

A Practical Proposal to Use Venuti's 'Minoritizing Translation' for Native American Literature

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The international circulation of Native American literature from the United States (US) through translation perfectly replicates the paradox behind this literature's own production: widely available but lacking a separate literary field. Written in English by authors from different tribal backgrounds, American Indian¹ novels are easily seen as an integrated part of the US literary market. Their incorporation into Spain's polysystem, likewise, has reproduced this pattern, and Indigenous writings are fused with the work of non-indigenous Americans. This is particularly true for the translations published since 2010, when Spanish publishing houses' interest in Native writers waned and focused on a small group of them.

In fact, since 2010, only 13 books by four Native American authors have been translated into Spanish: Sherman Alexie, Louise Erdrich, N. Scott Momaday, and Zitkala-Ša (also known as Gertrude Bonnin). Out of that total, just Zitkala-Ša's *American Indian Stories* is partially detached from the genre of fictional narratives owing to its autobiographical references and the political essay "America's Indian Problem." Alexie's collections, in addition, include some poems, but otherwise the selection of works is entirely restricted to novels. Since they are novels, these 13 books have blended more easily with other works of fiction imported from the US, eliminating the ethnic division between Indian and American literatures in the Spanish literary market. In the translations, therefore, we simply encounter a prolongation of this evanescence: Native American novels are rearranged for Spain just as the average American novel is, without the addition of distinctive strategies or commitments.

In a recent article, however, I argued that American Indian writings can be considered a minor literature according to Deleuze and Guattari's definition (Herrero López, "From US to Spain"). Native American literature is not only "the literature a minority makes in a major language" (Deleuze and Guattari 16), but also matches the three characteristics that Deleuze and Guattari attribute to minor literature (18). First, language in this type of literature shows a certain degree of deterritorialization. For Native American writers, such deterritorialization is characterised by a standard usage of English with minoritizing regional markers derived from the diverse tribal cultures, as well as with expressive patterns originating in Native oral traditions. Second, American Indian writings are politically determined by the imperial history experienced by Indigenous peoples in the US. Native authors, in addition, incorporate the socio-cultural and

¹ Since my article is not referring to the Canadian context, where, for example, the collective noun Indigenous peoples encompasses First Nations, the Inuit and Métis, I use the terms accepted in the US to refer to Native peoples and their reality (e.g. "tribal backgrounds"). "Indian" is used by Native Americans themselves, so I use it as an equally valid alternative to Native, Native American, American Indian, and US indigenous peoples.

political struggles of their nations into their works, giving them an extra political meaning. Third, Native American authors, drawing from a long tradition of oral storytelling in Indian communities, activate in their works the collective expression of minor literature as well as communal solidarity.

If Native American literature can be considered a minor literature, I suggest that it is possible to translate these works according to Venuti's minoritizing project. Unfortunately, the translators of Spanish editions of American Indian works published since 2010 and their associated agents of translation have not approached these texts with Venuti's project in mind, producing instead translations characterised by economic values, fluency, and the cooperative principle (Herrero López, "From US to Spain"). I am convinced, though, that Venuti's minoritizing translation offers an interesting medium to incorporate Native American literature into Spain's market in a different way, one that preserves the cultural pluralism, social resistance, and political subversion of these authors and their works as well as their distinctive usage of language. Therefore, in this article, I explore the possibility of applying Venuti's project to the individual and group characteristics of Native novels. I do so by proposing minoritizing translations in order to highlight their singularity from non-indigenous literary works.

Venuti's minoritizing translation

In his book *The Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference* (1998), Venuti presents his idea of a "minoritizing translation," the translation counterpart of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of minor literature. Venuti explains the reasoning behind his project: he wants to disturb the hegemony of English language in the translation world (10) and adopt "an ethical stance that recognizes the asymmetrical relations in any translation project" (11). He judges that "good translation is minoritizing" (11), a vision I share with him in relation to Native American writings. In his review of what a minoritizing project implies, he pays particular attention to the fact that heterogeneity must be a key element in translation to avoid the assimilation of the source culture into the target culture (11). In addition, heterogeneity will help emphasize the cultural and linguistic diversity of the source text (12).

Venuti also reflects on the connection between the popularity of a translated text in the target context of reception and the fluency of that text (12). He highlights the fact that fluency can attract the new audience powerfully and thus affect the canon significantly, to the point of transforming it. However, aiming for popularity and, as a consequence, fluency "means adhering to the current standard dialect while avoiding any dialect, register, or style that calls attention to words as words and therefore preempts the reader's identification" (12). As the analysis of translations of Native American literature published since 2010 demonstrates below, the Spanish translators have decided to popularize, that is to make more fluent, the individual styles of each author. Whatever the degree of adaptation applied by each translator, the outcome has been to reinforce the Spanish literary standard and its domestic cultural values. Venuti identifies such consequences and defines fluency as assimilationist (12), exactly the opposite of what, I believe, should be attempted with Native American literature.

In addition, Venuti offers a practical example of his project (13–20). He applies his minoritizing translation techniques to texts by I.U. Tarchetti, a nineteenth-century Italian writer. Basing himself on the characteristics of Tarchetti's writings, Venuti establishes early on that he would submit "the standard dialect of English to a continual variation" (14). He achieved this by

introducing into his first translation archaisms. He used Mary Shelley and Edgar Allan Poe as English-language inspirations, sacrificing accuracy “for readability and literary effect” (14). Some of these archaisms were derived directly from Italian, by keeping the translation close to the original and using calques (14). On other occasions, Venuti preferred archaic expressions over contemporary ones as a way of not only preserving the original sentence structure, but also of creating an old-style language for the English readers (15). According to Venuti (15), reviewers received the use of archaisms positively, for they were not considered a disturbing element in reading the translation.

