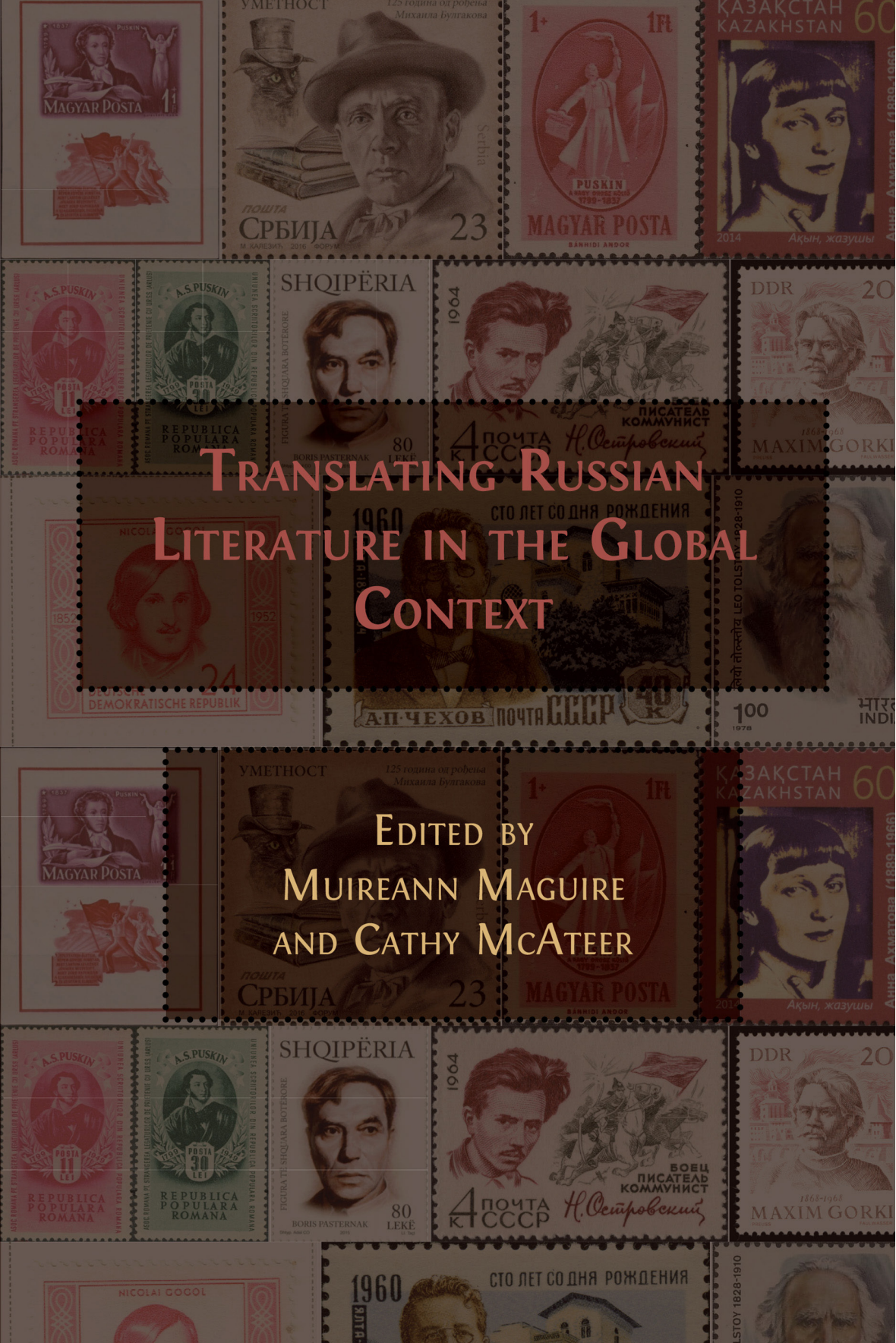

Translating Russian Literature in the Global Context

Edited by
Muireann Maguire
and Cathy McAteer

https://www.openbookpublishers.com

Muireann Maguire and Cathy McAteer (eds), *Translating Russian Literature in the Global Context. Cambridge*, UK: Open Book Publishers, 2024, https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0340

Version 1.1

ISBN Paperback: 978–1-80064–983–5

ISBN Hardback: 978–1-80064–984–2

ISBN Digital (PDF): 978–1-80064–985–9

ISBN Digital ebook (EPUB): 978–1-80064–986–6
ISBN DIGITAL ebook (HTML): 978–1-80064–989–7
DOI: 10.11647/OBP.0340

Cover Design: Jeevanjot Kaur Nagpal

This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme as part of the RUSTRANS academic project, 'The Dark Side of Translation: 20th and 21st Century Translation from Russian as a Political Phenomenon in the UK, Ireland, and the USA' (grant agreement no. 802437).

Brazil

Translating Russian Literature in Brazil: Politics, Emigration, University and Journalism (1930–74)

Bruno Baretto Gomide

In 1959, the well-known Brazilian critic Antonio Candido (1918–2017) published an important study on the formation of Brazilian literature.[1] Candido chose to explore the period from the end of the eighteenth century to the middle of the nineteenth, during which the Brazilian literary system was formed. I intend to draw on Candido's thoughts in this chapter to present a "decisive moment" in the translation of Russian literary texts in Brazil during a somewhat later period: from the beginning of the 1930s to the mid-1970s, when a densely interconnected network took shape, linking the publishing market, cultural journalists, translators born in Brazil, translators of emigrant origin, academia, and readers. During this period, many questions concerning the translation of Russian literature originating in previous decades were solved, and many of the critical and translational procedures that would inform later practices and conceptions were created.[2]

These four and a half decades encompass several important stages which will form the basis of my analysis in this chapter: the early 1930s witnessed the first direct translations of a collection of novels and short stories for the Iurii Zel'tsov translation-publishing series (known as the Russian Authors' Library). Zel'tsov

1 Antonio Candido, *Formação da Literatura Brasileira: momentos decisivos* (Belo Horizonte and Rio de Janeiro: Itatiaia, 1993).

2 Candido himself was also an important intellectual figure in the professionalisation of Russian Studies in Brazil, writing essays that related Brazilian and Russian literary texts, collaborating in the creation of the area of Russian Studies at the University of São Paulo, and acting as PhD supervisor to Boris Schnaiderman (whose legacy I will revisit in this chapter).

 https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0340.36

was a Jewish-Russian immigrant from Riga who, in Brazil, adopted the name Georges Selzoff. The next period saw large-scale production of translations, with a turning point in the final years of World War II and the Getúlio Vargas dictatorship (1937–45); debate over the so-called 'French' paradigm, questioning the role of Paris as a mediator of the Russophone 'Republic of Letters' (to paraphrase Pascale Casanova);[3] the emergence of several proposals and initiatives for the professionalisation of translation; the commissioning of the seminal collection of Dostoevsky's works by the publisher José Olympio; the debate over Vladimir Maiakovskii's translations made in Argentina; a shift in the relationship between translations of Russian prose and poetry, and the rise of avant-garde movements in Brazilian culture in the 1960s, notably Concretism and Tropicalism; the integration of this Brazilian translation scene within a transnational network of translators, especially of Russian poetry (such as Robel and Ripellino);[4] and finally the critical and translational influence of Boris Schnaiderman (1917–2016), from the creation of the Russian Literature course at the University of São Paulo (USP) to his professorial thesis ('livre-docência'), in 1974, which was an annotated Portuguese translation of Fedor Dostoevsky's short story, 'Mr. Prokharchin' ('Gospodin Prokharchin', 1846). This thesis was a milestone in the professionalisation of Slavonic Studies in Brazil. It was the first translation of a full-length Russian literary text in a Brazilian (or Latin American) university. Consequently, its completion will serve as the final date for the case I propose to discuss.

