



Pusey and Transubstantiation: An Exploration of His Thinking and Ecumenical Implications

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Abstract

This article seeks to explore the thinking of Edward Bouverie Pusey on the doctrine of transubstantiation. It begins by looking at the conflicted way Pusey is considered and goes on to examine Pusey's writings on transubstantiation. The article points out that Pusey's early writing on transubstantiation wrongly believed that the doctrine implied a carnal view of Christ's presence in the Eucharist, but that in his mature thinking this caricature was abandoned and he came to understand that transubstantiation is a form of moderate realism. Some detailed examination of Pusey's mature thinking is undertaken, including a very important set of correspondence between Edward Pusey and John Newman in 1867 which addressed the doctrine of transubstantiation. Pusey's thinking reveals that he is prepared to accept the word transubstantiation as long as it does not imply a change in the substance of the bread and wine of the Eucharist. The article concludes with discussion on the term transubstantiation itself and controversially cites evidence from both Anglican and Roman Catholic sources which suggest that the dependence on a particular scholastic philosophical analysis which attempts to explain the 'how' of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist may be less useful than an approach of 'what'. Pusey's mature thinking on transubstantiation is seen as useful for ecumenical dialogue between the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches.

Keywords

Pusey, Transubstantiation, Real Presence, Ecumenism, ARCIC

Edward Bouverie Pusey (1800-1882) was an English clergyman and academic who became the Professor of Hebrew at Oxford University in 1828 and remained in that position until his death. Pusey was distinguished by his biblical scholarship, not only Hebrew but also

other biblical languages,¹ and in theology more generally, including eucharistic theology.² Pusey's moderate realist approach to eucharistic theology was based on Scripture, the writings of the early church Fathers, reason and the Anglican tradition, seeking to recover much of the Catholic heritage of Anglicanism, including teaching the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist and the doctrine of eucharistic sacrifice. Pusey's insistence that Christ was really present in the Eucharist was based on moderate realism, that is, a presence which was spiritual but nonetheless real, and having nothing to do with any presence that was fleshy or carnal in its realism, where bread was seen to change into real human flesh and wine into blood. Pusey was notable and well known in his leadership of the Oxford Movement after John Henry Newman converted to Roman Catholicism in 1845. Pusey was critical and controversial in his many written works and both hated and loved in nineteenth century Britain. Puseyite, a word coined to denote followers of Pusey, became a term of derision in the nineteenth century. Some associated him with the devil³ while others saw him as the anti-Christ⁴ and a foil for popery.⁵ Even in modern times very negative views of Pusey continue to be expressed⁶ while others see him as consistent and wise.⁷ Geoffrey Rowell praises Pusey for his weighty scholarship, profound spirituality and devotion⁸ while Peter Cobb describes him as 'a mystic and a saint' who 'was a gentle and loving man' for whom 'God was all in all.'⁹ David Forrester however criticises Pusey for his character flaws in the way he lived his life and imposed strictures on others¹⁰ while Paul Avis sees him as an enigma, guilt-mongering and obsessive as well as having 'a

¹ Timothy Larsen, 'Anglo-Catholics: E.B. Pusey and Holy Scripture', in T. Larsen, *A People of One Book: The Bible and the Victorians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

² See Brian Douglas, *The Eucharistic Theology of Edward Bouverie Pusey: Sources, Context and Doctrine within the Oxford Movement and Beyond* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2015).

³ Thomas Goodwin, *Puseyism Proved to be the 'Number of the Name' of the Apocalyptic Beast* (Dublin: Curry, 1843)

⁴ Reginald Rabbett, *The Anti-Christ of Priesthood, or, the Subversion of the System of Popery and Puseyism by the Light and Force of Divine Truth* (London: Dalton, 1844).

⁵ R.M. Gurnell, *Popery and Puseyism, Twin Demons with One Soul, or, Ritualism Unmasked* (London: Office of the Gospel Guide, 1867).

⁶ See H.G.G. Matthew, 'Edward Bouverie Pusey: From Scholar to Tractarian', *The Journal of Theological Studies*, XXXII (1981), pp. 101-124.

⁷ David Brown, 'Pusey as consistent and wise: Some comparisons with Newman', *Anglican and Episcopal History*, 71 (2002), 3, pp. 328-349.

⁸ Geoffrey Rowell, *The Vision Glorious: Themes and Personalities in the Catholic Revival of Anglicanism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 11.

⁹ Peter Cobb, *Doctor Pusey* (London: The Church Literature Association, 1983), p. 8.

¹⁰ David Forrester, *Young Doctor Pusey: A Study in Development* (London: Mowbray, 1989), pp. 51-72.

life-rejecting spirituality and theological defensiveness.¹¹ More recently Carol Engelhardt Herringer has criticised Pusey's scholarship and personality.¹² The assessments of Pusey are many and varied and so this article mounts the case for serious consideration of Pusey's mature reflection on eucharistic theology in relation to transubstantiation and the implications for ecumenical dialogue.

