

SLAVIC TRANSLATION THEORIES IN ITALY

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Familiarity with Slavic T-theories in Italy is very limited (as it is in the rest of the Western World). This becomes evident when leafing through bibliographical references or the indexes of names in specialist works, which are generally lacking in Slavic references.¹ Currently, studies produced in the Slavic countries are referenced only by Italian specialists in the fields of Slavic Studies, whereas specialists in other disciplines only occasionally mention Slavic texts that have been translated into some Western languages. Furthermore, Slavic works are rarely reviewed in the specialized journals.²

This article aims to provide an overview of the ‘presence’ in Italy of translation theories produced in the Slavic countries. I will refer strictly to the field of theoretical research (and not to studies regarding the history, analysis or criticism of translation). I will therefore focus my attention on two groups of publications: *a*) Italian studies on Slavic T-theories; *b*) Slavic theoretical studies (or fragments thereof) published in Italy (translated into Italian or available in other non-Slavic languages in Italian journals and anthologies).

Clearly, a ‘presence’ thus conceived does not define the state of ‘knowledge’ of Slavic T-theories in Italy, which cannot be limited to a mere list of studies and translated texts. Certainly, the Italian research studies have not been carried out within a monolingual path, and a more complete report on the knowledge of Slavic T-theories in Italy should not overlook indirect con-

¹ Slavic titles are not ignored, however, in a good bibliography such as A. Tarantino, *Bibliografia sulla traduzione letteraria: 1970-1990*, Roma, Bagatto libri, 1997.

² A small number of reviews has recently begun to appear, starting in 1995. I have found only three reviews of Slavic works, all of them in journals of Slavic Studies: a review of *Translation as Social Action. Russian and Bulgarian Perspectives*, ed. by P. Zlateva, London-New York, Routledge 1994, by L. Salmon, in “AION. Slavistica”, 3 (1995), pp. 504-506; a review of P. Torop, *Total'nyj perevod*, Tartu, Izd. Tartusskogo Un.-ta, 1996, by P. Deotto, “Slavica Tergestina”, 6 (1998), pp. 245-250; a review of P. M. Toper, *Perevod v sisteme sravnitel'nogo literaturovedenija*, Moskva, Nasledie, 2000, by G. Denissova, in “Russica Romana”, VII (2000), pp. 261-264.

tributions in this field (first and foremost the entire international context of knowledge on the subject, within which these Italian research studies are conducted). However, this kind of overview could prove highly significant, especially considering that one of the major obstacles to the dissemination of the theories developed in Slavic countries has always been the language barrier. Texts produced in this part of the world are not easily accessible if they have not been translated into more widely-circulating languages in the Western World. Thus, the knowledge of Slavic T-theories in fact largely corresponds to their presence in translations and in popular works, and they can offer interesting clues about some of the trends that govern the Italian reception of Slavic T-theories.

The presence of Slavic T-theories in Italy is:

a. *limited*. There are not many studies on Slavic T-theories nor translations of Slavic works in this field;

b. *a recent phenomenon*. The number of these texts has grown since 1989 (with an increase that was exponential over this time period), concurrently with the growing success of the discipline of T-theory in general within the Italian academic world. It is important to observe that, if on the one hand the explosion of translation studies in the 90s became a widespread phenomenon at the international level, before the 90s in Italy, translation theories struggled harder to be accepted than in other western countries: the Italian debate long reflected the prevailing scepticism of scholars with regards to this discipline.³ On the other hand, the interest in Slavic T-theories from the 90s onwards also benefited from the progressive reinforcement of linguistic research within the field of Italian Slavistics in the same period.⁴

c. *a fragmented presence*. T-theory is a fairly young and multidisciplinary field of studies. And it should not be forgotten that studies on translation were initially carried out in different fields, which have not always communicated with one another. For a long time, fragmentation was typical of the debate on translation and it is also a characteristic of the presence of Slavic T-theories in Italy. If in different fields of research (Slavic Studies, Semiotics, Linguistics, Comparatives Literatures...) we can observe a parallel and generally discontinuous interest in specific aspects of Slavic T-theories, the different objects of study in each of these fields have not always formed a common heritage for T-theory.

³ See S. Arduini, U. Stecconi, *Manuale di traduzione. Teorie e figure professionali*, Roma, Carocci, 2007, pp. 9-10.

⁴ See L. Salmon, *Russistica e traduttologia: dai modelli alle prospettive*, "Studi Italiani di Linguistica Teorica e Applicata", 33 (2004) 2, pp. 275-286. Salmon notes that, if in the field of Italian Slavic Studies an interest in translation has always existed (in the perspective of an aesthetic practice or from a comparative perspective), it was not until the 90s that it became 'theoretical', thanks to the progress of linguistic research in this field in the academic world.

d. *a result of a selective interest*, focused only on some specific aspects of the Slavic debate (with few exceptions, the attention focused mainly on the debate that took place in the Russian language, and on some of the investigations in the field of Semiotics).

The situation until the 90s

Until the 90s, Slavic T-theories were almost totally absent from the field of Italian translation studies, and we can find only rare traces of them.

The first Italian publication of a theoretical text on translation written by a Slavic scholar is the translation in 1966 of the famous essay by R. Jakobson *On Linguistic Aspects of Translation*.⁵ This is also a special text, because it was written (in English) when Jakobson was already living in the United States, and because, from the moment of its publication, it became part of the ‘Western Canon’ of translation studies. Moreover this text came to Italy as part of a collection of essays in Linguistics that had already met with huge success in other European countries.⁶

It is important to mention a group of other texts from this period, which had been published in Italy in the 60s and 70s, but were not acknowledged until later for their value in the discussions on translation. This is the case of the translations of texts by Michail M. Bachtin, Ju. M. Lotman, as well as L. S. Vygotskij, A. N. Leont’ev, A. R. Lur’ja. Their presence in Italy is not the result of an interest in T-theories, and in some cases they are not directly concerned with the issue of translation. They were recognized and translated into Italian within the context of research carried out in other fields (Linguistics, Semiotics, Slavic studies), or as a result of the interest of individual scholars.