I begin with the year 1930, a significant one for the formation of modern Brazil. The first presidential term of Getúlio Vargas (1882–1954) initiated a series of structural reforms in politics, the economy, education, and culture, as well as in the publishing market, especially with the creation of a national Brazilian book industry.[5] The number of readers expanded significantly, despite the country's traditionally low literacy rate. The expansion of the public education system at primary and secondary levels and the creation of the first modern universities in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo were important factors in increasing literacy. In addition, difficulties in importing European books, due to the First, and especially the Second, World Wars, stimulated the process known as 'import substitution', which hastened the development of an internal market for books in Portuguese. Georges Selzoff's 'Russian Authors' Library (Bibliotheca de Autores

3 Pascale Casanova, *La République mondiale des Lettres* (Paris: Seuil, 2008).

4 Léon Robel (1928–2020), translator of Gennady Aigui, Solzhenitsyn, and other Russian and Soviet writers; Angelo Maria Ripellino (1923–78), Italian Slavist and translator.

5 Laurence Hallewell, *O livro no Brasil: sua história* (São Paulo: Edusp, 2005); see also Johan Heilbron and Gisèle Sapiro, 'Outline for a Sociology of Translation: Current Issues and Future Prospects', in *Constructing a Sociology of Translation*, ed. by Michaela Wolf and Alexandra Fukari (Amsterdam and Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins, 2007), pp. 93–107.

Russos)' series is a good indicator of the new state of affairs: within two years of its foundation (1930–32) it had published more translations of Russian literature than had appeared in the entire previous half-century (ten in total, up to 1929). Moreover, they were direct translations from Russian—a complete novelty in Brazil. The publisher's catalogue mixed nineteenth-century "classics" (Fedor Dostoevsky, Lev Tolstoy, Nikolai Gogol and Anton Chekhov), popular authors from the 1910s and 1920s (such as Leonid Andreev), and so-called "Soviets" (Il'ia Ehrenburg). The publisher's focus was on novels, novellas, and short-story collections, probably because Selzoff commissioned new translations from the original (which was theoretically more feasible with short texts).

The transliteration of authors' names and the translations of the titles of works in the 'Russian Authors' Library' was still dictated by French practice, noticeably the double 'f' in the endings of names, including the publisher's own. The Selzoff/Zel'tsov name variation is a clear example of the translational tensions of the period. The editor chose a French spelling with the dual aim of making the project more familiar to Francophile readers, but also to avoid police surveillance, always alert to Russophone names. There was widespread concern in the government and in various sectors of society about the spread of Communism, which in that period was fundamentally and almost exclusively associated with 'Russia' (as the Soviet Union was known). This fear had been evident since 1917, but since Vargas came to power in 1930, installing a centralising, modernising government, Soviet influence was actively resisted. Intellectuals and left-wing groups were for obvious reasons especially targeted, but there were periodic police raids on recreational or Russian religious associations (or those from elsewhere in Eastern Europe). The Modernist poet Carlos Drummond de Andrade (1902–87) commented ironically on the police's methods:

> Of the police searches in the homes of people whom the government suspect, perhaps none is more ridiculous than that concerning books in their libraries. Eighty or a hundred dog-eared works are lined up on a modest shelf, with pencil marks indicating the long hours of study and the reader's dialogue with the author. Two policemen touch these books with disheartened curiosity: they would perhaps want to find pornographic prints, which would distract them from this inconvenience [...]. But none of that. They are cold texts, in incomprehensible languages and bearing obscure names: as some of these names end in -ov, -ovsky and -insky, let's take them to the police chief, and the citizen will go too, just in case.[6]

6 Carlos Drummond de Andrade, 'Livros assassinados' in *Revista do Globo*, 9 June 1945, 12–58.

Drummond's account points to genuine and often arbitrary persecution, but it may obscure the fact that relations with Russian literature, both for the government and the police, were more ambiguous than this purely repressive operation allows us to suppose. An indicator of the complexity of the issue is the considerable diffusion of Russian literary texts, in French, Portuguese, and Brazilian translations, in law schools, and even among officials of the police and judicial systems: Dostoevsky, above all, was a very well-known author among police officers, prosecutors and judges. Selzoff made translations working with one or more Brazilian writers using the 'crib' or 'podstrochnik' method, in which Selzoff wrote an initial semi-literal version of the Russian text in Portuguese, after which other translators prepared the literary version. This process was entirely compartmentalised as Selzoff was not able to write in literary Brazilian Portuguese, while the Lusophone translators did not know Russian. This widely internationally accepted arrangement would reappear in Brazil three decades later, used by Schnaiderman and the so-called 'Concrete poets'.[7] In the latter case, however, the parties involved shared all aspects of the translation: Schnaiderman was a competent literary author and essayist, and the brothers Haroldo and Augusto de Campos had studied Russian with him.

Selzoff/Zel'tsov's publishing initiative must be evaluated against the background of the circulation of Russian literature in Brazil. This regional phenomenon was part of a transnational process, simultaneously in dialogue and in competition with the French translational paradigm that had emerged during the Russian novel's surge in popularity at the end of the nineteenth century. Various literary polysystems proceeded at varying degrees of distance from Paris: the German polysystem operated with relative independence from its early years; the Anglo-American one quickly detached itself from the French meridian;[8] the Italians achieved a remarkable degree of boldness and

7 This refers to the Brazilian Concretista movement, which proposed, following Ezra Pound, the superiority of the illuminating fragment over longer writings, especially in the creation of a 'paideuma', or series of works, which emphasised innovation. Intensity is better than distension: *non multa sed multum*, as the Latin proverb appropriated by the Concretistas states. The brothers Haroldo and Augusto de Campos, Bruno Schnaiderman's long-term collaborators on various translations from Russian, were leading Concretistas.

