

Translation and ethics: translation choices motivated by ideologies underlying the source text

Tradução e ética: decisões de tradução motivadas por ideologias subjacentes ao texto fonte

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ABSTRACT: Since 2013, participants of project ExTrad — a Community Outreach Program carried out at the Federal University of Paraíba (UFPB) — have been translating texts in the state of Paraíba (Northeast Brazil). Aimed both at providing translations for the community and at helping the professional development of the students of the Translation Program of the University, the project has debated a number of ethical issues since its establishment. This paper discusses some of the ethical issues we have dealt with when translating an 18th century text — on rhetoric, artistic perception and good taste — into contemporary Brazilian Portuguese. Although its theme is apparently non-controversial, colonialist and sexist ideologies underlie the discussions presented on the source text, arising discussions on how to tackle the issue and on how to translate it. This paper does not aim at closing the discussion, nor at presenting definitive solutions, but at fostering a debate, by presenting translation problems as cases that dwell in a grey area and that require complex decisions.

KEYWORDS: Translation Studies. Ethics. ExTrad Project.

RESUMO: Desde 2013, membros do projeto ExTrad — um projeto de extensão desenvolvido na Universidade Federal da Paraíba (UFPB) — vêm traduzindo textos no estado. Objetivando tanto fornecer traduções para a comunidade local quanto contribuir para o desenvolvimento profissional de alunos do Curso de Bacharelado em Tradução da Universidade, o projeto tem debatido várias questões éticas desde seu início. Este artigo visa a discutir algumas questões éticas debatidas quando nos foi solicitada a tradução de um texto do século XVIII (que trata de retórica, percepção artística e bom gosto) para português brasileiro contemporâneo. Embora o tema do texto fonte seja aparentemente não controverso, em diversos momentos os seus argumentos suscitaram debates a respeito de ideologias colonialistas e sexistas que subjazem as ideias nele desenvolvidas. Este artigo não pretende encerrar a discussão ou apresentar soluções definitivas para o caso, mas sim abrir um debate, apresentando problemas de tradução complexos que figuram em uma zona cinzenta, impondo decisões difíceis.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Estudos da Tradução. Ética. Projeto ExTrad.

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1. Introduction

Established in 2013 at the Federal University of Paraíba (UFPB), Project ExTrad is a Community Outreach Program, aimed at: a) helping the professional development of translation students at the University and b) providing translations for the community in the state of Paraíba (Northeastern Brazil). Members of the community can submit texts for the project, and these texts are, upon assessment, translated by translators in training, under the supervision of an appointed professor.

This paper presents a case study of the process of translating an 18th century text (henceforth TEXT Y¹) within Project ExTrad. Presenting an apparently non-controversial theme — rhetoric, artistic perception and good taste —, TEXT Y was assigned to one of the translators in training² working on the project. Contrary to the initial expectations, nevertheless, TEXT Y surfaced a considerable amount of discussion concerning the ideologies that underlie some of its arguments.

We acknowledge, beforehand, that every text is the product of a social and historical context. It is not our goal, therefore, to criticize TEXT Y for reflecting the conditions under which it was produced. However, we consider it relevant to shed light on our process of rendering translations for textual segments that, under a contemporary point of view, reflect sexist and colonialist ideologies. As Baker (2014) points out, there has been an “increased awareness of the role played by translation and interpreting in suppressing or promoting aspects of the lived experience of marginalized groups”, and, from our point of view, shedding light on decision-making processes behind a translation task can be a means to increase such awareness — at the same time it locates ourselves as we, as translators, present the cultural other.

This paper also constitutes an attempt to make the translators’ work visible to readers, an effort to change their cultural marginality, following Venuti’s (1995, p.311) suggestion of “presenting sophisticated rationales for (...) [translation] practices in prefaces, essays, lectures, interviews” (or, in this case, a case study).

¹ References to TEXT Y (including author, title and year of publication) have been intentionally omitted throughout this paper. The final section of this paper discusses the decision.

² The translator opted to remain anonymous. Yet, we would like to thank her for her hard work on translating TEXT Y and for her kind authorization and cooperation for this case study. Any criticisms regarding both the translation and this case study should be directed towards us. Hers are all the merits and our gratitude.

