

Brief Notes on the Portrayal of the Character Malinche in the English Translation of the First Latin American Historical Novel *Xicoténcatl* (1826)

Gilmei Francisco Fleck¹, Ph.D. & Leila Shaí Del Pozo González²

Abstract

Briefs notes about the translation of the anonymous novel *Xicoténcatl* (1826), by Guillermo I. Castillo-Feliú, from Spanish to English, are analyzed in this article. The translation was published in 1999 by the University of Texas Press. This novel is considered the earliest Latin American Historical Novel and the founding reference of the clash between the Latin American literature and the European canon as the seed of the Hispanic American New Historical Novel. Moreover, the book shows the first portrayal of the character doña Marina, La Malinche, in Literature. The comparative analysis of this representation, in the original and in the English version, is the aim of this paper. The study runs under the perspective of the translation theory according to Álvarez & Vidal (1996), Rodrigues (1999), Bassnett (2003), Wyler (2003), and Arrojo (2007).

Keywords: *Xicoténcatl* (1826), Latin American Historical Novel, Malinche, Commented literary translation.

1. Introduction

As Castro Leal registered in his work, *La novela del México colonial* (1964), the anonymous *Xicoténcatl* was published in 1826, in Spanish, in Philadelphia – USA. This novel is considered the first Latin American hybrid work of History and fiction (Fleck, 2014). At the same time, it breaks out with all standards of the Historical Novels introduced by Walter Scott's works in *Waverley* (1814) as well as in *Ivanhoe* (1819).

This remarkable feat happened to be unique in Literature, along with *Cinq Mars*, by Alfred Vigny, published the same year. Works that are similar to *Xicoténcatl* (1826) cannot be found in the Latin American production field until 1949, when *El Reino de este mundo*, by Alejo Carpentier, is released and considered the first Hispanic American New Historical Novel (Menton, 1993). This is why Fleck (2017) assures that this nineteenth century anonymous novel did not start a tradition in the Latin American Literature immediately, but, instead, as a seed, it helped to germinate the New Latin American Historical Novel in its high critical and deconstructive way of revising traditional History.

The foremost interest in this book, in the Latin American Literature, is the presence of critical judgment towards the Spanish colonial *status quo* written in the nineteenth century. At that time, the colonial system was collapsing in the wake of the independence struggles of the peoples of the Spanish territories in America³. To this purpose, verisimilitude is a dynamic key to the anonymous author of *Xicoténcatl*. With the use of textual fidelity to the *Historia de la conquista de México* (1809) in the narrative, all moral and political judgement made by the Spanish chronicler Antonio de Solís is specifically reversed (Grillo, 2004).

¹ Post-doctor in Comparative Literature and Translation, Western Paraná State University, Rua Pio XII, 296 – Apto 504 Cascavel, Paraná, Brasil., CEP: 85802-17

² Master in Literature, Western Paraná State University, Rua Cedro, 322, Cascavel, Paraná, Brasil., CEP: 85807-160

³ Independence Mexican wars lasted from 1810 to 1836, when finally Spain recognized its independence.

The novelist of *Xicoténcatl* dares to put into service the Spanish conqueror's own words when he deliberately quotes entire passages of the chronicles by Solís to construct a narrative showing the point of view of the subjugated one in order to explicit his political thesis: the idea of a Mexican predestination. In general, the narrator's voice in *Xicoténcatl* builds a theatrical narrative crowded with stock characters in order to allow readers to better understand the conquest of Mexico from the subjugated point of view. That is maybe why readers can find the text increasingly didactic, to the point where the narrative becomes too descriptive and perhaps slow.

The real intention of the narrative is to point out that even though *noble savants* corrupted by the Europeans helped Cortés to conquer the Aztec Empire, it would be possible to become a great nation because of Mexico's great destiny (Forero Quintero, 2012). The historical character Malinche receives from the narrator's voice a portrayal in this novel for the first time in literature that happens to be the only round one in the text. The reader can observe the three facets which are constructed of her along the narrative.

This character of historical extraction (Trouché, 2006) is introduced as a Rousseau's noble savage. After that, as it can be followed, one can see how a corrupted facet of her is gradually outlined. And, finally, a third side appears as a repented woman who relinquishes to continue as Cortés's accomplice and prefers to go back to her roots and to her life as a simple slave. At this point, the character is assigned the title of Mexico's symbolic mother.

According to Herren (1993), the narrative of *Xicoténcatl* served as the foundation for Malinche's myth. Thanks to the Mexican indigenist movement with Manuel Gamio, even nowadays the Mexican collective imaginary still considers this historical character as "[...] 'the treacherous mother, the whore and the symbolic womb of the Mexican nation' in the phrase by Fernanda Núñez Becerra" (Martín & Torre, 2005, p. 171 - our translation).

Based on this theme, the configuration of the character of historical extraction La Malinche on *Xicoténcatl*'s narrative, this paper aims to compare and analyze selected passages of the novel in Spanish and English to point out how the translator manages to incorporate the images of La Malinche's portrayal in the source language to the culture of the target language. The analysis uses the second edition of *Xicoténcatl*, organized, commented and published in 1964 by Antonio Castro Leal. In the following pages eight selected excerpts in Spanish and its corresponding in English, in which appear images of the character *doña Marina* – La Malinche –, are analyzed.