8 Pieter Boulogne, 'Europe's Conquest of the Russian Novel. The Pivotal Role of France and Germany', in a special issue *of IberoSlavica* on 'Translation in Iberian-Slavonic Exchange', ed. by B. Cieszynska (Lisbon: CLEPUL, 2015), 179–206; William B. Edgerton, 'The Penetration of Nineteenth-Century Russian Literature into the Other Slavic Countries', in *American Contributions to the Fifth International Congress of Slavists*, 2 vols (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1963), I (1963), pp. 41–78.

independence in the second half of the 1920s;[9] while in the Iberian Peninsula and Latin America, the process was just beginning.[10]

The Brazilian readership was largely French-speaking. Russian literary texts were read in French translations that began to arrive in Brazilian ports in 1887.[11] Due to the ubiquity of these editions, which were of considerable symbolic prestige, practically no new Brazilian translations were made. The few existing ones, such as a version of Tolstoy's *Kreutzer Sonata* (*Kreitserova sonata*, 1889) by the prestigious publisher Garnier (Rio de Janeiro, 1890), were based on French intermediary texts, or, in some cases, on Portuguese or Spanish ones, also in turn usually based on French versions. French translational mediation is a phenomenon that has been surprisingly little studied, despite its cruciality for Latin American reception studies. There are three main gaps in scholarship: firstly, in relation to the publishing market itself, the intricacies of decisions made by the publishers involved (Plon, Hachette and others), sales strategies, and reader responses. Secondly, the careers of the main translators involved are little-known. Finally, further analysis of the translations themselves is required, based on the theoretical corpus provided in recent years by Translation Studies. It would also be worth reassessing the role of certain fundamental mediators, such as that of Eugène-Melchior de Vogüé (1848–1910), who was immensely important both for Brazilian literary criticism and for the motivation behind various strategies in the publishing market, including the three factors mentioned above.[12]

Most of what has been written about Russian literature in Brazil is based on a corpus of criticism and translations generated by a tiny group of Parisian

9 Laurent Béghin, *Da Gobetti a Ginzburg: diffusione e ricezione della cultura russa nella Torino del primo dopoguerra* (Brussels and Rome: Brepols Publishers/Istituto Storico Belga di Roma, 2007).

10 George O. Schanzer, *Russian Literature in the Hispanic World: A Bibliography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972); Hélène Harry, 'La Russie en Argentine. Réception, diffusion et appropriation des idées russes dans l´Argentine des années 1920' (unpublished master's thesis, University of Rennes, 2006); Dina Odnopozova, 'Russian-Argentine Literary Exchanges' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Yale University, 2012).

11 Bruno B. Gomide, *Da estepe à caatinga: o romance russo no Brasil, 1887–1936* (São Paulo: Edusp, 2011).

12 There is little scholarship on de Vogüé. The best sources are Michel Cadot, *Eugène-Melchior de Vogüé le Héraut du Roman Russe* (Paris: Institut d'Études Slaves, 1989); and Magnus Röhl, *Le roman russe de Eugene-Melchior de Vogüé* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1976). For a recent account, see Anna Gichkina, *Eugène-Melchior de Vogüé, ou comment la Russie pourrait sauver le France* (Paris: L´Harmattan, 2018) and Pierre-Jean Dufief, 'Le Roman Russe de Vogüé et le dialogue des cultures', in *Les intellectuels russes à la conquête de l'opinion publique française:une histoire alternative de la littérature russe en France de Cantemir a Gorki*, ed. by Alexandre Stroev (Paris: Presses Sorbonne Nouvelle, 2019), pp. 271–82, and Elizabeth Geballe's essay in the present volume.

publishers. A famous case of how "bad translations can generate good criticism"[13] is the 1935 critical revision of the very important Brazilian author Machado de Assis by critic Augusto Meyer (1902–70), who radically reassessed the former's critical reception by citing the translation of *Notes from Underground* (*Zapiski iz podpol'ia*, 1864) by Élie Halpérine-Kaminskii (1858–1936).[14] Meyer refuted the traditional image of Machado as a sceptical, ironical author, on the model of Anatole France, instead framing him as an inhabitant of the same universe of fragmented consciousness, radical psychological introspection and unstructured language that Meyer identified in Dostoevsky's novella. As is well documented, the two most famous causes in the dispute that started in the 1920s—involving French intellectuals such as Gide—against the *belles infidèles* are linked to Dostoevsky: the adaptations of *The Brothers Karamazov* (*Brat'ia Karamazovy*, 1880) and *Notes from Underground*, which were reassembled by the translators and transformed into quite different texts.[15] *Alma de criança* (*Child's Soul*) was for a long time the title given to *Netochka Nezvanova* (1849), after the French *Âme d'enfant*. Publishers also tried to attract readers with seemingly new texts. Texts such as *O Tirano* (*The Tyrant*) and *Ensaio sobre o burguês* (*The Essay on the Bourgeois*) could trick buyers since they were, respectively, re-titlings of Dostoevsky's *The Village of Stepanchikovo and its Inhabitants* (*Selo Stepanchikovo i ego obitateli*, 1859) and *Winter Notes on Summer Impressions* (*Zimnie zametki o letnikh vpetchatleniiakh*, 1863).[16]

Selzoff's project can be understood from an international comparative perspective as part of a constellation of similar proposals that materialised in editorial projects aimed at translating or retranslating Russian literature against the hegemony of the first waves of French translations. This approach is evidenced by the efforts of Argentine translators from the magazine/publisher Claridador towards various book series showcasing translations of Russian literature, such as 'Proa' (Barcelona), 'Slavia' (Turin) and 'Les jeunes russes' (Gallimard/NRF, Paris), all printed in the late 1920s and early 1930s. A number of factors facilitated these projects: the original translations, already half a century old, were becoming outdated; the political impact of the Russian Revolution; the existence of new Soviet critical editions; the 'Modernist' demand for new translations, which would resonate with current literary trends; and

13 Adel Ramilevna Fauzetdinova, 'Translation as Cultural Contraband: Translating and Writing Russian Literature in Argentina or How "Bad" Translations Made "Good" Literature' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Boston University, 2017).

14 Augusto Meyer, 'O Homem Subterrâneo', in *Textos Críticos*, ed. by João Alexandre Barbosa (São Paulo: Perspectiva, 1986), 195–99.

15 More about Halpérine-Kaminskii can be found in Stroev, *Les intellectuels russes*, pp. 284–87.

16 Vladimir Boutchik, *Bibliographie des ouvres littéraires russes traduites en français* (Paris: Messages, n.d.); Vladimir Boutchik, *La littérature russe en France* (Paris: Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion, n.d.).

the availability of a translation workforce, made up of emigrants and 'fellow travellers'.

In Brazil, the translation of Russian literature was closely linked to the injunctions of macro-politics, especially the fluctuations of anti-Communist waves.[17] The relationship between anti-Communist discourse and Russian literature was complex. Initially, a complete division was established between literature before and after 1917. The latter was invariably proscribed by right-leaning pundits. As for the former, there was a wide range of reactions, ranging from the radical differentiation between the 'classical' Russian literary text and Bolshevism to the detection of continuity between these two phenomena. These reactions need to be taken into account in order to understand the choices faced by both editors and translators in the Ibero-American world, at both macro- and micro-textual levels.

