Literary Translation Human vs Machine: An Essay about Online Translation

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Abstract : The ways to translate are manifold since textual genres undergoing translations are diverse. In this essay, our goal is to give special attention to the literary genre and to the online translation tool Google Translate (GT), widely used either by nonprofessionals or by scholars, in order to show evidence of the indispensability of human wit in a good translation. Our study has its basis on a literary review of prominent authors, with emphasis on translation categories. Also highlighting the issue of polysemous literary translation, we aim to shed light on the translator's craft and the fallible nature of online translation. To better illustrate these principles, the methodology consisted on performing a comparative analysis involving the original text Moll Flanders by Daniel Defoe in English to its online translation given by GT and to a translation into Brazilian Portuguese performed by a human. We proceeded to identifying and analyzing the degrees of textual equivalence according to the following categories: volume, levels and order. The results have attested the unsuitability in a translation done by a computer connected to the World Wide Web.

Keywords : Google Translator, human translation, literary translation, Moll Flanders