2. Malinche: across the refracted images in the mirror of translation

Next, Castillo-Feliú's choices in the target language will be presented in order to build a portrayal of the character of historical extraction Malinche from the original Spanish. For this purpose, tables showing the correspondent excerpts are being used.

The first selected excerpt No. 1 from the book one, as it follows, in table 1, brings the first image of the character Malinche in the novel. Doña Marina, just as Malinche is called in the entire narrative, is outlined by another character, Diego de Ordaz, supposedly the only Spaniard in the narrative to be considered exemplary to the others. His voice tells the readers about his disappointment with his leader Hernán Cortés, as it follows:

Table 1 – Selected excerpt No. 1

Anónimo (1964)	Castillo-Feliú (1999)
p. 85 [...] casi hace ostentación de sus amores adúlteros <u>con esa india, quizá víctima de su seducción.</u> [...].	p. 16 [...] he almost boasts of his adulterous affair <u>with that Indian woman, who is maybe a victim of his seduction.</u> [...].

In the excerpt, Malinche is presented in the narrative as having an "adulterous affair" with Cortés. In both, Spanish and English, it is interesting to see how the character Ordaz casts doubts, from his position of an unpolluted figure, on what would have made Malinche fall into that position. And, in that context, he expresses: "[that Indian woman] is maybe a victim of his seduction". This fragment is important because it releases the starting point of the shaping of the character Malinche, as it suggests: "Malinche is a victim of Cortés's seduction". In both versions, the configuration of Malinche initiates at the same starting point: she is a victim of Cortés.

Later in the diegesis, the character of Malinche exposes other facets. The following selected excerpt No. 2, from book two, the narrative voice elaborates Malinche’s past in the text:

Table 2 – Selected excerpt No. 2

Anónimo (1964)	Castillo-Feliú (1999)
p. 99 [...] <u>Este</u> [el cacique de Tabasco] <u>la pasó al dominio</u> de Hernán Cortés, después de la sumisión de <u>su</u> país, con otras esclavas que le presentó de regalo. [...].	p. 37 [...] <u>He</u> [the cacique of Tabasco] <u>gave her to</u> Hernán Cortés, after the capitulation of <u>her</u> country, along with other slaves that he gave him as a gift. [...].

The phrase in the original “[...] *Este* [el cacique de Tabasco] *la pasó al dominio de Hernán Cortés*, [...]” suggests more clearly in Spanish, by the use of the phrase “*la pasó al dominio*”, that the cacique of Tabasco possesses Malinche and he passes his ownership to Cortés. The *Merriam-Webster dictionary* shows in the third entry for the verb “to give”: “3a: to put into the possession of another for his or her use” (Merriam-Webster, 2002, p. 778). But, the strong idea of two owners/dominant subjects and a property (Malinche) is somehow, if not lost in translation, at least diminished.

In the same excerpt, a problem in translation can be found. The original states: “*Este* [the cacique of Tabasco] *la* [Malinche] *pasó al dominio de Hernán Cortés, después de la sumisión de su país* [the cacique’s country], *con otras esclavas que le* [to Cortés] *presentó de regalo*.”. On the other hand, the translation shows: “He [the cacique of Tabasco] gave her to Hernán Cortés, after the capitulation of her country”. Here, it is suggested that the cacique of Tabasco ‘gave’ Malinche to Cortés after the fellow countrymen of Malinche surrendered to Cortés.

The contrary is expressed in the original: the cacique of Tabasco ‘gave’ Malinche to Cortés after the people of Tabasco capitulated. And History confirms what is formulated in Spanish: there has never been any capitulation from Malinche’s fellow countrymen to Cortés that could ‘give’ her to the Spanish chief. What Herren (1993) tells in his biography of Malinche, is that Malinche visited her ‘town’ with Cortés only when she had already borne him a child and then she was obliged by him to marry a Spaniard. Before that, Cortés did not meet that region. The use of the possessive pronoun ‘her’ alters the historical fact and not only the subject to whom it is connected to in the original language.

The following extract is part of excerpt No. 2:

Table 3 – Selected excerpt No. 2

Anónimo (1964)	Castillo-Feliú (1999)
p. 99 [...] Los buenos talentos y las gracias de esta esclava llamaron la atención de su amo [...].	p. 37 [...] The fine talents and charms that she possessed attracted her master [...].

The passage mentions in the original: ‘the good talents and charms of the slave called her master’s attention’. At this point, the narrative voice continues showing how Malinche is a noble savant. Alternatively, the translation does not use the word ‘slave’, probably because it might have been considered unnecessary and redundant. However, the emphasis given to ‘slave’ in Spanish will not be captured by the English speaker final reader.

