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Translation and Translatability in Intersemiotic Space

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The chronotopical aspect of translatability in intersemiotic space

ABSTRACT

After being introduced in Mikhail Bakhtin's works, chronotopical analysis became particularly relevant again connected with an interest in intersemiotic analysis. The universality of this kind of analysis consists in its independence from the material in the structuring of texts and in making them comparable. It is essential to distinguish between the textual and the intertextual aspects of (interdiscursive, intermedial) chronotopical analysis. The former presupposes the analysis of an individual text proceeding from its chronotopical levels, and the latter is the analysis of the imaginary text, the text's cultural plurality. In a chronotopical analysis, it is best to distinguish between three levels. The topographical chronotope concerns the story, depicting an event or a succession of events. The psychological chronotope expresses the characters' viewpoints, and the metaphysical chronotope determines the text's conception through interrelating the different chronotopical levels. In (intersemiotic) translation, these chronotopical levels form an intersemiotic space where various translatability problems exist on each level. There is possible to distinguish implicit chronotopical translatability in a case of intralinguistic and interlinguistic translation and explicit translatability in a case of intersemiotic translation.

KEYWORDS:

chronotope

translatability

intersemiotic space

comparability

Introduction

There are moments in translation studies in which the increased vagueness of the concept of translation produces counter-reaction attempts at bringing the idea of translation back to its original linguistic essence. Whenever a translation of any given text is declared to be acceptable as a translation, it generates as a counter-reaction an attempt at creating a theory of good translation, which values the linguistic nature of translation: "A 'good' translation is a text which is a translation (i.e., is equivalent) in respect of those linguistic features which are most valued in the given translation context" (Halliday 2001: 17). Here the equivalence is neither formal nor dynamic but rather functional. This is indicated by the concept 'equivalence value', according to which "in any particular instance of translation, value may be attached to equivalence at different ranks, different strata, different metafunctions" (Halliday 2001: 17).

The second attempt at confronting the translation concept's increased vagueness is to associate it with conceptual interpretation. Here the vagueness consists not in retreating from acceptability and linguistic nature but rather in metaphorization. In his polemic book, Lawrence Venuti creates a system of conceptual binaries. In his introductory chapter, titled 'Provocations,' he lists the following binaries: "STOP treating translation as a metaphor. START considering it a material practice that is indivisibly linguistic *and* cultural. STOP using moralistic terms like 'faithful' and 'unfaithful' to describe translation. START defining it as the establishment of a variable equivalence to the source text. STOP assuming that translation is mechanical substitution. START conceiving of it as an interpretation that demands writerly and intellectual sophistication. STOP evaluating translations merely by comparing them to the source text. START examining their relations to the hierarchy of values, beliefs, and representations in the receiving culture. STOP asserting that any text is untranslatable. START realizing that every text is translatable because every text can be interpreted" (Venuti 2019: ix-x). In the last chapter, titled 'Stop/start,' he creates a conceptual framework:

> STOP assuming that a source text possesses an invariant form, meaning, or effect; START assuming that a source text can support multiple and conflicting interpretations and, therefore, an equally heterogeneous succession of translations. [...] STOP thinking of source texts in terms of translatability and untranslatability and of translation as involving loss or gain; START thinking of translation as an interpretive act that can be performed on any source text. [...] STOP reading translations as if they were or could be identical to their source texts; START reading translations as texts in their own right, relatively autonomous from the texts they translate. (Venuti 2019: 174-176)

Although Venuti's book addresses translation researchers and primarily proceeds from verbal translation (including translation of subtitles), he also applies concepts from Peirce, Eco, and Derrida for conceptualizing the idea of translation. The pathos of his book is, in fact, quite close to cultural semiotics' thinking, as presented by Yuri Lotman's book *Universe of the Mind*, in which Lotman argues that "the elementary act of thinking is translation" and "the elementary mechanism of translating is dialogue" (Lotman 1990: 143). Lotman's approach to culture includes the notion that thinking is mediated by language, but dialogue occurs in cultural space. Thus, there are two primary languages of culture:

> Genetically speaking, culture is built upon two primary languages. One of these is the natural language used by humans in everyday communication. […] The nature of the second primary language is not so obvious. What is under discussion is the structural model of space. (Lotman 1992: 142)

