Conclusion

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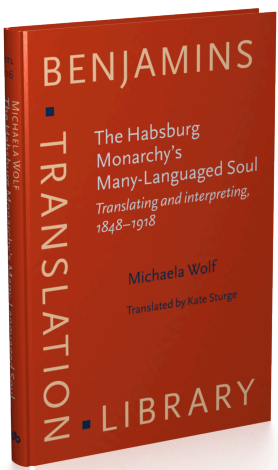

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The Habsburg Monarchy's Many-Languaged Soul: Translating and interpreting, 1848–1918
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Conclusion

The more of the Austrian Empire's languages
you understand, the more of an Austrian you will be.[1]

In this closing chapter, I draw together the Habsburg transfer and translation practices investigated so far to present a model that defines the phenomenon of translating as a process of action and communication within complex cultural and social networks. Let me begin by quoting from a 1922 satire by Carl Techet[2] that exemplifies the setting. In his short history of the Schneider family, writes Techet,

> persons and individual destinies belong to the average destiny of those civil-servant nomads who ignore the fact that the state to which they adhere sticks to them just as firmly, and obfuscates their existence so thoroughly that it retains only the smallest momentum of its own. …
>
> No one has ever managed to discover with certainty where the Schneiders originated; but they must have begun somewhere in Austria, although their membership of the fiscal state is surely not the main point.
>
> Yes, Schneider was their name.
>
> A German name?
>
> Old Schneider would have smiled blankly at the assertion that he was a German.
>
> His first position as a k.k. civil servant was in purely Asiatic Austria, in some subsidiary or other with an unpronounceable name in the borderlands of Galicia and Bukovina. There he forgot his German, and learned instead a sort-of-German with a Polish-Yiddish touch, and also – sufficiently for official purposes – Ruthenian, Polish and a little Romanian.
>
> Also, he there married a certain Fräulein Bobrzynski.

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1. Hammer-Purgstall (1852, 96), adapting the Latin saying "Quot linguas calles, tot homines vales".

2. Vienna-born Carl Techet (1877–1920) was a schoolteacher in Kufstein, but when he published his 1909 satire *Fern von Europa* (Far from Europe) under the pseudonym Sepp Schluiferer, painting a most unflattering portrait of the Tyrolese, he was persecuted and ultimately transferred to a "backyard" of the Empire, the Moravian town of Proßnitz/Prostějov. *Fern von Europa* has become a cult book and has been reissued several times (Plattform Inzing 2000; Nigg 2002; on reactions to his works, see SAGEN.at [n.d.]).

His beloved wife bore him a son. She made Polish at home in the family, but as a sideline also used Croatian, as her mother was a Croat, and cherished certain Hungarian proverbs with great loyalty, out of love for a quintessentially Magyar grandfather.

What was Father Schneider to reply when someone pointlessly asked him for his nationality? The question was bound to glance off his understanding.

Had he, the conscientiously trained servant of the political authorities, ever found the word "nation" or "nationality" in the copious decrees, ordinances and announcements, or in Imperial law? – Never and nowhere. – Were there, then, any "nations" in a fatherland?! Why should those terms rumble around in his head? They had no paragraphs or clauses – did they have any right at all to exist and be embodied? – One speaks whatever language one happens to have at hand and needs, just as one eats and drinks to pacify the belly and the gullet.

I am not saying that Schneider consciously deliberated thus. Oh no! He was impervious to the discord of opinions, for he was, and still remains, the "Austrian-in-itself". …

No ethnographer has yet studied the nation of Fiscal Austria. It lived in him with its five- or six-languaged soul, with the force of purposeful atrophy and of divinely ordained, mildly tranquil boneheadedness.

K.k. civil servant Schneider once sat perplexed before a census questionnaire containing the enigmatic heading "language of common communication". Fortunately, the sinister word "nationality" had been avoided once again – but the language of common communication nevertheless weighed heavily upon him.

How should he answer? At home he spoke Polish, sometimes a little German; with acquaintances, relatives and in the office he spoke both, and also Ruthenian and Romanian. His superior thought he could enter "Polish", since in the office and the coffee house one had no communication and therefore no language of communication – "you just sits there". But Herr Schneider did not want to incur any side's displeasure, and therefore wrote: "Neutral! Never the same, changes."

The years passed, and the Schneiders flourished splendidly. Schneider moved up the official ranks, attaining a considerably wider sphere of action in a Czech town and, naturally, an even higher salary ….