Following, a new facet of Malinche is shown: by the European corrupted one. This time, the character desires to seduce Ordaz, in excerpt No. 3, book 2:

Table 4 – Selected excerpt No. 3

Anónimo (1964)	Castillo-Feliú (1999)
<p>p. 101 [...]. Dificil sería querer pintar la sorpresa del honrado español al oír <u>la libre declaración de amor</u> que le hizo doña Marina. Esta le dijo que, <u>esclava y no amante</u> de Hernán Cortés, aborrecía su soberbia dominación; que <u>su afecto no había podido resistir al mérito y prendas de un hombre tan honrado como Ordaz</u>; que, si ella fuera libre, <u>no dudaría un momento en la elección y abandonaría al instante a su opresor, para darse toda entera a sus inclinaciones</u>; pero que, no pudiendo en su condición de esclava obrar conforme a su libre voluntad, quería lo menos robar a su tirano los instantes que pudiese, vengándose así de su opresión. [...].</p>	<p>p. 39-40 [...]. It would be difficult to describe how surprised the honest Spaniard was upon hearing <u>the open declaration of love</u> emanating from doña Marina. She said to him that, <u>as a slave and not a lover</u> of Hernán Cortés, she detested his haughty domination; that <u>her affection had been unable to resist the merit and natural gifts of a man as honest as Ordaz</u>; that, were she free, <u>she would not doubt for a moment in her election and would instantly abandon her oppressor to give herself totally to his inclinations</u>; but that, not being able, in her condition as slave, to proceed according to her free will, thus taking revenge against his oppression. [...].</p>

The entire quote brings the image of Malinche, the “sexual monster”, related to the symbols of treason and prostitution that the Mexican collective imaginary built for the historical character. According to the studies of Karttunen (1997): “To this day it seems that hardly any writer, male or female, can describe her in any terms by sexual.” (Karttunen, 1997, p. 297). The intentions of the character of historical extraction are confirmed when she reveals: “her affection could not resist the merits and charms of a man as honorable as Ordaz”. Cypess (1991) remembers that there was not any relationship between Malinche and Ordaz registered in History.

According to the previously mentioned scholar, this relationship was invented by the anonymous author. It seems that the writer’s aim was to show how a perfidious character could be forgiven at the end of the diegesis and that it could regain its status of noble savage. Meanwhile, when following the narrative, the reader understands doña Marina has true feelings for Ordaz as she says that if she were free, she would not have any moment of doubt and she would choose to leave Cortés (her oppressor) to follow her own preferences (Ordaz). This is told in third person, so it is an open door for new interpretations, such as, she is assuming her being a slave and that she can not materialize her own desires.

A key to understanding this is that there is no any single line in which the narrative shows there is a lovers’ relationship between Cortés and doña Marina, but it only points out to accomplices working together: Cortés, the leader, and Marina, his collaborator. Yet, there is a significant shift in meaning when the narrative in English states: “were she free, she would not doubt for a moment in her election and would instantly abandon her oppressor to give herself totally to his inclinations”. The translation writes up that Marina expresses that if she were free, she would not think twice and give herself over unrestrainedly to Ordaz’s desires.

The use of the pronoun ‘sus’ in the Spanish version relates to doña Marina’s desires and not Ordaz’s ones. The way it is expressed in the translation, it is understood that Malinche would be ready to surrender herself to Ordaz’s desires. So, there is a difference between a Malinche who would express herself as free to be in another relationship, but, instead, in English, assuming a masochistic behavior, she reveals she would like to be subjugated by a new partner: Ordaz.

In order to understand the next table, it is necessary to take into account that Marina is doing her best at saving her own skin when trying to have a good relationship with the other natives along the narrative. There are several moments in which this aspect of hers is shown. Before the scene mentioned in the next table, there are two things to consider. The first particularity is that the text clearly exposes that Malinche only chats with Xicoténcatl. And so, she feels successful when she perceives she gained Xicoténcatl's trust: "[...] with the idea of finding in any event a refuge in her misfortune." (Anonymous, 1999, p. 60).

The second one is that: "without ceasing to love his Teutila" (Anonymous, 1999, p. 59), Xicoténcatl considers a good idea to marry Malinche. Hence, in the next scene, Xicoténcatl reacts when he finds out that doña Marina was about to bear Cortés a child, in excerpt No. 4, book 3, as it follows:

Table 5 – Selected excerpt No. 4

Anónimo (1964)	Castillo-Feliú (1999)
<p>p. 117 [...] —¿Es posible, ¡gran Dios! —exclamó después de un profundo y largo silencio—, es posible <u>tanta perfidia</u>, y <u>tanta doblez</u>, y <u>tanta falsedad</u>, y <u>tanto arte</u>, y <u>tanta infamia</u>? Esa <u>americana indigna</u>, <u>hija espúrea</u> de estas sencillas regiones, mil veces más detestable que sus corruptores, ha abusado indignamente de la franqueza de mi corazón. ¿Quién hubiera podido descubrir <u>el veneno de sus dulces palabras</u>? Aquellas miradas tiernas y modestas, aquel palpitar del corazón, aquellas alarmas continuas contra su flaqueza: ¿cabe todo esto en una <u>pérfida</u> al salir de un <u>lecho adúltero</u>? “¿Y cuándo? Cuando en su seno lleva el fruto de su <u>amor criminal</u>... ¡Oh horror! ¡Oh abominación!... ¡Y mi corazón ha podido olvidar a la pura y celestial Teutila por una <u>serpiente tan venenosa</u>! [...].</p>	<p>p. 65 [...] ‘It is possible, great Lord!’ he exclaimed after a long and deep silence, ‘is it possible for there to be <u>such treachery</u>, and <u>so much duplicity</u>, and <u>so much falseness</u>, and <u>so much artifice</u>, and <u>so much infamy</u>? <u>That unworthy American, spurious daughter</u> of these simple regions, a thousand times more detestable than those who have corrupted her, has unworthily abused the sincerity of my heart. Who could have discovered <u>the poison in her tender words</u>? Those kind and modest looks, that heartbeat, those continuous displays of alarm against her weakness: does all of this befit a <u>betrayers</u> as she leaves her <u>adulterous bed</u>?’ ‘And when? When <u>inside her she is carrying the fruit of her criminal love</u>! How horrible! How abominable! And my heart was able to forget the pure and heavenly Teutila over <u>such a poisonous serpent</u>! [...].</p>

According to Castillo-Feliú (1999): Any act committed by such a female that could be deemed to be an offense against his honor would require the shedding of blood in order to cleanse the blot against reputation. Even the perception of a dishonorable act was often as serious as its actual commission. (Castillo-Feliú, 1999, p. 4).

In this connection, the excerpt shows that Xicoténcatl does not cope with the picture of being offended in his honor, as the only one who considered marrying a total stranger was him, and he cannot abide the only cogitation of being insulted. The same idea is reflected in the version of 1999. Also, from this passage itself, in the voice of young Xicoténcatl, the hero, the adjectives given to Malinche will serve as the foundation of negative images that the Mexican collective imaginary will use for the construction of the mythical Malinche.

The following excerpt, from book four, Marina's resemblance starts an important change. With the forthcoming birth of Cortés's child, suffering in bed, Malinche confesses to Friar Bartolomé de Olmedo:

Table 6 – Selected excerpt No. 5, book four.

Anónimo (1964)	Castillo-Feliú (1999)
p. 139 [...] —No, padre mío —decía a su confesor—; no hay remedio para mí. Yo soy una grande pecadora y es menester que todo el Universo conozca mis culpas y vea mis remordimientos, que el martirio que sufro sirva de ejemplo y de escarmiento a los que, como yo, abandonan la senda de la virtud. [...].	p. 98 [...]'No, Father,' she said to her confessor, 'there is no remedy for me, I am a great sinner and the whole universe must know of my faults and see my remorse; let my suffering serve as example and lesson to those who, like me, abandon the path of virtue.' [...].

The passage shows a Malinche assuming her guilt. In Spanish and English, the character confesses: “I am a great sinner”. And she then demands that everybody must know: “my faults and see my remorse; let my suffering serve as an example and lesson to those who, like me, abandon the path of virtue”. These two things – to serve as an example and to follow the path of virtue – are two key issues, serving as a significant didactic device to the narrative voice.

Next scene precedes the death of Magiscatzin, the other Native American collaborator of Cortés. His last words look for redemption, and his death caused a deep impact in those who came to pay him a last visit. Among them, Malinche was the only one touched by the scene, as she speaks to Friar Bartolomé:

Table 7 – Selected excerpt No. 6

Anónimo (1964)	Castillo-Feliú (1999)
p. 153 [...] —Extranjero, la ambición de pasar desde la condición de <u>esclava</u> a ser la <u>querida</u> de un hombre poderoso me arrastró a abjurar de la religión de mis abuelos por la vuestra. Aunque poco instruida en la doctrina de esta religión, sobre la que tú mismo vacilas y te contradices continuamente, veo, no obstante, en vosotros la monstruosa mezcla de las máximas más justas y más dulces con los hechos más atroces y más inicuos y de los discursos más profundos y delicados con los absurdos más necios y despreciables. “Cuando yo seguía mi culto sencillo y puro, pues que salía de mi corazón; cuando yo era una idólatra, según tú me llamabas, yo fui una mujer virtuosa y mi humilde y desgraciada fortuna me tenían muy lejos del heroísmo de esa matrona respetable que tienes a la vista; pero, desde que fui cristiana, mis progresos en la carrera del crimen fueron más grandes que las hermosas virtudes de Teutila. “Abjuro para siempre de una religión que me habéis enseñado con la mentira, con la intriga, con la codicia, con la destemplanza y, sobre todo, con la indiferencia a los crímenes más atroces. La doctrina se predica con el ejemplo, y, cuando éste se ha ganado el respeto, el entendimiento se sujeta a la convicción. [...].	p. 120 [...]'Foreigner, my ambition of going from <u>servitude</u> to <u>lover</u> of a powerful man influenced me to renounce the religion of my ancestors in favor of yours. Even though little instructed in the doctrine of this religion, about which you yourself vacillate and contradict yourself continuously, I see in you, nevertheless, the monstrous mixture of the most just and kind maxims with the most atrocious and iniquitous deeds and the most profound and delicate discourses with the most foolish and contemptible absurdities. ‘When I observed my simple and pure worship, well, it came right from my heart. When I was an idolater, as you referred to me, I was always a virtuous woman, and my humble and wretched lot kept me very far from the heroism of that respectable woman that you have before you. But from the moment that I became a Christian, my progress along the road to crime was greater than the beautiful virtues of Teutila. ‘I renounce forever that religion that you have taught me with lies, with intrigue, with greed, with misery, and, specially, with indifference before the most atrocious crimes. Doctrine is preached through example, and when it has won over respect, understanding is held through conviction. [...].