Paralleling the efforts of certain sectors of Brazilian culture and politics to curb the circulation of translated Russian texts, there were many attempts to finance and encourage the latter by the Soviet cultural propaganda agencies. In the 1930s and 1940s, VOKS (the All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries), the Foreign Commission, and representatives of other Soviet cultural agencies worked hard on exercising their soft power with dispatches of books and other material. Some of these texts were published in translation in books and periodicals across the Latin American continent. The poet and translator David Vygodskii, for example, sought to build, from 1926 onwards, a network of contacts with various Latin American intellectuals, including Brazilians; he used this network to effect important exchanges that resulted in several translation experiments both into Russian and Spanish and Portuguese.[18] Certain works produced in the Soviet Union were sent to contacts (journalists, writers, intellectuals) who disseminated them in several Latin American countries. Alternatively, depending on how favourable the political context was, these texts could be sent directly to bookshops. The periodical *La Literatura Internacional*, rich in Soviet literature, could be found on sale in the capitals of Chile, Uruguay, Cuba, Mexico and Colombia during the 1940s. At that time, no sustained attempts were made by the USSR to disseminate Russian texts in Brazil, mainly because Portuguese was the language of the latter. It was much more practical, from the Soviet point of view, to translate books, articles

17 Rodrigo Patto Sá Motta, *Em Guarda contra o Perigo Vermelho: o Anticomunismo no Brasil (1917–1964)* (São Paulo: Perpectiva/Fapesp, 2002).

18 Bruno B. Gomide, *David Vygódski, Um sismógrafo da crítica literária russa* (Campinas: Mercado de Letras/LETRA, 2021). On Soviet cultural propaganda and soft power, see: Sophie Coeuré, *La grande lueur à l´Est: les Français et l´Union soviétique, 1917–1939* (Paris: CNRS, 1999); Michael David-Fox, *Showcasing The Great Experiment: Cultural Diplomacy and Western Visitors to the Soviet Union, 1921–1941* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Ioana Popa, *Traduire sous contraintes: littérature et communisme (1947–1989)* (Paris: CNRS, 2010).

and periodicals into Spanish, the language common to most countries in the region, and to hope that Brazilian readers, generally literate in Spanish, would come into contact with them indirectly. That this did often occur is evidenced by Brazilian used bookstores, where to this day one can find Spanish translations of works by Mikhail Sholokhov, Aleksandr Fadeev, and other Soviet writers from this period. Soviet agencies considered Argentina a key strategic centre for the diffusion of literary and political texts across the continent, thanks to its huge emigrant community and powerful publishing market. The translator Lila Guerrero (1906–86) sent a letter in May 1943 to Aleksei Tolstoy, via the Foreign Commission in Washington, which shows the level of friendship at that time between Soviet cultural authorities and Latin American translators.[19] Agreements made in the 1960s between the Russian Department at USP and several Soviet academic institutions facilitated the acquisition of Russian-language critical and literary texts in Russian, which could then be translated for scholars, and sometimes also for the wider publishing market.

There were two Russian "fevers"[20] at either end of the first Vargas era: the first in 1930, when the so-called Brazilian 'October Revolution' transferred power to the Gaucho political group from the southernmost state of Rio Grande do Sul. The second occurred in 1945, when a coup deposed Vargas, ending an authoritarian period. Between 1930 and 1935, the Vargas regime had alternated constitutional and pseudo-constitutional government, with more or less permanent police surveillance of Russophone activity. Sixty-three literary translations from Russian were published, almost all of them mediated through a third language, except for Selzoff's series. The texts used for translation were, in the vast majority of cases, late nineteenth-century French versions. The most translated texts were those which could command commercial interest, such as Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* (1878) and Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* (*Prestuplenie i nakazanie*, 1866).

Maksim Gorky, Dostoevsky, and Tolstoy, in that order, were the most frequently translated authors, followed, on a rapidly descending scale, by Chekhov, Andreev, and certain 'new' authors, such as Boris Pil'niak, Fedor Gladkov and Fadeev. New work by the latter was greeted positively in Brazilian newspapers and magazines, although it was rare for such reviews to specifically acknowledge translation issues. The translators of these books were either first-time fiction writers (Brazil experienced a surge in novel writing after 1930) or names now shrouded in total obscurity. Several translations were either anonymous or pseudonymous, like the Communist militant Leôncio Basbaum's 1931 translation of *The Brothers Karamazov* (for the Americana publishing house),

19 Letter from Lila Guerrero to A. N. Tolstoi, 16 May 1943. Archive of the Inostrannaia Komissiia, RGALI, Fond 631, opis 11, delo 404, 'Materialy po Iuzhnoi i Tsentral'noi Amerike' (n. 5).

20 I borrow this term from the translator and critic Brito Broca, in his *Ensaios da Mão Canhestra* (São Paulo: Polis, 1981).

signed "Raul Rizinsky". Basbaum justified his pseudonym as a screen against possible police repression, but also because he lacked confidence, as an amateur, in his own translatorial skills.

Between 1935 and 1937, Russian matters were further sensitised in the aftermath of the Communist insurrection of 1935—a military uprising partially financed by Moscow[21]—and by the counter-decree issued by the strongly anti-Soviet Estado Novo dictatorship on 10 November 1937.[22] These events halted the spread of Russian literature and its translations. There was heated discussion about the continued viability of Russian literature in Brazil, exercising both sides. Belisário Penna, for instance, then a member of the far-right party Ação Integralista Brasileira (Brazilian Integralist Action), clamoured against the "Russian Jews", "Communist delinquents", who were "stooges of Russian literature".[23] Despite such extremism, Russian literature continued to be translated and published after 1935. However, Soviet literature—or 'modern Russian literature', a rather euphemistic expression—had virtually disappeared. Soviet authors, including Gorky, were only published between 1930 and 1935, which demonstrates the stricter exclusion of 'suspicious' authors and the practical impossibility of producing new translations. From 1936 onwards, readers of Brazilian translations had access only to the nineteenth-century classics, mainly Dostoevsky and Tolstoy. During this period the publishers of translations were largely motivated to cash in on successful film adaptations of Russian novels, such as *Anna Karenina* or *Crime and Punishment*.[24]

At this time of uncertainty for the Brazilian intelligentsia, Dostoevsky emerged as a middle ground for all sectors of the Brazilian political and ideological spectrum. In mid-1935, the first critical interpretation of a Russian writer to be published in Brazil appeared: the monograph *Dostoiewski* by the Catholic essayist Hamilton Nogueira (1897–1981). At the same time, and perhaps paradoxically, Dostoevsky was being read voraciously by various leftist groups, including card-carrying Communists. In part, the ideological

21 On the 1935 uprising, see Daniel Aarão Reis Filho, *Luis Carlos Prestes, um revolucionário entre dois mundos* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2014).

22 See Lúcia Lippi Oliveira, Mônica Pimenta Velloso, and Ângela Maria de Castro Gomes, *Estado Novo: ideologia e poder* (Rio de Janeiro: Zahar, 1982).

23 Belisario Penna, 'Momento brasileiro', *Correio da Manhã* (Rio de Janeiro), 17 December 1935, 2.

24 One good example of this is the director Josef von Sternberg's 1935 film version of *Crime and Punishment*, starring Peter Lorre as Raskolnikov, screened across Brazil in the first half of 1936. Two translations of the novel were published at this time: one by a mysterious 'Ivan Petrovitch' (Rio de Janeiro: Ed. Guanabara) and the other by J. Jobinsky (Rio de Janeiro: Pongetti). In fact, both books plagiarise a previous translation by the Portuguese writer Camara Lima, which had been serialised in the Rio de Janeiro newspaper *A Manhã* in 1925–26. See Denise Bottmann, 'Um curioso às voltas com uma curiosidade histórica', *Cadernos de Tradução*, 3 (2017), 214–48.

appropriation was made possible by the existence of certain translations, for example, the aforementioned 'Ensaio sobre o Burguês', read as an anti-capitalist manifesto. Dostoevsky's ecumenical character was one of the reasons why the publisher José Olympio, from 1944 to 1960, published an edition of his complete works.