By focusing this paper on our decision-making processes concerning the translation of controversial segments on a Source Text, we believe to be promoting a debate closely related to the ethics of translation. In this manner, this debate echoes Robinson's (2007) considerations on the ethics of translation, presenting an internal point of view on the subject.

According to Robinson (2007), discussions on the ethics of translation are traditionally dominated by an external, non-translator, point of view, which results on a too narrow notion of ethics, according to which translators are said to be unethical when they "distort the meaning of the source text" (Robinson, 2007, p.25-26), disregarding the countless situations in which the translator is expected, as Robinson himself emphasizes, to 'distort' the meanings of the Source Text due to specific characteristics of the translation task he or she is carrying out.

Robinson (2007) argues for a broader (and more understanding) discussion on the ethics of translation — one that views translators as "human beings, with opinions, attitudes, beliefs, and feelings" (ROBINSON, 2007, p.26), who, at times, are forced to make dramatic decisions when their personal ethics clash with their professional ethics. The author, nevertheless, acknowledges his point of view is highly controversial: for many translators consider "unthinkable to do anything that might harm the interests of the person or group that is paying for the translation" (ROBINSON, 2007, p.26), whereas others make ethical decisions putting their personal beliefs above all else.

This paper, thus, aims at discussing Translation considering it a complex, nuanced human activity, influenced by a myriad of internal and external forces — far from the Manichean struggle of trying to pinpoint rights and wrongs. Our choices concerning the translation we rendered for TEXT Y, therefore, are not expected to be indisputable, but to be a starting point for a debate on the ethical repercussions of translating a text whose underlying ideologies are fundamentally different from our own.

This case study is organized as follows: the second section presents Project ExTrad and its work dynamics — from the moment members of the community submit texts for translation and become commissioners, until the moment the work is finalized and translators in training are given feedback about the accomplished translations. The third section discusses the process of translating TEXT Y into contemporary Brazilian Portuguese, presenting segments debated among participants of the project and the translation renderings. By doing so, this paper aims at fostering a debate on the ethical implications behind translation choices, and also at inviting readers to reflect upon the possibilities and limitations translators face regarding

the works for which they are commissioned. The fourth, and last, section of this text presents our final remarks regarding this case study and an afterword by the supervisor of the translation task, reflecting upon the principles for research ethics behind the making of this paper and upon the omission of references to TEXT Y.

2. Contextualization

As previously mentioned, this section presents Project ExTrad, its general guidelines³ and its work dynamics. The section also introduces basic characteristics of TEXT Y and discusses the process of accepting it for translation.

Project ExTrad has been carried out at the Federal University of Paraíba (UFPB) since October 2013, aiming at providing translations for the general community in the state of Paraíba as a way of contributing back to society. The project was initially conceived by professors of the Translation Program as a way of broadening the scope of the supervised translation training activities carried out by translation students. These activities consisted originally of translating academic texts on Translation Studies, under the supervision of professors of the Program, to be used as reference in the different translation courses.

Twenty students and seven professors of UFPB's Translation Program have taken part in the Project since 2013. Nowadays, ExTrad has thirteen participants: seven students and six professors. Translations are carried out in the following linguistic pairs: English-Portuguese, Spanish-Portuguese, French-Portuguese, German-Portuguese and Italian-Portuguese. Most translation requests received in the last 2 ½ years by ExTrad were made by the academic and the local (state) community. This year (2016), two partnerships were established in order to increase the social impact of the project's activities⁴.

Since 2013, the activities carried out under the project included establishing the project's guidelines, advertising its activities to the community, translating and revising translations. Translations were carried out in the language pairs English-Portuguese (53 translations), Spanish-Portuguese (three translations), French-Portuguese (three translations)

³ Throughout this paper, the term guideline refers to the principles that guide broader courses of action taken by the project, including criteria for accepting texts for translation, how to respond to urgent requests, etc. The term guideline does not encompass, throughout this paper, factors related to specific translation tasks.

⁴ A partnership - with filmmakers from Paraíba - that aims at providing English, Spanish, French, German and Italian subtitles for short films to be submitted to international film festivals, and a partnership - with a non-governmental organization from Paraíba that addresses gender issues and supports women in vulnerable situations - that aims at translating texts on feminism and gender issues into Portuguese.

and German-Portuguese (one translation)⁵. Nineteen of these were translations into the foreign language (eighteen into English and one into Spanish). Among the translated texts, there were academic articles and abstracts of different subject areas (biology, political science, humanities, social sciences, arts, literature, library science, exact sciences, geography, computer science, education, psychology, health sciences, translation studies and interdisciplinary studies), short stories, Websites and personal documents. Furthermore, two translations rendered by members of ExTrad were published in 2014⁶.

