

# Across the Cross: Translation, Transgression, War<sup>1</sup>

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Without a sigh he left to cross the brine,  
And traverse Paynim shores, and pass earth's central line.  
—Lord Byron, 'Childe Harold's Pilgrimage' (I: XI)

## The Ever Divided World

The world is divided into marked and unmarked spaces.  
—Niklas Luhmann (1998, 79)

**T**he world, as we know it, does not exist in an undivided state—the world is always a combination of marked and unmarked parts. Even if an observer attempts to observe the world in its entirety, the world will inevitably be divided into the observed and the observer. In other words, the world should be presented as ever-crossed, that is, containing a cross. George Spencer Brown, the author of *Laws of Form*, defines cross as distinguishing between two sides of a cleft space (form), or between something and something else (1973, 1, 6). Cross is a boundary between something that is indicated, and therefore marked, and all the rest—not indicated, not marked. Such cross-generating distinction lies at the basis of any observation understood at the highest degree of abstraction (not just optical), including observations in the cognitive and social realms (Spencer Brown 1973, v, xiii). Observation is understood as handling distinctions—differentiating between marked and unmarked phenomena. The boundary (cross), drawn as a result of distinguishing between the marked and unmarked and indicating the marked, separates a named value from all other values, ego from alter, and system (including social systems) from environment.

There are different types of phenomena in the world understood as the space cleft by a cross into two sides. Some phenomena exist within one of the sides of the cleft space—either inside or outside the cross; they do not cross the cross. Other phenomena, on the contrary, thrive on crossing the cross. In fact, they exist because it is possible to cross cross-

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es, and such crossing is their role in the world. One might say they live across the cross. The crossing phenomena (CPs) are responsible for the interaction between the marked and the unmarked sides. They make it possible to bring marked and unmarked items together, juxtapose them, identify their convergences and divergences, and carry out all sorts of operations of exchange between the internal and external sides of the cross.

## The Two Crosses of Translation

**T**ranslation is one of such phenomena that exist across the cross. In translation studies (TS), translation has been considered so far exclusively either on its own or in comparison with adjacent phenomena studied in the verbum-centered humanities (among the most recent examples, see Merkle 2009). Even when translation is studied in combination with extra-verbal phenomena, the verbum-centrism still dominates the scholarly approach. For instance, in Baker (2006), it is verbum-centered translation that is at the focus, it is translation *in the context of* conflict. However, it would also be instructive to consider translation *in comparison with* conflict. One may wonder, on what basis? In what follows, I will suggest a basis.

Moreover, I argue that a broader conception of translation is long overdue and is indeed necessary, because a broader view would show translation in its natural social context, as a social phenomenon in connection with other similar social phenomena of a particular kind; this relationship so far has been outside the scope of consideration in TS. Besides, the narrower conception of translation predominant in TS is one of the reasons why TS still fails to draw a clear separating line (cross) between translation and the rest of the world. The connection of TS with its philological parents (literary studies and linguistics) is still stiflingly dominant among translation students, one of the main reasons, little doubt, being that the majority of TS scholars come from verbum-centered educational backgrounds (notably, linguistics). As a result, no matter how hard TS tries to impress the scholarly world with its claim to be a full-fledged discipline, the umbilical cord is still there and still shows few signs of being severed. Until a clear-cut cross has been drawn between translation and non-translation, such a claim is not quite convincing for non-translation specialists. Indeed, such claims remind one of an adolescent's claim to be independent, while she or he is still under their parents' roof. The prevalent verbum-centered understanding of translation testifies to the absence of a clear cross between translation and other verbum-centered phenomena, traditionally studied in linguistics and literary studies.

Translation is a crossing phenomenon (CP), but it is also a result of crossing. Unless translation is clearly separated (crossed) from other ways of crossing the world, there is hardly any possibility for it to rise to its claim as a scholarly discipline. Translation should and can be theorized as more than just a verbum-centered crossing; only then will it be seen as an independent object, rather than a subsection of applied linguistics. Yet, on the other hand, translation must have something that separates it from other crossing phenomena. Only if we find the exact position of the cross for translation, can we emancipate TS. When talking about translation, one has, therefore, to see two crosses: (1) translation as a cross, as a CP, and (2) a cross between translation and all other (crossing or non-crossing) phenomena.

Cross is a convenient basis for categorization of translational phenomena. Translation is crossing of a particular type. In order to distinguish this particular type of crossing from any other crossing, it is, first, necessary to compare translation with other types of crossing. This is what I would like to undertake in the present paper.

