Performance Criticism and Its Implications for Bible Translation[1]
Part II: Challenges and Experiences

James Maxey
The author is the director of program ministries for Lutheran Bible Translators

Introduction

In part one of this article,[2] I explored the interaction of orality and literacy during the era of NT composition in the Mediterranean regions. NT studies have significantly underplayed the importance of this communicative context in their research. Orality studies have somewhat addressed this lacunae; however, a more holistic – embodied – approach of such performance events as found in the NT is being made in fresh ways with Performance Criticism. The aim of part two of this article is to examine how issues raised by Performance Criticism affect Bible translation – both theoretically and in practice.

The majority of research on translation in regard to oral performance focuses on issues of orality.[3] These contributions are foundational but preliminary for performance. Many of these studies on orality presuppose electronic media for recording and transmission in a twenty-first century setting. Whereas Performance Criticism may contribute to translation involving such multimedia, the primary scenario in view for Performance Criticism is the live performer in the presence of a participatory audience. As has been recognized by translation agencies, the assumed medium can no longer be print, but often involves non-print media.[4] Yet this most noticeable change of medium presupposes a reexamination of the methods and theories for translation. This section begins with a review of the considerable contribution of several biblical

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[1] This essay is a condensed synthesis of several chapters from my dissertation, "Bible Translation as Contextualization: The Role of Oral Performance in New Testament and African Contexts." Earlier versions of this paper were presented at the SNTS section of *Oral Culture, New Testament, and Bible Translation* in Sibiu, Romania in August 2007 and SBL 2007 in the section *Bible in Ancient and Modern Media*.

[2] "Performance Criticism and Its Implications for Bible Translation: Part I: Oral Performance and New Testament Studies," *The Bible Translator* 60 (2009): 37-49.

[3] Several others involved in biblical translation have recognized the value of orality studies: Gosnell Yorke, "Grace and Peace in the Pauline Corpus and the Portuguese Bible: Implications for Translating 'Grace' in Lusophone Africa and a 'Peace' Proposal for UBS Handbooks," *The Bible Translator* 54 (2003): 332-46; Carla Bartsch, "Oral Style, Written Style, and Bible Translation," *Notes on Translation* 11 (1997): 41-48; Scott S. Elliott, "'The word' in text, sound, and image: the American Bible Society's New Media Bible and the Research Center for Scripture and Media," Bulletin/CSR vol. 30, no. 3 (2001): 65-67; Euan M. Fry, "An Oral Approach to Translation," *The Bible Translator* 55 (2004): 506-10; Edward R. Hope, "A Text-Linguistic Model for Media Scriptures," *The Bible Translator* 55 (2004): 441-48; Jan P. Sterk, "Translation and Media: How Different Can We Be and Still Be Equivalent (or at Least Similar)?" in *Similarity and Difference in Translation: Proceedings of the International Conference on Similarity and Translation* (ed. S. Arduini & R. Hodgson, Jr.; Rimini, Italy: Guaraldi, 2004), 127-51; Louren de Vries, "Bible Translation and Primary Orality," *The Bible Translator* 51 (2000): 101-14.

[4] My focus on issues of orality and Bible translation differs significantly from that of the recent trend of "Bible storying" (www.chronologicalbiblestorying.com). This is evident from the survey article by SIL's International Coordinator for Oral Bible Translation and Chronological Bible Storying, David Payne: "Storying is thus a reproducible evangelist and church planting approach …." David Payne, "Oral Bible Translation and Chronological Bible Storying," *Word & Deed* 2, no. 3 (2003): 41-46. My interest in issues of orality and translation originate from sensitivities to both the first-century biblical and the twenty-first century oral settings. My proposed paradigm sees translation as contextualization and not simply as an evangelistic tool. Furthermore, the bible storying movement has not presented many insights into the exegesis for determining orality features in biblical compositions.

scholars and translators who address issues related to oral performance. In closing, I suggest some theoretical challenges and practical applications both from David Rhoads' and from my own experience with Bible translation and performance in the Vuté community of central Cameroon.

Thomas Boomershine

Tom Boomershine has been concerned about the translation of the oral quality of NT compositions throughout his scholarly career.[5] In his pursuit to understand the challenges of translation from one medium to another, Boomershine coined the phrase "transmediatization" as he served as a consultant to the American Bible Society Multimedia project.[6] He recognizes the dramatic changes of media from those during antiquity to the print era. He suggests that the post-Gutenberg focus on mass print and distribution became an impetus for the beginning of the Bible society movement. Such a movement differed significantly from the NT's original cultural and communicative setting: communal, aural reception was slowly eclipsed by silent, individual reading. Such a shift, Boomershine continues, changed the understanding of the location of meaning and authority. Whereas these were previously located in the communal oral proclamation, the mass distribution of Bibles supported an individualized interpretation of the printed words, thus suggesting that meaning and authority emanate from the printed word.

Boomershine's proposal, based on these assertions, is that another phase of transmediatization into the electronic age should not be restricted by a print-bias mentality, a mentality not even original to the mentality of antiquity when these texts were first composed. In looking for theoretical support, Boomershine suggests that the semiotic communication model, on which Nida's Dynamic Equivalence is based, is limited in explaining the communication process.[7] He suggests that Relevance Theory better describes the communication situation and more broadly the various phases of Bible translation through the millennia. "Thus, relevance theory clarifies the reason why the significance of translations in particular communications systems changes in the course of time."[8] Given that the communicative context has changed to a multimedia environment, there is a need to revamp completely how translation is done. "To put it simply, if communication is related to receivers making inferences and that process is shaped by the calculation of relevance, print translations will have a declining communicative capacity in the future in comparison with audio, video, and multimedia translations."[9] Boomershine's assertions indicate that agencies of Bible translation must reimagine their assumptions, goals, and methods if their products are to be relevant and reflect both the Bible's oral roots and twenty-first century's communicative contexts.

