

"Divine Interpreter": Translation as Theme and Event in *Paradise Lost*

Adam's reference to Raphael as "Divine interpreter" in Book 7 of *Paradise Lost* signals one of the key activities of Milton's epic, as well as one of the chief literary activities of the early modern period: translation (7.72).¹ The archangel's act of translation occurs in Books 5 and 6, in which he responds to Adam's request for "The full relation" of what has "past in Heav'n" (5.554–56). That account contains some of the most dramatic passages of *Paradise Lost*, and yet, as important as what Raphael recounts, is what he says about the nature and difficulty of "lik'ning spiritual to corporal forms" to produce such an account in the first place (5.573). This essay argues accordingly that Milton's presentation of Raphael as a translator emphasizes translation as a significant, divinely-sanctioned, but inherently problematic activity. It is an activity that pertains to more than linguistic difference, and exists in the prelapsarian world, rather than being necessitated simply by the confusion of tongues precipitated by the fall of the tower of Babel (Gen. 11.1–9). Raphael's translation of spiritual events also acts structurally and thematically as a point of comparison for the strategies invoked by Milton in the invocation of the Holy Spirit as "Heav'nly Muse" (1.6). Neither Raphael nor Milton is the originator of the stories they tell. Raphael is the translator of heavenly events and Milton is the translator into words of the muse's song, which also proceeds from heaven and, by implication, existed in a non-verbal form prior to its literary re-creation. Both, then, aim to translate the "invisible" spiritual world into terms comprehensible to those in the physical world. Both must find ways of bridging a cultural gap, of bringing "originals" towards their new audience, and of making those originals newly comprehensible.² Most importantly, this essay demonstrates that both question their authority to render the tales they tell and highlight anxieties about translation as trespass. Those anxieties draw on the language and concepts of classical translation theory but ultimately link Raphael's and Milton's activities to early modern discourses surrounding sacred translation.

Identifying translation as an activity that is scrutinized at the heart of *Paradise Lost* has significant implications for how we read Milton. It fills what is currently a gap in the way in which criticism has engaged with Milton's language. There has, of course, been substantial research in this field—notably that by Christopher Ricks, John Leonard, and John K. Hale. Their studies do not, however, extend into matters of translation discourse. Indeed, Leonard's contention that "The corrupting of innocence begins with a corrupting of language" sits at odds with my view that discourses around translation in Milton's epic reveal his belief that there was language confusion even before the Fall ("Language and Knowledge" 143). As I have argued previously, *Paradise Lost* does not present us with what Leonard describes as a "natural language" that is at odds with fallen usage; nor does it present us with "Designation" itself as the source of isolation, "rupture[ing] a primordial unity and cohesion," as George Steiner contends (Leonard, *Naming in Paradise* 199; Steiner, *Grammars of Creation* 29).³ Rather, prelapsarian language slippage in the poem "expresses something already problematic" (Paice 20). This reminds us that Milton was not just a communicator *in* language (and in different languages), but also was concerned with the matter of (mis)communication between cultures on a fundamental level. Bernard Zelechow reminds us that "The Genesis narrative devotes a great deal of attention to the continual misunderstanding between God and God's multiple interlocutors" (133). In following his biblical source, Milton could only do likewise and, if problems exist in the communication between heaven and earth, how much more will they exist in communication between humans. Refocusing on this aspect of *Paradise Lost* will help to revise previous conceptions of an ideal language in the epic, revealing them to be based on a fantasy of perfect translatability.

Although *Paradise Lost*'s engagement with translation discourse has not previously been noted, Milton's engagement with translation has been viewed in terms of his interlingual

productions in poetry and prose, including in his professional capacity as Secretary for Foreign Tongues. In this sphere, Hale's work has been the most extensive and rewarding, developing a picture of Milton's increasing preoccupation with sense-for-sense fidelity in terms of his translation practice, but also presenting Milton as frustrated with translation, and as distancing himself from it: "Since Milton's career moved away from translating," Hale argues, "his best translation cannot in any case coincide with his poetic peak" ("Milton as Translator" 81, 83, 96; *Milton's Languages* 10). Yet, since Milton claims *Paradise Lost* to be a mediation of the Holy Spirit, one might say that a translation *is* Milton's best work. Or rather, since there is no source "text" for Raphael's story or the muse's song, perhaps it would be better to think of Milton's epic as a pseudotranslation, "a text pretending, or purporting [...] to be a translation," and one that "call[s] into question [...] the belief in the absolute difference between a translation and an original work" (Robinson, "Pseudotranslation" 183, 185).

Milton's emulation of the classics—"imitations' which competed with the models they followed"—and his deployment of Latinate words, etymologies, and neologisms, not only underscore his commanding multilingualism but also speak to the constant presence of translation-related inventiveness in his writing (Burke, "Renaissance Translator" 28). In this, Milton was also part of the early modern culture that Peter Burke, following Mikhail Bakhtin, has described as "the 'interanimation' of languages, in other words a sharper consciousness of the differences between languages, linked to increasing linguistic inventiveness and playfulness" (Burke, "Renaissance Translator" 17). Hale's observation that "Time and again [Milton] makes a theme out of his language-choice," aligns closely with my argument that Milton investigates translation thematically in *Paradise Lost* (*Milton's Languages* 6). Thus, while this is not an essay about Milton's activities as a translator of

modern or ancient languages, or about his activities as a translator in his role as Secretary for Foreign Tongues, those contexts are pertinent.

In *Method in Translation History* (1998), Anthony Pym lamented that contemporary translation studies had a tendency to focus on the translations themselves but not on the figure of the translator: "Where did all the people go?" Pym asked (4). Early modern studies, by contrast, offers a great deal of discussion of the people producing translations as well as their productions, and such studies also reveal much about the ways in which translation theory was influenced and developed across the period. What they do not often offer, however, is examination of the thematic and narrative uses of translation and translation theory within literary texts. Here, Leonard's thematic as well as linguistic investigation of language in *Naming in Paradise* (1990) provides a model for my approach. A closer parallel, however, is found in Patricia Parker's *Shakespeare from the Margins* (1996), which makes a case for translation in "multiple senses [. . . being] everywhere in Shakespeare and not just in the canon's own imitated, stolen, and mistranslated plots" (149). Such studies show the potential for translation-focused research to deal with the subject matter of early modern literary texts as well as translation theory and interlingual translation. In addressing this area, my method in relation to translation repeats what it was in relation to theoretical models of companionship in my essay on "Falling in Love and Language": that is, I focus on what happens to theoretical ideals of translation and translator when Milton subjects them "to the stresses and strains of experience (as construed and constructed by narrative)" (Paice 2).