It was however his sermon of 1843, *The Holy Eucharist: A Comfort to the Penitent*¹³ that propelled Pusey into controversy with Oxford University and British society more widely as he preached about the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. The University reacted negatively to this sermon, with the Vice-Chancellor accusing Pusey of teaching eucharistic doctrines which were not in conformity with the teaching of the Church of England.¹⁴ The Vice-Chancellor accused Pusey of teaching a carnal, that is fleshy and corporal presence of Christ in the Eucharist and suggesting some sort of continuation or repetition of Christ's sacrifice on the cross in the Eucharist. Pusey was suspended from preaching before the University for two years. Pusey denied the accusations brought against him, arguing that in the sermon he specifically denied transubstantiation and affirmed that the elements of the Eucharist remained in their natural substances. Others went further and accused Pusey of holding the doctrine of transubstantiation. James Garbett, for example, in a review of Pusey's sermon goes so far as to say that Pusey's sermon is 'in substance, in its antecedents and its consequents, identical with the Romanist transubstantiation.'¹⁵ Another writer, Samuel Lee, argued that Pusey had 'radical inclinations to Romanism' and that Pusey and those who followed him 'advocated the claims of the Pontificate.'¹⁶

Pusey mentions the doctrine of transubstantiation frequently in his writings but his message concerning this doctrine is not always clear. At times, early in his academic career he is confused about

¹¹ Paul Avis, *Anglicanism and the Christian Church: Theological Resources in Historical Perspective. Revised and Expanded Edition* (London and New York: T&T Clark, 2002), p. 225.

¹² Carol Engelhardt Herringer, 'Pusey's Eucharistic Doctrine', in Rowan Strong and Carol Engelhardt Herringer, (eds.) *Edward Bouverie Pusey and the Oxford Movement* (London: Anthem Press, 2012), pp. 96-108.

¹³ Edward Pusey, *The Holy Eucharist a Comfort to the Penitent: A Sermon Preached before the University in the Cathedral Church of Christ, in Oxford, on the Fourth Sunday after Easter 1843* (London: Rivington, 1843).

¹⁴ P. Wynter, Letter of Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University to Pusey, 17 May, 1843, cited in Henry Liddon, *Life of Edward Bouverie Pusey* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co, 1893), II, p. 311.

¹⁵ James Garbett, *A Review of Dr. Pusey's Sermon; and the Doctrine of the Eucharist according to the Church of England* (London: Hatchard, 1843), p. iii.

¹⁶ Samuel Lee, *Some Remarks on the Sermon of the Rev. Dr. Pusey lately preached and published at Oxford. In a letter addressed to that gentleman* (London: Seeley, Burnside, and Seeley, 1843), p. ii.

the meaning of transubstantiation and at later times he seems more clear. He affirms that transubstantiation is not part of Anglican teaching, although this message was not always heard by commentators. Perhaps this explains why even in the modern day, writers lack clarity and accuracy in their treatment of Pusey's eucharistic theology in general and transubstantiation in particular. Owen Cummings in his book *Eucharistic Doctors: A Theological History*¹⁷ does present a short specific treatment of Pusey's eucharistic theology but it is hardly in depth. Cummings for example makes the unhelpful comment that 'Pusey's strong statement of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, with all the learned patristic support that he brought to its defense, is quite simply what is intended by the doctrine of transubstantiation'.¹⁸ This statement fails to appreciate the fact that transubstantiation is really just one form of moderate realism and that while Pusey rejected the corrupted or carnal realist interpretation of transubstantiation where there is seen to be a physical change in the elements such the bread and wine become the fleshy body and blood of Christ, he also rejected the moderate realist form if that involved any change in the substance of the elements, as the doctrine of transubstantiation implies, even if there was no fleshy presence implied. Pusey was comfortable with the word 'transubstantiation' if it was clear that this meant no change of substance.¹⁹ Such unsophisticated discussion on the part of Cummings fails to understand that Pusey was able to embrace the word transubstantiation in a specific way and that Pusey could accept what he understood as 'sacramental and mystical'²⁰ transubstantiation as moderate realism without a change of substance. The modern Anglican scholar, Catherine Pickstock, makes exactly the same argument, suggesting that transubstantiation is an acceptable word as long as it is understood that there is no change of substance but rather a change in meaning.²¹ This same point was made earlier in the twentieth century by an Archbishop of Canterbury, William Temple,²² as he talked of particular definitions of transubstantiation where it is clearly understood that there is no change in substance but rather a change

¹⁷ Owen Cummings, *Eucharistic Doctors: A Theological History* (New York: Paulist Press, 2005), pp. 241-253.

¹⁸ Cummings, *Eucharistic Doctors*, p. 249.

¹⁹ See Pusey's treatment of transubstantiation in Edward Pusey, *The Church of England A Portion of Christ's One Holy Catholic Church, And a Means of Restoring Visible Unity. An Eirenicon, In a Letter to The Author of 'The Christian Year'* (Parker and Rivingtons: Oxford and London, 1865), p. 25. Pusey was of the same opinion in his correspondence with Newman on transubstantiation. See below for a discussion of this correspondence.

²⁰ Pusey, *An Eirenicon*, p. 25.

²¹ Catherine Pickstock, *After Writing: The Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1998), pp. 133-134.

²² William Temple, *Christus Veritas. An Essay* (London: Macmillan, 1924), p. 17.

in value.²³ Pusey's creative explorations of the nineteenth century pre-empted modern theological discussion and are seemingly lost on some modern commentators such as Cummings.

Carol Engelhardt Herringer in her essay on Pusey's eucharistic doctrine similarly fails to grapple with the depth of Pusey's eucharistic theology and asserts, in a matter of fact manner, that 'Pusey's doctrine of the Real Presence can be described very simply. It held that Jesus was really but not carnally or corporally present in or in conjunction with the consecrated bread and wine'.²⁴ As a result Herringer's language is lacking in caution and definition and confuses moderate with immoderate realism seemingly without any clarification or understanding of the difference. Herringer's comment assumes also that Pusey's eucharistic theology is simple rather than being based on the sophisticated philosophical reflection implied in moderate realism.