I will concentrate on social crossing phenomena (CPs), that is, the phenomena that exist across the crosses delineating boundaries of social systems. Translation will be compared with two other social CPs, which are also viewed as boundary phenomena—transgression and war. The goal is not to describe exhaustively either translation, or transgression, or war, but rather to juxtapose them in order to compare them; at that, the purport is to learn more about the first of the three. Therefore, when considering each of the three phenomena, I will keep turning from transgression and war to translation. In short, in the present paper, I will attempt to draw a cross to separate translation as a cross from other social CPs—transgression and war, and thereby, hopefully, outline translation as a CP in a clearer way.

Transgression and war were selected among many other CPs because there are available theoretical studies about them and also because they help to contextualize translation's social force or intensity, as well as put into perspective some other translation's social properties.

## Mediating Translation

**F**irst, let us consider translation itself. Translation is one of social mechanisms enabling the social system to interact with the environment. Society can be seen as a system, operationally closed from, yet interactionally open to the environment; translation can be considered as the social system's boundary phenomenon (Luhmann 1995, 197; Tyulenev 2011). Translation is located on the boundaries of social systems and subsystems. No social interaction—be it non-verbal or verbal and, in the latter case, both on the intra- or interlingual levels—is possible without translation. Translation mediates between interacting parties; and it opens systems to their environments or closes them by filtering incoming and outgoing phenomena.

Translation's mediation can be expressed by the formula  $A < > M < > B$ , where A and B stand for interacting parties (e.g., a social system and its environment) and M is a mediator = translator; the arrows '<' and '>' stand for interaction in both directions. Any interaction (or result thereof), which can be schematized with this formula, can be defined as translation. To distinguish between verbal

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and extra-verbal translations, one has to introduce further criteria, yet there is no reason why predominantly studied verbal translation should be termed translation and extra-verbal types of mediation should not. Including extra-verbal mediation into the category of translation is sometimes seen as a potential danger to the emancipated status of translation studies as a discipline. In fact, the opposite is true. Reluctance to include extra-verbal mediation is little less than bigotry of former linguists who feel uncomfortable in the open sea of interdisciplinarity, but translation's natural habitat is there. We had better all overcome our hydrophobia and learn sailing or at least swimming. The relationship between verbal and extra-verbal translations is comparable to the difference between language and semiotics, the latter including the former as its special case. Sooner or later, TS will inevitably come to the realization that it has to deal with general principles of mediation, and therein lies its emancipation of literary studies and linguistics; also therein, the cross between TS and the rest of the world must be drawn. Therefore, the time is ripe to study laws governing translation-Proteus as a way of crossing the cross. There is only one place to draw a cross of TS's emancipation; it is not between verbal and non-verbal mediation—the cross should be drawn along the line separating crossing the cross and all the rest.

However, at this point, the question is bound to arise: How is translation to be distinguished vis-à-vis (1) other types of boundary crossing phenomena and (2) other types of mediation? In the present paper, I will address the difference between translation and other types of boundary crossing aspect 1, while aspect 2 should be discussed separately elsewhere.

### A Cluster of Cross-Crossers

To be sure, translation is not the only social phenomenon that exists across the cross. Therefore, in order to be better appreciated and properly distinguished from other boundary phenomena, CPs, translation should be compared with other CPs. There are a number of boundary phenomena that exist in modern society, e.g., trade, diplomacy, transgression, war, and all sorts of cultural interactions. All these CPs belong to different social function(al) systems.

Modern society in developed countries, i.e., politically and economically modernized countries, which participate in international and globalizing processes, can be described as function-based (Luhmann 1997; Habermas 1984, 153–197). Roughly, around the period of the Industrial Revolution, the basis of intra- and inter-systemic interactions became function-based. Previously, social interactions had been determined either by the relative autonomy and self-maintenance of social groups (tribe-like segmentation); or by the dynamics of the relationship between centre and periphery; or by the rank- and class-dominated logic. Different types of social organization (segmentation; centre/periphery; ranks) did not follow each other as if in single file. In some periods, some of them coexisted, yet usually one of them dominated. In modern society, interactions are predominantly determined by differences between subsystems having different social functions. Function subsystems are differentiated social operational systems, each of which specializes in handling a particular social problem (Luhmann 1995, 299; Luhmann 2000, 138; Krause 1996, 34). Therefore, in modern society, we can distinguish between legal, military, educational, religious, and other subsystems.