This is not a simple moment of confession, but the result of Malinche's meditation on the latest events. Doña Marina acknowledges her ambition of being a slave that tried to become a mistress of a powerful man. Notice in the excerpt the use of 'servitude' instead of 'slave' for the phrase: "pasar desde la condición de esclava a ser la querida". Yet, 'esclava' (1964) is stronger than 'servitude' (1999).

RAE (2016) brings in its first entry for 'esclava': "1. adj. Dicho de una persona: Que carece de libertad por estar bajo el dominio de otra. U. m. c. s." (Real Academia Española, 2016, s.f.). And, three entries for 'servidumbre': "1. f. Estado o condición de siervo. 2. f. Trabajo o ejercicio propio del siervo. 3. f. Conjunto de personas que trabajaba en el servicio doméstico de una casa." (Real Academia Española, 2016, s.f.).

For 'esclavitud', in the third entry is found: "3. f. Sujeción excesiva por la cual se ve sometida una persona a otra, o a un trabajo u obligación." (Real Academia Española, 2016, s.f.). Those definitions suggest that, in Spanish, the condition of the human being changes. If someone is a slave, then he/she loses freedom and becomes a submitted/subjected/subordinated/subjugated person to someone's authority, in the quality of somebody's property.

The dictionary Longman (1995) shows the following definition for 'servitude': "the condition of being a SLAVE or being forced to obey someone else." (Longman, 1995, p. 1302). Meanwhile, for 'slave', it is shown in its first entry: "Someone who is legally owned by another person and works for them for no money [...]" (LONGMAN, 1995, p. 1350).

And, in the Merriam-Webster dictionary (2002) for 'servitude' states:

1: a condition in which one lacks liberty especially to determine one's course of action or way of life; 2: a right by which something (as a piece of land) owned by one person is subject to a specified use or enjoyment by another (Merriam-Webster, 2002, p. 1678).

So, presumably, 'servitude' and 'slavery' have similar meanings in English. However, for the definition of 'servitude', the person that works as domestic service:

[servants] can be freed after working for a certain period of time. [...] The contract of an indentured servant can be sold to an interested third party, but the servant is not considered property of the contract holder. Once the indentured servant is released from his contract at the end of the term, he becomes a recognized part of the community and can own property or vote. A slave is considered to be the property of his owner. Slaves are not allowed to own property, earn money for their services or vote. A slave can be bought, sold, left as property in a will and has no rights in society. [...]. ("What is the difference between slavery and indentured servitude?", 2017).

That way, the submissive relation is more intense when under the condition of slavery than of servitude. Even though it seems that definitions of slavery and servitude are similar, by choosing 'servitude' instead of 'slave', the original meaning gets lost. So, readers of the version of 1999 will understand that Malinche is not a slave, but a servant.

Another finding is related to choosing 'lover' as a correspondent of 'querida'. There is a slightly semantic difference between these two words, because the term in Spanish also brings the following definitions in the third and fourth entry of the dictionary RAE (2016): "3. m. y f. coloq. amante (|| persona que mantiene con otra una relación amorosa). 4. m. y f. mantenido (|| persona que vive a expensas de su amante)." (Real Academia Española, 2016, p. s.p.). The colloquial meaning of 'querida' brings the negative connotation as in 'a kept woman'.

On the contrary, for the entry 'lover', the Merriam-Webster (2002) dictionary shows:

1: a) a person in love; especially: a man in love with a woman, b) plural: two persons in love with each other; 2: an affectionate or benevolent friend; 3: DEVOTEE; 4: a PARAMOUR, b: a person with whom one has sexual relations (Merriam-Webster, 2002, p. 1087).

After verifying the related meanings for 'querida' and 'lover', the reader could find that Malinche's portrayals in both languages are different. While in the original Malinche calls herself a kept woman, in the translation only the meaning of a loved woman remains, somebody for whom love is felt and a person with whom one has sexual relationship. The negative connotation disappeared.

