Translation as Real Presence

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Introduction

A translation 'stands for', 'represents' or 'mediates' its original. But how, exactly? Is the relation one of identity, of figuration, of symbolisation? In what sense or in what form is the original 'present' in a translation? How should we understand the claim that a translation is still, substantially or essentially, the same work as the original – ontologically, epistemologically, transcendentally? How do we overcome the accident of linguistic difference to reclaim an identity of substance between translation and original? How to think the double identity of the translated text, as an individual text in its own language and as still the work of the original writer?

We normally think of translation as involving the transformation of an original text, the donor, into something new, the host. The process suggests a genetic link: the original gives rise to, or spawns, a translation. In this chapter I propose to invert this perspective. I will claim that, if there is conversion, it is not the donor which undergoes it but the host. I will suggest, in other words, that it is possible to think of a new text springing up alongside a pre-existing text and then being converted into and recognised as a translation of that pre-existing text. The conversion means that the new text, upon becoming a translation, is brought into convergence with the pre-existing text.

The particular approach I want to develop can be put in a nutshell as follows. In the most sacred part of the traditional Latin mass the priest echoes the words that Jesus Christ spoke when, during the Last Supper, he pointed to the bread on the table and declared, in the Vulgate version: "*hoc est corpus meum*" ('this is my body'). Can a writer point to a translation of his or her work and say 'This is my work' in the way that Christ said 'This is my body'? How similar is the writer's '*hoc est opus meum*' ('this is my work') to Christ's and the modern priest's or celebrant's '*hoc est corpus meum*'?

Copyright law and the French literary theorist Gérard Genette – a daunting combination – would probably answer that they are very similar indeed. Copyright law, as I understand it, regards translations as derivative works. Authors own the copyright in their work because it is the fruit of their labour. When a work is translated, the translator may claim copyright in the actual words chosen in the new language, but this claim in no way diminishes the author's right to continue to be regarded as the author of the work. Copyright law as laid down in the Convention of Berne enshrines the idea that, despite their different form and outlook, original and translation remain essentially and substantially the same work. A translated work is still the author's work. A writer can point to a translation and say '*hoc est opus meum*'.

Speaking of the various "modes of existence" of artworks in his two-volume *The Work of Art. Immanence and Transcendence* (1997), Genette distinguishes between three modes that are relevant in the case of written texts and books. There is first the "material object", which would be the individual copies I have on my desk, some of which show signs of wear while one is cheerfully dog-eared. Each material object is unique. Secondly there is the "text", which is defined by "literal identity" or "sameness of spelling". All copies of *Moby Dick* in the library contain the same words in the same order, even though some may be hardback and others may be paperback editions and they may use different fonts ("sameness of spelling" does not have to be understood in any

rigid sense; for one thing, it ignores the differences between British and American spelling). Finally there is the "work", which for Genette is the ideational object we construct in our heads as we read a text (1997: 177). With respect to translations Genette argues under the heading 'Plural Immanences' that

> if a *text* is surely defined by literal identity (sameness of spelling), a literary *work* is defined, from one text to the next, by semantic identity (sameness of meaning, as one might put it), which the passage from one language to another is supposed to preserve – not totally, to be sure, but sufficiently well and accurately enough for the reader to have a legitimate sense of operal identity" (*ibid.*).

"Sameness of meaning" is meant to be preserved in the passage from one language into another by means of translation. No doubt the phrase "sameness of meaning" does not have to be taken literally either; we can read it as comprising the kind of semantic or functional similarity normally associated with translation. Although two texts may then be quite different in language and script, "sameness of meaning" guarantees operal identity and for this reason the two texts are the same work. For Genette, as for copyright law, a writer can look at a translation of his or her work and declare: '*hoc est opus meum*', 'this is my work'.

Let us return to our initial questions. How can we think the relation between two texts that are different but nevertheless, somehow, are believed to constitute the same work? The perspective on this issue that I want to explore in the following pages takes its inspiration from the doctrine of the Real Presence in Christian liturgical doctrine. It is a very particular doctrine, and its application to translation will make certain aspects of translation appear in a different light. At the end of the chapter I will try to push the perspective as far as it will go.

The Real Presence is closely connected with the central part of the Eucharist. During the Eucharist the priest or minister consecrates the host by imitating Christ's words and actions during the Last Supper. For believers, something happens as a result. Christ's Real Presence is established. Exactly what happens to the bread and exactly how Christ come to be 'really present' among the congregation of believers, is a matter of debate. In pre-Reformation doctrine, and in Catholic doctrine since the Reformation of the sixteenth century, the Real Presence is tied to the concept of transubstantiation.

A word of caution is in order before we proceed. The Eucharist concerns the central dogma in Christian doctrine and is Christianity's most sacred rite. The topic is very large and the literature on it correspondingly huge. I have consulted only a very small part of it. I am not a theologian, not even a believer. I will deal with only a few historical aspects of the disputes about the Real Presence in the medieval and Reformation periods in the Catholic and Protestant churches (that is, excluding the Greek and Russian Orthodox churches, because I know nothing about them). While these historical debates are fascinating in their own right, I cover them here only insofar as they seem relevant to translation.

The starting point is the Last Supper as related in three of the four gospels (Matthew 26: 26-28; Mark 14: 22-24; and Luke 22: 19-20; further passages in John 6: 48-58 and in Paul's epistle 1 Corinthians 11: 24-25). During the Supper Christ broke the bread that was on the table and handed it to his disciples, saying: "Take this and eat, this is my body." He likewise poured the wine, shared it out and said: "Take this and drink, this is my blood." He then added, "Do this in remembrance of me." These words – probably spoken originally in Aramaic, but the gospels record them in Greek – are known as the 'words of institution'. They instituted the lasting covenant between Christ and his followers, the community of believers that would continue to exist after his death. It is at this moment, and by means of the words of institution, that Christ is deemed to have founded his Church.

The Eucharist ('thanksgiving') commemorates the Last Supper, and it celebrates and renews the covenant between Christ and those who believe in him. During the Eucharist the priest or minister echoes the words of institution that Christ spoke at the Last Supper, and in so doing he consecrates both the bread and the wine as he repeats Christ's actions of breaking bread and pouring wine. The words spoken during the Eucharist recall the Last Supper and bring about Christ's Real Presence for the faithful.