All function subsystems are independent from each other in the sense that their specialization makes it impossible for one of the subsystems to exercise full and unconditioned control over another/the others without being controlled by its own dependence on other subsystems for their 'services'. Contrary to widespread beliefs, even the political subsystem, which seems to be the most powerful and influential among the subsystems—a super-subsystem, one might say—cannot fully control the other subsystems. Politics can subdue the other subsystems for some time, as is the case in totalitarian states for example, yet this time inevitably runs out because the other subsystems exist according to their internal laws that cannot be determined from the outside. As a result, politics' supremacy gives way to economic laws (the economic order imposed by totalitarianism collapses and new economic patterns develop on the ashes of the overly centralized economy), to laws governing arts (underground art rebels against aesthetics foisted on it), etc.

Function subsystems are operationally closed. Yet one subsystem may affect the behaviour of another, but this happens only by way of irritations, which are external in relation to the internal operations of the subsystem. It is up to the subsystem whether to react to or ignore these outside irritations. Thus, being interactionally open, subsystems are operationally closed and do not compromise their functional independence. Translation is an example of such function subsystem, being an interactionally open operational closure (Tyulenev 2010).

Not all boundary phenomena, however, constitute full-blown function subsystems; some may belong to other subsystems, sometimes to more than one. For instance, trade contributes to the operations of the function subsystem of the economy; diplomacy facilitates functioning of the political subsystem on the international level or of other subsystems (cf. international cultural activities which involve arts); war is associated primarily with the military subsystem but also politics and the economy may be involved; espionage and intelligence services belong primarily to the subsystem of politics, yet in the case of economic spying their connection with the economy becomes predominant; cultural interactions are carried out primarily within the subsystem of art, yet in the case of what is termed 'soft power', that is, cultural diplomacy, cultural events fall under the jurisdiction of politics (Nye 2004).

In order to decide which of the boundary phenomena constitute function subsystems and which do not, a closer look at the properties of function systems is needed. In the modern world, function subsystems become so independent of respective intrastate political subsystems that they go beyond geopolitical frontiers; the world merges into one global system, a world society (Luhmann 1990, 178). International police (Interpol) is one such type of functional crossing of frontiers based on a particular type of systemic 'communicative behaviour' (ibid.) in the modern global world society; Interpol belongs primarily to the legal function subsystem. Education is yet another function that is exercised internationally. International news agencies are the internationally operating subsystem of mass media.

All the above-listed boundary phenomena are, however, different from translation in that they do not constitute subsystems; rather they are operations (among other possible operations) of this or that function subsystem. This can be shown if we apply five criteria in order to define function subsystems: function, efficacy, medium, code, and program (Krause 1996, 37–38). To exist, all function subsystems have to have a specific social problem which the entire social system needs to take care of in order to ensure its smooth operation, whether for the sake of its internal communication or for the sake of its external interaction with the

environment. The ability of a subsystem to tackle a particular problem on behalf of the entire system is efficacy of the subsystem. Thus, a problem that a system faces requires assigning the function of suggesting ways to handle this problem to a subsystem, which has the capacity to produce a desired effect and thereby address the issue—in other words, to a subsystem that demonstrates the required efficacy. For instance, the legal subsystem regulates social life by suggesting discrimination of actions according to whether they comply with the existing laws; science supplies knowledge; religion meets spiritual needs; etc.

Social-systemic codes are specific binary differences that allow (sub)systems to differentiate what is theirs and what is alien. Codes imply a cross-cleft two-sided form with positive and negative values, or marked and unmarked spaces. Thus, for the economy, the code is payment/non-payment; for religion, immanence/transcendence; for science, truth/falsehood; etc. Interpol, international circulation of news by international news agencies, war, trade do not have any code of their own that would distinguish them as social subsystems. Interpol, for example, operates according to the code of the legal subsystem and observes the difference between the lawful and lawless, the legal and illegal; trade operates according to the code of the economy subsystem; war according to the code of the military subsystem. Translation, on the other hand, operates based on its own code, which cannot be reduced to any other function subsystem's code—mediated/non-mediated (Tyulenev 2010).

While the code does not change within a subsystem, programs do. Programs are chronotopically sensitive. They thereby allow 'assigning the correct code value' to different things under changing circumstances, according to the spirit of the age without forfeiting the subsystem's operational identity (Luhmann 2000, 201). Based on these five criteria, only translation, among the above-mentioned social crossing phenomena, can claim to be a subsystem.

### Transversal Transgression

...[A]nd your children, which... had no knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in thither...  
—Deuteronomy 1:39 (KJV)

**T**ransgression is a special case of border crossing as compared to the above-mentioned boundary phenomena in that it is an operation, which may take place within any function subsystem.