Thus, Bachtin was renowned in Italy since the late 1960s for his literary studies, and later for his work as a language theorist.⁷ Although he is mentio-

⁵ R. Jakobson, *On Linguistic Aspects of Translation*, in *On Translation*, ed. by R. A. Brower, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard Univ. Press, 1959, pp. 232-239.

⁶ Id., *Aspetti linguistici della traduzione*, in Id., *Saggi di linguistica generale*, ed. by L. Heilmann, transl. from English by L. Heilmann and L. Grassi, Milano, Feltrinelli, 1966, pp. 56-64. The collection was published in Italy after the success of the French edition: *Essais de linguistique générale*, (traduit de l’anglais et préface par N. Ruwet) Paris, Les Editions de Minuit, 1963. It is worth noting that a similar ‘indirect reception’ occurred in the XX century for many important studies in the field of linguistics and literary theory. In Italy the article was re-edited several times in other miscellaneous volumes (see below).

⁷ Starting from works such as M. Bachtin, *Dostoevskij: poetica e stilistica*, Torino, Einaudi, 1968, to V. N. Vološinov (M. Bachtin), *Il linguaggio come pratica sociale*, Bari, Dedalo libri, 1980.

ned in an article written in 1979 by C. Montella on T-Theories in the USSR,⁸ and although suggestions of Bachtin's work on translation theory were used by A. Ponzio in 1981,⁹ interest in the relevance of his theories for translation theory (more precisely, for a philosophy of translation) has grown only in recent years.¹⁰

Lotman, on the other hand, was known in Italy in the 70s as a literary theorist and semiotician.¹¹ Although translation plays a fundamental role in all of Lotman's work as essential to the process of signification, the topic was not explored in depth until 1995.¹²

As for the representatives of cognitive research,¹³ the first mention of their relevance to the discussion about the translation process is contained in

⁸ C. Montella, *Tendenze recenti della teoria della traduzione in Unione Sovietica*, "AION. Annali del Seminario di Studi del Mondo Classico, Sezione Linguistica", 1 (1979), pp. 275-276. Actually, Montella refers to a posthumously published work by I. I. Revzin, which contains a reference to V. V. Ivanov and M. M. Bachtin's ideas on translation.

⁹ A. Ponzio, *Segni e contraddizioni: fra Marx e Bachtin*, Verona, Bertani, 1981, particularly the chapter *Polisemia e traduzione*, pp. 15-42.

¹⁰ As revealed in M. De Michiel, *Per una filosofia della traduzione responsabile. M. M. Bachtin: note, nel testo, in Nei territori della slavistica. Scritti per Danilo Cavaion*, ed. by C. De Lotto and A. Mingati, Padova, Unipress, 2007, pp. 111-128. See also: V. N. Vološinov, M.M. Bachtin, *Marxismo e filosofia del linguaggio: problemi fondamentali del metodo sociologico nella scienza del linguaggio*, ed. by A. Ponzio, Lecce, P. Manni, 1999; A. Ponzio, *Linguistica generale, scrittura letteraria e traduzione*, Perugia, Guerra, 2004; M. De Michiel, *M.M. Bakhtin: Prolegomena to a Theory of Translation*, in "S – European Journal for Semiotic Studies", 11 (1999) 4, pp. 687-698; Ead, *Il non-alibi del leggere*, Trieste, Dipartimento di scienze del linguaggio, dell'interpretazione e della traduzione, 2001, pp. 53-87. In previous essays on the Russian philosopher no mention was ever made of the implications of his ideas for translation theories. It is no coincidence that in a dense 23-page article about the Italian studies and praise of Bachtin's works in different research fields, Susan Petrilli (who edited several issues of the journal "Athanos", very important for translation theory) never talks about translation (S. Petrilli, *Bachtin in Italia negli ultimi quindici anni (1980-1994)*, in *Bachtin e le sue maschere: il percorso bachtiniano fino ai Problemi dell'opera di Dostoevskij (1919-1929)*, ed. by A. Ponzio, P. Jachia, M. De Michiel, Bari, Dedalo, 1995, pp. 305-327.

¹¹ Starting from such works as Ju. Lotman, *La struttura del testo poetico*, Milano, Mursia, 1972.

¹² In *Teorie contemporanee della traduzione*, ed. by S. Nergaard, Milano, Bompiani, 1995; *Sulla traduzione intersemiotica*, edd. N. Dusi, S. Nergaard, Milano, Bompiani, 2002. See F. Sedda, *Imperfette traduzioni*, in Ju. Lotman, *Tesi per una semiotica delle culture*, ed. by F. Sedda, Roma, Meltemi, 2006, pp. 7-78.

¹³ L. S. Vygotskij, *Pensiero e linguaggio*, ed. by A. Massucco Costa, Firenze, Giunti-Barbera, 1954; *Linguaggio e sviluppo dei processi mentali nel bambino*, ed. by A.R. Lur'ja, F.Ja. Judovič, Firenze, 1975; A. A. Leont'ev, *Psicolinguistica*, Roma, Editori Riuniti, 1972.

M. Picchianti, A. Jampol'skaja, *Sulla teoria della traduzione in Russia* (On translation theory in Russia, 1995),¹⁴ but it was not until the past decade that the importance of this research path was strongly underlined by L. Salmon in almost all her articles (see below), and by B. Osimo (who has contributed to the popularization of some aspects of the work of Vygotskij, especially in a semiotic perspective).¹⁵

In some cases, texts from this period were totally forgotten in later Italian theoretical discussions on translation. Thus the articles on translation *Testo e metatesto* (Text and meta-text) by Slovakian author A. Popovič,¹⁶ *La traduzione all'estero e da noi* (Translation abroad and in our country) and *Traduzione interlinguistica e interstratica* (Interlingual and interstratic translation) by Bulgarian author A. Ljudskanov,¹⁷ published in 1979 in a collection devoted to Semiotic studies in the Slavic countries, were received exclusively as texts of semiotic relevance, but never mentioned in later Italian works on translation.¹⁸

There is also a group of studies on translation of a specifically theoretical nature, dating back to 1979, four essays on literary translation included in the book *La traduzione letteraria dal russo nelle lingue romanze e dalle lingue romanze in russo* (Literary translation from Russian into Romance languages and from Romance languages into Russian), the proceedings of a

¹⁴ M. Picchianti, A. Jampol'skaja, *Sulla teoria della traduzione in Russia*, "Studi Italiani di Linguistica Teorica e Applicata", 24 (1995) 1, pp. 57-76.