The project constitutes, thus, an open channel for any member of the community to submit texts to be translated, completely free of charge. Before being accepted for translation, nevertheless, texts undergo a screening process, according to the following general guidelines:

- a) Texts must be submitted in an editable text format, to enable straightforward word count, and use of a translation memory software;
- b) Deadlines are set according to the maximum weekly load of the translators in training working with the project;
- c) Requests must be made by people who do not have the means to pay for translation services – considering that offering free of charge translations for companies or entities who could potentially pay for these services would be a practice of unfair competition and could potentially harm the local translation market;
- d) No urgent requests are accepted, so that translators in training are able to perform their tasks under comfortable conditions (in terms of deadline), and can benefit from in depth discussions with supervisors;
- e) By submitting a text for translation, the member of the community commits to answering a survey⁷ at the end of the process (when the translation is delivered).

The survey is an important tool for feedback about the work the project carries out.

⁵ The pair Italian-Portuguese was recently included, so no translation from or into Italian has been accomplished yet.

⁶ PEREIRA, P. J. B. **A Improvisação Integral na Dança**. Campinas: Medita, 2014. p. 7-18; 23-25; 89-91. Translated by Jonathan Vieira da Silva and Tânia Liparini Campos from the German Source Text: PEREIRA, P. B. **Integrale Tanzimprovisation**. München: Homo Integralis Publications, 2014. p. 4-21; 23-26; 117-119.

LEITÃO, R. de V. Bromelien auf den Felskuppen im östlichen Minas Gerais, Brasilien/Bromeliads on the rocky outcrops in Eastern Minas Gerais, Brazil. **Die Bromelie**, 2014(3). Article translated by Munich Graf di Monti Ferreira from the Brazilian Portuguese Source Text.

⁷ The survey is non-profitable and includes questions about the quality of the Target Text and about how the member of the community evaluates the project. A version of the survey can be found at <https://goo.gl/OhX3Id> - last access October 13, 2015.

Cases of unforeseen circumstances — such as texts that do not fully comply with the general guidelines, but present good learning opportunities — are discussed among all participants on the project. Decisions and actions are taken after consensual agreements among participants.

On the pedagogical front, the project provides a training environment for students, emulating the professional experience they will find in the translation market, promoting thus, their professional development as translators. By emulating the translation market, the project abides to the belief that translators in training should be, as Davis (2005) points out, presented with pedagogical activities, aimed at enhancing their skills and at preparing them for carrying out more complex translation tasks. More than simply assigning translation tasks to its participants, the project is concerned in providing them a real opportunity to develop their skills and competencies in a way they would not be able to in a completely professional environment (BERNARDINI, 2004).

Aiming at creating a training environment, the project established a maximum weekly load of work for participants — so that translators are provided with the opportunity to accomplish their tasks under in-training conditions and to critically discuss their work with an assigned supervisor. Moreover, participants also take part in monthly meetings, so that all activities developed under the project can be discussed broadly and openly.

Having delineated Project ExTrad, this section moves on to describe TEXT Y, and the process of accepting it for translation. In July 2015, an MA student submitted TEXT Y to Project ExTrad, justifying she needed it for her thesis and had no other means to have it translated. At a first glance, the text was considered longer (14,697 words) than the texts Project ExTrad usually accepts, but it presented a good learning opportunity — for being an 18th century text to be translated into the 21st, in addition to presenting complex structures and intricate vocabulary. The acceptance was discussed among participants of the Project and TEXT Y was eventually accepted and assigned to a translator in training and a supervisor.

During the process of translating TEXT Y, though, some of its statements caught our attention for presenting not only complex structures and intricate vocabulary, but underlying ideologies that, from a contemporary point of view, can be considered sexist or colonialist — as it will be further discussed in section 3.

Although the guidelines do not address the issue explicitly, there is consensus, among the participants of the project to not accept for translation texts that promote any form of hate speech, sectarianism, or intolerance against any creed, belief or opinion. During the process of translating TEXT Y, we found it borderline (at times) within this unwritten rule: although it is a text on rhetoric, artistic perception and good taste, it does make statements that reflect underlying sexist/colonialist ideologies.