Critical engagements with classical, medieval, and early modern translation have made clear that translation has a long history, has been variously understood, and has gone by a variety of names. "In Roman contexts," Rita Copeland writes:

It is rhetoric that supplies a hermeneutical model for translation. Rhetoric here is a coherent praxis in which eloquence conditions meaning and in which reason is

internal to both thought and discourse. Thus translation, as a problematic of discourse, is necessarily bound up with the deepest questions of interpretation, signification, and reception. (37)

In the early modern period, ways of talking about translation were bound to classical antiquity, whose frameworks of reference and vocabulary they still used—for example, *convertere, explicare, exponere, exprimere, imitare, mutare, reddere, tradere, traducere, transcribere, transferre, transfundere, transvertere, vertere*.⁴ Such terms, Frederick M. Renner observes, “come and go, following the fate of all fashions.” By contrast, “interpretation” and “interpreter” (and their Latin forebears, *interpretatio* and *interprete*) were used from classical antiquity until well into the nineteenth century, and so were inseparable from understandings of translation before, during, and well after the period in which Milton was writing (Renner 275).⁵ It is only in relatively recent history that the word “interpretation” has lost its particular rhetorical resonance, which signaled “the explanatory function [that] has always been the essential feature of translation” (Renner 277). That alignment with the interpretative aspect of translation tells us something of what Adam (and, by extension, Milton) understands to be a central part of Raphael’s story-telling activity. This is also implicit in the textual echo formed between Adam’s Book 7 designation of Raphael as “Divine interpreter” and his earlier reference to the archangel as “Divine instructor” (5.546). It is the interpretative element of translation that highlights the distance between it and its source. As Steiner explains, “The barrier is the obvious fact that one language differs from the other, that an interpretative transfer, sometimes, albeit misleadingly, described as encoding and decoding, must occur so that the message ‘gets through’”; no interpretative act, however, is without its “characteristic penumbras and margins of failure” (*After Babel* 29). Steiner is talking of interlingual translation and the act of translation that occurs when we read texts written in our own language but at a removal in time; the same, however, applies to the kind of cultural

translation that Raphael is involved in when he takes on the task of "lik'ning spiritual to corporal forms."

In modern understanding, translation is often conceived of in opposition to the creative inspiration of the poetic muse. By contrast, Milton understood translation through the lens of the classical authors he read—the likes of Cicero and Horace. In particular, as James Kuzner observes, "Cicero is recommended reading in the fields of ethics, politics, and rhetoric" in Milton's prose writings (141 n. 48). Elizabeth Young has demonstrated that "the Romans proudly proclaimed themselves a nation of translators," translating the Greeks not out of "any creative malaise," but rather because they saw translation as "the preeminent act of literary creation" (2). Ciceronian translation was not simply training in advance of producing "real" literature, nor some kind of stand-in during times of literary paralysis: it was in important creative act in itself. Under this heading fell not only interlingual translations (whether literal or loose), but even imitation—that which John Dryden called the "third way [. . .] where the Translator (if now he has not lost that Name) assumes the liberty, not only to vary from the words and sence, but to forsake them both as he sees occasion: and taking only some general hints from the Original, to run division on the ground-work, as he pleases" ("Preface to Ovid's Epistles" n. pag.). Dryden's understanding of translation follows the "vertical model" familiar today, in which the translator's role is seen as secondary (Rhodes, "Introduction" 47). He is distrustful of translation as imitation because he regards it as "the most advantageous way for a Translator to show himself, but the greatest wrong which can be done to the Memory and Reputation of the dead." For the writer in the Ciceronian mold, however, imitation "implies [. . .] bringing into play the vast expressive possibilities offered by different forms of poetic memory [. . .] an element of poetic language, not an obstacle to originality of creation" (Conte 303). Milton's thematic use of translation in *Paradise Lost* sits

on the cusp between Ciceronian celebration and Drydenic distrust: it is a vehicle for both creativity and the ultimate presumption.

Three of the classical sources that would have been key for Milton's understanding of translation—as they were for early modern translation theory in general—are Cicero's *De Optimo genere oratorum* and *De Finibus*, and Horace's *Ars Poetica*, and they begin to provide a picture of the issues with which Raphael, as interpreter, must contend.⁶ Cicero writes about his approach to translating Aeschines and Demosthenes, claiming:

nec converti ut interpres, sed ut orator, sentiis isdem et earum formis tanquam figuris, verbis ad nostram consuetudinem aptis. In quibus non verbum pro verbo necesse habui reddere, sed genus omne verborum vimque servavi. (§14 [364])

I did not translate them as an interpreter, but as an orator, keeping the same ideas and the forms, or as one might say, the "figures" of thought, but in language which conforms to our usage. And in so doing, I did not hold it necessary to render word for word, but I preserved the general style and force of the language.

(365)

A similar sentiment is presented by Cicero in *De Finibus*: "*Nee tamem exprimi verbum e verbo necesse erit, ut interpretes indiserti solent, cum sit verbum quod idem declaret magis usitatum*" ("it need not be a hard and fast rule that every word shall be represented by its exact counterpart, when there is a more familiar word conveying the same meaning" (§3.15 [230, 231])). Horace expresses much the same view:

*publica materies privati iuris erit, si
non circa vilem patulumque moraberis orbem,
nec verbo verbum curabis reddere fidus
interpres [.]* (131–34 [460])

In ground open to all you will win private rights, if you do not linger along the easy and open pathway if you do not seek to render word for word as a slavish translator [.] (461)

For both Cicero and Horace, then, the ideal translator produces sense for sense, and sits in opposition to the “*fidus interpres*,” the faithful translator seen as slavish, producing word-for-word translations. Yet Adam calls Raphael “Divine interpreter,” and the latter is certainly a “*fidus interpres*” in the sense of being a translator who has faith in God. The play between “faithful translator” as word-for-word translator, and “faithful translator” as translator who has faith is irresistible.

