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The Italian Voices of African Americans: *A Comparative Analysis of Italian Translations of* The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn *and* Their Eyes Were Watching God

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Introduction

During my university career, I had the opportunity to attend numerous literature courses, but I always found Anglo-American literature the most interesting among all of them. In particular, the studies about this field brought me to discover African-American history and literature: I always felt a genuine interest for this branch of Anglo-American literature, motivated by a strong curiosity to discover the origins and the development of African-American communities between discriminations and stereotyping. Therefore, I thought to combine this passion with my postgraduate studies concerning translation theories and methods by focusing on African-Americans' representation in Italian publishing market from a linguistic and socio-cultural point of view. To be specific, the aim of my thesis is to analyze the Italian translation of African-Americans' dialect, known as Black English or African American Vernacular English. I will consider two novels: *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain and *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neal Hurston: these two novels, written and based on different periods, are famously known because not only they cover important topics, but also they present a significant use of Black English. By considering part of the translations of these novels, I will study the main translation strategies used to translate this dialect, analyzing the positive and negative effects they may have on the source and target text. In addition, I will use my comparative analysis to study the relation between the different target texts of the same source text, highlighting how the time dimension may not always bring progress in the literary translation field.

Because of the linguistic and cultural complexity of this dialect in American and African American literature, it is fundamental for me to gaining basic notions about literary translation before facing the analysis of Italian translations of Black English. Therefore, I will structure my first chapter as a theoretical background on which to base my comparative analysis of different Italian versions of the two aforementioned novels, beginning by discussing the conflict in literary translation between domestication and foreignization presented by Lawrence Venuti in his most known study *The Translator's Invisibility*. Taking into consideration Venuti's discourse about the evolution of the translator's role and the correlated development of translation strategies, I will investigate how the choice of a certain strategy can be defined by the translator's own will and by the cultural and social conditions in which the translator works. Thus, literary translation

can be considered a dynamic discipline: the evolution of historical and social contexts constantly redefines the 'canons of accuracy', which establish the standards for a good translation.

The dynamicity of literary translation field given by the constant transformation of translation theories, lead translators to focus their attention on those literary works already presenting a translation: this phenomenon, better known as retranslation, will be an integral aspect of my theoretical background that involves complex issues such as the ageing text and the idea of retranslation as challenge. In particular, it is important for me to understand those theories explaining the process behind this phenomenon: beginning from the Retranslation Hypothesis argued by Berman and then supported by Chesterman – who reclaimed Goethe's idea about time as 'foreignness reconstructor' –, I will try to highlight the main aspects of Berman's conception of retranslation as a process leading to closer foreignness, and thus to a better translation, defined as the 'grande traduction'. The analysis of other studies about this phenomenon will bring me to underline the main weakness of the Retranslation Hypothesis, which is not considering a possible 'move backward' given by the translator's personal choices. The research done by Brisset and Venuti highlight how the translator's choice reversing the path of the Retranslation Hypothesis can be dictated by many factors, such as the 'anxiety of influence' or by the 'challenge' to diversify his or her own translation from the previous one. In particular, one of the latest theories suggested by Paloposki and Koskinen highlight two main weakness of the Retranslation Hypothesis: on one hand, this thesis may actually represent certain scenarios of retranslated texts, but it cannot presume a priori that first translations are domesticating and subsequent translations are closer to the original. On the other hand, the two Finnish scholars highlight how the Retranslation Hypothesis partially fails because it does not take into account the 'idiosyncratic constraints' related to the translator's preferences or the difficulties in interpreting the text, which may cause a fault in the improving path theorized by Berman.

After this general overview on literary translation, I will focus on the main issue of my thesis by presenting AAVE from an historical and social point of view and by giving a general overview on its main phonological and grammatical features. Understanding the history and the linguistic structure of this dialect is fundamental not only for a better comprehension of the source texts but also for a closer analysis of the

most common translating strategies concerning dialects and vernacular languages. In this perspective, I will analyze Antoine Berman's study "Translation and the Trail of the Foreign", in which he explains how translators should always have control of their actions in order to not be misled from the system of deformation imposed by their practice. Among these deformations, Berman pinpoints two main 'deforming tendencies' regarding dialects and vernacular, which are the effacement and the exoticization of vernacular networks. Franca Cavagnoli deeply analyzes these issues highlighting how these approaches can have serious repercussions on both the source and the target texts, since they manipulate the original message of the source text. She explains these scenarios in her two studies, *La voce del testo* and *Il proprio e l'estraneo nella traduzione letteraria di lingua inglese*, by providing examples taken from Italian target texts: these two studies will become extremely important for the following comparative analysis, since they will provide me with a general overview about Italian literary translation concerning dialects and vernaculars.

