves as wise [1 Cor. 1:19]) and support the

humble, or that express soteriology in terms that apply as easily to Gentile believers as Jewish believers (1 Cor. 1:31).

When we think about issues of imperialism or colonization it is interesting that Paul seems to use scriptural allusions or themes in ways that subtly subvert Roman ideology (e.g., Phil. 2:9-11), but he seems slightly less subtle about representing Jewish-Christian impositions on Gentile believers as hostile military actions that may have imperialistic tendencies. He directs his material about freedom versus bondage against the powers of sin and of the law and those seeking to impose the law on his churches.⁴⁰

The issue of resistant writing/translations raises questions about our tendency to assume we can move easily from our perception of Paul's implied readers to our conclusions about his actual readers. Have some of us been too quick to assume that if Paul leaves some information unexplained or seems to assume a certain knowledge of Scripture or Jewish background that the readers must have had that knowledge? Could Paul be demonstrating what some would call an assertive or resistant strategy by which he positions his Gentile readers "within limits, thus decentering the power and privilege of readers from dominant cultures"⁴¹ and leads them to recognize their need to educate themselves to fully understand the discourse of the Christian community? Could he be asserting cultural elements/concepts which may be foreign to them but which they may be expected to have to work and learn or otherwise process to fully enter into the material?

When Paul quotes and argues from Scripture to what extent does he domesticate his language and to what extent does he foreignize it? Does he enrich the vocabulary and linguistic repertoire of his readers or does he translate the terms and concepts so that they can be

⁴⁰ See, e.g., the discussion in Roy E. Ciampa, "Abraham and Empire in Galatians," in *Perspectives on Our Father Abraham: Essays in Honor of Marvin R. Wilson* (edited by Steven Hunt; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 153-168.

⁴¹ Tymoczko, *Enlarging Translation, Empowering Translators*, 230.

assimilated by people who are not familiar with the idioms and terminology found in the Scriptures? And what would that tell us about his theology and the ways in which he use of Scripture might impact subtle issues of power in his churches?

Paul's (modified) quotation of Habakkuk 2:4 is an interesting case in point. A search of Greek literature, inscriptions and papyri⁴² indicates that, despite the frequency of both the preposition and the noun, the expression ἐκ πίστεώς does not show up in extant Greek until Hab. 2:4LXX and then in the New Testament. Then it shows up twenty-one times in Romans and Galatians. It would not have been a familiar construction to his readers, except that they may have known it from Hab. 2:4. Paul doesn't hesitate to use the expression over and over again (at least in those two letters), more often than not keeping to that formulation. But he also rewords it to provide some clarification of how he thinks they should understand it (using διὰ πίστεως [Rom. 3:22; Gal. 2:16; Phil. 3:9, etc.] or ἐν πίστει [Gal. 2:20]; or εἰς πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντας [also Rom. 3:22, probably clarifying the meaning of εἰς πίστιν as another gloss on ἐκ πίστεώς in Rom. 1:17]).⁴³ Many other expressions that Paul frequently uses come from the Scriptures and are not collocations that would be familiar to Gentile readers unfamiliar with its idioms. For example, a search of TLG suggests the expressions associated with being reckoned righteous (Rom 4:3, ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην; Rom 4:6, λογίζεται δικαιοσύνην, etc.) were only found in the LXX and the Letter of Aristeas before showing up repeatedly in Paul (Rom. 2:26; 3:28; 4:3,5-6,9,11,22; Gal. 3:6). Similarly, the expression works of the law has only recently been clearly identified as predating Paul, and that in a Jewish source (4QMMT), but he does not hesitate to use it repeatedly and expect his Gentile readers to become familiar with it (see Rom. 3:20, 28; Gal. 2:16; 3:2, 5, 10).

⁴² Using TLG, <http://papyri.info/> and <http://epigraphy.packhum.org/inscriptions/>.

⁴³ See Francis Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith* (London: T & T Clark International, 2004), 54-71.

It seems Paul wants to introduce new expressions and enrich the vocabulary of those not familiar with biblical idioms while also giving enough commentary that they can be assimilated and fully adopted by those who were previously outsiders to this language.

Paul's Gentile readers are expected to learn to think of themselves as Gentiles (that's the scriptural and Jewish lingo, with ideological power) rather than as Romans or however they used to think of themselves, but also as the circumcision, sons of Abraham and of God, and brothers and sisters with their Jewish co-religionists. Paul is teaching his Gentile readers Jewish and scriptural vocabulary, but he is simultaneously transforming that vocabulary so that it is used in ways that will be new and challenging to his Jewish brothers as well.

In a variety of ways Paul's use of Scripture seems to strike some sort of balance between privileging Jewish/scriptural ideas and frames of reference (forcing his Gentile readers to master some of the lingo of this Jewish Messianic faith), while emphasizing in other ways (selection and exposition of texts and themes) the equal status of Gentile believers in Christ and the need to beware of the temptation some Jewish Christians might have to mimic the imperialistic approach of the Romans by imposing their own understanding of the Jewish Law as colonizers within the colonizing empire. His translation of the Christian faith for the sake of his Gentile churches empowers Gentile believers even as it challenges and stretches them. In other places it empowers those perceived to be weak or foolish and humbles those seeming to be strong and wise.

Most of these aspects of Paul's use of Scripture reflect his theological understanding of his calling and mission, the commission he has received from God who has appointed him as chief missionary to the Gentile world and advocate for a community in which Jews and Gentiles find their proper places side-by-side with the help of scriptural interpretation which is sometimes resistant, sometimes assertive, and virtually always activist and concerned to undermine improper exertions of power at the expense of fellow believers.

This essay has neglected many of Paul's primary scriptural themes (including sin, cross/death, life/resurrection, etc., etc.) and has also neglected numerous of the extremely diverse approaches and insights being developed within the field of Translation Studies. Hopefully the few basic concepts and perspectives introduced have been enough to give an idea of some of the ways in which they might fruitfully inform future research into Paul's use of Scripture and that of other ancient interpreters as well.