Bernard Brandon Scott

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[5] Thomas Boomershine, "Mark the Storyteller: A Rhetorical-Critical Investigation of Mark's Passion and Resurrection Narrative" (PhD diss., Union Theological Seminary, New York, 1974); idem, "Peter's Denial as Polemic or Confession: The Implication of Media Theory for Biblical Hermeneutics," *Semeia* 39 (1987): 47-68; idem, "Biblical Megatrends: Towards a Paradigm for the Interpretation of the Bible in Electronic Media," in *SBL Seminar Papers* (ed. Kent Richards; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 144-57; idem, "Biblical Translation and Communication Technology," *United Bible Societies Bulletin* 160/161 (1991): 14-19.

[6] Thomas Boomershine, "A Transmediatization Theory of Biblical Translation," *United Bible Societies Bulletin* 170/171 (1994): 49-57.

[7] Eugene A. Nida and Charles R. Taber, *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969).

[8] Boomershine, "A Transmediatization Theory of Biblical Translation," 55.

[9] Ibid., 56.

A 1995 symposium on the question of transmediatization was followed two years later by a second gathering at which was discussed the central challenge of "Fidelity and Translation."[10] One of the important contributions in this second volume is by NT scholar, Bernard Brandon Scott.[11] Scott presents a strong case for the importance of medium in translation. The primary medium of antiquity – even with the presence of manuscripts – was the sound of the human voice. Scott poses the critical question: "If the amphitheater forms the primary metaphor for communication in the ancient world and sound is the medium of communication, then what are the implications for translation?"[12] Using the linguistic method of presenting biblical passages on lines according to the coda, Scott demonstrates how the very form - its lexical items, morphology, syntax, and discourse style - contributes to the range of meaning of a text.[13] A severe dichotomy between signifier (medium) and the signified (message) is untenable. "[W]e can begin to envision fidelity in translation to be full fidelity to the whole composition, to sound and visualization, to the amphitheater quality of the biblical text and not just to the signified, the denuded message."[14] Scott challenges Bible translators to reframe their notion of fidelity so that it includes the entirety of the communication event.

Bobby Loubser

Bobby Loubser has provided significant insights into the first-century Mediterranean communicative context as well as for translation as he examines the performance aspects of the NT.[15] In 1984 a conference was held in South Africa, where Nida and others considered issues of sociolinguistics and translation.[16] In reviewing the literature from this conference, Loubser suggests that the participants discussed issues of orality and performance without overtly naming them.[17] He reviews how Reader-Response criticism and Speech-Act theory could contribute to issues of translation of performance features in the NT: "… it is of the greatest importance to investigate methods of understanding and translating the illocutionary force of the texts."[18] After reviewing many modern translations of the Bible, Loubser comments: "it is an almost pervasive problem that in translation primary oral texts are translated as if they were literary products."[19] Taking a specific text (Luke 9:51-56) Loubser compares modern English translations with the

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[10] Robert Hodgson and Paul Soukup, eds., *From One Medium to Another: Basic Issues for Communicating the Scriptures in New Media* (Kansas City: Sheed and Ward; New York: American Bible Society, 1997); Paul A. Soukup, S. J. and Robert Hodgson, eds., *Fidelity and Translation: Communicating the Bible in the New Media* (Franklin, WI: Sheed and Ward; New York: American Bible Society, 1999).
[11] Bernard Brandon Scott, "A New Voice in the Amphitheater: Full Fidelity in Translating," in *Fidelity and Translation: Communicating the Bible in the New Media*, 101-18.
[12] Ibid., 110.
[13] For a demonstration of the use of coda to interpret the structure of a text, see G. M. M. Pelser, A. B. du Toit, M. A. Kruger, H. R. Lemmer, and J. H. Roberts, "Discourse Analysis of Galatians," *Addendum to Neotestamentica* 26, no. 2 (1992): 1-41.
[14] Scott, "A New Voice in the Amphitheater," 118.
[15] Bobby Loubser, "How Do You Report Something That was Said with a Smile? – Can we Overcome the Loss of Meaning when Oral-Manuscript Texts of the Bible are Represented in Modern Printed Media?" *Scriptura* 87 (2004): 296-314; idem, "New Possibilities for Understanding Ancient Gospel Performances." Paper presented at the annual conference of the Society of Biblical Literature in the Bible in Ancient and Modern Media section, 2005.
[16] J. P. Louw, ed., *Sociolinguistics and Communication* (London; New York; Stuttgart: United Bible Societies, 1986).
[17] Loubser admits that Wendland was most aware of these issues. Ernst Wendland, *Language, Society and Bible Translation* (Cape Town: Bible Society of South Africa, 1985).
[18] Loubser, "How do You Report Something That was Said with a Smile?" 305.
[19] Ibid., 308.

Latin Vulgate. He finds that the Vulgate retained many of the oral performance features of the Greek composition while the modern translations edited out these features in favor of a more literary style.[20] Loubser pursues these issues in his paper presented at the SBL section on the Bible in Ancient and Modern Media, where he analyzes the first thirteen verses of Mark's gospel in the Greek. Loubser coaxes out of the Greek a series of performance directions for both voice and gestures: "one has to conclude that unity of rhythm and sound was the guiding principle for the seamless conflation of texts into a new unit."[21] Loubser challenges translators not to neglect the existing oral features found in NT texts by removing such features in a translation with the misguided aim of making it more "literary."

Ernst Wendland

Ernie Wendland has treated several aspects of issues of orality which have eventually been encompassed in a general translation theory: Literary Functional Equivalence.[22] Wendland's theoretical base is broad and eclectic as he incorporates elements of semiotics, relevance theory, and functionalism. He is quick to assure his audience that his use of "literary" incorporates the use of orality.[23] Discussing such issues under phonicity and artistry of the Scriptures,[24] he concludes his description of biblical artistry with the implications for translation:

> Obviously, the detailed and sustained artistry of the S[ource] L[anguage] document contributes a great deal to the progressive and cumulative meaning (conceptual plus emotive, hence also *affective* impression) that the original text ultimately conveys. It must also be admitted that this is an aspect of meaning that has not often been either fully considered or adequately responded to during the translation process.[25]

Wendland has presented extensive biblical research of the application of his methods for exegesis and translation. In work on John's gospel, Jesus' high priestly prayer, Wendland notes the oral-elocutionary structure of the Greek: short clausal segments (expressing familiar concepts); longer clauses that are used for contrastive effect; vocatives that interrupt the rhythmic flow; contrastive and complementary sound sequences that give a distinctive lyric progression; phonological play of vowels; subtle rhyming patterns (utterance-final bilabial nasals); reiteration of word, phrase, or clause; parallel and chiastic patterns; redundant personal

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[20] "It is clear that the modern translators, reconstructing the text in terms of a new medium – i.e., that of prose – transformed the oral conventions of the Greek text, whereas the Vulgate sought to maintain it" (Loubser, "How do You Report Something That was Said with a Smile?" 309.) These features include: conjunctive particle, formulaic expressions, repetitions, rhythm of text, and so on.