In another translation of Tarchetti’s texts, Venuti decided to increase the presence of archaisms to the point of “undoubtedly enhancing the strangeness of the translation” to match the “alienating extreme” to which Tarchetti had “pushed his peculiar romanticism” (16). Venuti also included Britishisms—both spelled and pronounced—meant to unsettle his essentially American audience (16). Calques were again used, and French calques were introduced on other occasions to produce the effect of archaic language. This time, the translation presented syntactic inversions, “characteristic of nineteenth-century English” (17), to reinforce the strangeness of the text. Venuti emphasized further the linguistic heterogeneity of the target text by introducing current standard and colloquial expressions, thereby creating pastiche sentences (17). This, Venuti claims (17), “immerses the reader in a world that is noticeably distant in time, but nonetheless affecting in contemporary terms” and, at the same time, reminds them “that he or she is reading a translation in the present.”

These two minoritizing translations were rounded out with an introduction in which Venuti informed his readers of the minoritizing strategies he had used, thus aiming to shape their reception (15 and 19). Although mainly appreciated by highly educated audiences, both translations appealed to a great diversity of readers (16 and 18). Nevertheless, many popular readers “wanted greater fluency” (18), because the linguistic heterogeneity of Venuti’s translations was hard to follow and disconcerting. Venuti states that, in his opinion, the aim of any minoritizing project should be “cultural, not commercial” and strive “to create a work of minor literature within the major language” (20).

After presenting his theory of what a minoritizing translation should be like and describing its application to a text and the reception of such translations, Venuti considers the relationship between a popular approach and the Gricean cooperative principle (21–22). He concludes that basing translation on such a principle implies that the translator would not defy domestic expectations and discourses; rather, he or she would simply domesticate the foreign text. Thus, “the minoritizing translator [...] will not abide by the cooperative principle,” and may “indeed meet with uncooperative readers” (23) who are not ready to accept the minoritizing project because they are not prepared for the challenge that this alternative kind of translating represents for their expectations and preferences.

Venuti’s project has drawn some criticism, most importantly from Maria Tymoczko, who recalls that “any translation procedure can become a tool of cultural colonization” (35). I believe that, indeed, Venuti’s minoritizing project, when applied without any kind of restraint, may produce a translation that unintentionally assimilates the original through exoticism and stereotyping. Yet, adopting a translation approach that undermines to a certain degree the authority

of fluency as the standard for reception will call readers' attention to two facts: that they are reading a translation and that the characteristics of the source text differ from target context expectations.

Venuti's definition of "minoritizing" is problematic, according to Tymoczko (37–38), because it is not well defined either as a theoretical concept or as a practical tool. From this perspective, Venuti's project seems difficult, if not impossible, to evaluate and replicate. As I will assert later with my own application of Venuti's minoritizing approach, his model can be assessed and reproduced. It is necessary, though, to bear in mind his own explanations that minoritizing strategies are not directly transferrable from one author, text, and language to another, but depend on the particularities of each act of translation. Moreover, the apparent lack of specifications about how a minoritizing project should be performed aims at challenging a vision of language and translation as unaffected by culture or society (Venuti 25).

Tymoczko also finds Venuti's minoritizing translation problematic because of issues of quality. She wonders when a resistant translation—analogue to a minoritizing translation—stops being useful because it becomes unreadable (37) or how many minoritizing elements are needed for a minoritizing project (37–38). As valid as these concerns are, it seems to me that the disagreement arises because Venuti gives translators and translation researchers freedom to decide these matters (Tymoczko 38), for he believes that "the strategies developed in minoritizing translation depend fundamentally on the translator's interpretation of the foreign text" (16). Nowhere in his book does he assert that minoritizing translations should or must be the only possible ones.

As I have argued elsewhere (Herrero López, "From US to Spain" 284), I am equally concerned by the legitimate questions that Tymoczko raises in her article. Nevertheless, I believe that Venuti's minoritizing translation project is very adaptable to any author and text and, consequently, has great potential. Indeed, it appears likely that the more minoritizing translations are produced, the more clearly defined the project will become and the more differentiated it will be from other translation projects. Tymoczko (37) argues that the question of quality in a minoritizing translation depends on the quantity of minoritizing items and its (un)readability. From my point of view, however, quality depends rather on the effect that the translation is able to produce in the receiving context, among both readers and cultural agents, even if this effect is difficult to measure.

Tymoczko also qualifies Venuti's project as "a normative one" (39). However, the issue of whether Venuti's minoritizing translation is normative or not requires a different focus. Venuti insists several times that the specific strategies for doing minoritizing translation must be selected by the translators themselves, not imposed by other cultural agents. The normative aspects of the minoritizing project are limited to only two: (1) minoritizing translations must defy the hegemony of the linguistic and cultural standard of the receiving culture, and (2) the defiance of that hegemony must be achieved through a heterogeneous discourse. These two preconditions for a minoritizing project are not so much normative decrees as guiding principles aimed at producing a translation that avoids being assimilated into the receiving culture "by signifying the linguistic and cultural differences of the text" (Venuti 12).

Description of the translations of Native American literature published since 2010

Between 2010 and 2017, 13 editions of works by Native American authors, of which 11 are new translations, were published in Spain. Seven of Louise Erdrich's works are new translations: *Bingo Palace* (1994), *The Master Butchers Singing Club* (2003), *Plague of Doves* (2008), *The Red Convertible: Selected and New Stories, 1978–2008* (2009), *Shadow Tag* (2010), *The Round House* (2012), and *LaRose* (2016). In addition, a re-edition of *The Beet Queen* (1986; first translation 1988) and a revised version of *Love Medicine* (1984; first translation 1987) were published.² The other four translations published since 2010 correspond to the originals by three authors, who are notably less popular than Erdrich. Sherman Alexie's *Ten Little Indians* (2004) and *War Dances* (2010) appeared on the Spanish market in 2010 and 2012, respectively. Momaday's Pulitzer Prize for Fiction winning *House Made of Dawn* (1968) and a combined edition of Zitkala-Ša's *American Indian Stories* (1921) and *Old Indian Legends* (1901) were published in 2011.³ During these years, each of the four authors was published by a different publishing house. In addition, all translations of Erdrich's novels were performed by the same translator, which was also the case with Alexie's novels.