The words play a crucial role. When Christ at the Last Supper said “This is my body,” the utterance was not just descriptive or constative, it was also an injunction with the meaning ‘take this, accept this as my body, agree to take this as my body.’ Obeying the injunction means accepting Christ’s authority and joining the community of believers in Christ. When a priest utters the words of institution after Christ, the words not only echo and thus recall Christ, they also make something happen. They are performative, and their effect extends to the physical world. They transmute or convert the bread and the wine on the altar into something else. Exactly what kind of change is brought about is again a matter of dispute, and we will trace some of these different opinions. Catholic doctrine holds that the bread and wine undergo a real change of substance: at the moment of consecration they become literally the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ. In the medieval period the Catholic Church coined the term ‘transubstantiation’ for this unique and miraculous phenomenon (one would expect the spelling ‘transsubstantiation’, but one ‘s’ appears to have been spirited away). Other Christian denominations reckon the change is more symbolic in nature, but they are particular about the meaning of ‘symbolic.’

Uccello’s predella

Before we address these debates, here is a visual illustration of the late-medieval, pre-Reformation doctrine. It incorporates the notion of transubstantiation. Paolo Uccello (1397-1475) was a fifteenth-century Italian painter with a keen interest in perspective. Among his works is *The Profanation of the Host*, a large narrative painting in six panels, now in the Palazzo Ducale in Urbino, Italy. The painting is a predella, a long rectangular panel forming part of an altarpiece. Its six scenes tell the story of a miracle that is supposed to have happened in different parts of Europe in the later Middle Ages. The story, which appears designed to reinforce a point of Christian belief, is that of a malicious test. It typically involves a non-believer who steals a consecrated host, takes it home, stabs it with a knife to see if it really is the body and blood of Christ as the Christians claim, and is astonished to find real red blood flowing from it. The story usually ends with the sacrilege being discovered and the perpetrators duly punished.

The second of Uccello’s six panels is of particular interest (see *Figure 6*). It shows, on the right, soldiers battering down the door of a house from the outside while, inside the house, blood flows from what looks like a three-legged frying pan across the tiled floor of a room and squirts into the street through a crack in the wall. The source of the blood, the host, is an ordinary piece of bread which, however, when consecrated, becomes the body and blood of Christ. When enemies of Christianity desecrate such a host, the blood miraculously flowing from it constitutes visible proof that it really is Christ’s flesh and blood.

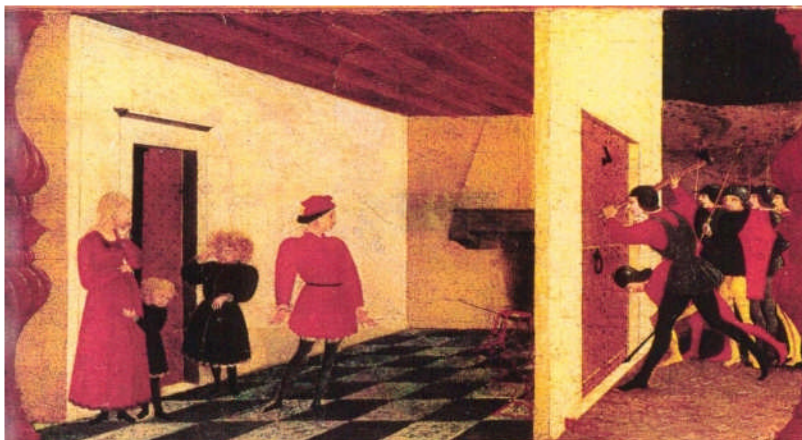

Figure 6: Paolo Uccello, The Profanation of the Host, second panel
(CourtesySoprintendenza per il Patrimonio Storico Artistico ed Etnoantropologico delle Marche, Urbino)

The literature on Uccello’s painting includes an essay by the New Historicist Stephen Greenblatt, ‘The Wound in the Wall’ (Greenblatt 2000). Discussing Uccello’s second panel,

Greenblatt highlights the rather extraordinary pictorial illusion used in it. Uccello's presentation of the scene is reminiscent of a stage: the panel lets the viewer see both the inside and the outside of the house because, as often happens in stage productions, the 'fourth wall' nearest to the viewer has been removed and the wall holding the front door is shown almost perpendicular to the viewer's angle of vision. This allows us to see the blood streaming out of the profaned host at the back of the room and running first across the floor inside the house and then into the street through the 'wound' in the wall. The blood leaves the privacy of the house and enters the public sphere of the street. Its vivid redness is visible proof that the bread is Christ's body. In order to show the blood as real, there for all to see, the painter has resorted to the deliberate 'unreality' of the pictorial convention of the cutaway fourth wall. As Greenblatt explains, the convention marshals the spectator's suspension of disbelief in order to make the doctrinal point that in matters of faith we should not require visible proof to believe: the consecrated host *is* Christ's body and blood even though outwardly it continues to look like any other piece of white bread. Believers have no need to test the reality of transubstantiation. The eyes of faith should not be deceived by physical appearances. Christ's Real Presence in the consecrated host defies representation but is nevertheless real (Greenblatt 2000: 107-8).

Uccello's *Profanation of the Host* illustrates the pre-Reformation doctrine of the Real Presence of Christ in the consecrated host. But Greenblatt's reading of its use of a pictorial illusion to make a doctrinal point about the belief structure underpinning the sacrament of the Eucharist has a relevance that extends to translation. The parallel can be formulated as follows. To be effective, translation too requires a leap of faith, a suspension of disbelief. Entering into the compact demanded by translation means accepting a given text as a translation of another, pre-existing text and therefore as bodying forth, embodying and actually 'being' that pre-existing text in one way or another. Whether individual readers or communities of readers are prepared to make this leap of faith depends on their following the injunction 'take this as a translation, this *is* the original work, even though it appears here under a different guise'.

The view I am putting forward here is that a translation comes into being when a text that has been written alongside another text is declared to be a translation of that other text. The declaration is an illocutionary speech act. If it is heeded, that is, if the speech act has its intended perlocutionary effect, it changes a text into a translation, and thereby converts it into that other 'work' (in Genette's sense) which is the original. A text that is converted into a translation does not change outwardly, but inwardly. Its words remain the same, but it is now, in essence, another 'work'. The approach I am taking starts not from the original but from the translation, and I regard a translation as initially being merely another text until it is declared to be a translation. At that moment, provided the speech act succeeds, a change takes place: the translation continues to look as it did before, but its nature has altered because somehow it is now another work. The 'somehow' will need to be specified below, and different readings will be possible, just as the doctrine of the Real Presence allows for different interpretations of the exact relation between the consecrated host and the body of Christ.