This article, in the face of Pusey's own confusion and the varied views of commentators as to what he believed about Christ's presence in the Eucharist, seeks to explore Pusey's thinking on transubstantiation and to show how his mature thinking could assist ecumenical dialogue in the present day as Anglicans and Roman Catholics explore eucharistic theology.

Deciding what Edward Bouverie Pusey thought about transubstantiation is not straightforward. His words were misinterpreted and misunderstood by some and he himself was unsure at times of the meaning of the doctrine itself. This article therefore seeks to expand Anglican thinking on transubstantiation with the aim that perhaps Pusey's insights may well increase the understanding of how Anglicans view the doctrine of transubstantiation and assist in the dialogue with Roman Catholics.

Pusey mentions transubstantiation in 1839, early in his academic career, in *Tract 81* of *The Tracts for the Times*.²⁵ *Tract 81* also entitled *Catena Patrum No IV*²⁶ argues against what Pusey calls the error of transubstantiation²⁷ which when combined with the notion of sacrifice in the Eucharist led to the idea that Christ was offered again

²³ For an examination of the ways transubstantiation has been considered by some Anglican theologians see Brian Douglas, 'Transubstantiation: Rethinking by Anglicans', *New Blackfriars*, 93, 1046 (2012), pp. 426-445.

²⁴ Herringer, 'Pusey's Eucharistic Doctrine', p. 93.

²⁵ *The Tracts for the Times* were a series of 90 Tracts published by members of the Oxford Movement between 1833 and 1841. They had wide circulation and influence in Anglican Churches across the world.

²⁶ Edward Pusey, *Tract 81. Catena Patrum. No. IV. Testimony of Writers in the Later English Church to the Doctrine of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, With an Historical Account of the Changes Made in the Liturgy as to the Expression of that Doctrine*, 1836/37, in *Tracts for the Times by members of the University of Oxford*. Volume IV (London: Rivington, 1839).

²⁷ Pusey, *Tract 81*, pp. 7-8.

in the Eucharist. In the same year Pusey also raises the doctrine of transubstantiation in a letter written to the Bishop of Oxford but seems to suggest, wrongly, that the doctrine of transubstantiation implies a carnal presence of Christ in the Eucharist.²⁸ This seems very strange that Pusey would have made this error. Roman Catholic doctrine did not teach such a gross view²⁹ and argued for a change in substance alone. Pusey was clearly wrong in his assessment of how the Roman Catholic taught the doctrine of transubstantiation. Pusey continues this misunderstanding in a letter to his friend Dr Jelf in 1841. Here in considering Article XXVIII of the *Thirty-Nine Articles* in the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer* he notes that the doctrine of transubstantiation has been a hindrance to the ‘true doctrine’ of the Holy Eucharist and observes that people ‘rightly dread the gross carnal doctrine rejected by our Church as Transubstantiation.’³⁰ This suggests that transubstantiation teaches the gross carnal doctrine, where the actual flesh and blood of Christ somehow becomes physically present in the Eucharist, while at the same time arguing that the doctrine has been rejected by the Church of England. The confusion increases as Pusey concludes in relation to Article XXVIII that ‘our Church in excepting against Transubstantiation, objects only to the scholastic mode of explaining the great doctrine which she holds – a true, “real presence.”’³¹ This seems in complete contrast to his earlier condemnation of the carnal view and refers instead to the scholastic doctrine of a change in substance.

It is however in his sermon of 1843, *The Holy Eucharist: A Comfort to the Penitent* that Pusey is more clear in his thinking about

²⁸ Edward Pusey, *A Letter to the Right Rev. Father in God, Richard Lord Bishop of Oxford on the Tendency to Romanism imputed to Doctrines held of old, as now, in the English Church* (Oxford and London: Parker and Rivington, 1839), pp. 133-134, 144 and 131.

²⁹ Thomas Aquinas in his exposition of the doctrine of transubstantiation specifically denies such carnal notions. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* (61 Volumes) (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1964), Question 75. Aquinas states that ‘It is clear that the body of Christ does not begin to exist in this sacrament by being brought in locally. First, because it would thereby cease to be in heaven,’ Aquinas, *Summa Theologicae*, 3a. 75, 2, p. 61. Further he says that ‘we could never know by our senses that the real body and blood of Christ are in this sacrament, but only by our faith which is based on the authority of God’ Aquinas, *Summa Theologicae*, 3a 75, 1, pp. 55-56 and ‘The body of Christ is not in this sacrament in the way a body is in place. The dimensions of a body correspond with the dimensions of the place that contains it. Christ’s body is here in a special way that is proper to a sacrament. For this reason we say that the body of Christ is on different altars, not in different places, but as in the sacrament’ Aquinas, *Summa Theologicae*, 3a 75, 1, 3, p. 59.

³⁰ Edward Pusey, *The Articles Treated on in Tract 90 Reconsidered and Their Interpretation Vindicated in a Letter to the Rev. R.E. Jelf, D.D., Canon of Christ Church*, 1841 (London: Rivington, 1841), p. 43. It is important to note that Article XXVIII only rejects the idea of a change of substance and does not mention carnal notions.