Although the target texts present a certain variety of translation strategies, all of them are commercially bound translations. Both the peritextual elements of the editions and the translations aim at providing readers with a sophisticated piece of literature that promises entertainment without interruptions or political and cultural challenges (Herrero López, "Rewrapping Indianness" and "From US to Spain" 271-283). None of the editions has an introductory essay or an afterword that contextualizes the narratives, much less explains the translators' motivations and their strategies. Thus, the editions comply with the Spanish taste for unchallenging and entertaining reading instead of offering distinctive translations which could help to reveal Native American literature in the context of its socio-cultural and political framework.

The Spanish taste for entertainment readings means that the American Indian elements of the texts are manipulated, by either concealing or emphasizing them, to promote the books. The concealment of the Native presence is particularly characteristic of Erdrich's novels in Spanish translation: the publishing house Ediciones Siruela seems to prefer just mentioning that some characters are indigenous (Erdrich, *El juego* back cover; *El hijo* back cover) rather than alluding to the cultural components in the source texts. Using Indianness⁴ as a key element in the books' promotion usually involves relying on romantic cultural constructs, such as the one developed in Zitkala-Ša's book, which is considered to document the "universo enigmático" [enigmatic

² *Bingo Palace* (2014), *El coro de los maestros carniceros* (2011) *Plaga de palomas* (2010), *El descapotable rojo y otras historias* (2016), *El juego de la sombra* (2010), *La casa redonda* (2013), and *El hijo de todos* (2018) were translated by Susana de la Higuera Glynne-Jones and published by Ediciones Siruela. *La reina de la remolacha*, translated by Carlos Peralta, was originally published by Tusquets Editores in 1988 and reedited by Ediciones Siruela in 2012. *Filtro de amor* was originally translated by Carlos Peralta and published by Tusquets Editores in 1987; the new sections in the revised edition were translated by Susana de la Higuera Glynne-Jones, and this revised edition was published by Ediciones Siruela in 2011.

³ Alexie's *Diez pequeños indios* (2010) and *Danzas de guerra* (2012) were translated by Daniel Gascón and published by Xordica. Momaday's *La casa hecha de alba* (2011) was translated by Amelia Salinero and published by Appaloosa. Zitkala-Ša's *Recuerdos de una india sioux* (2011) was translated by Carlos Ezquerro and published by Erasmus Ediciones.

⁴ In this article, I make the distinction between indigeneity and Indianness. The former has become an important conceptual tool, especially in history and ethnography. However, Indianness is a construct of both US Native peoples and White people, a concept used broadly in Native Studies since 1994 (see, for instance, King, "This is not an Indian," Madsen, "Contemporary Discourses on 'Indianness,'" or Pasquaretta, "On the 'Indianness' of Bingo"). It encompasses all the ways in which Indian identity gets defined and includes what non-Indians conceptualize as part of being Indian.

universe] (*Recuerdos* back cover) of her tribe.⁵ Less stereotypical references to the Indian realities in the books can be found in Alexie's and Momaday's summaries. Alexie's, for instance, insists on how normal it is to be Native American, on how his characters "pertenecen a la tribu spokane, [y] viajan en avión, trabajan en oficinas y conocen la cultura pop" [belong to the Spokane tribe, [and] travel by plane, work in offices and know pop culture] (*Diez* back cover). The Indianness in Momaday's summary is even more accurately emphasized by alluding to how Native Americans were treated in the 1950s (*La casa* back flap).

The translations themselves are amply fluent, with few interruptions in the form of footnotes. Amelia Salinero, translator of Momaday's book, is the most prolific writer of footnotes, offering 46 in 208 pages. However, only 22 of them refer to Native issues. For instance, she explains Jemez⁶ terms such as "dypaloh," "qtsedaba" and "sawish,"⁷ indicates language switching—Momaday mixes English, Spanish, and Jemez—and even informs readers about certain historical events mentioned in the text. Erdrich's translator, Susana de la Higuera Glynne-Jones, takes a diametrically opposite approach. She avoids footnotes in her translations as much as possible, addressing mainly non-Indian terms or concerns: in its 263 pages, *Bingo Palace* has 12 footnotes, five of them on Native issues, whereas *Plaga de palomas* presents only two footnotes in 382 pages, none on Native concerns. Daniel Gascón, the translator of Alexie's novels, is closer to de la Higuera Glynne-Jones than to Salinero, with only two footnotes out of 16 in two novels directly addressing Native matters. The footnotes offered by Carlos Ezquerro, Zitkala-Ša's translator, on Native issues are minimal, with four in 186 pages.

The translations' textual fluency is mainly achieved through the upgrading of the vocabulary and the style of the Native authors. The four translators apply this translation strategy, although with different frequency. However, they all establish a pattern of highbrow vocabulary and refined style as the basis for enjoyable reading, if not good literature.