That possibility of play becomes more compelling when one considers that Cicero and Horace did not have to contend with the translation problems thrown up by Christianity. St. Jerome—another key source for any early modern writer with an interest in translation—categorically did. Jerome quotes and approves both the passage from Cicero’s *De Optimo* and that from Horace’s *Ars Poetica* in his own statement about the practice of a translator, where he writes:

Ego enim non solum fateor, sed libera voce profiteor me in interpretatione Graecorum absque scripturis Sanctis, ubi et verborum ordo misterium est, non verbum e verbo sed sensum exprimere de sensu. (Liber De Optime Genere 13)

Now I not only admit but freely announce that in translating from the Greek—except of course in the case of the Holy Scripture, where even the syntax contains a mystery—I render not word-for-word, but sense-for-sense. (“On the Best Kind of Translator” 136–37)

What applies to his translation practice in general is distinguished by Jerome from what he claims to be his practice for translating from the holy scriptures. This intervention reverses Cicero’s and Horace’s ideal when it comes to the sacred: in biblical translation, one must be a

humble *interpretes* (word-for-word translator) not a sophisticated *orator* (an eloquent and transformative [re-]presenter of sense). The need to be a humble *interpretes* of the events in heaven in order best to instruct Adam is clear for Raphael, but the competing demands of being true to his biblical source while transforming it into a poetical narrative makes the tension between *interpretes* and *orator* a potent one for Milton.

As Massimiliano Morini has noted, "religious literature poses a different problem for translators, in so much as its true 'sense' is seen as existing before and beyond even the original text" (35). The scriptural affirmation of this is familiar: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1.1). Moreover, the Bible couches God's Word as pure, active and creative (Psa. 12.6; Heb. 4.12), insisting on "the unison of divine creation and divine articulacy" (Steiner, *Grammars of Creation* 28). Since "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. 3.16), the composers of the biblical books were understood to have been directly inspired ("breathed into") by God: "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:21). The emphasis on being "*moved by* the Holy Ghost," rather than simply taking down God's dictation, explained the differences between the different books. Each composer was actively involved in revealing God's Word, but they did so through their own languages, and with their own personalities. Sacred translation, however, was bound to the primacy of the original and subordinate status of the translator. Translators were not directly inspired by God, but rather were scholars working to render God's Word, as mediated through the inspired words of the composer, into a different language. In this scenario, to get words wrong, to mis-translate or mis-interpret, is a perilous matter, and it is a matter that lies at the heart particularly of Protestant attempts to bring the Bible into the vernacular and to make God's Word accessible.

In England, the field of biblical translation was particularly fraught. Indeed, in the 1520s and 30s the matter of translating the Bible into English had been dangerous for the body and soul: William Tyndale was condemned and burned to death as a heretic, and in general the vernacular Bible was regarded as a vehicle for political subversion and heresy. However, even after English Bibles had become not only accepted but authorized—most notably in the form of the 1611 King James Bible—the potential danger of translation remained a matter of concern and conflict. Pervading every performance of sacred translation, then, is the anxiety about the relation between the perfect Word of God and the imperfect words of men—and the fallible reception of those words by men—particularly in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as they existed in what until the late sixteenth century was regarded as “rude” and “barbarous” English (Morini 39).

In the case of the King James Bible, the emphasis was on refinement in translation, rather than originality. To this end, the approach of the translators of the King James Bible was wherever possible to reuse wording from the Bishop’s Bible, refusing the presumption of new invention where the old seemed to be functioning well enough: as the first of the rules drawn up by Bishop Richard Bancroft to guide the translators stated, “The ordinary Bible read in the Church, commonly called the Bishops’ Bible, to be followed, and as little altered as the Truth of the original will permit” (Norton, *Textual History* 7). In line with this aim, Myles Smith’s prefatory epistle asserts:

“[W]e never thought from the beginning that we should need to make a new translation, nor yet to make of a bad one a good one; [. . .] but to make a good one better, or out of many good ones one principal good one [. . .] To that purpose there were many chosen, that were greater in other men’s eyes than in their own, and that sought the truth rather than their own praise.” (lxv)

The choice of "many" translators echoed the tradition of the Septuagint and encouraged a parallel between its 70 scholar-translators and the 47 responsible for the King James Bible. Smith's assertion that "the *Seventy* were interpreters, they were not prophets" underscores the emphasis of the King James Bible project, too, on sacred translation as an interpretative exercise (lviii). Where he says that "the very meanest translation of the Bible in *English*, set forth by men of our profession, [. . .] containeth the word of God, nay, is the word of God," then, he is not arguing that the translators themselves "are the instruments whereby God speaks in English; rather they are the means whereby God's meaning is rendered into English" (Smith lxxii; Norton *History* 65–66). The need for care, for accuracy in translation, is clear and prioritized.

With this in mind, it is telling that Milton chose for Raphael not the role of inspired composer (equivalent of the composers of the biblical books), but rather that of translator. Milton's archangel acts on God's orders, but nowhere claims that his narrative is "inspired" by God. Rather, in Book 7 he wonders:

to recount Almighty works

What words or tongue of Seraph can suffice,

Or heart of man suffice to comprehend? (7.112–4).

Moreover, he implies the inadequacy of the words of men to the task of translating the spiritual world when he remarks that "The Palace of great *Lucifer*" is a description of "That Structure" as it is "in the Dialect of men / Interpreted" (5.760–62). Neil Rhodes observes that to claim to be "God's medium or instrument [. . .] gives the written text an absolute guarantee of purity and authenticity," while the translator in the model outlined by St Jerome "can never presume wholly to comprehend the essence of the word of God, but must try to reconstruct the best possible text of His utterance by philological method" ("Introduction" 10). Raphael's doubt about his own capacity and about the words he has at his disposal

implies that he does not see himself as "God's medium or instrument," but rather as a translator in the philological mold. Yet the good philological translator knows that he needs a good audience, one inspired "to see the sense and grasp the truth" (Rhodes, "Introduction" 14). Just as the biblical translators, however, Raphael has no such confidence that his present audience, Adam, will be sufficient to that task.