[21] Loubser, "New Possibilities for Understanding Ancient Gospel Performances," 12.

[22] Ernst Wendland, "A Literary Approach to Biblical Text Analysis and Translation," in *Bible Translation: Frames of Reference* (ed. Timothy Wilt; Manchester, UK: St. Jerome Publishing, 2003), 179-230; idem, *Translating the Literature of Scripture: A Literary-Rhetorical Approach to Bible Translation* (Dallas: SIL International, 2004); idem, *LiFE-Style Translating* (Dallas: SIL International, 2006). Wendland has recently engaged Performance Criticism as demonstrated in his recently published book: *Finding and Translating the Oral-Aural Elements in Written Language: The Case of the New Testament Epistles* (Edwin Mellen Press), 2008.

[23] "While the term *literary* unfortunately may imply a written text, my aim is to encourage a translated text that can not only be read, but one that also *sounds* natural to the ears of the primary target-language audience" (Wendland, *LiFE-Style Translating*, x).

[24] Wendland, "A Literary Approach to Biblical Text Analysis and Translation," 220; idem, *Translating the Literature of Scripture*, 139-63.

[25] Wendland, *Translating the Literature of Scripture*, 162.

pronouns; word order variations; polysyndeton (use of small set of conjunctions to maintain a terse rhythmic flow).[26] These features demonstrate how the form contributes to meaning. Translation theories that separate the two and marginalize the form in translation have not translated the rhetorical effects. "Rhetoric involves linguistic form – actually, a complex structure of diverse, but integrated, forms which inevitably transmit an essential part of the original meaning."[27]

The question remains, however, about how one incorporates these rhetorical features into a translation. For Wendland, two models of translation are held in tension: functional and relevance.

> The notion of "function" is viewed as being crucial to meaning – applied meaning – in all its diversity and fullness, including those aspects of pragmatic significance that relate to the participants involved in the communication event, its situational significance that relate to the participants involved in the communication event, its situational setting, and the particular medium of message transmission employed. … When applying the results of this hermeneutical method to Scripture translation, interlingual communicators seek to reproduce the most "relevant" aspects of the essential "meaning" intended by the biblical text, including its functional dynamics, by means of the resources of the receptor language.[28]

Wendland is suggesting that the biblical literary values – including orality features – be studied to determine how they functioned in the communication. This functional purpose is pursued in a translation with the aim of utilizing rhetorical strategies of the host culture and language. When Wendland experimented with this procedure with two African languages he recognized a richness of rhetorical strategies: vocatives, intensifiers, alliterative concordial system, doublets, demonstrative/pronominal usage, idiomatic expressions, rhetorical questions, unusual syntax, borrowed words to give an aura of authority, ideophones, graphic figures of speech, inversion of normal syntactic arrangements, and so on.[29] In the words of Richard Bauman, these features are a means to "key a performance."[30]

Recognizing that many of these features have been neglected in translation, Wendland is eager to demonstrate the performative character of translations.[31] His approach involves

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[26] Ernst Wendland, "Oral-aural Dynamics of the Word, with Special Reference to John 17," *Notes on Translation* 8 (1994): 19-43.
[27] Ibid., 23.
[28] Ibid., 25.
[29] Ibid., 24-27.
[30] "In empirical terms, this means that each speech community will make use of a structured set of distinctive communicative means from among its resources in culturally conventionalized and culture-specific ways to key the performance frame, such that all communication that takes place within that frame is to be understood as performance within that community" (Richard Bauman, *Verbal Art as Performance* [Prospect Height, IL: Waveland Press, Inc. 1984] (1977), 16.)
[31] For example, "One might even go so far as to claim that such a translation would lend itself to 'dramatic interpretation.' In other words, the trained or experienced lector, especially one who had studied the pericope beforehand, would be in a position to provide an overlay of intonation and emphasis to his or her reading which would make it come alive for the listening audience. The dramatic vigor and interpersonal dynamics that are already there in the original text, but so often hidden, obscured, or mutilated by an insensitive oral rendition, would again live" (Wendland, "Duplicating the Dynamics of Oral Discourse in Print," *Notes on Translation* 7, no. 4 [1993]: 38).

typographical representation.[32] Wendland understands that the first-century NT compositions were composed to be read aloud. He also is aware that the majority of people in the southern African context in which he works will hear rather than read silently the translations produced. Even if a translation exhibits functionally and relevantly translated performance features, someone who was not involved in the translation who attempts to read the translation for communal hearing needs visual aids that direct the lector in emphasizing these features. Wendland notes that there are three literary mechanisms that help with this: "typography (underlining, boldface print, capital letters, and so on), format (indentation, spacing, paragraphing), and punctuation."[33] Each of these contributes to the goal: "Thus, the fundamental signals – comma, period, question mark, exclamation point, and quotation marks – are employed along with spacing, lineation, indentation, type style, and so forth to indicate the structural dynamics of a message. The goal of the one who is preparing the text is to reveal the design of the discourse and thus assist the reader in enunciating as well as interpreting it, either for himself or for those to whom he is reading."[34] Wendland's contributions are numerous as he not only theoretically struggles with the "literary" form of biblical texts but also his experimentation with the implementation of functionally translating and typographically representing such features.