To return to the parallel with Uccello's painting: just as in the painting the red blood is proof that the consecrated host really is the body of Christ, so dissecting a translation will show the original hidden inside it. The important thing to note however is that this reality is real only for believers. For all its claims to universality (and 'catholic' means 'universal'), the doctrine that Uccello portrays is universal only within its own confines. That is why viewed from within the doctrine the proof furnished by the red blood is objective and incontrovertible. Once we have accepted a text as a translation we will find the original inhabiting it and rest assured in the conviction that doubters too will recognise this manifest proof that both texts are the same work even though they are made of different words. But then, only a believer would construe a context in which evidence of this kind could be procured.

In what follows I want to trace some of the historical debates around the Real Presence to see what may be gleaned from them about translation and the way in which the relation between translation and original could be thought. We will need to follow up on several aspects. What kind of transmutation or conversion is occasioned by the words spoken over the bread and wine in the Eucharist? If the change that happens comes about through the performative use of words, what are the 'felicity conditions' governing this speech act? If the bread is somehow altered, is there a

leftover, a residue, a material remainder, in other words, is the bread still bread even though it simultaneously is or comes to figure the body of Christ?

Despite the prolonged and fierce debates about the Real Presence there is common ground, just as there is broad agreement about its importance. All sides agree that the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist is the sacramental – that, is, the mysterious and ritual – point of intersection between two realities and two levels of reality, the visible and the invisible, the material and the immaterial, the human and the divine, the temporal and the eternal, the world of matter and the realm of God. Mystery and sacrament are intertwined: in the early Christian church the Latin *sacramentum* translated the Greek μυστηριον (*musterion*) (Heron 1983: 69; Pelikan 1984: 178). The connection between the two orders is made by means of the spoken words uttered by the priest over the bread and wine. In this respect consecration resembles other sacraments, which always involve spoken words. In Augustine's influential phrase, "the word comes to the element and it becomes a sacrament, itself a kind of visible word" (*Accedit verbum ad elementum et fit sacramentum etiam ipsum tanquam visibile verbum*; Heron 1983: 71). Augustine specifies that the sacrament must resemble that which it symbolises, and that it is the word spoken about the material element that makes the latter into the visible sign of an invisible reality (Heron 1983: 70-1).

During the service, 'holy communion' follows the consecration of the bread and wine, when the faithful follow the priest or minister in partaking of the host. In doing so, "the communicant swallows the divine Word translated into human flesh" (McNees 1992: 20). Communion therefore also signifies a profession of faith and signals membership of a community: "Communion in the body of Christ implies community in the body of Christ" (Crockett 1989: 31), and indeed the term 'the body of Christ' also stands for the community of believers united in their Christian faith.

In addition, there is the commemorative element. The priest who consecrates the bread commemorates the Last Supper and thus performs an act of *anamnesis* (McNees 1992: 18) as well as, performatively, bringing about Christ's Real Presence. How exactly Christ is then made present is the subject of the debates we will be exploring.

Before delving into the historical controversies it will be good to remember that they were as much about grammar and the meaning of words as they were about theology, and that they were fierce. By 1577 Christoph Rasperger could catalogue no fewer than two hundred different interpretations of the words of institution in a handy little book (Raspergerus 1577). "What words can be more plain than to say 'This is my body'?", Henry VIII's archbishop Thomas Cranmer asked, but he went on: "Truth it is indeed, that the words be as plain as they may be spoken; but that the sense is not so plain" (Pelikan 1984: 194). According to the seventeenth-century Catholic grammarians of Port-Royal, the word '*est*' in '*Hoc est corpus meum'* "transforms the thing that '*hoc*' designates from bread into body, the body which is that of the subject who originally pronounces the words" (in Greenblatt 2000a: 141-2), but for the modern Anglican H.E.W. Turner, "[t]he copulative 'is' is a more complicated word than appears at first sight" (1972: 102). "Most of the world's squabbles are occasioned by grammar! […] How many quarrels, momentous quarrels, have arisen in this world because of doubts about the meaning of that single syllable *Hoc*", Michel de Montaigne noted with some exasperation in his *Apology for Raymond Sebond* (Montaigne 1987: 99; "*La plus part des occasions des troubles du monde sont Grammairiennes. […] Combien de querelles et combien importantes a produit au monde le doubte du sens de cette syllabe:* hoc!", 1969, 2: 192).

Apart from grammar and semantics, the relative weight of the act of consecration itself compared with the good faith of those involved was also an issue. There was controversy, for example, about the question whether the sacrament of the Eucharist was effective because of the right words being spoken, that is, *ex opere operato*, 'through the enacted act', or *sola fide*, 'through faith alone,' that is, because the believers believed in the miracle (Turner 1972: 104). For Uccello, it will be remembered, the bread was Christ's body even to unbelievers. Small wonder someone like Erasmus referred contemptuously to the ritual observance of ceremonies as the surest way to degrade them to *cerimoniolae*, "trivial little ritual nonsenses", as M.A. Screech aptly rendered the word (Screech 1980: 119).

I will concentrate on the debates between Catholic and several Protestant positions in the sixteenth century, during the period of the Reformation. Apart from the Catholic position we will be reviewing the opinions of John Wycliff, Huldrych Zwingli, Martin Luther and John (Jean)

Calvin. But since these debates are foreshadowed in the medieval era, that is where we need to begin.

Transubstantiation

While the Eucharist was the central Christian ritual from an early date, the exact nature of the Real Presence was not from the beginning a matter of doctrine or an article of faith. There appear to have been different views about how the Real Presence could be understood. They hinged on the question whether the bread and wine *in reality* or only *symbolically* changed into the body and blood of Christ during the Eucharist. For some, the consecrated bread and wine merely *signified* Christ's body and blood. For others they *were* literally and truly his body and blood.

Different emphases appear to have existed among the early Christian thinkers and theologians known as the Church Fathers. Around the beginning of the fifth century Augustine, as we saw, held that the visible reality, the bread and wine, became a sign of an inner, immaterial reality when the 'element' was activated by the spoken word as part of a sacramental act. This meant that after the sacrament the bread and wine stood for or symbolised Christ's flesh and blood (Schillebeeckx 1963: 92; Crockett 1989: 92). His slightly older contemporary Ambrose took what has variously been called a 'conversionist', 'transformationist', 'metabolic' or 'realist' view according to which the words of consecration actually changed the bread and wine, inwardly though not outwardly. He argued that if the word of Christ was able to perform miracles and to create something out of nothing, it also had the power to make things undergo change; the sacramental word inherited this power (Crockett 1989: 97). Both views coexisted, but in the course of the Middle Ages the 'realist' position came to predominate and eventually hardened into doctrine.