The differences between Raphael and Milton's narrator as translators are as instructive as their similarities. Where the narrator commands the muse, Raphael pauses before he embarks on his account of the rebellion in heaven: his narrative is not something undertaken lightly. He claims the task to be not only "Sad" but "hard": "for how shall I relate," he says, "To human sense th' invisible exploits / Of warring Spirits [?]" (5.564–66). He also wonders if it is even "lawful" to tell his story, but—unlike the narrator, whose task is self-determined—he can also affirm to Adam "Commission from above / I have receav'd, to answer thy desire" (5.569–70; 7.119–20). The issue for Raphael is not simply that he is loath to talk about an event in which "so many glorious once" (5.567) were ruined (although that does weigh upon him too); his problem also goes beyond the question of whether or not it is lawful for him "to reveal" the secrets of heaven (5.570). What he starts with and returns to is the gulf between the human and the heavenly: since the exploits of the spiritual world are "invisible," at least some of what Raphael has been asked to speak of "surmounts the reach / Of human sense" (5.565; 5.571–72). How can he abide by God's commission when the only tool at his command is translation?

Beyond the anxieties about translation trespassing beyond the lawful, and of attendant punishment, there is the suggestion of heaven's secrecy—of the unknowable being at the center of the relationship between God and man. Heaven may "hide[s] nothing" from the muse's view, but it does hide things from human view (1.27). Raphael confirms that he has been commissioned to provide "knowledge within bounds," but warns Adam that he should:

beyond abstain

To ask, nor let thine own inventions hope

Things not reveal'd, which th' invisible King,

Onely Omniscient, hath suppress in Night,

To none communicable in Earth or Heaven [.] (7.120–24)

This, then, is not simply a matter of the inability of human sense to comprehend the heavenly, but of the debarring of human sense—and apparently, in some matters at least, angelic sense—from the position of being able to comprehend. Moreover, this is something that is picked up on in Adam's words thanking Raphael for having:

voutsaf't

Gently for our instruction to impart

Things above Earthly thought, which yet concernd

Our knowing [.] (7.80–83)

The reference to these things being "above Earthly thought" but "yet concern[ing] / Our knowing" marks one of those problematic confrontations of God's design in *Paradise Lost*, and it is one that the text does not—cannot—resolve. Milton, then, knowingly offers us a narrator who is both admirable in his ambition to translate the muse's song and who also fails fully to grasp the state of unknowing that makes it impossible for him to achieve perfect translation. This accentuates the disjunction between the heavenly and the human even within the attempt at bridging that gap through the act of translation.

As Kathleen Swaim has demonstrated in *Before and After the Fall*, analogy is Raphael's preferred narrative method, employing as he does modes of allegory and accommodation "[i]n small and large ways throughout the four central books" of *Paradise Lost* (175). This is Raphael's method for overcoming the gulf between the invisible spiritual world and the physical one:

[. . .] what surmounts the reach
 Of human sense, I shall delineate so,
 By lik'ning spiritual to corporal forms,
 As may express them best [.] (5.571–74)

The lines recall St Thomas Aquinas's discussion of drawing likenesses between creatures and God in question 2, article 11 of *De Veritate*. There, Thomas finds the possibility of comparison between creatures and God in the rhetorical device known as analogy of proportionality, his exemplar for which is the relationship between corporal and intellectual vision: "*sicut nomen visus dicitur de visu corporali et intellectu eo quod sicut visus est in oculo ita intellectus in mente*" ("as when sight is predicated of bodily sight and of the intellect because understanding is in the mind as sight is in the eye"). Yet Thomas also states "*nulla determinata habitudo attenditur inter ea quibus est aliquid per analogiam commune,*" that is that in this kind of analogy there is "no definite relation is involved between the things which have something in common" (*Quaestiones Disputatae* 2.11.162–65, 173–74 [79]; *Disputed Questions* 113). In translation by an analogy of proportionality, then, the original remains elusive. In the rhetorical question posed just before he embarks on his narrative, however, Raphael invokes the familiar analogy of the cave from Plato's *Republic*, presenting the possibility of the most tantalizing of all relational connections between the spiritual and corporal realms:

[. . .] though what if Earth
 Be but the shaddow of Heav'n, and things therein
 Each to other like, more then on earth is thought? (5.574–6)

What if, that is, the likenesses drawn by his analogical model of translation are not merely casual? The possibility is left hanging but ultimately unconfirmed, and perhaps out of the reach of his human audience in any case, since human thought is earthbound. Founded in

proportionality, then, Raphael's translation is still dogged by uncertainty about both the ground of his analogies and the ability of his audience to grasp their significance.

Regardless of this, Adam's praise for Raphael's heavenly narrative is fulsome:

Thy words

Attentive, and with more delighted eare

Divine instructor, I have heard, then when

Cherubic Songs by night from neighbouring Hills

Aereal Music send [.] (5.544–48)

Yet where Adam may mean to compliment Raphael by placing his wordcraft in comparison to "Cherubic Songs," such a commendation should give us pause. Although Adam may find that "Aereal Music" less delightful to *his* ear, it is precisely the angelic song to which, as we learn shortly afterwards, "Gods own ear / Listens delighted" (5.626–27). God's ears are implicitly infallible, but human ears are not. George Wither, with whom, as Evert Clark has demonstrated, Milton had an affinity, problematizes the reception of the ear thus in Chapter 10 of his *Preparation to the Psalter* (1619):

[T]he *Rhetoricke* of these *Poems* [the Psalms] is rather framed to winne attention from soules, then to delight the eares of the bodie. Yea, they are expressions of spirituall passions: and therefore it is impossible, they should please or move carnall men. (69)

Here Wither points towards the responsibility of the audience in appreciating his translations. The souls of the readers or listeners must be fit to give these works their attention—a "fit audience [...], though few," perhaps, as Milton sought for *Paradise Lost* (7.31).

Milton's wish to have a "fit audience" *for* his epic makes the inadequate audiences *of* his epic especially interesting. Most prominent among them is Eve, whose poor listening is part of her movement towards the Fall. She misinterprets (or *mishears*) Adam's warning

about the "malicious Foe," taking umbrage at what she considers to be him doubting her "firmness" (9.253, 279). As Satan approaches her, "shee busied heard the sound / Of rusling Leaves, but minded not" (9.518–19). She hears Satan's words, and is not sufficient to the task of discerning their lies. In explaining the delay in her return, she tells Adam "strange / Hath bin the cause, and wonderful to heare," without any sense of irony (9.861–62). Eve, then, hears but fails properly to understand. By contrast, Milton changes his source to make it clear that Adam does *not* fall as a result of deficient hearing. Whereas in Genesis Adam is punished by God because he "hearkened unto the voyce of [his] wife," in *Paradise Lost* Milton makes it clear that listening to Eve does not cause Adam to eat the apple (Gen. 3.17). That he understands the implications of what she tells him—and that he is *not* convinced by her—is made clear by the fact that "soon as he heard" her words he stands "amaz'd, / Astonied [. . .] and Blank" (9.888–90). However, in distinct contrast to the biblical story, in *Paradise Lost* Adam resolves to "to undergoe like doom" with Eve because he "prioritis[es] his relationship with Eve over his relationship with God," placing Eve at the center of his existence in a manner clearly designed to be read as idolatrous (9.953; Paice 16, 19). Were Adam a fitter audience, his soul might have responded more to the angelic choir, as God does, and he might have followed God's rather than Eve's word: as Romans 10.17 advises, faith comes not simply by hearing, but by "hearing the word of God." Thus, Milton not only registers a concern about the gulf between the spiritual and human utterance, but also acknowledges the aptitudes and claims of different audiences.