Although meaning primarily transgression as represented by sexuality and its language, Michel Foucault sees this type of border crossing as a present-day replacement of another transgressive operation—profanation in religious discourse: 'Profanation in a world that no longer recognizes any positive meaning in the sacred—is this not more or less what we may call transgression?' (1994, 70<sup>2</sup>; see also p. 75). According to Foucault, in the modern world lacking objects which could be desecrated, transgression provides division, which

<sup>2</sup> The article 'A Preface to Transgression' was translated by Donald F. Bourchard and Sherry Simon and slightly amended by James Faubion.

allows affirmation of conventionally limited phenomena. Transgression is, therefore, intimately connected with the limit, 'that narrow zone of a line where it displays the flash of its passage' (73). Transgression crosses and re-crosses the line of the limit. The limit is not uncrossable and at the same time it is not an illusion—the limiting line is a real division in and of the world: that it is inevitably divided and must be divided because otherwise no part of the world would be definable: '...we cannot make an indication without drawing a distinction' (Spencer Brown 1973, 1). Foucault compares transgression to a flash of lightning 'in the night which...gives a dense and black intensity to the night it denies' (Foucault 1994, 74). Importantly, Foucault theorizes transgression outside ethics, as neither 'bad' nor 'good', and defines the role of transgression as tracing 'the flashing line that causes the limit to arise' (74). Transgression's function is 'simply an affirmation of division' and 'the testing of the limit' (74). 'The instantaneous play of the limit and of transgression' is thus cognitively indispensable, being 'the essential test for a thought that centers on the 'origin' (75).

But what does the interplay of a limit and its transgression imply? Thanks to the fact of affirming division and demonstrating the limit by pointing to the limitlessness on the other side, the sides of the cross 'learn' something about each other and themselves. Transgression functions as a mechanism of breaking the circular internality of the sides of the divided world. In social-systemic terms, transgression is a way of overcoming the operational closure of the transgressed system and a channel of the (sub)system's interactional openness to the other side of the crossed form.

Such function of transgression, however, jeopardizes the integrity and the bliss of complacent ignorance of otherwise limited systems and may be seen as more or less serious crimes—and indeed they are seen as crimes, therefore Foucault has to emphasize that his consideration of transgression is beyond ethics (1994, 74). In order to understand this aspect of the social role of transgression, it would be helpful to take into consideration what Emile Durkheim wrote about the social role of crime. He defined crime as normal (1982, 32, 97–107). Contrary to widely held beliefs which confuse the moral nature of crime and its social role, Durkheim considers crime from the sociological point of view not as pathology but rather as normality, because crime is (1) universal, and (2) necessary, in that it plays an important social role. There is no society without crime (i.e., crime is universal); therefore, crime must be an indispensable component of the social. Crime ensures the evolution of society—of its morality and law (i.e., crime is necessary). Crime is 'an action which offends certain collective feelings which are especially strong and clear-cut' (Durkheim 1982, 99). Crime breaks open the hermetic closure of the dominant social discourse by introducing something foreign. Yet crime supplies society with options for transformation and helps overcome rigidity and resentment towards change. Crime allows individual originality, which goes beyond moral principles of its age, and this is how crime participates in introducing new moral principles:

Not only does [crime] imply that the way to necessary changes remains open, but in certain cases it also directly prepares for these changes. [Hence, w]here crime exists, collective sentiments are not only in the state of plasticity necessary to assume a new form, but sometimes it even contributes to determining beforehand the shape they will take on. Indeed, how often is it only an anticipation of the morality to come, a progression towards what will be! (Durkheim 1982, 102)

Durkheim adduces an example of Socrates who was a criminal according to Athenian law, yet who, by his crime that was the independence of thought, prepared a way for a new Athenian morality and intellectual freedom.

Recall that Foucault also vindicates transgression by putting it outside the realm of good and evil where it is seen as tantamount to demonism:

Nothing is more alien to this experience than the demonic character who, true to his nature, 'denies everything'. Transgression opens onto a scintillating and constantly affirmed world, a world without shadow or twilight, without that serpentine 'no' that bites into fruits and lodges their contradictions at their core. It is the solar inversion of satanic denial. (1994, 75)

Foucault himself was a prophet of the good land of transgression. Transgression lay at the core of his own method and scholarly mission: his own scholarly effort always negotiated between extremes, totalisations, centralizations, leveling his critique both against Marxism and against bourgeoisie, passing from level to level, crossing the thresholds, overcoming horizontal-ity and verticality alike, preferring diagonal mobility, or, borrowing Félix Guattari's term, transversality (Deleuze 1986, 30, 32). Foucault was interested in creating 'une théorie générale des productions' with 'l'analyse des formations sociales' as its basic motivation and method (Foucault 1969, 270; also Kremer-Marietti 1974, 6). In other words, he was fascinated by tracing limits and boundaries in their malleability, when they were breaking, forming, and changing, rather than when they were already congealed; he was mesmerized by the abysses of ruptures rather than the plateaus of continuities. Being himself part of *transversal* transgression, Foucault sought to unearth the fundamental function of transgression—affirmation in the divided world. Hence, transgression for him is neither negative nor positive and, *mutatis mutandis*, comparable to Durkheim's view of crime as an objectively necessary social phenomenon. This affirmation, as has been mentioned above, is inevitably related with continuous supply of the sides of a form with newness (of learning more about the other sides and, therefore, about themselves). This newness introduces new elements, as does crime, according to Durkheim.

