

TRANSLATOLOGY IN CROATIA AND SERBIA FROM THE BEGINNINGS  
OF THE DISCIPLINE TO THE THEORY OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION

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The ‘theory of translation’ (*teorija prevodjenja*) seems to have been the first term used, almost simultaneously in Croatian and Serbian scholarly circles in the late seventies, to indicate analytical reflections on translation.<sup>1</sup> Still insecure about its right to the status of a scientific discipline, the authors used to accompany the term ‘theory’ with other terms to distinguish it from the practice of translation and to separate it from the field of poetics and literary criticism. Thus, the first systematic book on the topic was the Croatian author Vladimir Ivir’s *Teorija i tehnika prevodjenja* (Theory and *techniques* of translation) in 1978<sup>2</sup> and the 1981 collection of essays on Serbian translation

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<sup>1</sup> The international references for this terminological choice were both Western – J. C. Catford (*A Linguistic Theory of Translation*, 1965) and E. A. Nida (with C. R. Taber, *The Theory and Practice of Translation*, 1969), and Eastern – A. V. Fedorov (*Vvedenie v teoriju perevoda*, 1958<sup>2</sup>) and L. S. Barkhudarov (*Jazyk i perevod – voprosy obščej i častnoj teorii perevoda*, 1975). See R. Bugarski, *Teorija prevodjenja kao naučna disciplina*, in *Teorija i poetika prevodjenja*, ed. Lj. Rajić, Beograd, Prosveta, 1981, pp. 7-26, particularly on p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Later, Ivir would become much less convinced about the term ‘theory of translation’. First doubts on its suitability had appeared as early as in his 1978 book, in which he questioned the exclusively linguistic theory of translation (*Teorija i tehnika prevodjenja*, Novi Sad, 1984<sup>2</sup>, p. 53). Later he would reflect on the “non-algorithmic nature” of the discipline. According to Ivir, the aim of achieving machine translation – one of the reasons for the introduction of “algorithms” into the theory of translation – was overambitious and, in any case, an incomplete approach (in V. Ivir, *On the Non-Algorithmic Nature of Translation Theory*, “Studia Romanica et Anglica Zagrabienisa”, 36-37 (1991-1992), pp. 85-91. It is interesting to note that the Italian linguist Gianfranco Folena referred in the same year to the enthusiasm for machine translation as a blind alley for the theory of translation; see G. Folena, *Premessa*, in Id., *Volgarizzare e tradurre*, Torino, Einaudi, 1991, p. VIII). The word ‘theory’, according to Ivir’s later works, implies a coherent system of concepts, principles and explanations of certain phenomena, a system that can be either confirmed or falsified, and so it is impossible to elaborate a *theory* around such a “non-algorithmic” phenomenon as translation (V. Ivir, *Teorija prevodjenja i znanost o prevodjenju*, in *Prevodjenje: suvremena strujanja i tendencije*, ed. by J. Mihaljević Djigunović and N. Pintarić, Zagreb, Hrvatsko društvo za primijenjenu lingvistiku,

theory is entitled *Teorija i poetika prevodenja* (Theory and poetics of translation).<sup>3</sup> Other terms were also used for the new discipline, referring to the same field or its subdisciplines: *nauka/znanost o prevodenju* (science of translation), *kritika prevodenja* (translation criticism), *poetika prevodenja* (poetics of translation).

Most of the terminological inconsistencies were due to the fact that the new discipline was rooted simultaneously, but not always harmoniously, in two different fields: linguistics and literary criticism. Similarly to translatology in Western scholarly circles, the Croatian and Serbian beginnings of the discipline were strongly marked by this dual origin. Some kinds of reflections on *literary* translation had always existed, at least from the early days of literary criticism in the 19th century, for example in the form of reports on a translator's own work and critiques of translated literary texts. It was, however, only with the emergence of machine translation after the Second World War, and with scientific descriptions of *linguistic* aspects of translation being offered within the structuralist paradigm, that translation theory had the opportunity to become a scientifically-based discipline. One of the witnesses of the debate in Western translatology of that time, the Italian scholar Gianfranco Folena, records that although the structuralistic approach to translation had the merit of affording the discipline a scientific foundation, it was both naïve in its self-consciously pioneering ethos (ignoring any link with previous reflections on translation) and restrictive in its strict definition of the topic, mainly through binary oppositions.<sup>4</sup> Vladimir Ivir also complained often about the narrowness of the linguistic approaches that confined reflec-

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1995, pp. 517-522). In the '90s Ivir was more inclined to favour the reintroduction of the old – and methodologically less ambitious – term *znanost o prevodenju* (science of translation, coined by Nida in 1964). As Ivir's case shows, the discussion around the name and the methods of the discipline goes from the imperative of scientificity in the '70s towards a more elastic understandings of the field and its perspectives – with loose interdisciplinary boundaries – in the '90s.