In the second and third chapter, I will try to put into practice the knowledge acquired for the first chapter by focusing separately on the two novels chosen for this thesis. As it will be seen, I will structure these two chapter in a similar way, by firstly presenting the author and then focusing on the novels, its major themes and its critiques. Following this structure is important in order to achieve a wide and complete comprehension of the novels' motifs and to understand the most significant passages in linguistic and socio-cultural terms. In fact, after a detailed presentation of the novels, I will focus on the source language of each work: through qualitative research, such as Minnick's "Articulating Jim" and "Community in Conflict", both belonging to her work *Dialects and Dichotomy*, I will try to show the grammatical and phonological particularities of each source text in order to understand Twain's and Hurston's representation of Black English. Afterwards, I will focus on the major aspect of my thesis, that is the translation of these novels into Italian language: first of all, I will focus on each translator's career and their involvement in the making of the translation, analyzing their prefaces or notes, where present, in order to highlight their perception of the story and their approach to translate it into Italian. This passage will allow me to better understand the translators' personal point of view on AAVE and their translating approaches before analyzing in detail every translation and comparing between each other.

The second chapter will focus on Mark Twain and his novel *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1883). Set in the 1850s South America, the novel follows the story of the young Huckleberry Finn's escape from his violent father across the Mississippi River. Jim, a runaway slave, joins the boy in his journey hoping to reach the free states and reunite with his family. Their journey is not easy: after dealing with two frauds, who will later sell Jim to gain some money, Huck will have to face his fears and confusing morality in order to free his friend. With Tom Sawyer's help, Huck will free Jim, deciding to go West and to leave behind that 'civilized society' that allowed slavery. After a brief presentation of the author's life, I will provide a general overview of the novel, presenting an extend summary of the story and its main themes, and discussing the different critical aspects arising from the interracial friendship between Huck and Jim. In particular, I will discuss Toni Morrison's thesis of Jim's minstrelization through his role as surrogate father and Jonathan Arac's study *Huckleberry Finn as an Idol and Target* dealing with the use of the N-word and its implications in the African American readerships.

Before dealing with the comparative analysis of the target texts, I will analyze the language of the source text, focusing on the complex language variation arising from the characters' speech. In particular, David Carkeet's study "The Dialect in *Huckleberry Finn*", based on a comparative analysis between Huck's speech and that of each character, will be useful to discuss two main points: Mark Twain's accuracy in developing characters speaking different dialects, and the similarity between Huck's and Jim's speech (they are grammatically and lexically similar, but they differ phonologically). With particular reference to this last aspect, Carkeet's comparative analysis shows the accuracy of Jim's phonological representation of Black English, highlighting how his use of non-standard forms is more rule-based than the one of Huck. However, the resemblance of Huck's speech to Black English features will be further analyzed through Shelley Fisher Fishkin's research *Was Huck Black?: Mark Twain and African-American Voices*: in this study, Fishkin compares Huck's speech with Jimmy's speech, a black boy whom Mark Twain met in one of his many travels. Through data collected from Twain's autobiography and other works, such as his article 'Sociable Jimmy' wrote for the *New York Times*, Fishkin shows how Jimmy's dialect is phonological closer to African American's dialect, but it is very much similar to that of Huck in terms of the modality

of narration and topics of conversation, like their naivety and aversion to violence and cruelty.

After a linguistic analysis of the source text, I will focus on the three translations chosen for this thesis, which are Giachino's 1949 version, Cavagnoli's 2000 version and Culicchia's 2005 version. The comparative analysis between these three versions will focus on specific passages of the novel regarding dialogs between Huck and Jim in order to highlight how each translators managed to represent the language variation between the two characters' dialects, and especially what strategies they used to translate Black English.