The distance between the heavenly song and the human ear is further underlined by Milton's claims to be mediator of the muse's song in his retelling and elaboration of the Genesis story. The invocation of the Holy Spirit in the opening of the poem requests "aid to my adventrous Song" (1.13), but the epic that unfolds is a far cry from the angelic singing and dancing, and some distance too from the muse's own song, which remains wordless. The

Holy Spirit communicates through non-verbal inspiration and illumination (1.7, 23). Although Milton repeatedly asks this muse to "Sing" or "Say" something, the Holy Spirit remains categorically voiceless in the poem (1.6, 27, 28; 7.40).

Here the narrator seems to practice the adventurous liberty of secular translators. As Burke has remarked, "the practice of translation during the Renaissance seems frequently to have been extremely or even scandalously free by modern standards," with early modern writers viewing themselves "as co-authors with the right to modify the original text": translation for them was a vehicle for their own authorial ingenuity ("Renaissance Translator" 25; "Cultures of Translation" 34). For example, George Chapman, in his address "To the Reader" of his *Iliad* translation (1609), confidently rejected "word-for-word traductions" on the grounds that such translations "lose / The free grace of their naturall Dialect / And shame their Authors with a forced Glose" (120–22 [10]); and Dryden, in his dedication of *The Aeneis* (1697), lightly stated that he "thought fit to steer betwixt the two extremes of paraphrase and literal translation" (76). Regardless of what their critics thought of the liberties they took with Homer and Virgil—and some, like Luke Milbourne (*Notes on Dryden's Virgil*, 1698), were notably hostile—their souls were not in peril by doing so. The primacy of Milton's biblical source and Raphael's heavenly one, on the other hand, makes steering a course in *Paradise Lost* a more treacherous enterprise.

In playing with the tensions between the Bible's problematizing of acts of interpretation and secular translation's delight in them, Milton would no doubt have appreciated the ideas concerning the creative potential of translation, found in Cicero's *De Oratore*:

mihi placuit [. . .] ut summorum oratorum graecas orationes explicarem. Quibus lectis hoc assequebar, ut, cum ea, quae legerem graece, latine redderem, non

solum optimis verbis uterer, et tamen usitatis, sed etiam exprimerem quaedam verba imitando, quae nova nostris essent, dummodo essent idonea. (§155 [106])

I resolved [. . .] to translate freely Greek speeches of the most eminent orators. The result of reading these was that, in rendering into Latin what I had read in Greek, I not only found myself using the best words—and yet quite familiar ones—but also coining by analogy certain words such as would be new to our people, provided only they were appropriate. (107)

I provide Edward William Sutton and Harris Rackham’s Loeb Classics translation as a widely accessed point of reference, but these translators do little to help us with the nuances of the passage when it comes to the words Cicero uses for translation, especially *exprimere*. Douglas Robinson’s analysis of Cicero’s statement is much more instructive:

Exprimere literally means to squeeze out—a powerful image for the translation process as Cicero describes it, akin to giving birth. [. . .] Figuratively, especially in connection with *imitando*, *exprimere* means to mold or form one thing in imitation of another. Cicero’s phrase *Sed etiam exprimerem quaedam verba imitando* suggests the potter shaping clay into the likeness of a face, creating something new in imitation of something that already exists; or, because the likeness of which Cicero speaks is not a face but of words (and since we derive our verb “express” from the participle form of *exprimere*), it suggests the romantic poet giving verbal expression to the whispering of the muse. *Exprimere* gives us the translator as mediator, but not as neutral transfer machine; rather, as the artist who mediates between two forms of being, two modes of understanding, natural and plastic, material and verbal matter and manner source language and target language. The “expressivist” mediation of translation as *exprimere* is specifically channeled through the translator’s transformative relation to both

forms of being, both modes of understanding." (Robinson, *What Is Translation?* 185)

It is worth reproducing Robinson's argument in full because it is strikingly in line with the ways in which Milton uses the word "express," and also because it connects such "expression" with the poetic trope of the muse (albeit in the context of its use by the romantic poets).

The idea of creation as "the shaping of clay by the Master Potter, of the infusion and breathing of life into the clay," is, as Steiner notes, "ubiquitous in mythology" as well as affirmed by the Bible (*Grammars of Creation* 143). Moreover, that this context for the word "express" was familiar in the seventeenth century is clear from the fact that the King James Bible uses it to render *χαρακτήρ* in its translation of Hebrews 1.3 in its description of the Son incarnate: "who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person." It is from the *χαρακτήρ* that we derive the word "character" in the first sense recorded by the *OED*, that is, "A distinctive mark impressed, engraved, or otherwise made on a surface; a brand, stamp" ("character, n. 1"). "Express" was evidently thought by the biblical translators to be a more easily understood vehicle for conveying this idea of Christ being a physically impressed likeness of God. Milton seems to have concurred, echoing the description from Hebrews in Book 3 of *Paradise Lost*:

Beyond compare the Son of God was seen
 Most glorious, in him all his Father shon
 Substantially express'd (3.138–40)

The lines play out the idea of Christ expressing (exuding) God's substance alongside a prefiguration of the Son's substantial (corporeal) expression (physical impression) of God, an incarnation that also ties this passage back to translation through the idea of Christ as

analogia incarnatio, "The Word [. . .] made flesh" (John 1.14). Indeed, in Book 11, the Son actually positions himself as a translator when he intercedes for man with God:

Now therefore bend thine eare
To supplication, heare his sighs though mute;
Unskilful with what words to pray, let mee
Interpret for him [.] (11.30–33)