The remaining part of the paragraph maintains the same meaning in both languages. The quote also reflects how the character Malinche uncovers what she finds dubious in the actions of the Catholic Church represented by the friar. Yet, the last selected excerpt shows a different Malinche. This time, the character completed the full circle of the configuration given to her, as it follows:

Table 8 – Selected excerpt No. 7

Anónimo (1964)	Castillo-Feliú (1999)
p. 153 [...] Di a Hernán Cortés que su esclava amasará su pan, que lavará sus ropas, pero que no volverá a ser la cooperadora de sus planes ambiciosos ni su cómplice en sus desórdenes.” [...] Ella no quería continuar ni en el amor ni en la confidencia de Hernán Cortés, y sostenía con todas sus fuerzas que, siguiendo en sus intrigas amorosas y políticas, se separaba infaliblemente del camino de la virtud. [...].	p. 121 [...] “Tell Hernán Cortés that his slave will knead his bread, that she will wash his clothes, but that she will no longer be the party to his ambitious plans or the accomplice to his excesses.’ [...] She did not wish to continue her affair with Hernán Cortés or be his confidante, and she avowed with all her strength that, if she continued in his amorous and political intrigue, she would separate herself, no matter what, from the road to virtue. [...].

The excerpt shows how the character no longer wishes to collaborate actively with Cortés nor ‘be his confidant or as his affair’, but instead she will go back to her Native American principles in which she finds herself returning to a virtuous life.

Next, some considerations are made about the relations between Literature and History, and, translation theory and the translation process.

3. Malinche in the mirror of the translation of Xicoténcatl (1826) to the English language [1999]: discussion and conclusion

Texts composed by the act of translating turn themselves into new creations. This redefined original text, or translation, according to Arrojo (2007), “[...] as the sign no longer is a faithful representation of a steady object that would have existed outside the language infinite labyrinth, it becomes a potential machine of meaning.” (Arrojo, 2007, p. 23 - our translation).

In these terms, Castillo-Feliú (1999) is aware of the dilemma of trying a perfect and exact transposition of words, thoughts and culture of a text in a totally different language, when he exposes that “translators are always aware that they face an impossible dilemma in any attempt to perfectly and exactly transpose words, thoughts, and culture – that is, all of the signifiers that make one particular language a unique mode of expression.” (Castillo-Feliú, 1999, p. vii). Among the difficulties during the act of translating, he expresses:

Aside from the difficulties already inherent in the process of translating the Spanish into English, the modern translator faces an insurmountable challenge posed by the chronological gap that renders impossible any collaboration between author and translator. [...] In my desire to update the language of his early nineteenth-century work for the modern reader, I have at times taken some linguistic liberties whenever they do not detract from the serious speech of the major characters. At the same time, to retain the flavor of this late neoclassic narrative, I have endeavored to remain faithful to the elevated oratory of the characters. (Castillo-Feliú, 1999, p. vii–viii).

When Castillo-Feliú mentions the impossibility of counting on the author’s feedback during the translation process, Brazilian readers remember the largely documented correspondence of the Brazilian author Guimarães Rosa with his two translators⁴. This could not be the case of Castillo-Feliú, but, at least, he seems to have had access to the original manuscript of 1826, that is why he had to update the language.

⁴ *João Guimarães Rosa: correspondência com seu tradutor alemão Curt Meyer Clason (1958-1967)*. s.l.: UFMG, 2003, and *J. Guimarães Rosa: correspondência com seu tradutor italiano Edoardo Bizzarri*. São Paulo: T.A. Queiroz, 1981.

The second edition of *Xicoténcatl*, Castro Leal's publication, by all appearances, was not employed as a translation source. Albeit, the translator worked with Castro Leal's preliminary study, from his prologue, to compose his introduction to the translation without making any reference to the scholar. Regarding to Castillo-Feliú's confessed language update, Raúl Coronado (2013, p. 495) expresses in a footnote that: "in his otherwise good translation he makes significant stylistic changes in verb tense that alter the theatrical feel of the original Spanish".

Similarly, Castro Leal in 1964 had already made his own arrangements, as he declared himself, when he translated from the original nineteenth century Spanish copy in a more accessible Spanish language for a contemporary reader.

However, as Nancy Vogeley explains in her review of the novel at a popular book seller platform: "This translation of *Xicoténcatl* makes available to English-speaking readers a key text in the nineteenth-century history of Spanish American literature." (Vogeley, [n.d.]). And that is perhaps the value in having this translation, as Castillo-Feliú (1999) himself declares, his translation has a higher purpose as it makes the original accessible to the English speaking readers.

In this regard, Susan Bassnett (2003) observes the importance of translators' comments in prologues, because, according to her, there it can be found not only an individual criterion but also translation concepts shared in their communities. In his own behalf, Castillo-Feliú (1999) defines his translation work as a scrupulous transmutation attempt. According to him, he tried to "remain faithful to the elevated oratory of the characters" (Castillo-Feliú, 1999, p. viii). In addition, as he continues: "To have done otherwise would have been a disservice to the original intent of the author, who obviously wished to ennoble the original inhabitants of the New world even as he clearly denigrated most of the usurpers from the Old." (Castillo-Feliú, 1999, p. viii).