<sup>3</sup> This collection of essays opens with an introductory article by Ranko Bugarski, *Teorija prevodenja kao naučna disciplina* (The theory of translation as a scientific discipline), cit., which categorically states the right of the theory of translation to be regarded as a scientific discipline within the wider field of linguistics. On the other hand, the term *poetics* of translation, used in this collection mostly in connection with literary criticism (although Bugarski is critical of it: *Ibidem*, p. 14), would later appear more frequently as an indicator for a methodologically coordinated set of tools used in someone's practice of translation, based on a defined understanding of the principles of translation, thus deriving from a certain theory, but halfway between theory and practice.

<sup>4</sup> G. Folena, *Premessa*, cit., p. VIII-IX.

tion on translation to the contrastive aspects of *langue*, instead of opening up the research to the dynamic manifestations and cultural diversity of *parole*.<sup>5</sup>

The present paper will take into account both approaches – the linguistic and the cultural – and their combinations in Croatian and Serbian translatology. It will deal with both *Croatian* and *Serbian* translation theory. They were two quite distinct scientific areas, and they have become even more so since the dissolution of Yugoslavia. However, the works of Croatian and Serbian authors are written in languages that are totally and mutually understandable.<sup>6</sup> In the '80s, the two circles shared the same space in public debate and a common readership of their books; the authors knew and often quoted each other's works.<sup>7</sup> Major international projects of contrastive linguistics, a branch that represented a kind of precursor of translatology and was very popular in the '70s, involved different universities in the former Yugoslavia and were presented as contrastive analyses of English vs. Serbian and Croatian.<sup>8</sup> It is true that no common "Serbo-Croatian" school of translatology has been created (but neither is there a 'Serbian school of translatology' or a Croatian one) since the authors of both areas maintained a large variety of approaches that could not be subsumed under one 'school'. The only group of authors that could (although very tentatively) be called a 'school' is that of the recent theoreticians of cultural translation, an international current of thought that draws on Homi Bhabha and has two important representatives from ex-Yugoslav countries: Boris Buden and Tomislav Longinović. However, regardless of their Croatian (Buden) and Serbian (Longinović) origins, both of them are biographically and ideologically migrant authors, and the

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. V. Ivir, *Lingvistička sastavnica teorije prevođenja*, "Suvremena lingvistika", 18 (1992), 2 (34), pp. 93-101.

<sup>6</sup> The question of "one or four" South Slavic Štokavian languages (Croatian, Bosnian, Montenegrin and Serbian) cannot be discussed here, but we can certainly state that for the purposes of the present research the most appropriate point of view from which to examine the question is that of sociolinguistics, the approach that permits us to grasp the complexity of historical, cultural, identitarian, political and hegemonic phenomena that go much further than mere grammar definitions. A useful description of the problem can be found in D. Škiljan, *Govor nacije*, Zagreb, Golden marketing, 2002.

<sup>7</sup> At the beginning of his essay, R. Bugarski declares that his work "owes quite a lot" to Ivir's book, "the first systematic introduction to the theory of translation that has been published in our country" (R. Bugarski, *Teorija prevođenja kao naučna disciplina*, cit., p. 9).

<sup>8</sup> Cf. D. Kalogjera, *In memoriam: Vladimir Ivir*, "Studia romanica et Anglica Zagrabien-sia", 56 (2011), pp. 275-285, for this information see on p. 275. The results of the main project in this field were published in the series "Yugoslav Serbo-Croatian – English Contrastive Project", Zagreb, Institute of Linguistics and Faculty of Philosophy, from 1969.

most important thing about their thought is its transnationalism. It would be quite inappropriate, therefore, to present them as representatives of any kind of national school of thought.