¹⁵ See B. Osimo, *Storia della traduzione. Riflessioni sul linguaggio traduttivo dall'antichità ai contemporanei*, Milano, Hoepli, 2006 [2002], pp. 135-140 and Id., *Translation Science 1959-2009: Contributions from Eastern Europe*, in *The Translator as Author. Perspectives on Literary Translation* (Proceedings of the International Conference, Università per Stranieri di Siena 28-29 May 2009), edd. C. Buffagni, B. Garzelli & S. Zanotti, Berlin, Lit, 2011, pp. 45-59.

¹⁶ A. Popovič, *Testo e metatesto*, in *La semiotica nei Paesi slavi: programmi, problemi, analisi*, ed. by C. Prevignano, Milano, Feltrinelli, 1979, pp. 521-545. In it the scholar proposed a typological classification of "metatexts", which also includes translation, along with reading, literary criticism, quotation, parody, etc.

¹⁷ A. Ljudskanov, *La traduzione all'estero e da noi*, in *La semiotica nei Paesi slavi*, cit., pp. 673-676; Id., *Traduzione interlinguistica e interstratica*, Ibidem, pp. 677-680. In the articles scholar commented some of the ideas of Rozencvejk and Revzin within a framework of semiotic definitions of translation.

¹⁸ The book also contained a text (written in 1973) in which translation seems to be the basis of cultural communication: V. V. Ivanov, Ju. M. Lotman, A. M. Pjatigorskij, V. N. Toporov, B. A. Uspenskij, *Tesi per un'analisi semiotica delle culture*, in *La semiotica nei Paesi slavi*, cit., pp. 194-220.

conference on the topic organized by the Institute of Slavic Languages and Literature of the University of Milan.¹⁹ They are: *Strukturnyj analiz sticha i voprosy teorii i praktiki stichotvornogo perevoda* (Structural analysis of the verse and questions of theory and practice of verse translation), by M. Jovanović;²⁰ *Voprosy toponimiki i nekotorye problemy teorii perevoda* (Questions of toponymy and some problems in translation theory), by A. Michajlov;²¹ *Sistemnost' v obučenii leksike russkogo jazika i perenos navykov* (Systematicity in learning the russian lexicon and the transfer of skills), by A. S. P. Novikov and L. B. Trušina;²² and the very short *Problemy chudožestvennogo perevoda /tezis/* (Problems of literary translation /a thesis/), by D. E. Rozen-tal'.²³

These texts, however, were written in the Russian language, and therefore addressed to a very specific audience, to Slavist readers. The first interest in Slavic T-theories in Italy indeed arose in the field of Slavic studies, not from T-theory.

Finally, it was in 1979 that the first Italian study on (a part of) Slavic T-theories was written: *Tendenze recenti della teoria della traduzione in Unione Sovietica* (Recent trends in translation theory in the Soviet Union)²⁴ by Montella, presented an overview of the main theoretical studies on translation carried out in the USSR from the 50s, an accurate synthesis of the discussions on the epistemological status of the discipline and research, both in the so-called 'linguistic' path of research (Ja.I. Recker, I.I. Revzin and V.Ju. Rozenevejg, A.D. Švejcer, V.N. Komissarov, L.S. Barchudarov, L.A. Černjachovskaja, A.A. Reformatskij, V.N. Krupnov) and in the 'literary' path (E.E. Etkind, G.G. Gačečiladze, A.V. Fedorov) – although Montella rightly observed that: “The dichotomy between linguistic and literary methodologies as an approach to the study of artistic translation must nevertheless be re-considered [...]. The contraposition between linguistics and literary studies should not be generalized”.²⁵

¹⁹ *La traduzione letteraria dal russo nelle lingue romanze e dalle lingue romanze in russo* (Atti del Convegno di Gargnano, 9-12 settembre 1978, Università degli studi di Milano, Istituto di Lingue e Letterature Slave), Milano, Goliardica, 1979.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 9-40. Jovanović is a scholar from the University of Belgrade.

²¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 41-53.

²² *Ibidem*, pp. 54-66.

²³ *Ibidem*, pp.89-91.

²⁴ C. Montella, *Tendenze recenti della teoria della traduzione in Unione Sovietica*, cit., pp. 263-276.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 275.

It is worth noting that Montella's contribution is not addressed exclusively to Slavists²⁶ and we can consider it as the first study in Slavic T-theories arising from a specific interest in T-theory.

Slavic T-theories in Italy after the 1990s

Starting in the 90s, the number of studies and translations increased. Between 1994 and 1997 further syntheses of the Soviet debate appeared: *a) Alcune note sulla teoria della traduzione nella ex URSS* (Notes on translation theory in the former USSR) by M. Itelson, where, compared with Montella's overview 15 years earlier, we may find information on the research of R. K. Min'jar-Beloručev;²⁷ *b) The previously-mentioned Sulla teoria della traduzione in Russia* by Picchianti and Jampol'skaja, that focuses mainly on studies in the field of Applied Linguistics, but also refers briefly to the discussion on literary translation from the 1930s and to the importance of the psycholinguistic research from Vygotskij and Leont'ev to A. V. Černov and A. F. Širaev;²⁸ *c) Historia de la Teoría de la Traducción en Rusia* (History of translation theory in Russia) by Ju. Obolenskaja,²⁹ which, compared to previous articles, also offers a rapid reconstruction of the Russian debate in the early decades of the XX century (underlining the importance of Gorkij's initiatives within the project of *Vsemirnaja Literatura*, the first interventions by Čukovskij-Fedorov, but also mentioning O. Finkel', A. Smirnov, the importance for the Russian debate of Tynjanov's literary theory, of the Moscow Circle and the St. Petersburg Linguistic School, of Ščerba and Vinogradov, and finally, the support for Soviet debate provided by the contributions from scholars from different areas of the confederation); *d) O. Brodovič* is the author of an attempt to synthesize the state of psycholinguistic and (with L. Čachojan) sociolinguistic research into translation in Russia in *Sociolinguistic Problems of Translation Theories in Russia* and in *Psycholinguistic and Sociolinguistic Aspects of Translation in Russia*.³⁰

²⁶ Montella is a specialist in Slavic Studies and Linguistics.