Translation plays the same function in the evolution of social systems. Translation crosses the boundary thereby (1) affirming the limited inside of the cross against the unlimited outside of the cross and (2) suggesting new ways of social evolution. Aspect (1) is at the basis of any translational act: translation always moves from one side of a cross into the other, from one (sub)system into another. Such trajectory of translation affirms one side against the other: a named value against all other values, the ego against the alter, and the system against the environment.

Aspect (2) is not as self-evident. Social evolution can be seen as a three-stage process consisting of the stages of variation, selection, and stabilization. The social system has to compensate for the difference, which exists between itself and its environment. The environment, which is always more complex than the system, sends signals to the system, or irritates the system, yet it is up to the system whether to accept or reject the signals. The signals suggest new elements or variations of phenomena already existing within the system or new phenomena. This is the stage of variation. Out of the suggested range of incoming signals, the system selects some and rejects others. The stage of variation throws the system out of its established order, yet upon the completion of the stage of selection, the system stabilizes its internal communication, which now includes new phenomena.



How does the system learn and make sense of the environment's signals? Translation as a boundary phenomenon plays a crucial role in this process. Translation enables the system to see and understand the options on offer. Like transgression and crime, translation makes the system sensitive to the environment and keeps the system open to the possibility of evolution. First, translation provides options for the variation stage. All the options, suggested by translation, boil down to a limited set. (1) Options may be borrowed exactly as they exist in the environment, even without changing the source's code, as is the case in borrowings of macaronic types of literary texts. Such ways of translating may be expressed as  $A=A$ . (2) Options may be changed in their form but not in their content:  $A=A_1$ . This can be illustrated by transliterating translation when a foreign word is re-coded in the graphical form of the target language without any significant change in the content. (3) Equivalents may be found in the target system and they replace the incoming options:  $A=B$ . This is the most widely practiced way of verbum-centered translation when words or phrases of the source language are replaced by target language 'equivalents'. (4) Mid-way between direct borrowing of what the environment offers and a replacement with something already existing in the system is when  $A$  is equalized with structures like  $A_1$ , (or)  $B$ . Such is the case with glossing types of translation when both a borrowing from the environment and an equivalent (or several equivalents) are provided. (5) Sometimes, phenomena of the environment and of the system are fused and hybrids result:  $A=A_{(1)}/B$ . This can be exemplified by lexical hybrids, such as the English word *oddmnts*, where the Germanic root *odd* was joined with the Latin suffix *-ment*. This is how translation handles the incoming signals from the environment and passes them on to the system for selection.

At the stage of selection, translation's role is significantly more modest. The system decides which of the suggested options to accept and which should be rejected. Although translators may have a say in this process, they usually are asked for their opinion in another capacity—as influential cultural or social figures, rather than as translators. When a particular option is accepted, translation's function is to conform to the re-negotiated social discourse. At this stage of stabilization, translation adopts that of the above listed five options for each suggested phenomenon, which the system selected and adheres to that option, while, concurrently, suggesting other ways of evolution by handling new signals coming from outside the system.

As we see, fundamentally, translation plays the same part as transgression and crime do in crossing the established limit in order to affirm one side of the crossed form by comparing it with the other and suggesting new ways of social evolution. This closeness to transgression/crime explains, among other things, why translation is often seen as unfaithfulness or a downright criminal activity (*traduttore traditore*). Yet the main difference as compared to transgression/crime is that translation is not as consistently radical as transgression and crime are. We have seen that at the stage of stabilization in social evolution, translation conforms to, rather than breaks the established rules.

Besides, transgression crosses 'incessantly' (Foucault 1994, 73), while translation crosses in order to bring a handful of options and then to adopt whichever option was found acceptable by the home system. Occasionally, however, translation may be perceived as dangerous as transgression or even crime (cf., translators of the Bible into vernaculars in early modern Europe, such as William Tyndale or Martin Luther).

## Subduing War

...[R]anged as infantry,  
 And staring face to face,  
 I shot at him as he at me...  
 — Thomas Hardy, 'The Man He Killed'

**T**ransgression is strong; crime is stronger still; but war is by far the strongest of the boundary phenomena. War forces the system to become acutely, very often painfully and tragically, sensitive to the environment (See Machiavelli 1965, 718). War is a locus not just of the system's contact, but rather the system's clash with the environment or, more precisely, with another system or other systems in the environment.

