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**Abstract:** In this age of globalization, scholars in cultural studies and translation studies would seem to have a lot to talk about. It is strange, then, that they talk so little with each other. This article seeks to bridge that gap by asking what a theory of translation would look like if it were grounded in the field of cultural studies. It proposes three axioms: 1) to use a sign is to transform it; 2) to transform a sign is to translate it; and 3) communication is translation. Its argument is performative rather than simply expository: it is structured as an example of the phenomenon it describes. It explores the three axioms inductively, starting from strategically chosen examples to arrive at a notion of translation that prompts a final conjecture: translation is inextricably linked to rhetorical invention and, as such, it helps us reframe questions about our relationship with and responsibility toward cultural others.

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