²⁷ M. Itelson, *Alcune note sulla teoria della traduzione nella URSS*, "Slavia. rivista trimestrale di cultura", 3 (1994) 4, pp. 162-180.

²⁸ M. Picchianti, A. Jampol'skaja, *Sulla teoria della traduzione in Russia*, cit.

²⁹ Ju. Obolenskaja, *Historia de la Teoría de la Traducción en Rusia*, in *La traduzione: saggi e documenti*, III, "Quaderni di Libri e riviste d'Italia", 33, Roma, Ministero per i beni culturali e ambientali, Ufficio centrale per i beni librari, le istituzioni culturali e l'editoria, Divisione editoria, 1997, pp. 19-32.

³⁰ L. Čachojan, O. Brodovič, *Psycholinguistic and Sociolinguistics Aspects of Translation*

These studies confirm that, in the context of Slavic T-Theories, particular attention was paid to the Soviet tradition. Despite the justifiable limitations inherent in the synthetic character of these studies, the Russian and Soviet tradition of research into translation is the tradition we have the most information on.

The 1990s also witnessed an increase in the number of translations. Several though partial translations are published in anthologies and journals of Translation Theories, Linguistics and Semiotics.

The first issue of the journal “Testo a fronte”, the first Italian journal dedicated entirely to literary translation, founded in 1989,³¹ published the article by Russian scholar E. Etkind entitled *Un’arte in crisi. Saggio di poetica della traduzione poetica* (The crisis of an art: essays on the poetics of poetical translation).³² And the same journal published other texts by Slavic scholars in the following years: J. Levý, *I problemi estetici del tradurre* (*Translation Aesthetics*, 1992),³³ Id., *Il verso: l’originale e la traduzione* (*Original Verse and Translated Verse*, 1993);³⁴ and again R. Jakobson, *Aspetti linguistici del tradurre* (1995),³⁵ at last the Estonian (but from the Tartu school, deeply linked with Russian tradition of research, author of some works in Russian) P. Torop, *La traduzione totale* (Total translation, 1999).³⁶

Theory in Russia, in *La traduzione*, cit., pp. 153-159; O. Brodovič, *Sociolinguistic Problems of Translation Theories in Russia*, Ibidem, pp. 161-170.

³¹ E. Solonovič was initially a member of the scientific Committee of the journal.

³² E. Etkind, *Un’arte in crisi. Saggio di poetica della traduzione poetica* (transl. from French by F. Scotto), “Testo a fronte”, 1 (1989), pp. 23-72. The excerpt dealing with the problem of translation of the “function” in literary texts – is an excerpt from the volume with the same title: Id. *Un art en crise: essai de poétique de la traduction poétique* (traduit par Wladimir Troubetzkoy avec la collaboration de l’auteur), Lausanne, L’Age d’Homme, 1982.

³³ J. Levý, *I problemi estetici del tradurre*, “Testo a fronte”, 7 (1992), pp. 11-36: translated by N. Dacrema from the German translation by W. Schamschula of *Umění překlada* (1963), *Die literarische Übersetzung: Theorie einer Kunstgattung*, Frankfurt am Main-Bonn, Athenäum, 1969. *Umění překlada* was also recently translated into English: Id. *The art of translation*, Amsterdam, J. Benjamins, 2011 (transl. by P. Corness, edited with a critical foreword by Z. Jettmarová).

³⁴ Id., *Il verso: l’originale e la traduzione*, “Testo a fronte”, 8 (1993), pp. 5-20 (transl. from German by A. Puskàs von Ditrò).

³⁵ R. Jakobson, *Aspetti linguistici della traduzione*, “Testo a fronte”, 12 (1995), pp. 7-15.

³⁶ P. Torop, *La traduzione totale*, “Testo a fronte”, 20 (1999), pp. 5-47 (repr. in *Traduttologia. La teoria della traduzione letteraria*, ed. by F. Buffoni (“Quaderni di Libri e riviste d’Italia”, 57), Roma, Ministero per i beni culturali e ambientali, Ufficio centrale per i beni librari, le istituzioni culturali e l’editoria, Divisione editoria, 2005, pp. 643-675.

Torop is overall the most widely published in Italy: several of his articles (and a monograph – see below) on translations as a semiotic process have appeared in the journal “Athanos” and in miscellaneous volumes of semiotic interest: *Biotranslation: Translation between umwelten* (1999);³⁷ *L’intersemiosi e la traduzione intersemiotica* (Intersemiosis and intersemiotic translation, 2001);³⁸ *Per una semiotica della traduzione* (For a semiotic of translation, 2001);³⁹ *La traduzione come comunicazione e autocomunicazione* (Translation as communication and autocommunication, 2008).⁴⁰

The year 1992 saw the first unabridged translation from a Slavic language of a book on T-theories: *Traduzione artistica e cultura letteraria. Comunicazione e metacomunicazione letteraria* (Artistic translation and literary culture. Literary communication and meta-communication) by W. Soliński.⁴¹ This is a highly interesting work ascribable to the Polish Structuralist tradition, that explores the sociological perspectives of translational communication. However, the publication came about in rather special circumstances, that is from Soliński’s personal encounter with the university environment in Bari (where he worked as a language assistant when the book was translated). The text has not met with particular success in Italy. It was not until the end of 90s that a greater number of books became available in the complete translated versions, as translation theories became an important sector of the academic publishing market.

The ‘important’ new position that seemed to be attributed to the ‘Slavic tradition’ in this period, is evident in the words of S. Nergaard, written in 1995, in the introduction to the anthology *Teorie contemporanee della tra-*

³⁷ Id., K. Kull, *Biotranslation: Translation between umwelten*, “Athanos”, 3 (1999): *Tra segni*, ed. by S. Petrilli, pp. 33-43.