One of the earliest attested conflicts of opinion on the matter emerged as two monks, Ratramnus and Paschasius Radbertus, clashed in the ninth century in the monastery of Corbie in France. Both apparently agreed that some kind of 'mutation' took place in the Eucharist. For Ratramnus this meant that after consecration Christ's spiritual rather than his actual body was present among the believers and the bread and wine were the signs of this presence, whereas Paschasius asserted a factual change in the material elements, so that Christ's flesh and blood were truly rendered present (Heron 1983: 93; Rubin 1991: 15-16).

The most famous early challenge to the conversionist view was launched by Berengar of Tours in the eleventh century. It introduced an important philosophical distinction and provoked a debate that threw up the new term 'transubstantiation'. Berengar's view was similar to that of Ratramnus but he put it by drawing on Aristotle's distinction between 'accidents' and 'substance'. The terms are important. In somewhat simplified form we can understand 'substance' as meaning the durable essence or identity of a thing or a person, and 'accidents' as an entity's outwardly visible qualities and attributes. Individuals remain the same persons (in 'substance') even though they change in appearance (in their 'accidents') as they grow older. For Berengar, the bread could entertain only a 'figural' relation to Christ's body because accidents, the appearances of natural objects, cannot be separated from the essence or substance to which they belong. If something looks and tastes like bread, then it is bread, both before and after consecration. Following consecration the bread sacramentally *signifies* Christ's body, but as this body is of a different order from that of the bread, the bread is still bread.

Berengar was opposed by Lanfranc of Bec, abbot of Caen and later to become Archbishop of Canterbury under William the Conqueror. Lanfranc argued that in the sentence '*Hoc est corpus meum*' not only must the subject and predicate be fully equal, but it is the noun which possesses enduring signifying power. Since 'hoc' refers to bread, the bread must become body, in substance though not in appearance.

Lanfranc's view prevailed. Berengar was forced to recant, publicly and repeatedly, first in 1059 and again in 1079 (Rubin 1991: 16-20). The recantation of 1079 was insistent on the real and substantial rather than any figurative or symbolic change of bread into body:

> I Berengar believe in my heart and confess with my mouth that the bread and wine which are laid on the altar are, through the mystery of the sacred prayer and the words of our

> Redeemer, converted in their substance into the real and truly life-giving flesh and blood of Jesus Christ our Lord, and that after consecration they are the real body of Christ that was born of the Virgin and dies on the cross for the salvation of the world and sits at the Father's right hand, and the real blood of Christ which spilt from his side, and that they are flesh and blood not merely in the form of a sign through the power of the sacrament but in their actual nature through the power of the sacrament. [*Ego Berengarius corde credo et ore confiteor panem et vinum, que ponuntur in altari, per mysterium sacre orationis et verba nostri Redemptoris substantialiter converti in veram et propriam vivificatricem carnem et sanguinem Iesu Christi domini nostri et post consecrationem esse verum Christi corpus quod natum est de Virgine et quod pro salute mundi oblatum in cruce pependit et quod sedet ad dexteram Patris, et verum sanguinem Christi, qui de latere eius effusus est, non tamen per signum et virtutem sacramenti, sed in proprietate nature et virtutem sacramenti*] (Rubin 1991: 20; Heron 1983: 94-95).

Berengar's 1059 confession had also stated that after consecration Christ's body and blood "are physically taken up and broken in the hands of the priest and crushed by the teeth of the faithful, not only sacramentally, but in truth" (*sensualiter non solum sacramento sed in veritate manibus sacerdotum tractari frangi et fidelium dentibus atteri*; *ibid*.), an idea the Reformer John Calvin would later describe as "monstrous" (Pelikan 1984: 199).

The term 'transubstantiation' began to be used around the time or shortly after these debates to indicate the real and substantial change that according to Berengar's opponents took place in the Eucharist. The doctrine was endorsed by the Church at the Fourth Lateran Council which Pope Innocent III convened in 1215 and would be emphatically reaffirmed as Catholic dogma during the Council of Trent. Berengar's views are unambiguously called 'heretical' in the online *Catholic Encyclopedia* (Scannell 2003)

In the thirteenth century the *Summa Theologica* of Thomas Aquinas, the major theological digest of the medieval era, summed up the doctrine in terms that recalled Berengar's recantation:

> The complete substance of the bread is converted into the complete substance of Christ's body and the complete substance of the wine into the complete substance of Christ's blood. Hence this change is not a formal change, but a substantial one. It does not belong to the natural kinds of change, and it can be called by a name proper to itself: transubstantiation" (section III, 75, 4: Kelly 2001: 61).

At around the same time the felicity conditions of the consecrating speech act were defined. Robert Grosseteste's *Templum dei* of *ca*. 1220-35, for example, prescribed wheaten bread, pure water, uncorrupted wine, clearly pronounced words, a male priest and good intentions (Rubin 1991, 37).

As we know, the Catholic Church countered the growing Reformation tide by reaffirming its basic tenets during the Council of Trent, which was held from 1545 till 1563. The Council emphatically asserted the doctrine of transubstantiation during its thirteenth session of 11 October 1551. The first chapter of the decree issuing from this session declared that

> by the consecration of the bread and wine a change is brought about of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord, and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of his blood. This change the holy Catholic Church properly and appropriately calls transubstantiation" (Noll 1991: 195; Pelikan 1984: 299).

As a result, the decree's fourth chapter concluded, "Jesus Christ, true God and true man, is truly, really and substantially contained in the august sacrament of the holy Eucharist under the appearance of those sensible things" (Noll 1991: 193). Because the change affecting the bread was miraculous and beyond human comprehension, the Council argued, the unique word 'transubstantiation' to label it was justified. The Council dismissed as "satanical untruths" the Protestant opinion that Christ's words at the Last Supper should be understood figuratively rather than literally, and upheld the view that Christ could be in two places at the same time, in the

bread and in heaven, “by a manner of existence which, although we can scarcely express in words, yet with our understanding illumined by faith, we can conceive and ought most firmly to believe is possible to God” (*ibid.*).

