

## Hybrid cultural identity and the (liturgical) translators as traitors

Translators working into or out of a language around which a sense of identity has formed work at an inevitable disadvantage. The history of the translation of the Catholic liturgy has placed this challenge before the translation committees formed for this purpose; many have eventually faced strong disapproval from those with the best interests of the source text or the target audience at heart. Despite changes in personnel and policy, the suspicions of the liturgical translators' sense of orthodoxy or sense of their audience remain. As tempting as it is to think that this impasse *might* have been avoided, the persistence of the "translator-as-traitor" attitude suggests that heart of the matter may lie outside the sphere of influence of strategies of translation *per se*, and of institutional implementation of translated materials.

Whether for an individual or for a community, a language difference can provide a system of compartmentalization, sorting different aspects of identity into different cultural categories. Although it would seem to cause tension, the dichotomy created may define and fortify a sense of identity. The split between languages may provide a mechanism for assimilating concepts to those who embrace this hybrid identity; the gap between the two may also provide a certain space for internal incoherence, where conflicting ideas and emotions stemming from both sides might coexist.

The history of linguistic difference between the Roman Catholic liturgical setting and the secular lives of practicing Roman Catholics may thus have benefited the institutional religion as a cultural identity in way that went unnoticed until the "vernacular" liturgy became the norm. Translation of the liturgical context transplanted a set of ideas and experiences into a cultural setting unprepared for them, and the liberating effect of moving from one setting to the other was lost. Although the criticisms directed at translation committees most often focused on the failure to adhere to theological tenets, much of the angst sparked by their work may have emerged from discomfort generated by this cross-pollination of cultural settings. In such a case, translators appear as traitors not because they give information (or misinformation) about the source culture, but because they bring to light the irreconcilable aspects of identity.