De la Higuera Glynne-Jones, Erdrich's translator, and Salinero, Momaday's translator, employ this strategy the most. De la Higuera Glynne-Jones refines almost every sentence in this way. She elaborates conjunctions, substitutes existential and copulative verbs with transitive ones, and selects highly refined options for many standard-level words in the source text. See, for instance, how she remodels two sentences of the opening paragraph of Erdrich's *Plague of Doves*: "but [he] saw the gramophone" (*Plague* 1) > "en su lugar descubrió un gramófono" [in its stead he discovered a gramophone] (*Plaga* 11); "The odor of raw blood was all around him in the closed room" (*Plague* 1) > "El olor a sangre fresca impregnaba la habitación cerrada" [The odour of fresh blood impregnated the closed room] (*Plaga* 11). The same thing happens with Momaday's text. Salinero upgrades the vocabulary throughout her translation by favouring the fancier options for verbs—"went out" (Momaday, *House* 10) > "marchaban" [march off] (*La casa* 21); "he told" (*House* 198) > "Explicó" [He explained] (*La casa* 192)—as well as for nouns and adjectives—"patches"

⁵ All translations and back translations into English are mine.

⁶ A Native American linguistic and cultural group, as well as a federally recognized nation, in New Mexico.

⁷ These words are complex in Jemez and do not have a ready correspondence in English. In fact, in the Spanish translation by Salinero they are explained in what I consider to be rather colonial footnotes. For instance, "dypaloh" is explained as "Fórmula con la que comienza un cuento o historia en Jemez, sería similar a 'Érase una vez'" [An expression with which a tale or story begins in Jemez; it could be similar to 'Once upon a time'] (Momaday, *La casa* 11).

(*House* 26) > “retazos” [remnants] (*La casa* 36); “awful” (*House* 15) > “temible” [fearsome] (*La casa* 25); “leaves” (*House* 200) > “follaje” [foliage] (*La casa* 195). In both cases, the cumulative impact of this strategy is to create the impression of very elaborate language and style, something added to the original in the translation process.

The high frequency with which de la Higuera Glynne-Jones and Salinero apply this upgrading contrasts greatly with the everyday linguistic standard generally adopted by Daniel Gascón. Gascón does not try to improve the stylistic value of Alexie’s texts, even when vulgar expressions are included. Take for example the following sentence: “The family and the tribe were helping her, so maybe she was a selfish bitch for questioning the usefulness of tribalism” (*Ten* 16). Gascón uses “ayudando” [helping], “zorra egoísta” [selfish bitch] and “cuestionar” [questioning] (*Diez* 28), instead of the fancier *socorrer* [assist], *arpía* [harpy] and *disputar* [dispute]. Similarly, the translator of Zitkala-Ša’s texts, Carlos Ezquerro, only upgrades vocabulary and style from time to time. The most interesting of Ezquerro’s vocabulary choices, however, is his selection of uncommon translation options. In a chapter (*Stories* 101–107; *Recuerdos* 83–86) devoted to the Great Spirit, traditional deity of the Sioux, he chooses to translate the common reference to “spirit” as “alma” [soul] and “soul” as “corazón” [heart], creating a variation in the spiritual and cultural meaning of this whole passage.

Syntax is also modified in the translation process, remodelling further the individual style of each author. The most typical syntactic alterations have to do either with the length of phrases and sentences or with the elimination of repetitions. Once again, translators differ in their use of these variants of syntax modification. In each case, though, it is open to debate how many of these changes are indeed required by the syntactic structure of the Spanish language.

De la Higuera Glynne-Jones’ modifications in this respect are less frequent than her upgrading of vocabulary and style, but syntactic changes still occur roughly in every paragraph. She frequently modifies sentences or generates complex sentences to expand the descriptions given by Erdrich. In addition, she usually moves phrases around, rewrites other phrases according to her interpretation of the source text, and substitutes commas with coordinating conjunctions. All this can be observed, for example, in Erdrich’s *Bingo Palace* (93–94 for the English version; 101 for the translation), in a passage that I will retranslate in the next section.

Once more, Gascón demonstrates little tendency to modify the original text. His translations follow closely the sentences that Alexie has written, incorporating the few modifications that the characteristics of Spanish language require, for example, converting certain passive sentences into active ones (*Ten* 118; *Diez* 123). Gascón respects punctuation marks, repetitive structures, as well as the complexity of sentences. Ezquerro’s translation also generally respects Zitkala-Ša’s syntax, although occasionally he transforms the internal structure of sentences. Among other modifications, Ezquerro elongates certain prepositional phrases with short subordinates (*Stories* 101; *Recuerdos* 83), and changes the order of clause elements, inverting it fully or partially (*Stories* 34; *Recuerdos* 31).

Amelia Salinero, on the contrary, adapts syntax the most to conform to the Spanish prototype of fluency. She often adds complexity to Momaday’s syntax by modifying the internal structure of sentences. For instance, she transforms a compound sentence into a simple sentence

with new adjective and noun phrases: “El valle, gris bajo la lluvia, mostraba restos de nieve sobre las dunas” [The valley, grey under the rain, showed the rests of the snow upon the dunes] (*La casa* 11), her translation of “The valley was grey with rain, and snow lay out upon the dunes” (*House* 1). On other occasions, she subdivides long sentences or attaches short sentences to surrounding structures, recreating Momaday’s narration in several ways.

In addition, the four translators show a certain disposition to add or omit information according to their personal preferences. Additions and omissions range from a single word or a few words to whole paragraphs, although the former is far more common. In three cases, these changes are singularly relevant and interesting from a cultural point of view.

Gascón, on this occasion, stands out for omitting elements that may challenge the cultural sensibilities of Spaniards. The most evident example of this type of omission is a passage about the hanging of 38 Dakota Indians in Minnesota in 1862. Gascón first transforms the “large and cheering crowd” (*War* 105) into a “multitud grande y ruidosa” [large and noisy crowd] (*Danzas* 113), and the fact that the Indians “dropped to their deaths” (*War* 105) is mitigated by the simple “murieron” [died] (*Danzas* 113). Next, he eliminates the sentence “Yes, thirty-eight necks snapped” (*War* 105), as if it revealed too much violence.