Times became difficult for editors of Russian literature from late 1937 onwards. With the consolidation of the Estado Novo dictatorship, numerous intellectuals were imprisoned or co-opted into the state machine and abandoned their Russian interests.[25] As a result, Russian literature ceased to be translated. 1938 was the first year in that decade when no new translations of Russian literature appeared. In the following two years (1939–41), the height of the Vargas dictatorship, only three translations appeared (of Dostoevsky and Tolstoy). From mid-1942, as a result of complex and (to some extent) contradictory geopolitics (since many members of the Vargas government sympathised with European fascism), the Brazilian Estado Novo aligned itself with the Allied Powers. War was declared on the Axis nations, and troops were sent to Italy in mid-1944. In a surprising turnaround, the Vargas regime ended up on the same side as the hated Communists. The Red Army's victories were celebrated in the newspapers, to the undisguised relief of many democratically minded intellectuals. Translating and publishing Russian literature became an Aesopian way of eroding the Estado Novo dictatorship. "Men advance through the steppes that filled Tolstoy's soul and Gorky's melancholy eyes with poetry", as one typical article said of Soviet military manoeuvres.[26] The translation that most clearly announced the arrival of a new period was the two-volume edition of *War and Peace* (*Voina i mir*, 1867), translated by Gustavo Nonnenberg for the Globo publishing house in Porto Alegre in the Southern state of Rio Grande do Sul. The translator, perhaps paradoxically, prepared the text from a German edition, which makes it the first and only Brazilian translation of Russian literature made from German, and not French or English.

This unprecedented number of new translations was closely associated with two great historical events: at a national level, the overthrow of the Vargas dictatorship, and at a global level, the end of the war. Russian literature, in criticism or translation, tends to be described in epic terms. The battle of Stalingrad became the great narrative of the period, its major text, and a metaphor present more or less explicitly in all critical and editorial initiatives. The entire process was conceived strategically and on a grand scale, pitting the idea of 'humanism' against 'barbarism' in both the exaggerated aspect and the notably 'red' tone of the initiatives. All this led to a flood of new translations from Russian. Never had so much Russian literature been published in Brazil as

25 Sérgio Miceli, *Intelectuais e Classe Dirigente no Brasil, 1920–1945* (São Paulo: Difel, 1979).

26 Anon., 'O contraste de dois mundos', *Diretrizes. Política, economia, cultura* (Rio de Janeiro), 11 June 1942, 8–24.

in the two years between 1943 and 1945. There were more than eighty volumes of literary texts (if those on history, literary criticism and journalistic texts were included, the number would increase considerably). There were some reprints of texts published in the 1930s, but most were newly issued. At an average of three and a half books a month, this equated to almost one release a week over this two-year period. In 1944 alone, two editions of *The Brothers Karamazov* were brought out by two of the most important publishers in Brazil, Martins and Vecchi, with José Olympio also preparing its own edition. The most published author during the 1943–45 period was Dostoevsky, with seventeen titles, closely followed by Tolstoy (fourteen), and Gorky (eight), accounting for almost half the total volume of translations, confirming these writers' prominence among the reading public and in the critical and editorial imagination of the period. Within this explosion of Russian literature, a special place may be assigned to Soviet literature, which now became very popular, despite having been almost completely ignored during the previous decade. Of the more than eight dozen works published, sixteen were by writers active after 1917. A similar yearning for diversity can be seen in the impressive series of short-story anthologies released between 1944 and 1945, which involved many professional and first-time translators, as well as new fiction writers, who used translation to supplement their incomes.[27]

At the same time, there was growing commentary in the press about the quality of the translations. First, critics and reviewers pointed out the need to expand knowledge of the Russian language in order to work from the original. The critic José Carlos Júnior, who came from Paraíba in the northeast of Brazil, reading Tolstoy in the French editions that arrived in the port of Recife, had mentioned this language problem as early as 1887, when the first Russian texts were arriving.[28] Half a century later, still confronted with the same problem, a São Paulo journalist stated that it was impossible to write about an author—in this case, Dostoevsky—whose language was unknown to critics.[29] Another way of trying to deal with the limitations was to criticise the amount of historic French intermediation: two Modernist critics, Ronald de Carvalho (1893–1935) and Mario de Andrade (1893–1945), disapproved of the incomplete, Frenchified Dostoevsky available in Brazil.[30] They also decried the dominance of indirect translations, targeting Portuguese versions ("poor little brochures sold to us in

27 Bruno B. Gomide, *Dostoiévski na Rua do Ouvidor: a literatura russa e o Estado Novo* (São Paulo: Edusp, 2018).

28 José Carlos Júnior, 'Apontamentos Esparsos', *A Quinzena* (Fortaleza), 15, 26 August 1887, 1–3.

29 'Dostoiewski e o regresso eterno', *Correio da manhã* (Rio de Janeiro), 6 November 1932, 1.

30 Ronald de Carvalho, 'O claro riso dos modernos', *O Jornal* (Rio de Janeiro), 5 February 1924, 1.

Lisbon")[31] for special attack, as well as unscrupulous editors and the "horrible translations" that they published. The term most frequently used by critics of available Russian translations was 'mutilation' (*mutilação*). This generated a symbiotic relationship between this word, traditionally used in various global contexts to indicate the hubris or limitations of some translators of Russian literature, and the political context of the end of the Estado Novo dictatorship. 'Condemned Books' is the title of an article by critic and translator Valdemar Cavalcanti (1912–82), who criticised the political and editorial mutilations to which books, especially those on Russian themes, were subjected.[32]

In addition to institutional precariousness and political pressures, there were very concrete practical problems. Schnaiderman recalled his first attempts at translation, in the 1940s, when there was just a single dictionary—Russian/French, not Russian/Portuguese—available to consult at the National Library in Rio de Janeiro. In fact, the great difficulty of obtaining Russian material for translation, even in later periods, should always be taken into account when studying the decisions that guided the preparation of editions or anthologies and those authors selected for translation. The parameters were set by foreign translations that circulated in Brazilian territory and by networks of contacts able to send copies of texts obtained in North American or European libraries; many of these packages were randomly confiscated at customs, further stymieing translators' efforts to access the original text.

There were efforts to improve the low quality of translations with ambitious projects. The main such attempt was the edition of Dostoevsky's *soi-disant* complete works by the publisher José Olympio in 1944, the most ambitious project by the most important publisher of the period.[33] The result pleased everyone and was praised in the newspapers. It boasted illustrations by celebrated Brazilian graphic artists (Oswaldo Goeldi, Axel Leskoschek and others). These images continued, on the other side of the Atlantic, the expressionist tradition of illustrating Dostoevsky, which was common in Central Europe in the first decades of the century. The illustrations in the 1944 edition have often been described as the best intersemiotic translation of Dostoevsky ever made in Brazil.[34]

The literary translations for Olympio's edition were made indirectly, at least in the early stages of the collection, by figures such as the trusted but obscure

31 Silvio Julio, 'Traduções novas?', *Correio da manhã* (Rio de Janeiro), 16 August 1944, p. 2.

32 Valdemar Cavalcanti, 'Livros condenados', *Leitura* (Rio de Janeiro), May 1945, p. 31.

33 José Olympio's Dostoevsky collection was labelled 'complete works' but many were missing, such as *The Diary of a Writer*.