A year after the Council of Trent ended, Pope Pius IV issued a bull which yet again reaffirmed the doctrine of transubstantiation (Heron 1983: 107). Three years later, in 1567, Thomas Aquinas was elevated to the status of Doctor of the Church. In the seventeenth century no less a thinker than René Descartes found a way of coming to terms with the doctrine. In the replies to objections raised against his philosophy by Antoine Arnauld and incorporated in his *Meditations on First Philosophy* (1641), and in a letter to the Jesuit Denis Mesland of 9 February 1645, Descartes even sought to modify the Aristotelian notion of ‘accidents’ so as to make the mystery of transubstantiation more acceptable (1984, II: 172-8; III: 241-4; Dear 1991: 130-33); he reckoned he deserved thanks from the theologians “for putting forward opinions in physics which are far more in accord with theology than those commonly accepted” (1984, II: 175).

The reality of transubstantiation was affirmed again as recently as 1965, in Pope Pius VI’s encyclical letter *Mysterium fidei* (‘The mystery of faith’), which declared: “Nor is it right to treat of the mystery of transubstantiation without mentioning the marvellous change of the whole of the bread’s substance into Christ’s body and the whole of the wine’s substance into his blood, of which the Council of Trent speaks, and thereby to make these changes consist of nothing but a ‘trans-signification’ or a ‘trans-finalization’, to use these terms” (Douglas 1973: 69).

Figuration

The Reformed interpretations all deny transubstantiation. To the Protestant reformers who broke away from Rome in the sixteenth century the doctrine of transubstantiation lacked a basis in scripture and was merely the fantastical invention of Pope Innocent III and his Fourth Lateran Council; it led, in their view, to the idolatrous worship of a piece of bread and to the presumptuous idea that reciting Christ’s words had the power to call him down from heaven or change bread into his body (Pelikan 1984: 190, 200). Their views of the change happening in the Eucharist are perhaps rightly typified as consisting of nothing but ‘trans-signification’. In the ‘diffusive’ and purportedly non-sectarian translation of the New Testament that Edward Harwood produced in 1768, the verses Mark 14:22 and Luke 22:19 are rendered not as ‘This is my body’ but as “This figuratively represents my body” (1768, I: 156, 266). Still, the Reformed reading of the change as primarily symbolic leaves room for different nuances. Luther, for one, continued to insist that the Eucharistic event was more than symbolic.

Well before the Reformation proper, John Wycliff (died 1384), the ‘morning star’ of the Reformation as he would later be called, was expelled from Oxford University following his attack on transubstantiation (Daniell 2003: 72-3). Wycliff appears to have taken the view – as far as we know, since most of his own writings were destroyed as heretical – that the sacrament brings about a change in the bread, not however in its accidents or substance but in its signifying quality. After consecration Christ was present in the bread “in some manner or other” (*quodammodo*, Pelikan 1984: 58), rather like a token or an image, or like a keepsake serving a memorial function (Rubin 1991: 324-5). Materially the consecrated bread remained bread, Wycliff argued, however it now symbolised Christ, who was present figurally, in other words, as a figure or a sign (“*sacramentum eucharistiae est in figura corpus Christi et sanguis*”, in Hudson 1985: 112). The body of Christ was present in the bread not physically or according to its dimensions but “according to its power” (*virtualiter*, Pelikan 1984: 58). The church formally condemned Wycliff’s views at the Council of Constance in 1414-18 (Pohle 2003).

The opinions of the Swiss reformer Huldrych Zwingli (1484-1531) were similar to those of Wycliff. For Zwingli, the ‘*est*’ in ‘*hoc est corpus meum*’ was to be taken as meaning ‘signifies’ (Crockett 1989: 136-7). Just as he regarded the mass not as re-enacting Christ’s sacrifice but as a mere commemoration of it, Zwingli, in a letter of 1526 addressed to the Nuremberg town council, gave as his view that “the bread and wine in the [Lord’s] supper are merely a sign” (Plöse and Vogler 1989: 308, 436). Rasperger’s 1577 catalogue of interpretations of ‘*hoc est corpus meum*’ firmly placed Zwingli’s reading of ‘*est*’ as ‘*significat*’ among the wicked depravations.

Wycliff's and Zwingli's understanding of the Real Presence leaves the relation between the bread and wine and the body of Christ underdetermined. The material elements point to the immaterial realm in the way that in C.S. Peirce's sign theory a symbol acts as a sign of what it symbolises primarily on the strength of a relation established by convention. The sign, that is, is motivated neither by similarity, as is the case with what Peirce calls an icon, nor by causality, as with an index. As Wycliff and Zwingli appear to read the matter, Christ willed the bread into standing for his body, and the church that he established follows him in reading the same symbolic relation into the element.

When Martin Luther heard of Zwingli's view, he is said to have been horrified by it (Heron 1983: 117). Of all the reformers, Luther remained perhaps closest to the Catholic position. He was willing to take the words of institution literally, and although he passed over the issue of transubstantiation, he stressed the Real Presence as an actual and true presence. The 'is' in 'this is my body' meant exactly what it said, he would insist. As he saw it, after consecration the bread and wine became imbued with the invisible, glorified body of Christ. Consecration meant therefore that the bread and wine acquired the qualities of Christ's body. Luther used the parallel of heated iron to illustrate his point: an iron heated in the fire retains all the qualities of iron, but also possesses all the qualities of heat (Higman in Calvin 1970: 18). Christ, he wrote in a celebrated formula, was present "in, with and under" the consecrated bread and wine, which however did not change in substance ("in, mit und unter dem der Substanz nach unveränderten Brote und Weine", Pelikan 1984: 200). The bread remained bread but Christ, who could unite both human and divine natures in his person, was present in every particle of it (Heron 1983: 118). Opponents referred to Luther's view as 'consubstantiation', a term that is however not accepted by Lutherans (Pelikan 1984: 201).

A representative statement of the Lutheran position may be found in the Wittenberg Articles of 1536, prepared jointly by Lutherans and an English delegation sent by Henry VIII and Archbishop Cranmer to forge links. The talks broke down but a draft confession had been drawn up by then, in Latin and German, which declared:

> we firmly believe and teach that in the sacrament of the Lord's body and blood, Christ's body and blood are truly, substantially and really present (*vere substantialiter et realiter adsint corpus et sanguis Christi*) under the species of bread and wine (*sub speciebus panis et vini*), and the under the same species they are truly and bodily (*vere et corporaliter*) presented and distributed (*exhibeantur et distribuantur*) to all those who receive the sacrament." (Bray 1994:137)

No mention is made of any actual change in substance; hence there is no transubstantiation, only 'presence'. The formulation is similar to that devised earlier by Philip Melanchthon, the author of the Augsburg Confession of 1530 (revised version), Article X of which declared that "with the bread and wine the body and blood of Christ are truly presented (*exhibeantur*) to those who eat the Lord's Supper" (Pelikan 1984: 186). In both the Wittenberg Articles and the Augsburg Confession the Latin word translated into English as "presented" is "*exhibeantur*", 'are exhibited'. The bread and wine 'exhibit' the body of Christ and in so doing render it present. This version proved acceptable also to other Reformers including the Genevan Reformer John Calvin. Later however Calvin distanced himself from the Lutheran view.