TEXT Y was eventually translated, but many of its segments surfaced debates on the ethical implications of translating it (and on how to translate it). The following section presents, in further detail, this process, the segments that we have deemed controversial and how TEXT Y constituted an opportunity for learning and discussion.

3. Translating TEXT Y

According to Nord (1997), translators should be briefed about the work for which they are commissioned. Having at hand “[...] (explicit or implicit) information about: a) the target-text addressee(s), b) the prospective time and place of text reception, c) the medium over which the text will be transmitted, and d) the motive for the production or reception of the text” (NORD, 1997, p.47-8) enables translators to make informed decisions about the work they are expected to carry out. Moreover, as responsible experts, translators need that sort of information to question the principles behind the work, to advise the commissioner when (and how) they see it fit or, even, to refuse the work if it comes to that extreme.

However, in non-academic settings, providing briefings⁸ for translators is not the general rule: professional translators, as Nord (1997, p.47) herself points out, often “do not feel any need for a detailed specification of the translation function(s)”, relying on their own professional experiences to work on particular kinds of source texts or for particular clients. Commissioners, on the other hand, do not always provide precisely the information translators need, and sometimes brief no more than peripheral information, which, as Akakuru (2010) points out, changes the pressure put on translators and on his/her decision making processes.

When commissioners do not provide all information translators need, the responsibility of defining how to approach the translation task falls to the translators

⁸ Throughout this paper, the term briefing refers to specific information — provided by translation commissioners — translators are expected to use to align the product of their translation tasks to the expectations of the commissioners regarding the Translated Text.

themselves. That was the case of the translation of TEXT Y: the briefing we received was as follows: ‘Translating — in under eleven weeks — a text originally written in 18th century English into contemporary Brazilian Portuguese’.

The decisions on how to deal with the idiosyncrasies of TEXT Y fell, therefore, on our hands, which gave way to our debates on how our translation choices could make the Source Text’s underlying ideologies visible or, alternatively, reflect more contemporary ideologies. As previously said, TEXT Y is an 18th century text on rhetoric, artistic perception, and good taste. We emphasize that TEXT Y, in our understanding, does not pamphleteer in favor of sexism or colonialism, nevertheless, in our analysis of the text, we identified colonialist and sexist ideologies underlying some of its arguments. This will become clearer as the case study unfolds.

Following the work dynamics adopted within Project ExTrad — as presented on the second section of this text —, the translation was carried out by a translator in training, under the supervision of a professor. The role of the professor in this process is tutoring the translator and/or providing the means for her to make informed decisions. In the case of TEXT Y, the first discussion held was related to how to approach the translation. In the range of options we identified, the extreme poles were a) Render a translation that reproduces the arguments of the text, by making colonialist and sexist statements; or b) Render a translation that emphasizes the translator’s critical reading of the text, by making politically motivated choices.

Given the options, the translator decided to avoid the extremes of the range, avoiding major changes in the nature of the arguments — considering, for doing so, that TEXT Y can be seen as a historic account of a time in which those arguments were acceptable —, but indicating her critical reading by pinpointing and justifying (on footnotes) controversial segments.

While dealing with controversial segments and justifying the translation choices on footnotes, the translator abides to Berman’s (1995, p.93) idea that “translators have all the rights as long as their game is played up front”⁹. Although Berman (1995) discusses literary translation, his position seems a very open and ethical approach towards the translation task herein discussed. Berman (1995) believes translations should be based on translation projects that articulate the translator’s beliefs and the constraints posed to the text, and reveal the translator’s

⁹ Simon’s (1996, p.36) translation for “le traducteur a tous les droits dès lors qu’il joue franc jeu”.
SIMON, S. **Gender in translation – cultural identity and the politics of transmission**. London & N.Y: Routledge, 1996.

positions on how to accomplish a translation and on how to choose modes and manners in translating (literary) texts.

A further justification for presenting our reasoning (both on this paper and on footnotes on the Translated Text) is to break from the traditional view of the translator as a neutral subject, who is expected, as Kremer (2007) puts it, to erase himself or herself of the translation process and deliver a seemingly transparent Translated Text — one that poses no shade to the Source Text. As Kremer (2007) emphasizes, as there is no completely neutral human being, there is no completely neutral translator. A translator is a transforming agent who relies on his or her own knowledge, ideology, opinions, attitudes, beliefs, and feelings to interpret and translate a Source Text.