³¹ Pusey, *Letter to Jelf*, p. 58.

transubstantiation. Here Pusey argues for a real presence of Christ in the Eucharist and speaks of the Eucharist being a 'channel of His Blessed Presence to the soul' but at the same time he says that the elements remain in their 'natural substances'.³² He denies that the Church of England teaches any change in substance demanded by transubstantiation while at the same time affirming a real, divine and spiritual presence of Christ in the Eucharist.³³ Another sermon in 1853, *The Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist* repeats the argument that the elements remain in their outward form and that there is no change in substance or annihilation of the substance of the bread and wine, thereby denying transubstantiation but affirming real presence in the elements by means of a union or incorporation with him.³⁴ Pusey's thinking about transubstantiation has changed. In his *Letter to the Bishop of Oxford* in 1839 Pusey speaks about a carnal notion of Christ's presence in the Eucharist which in his view was the criterion for accepting the doctrine of transubstantiation,³⁵ but now in 1853 he abandons the carnal view and instead sets the criterion for accepting transubstantiation as a change in substance. For Pusey, such a view of change of substance is unacceptable in terms of Scripture, the early church Fathers and the formularies of the Church of England as found in the *Book of Common Prayer* and the *Thirty-Nine Articles*. By 1853 he has abandoned his belief that the Roman Catholic held the corrupt view of Christ's presence in the Eucharist as a carnal one and accepted that the Roman Catholic Church held the more nuanced view of the real presence as implied by transubstantiation.

Clarification in Pusey's thinking is confirmed by reference to his exhaustive study of the teaching of the early church Fathers on the Eucharist, published in 1855.³⁶ Here Pusey argues that the account of transubstantiation as proposed by Aquinas could not have been accepted by the Early Church Fathers, who argued instead that the substance of the bread and wine remained after consecration and he cites a considerable amount of evidence to support his conclusion.³⁷ For Pusey, in a subsequent work of 1857, any rejection of the doctrine of transubstantiation was quite apart from his belief in the inward,

³² Pusey, *The Holy Eucharist: A Comfort to the Penitent*, p. iii.

³³ Pusey, *The Holy Eucharist: A Comfort to the Penitent*, p. v.

³⁴ Edward Pusey, *The Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist: A Sermon, Preached before the University, in the Cathedral Church of Christ, in Oxford, on the Second Sunday after Epiphany, 1853* (Oxford and London: Parker and Rivington, 1871), pp. 16-17.

³⁵ Pusey, *Letter to the Bishop of Oxford*, pp. 133-134 and p. 144.

³⁶ Edward Pusey, *The Doctrine of the Real Presence, as Contained in the Fathers from the Death of S. John the Evangelist to the Fourth General Council, Vindicated, in Notes on a Sermon 'The Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist', preached A.D. 1853, before the University of Oxford, 1855* (Oxford and London: Parker and Rivington, 1855).

³⁷ Pusey, *The Doctrine of the Real Presence*, pp. 21-31 and pp. 143-161.

sacramental, supernatural, mystical, ineffable and real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist and that the condemnation of transubstantiation in the *Thirty-Nine Articles* of the Church of England (Article XXVIII) referred to the outward elements alone and any change of substance in them.³⁸

In 1865 Pusey published *An Eirenicon*, a work with the ecumenical intent of seeking reunion between the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of England. In this work Pusey stated that the Church of England in the *Thirty-Nine Articles* ‘rejects under the term “Transubstantiation, or the change of the *substance* of the bread and wine,” only that interpretations which “overthroweth the nature of a sacrament,” in that the sign and the thing signified become the same.’³⁹ Pusey is rejecting not only a carnal notion of Christ’s presence in the Eucharist, but also any doctrine which suggests a change in the substance of the bread and wine. In fact, he is rejecting the understanding of transubstantiation which involves a change in substance but seemingly not rejecting the term transubstantiation itself since he is only rejecting a particular interpretation of the doctrine. Pusey himself proposes a moderate realist notion of Christ’s presence in the Eucharist where there is ‘a sacramental or hyperphysical change,’ that is, a change which is not physical but spiritual, and so asserts that ‘no English churchman, who believes the Real Presence as his Church teaches, could hesitate to accept’⁴⁰ such a view.

A remarkable set of correspondence between John Henry Newman and Edward Pusey took place in 1867 and this sheds more light on Pusey’s understanding of transubstantiation.⁴¹ Pusey wrote to Newman on 4 March, 1867 arguing that the Church of England in the *Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion* only rejects transubstantiation in one specific sense, that is, ‘in which there would be no outward visible sign, only something which has no objective existence, but is an illusion to the senses’.⁴² Pusey states that the Church of England believes in the real objective presence of Christ in the Eucharist but that ‘our difficulty related only to the desition of the natural substances’.⁴³

³⁸ Edward Pusey, *The Real Presence of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ the Doctrine of the English Church, with a Vindication of the Reception by the Wicked and of the Adoration of Our Lord Jesus Christ Truly Present*, 1857 (Oxford: Parker, 1857), pp. 1-3.

³⁹ Pusey, *An Eirenicon*, p. 24.

⁴⁰ Pusey, *An Eirenicon*, p. 25.

⁴¹ This correspondence is found in the fourth volume of Liddon’s *Life of Pusey*. See Henry Liddon, (eds. J.O. Johnston and Robert Wilson) *Life of Edward Bouverie Pusey: Doctor of Divinity, Canon of Christ Church, Regius Professor of Hebrew in the University of Oxford*, 4 Volumes (London: Longmans, Green, and Co, 1893, 1893, 1894 PubMed and 1897).

⁴² Pusey to Newman, 4 March, 1867, in Liddon, *Life of Pusey*, IV, p. 166.