As Joseph Wittreich has argued, when Milton considered the ideal orator in his prose works "he looked [. . .] not only [. . .] to the theoretical treatises of antiquity but to Christ, the perfect poet-orator, who had already translated the ideal of Cicero and Quintilian into reality," and who here takes on the role of translator of what he implies is in Adam's heart, though unexpressed (8).⁷

In Book 7 of *Paradise Lost*, "express" is connected both to the physical impression of likeness and to birth when it appears in Raphael's description of Adam's creation:

This said, he formd thee, *Adam*, thee O Man
Dust of the ground, and in thy nostrils breath'd
The breath of Life; in his own Image hee
Created thee, in the Image of God
Express, and thou becam'st a living Soul. (7.524–28)

These lines translate Genesis 2.7, in which God forms man out of the dust (*ā-pār*) of the earth (*'aḍamāh*), and they are very similar to the translation in the King James Bible: "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, & breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soule." However, with his knowledge of Hebrew, Milton would likely have been aware that both *'ādām* and *'aḍamāh* are associated with the root *'aḍom* ("red"), and certainly the connection between Adam and red earth, or clay, was both traditional and known by him. Sir Walter Raleigh's *History of the World* (1614), for example,

has Adam himself "finding the reason of his owne name *Adam* of *Adamah*, Earth, or red clay" (277). And Samuel Smith's *Moses His Prayer* (1656) is insistent on the connection:

we learn what is the nature of all men, of all the sons of *Adam*, viz. A piece of living *Clay*, a little piece of red Earth. And besides, that man is subject to *breaking* and *crushing*, every way a miserable man; so is he of a brittle mould, a piece of red clay, that hath in it for a time a living soul, which must return to God that gave it; and the body, this piece of earth, return to the earth from whence it came. (131)

Milton uses the image of the body as clay in "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity," when he refers to the Son setting aside his "glorious Form" and "chos[ing] with us a darksom House of mortal Clay" as Christ, the second Adam (lines 8 and 14). He also uses the connection explicitly in *Paradise Lost* in connection with Adam: "this Man of Clay"; "Did I request thee, Maker, from my Clay / To mould me Man" (9.176; 10.743–44). The way in which "Express" insinuates itself into the description of Adam's creation even suggests a Miltonian comment on the inadequacy of the authorized translation in comparison to the richness of the Hebrew text's verbal play.

These biblical and classical contexts expose the presumptions in Book 3's address to the muse that relate to both translation as written expression and expression as the production of offspring:

Hail holy Light, ofspring of Heav'n first-born,
Or of th' Eternal Coeternal beam
May I express thee unblam'd? (3.1–3)

On one level, the narrator is simply asking for permission to render the muse's song in words. However, given what Hale describes as Milton's "purposeful playing" with languages, we cannot avoid acknowledging other meanings (13). The reference to the muse's expression

(birthing) by heaven ("ofspring of Heav'n first-born") suggests that the narrator wishes to squeeze out the Holy Spirit, as by a Ciceronian, birth-like, translation. Moreover, "May I express thee unblam'd" also conveys the idea of the narrator requesting to become an image or likeness of the Holy Spirit. To give birth to the Holy Spirit would be to act as God; to become its likeness would be to be God: it is impossible for a human to do either "unblam'd." This develops Milton's construction of his narrative task as presumptuous elsewhere—a presumptuousness so often noted in the narrator's reference to his song being "adventurous"—akin to Icarus' attempt to fly, Satan's ambition, the "bold adventure" of the devils, Bellerophon's flight to Mount Olympus, and Milton's "presum[ing], / An Earthlie Guest" in heaven (2.571; 7.4; 7.13–14). Here, though, the presumption is linked specifically to the idea of being fit to give "verbal expression to the whispering of the muse," that is of being able to "express" (breathe out) what has been inspired ("breathed into") him by the Holy Spirit, in an act that parallels biblical composition. The traditional "claim to primary making" by means of *poesis*, then, is here revealed as inherently flawed, if not hollow: contrary to Steiner's contention that "at the highest pitch, in some sense beyond metaphor, the artist is indeed god-like [. . .]. He creates," here the narrator's aspiration to god-inspired expression reveals him rather to be akin to Satan in his audacity (*Grammars of Creation* 144).

Again, Milton demonstrates the presumptuousness of his narrator by comparison when, in Book 3's address to the muse he requests:

So much the rather thou Celestial light
 Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers
 Irradiate, there plant eyes, all mist from thence
 Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell
 Of things invisible to mortal sight. (3.51–55)

These words anticipate those of Raphael in terms of narrative order but must be also be reflected back on in view of the insights offered (temporally earlier) by the archangel. How much more should *Paradise Lost*'s human narrator question his capacity to be directly inspired by God, if an archangel does? Instead, Book 1 has the narrator calling on the "Heav'nly Muse, that [. . .] didst inspire" Moses, and by Book 3 he—a mortal—is asking to see "things invisible to mortal sight" (1.6–7; 3.55). Given Raphael's doubts, it is hard to see how such references to inspiration and irradiation could be meant as anything other than a wink towards the presumption inherent in the idea of the translator as "God's medium or instrument." Milton, then, presents, if not character-narrator, then at least a self-ironizing version of himself.

In his discussion of the Babel narrative in Genesis and the Mount Sinai chapters in Exodus, Zelechow provides an important context for Milton's suspect narratorial alignment of himself with Moses. Together, Zelechow argues, these texts "provide a specific and extended critique of the hubris of the idea of a universal, uniform language" (130). The image of the tower of Babel is more commonly referred to in discussions of translation, and Zelechow retreads relatively familiar ground in his summary: "The people of Babel confuse the distinction between the statement that they, like we, are made in God's image with the notion that they are gods," he writes, and notes that their punishment includes not only being "scatter[ed . . .] abroad upon the face of all the earth" but also "the elimination of the universal uniform world language" (132; Gen. 11.9). In the connection that he makes between the Babel episode and God's revelation on Mount Sinai, however, Zelechow argues that the Bible foregrounds the impossibility of perfect translatability:

Presumably if Moses had not broken the first set of tablets the dream of the tower of Babel would have been realised. [. . .] Supposedly God's word without human mediation would be transparent, direct literal and certain. The doubling of the

Sinai epiphany, in which God dictates the commandments to Moses, suggests the centrality of translation/interpretation in the texts. [. . .] But even after the revelation of Sinai the necessity of interpretation remains. (133)

In calling on the "Heav'nly Muse," and wishing to be as Moses, Milton repeats the dream of perfect translatability in *Paradise Lost*, a dream that the Bible itself indicates is "deception and delusion" (Zelechow 133).