For Calvin, too, the bread and wine in the Eucharist were primarily signs, the 'visible words' – the term harks back to Augustine – which signified Christ's presence (Pelikan 1984: 190). The Genevan Confession of 1536, drawn up by Calvin or his colleague Guillaume Farel or both, declared: "The supper of our Lord is a sign by which under bread and wine he represents the true spiritual communion which we have in his body and blood" (Noll 1991: 130). In the treatise on the Last Supper he published in 1542 Calvin consequently rejected transubstantiation as a "diabolical invention" ("*ceste transsubstantiation est invention forgée du diable*"; 1970: 120). He read the Eucharistic formula 'this is my body' as a figure of speech, more particularly a metonymy in which "the sign borrows the name of the truth which it figures" ("*par une figure qu'on dit métonymie, le signe emprunte le nom de vérité qu'il figure*", in the 1551 French translation of the Latin *Consensus Tigurinus* of 1549; Greenblatt 2000a: 146, 225). This "manner of speaking", Calvin argued, could be discerned in all the sacraments (Calvin 1957: 401, 405; Pelikan 1984: 194).

Similarly, in his main work, the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* which he continued to rewrite for most of his adult life and translated from his own Latin into French (first edition 1539, definitive edition 1560), Calvin argued that the relationship between the sign and the thing signified is more than merely linguistic. It is one of both representation and presence. The sign not only represents the thing signified but also makes it present by calling it forth. In paragraph 4.17.10 of the *Institutes* he urged the faithful to "hold above all to this rule, that every time they see the signs ordained by God, they understand with equal certainty that the truth of the matter represented is conjoined with it" ("*les fidèles ont du tout à tenir ceste reigle, que toutes fois et quantes qu'ils voyent les signes ordonnez de Dieu, ils conçoyvent pareillement pour certain la vérité de la chose représentée y estre coniointe*; Calvin 1957: 385; my translation). Through the visible signs a spiritual truth is "figured and exhibited" ("*figurée par iceux, et pareillement exhibée*, *ibid.*).

A few paragraphs further on he indicated the ground on which this signifying quality is based, stressing "the affinity which the things signified have with their symbols" ("*l'affinité qu'ont les choses signifiées avec leurs figures*", 1957: 401). As a result, the name of the thing signified can pass to the sign signifying it in a movement which he calls by its rhetorical name "translation" (French "*translation*", the corresponding Latin term is "*metonymia"*, 1957: 401, 402; the standard rhetorical term in Latin would be *transmutatio*, Plett 1979: 77; Vickers 1988: 496). The bread can stand for the body and vice versa, and this mutual 'translation' is possible due to the "affinity and similitude" between them ("*il a telle affinité et similitude de l'un à l'autre, que telle translation mutuelle ne doit pas estre trouvée estrange ne rude*", 1957: 402). This ground enables the sign to present the object and transfer its own name to it even though in the case of the Real Presence the physical bread and Christ's body belong to radically different and unequal orders of reality. Speaking with C.S. Peirce in 1906 we could says that the ground compels the sign: "a sign, in order to fulfil its office, to actualize its potency, must be compelled by its object" (Peirce 1991: 255). Due to this compulsion the sign is true because it is in conformity with its object. Or, using a different terminology, that suggested by Gilles Deleuze commenting on Plato's distinction between copies and simulacra (Deleuze 2001: 294ff.): the host becomes a true copy of the body of Christ because it is endowed with an internal, spiritual and essential resemblance; without this, it would be a mere simulacrum.

Calvin's 1542 treatise on the Last Supper rehearsed more or less the same points as his *Institutes*. It stressed that the bread and wine were the "visible signs" representing Christ's body and added that they are called his flesh and blood because they are like the instruments Christ uses to make his body manifest to us ("*ce sont comme instrumens par lesquelz le Seigneur Jesus nous les distribue*", Calvin 1970 : 106). In the same way John the Baptist saw the Holy Spirit in the shape of a dove. The event illustrated God's way of making visible to human eyes what is in fact invisible, and thus accommodated limited human capabilities. The vision therefore "was not a empty figure but a sure sign" of the Spirit ("*ceste vision n'estoit pas une vaine figure, mais un signe certain de la presence du S. Esprit*", 1970: 107). So it was also with the Eucharist, hence "it is right that the bread should be called body because it not only represents it for us but also presents it to us" ("*C'est donc à bon droict que le pain est nommé corps, puis que non seulement il le nous represente, mais aussi nous le presente*", *ibid.*). And just as actual water was needed in baptism to serve as material witness to the spiritual cleansing which the ritual performed, so the bread of the Eucharist testified to Christ's body serving as nourishment of the soul ("*aussie faut-il qu'en la Cene il y ayt du pain materiel, pour nous testifier que le corps de Christ est nostre viande*" (1970: 120). Exactly how the flesh and blood of Christ were communicated to the congregation, however, remained beyond human understanding ("*Ainsi en est il de la communication que nous avons au corps et au sang du Seigneur JESUS. C'est un mystere spirituel, lequel ne se peult veoir à l'œil, ne comprendre en l'entendement humain*", 1970 : 107).

By thus insisting that the sign was grounded in similitude and that the operation of the Real Presence remained unfathomable, the Reformers could also refute the Catholic charge that their conception of the Eucharist held no mystery and reduced the bread and wine to a lifeless sign, a simulacrum, "a bare representation … as dead men are represented through statues or other images", "something like a painted fire, which gave neither light nor heat" (Pelikan 1984: 192) –

images reminiscent, incidentally, of the objections sometimes raised to the way translations represent original texts.