Kenneth Thomas

Kenneth Thomas, as senior consultant of the United Bible Societies, has been involved with issues of orality and translation for many years. His recent monograph, *Structure and Orality in 1 Peter: A Guide for Translators*, is a culmination of many years of research.[35] Thomas states in the introduction:

> This study offers an analysis of a short written text, 1 Peter, that we can assume was read aloud to listeners who were accustomed to hearing devices that assisted memory and appreciation. It is time for today's translators to experiment with what can be done to translate the text of 1 Peter with attention to its form as well as its content – to recover some of its oral features both for the listener and for the reader. In so doing, we will discover that exploring structure and sound assist in discovering the main ideas of the letter, as well.[36]

Thomas' premise is that many oral features are universal: lexical repetition, rhythm, phonological resonance, volume, line length, aphoristic speech, and grammatical parallelism and repetition. At times these features can be translated directly into a host language, but in other situations one needs to research the functional equivalents in a host language. Thomas presents the epistle of 1 Peter in a way to demonstrate its rhetorical structure – both macro and micro – and its use of oral features that enhance its message. Perhaps one feature that Thomas lifts up

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[32] E. R. Wendland & J. P. Louw, *Graphic Design and Bible Reading: Exploratory Studies in the Typographical Representation of the Text of Scripture in Translation* (Capetown: Bible Society of South Africa, 1993); idem, "Duplicating the Dynamics of Oral Discourse in Print," 26-44.

[33] Wendland, "Duplicating the Dynamics of Oral Discourse in Print," 29-30.

[34] Ibid., 30.

[35] Kenneth J. Thomas and Margaret Orr Thomas, *Structure and Orality in 1 Peter: A Guide for Translators* (New York: United Bible Societies, 2006).

[36] Ibid., 2-3.

that has not been overtly discussed by many others is that of lexical consistency.[37] Thomas asserts that the NT composers purposefully used consistent key words to make cognitive connections with the audience as well as mnemonic aids to the performer. The challenge, of course, is that context often changes the range of meaning for a word. Furthermore each language semantically structures words differently. Thomas urges translators to attempt to maintain lexical consistency or perhaps a compromise in which a common root of the word is consistently used.

Translation for Performance: Challenges in Theory and Practice

Despite certain allusions to dramatic readings and the acknowledgment of how these NT compositions were initially orally performed, Bible translation principles and methods have not addressed directly the performative nature of biblical compositions. Performance Criticism responds to the fact that many societies today continue to exhibit a predominantly oral communicative setting. Rhoads begins his comments on translation with his subtitle: "The Art of Translation." Such nomenclature refutes a mechanical process of translation and acknowledges the human aesthetic choices and qualities of translation. The challenge can be posed in this way: "If the Second Testament texts are scripts of live performances, are we then translating the texts or are we translating the texts-as-performances—insofar as we are able to reconstruct and re-experience them!"[38]

In order to address this question, some fundamental presuppositions of translation need to be reexamined. Many biblical scholars present their understanding of translation theory in binary terms: literal and dynamic equivalence.[39] However, this by no means exhausts the possibilities.[40] Biblical scholars need to gain further sophistication in issues of translation. Two important theoretical developments with translation are the Functionalist approach and Relevance Theory.[41] This is not the place to summarize these theories. However, certain points of conflict with the literalist – dynamic equivalence can be lifted up as they pertain to a performance-oriented translation.[42] The most fundamental notion that performance counters is the

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[37] Rhoads urges such a tactic in translation so that key themes can be recognized lexically. David Rhoads, "Performance Criticism: An Emerging Methodology in Second Testament Studies – Part II," *Biblical Theology Bulletin*, 36, no. 4 (2006): 171. This is also an important principle for literal translation as exemplified by Everett Fox, *The Five Books of Moses: A New Translation with Introduction, Commentary, and Notes* (New York: Shocken Books, 1995).

[38] Rhoads, "Performance Criticism – Part II," 171.

[39] Nida and Taber, *The Theory and Practice of Translation*. Nida later suggests the term "functional equivalence" as a synonym for dynamic (Jan de Waard and Eugene Nida, *From One Language to Another: Functional Equivalence in Bible Translating* [Nashville: Nelson, 1986]).

[40] Mojola and Wendland present several alternatives: functionalist, descriptive, text-linguistic, relevance theory, post-colonial, literalist, foreignization v. domestication (Aloo Osotsi Mojola and Ernst Wendland, "Scripture Translation in the Era of Translation Studies," in *Bible Translation: Frames of Reference* , 1-25; Mona Baker, ed., *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* [New York: Routledge, 1998]).

[41] Representative (but surely not exhaustive) for the functionalist approach is Christiane Nord, *Translating as a Purposeful Activity: Functionalist Approaches Explained* (Manchester: St. Jerome, 1997). Representative of Bible translators use of Relevance Theory are: August Gutt, *Translation and Relevance: Cognition and Context* (Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing, 2000); Ronald Sim, *Retelling Translation: A Course Book* (Unpublished manuscript, 2004); Harriet Hill, *The Bible at Cultural Crossroads: From Translation to Communication* (Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing, 2006).

[42] Stine in his biography of Nida argues that the conflicts between dynamic equivalence and relevance-functionalist approaches are not as stark as purported by other translation theorists (Philip C. Stine, "Other Voices Other Words," in *Let the Words be Written: The Lasting Influence of Eugene A. Nida* [Leiden: Brill, 2004], 153-78).

presupposition of a model of communication that separates form from meaning. I have attempted to demonstrate above that it is not merely the form of individual words, but the structural patterns, paralinguistic and extralinguistic features that contribute to the communication process. Related to this issue of form and meaning is the location of meaning. Reader and Audience-Response criticisms challenge the notion that meaning is solely located in the written text. The audience participates in the negotiation of meaning. Such negotiation occurs in what Reader-Response criticism has named as the "gaps of indeterminacy."[43] Relevance Theory also understands communication as a matter of indeterminacies that are negotiated by premises and inferences. These indeterminacies contribute to potentially multiple meanings, thus calling into question an understanding of meaning in a monovalent way. Once the audience is admitted into the negotiation of meaning, it is more helpful to speak of a range of meanings or meaning potentialities. The monovalence of meaning supports a singular intention of meaning of the communicator. In the context of Bible translation it becomes a precarious assertion to present the author's singular intent. We must admit that we are asserting our interpretation of the author's intent.[44]