Salinero’s most outstanding omission concerns the sociolects of several characters, which are eliminated altogether. Thus, the representation of the Californian version of the so-called Red English and that of the Northern Plains dialect (Momaday, *House* 133) become standard Spanish, undistinguishable from each other or from the general narration (*La casa* 118). Salinero offers the reader nothing to compensate for this loss, not even a footnote as she does in other sections of the novel where code switching between English and Spanish happens. Furthermore, she does not explore possible strategies to convey in Spanish these dialects, consequently ignoring the cultural and identarian relevance these minoritizing linguistic markers may have.

The translator of Zitkala-Ša, on the contrary, has introduced the largest addition of all. The translation performed by Ezquerro not only contains *American Indian Stories* (1921), it also includes *Old Indian Legends* (1901), Zitkala-Ša’s first published work. Ezquerro interrupts the internal structure of the 1921 text and incorporates the 1901 legends into the single volume of the Spanish edition. In addition, he transforms into an appendix the last chapter of *American Indian Stories*, whose title is changed from “America’s Indian Problem” into “Problemas indioamericanos” [American Indian Problems]. By so doing, he obscures the political claims that Zitkala-Ša brought forth throughout her autobiographical reflections.

De la Higuera Glynnes-Jones is the most moderate of the translators in terms of omissions and additions. Nevertheless, the modifications she incorporates in the narration tend to produce mistranslations that transform the meaning and the connotations of the source text content. For instance, in her most recent translation, de la Higuera Glynne-Jones remodels one of the protagonists from a man who “was a devout Catholic who also followed traditional ways” (*LaRose* 3) into one who “era un católico devoto que también respetaba las tradiciones” [was a devout Catholic who also respected traditions] (*El hijo* 13). This translation transforms the character from someone who is an active participant in Native traditions in Erdrich’s original into someone who does not condemn them.

A minoritizing project for Native American literature

The first step in applying Venuti's project to Native American literature is to consider the asymmetries of power between the source texts and target languages and cultures. In the context of Venuti's translation of Tarchetti, nineteenth-century Italian language and culture were seen as minor compared to twentieth-century US English language and culture. Given the centrality of Native language(s) and culture(s) in the source texts, the resulting minoritized US English language and culture cannot be considered major in relation to Iberian Spanish. In my translation project, US English and Iberian Spanish are equally powerful dominant languages and cultures, whereas Native culture(s) and Red English dialects are minor. Consequently, Iberian Spanish must be minoritized and the ethical stance of the minoritizing project can be none other than to defy the hegemony of both US English and Spanish over Native culture(s) through a heterogeneous discourse.

The next step of a minoritizing project is the selection of the translation strategies, which "depends on the period, genre, and style of the foreign text in relation to the domestic literature and the domestic readership for which the translation is written" (Venuti 14). The archaisms, for example, used by Venuti are not an adequate option for the American Indian works under consideration here; however, other strategies, such as keeping sentence structures close to the original, will prove very effective in counteracting the Spanish language's standard word-order flexibility. In the following pages, I present my selection of strategies for producing a minoritizing translation of Native American texts. Because I approach the texts as a group, I focus particularly on strategies that can be adapted to all of them. Finally, I comment on additional strategies to be applied in a specific case: the translation of the dialects in Momaday's novel.⁸

The first strategy selected, common to all of the texts, is to adhere to the original sentence structure and vocabulary, avoiding any kind of upgrading. I adopt this strategy in order to disturb the hegemony of the current linguistic standard for literary texts, that is, the sophisticated Spanish register. The translations studied above show how the translators and their associated agents of translation, in general, promote refined styles to the point of modifying greatly the personal characteristics of the authors' prose and, in some cases, the contents of the texts. I aim at presenting the Native narrations in their original configuration as precisely as possible, especially when the original text presents a popular level of syntax and vocabulary. In this way, readers will, in the long run, revise their expectations about literary texts, accepting that simpler narrative patterns are as legitimate as elevated ones.

This technique will produce a contrast to most of the published translations. Consider the differences in sentence structure between the translations produced by de la Higuera Glynne-Jones and Salinero, and my own minoritizing translation. My translation, by following the original closely, avoids the addition of information (underlined) made by de la Higuera Glynne-Jones (example

⁸ In the present paper, I do not deal separately with Zitkala-Ša's early-twentieth-century style, but I bear in mind that specific strategies must be adopted to reproduce her more sophisticated usage of English as well as to differentiate it from the style of more contemporary writers such as Alexie and Erdrich.

(a)), as well as the displacement of elements (in bold) and the replacement of conjunctive devices (in blue).

- (a) He walked over to the rail beside the river's bank, thought hopefully of jumping in, but the Truckee River was only a foot or so in depth, wandering among gray rocks, too weak to flow, too shallow to run. (Erdrich, *Bingo* 94)

Caminó hasta la barandilla junto a la ribera del río y, **esperanzado**, pensó en tirarse al agua, pero el río Truckee, **que serpenteaba entre rocas grises**, no tenía más de **treinta centímetros** de profundidad, demasiado débil para que le llevara la corriente y demasiado poco profundo para engullir su vida. (Erdrich, *Bingo Palace* 101). [He walked over to the rail beside the riverside and, **hopefully**, thought of jumping in, but the Truckee River, **which snaked among gray rocks**, was only **thirty centimetres** in depth, too weak for the current to carry him **and** too shallow for it to gobble down his life.]