Table 1. **Levels of textual meaning**

TEXT				Punctum.
LEVELS	**INTRATEXTUAL RELATIONS** (semiotic resources)		**EXTRATEXTUAL RELATIONS** (work of art)	
MEANINGS	SUBTEXTUAL (linguistic or formal)	**FUNCTIONAL MEANINGS**	FUNCTIONAL MEANINGS	
STRUCTURE	STRUCTURE OF SEMIOTIC RESOURCES	**STRUCTURE OF WORK OF ART**	STRUCTURE OF WORK OF ART	
TEXT	TEXTUAL FEATURES	**INTERTEXTUAL SPECIFICITY**	INTERTEXTUAL SPECIFICITY	
DISCOURSE	DISCURSIVE FEATURES	**POSSIBILITIES OF INTER-DISCURSIVITY**	POSSIBILITIES OF INTER-DISCURSIVITY	
MEDIA	MEDIA FEATURES	**INTER-MEDIALITY**	INTER-MEDIALITY	

The structural model of space connects culture with its primary unit, text. Translation as dialogue first takes place in the space of the text. Since a complete interpretation of a text is only possible by comparing intratextual and extratextual relations, the dominant of analysis or translation can either be elementary textual meanings (such as translation on the level of words), the structural specificity of text (such as its rhythmical ordering), or poetics of text (the author's style). But a text's presentation style or subject matter can also represent a discourse, such as children's literature or a propaganda text. Of course, the same text can be assessed through its medium, if it is available both orally and in writing, both as a paper book and an audiobook. In translation, both the discourse and the medium can change. Thus, to understand the nature of a text and its meaning-making, the capacity to distinguish between basic structural levels is necessary.

A single text allows for innumerable different translations, and in the case of classical world literature, this is a well-known fact. As Venuti writes: "START assuming that a source text can support multiple and conflicting interpretations and therefore an equally heterogeneous succession of translations" (Venuti 2019: 174). But Venuti does not raise the question of typology concerning heterogeneity – how to compare the different translations of a text between one another. Understanding the methods of translation and translators is necessary both for teaching translators and for writing the history of translation. We are convinced that translations' comparability is possible by a universal model of the process of translation, which is, in turn, based on the universal structural properties of text (Torop 2007).

Moreover, a cultural semiotics approach permits a total translation model, which makes interlinguistic translation comparable with intralinguistic and intersemiotic translation. These three can be interpreted both as different aspects of an integrated translation process and as separate translation activities. To achieve this comparability, we must describe the text's structure based on both natural language and language of space (cf. Lotman's distinction, above). One basis for understanding the language of space can be Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of chronotope, which has been useful in classifying screen adaptations as well as intersemiotic translations, for example (cf. Torop 2000). One of the present paper's purposes is to consider translatability by proceeding not from the binary translatability-untranslatability, but from a single text's translatability potential. Translatability in intersemiotic space means the original text's simultaneous existence in different metatexts, discourses, and media. The intertextuality of a text is its natural characteristic, and, in the case of translations, there is also reason to consider the intertext as the relationship between the original text and its translation, as well as the relations of both with other texts (cf. e.g., Zhang, Ma 2018, Sakellariou 2015, Klimovich 2014). Interdiscursivity is closely connected with intertextuality:

Generally, intertextuality refers to the phenomenon that other texts are overtly drawn upon within a text, typically expressed through explicit surface textual features such as quotations and citations. All texts are constituted of elements of other texts and use such intertextual resources to varying degrees and for various purposes. However, interdiscursivity operates on a different dimension in that it refers to how a text is constituted by a combination of other language conventions (genres, discourses, and styles). (Wu 2011: 97)

Both intertextuality and interdiscursivity are in turn connected to intermediality, which is today the new environment for the creation and translation of texts, since moving from one medium to another is a kind of translation involving decision-making and negotiation in the light of the affordances of mode, the facilities of media as well as the critical and creative scope of the translational project as imagined and realized by the text's writer-producer/re-maker and re-created by the text's reader/viewer/co-constructor. (Doloughan 2011: 67) And of course, intermediality signifies intersemiotic space.