Whereas both a literal and dynamic-equivalence approach to translation attempt to protect the source language under the notion of fidelity, other (functional) theories support the audience with the notion of loyalty. This becomes an important distinction in performance, whether one wants to reconstruct faithfully a first-century performance or present a performance that takes into consideration the audience's context as a demonstration of being loyal to their needs. Such loyalty permits the audience to contribute both to the interpretation of the performance and also to the performance itself. Nevertheless, the question arises as to the limits of a faithful performance. When do oral interpretations become unfaithful? Rhoads suggests Performance Criticism's role: "Nevertheless, performance may be one way to test the limits of viable interpretations."[45] Rather than cause more skepticism as to acceptable interpretations, Performance Criticism offers a concrete method for testing interpretations as scenes are acted out or lines are spoken. This capacity of performance to vet acceptable interpretations coincides with Foley's assertion where he understands acceptable interpretations as those that "harmonize with the rest of the work."[46]

The theoretical distinctions noted above should inform the methods of translation for performance. These methods extend beyond the implications of orality to those of performance. How do these implications affect Bible translation? Rhoads notes some of his observations: the historical present can often be maintained in performance (as it alternates with past tenses) more freely than in print form; word order can be more varied in performance (e.g., fronting for emphasis); replication of onomatopoetic words and sounds; length of sentences; issues of punctuation in relation to pauses and stops; contractions and elisions; lexical consistency functions to maintain echoes of events and motifs; the use of parallelism and chiastic patterns shape the rhythm and pace of performance; presentation of translation for performance on a page that reflects rhythms, pauses and pace of performance; adopting the notation of musical scores for translations to indicate pitch, tempo, and volume; footnotes for suggestions for

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[43] Robert Fowler, *Let the Reader Understand: Reader-Response Criticism and the Gospel of Mark* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 34; John Miles Foley, *Immanent Art: From Structure to Meaning in Traditional Oral Epic* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 41.
[44] Charles H. Cosgrove, ed., *The Meanings We Choose: Hermeneutical Ethics, Indeterminacy and the Conflict of Interpretation* (London: T & T Clark International, 2004).
[45] Rhoads, "Performance Criticism – Part II," 179.
[46] Foley, *Immanent Art*, 41.

performance.[47] Rhoads acknowledges that these are just topical suggestions that need to be fleshed out in specific contexts. Within this list we recognize topics that have been addressed by others involved in translation. Admittedly, these suggestions are somewhat biased to the source biblical language with perhaps the assumption of English as the host language. The maintaining of historical presents, word orders, and onomatopoetic sounds demonstrates a commitment to recognizing how form participates in the communication process. However, such a commitment to the source language might abuse the host language – even when it is intended for performance. Following Wendland and Thomas, the function of these source forms needs to be deciphered, and research of the host language is required to find appropriate forms for compatible functions.[48]

Ethnopoetics addresses many of the suggestions on how a translation can be presented in print as a script for performance. Wendland's suggestions of presentation echo Hymes and Tedlock on the use of lineation to enhance recognition of the structural patterning of parallelism and chiastic structures. Punctuation as reflective of pauses and stops reverberates the findings of Tedlock.[49] I suggest that Elizabeth Fine's proposals would be helpful here.[50] Fine suggests a two-part translation of performance: the performance report and the record. The report is a synopsis of the performance that permits the reader an appreciation of the performance context, event, and notational devices used within the actual performance record. This report, suggests Fine, should follow Hyme's categories for an ethnography of speaking: setting and scene; participants; ends – that is, goals – and Act Sequence; key and instrumentalities (gestures); key (guide) to projections

[47] Rhoads, "Performance Criticism – Part II,"171.

[48] Such a principle was eventually recognized by Tedlock who initially kept onomatopoetic words in their source language in his translations but in time saw that such transliteration did not function with the same effects upon the new audience. Therefore, he sought out in the host language appropriate onomatopoetic expressions to achieve a compatible aesthetic response from the host audience. In Tedlock's later work, it seems this weakness is addressed. Fine summarizes the change: "Tedlock has changed his practice of leaving Zuni onomatopoeic words untranslated: 'In *Finding the Center*, I left Zuni onomatopoeia untranslated wherever I preferred its sound to that of the English alternative, but I have since come to the view that an onomatopoeic word helps give a story immediacy, an immediacy that would be lessened by the sudden intrusion of a foreign word in the translation'" (Dennis Tedlock, "Translator's Introduction," Walter Sanchez, "The Girl and the Protector," a story translated from the Zuni by Dennis Tedlock, *Alcheringa: Ethnopoetics* 1 no. 1 (1975): 111 quoted in Elizabeth C. Fine, *The Folklore Text: From Performance to Print* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984], 158).

[49] Further discussions of punctuation in relation to pauses can be found in Julian Sundersingh, "Toward a Media Based Translation: Communicating Biblical Scriptures to Non-Literates in Rural Tamilnadu, India" (Ph. D. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, School of World Mission, 1999). Much of Sundersingh's findings are based on M. A. K. Halliday, *Spoken and Written Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

[50] Elizabeth C. Fine, "Principles of Translating Performance," in *The Folklore Text: From Performance to Print* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 149-65. Annekie Joubert provides a more complex four-part model in her performance-directed text: performance-directed text: 1) pre-text which refers to a preface, or background information regarding the performance event, for example, setting and scene in which the performance is taking place, the participants involved in the performance, the uniqueness of every performance regarding cultural specificity and variability, the message form and content, the historical, cultural and social context in which the performance takes place, and the genre of the performance event; 2) transcribed text, which refers to the transcription in an alphabetic notation system of the verbal utterances of performance event; 3) sub-text, which can be regarded as the performance directions, because it contains inherent visual and auditory codes which are operative in a performance event; 4) an interpretive text, which refers to the interpretation and emergence (concretization) of the performance event (Joubert, ""Defining and Working in an Oral Culture: Between oral and written transmission – Three problems of textualizing performance events," paper presented at SNTS, 2004," 10; idem, *The Power of Performance* [Berlin: Mouton De Gruyter, 2004], 131).

(notation); norms and genre.[51] The need for this report is twofold: 1) in order for the new audience to appreciate the first-century performances this information is needed; 2) an attempt to include this information into the actual performance record overloads it and makes interpretation of the performance too complicated. This report would be especially helpful in biblical performance as there is such a cultural, temporal, and linguistic distance from the early performances of the first century and twenty-first century performances.[52] This report can summarize the first-century issues or conflicts between the composer and the audience.