Helped by her knowledge of Croatian and Polish, the mother made herself Czech. The family's firstborn, Franciszek, became a Frantisek.

Father Schneider shook his head …. In the borderlands of Galicia and Bukovina, in the jumble of four or five languages, he had been allowed to lead an easy-going life as a neutral Fiscal Austrian. Here, where just two peoples were at odds and poisoned each other's existence, he was no longer permitted that comfort. … It was a great blow to Father Schneider that he had entered this dismal era when the Radetzky March was beginning to lose its virtue as a steadfast worldview ….

How should the Schneider brothers define themselves? Their mother was a Czech Pole with a half-Croat past; their father a neutral Fiscal Austrian, Polish

> through his wife, Austrianized through his office. He had acquired a little bit of person from each of several languages, not a whole person from any of them – but this chaos was his homeland. (Techet 1922, 11–17)

If I quote here *in extenso* from the narrative "Das ewige Oesterreich" (Eternal Austria), this is because it touches on so many of the present book's key concerns around language, national identity, and the role of translation. Techet's sardonic view of the rise of nationalism in the multiethnic state and the disapproving bewilderment expressed by the "nomads" of the Empire's civil service is set firmly in the context of everyday multilingualism. It reflects the conflicts inherent to Kakania's plurilingual soul.

Perhaps the most striking element of the passage cited is the reference to the good civil servant Schneider's multicentric language use. Asked whether his name is German, he answers with a puzzled smile, and once in "Asiatic Austria" he uses his apparent mother tongue only sporadically or even forgets it. None of his languages holds a genuinely central position in his life; the situations and circumstances in which he moves each day are too diverse for a single language ever to gain the upper hand. Herr Schneider's sense of normality, shaken by the invention of nationhood (see Anderson 1991), makes up the everyday life of multiethnic states: "Where several languages coexist, multilingualism may be so normal as to make an exclusive identification with any one idiom quite arbitrary" (Hobsbawm 1990, 57).

Hobsbawm's point clearly applies to Herr Schneider, who is not surprisingly baffled by the census request to name one "language of common communication" – his many-languaged soul balks at an unambiguity that has never marked his thoughts and actions, at least in linguistic matters, and that contradicts the immediacy of language use ("one speaks whatever language one happens to have at hand and needs"). The very fact that switching between languages, the constant oscillation between different codes, is not framed here as a distinction between officialdom and the private sphere shows that Schneider stands for an era when contextual switching is not experienced consciously. He is full of ambivalence, an "entangled subject" (Bronfen and Marius 1997, 4) who assigns situations around him to particular languages with "divinely ordained" routine, or at least without any conscious sense of discordance. He is the "Austrian-in-itself" and thus, logically enough from his point of view, describes his language of common communication as "neutral".

The everyday switching of contexts that Herr Schneider accomplishes with such apparent ease stands for the continual processes of translation between the various worlds in which he moves and acts – processes that are acquiring a different quality as the unifying melody of the Radetzky March begins to fade. The ordering principle embodied in civil servant Schneider and his "steadfast worldview"

as yet coexists harmoniously with a linguistic situation that Techet calls "chaotic". This hybrid subject, whose homeland is chaos, typifies the Habsburg Monarchy, recurring in different forms and configurations across all social classes and cultural groupings. In this sense, the Monarchy may be imagined as made up of formations of innumerable "little bits of person", who manage their everyday life by means of complex translation processes and thereby weave the pluricultural fabric of the multiethnic state.

1. Model: The communicative space of the Habsburg Monarchy

Given this, we may think of the Habsburg Monarchy as a hybrid world in which, and by means of which, processes of interaction are constantly at work. The model I will now set out seeks to capture in schematic form the complexity of that world's possible references and communicative contexts. As will be seen, four broad domains of polycultural or transcultural contextualization emerge, which cannot be sharply demarcated and always interact. The first of them is the complex plurilingual and pluricultural communicative space of the Habsburg Monarchy, a "polytheistic" space (Strutz 1992, 331) marked by great ethnic, linguistic and cultural density.[3] This space is dominated by processes which are dependent on perpetual exchanges between ethnic and linguistic groupings, crosscutting class identities, and are therefore commonplace and everyday to a high degree. In the domains of what I will call the space of polycultural translation and the exogenous cultural field, concrete cultural products are created from, in the first case, the interaction of elements within the Monarchy and, in the second, representations emanating from "alien"– that is, geographically and culturally external – spaces. In the overlaps between these two domains is, fourthly, the space of transcultural translation, the source of the translations produced by interactions between Habsburg and exogenous cultural elements. Of special significance, and indeed constitutive of the Habsburg communicative space, are the spaces' open borders and their constant interplay. Power relationships are present in all those interactions, but especially in the contact zones; they are pivotal to the dynamism of each space. The social, political and economic factors producing that dynamism can be found in modernization, war and its territorial consequences, or knowledge of "foreign" languages, often learned under the pressure of migration. Figure 20 illustrates the processes of communication and translation in the Habsburg Monarchy (with the usual proviso that any such visualization is bound to oversimplify).