³⁸ Id., *L’intersemiosi e la traduzione intersemiotica*, “Athanos”, 4 (2001): *Lo stesso altro*, ed. by S. Petrilli, pp. 229-239 (transl. from English by F. Mirizzi).

³⁹ Id., *Per una semiotica della traduzione*, in *Incontri di culture: la semiotica tra frontiere e traduzioni*, ed. by P. Calefato, G. P. Caprettini, G. Colaizzi, Torino, Utet, 2001, pp. 13-21 (transl. from English by F. Mirizzi). The volume contains the proceedings of the Congress of Semiotics in Ostuni in 1999.

⁴⁰ Id., *La traduzione come comunicazione e autocomunicazione*, in *Le giornate della traduzione letteraria*. Centro europeo per l’editoria, Università degli studi di Urbino “Carlo Bo”, 2003-2007, ed. by S. Arduini, I. Carmignani, (“Quaderni di Libri e riviste d’Italia”, 59), Roma, Iacobelli, 2008, pp. 73-91.

⁴¹ W. Soliński, *Traduzione artistica e cultura letteraria. Comunicazione e metacomunicazione letteraria*, Fasano, Schena, 1992 (transl. from Polish by F. Tucci).

duzione (Contemporary Translation Theories). She writes (actually accepting a judgement already expressed by E. Gentzler in his popular manual)⁴² that:

It is no coincidence that (at least in this [semiotic] section) the scholars, such as Roman Jakobson, Jurij Lotman and Levý are mainly from Eastern Europe. In Eastern countries the interest in our field is ahead of its time compared to the rest of the world, as demonstrated by the rich tradition of studies (see Ljudskanov 1975, Popovic [sic!] 1969, Tabakowska 1990, Zlateva 1993). All the authors in this semiotic section have indeed had their training and/or have been influenced by formalists.⁴³

There are four works by Slavic scholars included in the anthology (out of a total of 15): the above-mentioned text by R. Jakobson;⁴⁴ J. Levý, *La traduzione come processo decisionale* (*Translation as a Decision Process*);⁴⁵ Ju. Lotman, *Il problema del testo* (The problem of the text) and *Il problema della traduzione poetica* (The problem of the translation of poetry).⁴⁶

Despite positive opinions such as these, the knowledge of Slavic T-Theories is still very limited. *Tradurre: un approccio multidisciplinare* (Translating: a multidisciplinary approach), edited by M. Ulrych⁴⁷ (very popular in the Italian contest of T-Theories, as is Nergaard's anthology) seems to represent a failed attempt. The third part of this volume is dedicated to "Translation theories by geographical and cultural areas": after the chapters on China and the West, the Anglo-Saxon culture, French and German T-theories, it also contains a section dedicated to the Slavic context with 1) a chapter dedicated to *Translation in the Russian culture* (by V. Komissarov, though only the last paragraph of the *Conclusions* mentions Russian theoretical debate);⁴⁸ 2) another dedicated to the Slavic world as a whole (by L. Avirović), which does not deal with translation theory but rather comments on specific translation problems between Slavic languages and Italian, going off on some historical and cultural tangents.⁴⁹

The volume is not really a major step forward with regard to the framework that we are reconstructing here. It involves, on the one hand, the small

⁴² E. Gentzler, *Contemporary Translation Theories*, London-New York, Routledge, 1993.

⁴³ *Teorie contemporanee della traduzione*, cit., p. 22-23.

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 51-62.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 63-84 (transl. from English by S. Traini).

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 85-102, 257-264 (transl. from Russian by M. De Michiel).

⁴⁷ *Tradurre: un approccio multidisciplinare*, ed. by M. Ulrych, Torino, Utet, 1997.

⁴⁸ V. N. Komissarov, *La traduzione nella cultura russa*, in *Tradurre: un approccio multidisciplinare*, cit., pp. 317-331.

⁴⁹ L. Avirović, *Ibrido o equivalente: sulla traduzione letteraria in italiano dalle lingue slave*, in *Tradurre: un approccio multidisciplinare*, cit., pp. 333-351.

space that Slavic T-theories occupy compared to those produced in a Western context, and on the other, the position of absolute privilege accorded to the Russian culture compared to the rest of the indistinct Slavic world.

Worthy of a special mention, is the initiative undertaken the same year by E. Arcaini (one of the most important translation theorists in Italy, the author of many publications including *Analisi linguistica e traduzione* in 1986, the founder of the journal "SILTA", which published the above-mentioned article by Picchianti-Jampol'skaja) to devoting an entire volume of the series "Quaderni di Libri e Riviste di Italia" to Russian translatology.⁵⁰ The book aims to provide a survey of current Russian research and is a diversified publication in terms of the topics and profile of the articles it features. It does not privilege the semiotic approach; indeed, the articles in the volume deal with the sociological and psychological aspects of translation, the problem of creativity, the impact of cultures in the transfer to different systems from a linguistic viewpoint.⁵¹ In addition to the above-mentioned synthesis by Obolenskaja, Brodovič and Čachojan, the volume contains the following articles: A. Švejcer, *Translation and Literary Tradition*; S. Gončarenko, *La traduzione poetica come comunicazione interlinguo-culturale e la sua variabilità* (Translation of poetry as interlinguistic-cultural communication and its variability); V. Komissarov, *On The Linguistic Basis of Creativity in Translation*; V. Zadornova, *Verbal Creativity and the Problem of Translation*; A. Mikoyan, *Translation as Communication between Cultures: Understanding Translated Literature in the Absence of a Shared Code*; T. Komova, *Colour Names in the Context of a Philological Study*; L. Boldyreva, *Some Elements of Vertical Context in Translation*; V. Gak, *La variation des dénominations dans le texte et la traduction*; M. Golovanivskaja, *Noms abstraits: monde connotatif, fautes connotatives* (Abstract nouns: connotative world and connotative mistakes); G. Kiselev, *Sulla traduzione della parabola* (On translation of the parable).⁵²

Real progress in the context of the presence of Slavic T-theories has been made since the year 2000, thanks to the contribution once again of two Slavists and translation theoreticians, Osimo and Salmon, who in their studies have emphasized the existence of a rift in the field of translation theory,

⁵⁰ *La traduzione: saggi e documenti*, III, cit.