Translatability in intersemiotic space

Translatability in intersemiotic space develops in the course of a bidirectional process. If we were to proceed from the original text, then the translatability of, for example, a work of classic literature can be analyzed on two levels. 1) On the level of individual translations, one can observe how, in the course of the process of mediating a work of literature, there occurs an interlinguistic translation into other languages, an intralinguistic translation into the same language (such as adaptations for children or students), an intersemiotic translation into the languages of film, theatre, music, or images, which in turn can be interpreted, depending on the case at hand, as interdiscursive (adaptation, comic, parody) or intermedial (literature and film). On this level, our basis for analysis can be the concrete relationship between the original text and its translation, which by way of comparing all the translations with the original text, allows for an explanation of the ways of translatability (methods of translation and of translators) and the level of translation of a given work of literature. 2) Proceeding from culture, all the translations of a single classic piece of literature can be treated as interpretations that help preserve this work in cultural memory and assist in simply raising interest in, or leading to a more in-depth interest in this work. A reader can arrive at reading classic works of literature by way of different translated versions, or then again, these versions offer them an opportunity for additional or rereading. In intersemiotic space, the original text and all of its translations comprise a mental whole, which is all-encompassing for collective cultural memory and selective for every individual reader. In the context of culture, intersemiotic space is also a space of transmedial translation.

For this paper, we have selected the novel *Anna Karenina* by the Russian literary classic Leo Tolstoy. For instance, after the success of the British film adaptation (Joe Wright, 2012) of the Russian classical novel, some reprints of old translations of this novel, with pictures from the film on the cover, were published (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Transmedial *Anna Karenina*: the book's cover and the DVD's cover

The text as a book also has a cover as an architectonical element modeling the whole: "The book cover provides the (potential) reader with a visual summary of the book's contents" (Sonzogni 2011:4; cf also Lau, Varughese 2015). Designing the cover of a literary work with a shot from a popular screen adaptation creates a dialogue between the novel and the movie and amplifies the reader's interest in the novel. Raising the reputation of a novel with a film is also a change in branding, which Evangelos Kourdis has analyzed the example of logs and has compared them to translation (Kourdis 2019). There is a compositional similarity that Kourdis has compared to intersemiotic translation (Kourdis 2018), and which also has a currently topical interdiscursive version (Figure 2).

The novel's translations into cyberculture and parody, published soon after Joe Wright's movie, can also be considered interdiscursive (Figure 3). There are also comic book versions of *Anna Karenina*, both as mangas and in traditional style, including one Russian-English dual-language version (a couple of examples in Figure 4).
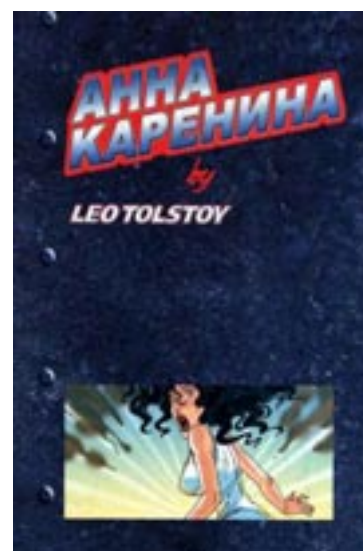
Figure 2.
Anna Karenina 2020

Figure 3.
Android Karenina (2013)
and *Anna Karenina*, bitch (2013)

Figure 4.
Anna Karenina: manga (2017)
and bilingual comics (2000)

These are but cursory examples of the transmedial whole that is *Anna Karenina*, which together demonstrate that a particular popular interpretation, such as Joe Wright's screen adaptation, in turn, unleashes the creativity of new interpreters. When one attempts to describe the entire transmedial process of translation, however, comparing, for example, all of the interpretations created during the 21st century, there first emerges the story world of *Anna Karenina* and then those characters, events, and ideas in the novel which resonate the most. The reasons for and ways of the readability of *Anna Karenina* and its place in cultural memory become apparent. However, in the intersemiotic sense, what is relevant is the correlation of a culture's semiotic systems (languages of culture) in a mental and multimodal whole called *Anna Karenina*.