Él caminó hasta la baranda junto al banco del río, él pensó esperanzado en saltar adentro, pero el río Truckee tenía sólo **un pie** o así de profundidad, vagando entre grises rocas, demasiado débil para fluir, demasiado poco profundo para correr. [He walked over to the rail beside the river's bank, he thought hopefully of jumping in, but the Truckee river was only one foot or so in depth, wandering among gray rocks, too weak to flow, too shallow to run.]

Salinero's translation, for its part, contrasts greatly with mine owing to her tendency to embellish simple sentences, either by generating complex sentences (in bold) or by choosing more refined words (underlined). She also offers new versions of certain phrases (in blue), changing the information in the paragraph, as was the case with de la Higuera Glynne-Jones' additions.

- (b) The valley was gray with rain, and snow lay out upon the dunes. It was dawn. The first light had been deep and vague in the mist, and then the sun flashed and a great yellow glare fell under the cloud. (Momaday, *House* 1)

El valle, **gris bajo la lluvia**, mostraba restos de nieve sobre las dunas. Amanecía. La luz del alba, **oscura y vaga bajo la llovizna**, resplandeció **bajo** los rayos del sol **que asomaba por el horizonte**. (Momaday, *La casa* 11) [The valley, **gray under the rain**, showed the rests of the snow upon the dunes. The day dawned. The light of dawn, **dark and vague under the drizzle**, gleamed **under** the sunrays **which come onto the horizon**.]

El valle estaba gris con la lluvia, y la nieve estaba expuesta tendida sobre las dunas. Era el alba. La primera luz había sido profunda y vaga en la niebla, y entonces el sol brilló y **un gran amarillo resplandor** cayó detrás de la nube. [The valley was gray with the rain, and the snow lay upon the dunes. It was dawn. The first light had been deep and vague in the mist, and then the sun flashed and a great yellow glare fell behind the cloud.]

In both of my translations, I have tried to add heterogeneity to the narration (in green in examples (a) and (b)). In the first case, I preserve the reference to the US customary system, whereas de la Higuera Glynne-Jones has adopted the metric system, the norm in Spain. In the

second case, I ignore the Spanish rule that places most adjectives behind their corresponding nouns: the double adjective in front of nouns will create an effect of strangeness among Spanish readers and will remind them that this text is a translation.

Adhering to the original sentence structure involves avoiding not only additions to the original, as in the examples above, but also omissions. This particular aspect is relevant in Gascón's translations of Alexie's novels: his translations mostly follow the original syntax and vocabulary closely, but, at times, his modifications tend to hide cultural and political issues relevant to US Indigenous peoples. Let us revise the hanging passage mentioned in the previous section:

- (c) Yes, in front of a large and cheering crowd, thirty-eight Indians dropped to their deaths. Yes, thirty-eight necks snapped. But before they died, thirty-eight Indians sang their death songs. (Alexie, *War* 105–106)

Sí, treinta y ocho indios murieron ante una multitud grande y ruidosa. Pero antes de morir, treinta y ocho indios cantaron sus canciones de la muerte. (Alexie, *Danzas* 113–114) [Yes, thirty-eight Indians died in front of a large and noisy crowd. But before dying, thirty-eight Indians sang their death songs]

Sí, ante una gran y entusiasta muchedumbre, treinta y ocho indios fueron lanzados a sus muertes. Sí, treinta y ocho cuellos chascaron. Pero antes de que ellos murieran, treinta y ocho indios cantaron sus canciones de la muerte. [Yes, in front of a large and enthusiastic crowd, thirty-eight Indians were thrown to their deaths. Yes, thirty-eight necks snapped. But before they died, thirty-eight Indians sang their death songs.]

The contrast between Gascón's and my translation comes from a small, but significant, detail. In the two first sentences, I abstain from making any of the modifications performed by Gascón: the relocation of some elements, and the moderating and omissions of phrases. I even keep the adjective–noun order, as commented on in relation to Momaday's text (example (b) above). But most importantly, I do not attenuate the cruelty of the situation. In fact, I intensify it by selecting terms, such as “muchedumbre” [crowd, horde], “fueron lanzados” [were thrown], “chascaron” [crackled], which are more negatively charged than the most direct translations of the corresponding English words, *multitud* [crowd], *cayeron* [fell], and *se rompieron* [snapped, broke]. By moving momentarily away from my usual adherence to the original sentence structure and vocabulary, I emphasize not only the linguistic deterritorialization of the original text, but also the political meaning of this literary work.

Vocabulary, thus, also plays an important role in my minoritizing project. I aim not only at preserving the linguistic level of it in the translations, but also at using it both to add heterogeneity to the discourse and to emphasise the political and cultural significance of the original texts. As with Alexie's passage, Zitkala-Ša's sad memories of her years at an assimilationist boarding school could be reinforced by selecting vocabulary with strong connotations. See example (d) for an illustration of this suggestion:

- (d) I cried aloud, shaking my head all the while until I felt the cold blades of the scissors against my neck, and heard them gnaw off one of my thick braids. Then I lost my spirit. (Zitkala-Ša, *Stories* 55–56)

Grité mucho sacudiendo la cabeza todo el rato hasta que sentí las frías cuchillas de las tijeras en el cuello y oí cómo cortaban una de mis espesas trenzas. Luego, caí abatida. (Zitkala-Ša, *Recuerdos* 47) [I cried aloud shaking my head all the while until I felt the cold blades of the scissors on my neck and heard how they cut one of my thick braids. Then, I became downcast.]

Yo lloré a gritos, azotando mi cabeza en todo momento hasta que yo sentí las heladas cuchillas de las tijeras contra mi cuello, y las oí roer una de mis gruesas trenzas. Entonces yo perdí mi espíritu. [I cried aloud, battering my head without stop until I felt the frozen blades of the scissors against my neck, and I heard them chew away one of my thick braids. Then I lost my spirit.]