In the third chapter, I will study Zora Neale Hurston's novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937), the story of Jane Crawford and her research of true love. At young age, Janie's grandmother Nanny forces her to marry Logan Killicks, a man of property who expects her to meekly obey him; tired of her life with him, Janie runs away with the handsome and charming Joe Starks, who promises to make her the 'queen of the porch' in the all-black town Eatonville. However, Joe's ideal of power makes him acting harshly with Janie, limiting all her interactions with the Eatonville community and humiliating her every time she does something wrong in the store he owns. Janie sustains Joe's psychological and physical violence, but she gradually becomes aware of her submission and what her own identity is apart from Joe. One day, Janie replies to Jody's umpteenth reprimand by humiliating him in front of the Eatonville men, which further weakens his precarious physical conditions. Joe dies and Janie is finally free: she will find true love with Tea Cake, a younger black man who treats her as his equal. They move to the Everglades of Florida to work in the plantations, where Janie finally experiences membership with the other black workers. However, their life together ends when a hurricane hits the area: Tea Cake gets bitten by a dog and contracts rabies, forcing Janie to shoot him after he goes mad and tries to kill her. Janie is put on trial for murder: after being acquitted, she returns to Eatonville, where she meets up with her friend Phoeby and tells her life story.

After a brief presentation of the author's life, I will deeply analyze the main themes of the novel, focusing on how Janie acknowledges her own identity within a coercive male-dominant society. Through Mary Hellen Washinton's article 'The Black Woman's Search For Identity', I will show how Janie's sufferings come from people – Nanny and

Joe Stark – who set their dream life on standards dictated by white society: Washington argues that meeting Tea Cake not only allows Janie to find true love, but it also helps her to discover black folklore and to experience membership. In addition, Yvonne Johnson's research will be important to study how Janie acknowledges her identity as African American woman by discovering and achieving her voice: Johnson focuses her research on the relationship between the third-person narrator and Janie's character, highlighting how the reader comes to know Janie's inner growth through a tangled web of narrative voices. In order to provide a complete presentation of the novel, I will analyze the various critiques to Hurston and her works, from Richard Wright's harsh condemnation of Hurston's anthropological-based work, to Robert Stepto's skepticism about Janie's real achievement of her own voice.

Subsequently, I will analyze the novel from a linguistic perspective: through the grammatical and phonological data collected by Minnick in her study 'Community in Conflict', I will show Hurston's particularities in representing Black English. As it will be showed, Minnick argues that the linguistic homogeneity among all characters' speech mirrors the author's will to represent Black English as a common language through which reinforcing membership and celebrating black folklore. After the analysis of the language of the source text, I will focus on the two translations of this novel, which are Prospero's 1938 version and Bottini's 1989 version: I will built my comparative analysis by studying those passages representing Janie's discover of her own voice, highlighting the main differences between the two target texts and the consequences of certain strategies used by the translators to translate Black English.

1. Literary Translation: Theories and Their Evolution

The aim of my thesis is to analyze the translation strategies used to translate African American Vernacular English into Italian. This topic needs to be faced by approaching literary translation from a wider point of view: in fact, it is important to approach this question by firstly focusing on the theory of literary translation and on how this subject has changed in the last decades. Acquiring a good knowledge of the evolution of translation theories and how this affected the translation process is a fundamental step to take before investigating the techniques used to translate AAVE into Italian in versions of the same literary work published in different periods of time: understanding the reasons behind the variety of literary translation strategies adopted in these texts allows to unveil their translators' ideologies, which are closely linked to the historical and political context in which they operated. Thus, the main aim of this first chapter is to provide a brief survey of the main debates concerning the translation of works of literature in the field of Translation Studies, in order to have a theoretical background on which to base my comparative analysis of different Italian versions of the same novel in the following chapters. I will focus in particular on three interconnected issues, that is to say, 1) the conflict in literary translation between domestication and foreignization, 2) the act of retranslation, and 3) the recognition of AAVE as dialect and its constraints in the translation into Italian. These issues are interconnected, since the development of new theories about literary translation has inevitably brought translators to reconsider the relation between source text and target text and thus to retranslate literary works following different approaches. These aspects will be then analyzed in the specific context of novels written partially or totally in AAVE, highlighting the problems that are faced in the translation of dialects and vernaculars.