#### Croatian translatology: linguistic and cultural approaches from Ivir to today

The author of the previously mentioned first systematic book on translation theory in South East European area, Vladimir Ivir was primarily a linguist, specialising in English syntax and in the contrastive analysis of English and Croatian. However, he considered it essential that the theory of translation go beyond the concept of *formal correspondence* as a key term of contrastive analysis (verifiable in the process of *backtranslation*) and aim for a *translational equivalence* that would include psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic, cultural and other extralinguistic contents.<sup>9</sup> While the particular communicative model of translation elaborated by Ivir in the 1970s was based on information theory, which explained every linguistic interaction through fixed elements such as communication channel, code, intention, noise in the channel, extralinguistic content etc., he remained very aware of the non-linguistic aspects of translation.<sup>10</sup> Thanks to this awareness, Ivir's model has proven to be very flexible and open to the cultural turn in translation theory of the '80s and '90s.

The communicative model of translation elaborated by Ivir is a dynamic model, similar to the 'dynamic equivalence' of Nida.<sup>11</sup> Ivir treats translation equivalence as a matter of the dynamic relationship that takes place in the act of communication through approximations and negotiation, a barely sufficient overcoming of the inevitable non-matching of the cultures.<sup>12</sup> It

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. V. Ivir, *Contrasting via Translation: Formal Correspondence vs. Translation Equivalence*, in "Yugoslav Serbo-Croatian – English Contrastive Project, Studies", vol. 1, Zagreb, Institute of Linguistics and Faculty of Philosophy, 1969, pp. 13-25; Id., *Formal Correspondence vs. Translation Equivalence Revisited*, "Poetics Today", vol. 2:4 (1981), pp. 51-59; Id., *Translation and Backtranslation*, in *Yugoslav General Linguistics*, ed. by M. Radovanović, Amsterdam-Philadelphia, John Benjamins, 1989, pp. 131-143; Id., *Formal/Contrastive Correspondence and Translation Equivalence*, "Studia Romanica et Anglica Zagrabienisia", 42 (1997), pp. 167-180.

<sup>10</sup> "[A] comprehensive theory of translation cannot be a linguistic theory of translation alone", in: V. Ivir, *Linguistic and Extra-Linguistic Considerations in Translation*, "Studia Romanica et Anglica Zagrabienisia", 33-36 (1972-1973), pp. 615-625, quotation on p. 616.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. V. Ivir, *Teorija i tehnika...*, cit., p. 89, where he includes the "closest natural equivalent" in his translation scheme.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 43-44.

means that the equivalence is realized through the communication and does not exist outside of it. This dynamic understanding of equivalence is close to the concept of continuous semiosis characteristic of poststructuralist approaches. Anticipating the debate on translation as infinite production of meaning in the Croatian translology of the '90s, in 1989 Ivir stated that "insufficient distinction is made between translation as a process and translation as a product" and that "equivalence happens rather than is".<sup>13</sup>

The reflection on cultural differences leads Ivir to the question of untranslatability. If the translation always implies a metaphorical shift in meaning, the communication, if it is to happen, has to settle for compromises. This applies not only to translation but to all communication: Ivir regards every communicative act, including those within the same linguistic community, as an act of translation which has to deal with cultural differences.<sup>14</sup> Ivir had in mind the philosophical question of the relation between the individual experience of the pre-linguistic self on the one hand and the collective language on the other; every speech act is the translation of individual experience into language, and implies a metaphorical shift of meaning that can never express the same, but only *almost* the same, meaning. This difficulty, indicating the basic untranslatability between humans, is for Ivir the potential ultimate limit of every communication attempt.

However, Ivir's theory carefully avoids the extreme linguistic relativism to which such ideas can lead, distancing himself from German romanticism and Humboldt.<sup>15</sup> Probably because for all of his scientific career Ivir has also been an active translator and interpreter, he never abandoned himself to a purely theoretical reflection on untranslatability, stating that, despite all obstacles, communication – and translation – always happen somehow. While completely aware of the insurmountable obstacles to mutual understanding between people, Ivir insists on the *need* for people to communicate. The translator's *flexibility*, which sometimes means going some distance from the source text, is the only alternative to silence.<sup>16</sup> To simplify, this view on translation could be: translating / communicating *despite its total impossibility*.