⁴³ Liddon, *Life of Pusey*, IV, p. 166.

Pusey also reports that discussion with the Roman Catholic Monsignor Dupanloop⁴⁴ revealed that the monsignor believed in regard to the Eucharist that the important matter was the real objective presence and that questions of substance were not of any moment. Pusey therefore expresses puzzlement as to what the word *substantia* means.

Pusey wrote again to Newman on 9 August, 1867, clarifying his comment in his previous letter about the meaning of *substantia* or οὐσία (ousia). Pusey says: ‘I understand what an Englishman means by “natural substance”, i.e. that he means that there are the same particles or matter (whatever matter is) that there were before. But *substantia* or οὐσία is an abstract thing’.⁴⁵ Pusey questions why the Church should take up terms of philosophy in their strict philosophical sense or Aristotelian sense and so asks what is meant by *substantia* or οὐσία in its abstract sense. In asking his question Pusey also interprets the Council of Trent which had said that ‘the substance of bread is changed into the substance of our Lord’s Body’ by arguing that ‘it is not meant that the bread is changed into something material’ and so ‘nothing material is meant by the substance of bread. For the two terms substance are correlative’.⁴⁶ Pusey suggests that all must believe that there is a change in the bread, that is, ‘It was mere bread (ψιλὸς ἄρτος), it is the Body of Christ’,⁴⁷ that is, it is changed from mere bread to the body of Christ.

Pusey’s thinking here is remarkably similar to the statement made by the Anglican–Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) some hundred years later in relation to change in the context of sacramental realism and suggests that he was ahead of his time in employing such a creative discussion of eucharistic theology.⁴⁸

Further, and this seems to be a remarkable concession, Pusey states that ‘whether the term used is “becomes” or is “transubstantiated” is so far alike’.⁴⁹ It seems that as long as the change is not into something material then the word transubstantiation can be accepted as long as it is understood that the change is not a physical change but rather one of moderate realism. Pusey continues, ‘If the doctrine of the Real Objective Presence is propounded to me, I understand

⁴⁴ Monsignor Dupanloop (1802-1878) had discussions with Pusey on the question of reunion. These discussions included matters of eucharistic theology.

⁴⁵ Pusey to Newman, 9 August, 1867, in Liddon, *Life of Pusey*, IV, p. 166.

⁴⁶ Pusey to Newman, 9 August, 1867, in Liddon, *Life of Pusey*, IV, p. 167.

⁴⁷ Pusey to Newman, 9 August, 1867, in Liddon, *Life of Pusey*, IV, p. 167.

⁴⁸ The ARCIC document of 1979 entitled *Elucidation* makes the statement that ‘before the eucharistic prayer, to the question: “What is that?”, the believer answers: “It is bread.” After the eucharistic prayer, to the same question he answers: “It is truly the body of Christ, the Bread of Life”’. See Anglican–Roman Catholic International Commission, *The Final Report*, (London: Catholic Truth Society and Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge, 1982), p. 21

⁴⁹ Pusey to Newman, 9 August, 1867, in Liddon, *Life of Pusey*, IV, p. 167.

not the “how”, but I understand what it is which is proposed to me, and, of course believe it’.⁵⁰ Again this is remarkably similar to a comment made by ARCIC which distinguishes the ‘how’ from the fact of the change and Christ’s presence.⁵¹ For Pusey, he is able to believe the ‘what’, that is, Christ is present in a real and objective way following a change in the elements, but he does not understand or see the need to understand the ‘how’ in relation to the way this change is achieved. Further he admits that he does not know what substance is. He says: ‘I can believe . . . what the church believes; but I can get no idea what the substance or, it may be, the essence of the material thing is, while I can adore and say, “Under these outward veils is the Body of God”’.⁵²

So Pusey believes what he proposes the churches believe, that is, a real objective presence of Christ in the Eucharist, ‘but if I am to teach others what Transubstantiation means, I am at a loss, since I do not know what substance is.’⁵³ Pusey’s reflection here is a nuanced view of transubstantiation, with remarkable similarity to some modern views, where he adopts the position that the word can be used in an Anglican context as long as it implies no material change in the elements of the Eucharist.⁵⁴ He also seems to put the view that what is important is the fact of a real and objective presence of Christ in the Eucharist, rather than any philosophical discussion of how that presence occurs through a change in substance.

⁵⁰ Pusey to Newman, 9 August, 1867, in Liddon, *Life of Pusey*, IV, p. 167.

⁵¹ The ARCIC document entitled *Eucharistic Doctrine* of 1971 states that ‘the word *transubstantiation* is commonly used in the Roman Catholic Church to indicate that God acting in the eucharist effects a change in the inner reality of the elements. The term should be seen as affirming the *fact* of Christ’s presence and of the mysterious and radical change which takes place. In contemporary Roman Catholic theology it is not understood as explaining *how* the change takes place’. See Anglican–Roman Catholic International Commission, *The Final Report*, p. 14, footnote 2. It needs to be noted that not all Roman Catholics or Anglicans on the Commission agreed with this statement. For a fuller discussion see Brian Douglas, ‘Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) and the Eucharist: Review and Prospects’, *Journal of Religious History*, 36 (2012), pp. 351-367.

⁵² Pusey to Newman, 9 August, 1867, in Liddon, *Life of Pusey*, IV, p. 167.