The first issue regards the discipline of translations analyzed from an historical and economic point of view: the study made by Lawrence Venuti *The Translator's Invisibility* on the role of translators in the American publishing market,, explores the evolution of translation strategies from the seventeenth century to nowadays, highlighting the conflict of different ideas about literary translation and its effects on translators and the readership of the target culture. Basing on important scholars in the field such as Friedrich Schleiermacher and Philip Lewis, Venuti pinpoints two main strategies adopted by translators, 'domestication' and 'foreignization'. In this perspective, he explains how the

choice of strategy is not just a decision taken by the translator based on his or her ideas of what a good translation should be like, but it is also determined by the cultural and social conditions in which the translator works. This last aspect is crucial, as it not only explains the constant mutation of translation strategies, but it represents also the reason why we feel the need to retranslate works of literature: the evolution of historical and social contexts leads to a redefinition of the canons of accuracy, as they are culturally specific and historically variable.

Hence, the constant transformation of translation theories and consequently the production of more translations for the same literary work, has produced a specific phenomenon of literary translation, known as 'retranslation'. This phenomenon, defined as the repeated translation of a given work into a given target language, will be the second issue analyzed in this first chapter. Understanding the reasons of this phenomenon will help to develop the comparison between translations in the next chapters: comparing translations of the same work makes clearer and more explicit each translators' approach to his or her own work, highlighting their main ideas on the representation of the Other.

In order to focus gradually on the main issue of this thesis, in the third subchapter I will firstly provide a general overview of AAVE, addressing the problems in its recognition as an American English dialect and its use in the American Literature. Then, I will focus on the most common strategies for the translation of dialects and vernacular languages: the studies conducted by the scholars Antoine Berman and Franca Cavagnoli will be used as examples to highlight the main difficulties in this translation field, underlining how different approaches can distance the target text from the original message of the source text.

1.1 Translation Theories in Venuti's *The Translator's Invisibility*

As I mentioned above, the aim of this chapter is to present the development of translation strategies in literature in order to focus on those aspects that are important to consider while comparing two or more translations of the same source text. In order to better present this subject, it is important to start from a general point of view, that is to say, how the debate on what a translation is and what its relation to the original text should be has changed over the years and how it has influenced the field of literary translation and its practices. In fact, understanding the evolution of translation strategies leads to identifying the major factors behind translators' choice of a specific strategy: as it will be

shown, this choice is the product of the translator's ideas about translation together with the cultural and social conditions in which the target text is produced. In this perspective, Lawrence Venuti's book *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* is surely among the most relevant to consider for this study. He is an American translator from Italian, French, and Catalan, a translation theorist and a translation historian. His *The Translator's Invisibility* was published in 1995 and proved to be one of the landmark publications in translation studies. Appearing at a time when the discipline was already adopting a strongly cultural-studies perspective, it drove an agenda that views translation as the locus of an interlingual and intercultural power struggle.

The Translator's Invisibility retraces the history of translation across the ages. The title is extremely explicit, as the main intent on the part of Venuti is to disclose those ideologies of translation that make the translator 'invisible'. His thesis is that since the seventeenth century, Anglo-American translation theory and practice have been dominated by the conviction that translation should be self-effacing to the point of invisibility, leaving the impression that the text was originally written in the language into which it has been translated. The corresponding translation strategy seeks to produce a fluent, idiomatic language where every trace of foreignness is erased. Venuti's goal is to reveal the underlying ideological assumptions of this tradition of 'domesticating translation' and, through a series of genealogical soundings, to locate ways of resisting it. Before further explaining Venuti's theory of literary translation, it is important to underline that, although his thesis is based on the analysis and comparisons of different literary translations from a foreign language to English, the transparent translation is a "prevalent feature of western translation theory and practice since antiquity"[1], thus it applies also to literary translators who translate from a foreign language to Italian.