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<sup>13</sup> V. Ivir, *Translation and backtranslation*, cit., p. 131.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. V. Ivir, *Implicirani elementi kulture u izvornom tekstu i prijevodu*, in *Strani jezik u dodiru s materinskim jezikom*, ed. by M. Andrijašević and J. Vrhovac, Zagreb, Hrvatsko društvo za primijenjenu lingvistiku, 1992, pp. 17-24, in particular on p. 18.

<sup>15</sup> V. Ivir, *Teorija i tehnika...*, cit., p. 39.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 45.

This idea leads him to a rather idealistic image of the people of the world: “The basis of this community [in its need for linguistic interaction] consists in the common physical and chemical laws that dominate the planet earth and our part of the universe, basic common forms of organic life from which the psycho-physical constitution of all people on earth has come”.<sup>17</sup> This harmonic image of the earth’s population seen from a very high perspective seems to echo the young Ivir’s experience of interpreting for Croatian television the live telecast of the moon landing in 1969. At the same time, as we will try to show, his vision of the planet inhabited by a community of beings eager to communicate is surprisingly close to some current ideas in cultural translation, and, thus, far from being outdated.

Many ideas now current in the theory of cultural translation were present in translation theory after the Second World War, especially in those authors who struggled to give a more inclusive, cultural and historical direction to the structuralist approaches.<sup>18</sup> However, what distinguishes those authors from today’s cultural translation is their idealistic and optimistic belief in the common humanistic basis of all the cultures of the world,<sup>19</sup> which has now been replaced by the idea of discontinuity and difference.

Leaving the question of cultural translation to the last section, we can state here that after Ivir Croatian translatology seemed to go in two different directions. On one route, the matter of research is translation as the interpretation

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<sup>17</sup> V. Ivir, *Implicirani elementi kulture...*, cit., p. 18.

<sup>18</sup> “In effect, one does not translate LANGUAGES, one translates CULTURES. Ethnography may, in fact, be thought of as a form of translation”. This quotation is from J. B. Casagrande’s article which appeared in 1954; quoted in Ivir, *Linguistic and Extra-Linguistic...*, cit., p. 620.

<sup>19</sup> The above mentioned quotation from Casagrande continues in this way: “That it is possible to translate one language into another at all attests to the universalities in culture, to common vicissitudes of human life, and to the like capabilities of men throughout the earth, as well as to the inherent nature of language and the character of the communication process itself; and a cynic might add, to the arrogance of the translator” (ibidem). Apart from the brilliant final allusion to the delusive nature of the communication between cultures (only an arrogant translator can believe in the transparency and total honesty of his practice), the rest of the sentence manifests a firm faith in the humanistic principles which underlie common understanding. Something very similar, in both aspects of faith and skepticism, can be found in B. Terracini, *Conflitti di lingue e di cultura*, Venezia, Neri Pozza editore, 1957, in particular on pp. 72-73. According to L. Venuti, the idea of cultural universality was at the basis of the domesticating approach to translation that adapted the source text to the values of the target culture, presenting them as a false semantic equivalence. The idea of the world community with basically same values can be found also in E. Nida. Cf. L. Venuti, *The Translator’s Invisibility*, Abingdon Oxon, Routledge, 2008<sup>2</sup>, pp. 1-35.

of a text, and Ivir's dynamic model is dynamised even further, as in the post-structuralist understanding of poetic translation in the work of Mirjana Bonačić.<sup>20</sup> On the other route, cultural aspects of translation, within the tradition of comparative literature, are the subject of new studies in the history of translation that take into account power relations between cultures and thus approximate to postcolonial thought, as in the work by Iva Grgić.<sup>21</sup>

Mirjana Bonačić criticizes structuralist patterns of translation which imply the existence of a stable meaning as the basis of equivalence, whether in the form of an objective content of the message (as in Levý), or of a "closest natural equivalent" (as in Nida), or of an extralinguistic content (as in Ivir). According to Bonačić, there is no *tertium comparationis* outside the texts, and the source text does not have any established meaning to be decoded and translated into another language. She questions the alleged universality of patterns of perception, referring to cognitive psychology (D. Edwards) and semiotics (C. S. Peirce, U. Eco). Returning to the understanding of translation as the process and not the product of translator's activity, she overturns the traditional hierarchy that attributes priority to the source text and the terms related to it, stating that the translation comes first, and opens a never-ending process of interpretation of the source text, the process "of diversifying the original".<sup>22</sup> Even when finished, written or published, the translation is understood only as a temporary and pragmatic stopover in the continuous process of the production of meanings. This, as she also demonstrates with her own poetic translations, does not free the translator from his or her professional and ethical responsibility. On the contrary, he/she is constantly asked to justify his/her choices, and this brings the translator and the scholar very close to each other.