In my translation, I again depart to a certain extent from the original vocabulary in order to reinforce Zitkala-Ša's fear and anger at having her hair cut, something contrary to her traditional ways. I select vocabulary that creates a tenser atmosphere than the one achieved by the first translation to convey the oppressive feeling of such a situation. Thus, "lloré a gritos," literally, cry aloud, brings forth both the screaming and the tears, whereas "azotando mi cabeza en todo momento" [battering my head without stop] implies a truly desperate action, exhausting and constant and, somehow, dangerous. I also modify the scissors' "cold blades" into "heladas" [frozen] which chew away, "roer," not only Zitkala-Ša's beloved hair, but also her tribal identity. The last sentence, "Then I lost my spirit" could be equally altered, but I find it more effective to keep it simple as the final and unavoidable conclusion of the assimilationist treatment enforced on Zitkala-Ša's hair and identity.

On other occasions, neologisms have to be created to render the meaning that the authors conveyed. Usually, this situation will arise from the fact that Spanish and English do not create words in the same ways. Take, for instance, the verb "to earthquake" in "I know I would have earthquaked Los Angeles, Paris, and Rome" (Alexie, *Ten* 99). Gascón adopts the Spanish expression "yo habría provocado terremotos" [I would have provoked earthquakes] (*Diez* 121), but that deletes the heterogeneity introduced by the author himself. Thus, I propose generating a corresponding verb in Spanish, leaving the sentence as "yo habría terremoteado Los Ángeles, París y Roma." A bit more problematic, although not impossible, is the creation of a Spanish word for "the nowhere place"—the imprecise realm around him made of luck and gambling—from which Lipsha, one of the characters, gets only insulation from hunger, poverty and other people's criticism instead of actual money (Erdrich, *Bingo* 95). Rather than the proposed translation, "ese vacío" [that emptiness] (Erdrich, *Bingo Palace* 102), I favour a small modification of the term, "el no-lugar" [the no-place], or a word-for-word translation, "el ningún lugar" [the not-any place]. Either of these two alternatives would emphasize the heterogeneity of the target text and seem strange to target readers.

It may be argued that these two strategies may not add enough heterogeneity to the target texts to disrupt the linguistic standard of literary Spanish. So, to help the reader appreciate the cultural difference offered by the original texts, I will go against the Spanish norm of eliminating the subject pronoun when unnecessary for clarity. This technique—as applied in examples (a), (c), and (d) above—disturbs greatly the reading rhythm in Spanish, so it will remind readers that the book is a translation and that the original text is marked by stylistic and linguistic difference. In addition, the presence of the subject pronouns will create a link between the translated text and the oral tradition of storytelling, where repetition and explicitation are essential for the audience to understand and participate in the narration (see Kroeber 10 and Roemer 44-45).

In order to attend to the cultural difference in the original works, I also adopt the use of profuse footnotes to comment on cultural and political issues. The inclusion of these extensive annotations will produce an effect of strangeness by means of a repetitive disruption in the reading flow, in addition to producing an informative translation that respects and enhances the cultural and political claims of Native American writers. In example (c) above (Alexie, *War* 106; *Danzon* 114), for instance, I will add a footnote to explain in Spanish what a death song is: a solo song of the Sioux, full of intensity and emotion, although straightforward and without embellishment, which is sung when facing death before entering *Wanági T'amak'oc'e*, the Spirit Land. In the same way, the episode of Zitakla-Ša's hair being cut (example (d) above; *Stories* 52–56; *Recuerdos* 45–47) will be complemented with both a lengthy annotation and an introduction to the whole book in which the system of boarding schools is explained, from its origins to its consequences, with a special emphasis on the destructive nature of this “civilizing” programme on Native cultures and on communal and individual identities. Introductory essays to each translated work will also be included in which I will explain the minoritizing approach and strategies selected. I will therefore not only contextualize the source texts in their cultural and socio-political context, but also within a framework of commitment to and respect for cultural diversity.

Before presenting my final reflections, I suggest the use of additional strategies aimed at specific features present in some of the books analysed here. Because of the complexity of their translation, I focus exclusively on Momaday's inclusion of dialects of the so-called Red English. The small but important differences among the speech styles of several characters during a peyote ceremony disappear in Salinero's translation, but a mindful exercise of creativity may restore their cultural and linguistic heterogeneity. Consider the comparison of Salinero's version and mine of the two most noteworthy dialects in Momaday's novel:

- (e) “Well, I jes’ want to say thanks to all my good frens here tonight for givin’ me this here honor, to be fireman an’ all. This here shore is a good meetin’, huh?” [...] “Great Spirit be with us. We gone crazy for you to be with us poor Indi’ns. We been bad long time ’go, just raise it hell an’ kill each others all the time.” (*House* 113).

“Bueno, yo solo quiero dar las gracias a todos mis buenos amigos de aquí esta noche por darme el honor de ser el que atiende el fuego. Seguro que esta será una buena reunión, ¿eh?” [...] “Gran Espíritu, ven a nosotros. Estamos locos porque vengas a nosotros, pobres indios. Hemos sido malos hace tiempo. Armando un infierno y matándonos unos a otros todo el tiempo.” [Well, I just want to say thanks to all my

good friends for giving me the honor of being the one attending the fire. Surely this will be a good meeting, eh? [...] Great Spirit, come to us. We are crazy for you to come to us, poor Indians. We have been bad long ago. Causing a hell and killing one another all the time.] (*La casa* 118 and 119).