⁵³ Pusey to Newman, 9 August, 1867, in Liddon, *Life of Pusey*, IV, p. 168

⁵⁴ Again, Pusey’s analysis is remarkably similar to some modern reflections on the word ‘transubstantiation’. See Pickstock, *After Writing*, p. 260, who argues for the rediscovery of premodern themes, such as transubstantiation, where that term is interpreted as a sacramental (that is, moderate) realism. Indeed Pickstock, like Pusey, argues against the destruction of the substantiality of the bread in the Eucharist but rather that it is ‘constituted by being taken up into God, who is more truly “substance”’. This she expresses using the moderate realist concept of ‘non-identical realism’, where although the sign, the bread for example, conveyed the signified, that is, the body and blood of Christ, no recognizable body (that is, identical or immoderate realism) appears in the bread. The sign therefore in Pickstock’s analysis, and Pusey’s, is not left behind (see Pickstock, *After Writing*, pp. 260-262).

Newman replied to Pusey's two letters on 12 August, 1867. He responds by saying that 'gladly would I talk on Transubstantiation if I knew how. What I shall say, I say under correction – for I think the subject altogether beyond us, and never have felt an interest to pursue it into its scholastic ramifications'.⁵⁵ Despite this qualification Newman does say that in his view 'οὐσία or *substantia* is not an abstract idea, but a real, concrete thing'⁵⁶ and goes on to argue that no two people have the same *substantia*, rather each has their own. This means for Newman that 'the substance of a man's body is a *res*' and 'so is the substance of a piece of bread.'⁵⁷ For Newman *res* is beyond human senses since 'we only know bread subjectively, in its phenomena – as white, sweet, dry &c. &c.' and 'these phenomena are produced upon our senses by what are called its accidents, which are real things too, and beyond our senses too'.⁵⁸ Newman also calls them 'forces' or '*natura*' and argues that they are not abstract either since 'their impressions on our senses are all concrete things'.⁵⁹ For Newman then the forces or the *natura* of the bread are succeeded by the forces of Christ or the 'substance of Christ is represented by the forces, and through them the phenomena of bread'.⁶⁰ Newman's reflections seem to accord with traditional Roman Catholic teaching on the change or succession of the substance or forces of the bread into the substance or forces of Christ.

Newman rejects the use of the matter in the doctrine of the Eucharist, except when concomitance⁶¹ is considered since he believes there can be no necessary contrast between the spiritual and the material. For Newman "matter" is now an abstract word, as denoting something, not existing in fact, but which would exist if substance could be divided into its constituents.'⁶² This means for Newman that 'the accidents of our bodies are nourished by the accidents of bread' but he does not need to know 'that the substance of our bodies is nourished by the substance of bread.'⁶³ This lack of knowledge in the empirical sense does not concern Newman and he is content to believe what the Church declares rather than dispute the point. He concludes his letter to Pusey by saying that 'I cannot get beyond the words of the Tridentine canon, that the substance of the bread is changed into the substance of the Body of Christ, and that the species

⁵⁵ Newman to Pusey, 12 August, 1867, in Liddon, *Life of Pusey*, IV, p. 168.

⁵⁶ Newman to Pusey, 12 August, 1867, in Liddon, *Life of Pusey*, IV, p. 168.

⁵⁷ Newman to Pusey, 12 August, 1867, in Liddon, *Life of Pusey*, IV, p. 168.

⁵⁸ Newman to Pusey, 12 August, 1867, in Liddon, *Life of Pusey*, IV, p. 168.

⁵⁹ Newman to Pusey, 12 August, 1867, in Liddon, *Life of Pusey*, IV, p. 168.

⁶⁰ Newman to Pusey, 12 August, 1867, in Liddon, *Life of Pusey*, IV, p. 168.

⁶¹ That is, where the body and blood of Christ is there also is his soul such that where the material substance is, the spiritual is also.

⁶² Newman to Pusey, 12 August, 1867, in Liddon, *Life of Pusey*, IV, p. 168.

⁶³ Newman to Pusey, 12 August, 1867, in Liddon, *Life of Pusey*, IV, p. 169.

remain.’⁶⁴ Newman is content to accept the traditional definition of transubstantiation as defined by Trent, that is, a view of moderate realism where there is a change in substance but where there is also no carnal notion present, and to remain agnostic on the matter of ‘how’ this occurs.

Whilst both Pusey and Newman seem to accept a moderate realist view of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, that is no carnal notions, they differ as to their definition of transubstantiation and crucially on the matter of a change of substance. Whereas Pusey is seemingly happy to use the word transubstantiation, as long as it is understood that there is no change in the substance of the elements, Newman uses the word with the assumption that there is a change in the substance of the elements, such that the accidents remain and the substance of Christ becomes present, succeeding the substance of the bread and wine.

Pusey replies to Newman on 8 November, 1867 continuing to reflect on the word *substantia*. Pusey asks if ‘the “*substantia*” of any physical object was something incognizable by any human faculties’ would that ‘make the “*substantia*” immaterial’⁶⁵ although the matter would still be cognizable to our faculties. So, Pusey asks: ‘Would it be thought an unevasive or admissible acceptance of Transubstantiation to say . . . by “substance” I mean “essence”, something incognizable by any human faculties’⁶⁶ in the sense of hyper-physical rather than physical. If this is so then Pusey asks ‘if the Church of Rome, by the word Transubstantiation, means only to preserve the exactness of our Lord’s words . . . if it is not to involve us in anything which contradicts our physical knowledge or, as an alternative, involves miracles as to the removal or new creation or matter, of which no authority tells us anything, I think that a great stumbling-block would be removed’.⁶⁷ Pusey suggests that transubstantiation therefore ‘is the great bugbear to prevent people owing to themselves that they believe a Real Objective Presence’⁶⁸ of Christ in the Eucharist. Pusey’s desire for reunion and agreement seems to come to the fore here. If by transubstantiation the Roman Catholic Church means to affirm the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist then Pusey sees no problem. If, however, and it seems that this is what he detects in Newman’s reply, there is a meaning which implies a change of substance and that this is in some way more important than the fact of the real, objective presence of Christ in the Eucharist, then he sees this as

⁶⁴ Newman to Pusey, 12 August, 1867, in Liddon, *Life of Pusey*, IV, p. 169.