Still according to Kremer (2007), by explicitly presenting his or her own considerations regarding a translation task, the translator turns himself or herself into a producer of meanings, accountable for his or her decisions. Thusly, a Translated Text should be evaluated not considering abstract expectations, but considering its internal coherence —, which takes into account the translator's ethical and political commitments, and also the peculiarities of each situation, each play on words, each translation, etc.

Having extensively justified our position, in presenting this case study and in presenting our translation choices, this paper moves on to discuss the peculiarities of translating TEXT Y. The first kind of decision posing situation dealt with was related to how TEXT Y makes general references to human beings under the epithet 'man'. The following example illustrates this (emphasis added):

1. Destitute of this power, Reason would be a solitary, and, in some measure, an unavailing principle. Speech is the great instrument by which *man becomes beneficial to man* [...]

In our discussions with the translator, we agreed that, by using 'man' as a superordinate under which other forms of reference to human beings are grouped, the text construes a sexist view of the world — according to which there is a supremacy of one of the sexes over the other.

The translator decided to adopt a more egalitarian construal in the Target Text — one that considers both men and women (regardless their gender identification) as equal members of the same group, "human beings". In justifying her decision, the translator argued that, from the perspective of the text, it makes no difference to say 'man becomes beneficial', 'woman

becomes beneficial’ or ‘a human being becomes beneficial’, but from the perspective of how a text construes and shapes worldviews, the difference is considerable.

The translation choice was explained on a footnote, in which the translator argued for her inclusive choices (referring to ‘human beings’ and not to ‘men’¹⁰). The use of the footnote is further justified by her intention of making the historical trait of sexism of TEXT Y explicit, rather than simply excluding it or ignoring it ever existed. Similar decisions were taken for other segments that make general references (to human beings), as ‘men’. The following case has been picked to illustrate, and further discuss this decision (emphasis added):

2. For, according as society improves and flourishes, *men* acquire more influence over one another by means of reasoning and discourse;

As on the previous case (example number 1), on example number 2 it is possible to identify a general reference to human beings made under the epithet ‘men’ (on TEXT Y). In our understanding, once again, such a use of ‘men’ can be interchangeable by other epithets (such as ‘women’ or ‘human beings’). During our process of translating the text, the following two renditions have been considered for the segment (shown on example 2)¹¹:

3. TRANSLATION 1: Pois, na medida em que a sociedade melhora e prospera, *os homens* adquirem uma maior influência uns sobre os outros por meio de raciocínio e discurso;
4. TRANSLATION 2: Pois, na medida em que a sociedade melhora e prospera, *os seres humanos* adquirem uma maior influência *uns sobre os outros* por meio de raciocínio e discurso;

The examples 3 and 4 are alternative translations of the segment shown in example 2. Whereas the third one uses a translation for the word ‘men’ into Portuguese (the epithet ‘os homens’, emphasis added), the fourth adopts a more inclusive translation, choosing the epithet ‘os seres humanos’ (human beings) in Portuguese as translation for ‘men’. Once again, the more inclusive translation suitable for this case was deemed suitable for this segment.

¹⁰ In Portuguese, her footnote is as follows: Neste ponto, o texto original traz a frase “man becomes beneficial to man”, mas optou-se por traduzir (esta e as demais ocorrências dos termos “man/men”) como “ser humano/pessoas”, por ser uma opção mais abrangente.

¹¹ For more examples of segments similar to the one presented above and the translation solution we have rendered, please refer to the appendix.

Differently from the gender inclusive translations for ‘men’ (in the cases in which TEXT Y makes general references to ‘human beings’), other cases that carry gender marks were translated carrying those gender marks. One example (that can also be seen on example 4) is the segment ‘uns sobre os outros’. In Portuguese, ‘uns sobre os outros’ carries a gender mark for masculine — as opposed to ‘umas sobre as outras’, which would be the translation of the segment ‘over one another’ marked for the feminine. The translator considered that making a more inclusive choice (on that case and on similar ones) would result in an awkward rendition for the Target Text.