3. On the "lived communicative space" in a linguistic context, see Krefeld (2004).

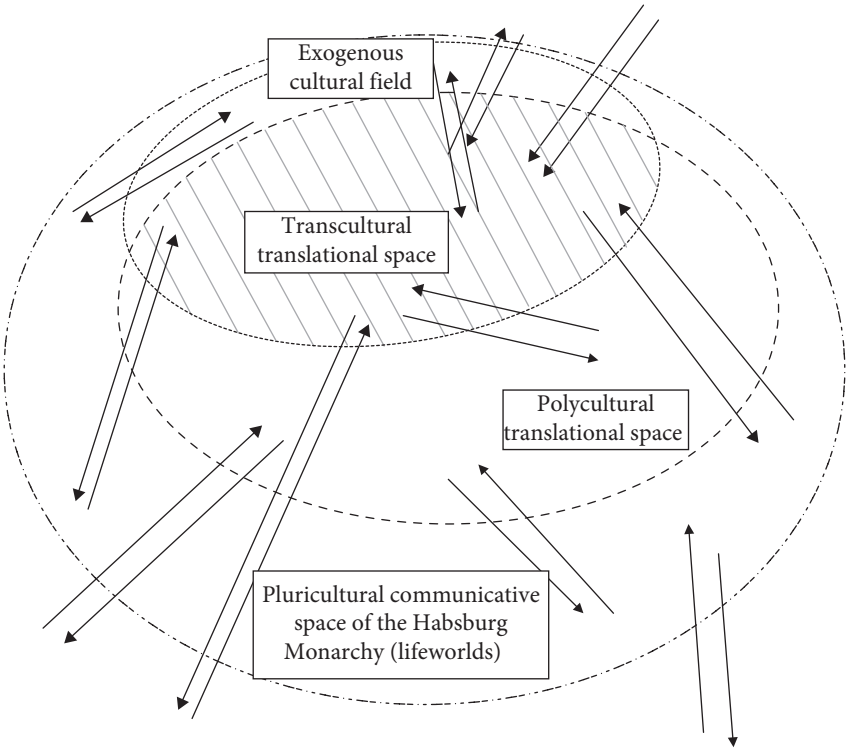

Figure 20. The communicative space of the Habsburg Monarchy

The pluricultural communicative space of the Habsburg Monarchy

Moritz Csáky's view of culture as an "open communicative space" (2010, 101) provides the basis for my concept of the Habsburg Monarchy's pluricultural communicative space. Csáky argues that culture should be regarded as comprising the "entire ensemble of elements, signs, codes or symbols" by means of which individuals carry out "verbal and non-verbal communication within a social context" (ibid.). Ways of behaving in a culture are constantly changing, are constantly under performative negotiation. For a notion of culture as communicative space, this implies that individuals or groups continually reconstitute their lifeworlds and power relationships by positing or avoiding particular elements, signs and codes. Of particular value for the model of a Habsburg communicative space is Czáky's refusal to draw sharp distinctions between "high" and everyday culture or to essentialize culture, an approach he illustrates through the case of language:

> Consider, for example, the constant, dynamic changing of an actual spoken language, with its neologisms, changes in meaning and new connotations, added to which are continual loans from other actual languages, that is, other linguistic communicative spaces. (Ibid., 24)

I would expand this spectrum of components by adding the translation types presented earlier in this book. The pluricultural communicative space of the Habsburg Monarchy is shaped by numerous translation processes, many of which are located in the wider communicative structure of the "densely ethnically and culturally mixed Habsburg state" (Stachel 2001, 20). These include, on the one hand, processes of communication and transfer like travel narratives (Stark 1999; Agorni 2002) or the mediation performed by publishers and merchants (see Espagne 1997), and, on the other, the Monarchy's characteristic bi- and multilingualism. In other words, the pluricultural communicative space brings together all translational processes, whether or not they are carried out by explicitly designated agencies of mediation. The second group, processes around linguistic plurality, is what I will emphasize in the following.