Conversion

Let us retrace our steps and consider where this exploration of the historical divisions over the doctrine of the Real Presence leaves us with respect to translation. We began by wondering whether an author could point to a translation of his or her work and say 'this is my work' in the way a minister or priest says, in imitation of Christ picking up the bread during the Last Supper, 'this is my body'. The elaboration of the parallel took us into the Real Presence and a consequent shift of emphasis. The focus of attention moved from the original text to the translation, more particularly to the text that, through the power of words, is made into a translation. Before consecration, the bread is just bread. Consecration changes the bread into something else or something more. Depending on which theological reading one prefers, the bread is either transubstantiated into the body of Christ or its signifying quality is altered to make it figure the body of Christ. A given text that has sprung up alongside other texts in the way intertextuality governs the production of all texts, is picked out, consecrated and thereby converted into a translation of one of these other texts. It is altered as a result. Although it has not changed outwardly, it is now another work or, alternatively, it now represents, figures and/or exhibits another work.

Understanding translation through the prism of the doctrine of the Real Presence provides us with a novel perspective and puts translation in a new light. We can try to assess the implications of such a move.

1. It focuses on the host text – that is, the translation – and its relation to the anterior text. This means inverting the standard approach, which starts from the original and casts every translation as deriving from it. The Real Presence perspective affords the spectacle of a new text being created alongside and contiguous with a pre-existing text. About this new text the claim is subsequently made that it is a translation of the pre-text. If the claim finds acceptance among a particular community – if, that is, the speech act does its work and the new text is consecrated – several things happen. Firstly, the pre-text remains what it always was, a text among other texts, except that it now enjoys the added distinction of being an original – an accidental change. Secondly, a particular relation between translation and original is instituted. Thirdly, as soon as a text becomes a translation, it acquires dual status: it is both text and translation, in other words, its accidental nature remains unaffected but its substance has altered; alternatively, in line with the idea of transubstantiation, the translation continues to look like a text in its own right but it is now entirely that other work of which also the pre-text is a manifestation.

2. It supplies a ground for burying the idea of translation as involving the transformation of an original text. In other words, it foregoes the notion of an original that gives rise to a derivative, transmogrified product called translation. Transformation assumes there is an invariant, an essence or identity that remains the same despite different manifestations and changes in form and language. Identifying such an invariant has proved problematic in translation studies. If there is alteration in a Real Presence perspective it is the conversion of a text into a translation by means of a speech act which declares this text to be a translation and in so doing changes either its substance or its signifying quality.

3. It dispenses with the idea that in translation something – a content, meaning – is transferred from an original to the translation. In other words, it discards the idea of translation as consisting of the transport of meaning from original to translation. The notion of an invariant that is kept intact as it travels from one language to another, can also be jettisoned.

4. It claims instead that another process is at work. It is this: when a text is successfully declared to be a translation of a pre-existing text, the pre-text comes to inhabit the translation. The original's body or substance is now somehow present and manifested in the translation. The decisive moment in this chain of events is neither that of the original secreting a translation nor that of the translation being materially constituted, but that of the consecrating speech act which converts a text into a translation. The speech act cleaves the host in two; it separates substance

from accident, reduces the host's linguistic appearance to accident and infuses its substance with the substance of the original.

5. It stresses the idea of communities of believers and, in the same breath, that of the institutional context of the consecrating speech act. As the word 'successfully' in the previous paragraph already indicated, translations function as translations – that is, they are accepted and recognised as translations – only for believers, communities of readers or text users who are willing to suspend their disbelief and to consume translations as either being or representing an underlying original. But as we also know, the effectiveness of a speech act depends on institutional factors. What counts as translation in one environment will not necessarily be accepted in another. And as the controversies surrounding the Real Presence showed, even when a text is recognised as translation there is still plenty of room for different opinions about the precise nature of the relation between a translation and its pre-text.

6. It highlights the commemorative function of translation. Just as the Eucharistic ritual commemorates the Last Supper and serves anamnesis, translations counteract forgetting by bringing back and revitalising anterior texts. Such translative commemoration takes place continuously and in any number of locations. An original may be simultaneously exhibited in numerous translations in different languages across the globe.

Depending on the position one adopts regarding the Real Presence, following conversion a translation 'is' its pre-text, that is, an allographic token of it, or it is 'inhabited by' it, or it 'signifies' and 'recalls' it and in so doing 'renders it present' or 'presents' it in an active and effective sense. Let us try to see how each of the main theological stances sketched in the previous pages might reflect on the way a translation relates to its pre-text.

Transubstantiation may be understood as the opposite of transformation, as indeed Cornelis de Waal points out in his little book on Peirce (de Waal 2001: 25-6). De Waal draws on the Aristotelian distinction between accidents and substance to clarify the difference. In transformation, the substance – that is, the object, an invariant – remains the same while the accidental qualities change. Even Proteus, through all his protean transformations, remains himself; he just looks different with every change. In transubstantiation, the opposite occurs. The attributes remain as they are but the object, the inner reality, changes.

This is what happens when a text becomes a translation as viewed in the light of the transubstantiation paradigm. It is transmuted into the original from the moment it is converted into a translation. On the surface, nothing happens. The words remain as they are. The change affects what Genette called the operal identity of the object. Declaring a text to be a translation brings it into convergence with another text such that both works are now the same work. The convergence is total. It also exceeds what Genette termed "sameness of meaning". Similarity or convergence of meaning is likely to aid the acceptance of a text as a translation of another text (I will return to this point), but the decisive shift is the alignment of the two texts in such a way that they now stand as the same work. In other words, operal identity is not preserved despite translation, as the traditional perspective which casts translation as transformation has it, but exactly the opposite happens: recognising a text as a translation creates operal identity with another text.

Adopting a Lutheran perspective would mean not invoking transubstantiation but still assuming that the pre-text is present "in, with and under" the translation, which therefore will have changed in status if not in substance. Just as for Luther the bread must remain bread even as after consecration the body of Christ inhabits it, so a translation remains a text in its own right while at the same time, as a translation, it also 'exhibits' another text. The term sometimes employed to label the Lutheran position, consubstantiation, even though Lutherans reject it, has the advantage of drawing attention to this dual nature of a translation, an aspect which the transubstantiation perspective covers under the blanket of a radical change that leaves only the accidents but nothing of the old substance of the text converted into a translation. Consubstantiation points to a translation's two bodies, its simultaneous and analogical articulation of two orders of meaning, as incarnation of another text and as a text *per se.* In other words, and phrased in Relevance theory terminology, translations can be read both interpretively as texts representing other texts, and descriptively as texts speaking about the world in their own right.