⁵¹ Apart from the above-mentioned synthesis by Obolenskaja, Brodovič and Čachojan.

⁵² *La traduzione: saggi e documenti*, III, cit., pp. 33-125, 137-151. The volume also contains a non-theoretical but analytical study by E. Solonovič, "Su fil di lama". *Postscriptum di un traduttore alle versioni russe di due poeti italiani* ("Su fil di lama". A Postscript by a Translator to the Russian Versions of Two Italian Poets), pp. 127-136.

between two different research traditions in the Western World and Eastern Europe. Both scholars have contributed (although in different ways and at different levels) to bridging the gap between them.

Osimo (a Russist, and expert of T-theories) has contributed primarily to the popularization of Slavic T-theories, mainly thanks to translations of some of the classics of Slavic T-theories edited in a prestigious series on T-theory by publisher Hoepli, but also through the information contained in his manual and articles (some of which become the introduction to translated volumes). His handbook, *Storia della traduzione* (History of translation),⁵³ consists of notes presenting individual scholars and their contribution to translation theory from ancient times to the modern day. Many of these notes are devoted to Slavic theoreticians: M. Bachtin, L.S. Barchudarov, E. Etkind, A.V. Fedorov, R. Jakobson, V.N. Komissarov, J. Levý, Ju. Lotman, Z.D. L'vovskaja, I.A. Mel'čuk, A. Popovič, Ja. Recker, I. Revzin, A. Švejcer, P. Torop, L.S. Vygotskij, S. Vlachov and S. Florin.

Osimo's main contribution, as mentioned before, consists, however, in the series of translations he edited for the publisher Hoepli: P. Torop, *La traduzione totale: tipi di processo traduttivo nella cultura* (Total translation. Types of translation processes in culture);⁵⁴ A. Popovič, *La scienza della traduzione. Aspetti metodologici. La comunicazione traduttiva* (The science of translation. Methodological aspects. Translational communication);⁵⁵ A. Ljudskanov, *Un approccio semiotico alla traduzione. Dalla prospettiva informatica alla scienza traduttiva* (A semiotic approach to translation. From an informational perspective to the science of translation).⁵⁶

⁵³ B. Osimo, *Storia della traduzione: riflessioni sul linguaggio traduttivo dall'antichità ai contemporanei*, Milan, Hoepli, 2002. Actually, this is not a history of translation, but a history of translation theory.

⁵⁴ P. Torop *La traduzione totale: tipi di processo traduttivo nella cultura*, Milano, Hoepli, 2000 (transl. from Russian by B. Osimo). This is actually a re-edition, amended (and with the addition of introduction by Osimo, *Peter Torop per la scienza della traduzione*). The first edition could be considered as a draft, given its quality and the number of errors it contains: it was published under the title *La traduzione totale* in 1999 by the small publisher Guaraldi Logos (Modena), which disappeared shortly after its publication.

⁵⁵ A. Popovič *La scienza della traduzione. Aspetti metodologici. La comunicazione traduttiva*, Milano, Hoepli, 2006 (transl. from the Slovak by D. Laudani with integrations from the Russian edition).

⁵⁶ A. Ludskanov, *Un approccio semiotico alla traduzione. Dalla prospettiva informatica alla scienza traduttiva*, ed. by B. Osimo, Milano, Hoepli 2008 (transl. from French by V. Albertocchi, G. D'Alò, E. De Candia, F. Picerno, L. Revelant, V. Sanguinetti, E. Scarmagnani, M. Zampieri). The introduction by Osimo was rewritten and re-issued as *Aleksander Ludska-*

These are three of the five unabridged translations of monographs from the Slavic debate published in Italy – the other translations are the previously mentioned text by Soliński and *La traduzione: una grande arte* (The art of translation: a great art), by K. Čukovskij,⁵⁷ a classic of Russian studies on literary translation, but not to be considered as part of T-theory (it discusses many problems in literary translation in an interesting manner and engaging style, but beyond an epistemologically-founded framework).

In consideration of the three previously mentioned translations promoted by Osimo, it is worth discussing one of his studies:⁵⁸ *Translation Science 1959-2009: Contributions from Eastern Europe*,⁵⁹ in which Osimo proposes a personal reconstruction of the Slavic tradition of research on translation, explicitly following the traces of a semiotics path, which he identified as the most representative of Slavic tradition (from Vygotskij to Ljudskanov, Popovič, Jakobson and Torop). Actually, the ‘Slavic’ path highlighted by Osimo could be more accurately defined as one of the paths of the semiotic debate that took place “in the Russian language” (see below).

A major step forward is also represented, in this respect, by the works of L. Salmon, a Slavist and translation theoretician, who in her studies⁶⁰ moves

nov, un approccio semiotico alla traduzione, in Le giornate della traduzione letteraria. Nuovi contributi, S. Arduini, I. Carmignani (eds.), (“Quaderni di Libri e Riviste d’Italia”, 63) Roma, Iacobelli, 2010, pp. 216-231.

⁵⁷ K. Čukovskij, *La traduzione: una grande arte*, Venezia, Cafoscarina, 2003 (transl. from Russian by B. M. Balestra, J. Dobrovol’skaja).

⁵⁸ Among his studies (some of which converged in the introduction to the cited translated volumes): B. Osimo, *La traduzione totale di Peeter Torop*, “Testo a Fronte”, 20 (1999), pp. 5-48; Id. *Attualità di Aleksandr Ludskanov per la scienza della traduzione*, “Testo a fronte”, 38 (2008), pp. 81-107; Id., *Jakobson: Translation as imputed similarity*, “Σημειωτική – Sign Systems Studies”, 36 (2008), 2, pp. 315-339; Id., *Jakobson and the mental phases of translation*, “Mutatis Mutandis. Revista latinoamericana de Traducción”, 2 (2009), pp. 73-84.

⁵⁹ Id., *Translation Science 1959-2009: Contributions from Eastern Europe*, cit.