34 Boris Schnaiderman, following Jakobson, examined this as a case of intersemiotic translation in his article 'Osvaldo Goeldi e Dostoiévski', *Revista da USP*, 32 (1996–97), 166–69.

Costa Neves, the 'Dostoevskian' novelists José Geraldo Vieira (1897–1977) and Rosário Fusco (1910–77), and also Rachel de Queiroz (1910–2003), one of the exponents of the new literary scene, who left some very interesting accounts of the joint translations that featured: a process that was both meticulous and messy, rigorous and improvised, involving a number of intermediary languages (French, English, Spanish and Italian) and always with reference to, and possible comparison with, the most recent Soviet critical editions. The translation of *The Idiot* (*Idiot*, 1868) published by Vieira in 1949 represents the most interesting case of 'success' in this wave of indirect translations. Vieira, a Modernist writer from São Paulo who had studied Dostoevsky's work academically for many decades, managed to find a Portuguese lexis in tune with the Russian author's poetics and to produce a text with an undeniable Dostoevskian flavour. In the early 1960s, when the José Olympio project was completed, Schnaiderman retranslated some of the translations that had been made in the original thriving period of publications. Olympio himself was fully aware of the limitations of indirect translations in the first phase of his project, but claimed that he had not been able to find an immediate remedy, due to a lack of suitable translators: around 1940, as we have seen, Russian-language experts were not good translators, and the good translators did not know Russian.

Another important moment in the maturation of translation methodology in the mid-1940s was the debate in São Paulo over the widely-circulated Argentine translations of Vladimir Maiakovskii, which had become the Latin-American Russian poetic Ur-text. Their translator, Lila Guerrero, was born in Buenos Aires to a Russian family and had spent much of the interwar period in Moscow.[35] When these translations were published, a more direct 'horizontal' dialogue about Russian literature took place between Brazilians and Argentines for the first time. Brazilians commented on production in their neighbouring country, not necessarily mediated by the critical production that came from Europe, especially France. Candido reviewed Guerrero's book of translations rigorously, considering it superficial and propagandistic, with an exaggerated emphasis on Maiakovskii compared to other Russian poets.[36] In a subsequent article, Candido played a Modernist-inspired joke. He created a pseudonym, "Fabrício Antunes", who questioned Candido's ability, since he knew no Russian, to comment on Guerrero's translation.[37] This incident inspired many proposals for better translation practice, which would be trialled in the following years.

The pioneering work of Selzoff and the dispute over Guerrero's translation points to the importance of writing by Russian exiles in the production of literary

35 Lila Guerrero, *Antologia de Maiacovski: su vida y su obra* (Buenos Aires: Claridad, 1943).

36 Antonio Candido, 'Notas de crítica literária—um poeta e a poesia', *Folha da manhã* (São Paulo), 11 March 1943, p. 5.

37 On Candido's game of pseudonyms, see Gomide, *Dostoiévski na Rua do Ouvidor*, p. 296.

translations.[38] This process would have been impossible without the presence of Russian-speaking emigrants, mainly Jews. In this sense, the history of the translation of Russian texts is, to a large extent, the history of port cities like Riga or Odesa, and their relationships with the migratory processes triggered by the Soviet and Nazi regimes. In the context of the 1940s and 1950s, one could mention other key names, such as Tatiana Belinky (1919–2013) and Paulo Rónai (1907–92),[39] Jewish emigrants from, respectively, Riga (arriving in São Paulo in 1929) and Budapest (coming to Rio de Janeiro in 1939). Both were leading figures in the process of professionalising the translator's work, with quality contributions to the translation of Russian texts, and particularly Russian-language short stories, although Belinky also published an excellent translation of Nikolai Gogol's *Dead Souls* (*Mertvye dushi*, 1842).[40]

The work on Russian literary translation took systematic shape thanks to another emigrant, Boris Schnaiderman. Despite some recognition of his importance as one of Brazil's major twentieth-century intellectual figures, his work has not been thoroughly studied. There is, for example, no critical assessment of his translations. His career, which is little known in international Slavonic Studies, provides some insights into important issues in the field, such as studies on exile and diaspora, the professionalisation of Slavonic Studies, and the processes of cultural transference in Russian texts. Born in 1917, Schnaiderman emigrated from Odesa in 1925. Russian was his mother tongue, but he did most of his schooling and literary training in Brazil. This was a special linguistic situation for the future translator, and he called his bilingualism "schizophrenic". Schnaiderman drew analogies between his trajectory and that of the great translator Lev (or Leone) Ginzburg (1909–44), also from Odesa, who emigrated to Italy as a child. This parallel with Ginzburg was always very important for Schnaiderman, and he also maintained contact with the translators and Slavists Ettore Lo Gatto (1890–1983) and Angelo Maria Ripellino. It is perhaps best to understand Schnaiderman's critical and translational path not as a binary (the Brazil-Russia bridge), but as a triangle with Italy as the third vertice. This bond was also important to Schnaiderman because of a personal experience: he had fought as an artillery sergeant on the Monte Castello front

38 For recent scholarship on exilic literature, see Galin Tihanov, *The Birth and Death of Literary Theory: Regimes of Relevance in Russia and Beyond* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2019); *Redefining Russian Literary Diaspora, 1920–2020*, ed. by Maria Rubins (London: UCL Press, 2021); Annick Morard, *De l´émigré au déraciné. La "jeune génération" des écrivains russes entre identité et esthétique* (Paris, 1920–1940) (Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme, 2010).

39 Paulo Rónai, *A tradução vivida*, 4th edn (Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio, 2012); on Rónai, see Ana Cecília Impellizieri Martins, *O homem que aprendeu o Brasil: a vida de Paulo Rónai* (São Paulo: Todavia, 2020); Tatiana Belinky, *Transplante de menina* (Rio de Janeiro: Moderna, 2003).

40 N. Gógol, *Almas Mortas*, trans. by Tatiana Belinky (São Paulo: Abril Cultural, 1972).

in World War II. He embarked with the Brazilian Expeditionary Force in mid-1944, soon after delivering to Vecchi his translation of *The Brothers Karamazov*, under the pseudonym of Boris Solomonov. He used this same pseudonym for five other texts which he translated in the immediate postwar period, by Tolstoy, Aleksandr Pushkin, and Aleksandr Kuprin. Schnaiderman followed a very characteristic Ibero-American tradition of resorting to pseudonyms, often to protect the translator politically and preserve him from direct criticism of his (often rushed) translation. Schnaiderman's use of a pseudonym is meaningful, however. By transforming his patronymic (Solomonovich) into a surname, he only partially concealed his identity. One aim of this approach was to ensure he could claim copyright for his translations in the future. During the war, he began writing his only novel, *War on the Quiet* (*Guerra em Surdina*), released in 1964, which was inspired by recent Brazilian fiction (authors such as Graciliano Ramos, Clarice Lispector, and Guimarães Rosa) and by Russian war narratives (mainly by Isaak Babel and Tolstoy). Thus, this translator was also an experienced prose fiction writer.