More complicated than references to human beings under the superordinate ‘men’ are the cases in which the references to ‘men’ imply a positive connotation. The following example illustrates this case (emphasis added):

5. They who have never studied eloquence in its principles, nor have been trained to attend to the *genuine and manly beauties of good writing*, are always ready to be caught by the mere glare of language [...]

The segment in point (‘genuine and manly beauties of good writing’) associates the masculine (‘manly’) to a positive characteristic — and, by extension, implies a lower status for women and womanly characteristics. Once again, in our understanding, TEXT Y reflects a historical bias that favors masculinity and masculine values.

Different from previous cases — that merely make general references to human beings as ‘men’ —, nevertheless, choosing gender neutral terms to translate a segment that implies that a ‘manly’ characteristic is more positive and desirable than others would drastically change the argument the Source Text construes. The translator opted, hence, for maintaining the association to masculinity as a positive trait (as opposed to construing a more gender inclusive characteristic). The translation for the segment presented on example 5 is (in Portuguese) as follows:

6. TRANSLATION: Aqueles que nunca estudaram eloquência em seus princípios, nem foram treinados a observar as *belezas genuínas e viris da boa escrita*, estão sempre prontos para serem capturados pelo simples reflexo da língua [...]

The translator maintained the association the Source Text makes of the masculinity as a positive trait (by using the adjective ‘viris’ in Portuguese). That decision is based on the belief

that changing such an association would affect the appreciation-depreciation values construed on the Source Text. Moreover, the use of a more gender neutral adjective (on that specific segment) would be excessively diachronic in relation to the Source Text and its context of production — and could not be justified on a short footnote, requiring an explanation much larger than the means the translator would have to state her point.

Another debate held during the process of translating TEXT Y is related to the ideas and arguments that imply condescension towards different/more marginal cultures. In our readings, we identified a tendency (in TEXT Y) to define different (peripheral) cultures as barbarous and uncivilized. Moreover, the text attributes to central cultures the responsibility to bring civilization to the peasant and savage nations (a colonialist point of view, under a contemporary eye). The following example illustrates this case (emphasis added):

7. Of the truth of this assertion we may easily be convinced, by only reflecting on that immense superiority which education and improvement give *to civilized*, above *barbarous nations*, in refinement of Taste; and on the superiority which they give in the same nation to those who have studied the liberal arts, above the rude and untaught vulgar.

In some of the arguments presented on TEXT Y, there is an underlying idea of a supposed superiority of ‘the civilized’ above ‘barbarous nations’. The notions of what constitutes civilization and what constitutes barbarity, nevertheless, are not scrutinized on the Source Text. Contemporarily, the clash between civilized versus barbarous can be disputed or deconstructed: it is, after all, a binary opposition, strongly based on Western values and it disregards the history and traditions of the non-central cultures in point (especially by making statements — such as the one shown on Example 7 — without defining the notions of civilization and barbarity it adopts).

Attributing to peripheral cultures the quality of uncivilized could be non-problematic in the 18th century. For a contemporary audience, nevertheless, it is politically incorrect — to say the least. TEXT Y outlived its author and its context of production though, which makes the translation of these colonialist statements (as we contemporarily view them) a matter of concern. We debated on whether to re-evaluate the opposition (civilization vs. barbarity), while rendering a translation for TEXT Y.

The translator opted for maintaining (to some extent) the colonialist view of peripheral cultures as uncivilized in her translation. Nevertheless, in her final revision of the translation,

she has leveled out arguments, whenever ambiguities and possible understandings allowed her to. The following examples (numbers 8 and 9) are her first and her last renditions for the segment presented on Example 7 (emphasis added):

8. TRANSLATION 1: Podemos facilmente nos convencer da verdade dessa afirmação, apenas refletindo sobre a imensa superioridade que a educação e o aperfeiçoamento dão *àqueles que são civilizados*, acima das *nações bárbaras*, no refinamento do Gosto; e na superioridade que eles dão, na mesma nação, para aqueles que estudaram as artes liberais, acima daquele que é vulgar, rude e ignorante.
9. TRANSLATION 2: Podemos nos convencer que essa afirmação é verdadeira ao refletir sobre a vantagem que a educação e o aprimoramento trazem às *sociedades mais civilizadas*, em *oposição àquelas mais primitivas*, no que diz respeito ao refinamento do Gosto; e na vantagem que oferecem, dentro da mesma sociedade, às pessoas que estudaram as artes liberais, em oposição àquelas sem instrução e sem conhecimento.