⁶⁵ Pusey to Newman, 8 November, 1867, in Liddon, *Life of Pusey*, IV, p. 169.

⁶⁶ Pusey to Newman, 8 November, 1867, in Liddon, *Life of Pusey*, IV, p. 169.

⁶⁷ Pusey to Newman, 8 November, 1867, in Liddon, *Life of Pusey*, IV, p. 170.

⁶⁸ Pusey to Newman, 8 November, 1867, in Liddon, *Life of Pusey*, IV, p. 170.

a great problem and one which stands in the way of closer union. For Pusey, it is the ‘what’ that is vital and not the ‘how’.

Newman replies to Pusey on 14 November, 1867⁶⁹ arguing that there is little in Pusey’s letter which is indisputable or inadmissible. Newman agrees with modern philosophical thinking that *substantiae* are incognizable by human faculties and that these *substantiae*, seen as phenomena, are actual things and therefore material and not immaterial. He does not believe in matter as thing and rather sees matter as chaos but at the same time admits that the things physical philosophers call matter, are the same as what modern metaphysicians call phenomena. Newman sees ‘substance’ and ‘essence’ as expressing the same thing in relation to the phenomena. He sees ‘species’ as including all the phenomena of bread and wine, including nourishment of human bodies. Importantly he admits that ‘transubstantiation is of course hyper-physical’⁷⁰ thereby affirming the presence of Christ in the Eucharist as moderate realism and denying any immoderate or fleshy realism, but at the same time he affirms the words ‘substances’ and ‘accidents’ as being the important theological words. For Newman, ‘Our Lord’s Body and Blood are material substances though they have spiritual properties’⁷¹ and yet he also admits that no one knows the difference between material substances and spiritual and immaterial substance.

Pusey in reply to Newman on 15 November, 1867⁷² distinguishes ‘substance’ and ‘species’, arguing that ‘by “substance” I mean the essence of a thing, that which it is, its *quidditas*. By “species” I mean the *physics* or *natura*, all those properties of which the senses are cognizant, including the natural powers of supporting and nourishing our bodies’.⁷³ Pusey is here admitting his belief is seemingly in harmony with the Council of Trent. Newman replies to Pusey on 4 December, 1867⁷⁴ conceding that what Pusey has said in this specific matter is consistent with the Catechism of the Council of Trent. This being so it seems that Pusey is prepared to use the term transubstantiation, but with some important caveats, related in the main to the idea of a change of substance in the eucharistic elements.

This correspondence is remarkable in that it seeks and finds some kind of unity between the two theologians, where Pusey is able to use the words transubstantiation in a particular way such that there is no change of substance in the bread and wine. Despite its agreement,

⁶⁹ Newman to Pusey, 14 November, 1867, in Liddon, *Life of Pusey*, IV, pp. 170-171.

⁷⁰ Newman to Pusey, 14 November, 1867, in Liddon, *Life of Pusey*, IV, p. 171.

⁷¹ Newman to Pusey, 14 November, 1867, in Liddon, *Life of Pusey*, IV, p. 171.

⁷² Pusey to Newman, 15 November, 1867, in Liddon, *Life of Pusey*, IV, pp. 171-172.

⁷³ Pusey to Newman, 15 November, 1867, in Liddon, *Life of Pusey*, IV, p. 171.

⁷⁴ Newman to Pusey, 4 August, 1867, in Liddon, *Life of Pusey*, Volume IV, p. 172.

a fundamental difference remains: while Newman admits a change of substance, Pusey does not. It is important to note that both are using moderate realist assumptions in regard to eucharistic theology but they are doing it in different ways. For both Pusey and Newman, Christ is seen to be really present in the Eucharist. Pusey sees this presence as the essence of Christ present in the Eucharist without any change in the substance of the bread and wine whereas Newman sees a change in the substance of the bread and wine which does not involve any material or carnal notions but which explains a real presence of Christ.

What can be concluded from this discussion? It seems that Pusey was confused about transubstantiation early in his academic career, wrongly attributing a carnal notion to transubstantiation. It also seems that Pusey overcame this confusion and presented a more accurate understanding of transubstantiation in the later years of his life which did not include a carnal characterisation of transubstantiation. In his mature work Pusey was prepared to countenance using the term transubstantiation as long as it did not imply either a carnal presence of Christ in the Eucharist or a change in the substance of the bread and wine. This is apparent in Pusey's correspondence with Newman. Some modern Anglican writers (for example William Temple, who talks of 'transvaluation' and Catherine Pickstock who uses transubstantiation in a way that excludes a change of substance) are also more accepting of the term transubstantiation as long as the carnal notion is denied and no change of substance is included.