⁶⁰ In Italian language see at least: L. Salmon, *Russistica e traduttologia: dai modelli alle prospettive*, cit.; Ead., *Dalla slavistica alla traduzione: alcune premesse, alcune prospettive*, in *Cultura e traduzione* (Atti del Convegno dei polonisti italiani, Roma, 9 dicembre 1994), ed. by K. Żaboklicki, M. Piacentini, Warszawa-Rzym, Upowszechnianie Nauki-Oświata, 1995, pp. 86-92; L. Salmon, M. Mariani, *Bilinguismo e traduzione: dalla neurolinguistica alla didattica delle lingue*, Milano, Franco Angeli, 2008. Salmon is also author of important works in Russian language, among others see: L. Salmon, *O perspektivach razvitija perevodovedenija v ramkax novejšich naučnych napravlenij*, Tezisy doklada, in *III Mežd. Naučnaja konferencija po perevodovedeniju “Fedorovskie Čtenija”* (26-28 okt’jabrja), S.-Peterburg, SPbGU, 2001, pp. 436-449; Ead., *Mechanizmy jumora. O tvorčestve Sergeja Dovolatova*, Moskva, Progress-Tradicija, 2008.

through the two (Western and Slavic) research traditions and combines them, representing the finest product of what she has identified as a natural link that exists between Slavic Studies and research on translation in Italy⁶¹ (it is also worth mentioning that she is a professor at the University of Genoa, where she founded the first Italian chair of Translation Theory in 2001). Salmon has contributed, as well, to spreading the knowledge of Slavic T-Theories. First, in her very popular manual *Teoria della traduzione* (Translation theory),⁶² in which she programmatically illustrates both the Western and Eastern traditions of research. However, more importantly, she does that within a more coherent framework. Referring to the Russian tradition, Salmon appropriately reminds Italian readers of the existence not only of a semiotic tradition (or a semiotic tradition in opposition to a linguistic research path), but of an interdisciplinary tradition “precociously located at the crossroads of philology, pedagogy, psychology, neurology, semiotics and cybernetics, accepting the inevitable need to combine purely humanistic interests with the methodologies and approaches of the natural sciences, mathematical and empirical”.⁶³ Furthermore she does not identify Slavic T-theories exclusively with the debate in the Russian language. Hence, while on the one hand, she broadly describes the contribution of Russian scholars who are little-known in Italy, on the other, she highlights the relevance for the Russian debate of the Charkiv school, of the Ukrainian scholar Finkel’. She reminds the Italian reader of the importance of the famous Conference in Bratislava in 1968 to Western debate and the birth of Translation Studies; she does not speak about a generic Slavic tradition, but underlines the importance of Czech, Slovak, Bulgarian and Polish schools in this field.⁶⁴

In this regard two recently-published studies by L. Costantino on Polish tradition run along the same lines indicated by Salmon, contributing to shed light on one of the Slavic traditions. They are: the anthology of theoretical texts *Teorie della traduzione in Polonia* (Translation theories in Poland, 2009);⁶⁵ and the study *Necessità e poetica. Profilo della traduttologia polac-*

⁶¹ Ead., *Russistica e traduttologia: dai modelli alle prospettive*, cit.; Ead., *Dalla slavistica alla traduzione: alcune premesse, alcune prospettive*, cit.

⁶² Ead., *Teoria della traduzione. Storia, scienza, traduzione*, Milano, Vallardi, 2003 (translated into Russian by author: *Teorija perevoda. Istorija, nauka, professija*, S.-Peterburg/Astana, MIEP-ENU, 2007).

⁶³ Ead., *Russistica e traduttologia: dai modelli alle prospettive*, cit., p. 278.

⁶⁴ The bibliographies in her works, therefore, contain a wide selection of Slavic studies, not limited to those translated into English (this is not an exclusively Western bibliography), nor only into Russian.

⁶⁵ *Teorie della traduzione in Polonia*, ed. by L. Costantino, Viterbo, Sette città, 2009. The anthology contains the following texts: O.A. Wojtasiewicz, *Traduzione ed equivalenza*

ca contemporanea (Necessity and poetics. An outlook on contemporary Polish translation theories, 2012).⁶⁶ These studies offer an overview of the theoretical debate on translation in Poland from its origins to the present day, presenting various approaches and models proposed in time which look beyond the disciplinary divisions that have characterized this debate in the past. At the same time, the anthology gives Italian readers the opportunity to approach some of the most significant texts of this debate, in translation.

Some final remarks on the Italian reception of Slavic T-Theories

At the beginning of this article, I wrote that the interest in Slavic T-theories was a result of selective attention, focused mainly on some specific aspects of the Slavic debate. From what has been said, it is easily observed that it is the Russian debate we have most information on. But there is something else that is interesting to note: we could identify several primary channels of mediation (or filters) that have conditioned the reception of Slavic T-theories in Italy, namely the “Russian Canon” of Slavic T-theories, the “Western Canon” and the “semiotic interest”.

Generally (with a few rare exceptions), the only references to ever reach Italy were those that had previously been addressed in the Russian debate. This does not mean that the entire Russian Canon was known in Italy, but that what was not part of this Russian Canon, hardly reached us at all (this was the case with Polish translation studies). Many studies produced by non-Russian scholars have become popular in Italy because they were previously considered part of the Russian Canon of studies on translation. This was the case of Popovič, Ljudskanov, Vlachov and Florin, Torop.

(Translation and equivalence); E. Balcerzan, *La poetica della traduzione artistica* (Poetics of literary translation); J. Święch, *Traduzione e poetica storica* (Translation and historical poetics); S. Barańczak, *La traduzione artistica come oggetto di interpretazione ‘indipendente’ e ‘correlato’* (Interpretation in literary translation: its ‘autonomous’ and ‘related’ aspects); J. Ziomek, *Traduzione – comprensione – interpretazione* (Translation – Understanding – Interpretation); F. Gruzca, *Problemi di ‘translatorica’* (The problems of “translatoryka”); E. Tabakowska, *Le barriere culturali sono fatte di grammatica* (Cultural barriers are built from grammar); D. Urbanek, *I problemi di teoria e prassi della traduzione sullo sfondo di una teoria generale della mimesis* (Translation theory and practice within the mimetic theoretical framework).