In a similar way to how linguistics and semiotics were the basis for post-structuralist definitions of translation, comparative literature has been a kind of road map for culturally oriented translation studies. Studies on translations of, for example, Italian literature into Croatian have always been markedly culturological: even when they dealt with seemingly technical topics like metre (as in Svetozar Petrović), they treated them as basically cultural phenomena and as carriers of important identity issues. It could not be other-

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<sup>20</sup> M. Bonačić, *Tekst diskurs prijevod. O poetici prevodenja*, Split, Književni krug, 1999.

<sup>21</sup> I. Grgić, *Poetike prevodenja. O hrvatskim prijevodima talijanske poezije*, Zagreb, Hrvatska sveučilišna naklada, 2009. Methodologies interested in cultural aspects of translation are met frequently in the publications of the Society of Croatian literary translators (Društvo hrvatskih književnih prevoditelja, <http://www.dhkp.hr/zbornici>).

<sup>22</sup> M. Bonačić, *Tekst diskurs prijevod*, cit., p. 355.

wise, given the strong asymmetry of power between the Italian and Croatian cultures. In the recent work by Iva Grgić the tradition of comparative literature, looking at Croatian-Italian literary relations, is continued in the form of the history of translations intended also as history of cultures in a wider sense. This includes the possibility of understanding various translational poetics as indicators of different types of cultural and national self-perception. In studying the history of translations we can learn, as Grgić shows, about cultural hegemony, cultural stereotypes and the political role of translated literature in the creation of national identities, which is close to what Susan Bassnett meant by her apparently paradoxical ‘translation turn in cultural studies’.<sup>23</sup>

#### Serbian translatology from the '80s to the present day: linguistics and poetics, theory and methodology

At the beginning of the '80s, Serbian translatology was quite rich and various, as the collection of essays *Teorija i poetika prevodenja* published in 1981 shows.<sup>24</sup> The introductory essay by Ranko Bugarski<sup>25</sup> is a kind of manifesto for the foundation of the new discipline on a linguistic basis. Convinced that the theory of translation has a reason to exist, Bugarski insists on the need for new scientific methods that should replace the vague, subjective and ‘poetic’ writing on literary translation that had dominated until then. The priority of the linguistic approach in Bugarski’s view applies to all types of translation, regardless of the typology of texts. Bugarski is highly critical of the sharp distinction, present in the Serbian translatology of the time, between the non-literary and the literary translation. “The theory of literary translation”, he argues, “cannot be anything else than a particular case of the theory of translation in general”.<sup>26</sup> Bugarski has been among the most important Serbian linguists and sociolinguists since the '70s, and in his later career he occasionally returned to the topic of translation.<sup>27</sup> His specialisation in

<sup>23</sup> S. Bassnett, *The Translation Turn in Cultural Studies*, in *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation*, ed. by S. Bassnett and A. Lefevere, Clevedon, Cromwell Press, 1998, pp. 123-140.

<sup>24</sup> I would like to thank professors Branka Novaković and Marija Mitrović for providing me with precious bibliographical information for this part of my research. Possible omissions, of course, are my responsibility alone.

<sup>25</sup> R. Bugarski, *Teorija prevodenja kao naučna disciplina*, cit. See also another text by the same author, written in the same year: R. Bugarski, *O prirodni teorije prevodenja*, in Id., *Lingvistika u primeni*, Beograd, Čigoja štampa, 2007<sup>3</sup>, pp. 131-142.

<sup>26</sup> Id., *O prirodni teorije prevodenja*, cit., p. 137.