Chronotopical analysis

In principle, a chronotopical analysis distinguishes three levels in every text. The topographical chronotope is related to the story, the depiction of an event, or a succession of events; the psychological chronotope expresses the characters' viewpoint; the metaphysical chronotope determines the text's conception through the interrelations between the different chronotopical levels. Since these levels are not related to texts' material, this type of analysis is particularly rewarding in comparing heterogeneous texts.

For a deeper understanding of the author's poetics and artistic thinking, it is essential to see in the text's construction not only organized space, but also the system of realities (worlds) it contains. According to Bakhtin, chronotope functions as a tool of holistic analysis for both text and culture: "World (chronotope) as the environment of characters and world (chronotope) as the horizon of the author" (Bakhtin 2012: 506). In these fragments, a definite attempt to create a methodological framework for chronotopical analysis is visible:

> Chronotopicality of thinking (especially ancient). A viewpoint is chronotopical, i.e., it embraces both the aspects of space and time. This is in direct relation with the axiological (hierarchical) viewpoint (attitude towards the high and the low). The chronotope of a depicted event, the chronotope of the narrator, and the chronotope of the author… (Bakhtin 2002: 393; cf also Morson; Emerson 1990; Holquist 1994)

The textual aspect consists of the analytical value of chronotopes as cognitive tools: the topographical chronotope as visibility, or the reality depicted in the text; psychological chronotope as markedness or unmarkedness of the characters' viewpoints; and metaphysical chronotope as the manner of realizing the author's conception, or the creation of a new conception of the text on the chronotopical level. The extratextual aspect is also present in Bakhtin's disquisitions:

> The work and the world represented in it enter the real world and enrich it, and the real world enters the work and its world, as part of the process of its creation, as well as part of its subsequent life, in a continual renewing of the work through the creative perception of listeners and readers. Of course, this process of exchange is itself chronotopic […]. We might even speak of a particular creative chronotope inside which this exchange between work and life occurs, and which constitutes the distinctive life of the work. (Bakhtin 1981: 254)

There is an implicit or explicit coexistence between the word and the picture within every text, or between narrative and performance. The basic semiotic binarities in defining montage mechanisms are discreteness and continuity on the level of language, textuality and processuality on the level of text, and narrativity and performativity on the level of culture (cultural semiosphere). Chronotopical levels constitute differences in texts between the topographical story world as a reality, the individual worlds or subjectivity of the world's perception by participants in events, and the conceptual world or authorial synthesis of all aspects of a text. The contact between the vertical and horizontal levels is a sphere of semiotization (Table 2).

Table 2. **Chronotopical levels of text and sphere of semiotization**

SPHERE OF SEMIOTIZATION

Punctum.

LEVELS	NARRATIVE WORD		PERFORMANCE PICTURE
TOPOGRA PHICAL CHRONOTOPE	STORY	**STORYWORLD INTERTEXTUALITY**	EVENTS
PSYCHO LOGICAL CHRONOTOPE	NARRATION	**SELF AND OTHER INNERWORLDS**	PERFORMING SHOWING
META PHYSICAL CHRONOTOPE	VERBAL DESCRIPTION	**CONCEPTUAL WORLD PRINCIPLES OF COHESION**	PICTORIAL DEPICTION

Semiotization (and semantization) suggests that the storyworld, on the topographical level of chronotope, is simultaneously the world of signs – things, names, situations, and behaviors. On the psychological level, the inner world is the world of semiotic states, thoughts, and characters' words. Finally, on the metaphysical level of chronotope, the conceptual world is the world of the author's hypertheme. Chronotopical analysis provides us an intricate understanding of a text and its meaning generating mechanism. Chronotope becomes a tool of holistic analysis of text: "World (chronotope) as environment of characters and world (chronotope) as horizon of the author" (Bakhtin 2012:506). A chronotopical system is a toolbox for a deeper understanding of authors'

poetics and holistic texts analysis. Textual structure and chronotopical structure are two analytical parameters of the specific construction of artistic texts (cf also Torop 2019, 2019a).