As for the actual performance record, Fine combines the work of several anthropologists – including Tedlock – in a three-part record.[53] The left margin is for paralinguistic information, e.g., the quality of the voice in speaking; the right margin presents the kinesics, that is, the body language, gestures, and facial expressions of the performer. The text proper includes similar notation as Tedlock for intonation contours, syllable stress, and volume. Fine recognizes that each performance situation may require varied notation, depending on cultural and linguistic patterns. There is also notation of audience participation.

Below is an excerpt of my own script from a pericope of Mark that follows Fine's suggestions. This script differs significantly from Fine's purposes for a record in that she understands the record to be descriptive of the actual performance. My purpose with this script is to suggest how my exegetical preparation and hermeneutics of the pericope can be transferred in script form to other potential performers – not in a prescriptive manner – but as a way to suggest potential ways of performing the pericope. In sum, the report is focused on the historical implications of the performance whereas the record-script represents a modern interpretation of the text.

TABLE 2
SCRIPT FOR MARK 1:40-45[54]

Paralinguistic	**Text**	**Extralinguistic**
	Now there comes to him a leper,	Performer looks up and sees someone approaching
	pleading with him,	Performer can choose to dramatize actions of leper.
	falling on his knees,	
	and saying to him,	
Voice is humble, supplicating, perhaps even fearful	*"If you want to,*	

[51] Dell Hymes, "Models of the Interaction of Language and Social Life," in *Directions in Sociolinguistics* (ed. J. J. Gumperz and Dell Hymes; New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1972), 35-71.
[52] Current translation practices permit several components that meet partially the aim of the report: book introductions, section titles, footnotes, illustrations. However, there is a general awareness among translators that such literary aids are not heard by an audience (and seldom read by the reader).
[53] I am aware of the challenges such a sophisticated notation presents to the uninitiated. As well, such notation can be misunderstood as objective without admitting the influence the translator-transcriber has. Both of these issues have been addressed respectively in the journal *Oral Tradition*: Eric L. Montenyohl, "Strategies for the Presentation of Oral Traditions in Print," *Oral Tradition* 8, no. 1 (1993): 159-86; Edward L. Schieffelin, "Moving Performance to Text: Can Performance be Transcribed?" *Oral Tradition* 20, no. 1 (2005): 80-92.
[54] An earlier version of this script was presented at the Forum of Bible Agencies International Translation Section (James Maxey, *Performance Criticism and its Impact on Translation and Theology*. Paper presented at the Translation Track of the Forum of Bible Agencies – International, October, 2006).

Paralinguistic	Text	Extralinguistic
	you can make me clean."	
	And moved by compassion,	Facial features demonstrate compassion
	stretching out his hand,	Performer stretches out hand firmly, but gently
	he touched him	Demonstrate laying on of hands
Voice is full of compassion	*and he says to him,*	
Phrases said slowly and clearly	*"I want to,*	
Tone of authority	*be cleansed."*	
Pace of speech increases	*And immediately the leprosy went from him*	
	and he was made clean.	Lift the hands from imagined leper in demonstrative fashion
	And becoming harsh with him,	Change of expression from compassion to sternness
	immediately Jesus drove him out	Hand gesture indicating separation of leper from center stage
	and says to him,	
Tone of sternness	*"See that to nobody*	
	you say nothing,	
	but go,	Point off stage
	show yourself to the priest,	
	and make for your cleansing the offering	
	that Moses prescribed,	
	as testimony to them.	Hand gesture of reference to unseen group (priests?); performer looks to the audience with this last word to indicate the reference to the Jerusalem authorities
Tone of surprise at disobedience of leper	*But going out*	Performer indicates with gestures and expressions the contradictory action of the leper
	he began to proclaim freely	
	and to spread the word	Expansive gesture to demonstrate grandeur of action

Paralinguistic	Text	Extralinguistic
Slowing of speech with an intonation that notes the irony of the reversal	*so that Jesus was no longer able*	
	to enter openly into a city,	Performer steps back, creating distance from the audience
	but was outside	Look of irony
	in deserted places	
Change of inflection that indicates the incessant pursuit of the needy, and the surprise of the narrator in the crowd's persistence	*and they kept coming to him*	Look of astonishment
Longer pauses between phrases	*from everywhere.*	Outstretched arms

The script above underscores that performance-translation is an interpretive activity. The personal involvement of the translator accentuates his or her social location. It should be remembered, however, that performance is communal. The actual performance of this script will be influenced by the audience, the setting, and so on – all the particularities mentioned above in relation to the performance event. Both during the performance and as a result of the performance the script might be changed significantly.[55] The words of the translation might be revised along with the paralinguistic and extralinguistic features. Such revision highlights the cyclical, multiform rhythm of performance-oriented translations.

Bible translation has gained insights not only from Relevance and Functional theories, but also with the concept of *Skopostheorie*.[56] The *skopos* or goal for the translation determines what type of translation is created. In order to avoid a prescriptive, universal method for translation, it will be helpful to make clear what types of translations Performance Criticism can influence. The suggestions above can be applied to different degrees depending on the *skopos* of the project. It would be quite unrealistic to attempt to publish the entire NT with the type of tripartite scripting as shown above for the Mark passage. Sheer economics and logistics of size of such a scripted NT render such a goal as impractical. However, portions of Scripture that are destined for performance could easily be scripted with such a method. Translators and performers could corroborate to draft a potential script for a passage. In true community-based translation, eventual performances will offer revisions of this script for various situations and audiences. My experiences in rural Africa have assured me that the most effective method of teaching in that setting is the apprenticeship model. This hands-on approach would involve potential performers participating as an audience in the performance of a mentor. In turn, the apprentice would replicate the performance as she or he perceived it from the audience. In other words, the handing on of oral tradition in biblical performances would replicate the already established process of learning and the passing on of traditions. An intermediary, modern insertion might be the multimedia recording and screening of performances for potential

[55] Such is the case with the scene where the leper appears and Jesus' action in touching the leper. After witnessing a performance of this scene by a Peruvian actor while at a workshop in Buenos Aires in May 2007, I have experimented with focusing on the hand of the leper who is "unclean" and the more intimate gesture of Jesus of intertwining his fingers with those of the hand of the leper in the act of healing.