<sup>27</sup> Three of his essays on translation can be found in Id., *Lingvistika u primeni*, cit.



applied linguistics and sociolinguistics has certainly played an important role in the broadening of his initial insistence on a linguistic setting for translation theory, towards the perspective of a “sociolinguistic theory of translation”.<sup>28</sup> He takes into account the possibility of an extensive understanding of translation as part of every communicative act although, recognizing that this topic belongs to the philosophy of language, he remains dedicated to the conventional understanding of translation as a primarily linguistic act,<sup>29</sup> often using concrete examples from translational practice.

In spite of Bugarski’s introductory remarks, the rest of the 1981 collection, as with probably the whole of Serbian translatology of that time, is clearly marked by the binary split between the linguistic approach to non-literary translation and the more traditional approaches to literary translation, based mainly on the aesthetic methods of literary criticism. The same polarity is also reflected in the title of the collection, in which the “poetics of translation” reflects the aversion on the part of literary translation towards being framed in a purely theoretical way.

The impossibility of a scientifically founded theory for literary translation is stressed both in articles with a strict linguistic approach and in works that discuss literary translation. Mila Stojnić,<sup>30</sup> for example, draws on Ju. Lotman and uses the definition of the multiple codes in literary text in order to prove that the substantial differences between the nature of literary texts and that of non-literary ones prohibit one common theory. Similarly to Ivir, Stojnić insists on the insufficiency of linguistics to cover all aspects of translation and suggests the theory of information as a possible and more appropriate level of analysis, even though, unlike Ivir, she does not take into consideration the cultural aspects of the translation process, pointing rather to the functional ones. Among Stojnić’s main theoretical references is the Russian theoretician L. A. Černjachovskaja, who formulated transformational models for translation from Russian to English. Focusing on ‘meaning structures’ and on the limited number of linguistic formulas to express them, Stojnić directs her theory towards the methodology of machine translation, which also means, as she explicitly states, the exclusion of literary translation from this field. Unlike Stojnić, another reflection on machine translation in the same collection, written by Mladen Jovanović, looks at the inherently ‘symbolic nature’

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<sup>28</sup> R. Bugarski, *Međukulturno prevođenje*, in Id., *Lingvistika u primeni*, cit., pp. 123-130, for the quotation see on p. 123. The essay is from 1983.

<sup>29</sup> Id., *O prirodi teorije prevođenja*, cit., p. 134.

<sup>30</sup> M. Stojnić, *Teorija ili metodologija prevođenja?*, in *Teorija i poetika prevođenja*, cit., pp. 45-66.

of language *in general* (and not only of literary texts) and refers to Jakobson's different functions of language as an obstacle (or a challenge, as the author optimistically states) to the scientific description and formalisation of the process of translation.<sup>31</sup>

It is interesting to note that the authors who, unlike those mentioned above, wrote about *literary* translation in the '80s (from the point of view of literary criticism, poetics and aesthetics) are those who dominate the Serbian translatology scene today. Miodrag Sibinović has written several books on translation since then,<sup>32</sup> mainly for didactic purposes and for a large audience, academic and non-academic. In all his publications Sibinović has remained faithful to the idea of the specificity of literary translation that asks for a specific theory, philologically based.<sup>33</sup> Similarly, Radivoje Konstantinović has followed his interests in literary translation from the '80s until today,<sup>34</sup> specialising in the translation of poetry and offering his readers reflections on some particularly successful examples of his translational workshop. The somewhat more general approach to translation in the work of Boris Hlebec still belongs to the same area of thought.<sup>35</sup> Pragmatically oriented, Hlebec states that the "essence" of "translation theory [...] lies in listing the relevant factors that lead to successful translation".<sup>36</sup> He solves the doubt about translation fidelity by stressing the inevitable alteration of meaning in every process of recoding, offering a technical distinction between recreation and modification as two different operations that take place in every translation activity (although they are hardly distinguishable in actual translation practice). Hlebec's scheme of the translator's activities, divided into 11 steps (choice of code, interpretation of the original etc.), is based on stable dichotomies of traditional translational concepts.

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<sup>31</sup> For other linguistic approaches, mostly inspired by the theory of linguistic models and the analysis of grammar correspondence, see the articles by Ljubomir Mihailović and Nikola Kremzer in the same collection.