As example 8 shows, in her first attempt to translate the segment ‘[...] to civilized, above barbarous nations’, the translator followed the contraposition presented on the Source Text (by saying ‘civilizados, acima das nações bárbaras’). On her last revision (shown on example 9), nonetheless, she leveled out the contraposition, by adopting a relativized construction and referring to ‘more civilized’ versus ‘more primitive’ societies — thus shedding light on the relativity of the notions of civilization and barbarity, but still maintaining the politically incorrect idea TEXT Y construes.

The translator made other attempts of leveling out controversial segments, by working on ambiguities and connotations in her translation. The following examples (numbers 10 and 11) illustrate this:

10. In children, the rudiments of Taste discover themselves very early in a thousand instances; in their fondness for regular bodies, their admiration of pictures and statues, and imitations of all kinds; and their strong attachment to whatever is new or marvellous. *The most ignorant peasants* are delighted with ballads and tales, and are struck with the beautiful appearances of nature in the earth and heavens. Even in the deserts of America, where human nature shews itself in its most uncultivated state, *the savages have their ornaments of dress, their war and their death songs, their harangues, and their orators.*

The two segments (emphasis added) on example 10 are examples of what we classify as colonialist statements made on TEXT Y (or, at least, statements that display condescension towards different, peripheral cultures). On the first emphasized segment, the Source Text refers to how ‘the most ignorant peasants’ are awed by ballads and tales and, on the second, it displays condescension towards the cultural elements (ornaments of dress, war and death songs, harangues and orators) of the ‘savages’ of America by commenting on the uncultivated state of the human natures of these groups. As in previous cases (see the translation presented on example 9, for instance), the translator opted for leveling out the controversial argument — her translation is presented below:

11. TRANSLATION: Nas crianças, descobrem-se muito cedo os rudimentos do Gosto, em diversos casos: na predileção por corpos comuns, na admiração de imagens e estátuas, em todos os tipos de imitações e em seu forte apego a tudo que é novo ou maravilhoso. ***Os mais ignorantes*** encantam-se com baladas e contos e impressionam-se com a beleza da natureza, na terra e nos céus. Mesmo nas planícies da América, onde a natureza humana mostra-se em seu estado mais bruto, ***os povos indígenas têm suas vestimentas típicas, sua guerra e suas canções de morte, suas arengas e seus oradores.***

The translator justified her decision in leveling out the translation — in nominalizing the adjective ‘ignorant’ and in omitting a word for ‘peasants’ in her translation into Portuguese — by considering that, the word ‘peasant’ can mean (according to *TheFreeDictionary.com*¹²) a rustic person or an uncouth, crude person. The decision in not presenting an overt translation for the word ‘peasant’ (meaning ‘a member of the class constituted by small farmers’) reduces, to an extent, the trace of condescension towards people who work at farms.

As for translating ‘the savages’ as ‘os povos indígenas’, on the other hand, the translator justified her decision in an attempt to make a more respectful reference to human group formed by the original inhabitants of a place. She considered, for doing so, in Portuguese, the word ‘selvagens’ (an alternative translation for ‘savages’) carries a more negative connotation (as opposed to ‘indígenas’, which is more neutral).

The following section summarizes our main arguments on this case study and presents our final remarks concerning the translation choices made by the translator while carrying out her translation task.

¹² Available at <http://thefreedictionary.com/peasant>, last access: September 16 2015.

4. Final remarks

This paper discussed the process of translating an 18th century text (referred to as TEXT Y) into contemporary Brazilian Portuguese. During the process of translating TEXT Y, though, some of its segments raised controversies —, which are, in our understanding, a reflection of the social-historical conditions under which it was produced — among participants of the project.

In discussing the range of possibilities of how to approach the translation — from one extreme, in which the translator would render translations that present colonialist and sexist statements, to another extreme, in which she would make politically motivated translation choices —, the translator opted for a middle way. It means her final rendition of the Target Text presents a more inclusive language (whenever possible), indicated by means of footnotes, but conserves the nature of the arguments presented on the Source Text (even when they seem, to a contemporary audience, sexist or colonialist).