It is not only multilingualism as such that may be considered constitutive of the Habsburg Monarchy,[4] but also the conflict situations intrinsic to the dynamic processes within a communicative space. As Hans Goebl comments, anyone who lived in the Habsburg lands, or served the Habsburgs in whatever role, was inevitably exposed to a whole range of language contacts and language conflicts (Goebl 1997, 106). The potential for tension inheres in multiethnic societies, and takes its specific form from the gap between usage and prestige. This functional asymmetry may result in a diglossic or polyglossic hierarchy of languages that reflects the structures of power (see Rindler-Schjerve 1997, 17–18). In view of this power play within linguistic configurations, the distinctions between attitudes to the different domains of language use are important: conflicts tend to cluster around the public use of particular languages, in other words in administration or education, where written language plays an important role. The language or languages

> spoken within the private sphere of communication raise no serious problems even when it or they coexist with public languages, since each occupies its own space, as every child knows when it switches from the idiom appropriate for talking to parents to the one suited to teachers or friends. (Hobsbawm 1990, 113)

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4. The great importance attached to multilingualism (and therefore, in the present context, to translating) and its political topicality in the Habsburg Monarchy's communicative space is reflected in the theme chosen by the president of the Imperial Academy of Sciences, Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall, to celebrate the institution's fifth anniversary in 1852: "Lecture on Multilingualism" (Hammer-Purgstall 1852; see also Stachel 2001, 42).

Switching between languages and cultures was thus routine procedure among the inhabitants of the Habsburg Monarchy.

A glance at everyday communication in the Monarchy reveals two main types of translating, in most cases between several languages. The first is the type of translating without which it would be impossible to handle everyday communication, and which in this book I have called "habitualized translating". This covers the labour of communication within the Habsburg Monarchy that was not explicitly requested but routinely carried out by servants, craftspeople, coachmen, wet nurses, publicans and so on. Mixed marriages, like that of the Kakanian functionary Schneider, also epitomize the practices of habitualized translation. Such translating tends to be framed within highly asymmetrical relationships. It is usually oriented unilaterally on the target language, and in social terms on a lower-to-higher direction of communication. The other direction is the exception, although cases are documented where the children of an employer family, for example, learned the language of the domestic staff at least in a fragmentary form. Habitualized translation formed the basis of communication for large segments of the Habsburg Monarchy's population.

The second form of translation in this area is what I call "institutionalized translating". The dense network of administration that characterized the Monarchy in general and increased with further democratization demanded a differential treatment of the Monarchy's various languages in schooling, the military, the courtroom and other contexts. Language practice here was usually regulated by law (see Fischel 1910), with Article 19 of the 1867 constitution giving rise to a series of ordinances – respected to a greater or lesser degree on the ground – that attempted to manage multilingualism in the public sphere. This public context explains my choice of the label "institutionalized" to describe this multiform translation type. The term acquires further plausibility if we consider state initiatives to encourage officials' acquisition of other "languages of the land" (*Landessprachen*) used in their particular locations, the aim being to continue the state's polyglot tradition at least in statutory terms and to organize communication within the Empire as efficiently as possible (see Chapter 4 on language learning in the Habsburg Army or the training of polyglot diplomats at the Oriental Academy). Accordingly, if it was the multifarious cultural acts of linkage that constituted the Monarchy's hybridity, those acts took place primarily in everyday practice, as part of the lifeworlds of the Habsburg population. Their multiple encodings did not follow rigid rules, but were more flexible in structure, potentially enabling greater interplay between cultural elements. Admittedly, this does not apply equally across the Habsburg area: some regions were particularly affected by such "contamination", while others subsisted in zones with far less concentrated overlaps.

Space of polycultural translation

This space exists within the communicative space of the Habsburg Monarchy, and comprises two constantly interacting complexes. On the one hand, it is the site of the production of cultural goods by Habsburg inhabitants who were not performing an explicit or conscious labour of transfer. Nevertheless, such cultural products – works of art, architecture, literature or music in the areas of popular or high culture – arose within the Habsburg communicative structure and were therefore subject to its communicative strategies and dynamics. Despite being defined as "originals", they can certainly not be regarded as ethnically and culturally "pure" in any way, but were the outcomes of many different encodings. This view of original cultural production as mixed implies that text is the provisional outcome of multiple different meaning ascriptions, which is why I include such products in the category of the space of polycultural translation. Examples would be many Habsburg operettas, or the recipes that gradually made their way across the Monarchy.