<sup>32</sup> His contribution in the collection from 1981 is intitled 'Stvaraoci' i 'teoretičari', pp. 27-43. His other books are: M. Sibinović, *Original i prevod. Uvod u istoriju i teoriju prevodenja*, Beograd, Privredna štampa, 1979; Id., *Novi original. Uvod u prevodenje*, Beograd, Naučna knjiga, 1990; Id., *Novi život originala. Uvod u prevodenje*, Beograd, Altera-Prosveta-Udruženje naučnih prevodilaca Srbije, 2009 (the third book is a slight modification of the second one).

<sup>33</sup> See, for example, M. Sibinović, *Novi život originala*, cit., pp. 71, 130.

<sup>34</sup> The introductory essay in his recent book is taken from the 1981 collection: R. Konstantinović, *O prevodenju poezije i drugi ogledi*, Novi Sad, Adresa, 2010.

<sup>35</sup> B. Hlebec, *Opšta načela prevodenja*, Beograd, Beogradska knjiga, 2009<sup>2</sup> [1989].

<sup>36</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 176.

It should be mentioned, though, that among the various approaches to translation represented in the collection from 1981, particularly within its 'literary' pole, one essay stands out among the others for its possible correspondence with the translation studies of our days. The approach by Slobodan Grubačić<sup>37</sup> differs from the others in its extrinsic view of literary translation in the context of literary and cultural history and of the history of ideas. Grubačić examines the place of translation within the literary canons through the ages, making use of the concept of originality and of the hierarchy of literary values and genres in each given period, but also incorporating many extra-literary factors such as the dominant ideology of the time, politics and religion. Starting from the reception theory, Grubačić liberates the understanding of the literary text, and of translation, from the confines of the "abstract, neutral ideality of the language".<sup>38</sup> His important insights about the dynamic existence of translation through time lead him to imagine the history of literature written from the point of view of the history of translation. Many of his ideas resemble the principles of polysystem theory, testifying to the widespread dissatisfaction with the linguistic approach of the time.

#### Transnational authors in cultural translation:

Boris Buden and Tomislav Longinović

The dissatisfaction with linguistic approaches to translation, the efforts to develop extrinsic methods of interpretation of the text and to strengthen the connection between the study of translation and comparative literature led, in Anglo-American translation studies, to the revival of the discipline within the field of cultural studies.<sup>39</sup> The study of power relations between cultures, relations that are decisive for the status of translations in the national canon, brought translation studies close to postcolonial thought. A number of the aforementioned approaches, like the one of Iva Grgić, display some possible outcomes of this approach for the study of national poetics and politics.

We should remember, though, that postcolonial thought contains an internal contradiction that has been described and discussed by its theorists.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> S. Grubačić, *Prevod i književna istorija*, in *Teorija i poetika prevođenja*, cit., pp. 177-200. The essay by L. Rajić, *O prevođenju s prevoda*, Ibidem, pp. 201-218, is written from a similar point of view.

<sup>38</sup> S. Grubačić, *Prevod i književna istorija*, cit., p. 179.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. M. Ulrych, *La traduzione nella cultura anglosassone contemporanea: tendenze e prospettive*, in *Tradurre. Un approccio multidisciplinare*, ed. by M. Ulrych, Torino, Utet, 1997, pp. 213-248.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. V. Biti, *Teorija i postkolonijalno stanje*, in *Prošla sadašnjost. Znakovi povijesti u*

The practical application of the postcolonial emancipatory momentum led to the creation of a new identity politics for postcolonial subjects, but this often entailed a return to the old national identity models. While this result can be thought of as a secondary product of the postcolonial movement, its first and primary principle remains that of emancipation. Postcolonialism is, by definition, a great emancipatory movement that frees its actors from great empires and from all other grand narratives, including that of national identity. A return to this original emancipatory imperative is exactly what inspires some of the recent theoreticians in cultural translation<sup>41</sup> who start from postcolonial assumptions, but try to go beyond identity politics, especially the national ones.