On her reflections on this translation task, the translator in training described the experience positively. According to her, it led her to reflect upon translation (and upon the ethics behind it) as a non-binary system, but as an activity influenced by a number of factors that requires reflection from the translator. She stood by the final version of the Translated Text, but, very maturely, emphasized there are other possibilities for the choices she made — she even pointed out her decisions are ground to social, cultural, historical conditions.

On her final report to the project, the translator in training mentioned the importance of the learning opportunities she was given on Project ExTrad as a means to develop her skills and competences. According to her, the project allows her to translate different texts, dealing with comprehensive deadlines and under supervision. Among the advantages of this kind of task she mentions, a few can be highlighted: a) realizing each text presents unique challenges when translated; b) realizing how a briefing can affect the task of the translator (positively or negatively, depending on how thorough it is); and c) reflecting upon her own translation choices, due to the interaction with a supervisor.

By creating conditions for this translation task — and for others, similar to this one — to be carried out in a reflexive way, Project ExTrad aims at constituting a formative experience giving translators in training the opportunity to make decisions and discussing their decisions with an assigned supervisor. The project, as previously mentioned, emulates a professional

environment within an academic setting, providing students of the Translation Program at the Federal University of Paraíba with genuine translation tasks, under a pedagogical design that aims at enhancing their skills and at preparing them for carrying out more complex translation tasks.

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Appendix

The table below presents more segments (and their translations) related to the discussion held on this paper. The following cases are not discussed any further on this appendix for presenting cases similar to the ones discussed throughout this paper.

Source Text	Target Text
But sure it is equally possible to apply the principles of reason and good sense to this art, as to any other that is cultivated <i>among men</i> .	Mas, com certeza, é igualmente possível aplicar os princípios da razão e do bom senso a essa arte, como a qualquer outra arte cultivada <i>entre as pessoas</i> .
They sometimes strike in the same manner the philosopher and the peasant; <i>the boy</i> and <i>the man</i> .	Eles podem afetar, da mesma forma, desde o filósofo até a pessoa com pensamento mais rudimentar, <i>a criança</i> e <i>o adulto</i> .
Taste, as I before explained it, is ultimately founded on an internal sense of beauty, which is <i>natural to men</i> , and which, in its application to particular objects, is capable of being guided and enlightened by reason.	Como expliquei antes, o Gosto é baseado, afinal, em um sentido interno de beleza, algo que é <i>natural aos seres humanos</i> e que, na sua aplicação a determinados objetos, é passível de ser guiado e esclarecido pela razão.
The <i>Tastes of men</i> may differ very considerably as to their object, and yet none of them be wrong. <i>One man</i> relishes Poetry most; another takes pleasure in nothing but History.	Os <i>Gostos das pessoas</i> podem diferir consideravelmente, assim como difere o objeto de seu Gosto e, ainda assim, nenhuma delas estar errada. <i>Uma pessoa</i> aprecia mais a Poesia; outra, tem prazer apenas na História.
<i>The most busy man</i> , in the most active sphere, cannot be always occupied by business. <i>Men of serious professions</i> cannot always be on the stretch of serious thought.	<i>Aqueles mais ocupados</i> , na esfera mais ativa, não podem estar sempre ocupados com negócios. <i>Pessoas com profissões sérias</i> não podem ser sempre obrigadas a ter pensamentos sérios.
Every one must perceive, that <i>among rude and uncivilized nations</i> , and during the <i>ages of ignorance and darkness</i> , any loose notions that are entertained concerning such subjects carry no authority. In those states of society, Taste has no materials on which to operate. It is either totally suppressed, or appears in its lowest and most imperfect form. We refer to the sentiments of mankind in polished and flourishing nations; when arts are cultivated and manners refined; when works of genius are subjected to free discussion, and Taste is improved by Science and philosophy	Devemos perceber que, <i>entre as nações rudes e incivilizadas</i> , e durante os <i>séculos de ignorância e trevas</i> , quaisquer noções básicas relativas a tais assuntos não possuem qualquer autoridade. Nesses estados da sociedade, o Gosto não tem materiais sobre os quais operar. Ou é totalmente suprimido, ou aparece em sua forma mais baixa e mais imperfeita. Referimo-nos aos sentimentos da humanidade em nações cultas e florescentes, quando as artes são cultivadas e as maneiras são refinadas; quando as obras de genialidade são submetidas a discussões livres e o Gosto é melhorado pela Ciência e pela Filosofia

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