Milton's *Paradise Lost*, then, deals with translation of the most serious kind. Raphael's discomfort at the losses that the act of translation entails, and the tension between the Holy Spirit's non-verbal song and what turns out to be a very wordy epic, accentuates the gulf between spiritual and corporal forms—a separation of man from the spiritual realm that both necessitates translation and is reinforced by it. Although translation is a means of expressing things, it is also insufficient to that task, replete with the inexpressible: in the words of Thomas Steiner, "Translation begins with rupture"—a rupture metaphorically conceived of as the confounding of language after Babel (10). In *Paradise Lost*, translation is inherently caught up in the problem of the unknowable. Situating *Paradise Lost* in relation to seventeenth-century discourses on translation, this essay has shown that, rather than hide the originary gaps necessitating translation, Milton draws attention to them. By placing translation activities in the prelapsarian, and so pre-Babel world, he also marks the act of translation as both divinely-sanctioned and problematic. Milton straddles secular and sacred trends in translation. As a Puritan, he worries—like Raphael does—about the presumption of his task, but he was also steeped in classical learning and clearly drawn to the freedoms—the licence—of secular translation.

Milton's doubts and anxieties are played out by Raphael: as noted, in Book 5 he wonders if it is even "lawful" to tell heaven's story, but in Book 7 he says he has been commissioned by God to "answer [Adam's] desire," which turns out to be to hear all about

heaven. Raphael's quandary is natural when one considers that he is the first to need to take on the task of translation into another culture.⁸ He is the original, and the archetypal, translator, troubled from the start by the magnitude of his undertaking. Raphael's role within *Paradise Lost* speaks to Milton's concern to define his own retelling of the story of creation and Fall as a kind of spiritual translation. In bringing the license of secular translation into conjunction with sacred subject matter, Milton, too, is attempting something new—"Things unattempted yet in Prose or Rhime" (1.16). Though Raphael's "lik'ning" may be sanctioned by God and even necessary to compensate for the originary gap between man and heaven, Milton's elaborate act of translation is one that plays with the limits of the human and the (il)legitimacy of his task, and knowingly highlights the dangers of his poetic ambition: "Into the Heav'n of Heav'ns I have presum'd, / An Earthlie Guest" (7.13–14). Ultimately, the gulf between human and heavenly languages paves the way for the Fall, and Milton appears to acknowledge that his own translation re-enacts a Satanic overreaching through the presumptuous activity it involves. Far from leaving translation behind, then, Milton presents the activity of translation—with all its potential for trespass—as central to *Paradise Lost*.

Bibliography

Berry, D. H. "The Value of Prose Rhythm in Questions of Authenticity: The Case of the *De Optimo Genere Oratorum* Attributed to Cicero." *Papers of the Leeds International Latin Seminar* 9 (1996): 47–74.

Burke, Peter. "Cultures of Translation in Early Modern Europe." *Cultural Translation in Early Modern Europe*. Ed. Peter Burke and R. Po-chia Hsia. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007. 7–38.

- Burke, Peter. "The Renaissance Translator as Go-Between." *Renaissance Go-Betweens: Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe*. Ed. Andreas Höfele, and Werner von Koppenfels. Berlin and New York: Walter De Gruyter, 2005. 17-31.
- Chapman, George. "To the Reader." *Chapman's Homer: The Iliad*. Ed. Allargyce Nicoll. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998. 7–13.
- "Character, n." *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, June 2018, www.oed.com/view/Entry/30639. Accessed 12 August 2018.
- Cicero, Marcus Tullius. *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum*. Trans. H. Rackham. London: William Heinemann, 1914.
- Cicero, Marcus Tullius. *De Optimo Genere Oratorum. De Inventione; De Optimo Genere oratorum; Topica*. Trans H.M. Hubbell. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1949. 354–73.
- Cicero, Marcus Tullius. *De Oratore*. 2 vols. Ed. Edward William Sutton and Harris Rackham. Cambridge, MA: Harvard U P, 1967.
- Clark, Evert Mordecai. "Milton and Wither." *Studies in Philology* 56 (1959): 626–646.
- Conte, Gian Biagio. *Latin Literature: A History*. Trans. Joseph Solodow. Rev. Don Fowler and Glenn W. Most. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins U P, 1999.
- Copeland, Rita. *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation in the Middle Ages: Academic Traditions and Vernacular Texts*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995.
- Dihle, A. "Ein Spurium Unter der Rhetorischen Werken Ciceros." *Hermes* 83 (1955): 303–14.
- Dryden, John. "Dedication of the Aeneis." *The Works of John Dryden, in Verse and Prose*. Ed. John Mitford. Vol. 2. New York, 1847.
- [Dryden, John.] "The Preface to Ovid's Epistles." *Ovid's Epistles, Translated by Several Hands*. London, 1680.

Ferguson, Margaret. "Translation and Homeland Insecurity in Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*: An Experiment in Unsafe Reading." *Early Modern Cultures of Translation*. Ed.

Karen Newman and Jane Tylus. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 2015. 117–52.

Hale, John K. *Milton's Languages: The Impact of Multilingualism on Style*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997.

Hale, John K. "Milton as a Translator of Poetry." *Renaissance Studies* 1 (1987): 238–56.

Reprinted in *Milton as Multilingual: Selected Essays, 1982–2004*. Humanities-Ebooks, 2007. 81–102.

Horace, *Ars Poetica. Satires, Epistles and Ars Poetica*. Trans. H. Rushton Fairclough.

Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1929. 442–89.

Jerome, Eusebius Hieronymus. *Liber De Optime Genere Interpretandi (Epistula 57)*. Ed.

G.J.M. Bartelink. Leiden: Brill, 1980.

Jerome, Eusebius Hieronymus. "On the Best Kind of Translator (Letter 57 to Pammachius)."

The Satirical Letters of St. Jerome. Trans. Paul Carroll. Chicago: Gateway Editions, 1956.

132–51.

Kuzner, James. "Habermas Goes to Hell: Pleasure, Public Reason, and the Republicanism of *Paradise Lost*." *Criticism* 51 (2009): 105–145.