Imbricated with this complex through individual agents and comparable representational strategies is the space in which translations in the narrower sense are made – products of the Habsburg Monarchy's own ethnic groupings that include both literary translations and translation or interpreting in the administrative field. In this sub-space, historical and other connections determine the degree of interaction in any one case. Transfer between Slovenian and Serbo-Croat, for example, obeys different constraints and forms a differently figured fabric from transfer between German and Slovenian or between Italian and German. In all cases, the criteria of hegemony are the crucial ones.

At first sight, there seem to be parallels between the making of these translations and the making of cultural products in the previous category – close enough to blur the borders between them. However, there are also fundamental structural differences. For a translation to be made, there must be an agent performing an explicit act of mediation, whereas for the production of originals (for example, popular literature) the mediation is only implicit, not carried out consciously. Partly for this reason, the profile of interests and actions in the two areas diverges significantly. Transfer efforts are the defining feature of the space of polycultural translations in the narrower sense, but an optional one in the space of original productions (even if they are always implicitly there in the background). Finally, the cultural products created in this space are subject to very varied conditions in terms of social class, ethnic or national grouping and, especially, historical epoch (always within the period between 1848 and 1918). The practices of communication and transfer carried out by the army may be located at the edges between the space of polycultural translation and the wider pluricultural communicative space, as some take the shape of bilingual and multilingual communication, others of

mediation through translations in the narrower sense (for example between the members of a regiment). The borders between this space and the space of transcultural translation are open.

Exogenous cultural field

The term "exogenous cultural field" is chosen with reference to Csáky's "exogenous plurality", as it shares many traits with that category but is mainly located *within* the pluricultural communicative space of the Habsburg Monarchy. This is because exogenous elements – cultural elements arriving from spaces located geographically and culturally outside the Monarchy's frontiers, though not necessarily having been produced there, for example a book or opera in a "foreign" language – can only be perceived, or be relevant to the Monarchy's communicative space and its relationships, if they are actually distributed and thus attain a presence there. The exogenous cultural field interacts with the pluricultural space in varying degrees of intensity, and, like parts of the space of polycultural translation, it is not explicitly the result of transfers; the intensity of transfer depends on the extent to which contextual links need to be created with cultural elements of the pluricultural communicative space, regardless of whether agents are actually conscious of that need. Accordingly, the exogenous cultural field is not large, accounting for only a very small proportion of the Habsburg Monarchy's cultural production. It comprises "original" products (regarded as such despite being inherently hybrid) received or consumed by an audience that was small, but possessed substantial symbolic and social capital.

Space of transcultural translation

This space is located in the overlap of the space of polycultural translation with the exogenous cultural field, and therefore also within the larger communicative space of the Monarchy. The space of transcultural translation is the site of the transfer processes, and the translations (in the narrower and wider sense), that result from interaction between the cultural practices of the Habsburg Monarchy and those of "other" cultures. It is therefore highly dynamic – for not only do its cultural products arise from the reciprocal impacts of the space of polycultural translation and the exogenous cultural field, but its own effect on the pluricultural space, in the form of discursive meaning constructions, forms part of that space's communicative potential. In addition, the external impact of the transcultural translational space's products and their retroaction on the exogenous cultural field should not be underestimated.

The transfers that happen in and determine the space of transcultural translation encompass not only conventional translation and interpreting between the cultures involved (such as literary or diplomatic translating), but also fashions or schools of thought in the domain of everyday life, art, literature or music. It is important to note that these transfers are not one-dimensional but always already mixed or contaminated, indicating once again how much hybridity is inherent to all cultural products. Viennese commentator Hermann Bahr remarked that there was no point in describing Austrian literature as part of German literature, since "one will find something French, something German, traces of all literatures, for our mind has been in commerce with everything" (Bahr 1894/1995, 317). Thus, the translation of a text from English into German and its subsequent publication by a Viennese company, for example, is not a simple, linear transmission; it is a process that began before a word of the translation was written, because the English text itself was already shot through with ambivalences and multiple contextualizations. Also of importance here are the various intermediate categories between the space of transcultural translation and that of polycultural translation, where institutions like the Evidence Bureau carried out transfer both within and across the Monarchy's boundaries.

