

Joint Research Project "Brazil and its Translators"

Principal investigators

Professor Else R. P. Vieira (Queen Mary, University of London) and Doctor Maria Clara Castellões de Oliveira (the Federal University of Juiz de Fora), also co-directing the project.

Research Assistant

Eduardo Batista, from the University of Campinas, visiting research assistant to Professor Vieira, based at Queen Mary, for the duration of the project, to carry out specific research on Sir Richard Burton as the first translator of Brazilian literature into English.

Duration

8 months (Feb-September 2009)

Funding:

Graduate Programme in Literature of the Federal University of Juiz de Fora (all publication costs); the Brazilian Ministry of Culture/CAPES (covered RA's international ticket, accommodation in London and monthly stipend @ £ 6,000).

Project Description

This project explores the cultural role of translation in Brazil, with a particular focus on the Brazilian creative writer *cum* translator of literary texts, a marked phenomenon in Brazilian cultural history, including the following sub-topics and ramifications:

- (a) The genealogy of the phenomenon in the 19th century when the seat of the Portuguese Empire was transferred to Rio in 1808, fleeing Napoleonic persecutions and responding to British pressures, and the monopoly of Brazilian commercial and cultural exchanges with Portugal was broken, thereby enabling foreign literature to enter the country.
- (b) the counterpart to the phenomenon in the 19th century: Brazilian literature starts to get translated as foreign diplomats entered the country, with a specific focus on the landmark case of Sir Richard Burton, British diplomat and travel writer, the first translator of Brazilian literature into English, subsequent to his translation of Portugal's epic, *The Lusiads*;
- (c) Machado de Assis, Brazil's major 19th century writer, as a translator of plays, in the context of intensified inflow of foreign cultural artefacts, as part of the colony's expansion of its cultural life in order to absorb the greater demands arising from the residence of the Royal family in Brazil and its continued permanence in the country even after Independence (1922). Intertexts from Shakespeare in his writing. His theorization of the role of the translator relative to the original author via metaphors deriving from slavery which persisted in Brazil until 1888.

(d) the persistence of the phenomenon of the creative writer *cum* translator in the 20th century in shifting configurations: in Brazilian Modernism of the 1920s with the assertion of Brazil's non xenophobic cultural identity; the increasing professionalization of the writer: the marked expansion and consolidation of Brazil's robust publishing industry demanding high quality translations; the ever growing contribution of feminine writers *cum* translators; the intensification of translation during the military dictatorship; the pivotal role of the brothers and major poets Haroldo de Campos and Augusto de Campos in Brazilian postmodernism, as prolific translators from several languages, whose project of artistically (re)translating the world's literary canon conferred respectability to the literary translator;

(e) the impact of the phenomenon on the avatars of the original text and on the canonization of the original author;

(f) the ramification of the phenomenon in the form of increasing publication/ incorporation into the translated text of the creative writers *cum* translators' metalanguage, revealing their operational processes; the impact of their creative writing on translation and vice-versa;

(g) a parallel development to the phenomenon, namely, the Brazilian cineaste *cum* intersemiotic translator, in the context of the expansion of the Brazilian film industry and the growing number of directors who have greatly explored the potential of Brazilian literature for the screen. The avatars of the literary text translated into visual images and reaching a wider public. The internationalization of Brazilian literature via the increasing presence of Brazilian cinema in the transnational circuits.

Envisaged output:

Publication of a special issue of the refereed journal *Ipotesi*, named after the project, 160 pages, co-edited by Professor Vieira and Dr. Castellões de Oliveira, with the participation of the Journal's Editor-in-Chief, Dr Miriam Volpi, including

(a) an editorial by Dr Miriam Volpi,

(b) a presentation of project by co-directors Professor Vieira and Dr. Castellões de Oliveira

(b) a co-authored contribution by Else R. P. Vieira and RA on Richard Burton, the first translator into English of Brazilian Literature (Romanticism) contrasted with Elizabeth Bishop, major translator of Brazilian Modernism into English;

(c) two co-authored contributions by Dr.Castellões de Oliveira featuring, respectively, the genderization into the feminine and the professionalization of the writer *cum* translator;

(d) 9 other contributions on the diverse dimensions of the topic arising from call for papers

(f) review articles