This statement shows the translator's constant critical thinking evoked by the translation activity. In this respect, a translator's reading process is the starting point of his/her work. Only then, translators will understand and recognize power relations in between lines. In order to begin with the "creative writing" (Bassnett, 2003), a translator needs first to address the original reading to understand it to its minimum details. For a translator, the act of translating begins at the first moment of reading (Arrojo, 2007). It is meticulous, in order to understand and to perceive the purpose of the translated author, the craft in the attitude of each character, and the historical context in which the narrative is placed (Wyler, 2003). And, finally, a translator must write his/her text considering the impact on the final reader (Arrojo, 2007). Only this way, final readers will actively enjoy reading the translated 'original'.

This reading is demonstrated when Castillo-Feliú observes that the anonymous author writes clearly under the influence of the Iberian Peninsula's cultural background and when the translator gives as an example the scene in which the young *Xicoténcatl* is jealous towards Ordaz bringing up the old matter of Spanish perception of honor.

According to *Xicoténcatl*'s translator, fictionalizing historical events was not the only purpose of the anonymous author, but instead, the writer was aware of what his contemporaneous Mexican (or Latin American) readers could link in the events depicted in the narrative about Tlaxcala-Tenochtitlan to the situation within the context of 1826. So, Literature allows itself to function as a piece in the puzzle of History when it brings the excluded one's perspectives. As Ricoeur states: "a literary narrative allows itself to walk through other referential paths, such as the ones that take aesthetics and poetry so that its relation with 'traces of pastness' become freer." (Ricoeur apud Leenhardt & Pesavento, 1998, p. 88 - our translation).

Therefore, the fictional discourse demystifies the official History version, because "it attempts to bring back the past with the perspective of what could have happened" (Fleck, 2016, p. 163 - our translation). For that matter, the Latin American Historical Novel has provided the decolonizing seed since 1826 with *Xicoténcatl* when it positions itself in bringing an anti-colonial status quo voice and rebuilds events from the "Conquest" of Mexico by the Spanish. This way, *Xicoténcatl* brings new glances on the Latin American History as a whole. Both as the Latin American Historical Novel founder benchmark and from its conception and formation as a 'never told chronicle,' *Xicoténcatl* remembers "the fall of the young *Xicoténcatl*" and, at the same time, it looks for a historical critical awareness in their contemporary readers.

Moreover, Lefevere's term "refraction" (apud Bassnett, 2003) compares translation with a temporal continuum and not with an activity that occurs in a vacuum. So, if the analogy of a prism that refracts is used, understanding the prism as the translator's idiosyncrasy through which refraction occurs, then it could be understood that translators read their texts through their particular prisms. And that the resulting refractions would be the translation itself, the final product. In them, there are images that will enter the collective imaginary of a new linguistic community. And also, along with them, the perception of images will not necessarily be the same as the original first readers.

Also, according to Bassnett (2003), translation studies highlight the inequality between power relations during the translation process when discussing in terms of the original text's superiority versus the inferior copy, and analyze them from the postcolonial perspective. As stated by Bassnett (2003), the new approach considers translation as a linguistic interchange dialogic process. In her words: "a process that occurs in a gap that does not belong to the starting point nor to the ending point" (Bassnett, 2003, p. 10 - our translation).

Consequently, translation also turns out in a "third space" – "[a new] space, a third space where subtleness and openness take hold. It is worth considering the collapse of conventions and writing practice that would break reality in order to open new spaces" (Bhabha apud Bernd, 1998, p. 267 - our translation) – in which the junctions in between ideological fields are put into evidence. In accordance with Rodrigues (1999), the translation uses textuality to confront power relations inside translated texts. The attempt to find a "complete" equivalent in translating texts is and will be a hard task to be accomplished by translators. But, the issue that occupies theorists nowadays is: what translators and translations are faithful to? In this regard, it is indispensable to understand that the act of translation is also a political act:

Contemporary studies on translation are aware of the need to examine in depth the relationship between the production of knowledge in a given culture and its transmission, relocation, and reinterpretation in the target culture. This obviously has to do with the production and ostentation of power and with the strategies used by this power in order to represent the other culture. (Álvarez & Vidal, 1996, p. 2).

Let's consider two questions: Is it to translate in order to acculturate or to develop? What is the taken attitude towards the visible strategy employed by the systems of power? Just as Álvarez and Vidal (1996) declare: "It is a question of making clear that the subject who speaks and translates is not as responsible for what he or she says as for what s/he does not say and how s/he says it" (Álvarez & Vidal, 1996, p. 8). Finally, it is essential that translators are aware of their role when handling texts to be translated. Only with these ideas in mind, treasures as the nineteenth century first Historical Novel of Latin America will continue to receive good translations as in *Xicotécatl*.

As for the English language reader of *Xicotécatl*, even though the version of 1999 brings some points that are still to be considered about the portrayal of Malinche, the general impression is that lay readers will understand its gist. However, the stigma planted in the configuration of the character of historical extraction Malinche gains a darker image than in the original one.