The case of *Anna Karenina* (2012)

What chronotopical construction was used in the last film adaptation of L.Tolstoy's novel *Anna Karenina* (Joe Wright, 2012)? The beginning of this adaptation is theatrical:

Figure 5. The curtain

The curtain (figure 5) gives the first information about time, place, and conditionality. After the beginning, the spectators expect a theatrical-like adaptation of the novel, more performance than storytelling. The first episode supports this expectation. The shaving on the stage gives a key for understanding conditionality not only in space but also in body language and behavior. The next episodes show that the stage (figure 6) is

not the only important element in the conditional (theatrical) transforming of space, but the whole theatre is involved.
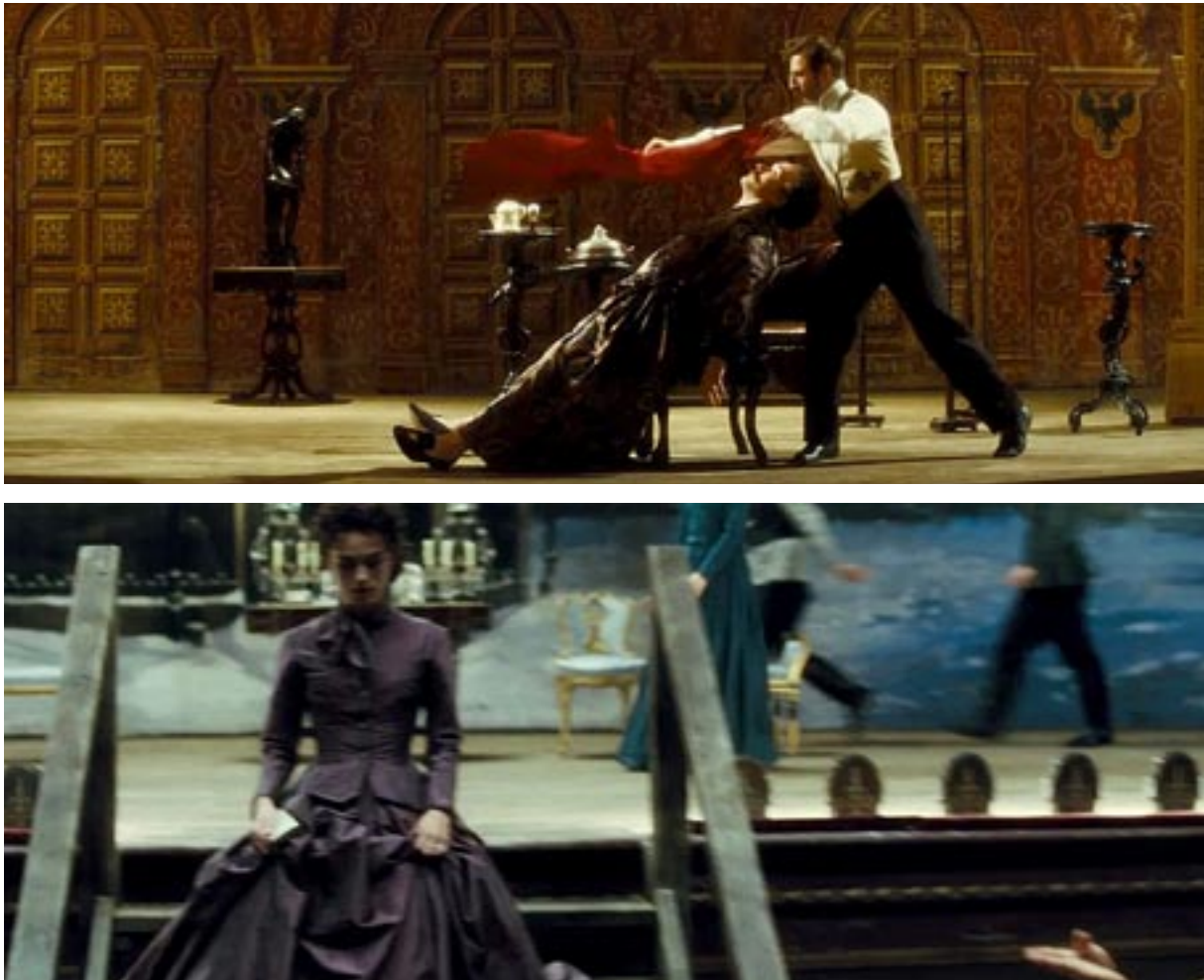

Figure 6. The stage

Conditionality is also expressed in proportions. For example, there is a significant similarity between a toy and a real train (figure 7). The suicide of Anna Karenina is also very theatrical due to the unreal proportions of the train. At the same time, of course, it was very symbolic.