Leonard, John. "Language and Knowledge in *Paradise Lost*." *The Cambridge Companion to Milton*. Ed. Dennis Danielson. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989. 130–43.

Leonard, John. *Naming in Paradise: Milton and the Language of Adam and Eve*. Oxford:

Clarendon, 1990.

Milton, John. *The Riverside Milton*. Ed. Roy Flannagan. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin.

Morini, Massimiliano. *Tudor Translation in Theory and Practice*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006.

- Norton, David. *A History of the English Bible as Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000.
- Norton, David. *A Textual History of the King James Bible*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005.
- Paice, Rosamund. "Falling in Love and Language: Earthly Companionship and Spiritual Loss in *Paradise Lost*." *Communities and Companionship in Early Modern Literature and Culture*, special issue of *Early Modern Literary Studies*, no. 22 (2014): 1–22.
<https://extra.shu.ac.uk/emls/journal/index.php/emls/article/view/121/110>
- Parker, Patricia. *Shakespeare from the Margins: Language, Culture, Context*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1996.
- Pym, Anthony. *Method in Translation History*. Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing, 1998.
- Raleigh, Walter, Sir. *The History of the World*. London, 1614.
- Renner, Frederick M. *Interpretatio: Language and Translation from Cicero to Tytler*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1989.
- Rhodes, Neil. *Common: The Development of Literary Culture in Sixteenth-Century England*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2018.
- Rhodes, Neil. "Introduction." *English Renaissance Translation Theory*. Ed. Neil Rhodes, Gordon Kendal, Louise Wilson. London: Modern Humanities Research Association, 2013. 1–67.
- Riggs, William G. *The Christian Poet in Paradise Lost*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1972.
- Robinson, Douglas. "Pseudotranslation." *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*. Ed. Mona Baker and Kirsten Malmkjler. London and New York: Routledge, 2001. 183–85.
- Robinson, Douglas. *What Is Translation?* Kent, OH and London: Kent State UP, 1997.
- [Smith, Myles]. "The Translators to the Reader." *The Bible: Authorized King James Version*. Ed. Robert Carroll and Stephen Prickett. Oxford and New York: Oxford UP. liii–lxix.
- Smith, Samuel. *Moses His Prayer. Or, An Exposition of the Nintieth Psalm*. London, 1656.

Steiner, George. *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation*. 3rd ed. Oxford and New York: Oxford UP, 1998.

Steiner, George. *Grammars of Creation: Originating in the Gifford Lectures for 1990*.

London: Faber and Faber, 2002.

Steiner, T.R. *English Translation Theory, 1650–1800*. Amsterdam: Van Gorcum, Assen, 1975.

Swaim, Kathleen M. *Before and After the Fall: Contrasting Modes in Paradise Lost*.

Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 1986.

Thomas, Aquinas, Saint. *Quaestiones Disputatae De Veritate. Sancti Thomae de Aquino opera omnia*, Vol. 22. Rome: Editori di san Tommaso, 1970–76.

Thomas, Aquinas, Saint. *The Disputed Questions on Truth: Translated from the Definitive Leonine Text. Volume 1: Questions I-IX*. Trans. Robert W. Mulligan. Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1952.

Wither, George. *A Preparation to the Psalter*. London, 1619.

Wittreich, Joseph Anthony, Jr. "'The Crown of Eloquence': The Figure of the Orator in Milton's Prose Works." *Achievements of the Left Hand: Essays on the Prose of John Milton*.

Ed. Michael Lieb and John T. Shawcross. Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 1974. 3–54.

Young, Elizabeth Marie. *Translation as Muse: Poetic Translation in Catullus's Rome*.

Chicago and London: U of Chicago P, 2015.

Zelechow, Bernard. "The Myth of Translatability: Translation as Interpretation." *Translating Religious Texts: Translation, Transgression and Interpretation*. Ed. David Jasper.

Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993. 122–39.

¹ All quotations of Milton's poetry are taken from Flannagan's edition.

² Correspondences between Raphael and the narrator have of course long been noted, though not in relation to translation activities: for example, Kathleen Swaim regards Raphael as "the model of the poet" (4), and William Riggs makes the connection between Raphael and the narrator when he describes the former as an "epic narrator" in his own right (102).

³ Leonard echoes Steiner's earlier contention that "Before the Fall, man and woman may have spoken the same tongue, comprehending each other's meaning perfectly. Immediately after, speech divided them," a transition that he locates in *Paradise Lost* at 9.1187–89 (*After Babel* 44).

⁴ See, for example, Neil Rhodes' list of the words used by Laurence Humphrey in his 1559 account of the theory and practice of translation, *Interpretatio Linguarum* (*Common* 144). Renner provides a list drawn from a variety of Latin sources (266).

⁵ Compare Steiner who used the fact that "*Interprète/interpreter* are commonly used to mean *translator*" as "the vital starting point" for his argument that "When we read or hear any language-statement from the past [. . .] we translate" (*After Babel* 28).

⁶ While Cicero's authorship of *De Optimo Genere Oratorum* has been questioned, the questions postdate the time in which Milton was writing by three centuries (by Albrecht Dihle in 1955) and have themselves been challenged (Berry 62–62). I have therefore chosen to discuss this work as Milton would have understood it, giving the author as Cicero.

⁷ Milton is not the only early modern writer to have seen Christ as a translator. Rhodes notes, for example, that Lawrence Humphrey's *Interpretatio Linguarum* (1599) recommends three models of translation for his readers to emulate: "'Christ in Christianity, Cicero in Latin prose, Virgil in hexameter verse' [. . .] When Humphrey refers to Christ as a translator he does so in the context of imitation. Christ is translating himself, as it were [. . .] Humphrey's version of the *imitatio Christi* presents Jesus as both the pure source and its translator, both a

life model and a pattern of expression, a personification of the text which is itself the true original [.]” (*Common* 145).

⁸ It is in fact Uriel who Satan names as “The first” of the archangels to bring God’s “great authentic will / Interpreter through highest Heav’n” (3.656–57). Satan believes that Uriel is “likeliest by supream decree / Like honour to obtain” to act as interpreter for the “new Creation,” so it is perhaps surprising that it is Raphael instead who is given that responsibility (3.659–61). This indicates that translation is also needed in Heaven, a matter beyond the scope of this essay, but deserving of further discussion.