References

- Álvarez, R., & Vidal, M. C.-Á. (1996). *Translating: a political act*. In R. Álvarez & M. C.-Á. Vidal (Orgs.), *Translation power subversion*. Philadelphia: Multilingual matters.
- Anonymous. (1999). *Xicotécatl*. (G. I. Castillo-Feliú, Org.) (1ed.). Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Arrojo, R. (2007). *Oficina de tradução: a teoria na prática* (5ed.). São Paulo: Ática.
- Bassnett, S. (2003). *Estudos de tradução: fundamentos de uma disciplina*. Lisboa: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian.
- Bernd, Z. (1998). *Escrituras híbridas: estudos em literatura comparada interamericana*. Porto Alegre, RS: UFRGS.
- Castillo-Feliú, G. I. (1999). *Translator's note*. In *Xicotécatl* (1ed., p. vii–viii). Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Castro Leal, A. (1964). *La novela del México colonial*. (A. Castro Leal, Org.). México: Aguilar.
- Coronado, R. (2013). *A world not to come: a History of Latino writing and print culture*. Cambridge; London: Harvard University Press.
- Cypess, S. M. (1991). *La Malinche in Mexican Literature* (1ed.). Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Fleck, G. F. (2014). *O romance histórico - uma breve trajetória*. In D. Abrão & E. M. de O. Giacon (Orgs.), *Pesquisa em Literatura: deslocamentos, conexões e diferenças - Reflexões de crítica, teoria e historiografia literárias do Mestrado em Letras da Universidade Estadual de Mato Grosso do Sul* (1ed., p. 69–93). Curitiba: Appris.

- Fleck, G. F. (2016). O romance histórico: processo de leituras cruzadas – uma via de descolonização para a América Latina. In G. F. Fleck (Org.), *Coleção literatura comparada*. Curitiba, PR: Atena.
<https://doi.org/10.22533/93243-09-7>
- Fleck, G. F. (2017). O romance histórico contemporâneo de mediação: entre a tradição e o desconstrucionismo - releituras críticas da história pela ficção (1st ed). Curitiba: CRV. <https://doi.org/10.24824/978854441630.33>
- Forero Quintero, G. (2012). Estudio preliminar. In G. Forero Quintero (Org.), *Xicotencatl* (p. 9–80). Madrid; Frankfurt am Main; México DF: Iberoamericana; Vervuert; Bonilla Artigas Editores.
- Grillo, R. M. (2004). Tres novelas para la misma historia: el encuentro entre Cortés y Xicoténcatl. *América sin nombre*, 5–6, 83–93.
- Herren, R. (1993). *Doña Marina, La Malinche*. Barcelona: Planeta.
- Karttunen, F. (1997). Rethinking Malinche. In S. Schroeder, S. Wood, & R. Haskett (Orgs.), *Indian women of early Mexico* (p. 291–314). Norman; London: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Leenhardt, J., & Pesavento, S. J. (1998). Discurso histórico e narrativa literária. (J. Leenhardt & S. J. Pesavento, Orgs.). Campinas, SP: Editora da Unicamp.
- Longman. (1995). *Dictionary of contemporary English* (3ed.). Bungay, Suffolk: Oxford University Press.
- Martín, M. T. D., & Torre, C. M. P. (2005). Perspectivas historiográficas: mujeres indias en la sociedad colonial hispanoamericana. In S. B. Guardia (Org.), *La escritura de la historia de las mujeres en América Latina: el retorno de las diosas* (1ed., p. 155–200). Lima: Minerva.
- Menton, S. *La nueva novela histórica de la América Latina: 1979-1992*. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1993.
- Merriam-Webster. (2002). *Webster's New Encyclopedic dictionary*. Springfield, MA.
- Real Academia Española (RAE). (2016). *Diccionario de la lengua española* [Dictionary of the Spanish Language]. Recuperado 22 de maio de 2016, de <http://dle.rae.es/?w=diccionario>
- Rodrigues, S. V. (1999). Os limiares da crítica da tradução na pós-modernidade. In T. F. Carvalhal (Org.), *Culturas, contextos e discursos: limiares críticos do comparatismo*. Porto Alegre, RS: Ed. Universidade/UFRGS.
- Solís, A. de. (1809). *Historia de la conquista de México, población y progresos de la América septentrional conocida por el nombre de Nueva España*. (A. L. Josse, Org.). s.l.: Imprenta de R. Juigné.
- Trouché, A. (2006). *América: história e ficção*. Niterói, RJ: EdUff.
- Vogeley, N. ([n.d.]). [Review of the book *Xicoténcatl*, by anonymous]. Recuperado 6 de junho de 2017, de https://www.amazon.com/dp/0292712146?_encoding=UTF8&isInIframe=0&n=283155&ref_=dp_prodde_sc_0&s=books&showDetailProductDesc=1#product-description_feature_div
- What is the difference between slavery and indentured servitude? (2017). Recuperado 22 de agosto de 2017, de <https://www.reference.com/history/difference-between-slavery-indentured-servitude-cbb230fea37b1dcb>
- Wylter, L. (2003). *Línguas, poetas e bacharéis: uma crônica da tradução no Brasil* (1ed ed). Rio de Janeiro: Rocco.