From 1956, Schnaiderman began to publish in the prestigious 'Literary Supplement' of the *O Estado de São Paulo* newspaper, as well as in other periodicals. There, he reviewed Russian writers already familiar to Brazilian readers while introducing a series of other unknown or semi-unknown names, such as Aleksandr Grin, Velimir Khlebnikov, Osip Mandel'stam, Valentin Kataev, Konstantin Paustovskii, Iurii Olesha, Konstantin Fedin, and Babel. In a characteristic move for the period, his newspaper articles led him to be invited to teach Russian at the University of São Paulo, initially as open courses in 1960 (in a typical post-Sputnik environment), and, from 1963, with the implementation of the undergraduate course in Russian Language and Literature. Schnaiderman was central to the translation and introduction of important Russian-speaking theorists such as Eleazar Meletinskii, Mikhail Bakhtin, Iurii Lotman, Viacheslav Ivanov, and the Russian Formalists, above all through his relationship with Roman Jakobson, who visited Brazil in 1968 to deliver a series of lectures. The Russian Language and Literature course at University of São Paulo was created alongside a course in Literary Theory, which brought Russian Studies closer to the areas of linguistics and translation.[41] Schnaiderman was a unique figure in the context of Latin America at that time, uniting in his career academic activities, translation practice, and scientific and cultural dissemination. Schnaiderman's style was academic yet accessible to the common reader, thus transcending the almost universal division between professional Slavists and popularisers.[42]

41 More on this subject can be found in Bruno B. Gomide and Rodrigo Alves do Nascimento, 'Slavic Studies in Brazil', *Slavic and East European Journal*, 64 (2020), 31–39.

42 An example is Schnaiderman's *Turbilhão e semente: ensaios sobre Dostoiévski e Bakhtin* (São Paulo: Duas Cidades, 1983) (*Whirlwind and Seed: Essays on Dostoevsky and Bakhtin*), which brings together both published and unpublished articles.

In the following decades, he wrote several books, always preoccupied with translation. One of them focused on translation exclusively: *Translation, An Excessive Act* (*Tradução, Ato Desmedido*, 2010).

Translation was thus both a theoretical and concrete feature of Schnaiderman's work from his earliest journalism, which consisted of texts either written exclusively on the topic or commenting on it tangentially. A key point was his criticism of existing translations of Russian literature in Brazil. One of the main threads deals with the specific difficulties of poetic translation. Schnaiderman was already pointing to the partnership process that, at the beginning of the following decade, would develop between himself, the brothers Haroldo (1929–2003) and Augusto de Campos (b. 1931). The various outcomes of this collaboration are discussed in newspaper articles such as 'Maiakovskii Reprinted in Russia' ('Maiakovsky republicado na Rússia', *O Estado de São Paulo*, 8 April 1961), 'A Paradox of Maiakovskii' ('Um paradoxo de Mayakovsky', *O Estado de São Paulo*, 6 May 1961), 'Letter to Tatiana Iacovleva' ('Carta a Tatiana Iacovleva', *O Estado de São Paulo*, 29 September 1962), and 'Two Russian Themes' ('Dois temas russos', *O Estado de São Paulo*, 16 November 1963). These articles consider theoretical problems related not only to translation, but also translated poetry. In some articles, the voices of other authors help to partially communicate ideas original to Schnaiderman, as in 'Modern Art in the Soviet Union' ('Arte moderna na União Soviética', *O Estado de São Paulo*, 3 September 1961), which contains an extract from the autobiography *People, Years, Life* (*Liudi, gody, zhizn'*, 1960–67), by the Soviet writer Il'ia Ehrenburg (which Schnaiderman would partially translate). Here Ehrenburg comments on the avant-garde's relations with Soviet culture. In the same vein, 'Translation and Style' ('Tradução e estilo', *O Estado de São Paulo*, 21 March 1964) is a note on Theory and Criticism of Translation, published by the University of Leningrad, in which the critic and translator Efim Etkind (1918–99) "attacks the translations which seek to achieve an average style, that is, lean, correct, tidy, but without greater boldness, in the transposition of the stylistic peculiarities of an author […]". Etkind states that, to overcome these deficiencies, modern theoretical conceptions on literary translation based on comparative stylistics need to be more effectively disseminated.[43]

Thus, Schnaiderman's partnership with Haroldo and Augusto de Campos represented a kind of confluence of views on the translation process. Schnaiderman was certainly inspired by the bolder conceptions of his interlocutors. However, praise for the dynamic and radical aspect of the literary text was already embedded in the comments on Russian literary prose that he had been making throughout his career. Schnaiderman laments, in the trajectory of several Soviet writers, the replacement of boldness with more traditional

43 For more information on Schnaiderman, see Bruno B. Gomide, 'Pormenores violentos: Boris Schnaiderman crítico', *Literatura e Sociedade*, 26 (2018), 22–36; and Bruno B. Gomide, 'Boris Schnaiderman: questões de tradução nas páginas de jornal', *Estudos Avançados*, 26 (2012), 39–45.

styles. The initial hundred texts written by Schnaiderman at the turn of the 1950s and 1960s, defending literary Modernism and the need to incorporate contemporary thinking into the translation, are enough to place him among important commentators on these themes.

The *Modern Russian Poetry* (*Poesia Russa Moderna*) anthology, published in 1968 by Schnaiderman and the de Campos brothers, who were exponents of the Concretist movement, followed a similar volume dedicated exclusively to Maiakovskii. It is certainly the most successful translation experiment of Russian poetry in Latin America.[44] This period was a golden age for Russian poetry anthologies globally, thanks to the favourable environment created by improvements in communication during the Thaw period, and by the interest in critical and theoretical experimentation in Russia at the beginning of the twentieth century, especially in the connection between Futurism and Formalism.[45]

The Campos brothers were instrumental in raising the discussion and practice of translation to a more sophisticated level in Brazil, and the importance of their contribution to Translation Studies has been increasingly evident on the international scene. The anthology's impact was unprecedented, with a very positive assessment made by a transnational network of scholars and translators of Russian poetry. Roman Jakobson, Iurii Ivask, Victor Terras, Léon Robel, and Angelo Maria Ripellino, among others, made glowing comments. In Brazil, the anthology was widely accepted by the public and reprinted several times, always including new translations. The book achieved the greatest success possible for poetry translators, being read as an original work, on the same level as the best Portuguese-Brazilian poetic production of the period. It also connected translated texts with contemporary musical language of the period, at a time of intense artistic and cultural activity: the translators strategically used excerpts from Brazilian popular songs to recreate Russian verses; in turn, the anthology inspired new work from popular composers. Schnaiderman continued to translate Russian poetry until the end of his life, always with collaborators. Poems by Iosef Brodskii, with Nelson Ascher, and by Gennadii Aigi, with Jerusa Pires Ferreira, stand out. Schnaiderman was one of the international pioneers in the dissemination of Aigi, having participated in congresses dedicated to the discussion of his work.[46]

44 *Poemas de Maiakóvski*, ed. by Boris Schnaiderman and others (Rio de Janeiro: Tempo Brasileiro, 1967).