Music and the actors' general dance-like movement (figure 8) are also essential features of this film. Ballroom dancing is historical from the costumes' perspective. The costumes are the most historically coherent level in this film. In some years, Jacqueline Durran won 11 different awards for best costume design, included an Academy Award (Oscar). However, the dances in this film were not historical. On one side, dancing is a performance of original body language and is the same for streets and ballrooms.

Figure 7.
Similarity between a
toy and a real train

Figure 8.
Music and the
general dance-like
movement
of the actors

On the other side, dancing is a cinematographic storytelling tool and a complex social and psychological communication (figure 9). At the same event, people can be alone and a part of a collective. An effective device is spatial montage, for example, for visualization of memories Anna Karenina. Furthermore, still images appearing in the background effectively accentuate moving images on the foreground (figure 9).
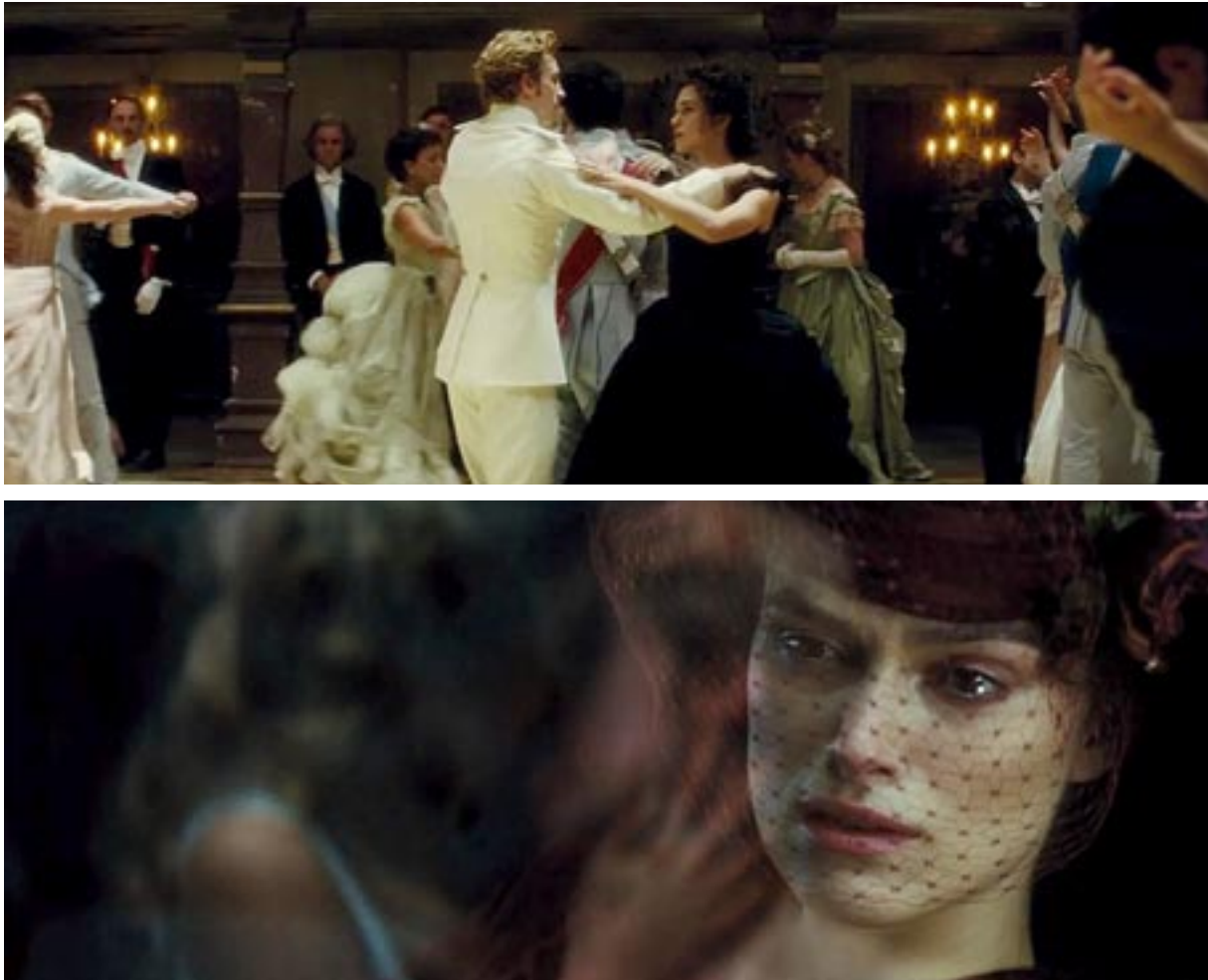