Translation results in continual reinterpretations and transformations that both dynamize the receiving culture and threaten to fracture it. Depending on the extent of contamination within the cultures involved, dynamic processes arise that shaped the space of the Habsburg Monarchy as a whole and could amplify or attenuate the existing relationships of power. The difference between translating a French text into German or into Ruthenian lay, not least, in the different degree to which discursive exchanges had already taken place between the cultures, processes that themselves altered meaning ascriptions. The hierarchical relations between the parties involved, too, affected these translational exchanges.

2. Kakania as a site of translation

In all these dimensions of the Habsburg communicative space, power relations conditioned communication on every level. They emanated from tensions between the various societal groups and, towards the end of the nineteenth century, increasingly also from the nationalities conflicts, which importantly influenced the mechanisms of communication. In the creation of cultural products, the impact of power relations made itself felt in various different forms. For the specific context of producing translations in the narrower sense, one of these was the enhanced national consciousness that resulted from (and itself fuelled) the Monarchy's nationalities conflicts and promoted the creation of "original" cultural products in

different languages. This, in turn, contributed to an increase in translation activity: the greater volume and often diversification of original texts offered a greater palette from which to choose translations. This was of interest to both professional mediators and the public, as is evident from cases like the massive increase in translations from Serbo-Croat into German from around 1888 (in 1888–97, the number of translations rose almost threefold compared to the previous decade).

The border dimension is important to all these processes of reinterpretation, as is the dimension of overlap between the various fields or spaces. The site of cultural intersection, the "in-between" where cultural negotiations take place and "asymmetrical powers, dissonance and the unsaid are inscribed in a rendezvous in which the West and its others emerge modified" (Chambers 1996, 49), is thus a contact zone, a concentrated form of translation that bears enormous potential for producing further recontextualizations. Cultural mediators work primarily at the transitions and fault lines, creative settings for the generation of cultural difference, which is why the borders between fields or spaces are here thought of as fluid and permeable. This permeability is favoured by the individuals and social groups whose plurilingualism means that they simultaneously occupy several different communicative spaces.

It is worth emphasizing the creative power of such border zones. As Anthony Pym observes in his discussion of historical networks of translations, in many cases it is the act of translation that makes the borders between cultures manifest. This link between translation and border may follow a special logic, given that border regions are often bi- or multilingual and for this reason produce pluricultural mediators; borders are also created inside cities, a process fostered by migration (Pym 1998, 105). All these points are clearly valid for the communicative space of the Habsburg Monarchy. The entanglement of countless transfers – at times reinforced by explicit mediation processes – occurred at the cultural boundaries or interstices, where plurality was particularly pronounced (for example Herr Schneider at the Monarchy's "periphery" or the everyday communicative labour of servants at its "centre"). In these areas, as well, the movement of individuals across the borders of different forms of translation becomes particularly visible (for example Antonio Martecchini, whose career took him from the domain of institutional translation, grounded in plurilingualism and belonging to the pluricultural space, into the greater density of exchange found in the space of polycultural translation).

Against this background, agents in the various fields may be regarded as border-crossers, contributing to the production of different contextualizations on the basis of the specific connections within the contact zones between cultural spaces that condition them and are conditioned by them. At the same time, these agents, as the bearers of hybrid identity, generate the productive instability of cultural change. Seen this way, the Habsburg or Kakanian subject has much in common with the postcolonial subject.

In summary, my account of translation's constructive character arises from a notion of culture that takes account of the multifarious processes of meaning constitution and recontextualization generated by cultural encounters. In the Habsburg context, this means that culture was produced by members of a community who crossed geographical, ethnic, linguistic, political and national boundaries, each for his or her own reasons. Culture was a web to be constantly rewoven, a labour of translation from one generation to the next that accumulated more and more complexity from the voices of ever more participants in the process. As mediators located at key points in the construction of culture by translation, and as the bearers of multiple meanings, these actors supplied an important impetus for change in their environments. In the cultural constellation of the Monarchy, what Hugo Schuchardt once called an "experimental station", processes of construction were continuously at work on two levels: on a macro level mainly conditioned by migration, and on a micro level where the constant labour of translation *sensu stricto* accommodated a heterogeneous cultural lifeworld while also contributing to its construction. In this book, I have proposed a view of translation as something reciprocal, dialogical, polyphonic and interactional – something that always plays a part in constructing the receiving culture and is able, because of that culture's heterogeneity and contamination, to find receptive contexts that permit mutability, renewal and retransformation. It is in this sense that Habsburg culture may be understood as the outcome of processes of translation.