[56] Christiane Nord, "Basic Concepts of *Skopostheorie*," in *Translating as a Purposeful Activity: Functionalist Approaches Explained*, 27-38.

performers. In this way, the written medium is circumvented.[57] I would add that performance is not limited to a theatrical genre of performance. Performance through song, musical instruments, and other indigenous genres can be equally effective in the reanimation of biblical performance.

Translation for Performance among the Vuté People of Cameroon

In June 2007 I spent three weeks in the Vuté community of central Africa. It is with this community that I lived and worked from 1991-2003 as I worked as a linguist-exegete, called by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cameroon, to assist the Vuté literature center in the development of Vuté literature – including the NT. During this recent trip, I worked with four Vuté Bible translators and several community-recognized performers. [58] Our goal was to prepare five pericopes from Mark's gospel for public performance in a variety of contexts.[59] The Vuté NT has recently been published by the Bible Society of Cameroon. The pericopes of this published text were compared with fresh translations made specifically for these occasions for performance.[60] These two written translations were compared to the transcripts of the actual (video-taped) performances in the various contexts.[61]

Conclusions are tentative, but here are some of the immediate observations. In the translation for performance (as well as the actual performances), the translators (and performers) demonstrated a greater degree of liberty in the use of ideophones – those onomatopoetic expressions richly found in spoken African languages.[62] Their use immediately energized the storytelling (and storyteller) and engaged the audience in following the actions of the characters in the stories. This engagement with the audience was clearly a goal of the presenters. Questions posed by the presenter to the audience assured their active comprehension. The questions often elicited verbal responses from the audience – both individually and as a whole group. Oftentimes these questions underscored relevant passages or offered opportunities for the presenter to explain the relevancy of a particular piece of information – especially when there were potential religious-cultural dissonance between the Markan scenario and Vuté culture.[63]

Other examples of the motivation for relevancy were how storytellers would often set the scene for a pericope by summarizing what had happened immediately before the pericope or by a generalized account of Jesus' earthly ministry. Related to this was the choice by some of the performers to present themselves to the audience as one who had seen or heard the events he was

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[57] As Joubert notes, even a multimedia presentation is a frozen recording, lacking the participation and fluidity of a live performance (Joubert, *The Power of Performance*).

[58] The translators included: Alfred Oumarou, Jean Nogoadjéré, Valentin Yakoura, and Rev. Justin Mvougnoh. The performers (besides the translators) included: Pim Samiyong, Paul Soumer, Oliver Mving, Jean Bosco Josky.

[59] The pericopes included Mark 1:40-45; 2:1-12; 5:1-20; 5:21-43; 7:24-30. The various contexts included: an isolated hamlet, worship services at both Lutheran and Catholic churches, an evening concert at a Catholic church, a neighborhood weekly meeting where folktales were told, and an evening gathering at the Vuté chief's compound, where folktales were told.

[60] I discussed with the translators the possibilities of scripting the performance translation in a similar way to how I divided the Markan pericope in a previous section: extralinguistic, text, paralinguistic. Although of interest to the translators they were not eager to prescribe the extra-textual choices.

[61] There is a relatively long history of translations of Mark's gospel in Vuté: 1981 test edition with SIL; 1997 test edition with current translators; 1999 as part of the 4-Gospel edition; 2007 in the publication by the Bible Society of Cameroon; June 2007 translation for performance.

[62] Philip A. Noss, "Ideas, Phones and Gbaya Verbal Art." Presented at: International Symposium on Ideophones Cologne: Institute of African Studies, University of Cologne, 1999.

[63] This supports Harriet Hill's suggestions of Relevance Theory's gaps of communication that can be filled with oral "footnotes." Harriet Hill, *The Bible at Cultural Crossroads: From Translation to Communication*, 82-91.

about to present. These settings-of-scenes and cultural footnotes lead us into a discussion of the blurred line between a performance of a biblical text and a performance informed by, but not limited to, a biblical passage. When has a performer gone beyond the text in order to make the biblical text relevant? This is not a new question as one is reminded of the continuum from a literal and dynamic translation to a paraphrase. Yet such a question is text-oriented, one that seeks to guard fidelity to a source text. In more functional approaches to translation, where loyalty to an audience is the aim, perhaps the question should be stated in terms of what is evoked in the experience of the audience. How does the performer evoke the audience to experience the message of the text? Are these evocations compatible? Below are some examples from the Vuté performances of the performers' pursuit of relevancy.

In the story of the leper that approaches Jesus to be restored, the performance translation adds the parenthetic religious-cultural information for the Vuté audience: "At that time, a leper must not be with people in the village." The translators felt that the information about the communal separation due to impurity was not immediately available to the Vuté audience. This information reinforced the surprising act of Jesus to touch the leper. Within the same story, another performer gave his explanation of why the leper was directed by Jesus to go to the priest: to prove that the leprosy was truly gone, permitting the former leper to be socially reintegrated. The translators' and performers' addition of these pieces of information may be an influence of the exegetical study that I did with the translators and performers. Sporadically, pieces of background information that were discussed in the exegetical study time were placed within the performance translation or the performance itself. Another cultural piece given was the difference of rooftops between those of first-century Palestine and the current Vuté construction – flat vs. pitched, respectively. Not only was this information placed in the performance translation of Mark 2:1-12, but each performer included this information in his performance as if it was critical to the audiences' understanding of the story. In fact, several performers enhanced the pithy explanation of the translation. One performer explained how people might spend time on their roofs to rest or to eat.

The examples above demonstrate the influence that an exegete might have on a translation and its performance. However, other discussions of background material with the translators and performers had no overt effect on the translations or performances. During the discussions of the pericope of the Gerasene demoniac, I, as the exegete, suggested how some NT scholars had perceived allusions to the Roman Empire and Mark's subversive retelling of the events.[64] Furthermore, I suggested that the colonial experience of first-century Palestine and the history of Cameroon might be similar. The group found the similarities intriguing yet neither the translation nor any of the performances reflected any colonial references. Further research is needed to respond to why this is the case. Nevertheless, it appears that nobody from the group considered such information as relevant or potentially engaging to the audience. It could also be exemplary of the conditioning that the Vuté community has experienced with regard to a Christianity that separates the biblical narratives from politics.