Figure 9. Dancing and images on the background

The theatre is an artificial world of Anna Karenina, high society, and all urban people. At the same time, there exists another world – a natural world with real nature, natural behavior, thinking, and manual work (figure 10). That is the world of Konstantin Levin.

The film's last shots are symbolic as the meeting of culture (theatre) and nature and the influence of nature on the conditional urban world (figure 11). The daughter, the son, and the husband of Anna Karenina are on the green meadow. It is a significant change. However, this meadow is not a natural nature. It is a new conditionality as a meadow on the stage (figure 12).

Figure 10.
Real nature
and manual work

Figure 11.
The daughter, the son,
and the husband of
Anna Karenina

Figure 12. A meadow on the stage

The artificial world and movement on the stage are both conceptual dominants of J.Wright's *Anna Karenina*. The conceptualization of these dominants is based on the intertextuality and intermediality. For Tolstoy, the contradiction between urban and rural and artificial and natural life was fundamental. From an intertextual perspective, the film version of *Anna Karenina* has a dialog with O. Figes' book *Natasha's dance: a cultural history of Russia* (2002). It is also useful to know about the ironic performing of Russian intellectual life in 'Russian' dramas of *Anna Karenina*'s screenwriter Tom Stoppard. In Tolstoy's previous novel, Natasha was a highborn heroine, *War and Peace*, who, in one scene, improvises a national dance like a peasant woman. It was an expression of deep Russianism. In *Anna Karenina*, dancing is a part of the European habits of Russian high society. Figes accentuated this binarity:

> For European Russians, there were two very different modes of personal behavior. In the salons and the ballrooms of St Petersburg, at court or in the theatre, they were very 'comme il faut': they performed their European manners almost like actors on a public stage. (Figes 2002: xxxii).

The other mode was Natasha's dance. Figes accentuated the conflict between these two modes:

> The European Russian had a split identity. His mind was a state divided into two. On one level, he was conscious of acting out his life according to prescribed European conventions, yet on another plane, his inner life was swayed by Russian customs and sensibilities [...] But generally speaking, the European Russian was a 'European' on the public stage and a 'Russian' in those moments of his private life when, without even thinking, he did things in a way that only Russians did (Figes 2002: 44-45).

It was the socio-historical aspect of dancing. The intermediality of *Anna Karenina* accentuates a symbiosis of dancing, dance-like movements, and music as a dialog between the film and ballet. It is the aesthetic aspect of dance(ing) that gives coherence to the film. The music and body language of *Anna Karenina* are interpretable as allusions to the Soviet film-ballet *Anyuta* (1982, Alexandr Belinsky, Vladimir Vasiliev). Valery Gavrilin's music and Vladimir Vasiliev's choreography made this ballet quite famous. The plot is based on Anton Chekhov's story *Anna on the Neck* and has similarities with Tolstoy's novel's plot. Another similarity is the description of "bureaucratic paperwork as the soul of Russia." The bureaucratic corps de ballet is comparable in both films, like many other motives (figure 12).