Since times immemorial, war has shaped societies, being at the same time a product of social development. Fundamentally, war 'is a function of ambiguities in the state system' caused by unequal distribution of resources and ensuing rivalry (Freedman 1994, 3). Social-systemically, wars may be seen as a result of the system's failure to curb conflicts, which, as we have seen in the cases of transgression and crime, are necessary in order to ensure the system's flexibility and ability to evolve (*GLU*, 97). If the system manages to limit the effect of a conflict, the latter remains a transgression or crime. If however the scale of a conflict becomes unmanageable and the system fails to cope with it, warfare may result. The system ceases to exist as one unit and an internal (e.g., intrastate) war may break out. Interstate wars may be represented as either one complex system breaking into two or as two systems, originally in balanced interaction, yet at some point, the balance is disturbed and the systems' military forces cross the cross (frontier) and an interplay of offensives and defensives begins (Machiavelli 1975, vol. I, 381; Clausewitz 1832, VI<sup>3</sup>). Allied systems may war against their common enemy/enemies; thus, two crosses are united (allied) under one common cross and the war is waged across this common cross with the enemy. 'If two or more states combine against another, the result is still politically speaking a *single* war' (Clausewitz, in Freedman 1994, 212). The goal of war, thus, is to eliminate obstacles in either internal systemic communication or external intersystemic interaction, whatever size or structural complexity these systems may assume, or increase the domain of the original communication and include a part of the environment (of the external side of the cross) to the system (to the internal side of the cross) (Machiavelli 1975, vol. I, 375).

There is probably no better suiting discussion of war available than Carl von Clausewitz' magnum opus *Vom Kriege* (*On War*). Although written (1806–1830) and published (1832) roughly two centuries ago (Schössler 1991, 79–100) and all elements of warfare since then has drastically changed, no one, as yet, has written a book on the subject that even remotely surpasses that of Clausewitz' because his 'fundamental explanation and definition of war [...] has remained relevant' (Handel 1986, 2, 12; see also Freedman 1994, 7, 191–194). Therefore, I will draw my comparison of war with translation on Clausewitz' theory.

<sup>3</sup> Hereinafter, in references to Clausewitz' *On War*, the Roman numeral stands for the number of the book cited; the Arabic for the section therein; and a letter, if any, after the Arabic numeral points to a subsection.

Transgression is as free as lightning, but not so is war. As seven cities 'warr'd for Homer dead' (Thomas Heywood, 'Heirarchie of the Blessed Angells', 1635), so several subsystems lay claim to war. War is most commonly viewed as a purely military activity. Clausewitz, 'a true philosopher in uniform', revolutionized the study of war—and his revolution is compared to Copernican revolution for its profundity and scale—in showing that politics provides the source and motivation of war; without politics, war turns into a senseless slaughter (Clausewitz 1832, VIII, 6B; Handel 1986, 7; Creveld 2000, 108, 112). Other causes of warfare are known—notably, economic, religious, and ethnic; moreover, deeper motives are found (Stoessinger 2008; Machiavelli 1975, vol. I, 378; Lebow 2010). In social-systemic terms, these different combinations of military action with other social activities or psychological phenomena show strong intersystemic links, which develop between war and other phenomena, notably social subsystems. It is beyond my expertise and the purport of the present paper to discuss arguments as to which of the 'seven subsystems' has more legitimate rights to lay their claim to causing and motivating wars (see Lebow 2010, 18). What is more important in light of comparing war and translation as two boundary phenomena is that both are volatile in their allegiances to social activities and (sub)systems, they easily form structural couplings with other social phenomena; at that, their structural couplings are stronger bonds than those of transgression which always contests and challenges the establishment, yet shuns any commitments.

On the one hand, as Clausewitz put it, war has 'its own grammar', its own nature; on the other hand, its logic originates from politics (1832, VIII, 6B: '*seine eigene Grammatik, aber nicht seine eigene Logik*'). Moreover, this instrumental vision of war enabled Clausewitz to argue that war was morally neutral' (Creveld 2000, 112). Thus, war, like transgression, crime, and translation, which all, being neutral in themselves, exist beyond good and evil, is theorized as a neutral instrument of boundary crossing in the hands of politics. At the same time, politics is not a tyrant over war, for whatever political goal motivates warfare, the political will must be commensurate with the available military resources (Clausewitz 1832, I, 23). Clausewitz' contemporary, Baron de Jomini, a military theorist who, like Clausewitz, found his material for analysis in Napoleonic warfare, viewed war as 'a great drama, [...] which cannot be reduced to mathematical calculations; yet he also recognized that there was 'a small number of fundamental principles of war, which could not be deviated from without danger, and the application of which, on the contrary, has been in almost all times crowned with success' (cited in Freedman 1994, 191). In social-systemic terms, this statement could be re-read as defining war as an operational closure which forms structural couplings with different phenomena of its environment.