An issue which must be considered is the use the word 'transubstantiation' at all and whether it accurately communicates in the modern era. For Anglicans the term transubstantiation is problematic on the basis of Article XXVIII of the *Thirty-Nine Articles* not because there is any suggestion of a carnal presence of Christ in the Eucharist but because of the idea of a change of substance.⁷⁵ The issue here relates to sacramentality, the nature of a sacrament, with Anglicans believing that the elements are used to convey the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist⁷⁶ without any change in substance, and Roman Catholics believing that the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist is brought about by a change in substance. Some Roman Catholic scholars have themselves indicated the problem is with the term transubstantiation itself and another term, such as transignification, may be preferred to give new meaning to the

⁷⁵ Article XXVIII in the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer* says in part: 'Transubstantiation (or the change of the substance of the Bread and Wine) in the Supper of the Lord, cannot be proved by holy Writ; but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a Sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions'.

⁷⁶ Article XXVIII goes on to say that: 'The Body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten, in the Supper, only after a heavenly and spiritual manner'.

eucharistic presence of Christ.⁷⁷ Pusey distinguishes the term ‘transubstantiation’ from other words used in the early church and suggests that the early church Fathers used other words, including transelement, transmute and transmade in relation to the eucharistic presence of Christ where the meaning implies a cumulative manner and not a replacement manner as is implied by transubstantiation.⁷⁸

If transubstantiation is to be used then perhaps the change of substance language is a philosophical system that has had its day and no longer conveys what is meant by this word. This is precisely the point made by the Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) in *The Final Report* where the term transubstantiation is meant to indicate the mysterious and radical change which takes place in the elements in the Eucharist but not to specify how that change takes place.⁷⁹ I suggest that Pusey, and perhaps also Newman, would be drawn to this idea. This allows the word transubstantiation, or one of the others to be used, but distances the discussion from the type of scholastic philosophy which suggests a change in substance. This is a highly disputed matter and the official reaction of the Roman Catholic Church to the ARCIC material in a Vatican document called *Observations* has indicated that there is a preference for the more traditional view of transubstantiation.⁸⁰ Others within the Roman Catholic Church are less prescriptive, with the Roman Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales stating in 1985 that the ARCIC statements clearly maintained the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and most importantly the Bishops went on to say that:

The substantial nature of the change of the bread and wine is clearly asserted by the repeated use of the word ‘become’ as in the statement that ‘they become his body and blood,’ by reference to the transforming action of the Spirit, by use of the language of change in the footnote on transubstantiation, and by careful description of the role of faith within the individual.⁸¹

⁷⁷ See Edward Schillebeeckx, *The Eucharist* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1977), pp. 144–151.

⁷⁸ Pusey, *The Doctrine of the Real Presence*, pp. 170–264.

⁷⁹ Anglican–Roman Catholic International Commission, *The Final Report*, p. 14, footnote 2.

⁸⁰ See Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, ‘The *Observations* of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on the Final Report of ARCIC I’, in Christopher Hill and Edward Yarnold (eds), *Anglicans and Roman Catholics: The Search for Unity* (London: The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge/Catholic Truth Society, 1994), pp. 156–166. *Observations* while commending progress also speaks of ‘negative aspects’ in *The Final Report*. Specifically, *Observations* noted an inadequate treatment of transubstantiation in that there was no specific statement on the change in the substance of the bread and wine following the eucharistic prayer.

⁸¹ Roman Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, ‘Response to the Final Report of ARCIC I’, in Hill and Yarnold, *Anglicans and Roman Catholics: The Search for Unity*, p. 99.

The Bishops also went as far as saying that ‘we accept this statement as an expression of Catholic faith in the real presence.’⁸² Most importantly the Bishops were able to say that ‘we do not insist on the language of transubstantiation nor advocate any one theological/philosophical attempt to explain it.’⁸³ This comments seems to be in full agreement with the footnote on page 14 of *The Final Report* of ARCIC (and interestingly with the mature thinking of Pusey). Contemporary thinking (and indeed Pusey’s thinking) about transubstantiation seeks the ‘what’ of the presence of Christ in the Eucharist but not the ‘how’. The French Roman Catholic Episcopal Commission for Christian Unity responding to *Observations* in 1992 specifically stated that official responses referring to ‘substantial change’ were less useful and so the Commission was distancing itself from particular theological/philosophical positions and seeking a wider view of eucharistic theology and in particular how Christ was present in the Eucharist.⁸⁴ ARCIC I, the Roman Catholic Bishops of England and Wales in 1985, the French Commission in 1992 and Pusey were of one mind. The real presence of Christ in the Eucharist was seen as the important and major issue and philosophical issues related to a change of substance in the bread and wine were less important.

It may be that Pusey’s more mature thinking on transubstantiation has much to contribute to thinking on the way Christ is really present in the Eucharist and in turn this may contribute to enhanced ecumenical engagement between Anglicans and Roman Catholics. Pusey’s mature work deserves attention in the official dialogues of the churches.

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⁸² Roman Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, ‘Response to the Final Report of ARCIC I’, in Hill and Yarnold, *Anglicans and Roman Catholics: The Search for Unity*, p. 99.

⁸³ Roman Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, ‘Response to the Final Report of ARCIC I’, in Hill and Yarnold, *Anglicans and Roman Catholics: The Search for Unity*, p. 100.

⁸⁴ French Roman Catholic Episcopal Commission for Christian Unity, ‘Concerning the Holy See’s Response to the Final Report of ARCIC I’, in Hill and Yarnold, *Anglicans and Roman Catholics: The Search for Unity*, pp. 171-184.