45 See Gabriela Soares da Silva and Tiago Guilherme Pinheiro, 'Convergências da poesia russa moderna na América Latina dos anos 1960: Nicanor Parra, Boris Schnaiderman, Haroldo e Augusto de Campos', *El jardín de los poetas*, 10 (2020), 154–99.

46 *Guennadi Aigui, Clamor e silêncio*, ed. by Boris Schnaiderman and Jerusa Pires Ferreira (São Paulo: Perspectiva, 2010).

Dostoevsky was the writer around whom, historically, the most elaborate proposals of translation theory and practice in Brazil were woven. A final comment on Schnaiderman's technique may help us to understand the process of densification of the translation network that took place between the 1930s and 1970s. His work as a critic and translator sought to emphasise issues of aesthetics and language in Dostoevsky. His 1944 version of *The Brothers Karamazov* was highly praised by critics, especially because it was the first translation of an important literary work made directly from the Russian, but Schnaiderman always maintained that he himself was dissatisfied with it. He had felt obliged to produce an elegant and fluent text, incompatible with the irregularities and roughness of Dostoevsky's own text. Contemporary examination shows many merits in his translation, including some excellent solutions to difficult stylistic and terminological problems. Schnaiderman would never again attempt such an intense task. He remained firm in his intention to resist the verbose pathos characteristic of certain sectors of Latin American culture. He was very taken by the ideas of the Brazilian concrete poets, as mentioned above. Deviating from his desire to translate Dostoevsky's 'great novels', Schnaiderman produced most of his Dostoevsky translations in the early 1960s, consciously opting for shorter works: *Netochka Nezvanova*, *Notes from Underground*, *The Gambler* (*Igrok*, 1866), 'The Crocodile' ('Krokodil', 1865), 'The Eternal Husband' ('Vechnyi muzh', 1870), and *Winter Notes on Summer Impressions*. Afterwards, these translations passed through considerable revisions and underwent important changes by Schnaiderman, who saw translation as a process and an open text, subject to modification and improvement.

It is worth commenting on one book that brings together Schnaiderman's two main fields, criticism and translation: *Dostoevsky the Artist* (*Dostoiévski artista*), which includes two essays by Leonid Grossman, 'Dostoevsky the Artist' ('Dostoevskii khudozhnik'), and 'Materials for a Dostoevsky Biography' ('Matierialy k biografii Dostoevskogo'), translated by Schnaiderman in 1965. I believe this to be the first critical philological text about a Russian thinker translated in Latin America. The reasons why this book was published in Brazil may help us to understand some of the goals of Schnaiderman's translation work. First, the book questions the very genre of Dostoevsky's biographies. His "hectic" life was commented on to exhaustion in the Brazilian press.[47] Grossman's painstaking research helped to reduce and to contextualise a series of traditional Dostoevskian mythemes of suffering.

Schnaiderman wanted to provide a bibliography on Dostoevsky that would be independent from the French market, given that the translated texts traditionally available in Brazil were by emigrants residing in France, such as Henri Troyat, André Levinson, and Nikolai Berdiaev. The Brazilian version of

47 Giuliana Teixeira de Almeida, *Pelo prisma biográfico: Joseph Frank e Dostoiévski* (São Paulo: Desconcertos, 2020).

Grossman's essays was inspired by the book of the same title, *Dostoevsky Artista*, translated by Bompiani publishing house in Milan in 1961. Seven years later, Grossman's full-length 1965 biography *Dostoevskii* was published in Italian translation in Rome.[48] Schnaiderman was also interested in seeking a quality critical text written within Soviet Russia itself, that is, one that would frame a Russian writer in terms of current literary debates internal to the Soviet Union. Schnaiderman also helped to strengthen the theory and practice of translations of essays and literary criticism, which were still relatively rare in Brazil. This was the only translation of a complete book of essays by Schnaiderman (though he would later translate some shorter texts by theorists like Ivanov or Lotman).

Translators of Dostoevsky have often tried, at some point in their careers, to translate at least one of his 'five elephants', the key long novels. Schnaiderman, in a way, took the opposite route: he began with Dostoevsky's final novel and ended his cycle of translations with a short story, at that time relatively little studied by researchers outside Russia. I refer to 'Mr. Prokharchin', which Schnaiderman translated and commented on in his professorship thesis, presented at the University of São Paulo in 1974. This was Schnaiderman's last complete translation of fictional prose by Dostoevsky—and the first scholarly translation of Russian literature made at a Brazilian university. Afterwards, the text was published in a book called *Dostoevsky Prose Poetry* (*Dostoiévski Prosa Poesia*).[49] The translation of the short story is accompanied by an extensive critical essay that analyses the composition of the original alongside Schnaiderman's own translation decisions. Like other works by Schnaiderman, parts of this translational and essayistic project were printed in newspapers as works-in-progress. The translation he made for the thesis aimed to recreate Dostoevsky's complex and difficult style, noting its phonic aspects; the resulting effect (as Schnaiderman recalled on several occasions in lectures and talks) prompted the Concretist poet Décio Pignatari to call it a "brutalist" translation. Schnaiderman later reached the conclusion that he might have overcomplicated Dostoevsky's style. The version published in book form recreates the translation that was published in Schnaiderman's thesis, reducing the so-called brutalism. In correspondence with Paulo Rónai, one of the members of his thesis evaluation panel, and a leading specialist on Balzac and French literature, Schnaiderman engaged in an important dialogue about possible ways of translating the discontinuous text of Dostoevsky.

48 This would be Antonella di Amelia's translation, published as *Dostoevskij* (Rome: Samona e Savelli, 1968). Grossman's works were little translated elsewhere in the world: one exception was a 1940s French translation of his study of Balzac's reception in Russia, *Balzac en Russie* (Paris: O. Zeluck, 1946). His biography of Dostoevsky came out in English only in the mid-1970s, as *Dostoevsky. A Biography* (London: Allen Lane, 1974).

49 Boris Schnaiderman, *Dostoevsky Prose Poetry* (*Dostoiévski Prosa Poesia*) (São Paulo: Perspectiva, 1982).

His 1974 translation of 'Mr. Prokharchin', therefore, closes the arc begun in the 1930s. In this work, the elements existing in previous decades are condensed, rearranged and appear in a more complex and sophisticated way: the tense dialogue with 'French' conceptions of translation; Modernist, or even avant-garde, criticism of past conceptions of literary writing; the desire for an original participation at the level of international Slavonic Studies; the modulation of the bilingual and traumatised voice of the émigré translator; the need to establish bridges with the wider readership and the publishing market; the connection between academia and journalism; and, last but not least, the fight against concrete obstacles for the circulation of translations of Russian texts in Brazil—the delimitation of a possible canon in a country that was, in 1974, still going through the worst period of military dictatorship. The paradigm of simultaneously rigorous and creative treatment in the translation of Russian texts proposed by Schnaiderman provided theoretical and practical parameters for subsequent generations of translators, inside and outside the University of São Paulo.