Figure 12. Bureaucratic "paperwork as the soul of Russia"

Table 3: **Very general overview of the chronotopical structure of *Anna Karenina* (2012)**

SPHERE OF SEMIOTIZATION: **ANNA KARENINA** FILM

LEVELS	NARRATIVE WORD	PERFORMANCE PICTURE	
TOPOGRA PHICAL CHRONOTOPE	STORY	**WORLD OF SIGNS** (THINGS, SITUATION, NAMES, BEHAVIOUR) Historical costumes, conditional theatrical space, artificial proportions of things, urban contra rural life	STAGE
PSYCHO LOGICAL CHRONOTOPE	NARRATION	**WORLD OF SEMIOTIC STATES, THOUGHTS, WORDS** Natural and artificial behaviour, still images and moving images as conflict	DANCE-LIKE MOVEMENT
META PHYSICAL CHRONOTOPE	VERBAL DESCRIPTION	**WORLD OF HYPERTHEME** Dance as symbol of artificial life, meadow on the stage as compromise	THEATRICAL CONCEPTION OF NOVEL

Punctum.

Every novel or film is based on the different hierarchy of chronotopes. The film *Anna Karenina* is simultaneously a story and performance, and its original artistic conditionality entails the description of a high society lifestyle (from space to body language). The contrary to this world is living in the countryside and manual work. The binarity of these worlds is in fundamental contrast on the level of topographic chronotope. On the level of psychological chronotope, Anna Karenina is described as a dynamic person in a static community. In pursuit of love and meaning of life, she is alone. In the film, this is visualized with Anna's movements between still images of people. On this level, there exists a contrast between dynamic (Anna, Levin) and static heroes and heroines. The metaphysical chronotope or level of film conceptualization represents contrast and conflict between Anna and society, urban and rural, artificial, and genuine life. The result of this dialog is a compromise. The influence of genuine life on the artificial world is represented with a meadow on the stage in the film's final episode. Different tools of artistic conditionality (stage, wrong proportions of things, artificial scenes, etc.) support this conception.

Conclusion

A text's chronotopical analysis allows for the analysis of translatability in intersemiotic space regarding both the translatability of a single text (in cases of intralinguistic, interlinguistic, and intersemiotic translation) and the instances of transmedial translation. For both in the synchronic and diachronic cultural memory, the transmedial story world of a single text can be analyzed as a single mental whole, an abstract text, which nevertheless can be subject to a chronotopical analysis. Also, a chronotopical approach enables refreshing the study of the history of translation and moving towards a transmedial translation history. This helps connect the history of translation with the history of literature and the entire history of culture.

From the perspective of the semiotics of translation, and given the inseparability of natural language from the language of space (in Lotman's sense), chronotopical analysis allows for moving from Jakobson's distinctions (intralinguistic, interlinguistic, and intersemiotic translation) towards the understanding that, even in translating verbal texts, other systems, in addition to language, can be distinguished. Kobus Marais has summarised this with the concepts of system and subsystems:

> Translation can take place between subsystems of a system, which qualifies it as intrasystemic translation. Also, translation takes place between systems, qualifying it as intersystemic translations. The problem is that, with systems thinking, what is intrasystemic at one level may be intersystemic at another as systems always have subsystems and are themselves subsystems of larger systems. So, the definition of translations will always be relative to the systemic level one is discussing. (Marais 2013:408)

This way of thinking originated with Gideon Toury's typology, who offers his version based on Jakobson's typology. The most general division is between intrasemiotic and intersemiotic translating, with the first category further divided into intrasystemic and intersystemic translating (Toury 1986: 1114). Some years later, Umberto Eco uses the similar notions of intrasystemic interpretation and intersystemic interpretation (Eco 2001). After him, Susan Petrilli proposes a comprehensive typology of translating processes, ranging from intersemiosic translation (translative processes across two or more sign systems) and endosemiosic translation (translative processes internal to a given system) in biosemiosphere to diamesic, diaphasic, and diglossic translation (translation between written and oral language, across registers, and between a standard language and a dialect, respectively) (Petrilli 2003: 19-20; cf overview in Sütiste and Torop 2007).

This line of thinking permits the discussion of different translatability levels both in translating a single text and in analyzing the transmedial process of translation. The chronotopical aspect adds flexibility to the analysis of translation culture and draws

researchers nearer to the possibility of comparing different translations systematically. Only in this way can both the translated text and the translator's identity be strengthened.

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