The same, *mutatis mutandis*, can be said about translation: on the one hand, translation operates according to its own 'grammar', that is, rules and principles of transformation of phenomena passing through it between the source and the target, yet the material for the transformation is supplied from outside translation. Without such outside provisions, neither war nor translation do not make sense, or, in Clausewitz' own words, they become *einsinn- und zweckloses Ding* (a meaningless and purposeless thing, 1832, VIII, 6B). War and politics are described by Clausewitz as being interdependent; this is exactly how Luhmann understands the relationship between different function subsystems: politics permeates (*durchziehen*) military operations and exercises continuous influence on them, yet so

far as military force will allow (Clausewitz 1832, I, 23). Such view of war supports the possibility of the social-systemic sovereignty of translation (operational closure) and its existence in structural couplings with other social and psychological phenomena. In TS today, this equilibrium is infrequently upset and, as a result, translation's social systemics is not recognized and translation is mistakenly seen to be ephemeral in the social space (Wolf 2007, 114–117).

Clausewitz compares war with a duel on a larger scale (*einerweiterter Zweikampf*, I, 2). Thereby Clausewitz stresses the reciprocal nature (*Wechselwirkung*) of war (1832, I, 3; 4; 5; 6; 8). Reciprocity is also an integral part of interpreting (understood here as the oral form of translation). Yet the nature of war's reciprocity is, of course, quite different from that of translation. First of all, war is a violent act aimed at subduing the opponent (Clausewitz 1832, I, 2). Even when the aim is to avoid bloodshed as much as possible, the goal is victory and taking the high ground (see, for instance how such a goal is at the basis of Sun Tzu's principles of warfare which makes them applicable to quite peaceful business transactions, as shown in Hawkins and Rajagopal 2005<sup>4</sup>). Translation is hardly ever as belligerent as war; even when it is faulty or biased, superficial and distorting, translation aims at enabling intersystemic interaction.

Yet another aspect, which is important for understanding such boundary phenomena as war and translation, is the balance of psychic and social phenomena. Clausewitz considers this aspect as a problem of friction. The problem boils down to the difference between an ideal warfare, an imaginary view of 'absolute war', vs. 'real war'—in other words, between the war, 'stripped of all practical considerations concerning time, place and intent', imagined, as it were, 'stand[ing] up naked, so to speak' and the war as it is in the battlefield (1832, VIII, 2; I, 7; Creveld 2000, 109). The friction between the theory and practice of war is caused by a number of factors, yet what is pertinent for the present discussion, is the difference between the psychic and social dimensions of war. Troops are made up of individuals, each with his individual will, feelings, fears, etc. Yet for the success of a military operation, they all have to be united to act as one. Thus, the difference between war in reality, complicated and confused, and war on paper is, among other things, the difference between individual psychic systems and a social unit of the entire army or any of its subdivisions.

Arguably, a similar difference is observed in translation viewed as a sum total of all translational acts (in a particular place in a particular time) and each translation act taken on its own. Clarity of what constitutes the psychology and sociology of translation has still not been reached in present-day TS. Not all translation students understand the difference and importance of viewing translation from the sociological perspective; many are struggling with social-systemic approaches to the study of translation, such as Luhmann's theory of social systems. Yet, although there is no denying that each translator always has a certain degree of freedom of choice in his/her decisions, all translators are socialized human beings—they are products of their upbringing and carriers of a particular social-systemic communication and, therefore, there is a fully legitimate ground for efforts to capture supra-

<sup>4</sup> See Creveld 2000, 114–115, on the difference between Clausewitz' vision of war and Chinese military theory epitomized in Sun Tzu's treatise *The Art of War*.

psychic translational processes. Translation can be studied as a social phenomenon which means that it can be studied sociologically or, in Durkheim's terms, as a social fact, that is, a 'way of acting, whether fixed or not, capable of exerting over the individual an external constraint' (1982, 59). Social fact is 'general over the whole of a given society whilst having *an existence of its own, independent of its individual manifestations*' (ibid., emphasis in original). Translation's own existence, stripped of all individual manifestations, can well be studied. Translation manifests itself in a particular way in a particular chronotopic locus. It is this that allows us today to have translator education, according to the principle formulated by Machiavelli about warriors: 'Nature brings forth few valiant men; effort and training make plenty of them' (1965, 718). Effort and training, or socialization of translational praxis, is what, among other things, turns translation from a psychological fact into a social fact.