⁶⁶ L. Costantino, *Necessità e poetica. Profilo della traduttologia polacca contemporanea*, Roma, Lithos, 2012.

It is worth noting that, in the introductions to the translated volumes of Popovič and Ljudskanov, their editor Osimo underlines how they fall within a common Slavic tradition of research, the semiotic branch we discussed earlier. This tradition does indeed exist, however in this and other articles, Osimo refers only to the part of the debate conducted in the Russian language. Slavic tradition is thus implicitly identified with the Russian debate. It is not fortuitous that when Osimo mentions Popovič and Ljudskanov, Levý or Finkel' in his publications, he generally mentions the Russian editions of their works. A closer look reveals that the selection of Slavic theoreticians in the handbook he edited, includes Eastern European scholars who participated in the debate in Russian. It is also worth noting that the translation of *Teória umeleckého prekladu* by Popovič in Italy was the result of a collation of the Slovak edition and its Russian translation – for reasons that may not be merely philological!

Other texts translated into Italian were part of the “Western Canon” of Slavic T-theories: they were already circulating in other Western languages, from which in some cases they were translated. The texts by R. Jakobson and J. Levý, texts anthologised by S. Nergaard, are translations of texts written in English. The essays by E. Etkind or by J. Levý that appeared in “Testo a fronte” were respectively translated from their French and German translations. The journal’s director, F. Buffoni, in the introduction to Levý’s text, speaks of a work “which appeared in 1963 within the Structuralist field in Prague and immediately became a common heritage for cultured Europe in its German version (*Die literarische Übersetzung. Theorie einer Kunstgattung*, 1969).”⁶⁷ Ljudskanov’s work also achieved recognition thanks to its French self-translation (from which it was translated).⁶⁸ When S. Nergaard, in her introduction, mentions Ljudskanov, Popovič, Tabakowska, Zlateva, Miko, she refers only to their articles published in English or to English translations of their works (forgetting the existing translations in Italian!).⁶⁹ Even

⁶⁷ F. Buffoni, *Testo a fronte: da Jiří Levý a Friedmar Apel*, “Testo a fronte”, 7 (1992), p. 8.

⁶⁸ A. Ljudskanov, *Traduction humaine et traduction mécanique*, Paris, Centre de Linguistique Quantitative de la Faculté des Sciences de l’Université de Paris, 1969.

⁶⁹ These are: A. Ljudskanov, *A Semiotic Approach to the Theory of Translation*, “Languages Sciences”, 35 (1975), April, pp. 5-8; A. Popovič, *Dictionary for the Analysis of Literary Translation*, Edmonton, University of Alberta, Department of Comparative Literature, 1976; E. Tabakowska, *Linguistic Poliphony as a Problem in Translation*, in *Translation, History and Culture*, S. Bassnett, A. Lefevere (eds.), London-NewYork, Pinter Publisher 1990, pp. 71-77; P. Zlateva, *Translation as Social Action. Russian and Bulgarian Perspectives*, cit.; F. Miko, *La théorie de l’expression et la traduction*, in *The Nature of Translation*, ed. by J. S. Holmes, F. de Haan and A. Popovič, The Hague, Mouton [s.p.].

the names of these scholars are in some cases transliterated to their English, German or French form – leading to the problem that, from one work to another, the same scholars seem to have different names. It is possible that the decision to refer exclusively to the bibliography in English, and ignore the original texts, was functional to the informative nature of the work, and then to the decision to refer to some fundamental and accessible texts. Yet, here, it is not clear why in the case of Tabakowska, S. Nergaard does not mention her *Cognitive Linguistics and Poetics of Translation*,⁷⁰ but only a text published in a volume edited by Bassnett, considered an authority in the Western field of Translation Studies. Though she is rigorous, Nergaard actually betrays her own research preferences and respect for the canon.



The third filter is the semiotic interest. The majority popularisers of Slavic T-theories in Italy seem to have shown interest exclusively in the semiotic approach to translation (with valid exceptions such as Montella and Picchianti-Jampol'skaja, Arcaini and Salmon). This is evident in the works of Nergaard or Osimo, whose success has created the idea that the Slavic con-

⁷⁰ E. Tabakowska, *Cognitive Linguistics and Poetics of Translation*, Tübingen, Gunter Narr Verlag, 1993.

tribution has been expressed primarily in the field of semiotics.⁷¹ Perhaps it is not a coincidence that the most extensively published scholar in the Slavic tradition was P. Torop,⁷² or that many of above-mentioned publications appeared in journals such as “Athanos”, or through the mediation of researchers such as Nergaard (Lotman, Levý), Petrilli (Torop), Ponzio, De Michiel (Bachtin).

The situation has changed over the past decade. However, translations and studies relative to the debate in the Slavic areas offer a vision that is still incomplete. Traditions of research not conducted in the Russian language find less representation both in terms of studies and translation (not only the relatively young traditions from the former Yugoslavian area are little-known, but also studies carried out in the Ukrainian language, and a large part of the contributions from the very rich Czech and Slovak traditions). If in the Slavic context the Russian debate is better known, it is also true that relatively few texts from the Russian tradition are currently accessible to the Italian reader and the tradition of studies (both from the past and the present) based on psycholinguistic and neurolinguistic approaches are insufficiently represented.

⁷¹ The lack of interest in Slavic T-theories is particularly surprising in the field of Italian comparative studies, where instead Slavic T-theories have expressed interesting contributions (particularly the Czech, Slovak and Polish debates). The only one exception is D. Ďurišin, known in Italy and often cited in reference to the concepts of “inter-literary networks” and translation as “creative reception”). This seems due to his collaboration with A. Gnisci (together they edited *Il mediterraneo. Una rete interletteraria*, Rome, Bulzoni, 2000. See A. Visco, *La tradizione dello studio comparatistico in Slovacchia*, “I quaderni di Gaia. Rivista di letterature comparate”, 5-6-7, (1993) 92-93, pp. 107-118).

⁷² Some his articles, however, are translated from English.