Beyond my own exegetical influence on the translations and performances, I recognized within the performances (not the translation for performance) the influence of Vuté cultural values.[65] Gratefulness to someone who has helped you is a deep-seated value in Vuté culture. In

[64] See, for example, Richard Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story: The Politics of Plot in Mark's Gospel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001).
[65] There could be some influence from the general biblical knowledge of the performers in relation to other gospel narratives – in particular the story of the ten lepers and the gratefulness of only one healed leper (Luke 17:11-19).

at least two of the performances the performer underscored how people did not thank Jesus for his healing. In both cases the reasoning was the hurriedness of the character. The leper, finding that he was cleansed, quickly left Jesus to report his cleansing to the priest and freely announced it to all who would hear him. The Syro-Phoenician woman, having heard of her daughter's exorcism, quickly returns to her house without any further exchanges with Jesus. The performers inserted such information without my exegetical encouragement (and seemingly without textual support) to underscore an integral lesson of thankfulness. The Markan characters were not condemned by the performers but the audiences were reminded of their duty to show gratefulness.

A second example of performance additions involves humor, a common component of Vuté folktales. This creates interest for the audience and engages them in following closely the story and its lessons. This important component of folktales seems to be missing significantly from biblical performances. However, I do note a few examples where humor was used. These examples represent the performers' interpretation and insertion of added information. When the storyteller is explaining how first-century Palestinian houses with flat roofs differ from the Vuté construction, he suggests that one of the four friends of the paralytic listens closely from the roof for Jesus' voice in the house before digging through the roof. The storyteller quickly assumes the role of those in the house as the roof is caving in. Despite this vandalizing, the owner keeps his attention on Jesus' teaching. Such a humorous presentation of the scene suggests how a Vuté person might object to the destruction of their roof and how (at least for the storyteller) such damage is of minimal importance in comparison to hearing the words of Jesus. As mentioned above, the Syro-Phoenician woman is quick to return to her daughter. One of the performers presents her as flitting about in excitement – to the humorous appreciation of the audience. Such cultural insertions underscore not only the (outsider's) exegetical influence on translation and performances but also the (insider) performers' influences on the performances. Source-oriented translation is very reluctant to include such extra-textual additions. Audience-oriented translation encourages such relevancy. This tension is not readily resolved – especially when dealing with biblical translation for performance.

The performances were not restricted to speaking but included songs. For several years the Catholic Church in the Vuté community has been involved in the composition and dissemination of Scripture-based songs.[66] Community-recognized composers have often been invited to songwriting workshops where Gospel texts are the basis of the lyrics for new songs. The criteria for these songs are twofold: the local style of music must be respected in the compositions; the lyrics for these songs are to follow closely the already translated texts, with limited creative licensing for revision. Audience participation with the composed songs is integral in that the congregations are expected to respond with a refrain. Two examples of such songwriting are mentioned here. First, I participated in a Catholic Mass while in Cameroon in June. During the liturgy one of the choir leaders sang a Scripture song from Luke 1:57-66, 80 – the lectionary text for that Sunday. It is the choir leader's voice alone that begins. However, at the first direct citation within the text (Zechariah's verbal response, "No, his name is to be John") the congregation joins in with several repetitions of the line. Several other refrains occur within the song (with two other direct quotes) as both performer and congregation join in with music now accompanied by the traditional drum. In comparing the lyrics of this song with the published translation, there is almost no deviation from the text. There are no cultural footnotes, no performer insertions. This rigidity can be explained by both the context of the performance

[66] This activity was initiated and encouraged by a French priest in the Vuté community, Father Michel Lachenaud.

within the Catholic liturgy on a Sunday morning in a church building and also by the inherent audience integration in the performance through the refrains.

A second example of Scripture songs was filmed while I was in Cameroon this past June in a small hamlet with the name of Nazareth. The fifteen inhabitants gathered to participate in biblical storytelling and singing. One of the story-songs had been composed specifically for this encounter: the story of the Syro-Phoenician woman. The group had decided to have a narrator present the story with a song leader intervening when the woman spoke. At this point, the song leader led the group in what became the refrain. The song sections were accompanied by a traditional drum and thumb piano. Once again, the lyrics held closely to the translated text. Nevertheless, the emotion of the woman's pleading for her daughter was highlighted by the style and rhythm of the song. Minor changes were made so that the words matched the rhythmic syllabic space available. The context was far from a formal liturgy in a recognized place of worship. Rather, as the small group sat on bamboo benches in their hamlet's open courtyard, there was a continued adherence to the translated text.

Throughout this section I have described several performances in terms of the words used and their adherence or deviation to the various translations prepared. However, as I have argued throughout this paper, and as supported by Performance Criticism, performances are more than words. This was evident by the Vuté performers' gestures, body posture, and facial communication. Beyond the performers' expressions, it was a synergy of the audience with the performance as they interacted through physical proximity, audience laughter and applause, and the questions exchanged between the performer and his audience. Because of this embodiment of the performance, a more appropriate medium for discussing these Vuté stories would be to show excerpts from the video footage I took this past June. Even so, the immediacy of the live performance would be lost. The ways in which the Vuté audiences influenced the performers would be frozen. We would be simply observers and not participants in such an experience. The challenges that performance presents to translation was encountered head-on with this recent Vuté research. It underscores the important need for Performance Criticism to continue its methodology of actual performances of biblical compositions.

Conclusion and Challenges

This two-part article has sought to present in summary form the insights that Performance Criticism can bring not only to biblical studies but especially to the art of translation. The performance event involves the embodiment of the biblical composition by a performer who responds to the participation of the active, communal audience. The translation and transmission of these biblical compositions challenge many presuppositions of translation theory and practice. Such an approach requires imagination and interpretation, based upon social, historical, and textual evidence, as it seeks to translate not a skeletal text but a composition intended for performance. Creative interactions were experienced in the Vuté community in Cameroon with performances of Markan pericopes. These performances raise further questions as to the extra-textual contributions of exegetes, translators, and performers and the intrinsic challenges of translating for performance.