## Conclusion

All three social phenomena, translation, transgression, and war, are boundary phenomena. This is the basis, which allowed us to compare these otherwise quite different social activities. Although to cover all their similarities and differences would be 'mission impossible' for just one paper, I hope to have demonstrated the potential of such a systemic approach to translation when such comparisons can be made and, thanks to that, better understood. This also helps to draw a clearer distinction (cross) between translation and all other comparable social phenomena. Let us recapitulate and finalize the major findings of comparing translation with transgression and war.

All the three cross the systemic cross and such crossing is the essence of their social functioning. Their fundamental source is social evolution and they are a product of social evolution (although war should be considered as an extreme and undesired case). Society needs to evolve and it does evolve. In the process of social development, established discourses, norms, conventions, all of what makes a system a distinct social unit—all that is comprised in the term *systemic communication*—undergo transformations. What is the source of new options? It is the system's environment. Boundary phenomena are mechanisms of how the system obtains new options from the environment.

At that, all the boundary phenomena have different 'tasks': translation directly suggests new options; transgression probes the established boundary; war aims at resolving problems of intrasystemic communication or intersystemic interaction. All the three cross boundaries (systemic boundaries, of which geographical-political state frontiers are only a special case!), thereby affirming the fact of the boundaries'. However, all the three analysed phenomena differ in the ratio of primary functions vs. secondary functions, or 'by-products', of crossing social-systemic boundaries.

Translation is supposed primarily to facilitate the exchange of phenomena between interacting (sub)systems across boundaries. Naturally, such an exchange implies affirmation of boundaries and, consequently, of systemic identities. Transgression, on the contrary, primarily, affirms intrasystemic discourses (by challenging them and taking them to their limits). Transgression brings these intrasystemic discourses all the way to the point where they can be juxtaposed with the phenomena located beyond the boundary. Such juxtaposi-

tion necessarily generates a fresh appreciation of the juxtaposed phenomena and, thereby, something new is brought into the system (new information about what is beyond the system's limit and how it is different from what is inside the system). However, the latter result of transgression is but a by-product of crossing the boundary, whereas in the case of translation, that was the primary objective.

War also crosses the boundary, thereby affirming the existence of the boundary and opening the internal communication of the involved systems for one another's elements (e.g., soldiers of warring nations inevitably learn something new about people in the countries they pass), yet these two functions are only by-products of war as a boundary phenomenon, the primary goal being an attempt to restore the integrity of the intrasystemic communication or intersystemic interaction or to enrich them (See Machiavelli 1975, vol. I, 375; vol. II, 101–102, note 6, 1).

Such are governing principles of distinguishing between these boundary phenomena, all other of their differences and similarities are deductible from these principal ones. For example, all the three cross the systemic boundary, yet the intensity of crossing is different in all the three cases. In transgression, crossing is not more than a glance beyond the cross, at the other side, from the limited into the limitless. Hence, transgression's extremism is nothing to compare to the extremism of the boundary crossing as observed in war, yet it is stronger than the intensity of translation's boundary-crossing. Translation may be transgressive (when it couples with transgression and assumes some of its properties), yet the power of translation's transgression is perhaps the most modest among the three. Translation's main function is to provide new elements, and transgression may be called upon only in order to emphasize the importance of suggested options. Yet, rarely, translators go as far as to impose the translated options upon the system (that is why we know those translators who were considered criminals for their translational audacity by name—they are exceptions that confirm the rule).

On the contrary, the extremism of transgression is much stronger because transgression aims 'to release forces within language that will hurl us to the limits of our ordinary concepts and experiences and give us a (*perhaps transforming*) glimpse of radically new modes of thought' (Gutting 2005, 17; emphasis added). There is no guarantee, however, that transgression will bring us transformation—*perhaps* is an important word used by Gary Gutting here. After all, transgression's function is not so much to provide something from beyond, but to bring us to the beyond. But none of the two—translation or transgression—can compare with war in the latter's intensity of crossing the boundary. War is a violent crossing aiming at nothing less than subduing the other side of the cross (Machiavelli 1965, 581, 653). But the constructive aspect of intersystemic boundary crossing is the strongest with translation.

Finally, translation, as compared with transgression and war, acts as a mediator between the two interacting social units in that it helps, even if only superficially, the interacting social units to reach a better understanding of one another; whereas transgression and war act almost exclusively on behalf of the home system and do not mediate in the sense of facilitating the home system's better appreciation of the other side of the cross.

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