Both Boris Buden and Tomislav Longinović, two authors from the former Yugoslavia (Buden from Zagreb, Longinović from Belgrade) and living as intellectual migrants (Buden lives in Germany, Longinović in the USA), have found in cultural translation the answer to their theoretical and political questions. A key image they both use to describe a new concept of identity is that of the community of migrant people which needs to be emancipated from the oppressive identitarian policies of nation-states. Migrant people are to be understood, to adapt Rushdie's famous metaphor,<sup>42</sup> as people who have translated themselves from one national culture to the other and whose way of being is no longer perfectly equivalent to either of them. For Buden the figure of translator refers to linguistic communities with no nation or state, communities that cannot define their identity in political terms or have any form of political organisation, but are eager to communicate and to emancipate themselves through communication, which is always intercultural translation.<sup>43</sup> Buden is critical of recent translations studies, suspecting them to be too adapted to the world of the nation-states, since the postcolonial discourse

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*Hrvatskoj*, V. Biti and N. Ivić, Zagreb, Naklada MD, 2003, pp. 446-488, in particular on pp. 470-472, where this double motion of postcolonialism is seen as a discrepancy between its theory and practice.

<sup>41</sup> By cultural translation I mean a relatively new theoretical area of translation studies, which draws on the previous studies about language and culture (from Humboldt onwards), and creates its current field mainly around Homi Bhabha's concept of hybridity. Reflections in cultural translation seek to account for the processes of migration and the meetings of cultures in today's world that can be described both as transnational and translational.

<sup>42</sup> S. Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1992, pp. 9-21.

<sup>43</sup> This vision is, as previously mentioned, the one that reminds us of the optimistic view of the earth's population seen "from the moon" by Vladimir Ivir.

on asymmetric power relations and conflicts between cultures too often serves to affirm national identities.<sup>44</sup> Similarly, Longinović reflects on the pain, anxiety and “desperate nationalism” that come from the globalising oppression and feed the small cores of secrecy that are created as barriers guarding imperialist knowledge. Confronted by the knowledge that wants to translate everything to itself, these cores represent the fortresses of untranslatability.<sup>45</sup> As a counterweight, Longinović promotes cultural translation as a new platform to define the post-humanist identity. The notion of translation is basic to this idea, since it offers the possibility of understanding the metaphoric displacement of meaning and the resistance to equivalence that happen in bridging the identities. This understanding should have a direct political effect; the theory of cultural translation, in Longinović’s vision, is a performative theory that acts in the world.

Both Buden and Longinović openly speak about their personal experience as formative for their theoretical work: the experience of the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia, of migration and the life as intellectuals representing small cultures in the Western world.<sup>46</sup> In what remains of their former country, indeed, the theory of cultural translation seems to be a possible answer to the obsession with translation between national languages that need cultural translation much more than linguistic.<sup>47</sup> At the same time, though, it refers

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<sup>44</sup> B. Buden, *Vavilonska jama. O (ne)prevodivosti kulture*, Beograd, Edicija Reč, 2007, pp. 63-65. The history of Buden’s book is in itself a story of the instability of the relationship between the original and the translation, between the mother tongue and acquired new identities. Originally written in German, the book has been translated into Serbian and published in Belgrade, with the addition of one chapter written directly in Croatian.

<sup>45</sup> On the contrary, the untranslatability should be something naturally accepted in the process of intercultural interaction: “Opening the path to the Other, while being aware that the Other may not offer to display all its secrets, affects the articulation of identity as a motion between different faces of alterity”. Cf. T. Z. Longinović, *Fearful Asymmetries: A Manifesto of Cultural Translation*, “The Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association”, vol. 35 (2002) n. 2, pp. 5-12.

<sup>46</sup> T. Longinović and B. Buden, *The Answer is in Translation*, <http://eipcp.net/transversal/0908/longinovic-buden/en>.

<sup>47</sup> According to Enlightenment and egalitarian European language policy, between national languages there must be translation. But when it comes to national languages that are as close to each other as Croatian, Bosnian and Serbian, we see clearly all the dialectical problems inherent in this principle, which often leads to absurd situations like linguistic segregation in Bosnian schools. Only a balanced economic and political programme based on cultural mediation can prevent it from becoming a menace for other human rights. The illustrative headline “Bosnians are hungry in three languages” (<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/>

to much wider issues. In his Manifesto published in 2002 Longinović defined his idea of cultural translation as a way of overcoming the vision of a clash of civilisations that has been with us since the '90s, describing it as “the vision of clashing cultural forces of a pseudoreligious origin (Christian / Muslim, for example)” that “naturalizes differences” in order to polarize the world. It is an idea that resonates strongly today.

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bosnians-are-hungry-in-three-languages), appeared after the social protests against the malfunctioning of the country in February 2014.