Both the Roman Catholic and the Lutheran positions can readily be accommodated by the Berne Convention on copyright. If a translation in effect changes into another work the moment it

becomes a translation, then at that instant it is appropriated by whoever owns this other work. In contrast, the semiotic stance that looks to Wycliff, Zwingli and Calvin for inspiration has nothing to say about ownership. It posits a different signifying quality in texts declared to be translations but it does not foresee a change in their operal identity.

The view Wycliff and Zwingli take of the Real Presence is probably the most rationalist of all those we have surveyed. They too grant that a change takes place during the sacrament, but it concerns only the signifying quality of the bread and wine. In this perspective, converting a text into a translation of a pre-text would imply that the translation, while it remains a text in its own right, additionally comes to stand for the pre-text. A translation can substitute but should not be taken for the pre-text, however. The ground on which the translation acts as a sign of the pre-text is not specified here – and neither is it in the Catholic or the Lutheran perspective.

Seen from this angle Calvin's position may be the most amenable to translation. Calvin captures the change that the sacrament of the Eucharist brings about with the rhetorical concept of metonymy. Before consecration the bread is identical with itself, afterwards it is a sign which calls forth the body of Christ, which 'presents' it in the full sense of the word: causes it to be seen and to be present. As a result the name for the thing signified can be transferred to the sign, and this transfer Calvin calls metonymy. In this view metonymy would be the figure of speech I use when I point to *War and Peace* in English and say: 'This is *War and Peace*'. The same name can be used to designate either the translation or the original. The two are not to be confused, and they remain of different orders, but the close link between them allows for the shifting designation. And the link is close because Calvin insists on 'affinity', 'similitude' and relations of contiguity as the cement holding the sign and its object together so that the former is 'true' to the latter, its image rather than its simulacrum.

This is important because it allows us to see how far the perspective on translation sketched in this chapter can go beyond illuminating the relation between translation and original. My account so far has stressed the speech act that makes a text into a translation of another text. Can *any* text be converted into a translation? On the strength of most of what has been said above, yes. In practice, no. Much depends, in the model that I have presented, on the speech act that brings about the conversion of a text into a translation. Who is authorised to utter such a speech act with any prospect of perlocutionary effect? In the religious ritual the minister's authority derives from Christ, whose words of institution are echoed in the institutional ritual that is the Eucharist. In the secular world, only the author of the original is entitled to say '*hoc est opus meum'* about a translation, a text whose words the author manifestly did not write. Copyright law stipulates that even though a translator can claim ownership of the form of words of a translation, this claim does not in any way diminish the author's claim to be regarded as the owner of the work. It follows that strictly speaking only an author can change a text *X* in another language into a translation of his own work *A*.

However, as we saw before, copyright law is a tool of limited reach. It is restricted to texts circulating in the public domain and it expires seventy years after the author's death. After that, what? Perhaps Calvin can help here. Calvin argued that Christ took bread and wine to stand as signs of his flesh and blood because of the affinity and similitude between the solidity of the bread and his body and the fluidity of the wine and his blood, and because the foodstuffs on the table and his own future spiritual presence among his followers shared the idea of sustenance. These parallels provide the signs with their ground. In the same way, it could be argued, history and tradition, convention and consensus have seen to it that 'relevant similarity' with an original (Chesterman 1997: 69) conditions the acceptability of a text's claim to be regarded as a translation. If the sign shows the right affinity with its object so that it can be seen, in Peirce's terms, as being compelled by it and therefore true to it, then chances are that the conversion comes into being and the sign can legitimately stand for the object – in our case, a text *X* will be recognised as a translation of work *A*. The implication is that the claim for recognition may be made by the translator or indeed by anyone, provided there is a tradition that supplies models and samples of the kind of affinity that satisfies the condition for recognition as translation.

This also means that authors and other copyright holders cannot escape the force of precedent and tradition. While they can, for whatever reason, or even for no reason, prevent a translation of their work from entering the public domain, they cannot elevate just any random text to a translation of their work. On the contrary, conventions and consensus ratify translations.

They see to it that communities accept that if *X* is offered as a translation of *A,* and *X* shows an acceptable level and kind of resemblance with other instances of authorised translations, then *X* has a fair chance of being accepted as a translation of *A*. Who decides what is acceptable? In a world of professional and specialised translating, which as a result shows a degree of institutionalisation, the words of the recognised practitioners and their organisations will carry most weight, as indeed Andrew Chesterman has suggested with reference to professional translation norms (1993; 1997: 64-70). In less well-organised and less institutionalised parts of the world of translating, things will be more fuzzy. Here sectarianism has ample scope, as partial agreements and disagreements proliferate and different poetics compete. But then, the expectations about translation in these areas and genres may also be more diffuse, so that conventions rather than norms structure the field (Hermans 1999: 79-85). In all these cases, however, history has the last word.

This leaves a further issue to be resolved. Does not translation presuppose a genetic link that starts with the original as the source of translation? What happens to this link and to the original's logical and chronological primacy?

The question of primacy is not in doubt. Just as theology would have no hesitation in assigning primacy by invoking the gravitas, omnipresence and supra-temporality of the divine, so there must be a pre-text before a new text can be aligned with it as its translation. But viewing translation through a Real Presence prism reorients the idea of a genetic link and the associated notion of derivation by foregrounding intertextuality and subsequent convergence. All texts feed on other texts. In this sense intertextuality describes the general condition of text production. But not all intertextually produced texts are translations. Some may be intended as translations but fail to be ratfied as such and end up having another label attached to them. The particular alignment called translation requires a valid speech act resulting in recognition by a congregation. What matters in this perspective is not the derivation, since all texts derive from other texts, but the alignment and the way it comes about.

To end on a textual note: perhaps the alignment that translation brings about with a pre-text can be understood in anagrammatic terms. If the Real Presence means recognising the body of Christ in a piece of bread, a translation might be read as an anagram of a pre-text, which is contained, as it were, beneath the translation's verbal arrangement. Once we have been handed the key, we can read the surface text as a sign manifesting a different corpus. The triumphal *Imago primi saeculi Societatis Jesu* (1640), the collection of emblems that celebrated the one hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Jesuit order in the Low Countries, featured a programmatic anagram in which '*Societas Iesv*' (Society of Jesus) was transmuted into a militant '*Vitiosa seces*' ('cut off wicked things'); in the same way Orpheus' lyre was first christianised into a '*cithara Iesu*' and then anagrammatically elevated into '*Eucharistia*' (Manning 2002: 195-7).