“Bueno, yo sólo quiero decir gracias a todos mis buenos amegos aquí esta noche por darmé este aquí honor, ser el hombre del fuego e todo. Esto aquí siguro es una buena reunión, ¿eh?” [...] “Gran Espíritu sé con nosotros’. Nosotros’ vuelto loco’ para que tú seas con nosotros’ pobre’ indio’. Nosotros’ sido malo’ hace mucho t’empo, simplemente alzarlo el infierno e matar uno a otro’ todo el tiempo.” [Well, I jus’ want to say thanks to all my good frens here tonight for givin’ me this here honour, to be the fireman an’ all. This here shore is a good meetin’, eh? [...] Great Spirit be with us. We gone crazy for you to be with us poor Indi’ns. We been bad long time ’go, just raise it hell an’ kill each others all the time]

Instead of using a Spanish dialect to stand for these two Indigenous versions of English, I propose to follow the speech patterns in the source text. In the case of the first dialect, I change the stress of *sólo* (“solo”), *darme* (“darmé”), and *reunión* (“reunión”) incorporating graphic accents on the wrong syllables to express a different pronunciation of these words. In the case of the second dialect, I omit the final letter *s* from the Spanish words to create a pronunciation pattern that is similar to the English “Ind’ns” (*indios*); I also eliminate a letter in the pronunciation of “hace mucho t’empo” (*hace mucho tiempo*), corresponding to the English “long time ’go.” I also imitate the grammatical deviations in the original: I neither introduce into the Spanish text the missing auxiliary in “We gone crazy” nor rectify the incorrect plural “each others.” Furthermore, in order to reproduce the English “each others,” I insert an error in the Spanish discourse by writing “uno a otro’,” instead of the accurate *unos a otros*.

Moreover, I innovate when transferring the oral expressions “frends,” “shore,” “an’,” and “this here,” by transforming the Spanish word *amigos* [friends] into “amegos” and *seguro* [sure] into “siguro” to correspond to the first two of these expressions, whereas for the English “an’,” I select “e,” the alternative version of the copulative conjunction *y* when it is followed by a word starting with i-sound. For “this here,” I translate word for word, which results in “este aquí,” rather than the standard expression *este de aquí*.

All of these choices, when put together, aim at reproducing the heterogeneous discourse that exemplifies Momaday’s linguistic variations, while respecting his narrative techniques and the cultural relevance of including such heterogeneity. However, generating this kind of heterogeneity in Spanish to reproduce the dialectical speech patterns of Native characters can be counterproductive in cultural terms. Too many of these elements might create a stereotypical representation of Indigenous peoples as uneducated or linguistically unrefined. In the present example, though, a marked heterogeneity is very positive, given that the passages of dialogue are rather short relative to the novel’s entire length. In addition, a minoritizing translation should not aim at eliminating potentially negative representations of Indians if these appear in the original: after all, if the humoristic and/or realistic effect that these dialects aim to produce has been included, the authors must have their reasons.

Conclusions

In the present article, I have explored the possibility of producing minoritizing translations of Native American literature. But why perform a minoritizing translation? I find the translations published since 2010 problematic because of the promotion of fluency and of the Spanish literary linguistic and cultural standard by translators and their associated agents of translation. Thus, I aim, as Venuti did, to develop a cultural translation project instead of producing popular, commercial translations. The cultural project I envision involves resistance to both cultural and linguistic assimilation into the Spanish literary system. I intend to produce subversive translations that preserve and disseminate the cultural and political testimonies of Native authors. I attempt to recreate in the Spanish language the minoritized major language of the originals, thus reproducing their status of minor literature in the Spanish polysystem. For me, translations of these books performed according to these principles would be powerful translations.

However, a serious question arises about the feasibility of such a project. Venuti's literary capital at the time he translated Tarchetti contributed to the realization of his minoritizing project: he was not economically dependent on the commercial success of his translations and, moreover, worked with a non-profit publisher committed to academically-driven projects. This gave him the freedom to translate against the expectations of popular audiences. Most translators cannot consider adopting minoritizing strategies unless commissioned by a publishing house to do so, and most publishers find such projects commercially risky. However, exceptions exist: Malika Embarek, translator of Franco-Magrebien writers for both mainstream and independent publishers, has successfully negotiated the inclusion of Arabisms in her Spanish translations. Moreover, she always offers to publishing house reviewers a document in which she explains her translation strategies and requests that they respect them (476). This case shows that translation projects based on ethical and cultural stances are possible in Spain, although they require a great deal of cooperation among agents of translation as well as the development of strategies to produce this type of translations in an efficient way (Buzelin 161).

Two other important questions in relation to any minoritizing project are those of quantity and quality. I have followed Venuti's suggestion to select my own minoritizing strategies, keeping in mind the necessity of deviating from the Spanish literary text standard by introducing heterogeneity into my translations. I have been able to present only excerpts, which at best can give but a glance into how a full translation that incorporates my minoritizing strategies might read. I believe, however, that my application of Venuti's minoritizing project is more disruptive than his translations of Tarchetti, simply because I cannot rely on historical linguistic features to create heterogeneity. I must resist the current Spanish highbrow standard for literary works with non-standard or minoritizing linguistic elements. This explains my persistent repetition throughout the excerpts of techniques such as the non-standard word order of adjectives and nouns, the inclusion of the subject pronoun, and the addition of long footnotes. When translating a whole book, I will distribute these strategies throughout the work, to avoid the strategies being concentrated in single paragraphs.

I have stated that in my opinion the quality of a minoritizing translation depends on the effect that the translation has on the receiving context. I am aware that this is a difficult criterion to measure, more so within the limits of the present article. In addition, my proposal lacks reviews,

something that Venuti had available in order to evaluate the reception of his minoritizing translations. This article, then, stands as a call for reactions to the minoritizing strategies I have adopted for a literature whose cultural and political components have, so far, been downplayed in their Spanish translations. A better approach than cultural and linguistic disregard and assimilation must be found for incorporating Native American literature into Spain's polysystem. This is my proposal.

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