1.1.1 Invisibility as Criterion to Evaluate Translations

One aspect faced by Venuti in his study concerns the translator's position in the publishing industry. In *The Translator's Invisibility,* Venuti focuses all his attention on this particular topic, analyzing it from a historical, social and economic point of view. He identifies invisibility as the result of two interrelated aspects: one refers to the "illusionistic effect of discourse"[2] given by the translator's own manipulation of the target

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[1] Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, London, Routledge, 1995, p.316.
[2] Ivi, p. 1.

language, the other concerns a notion about translations that enjoyed great favor in American and West European cultures, based on the idea that a translated text will be considered acceptable by the target readership when it presents two main characteristics, which are fluency and transparency. In this perspective, any translated text, whether prose or poetry, should be adapted so as to be read fluently and thus, be perceived as 'enjoyable'. In order to do so, any linguistic or stylistic peculiarities of the source text have to be erased, giving the illusion of transparency, that is to say creating the impression that the translated text is an original text. Since the translator's main aim is to create a fluent text while producing the illusion to have created a text that is identical to the original one, the translated text will not be seen as the translator's work, which leads to his or her inexistence in the reader's perception. As Venuti states, "this illusory effect conceals the numerous conditions under which the translation is made, starting with the translator's crucial intervention in the foreign text. The more fluent the translation, the more invisible the translator, and, presumably, the more visible the writer or meaning of the foreign text".[3]

By analyzing this topic from different points of view, Venuti shows how literary translation involves various aspects of the translator's persona. In fact, the historical analysis of literary translation has brought Venuti to consider the translator's condition of invisibility in its entirety, which includes a legal and economic aspect. In this perspective, invisibility causes damages to the translator in several respects. Taking into consideration the publishing industry, Venuti traces the translator's condition of complete absence from the evaluation of the translated text to an "individualistic conception of authorship"[4]: in accordance with this conception, texts are understood as transparent and original self-representations, in which authors freely express their feelings and thoughts. This ideology has a double negative effect on the translator: on one side, translation is reduced to a be a 'second-order representation', since it is understood as an attempt to reproduce the original author's singularity and thus it is considered as a derivate or a potentially false copy. On the other side, the reproduction of the author's singularity means that the translator's presence in the text becomes unwelcome, which forces translators to produce fluent and transparent translations in order to give the illusion of

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[3] Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, p. 1.
[4] Ivi, p. 6.

the presence of the author. This double face consequence provokes what Venuti calls a 'weird self-annihilation' on the part of the translator, reinforcing his or her marginal position in literary translation.

This conception of invisibility has repercussions not only on the translator's reputation, but also on his or her legal and economic position. Taking into consideration British and American law, Venuti explains how translation is defined in legal terms as an 'adaptation' from an 'original work of authorship', whose copyright belongs to the author of the original text. By this means, the translator is considered subordinated to the author. As Venuti states, "the translator's authorship is never given full legal recognition because of the priority given to the foreign writer in controlling the translation".[5] These limitations affect also the financial position of translators: Venuti's report about translators' contracts during the second postwar period, shows how most of them had other jobs, as the fee for a freelance translator was not enough to make a living. Even though the raise in translators' wages did not constitute a significant change in the economics of translations, since the 1980s the situation has improved from a legal point of view, as translators started to be recognized as 'authors' in their own right. This leads to a slow but important recognition also in the publishing industry: the reception of translation as literary process done by a specialist gives authorship to the translator, raising his or her significance in the adaptation of the literary work in a given language.

This improvement is reported also by Emilio Mattioli, an Italian professor who published several papers concerning Translation Studies and their issues in the early stages. In his study "Il rapporto autore-traduttore. Qualche considerazione e un esempio" (1993), Mattioli addresses the problem created by the complicated relationship between author and translator, noticing that the invite to recognize the dignity and importance of translation has improved this relationship in the last years. He claims that there are positive signs of a shift in progress with respect to the traditional approach: this change confirms that the relationship between original and translation is today conceived as a relationship between text and text, which implies that the relationship between author and translator should be rethought as a relationship between author and author.[6]

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[5] Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, p. 9.
[6] Emilio Mattioli, *Contributi alla teoria della traduzione letteraria*, Palermo, Centro Internazionale Studi di Estetica, 1993, p. 26.

1.1.2 The dichotomy domestication-foreignization and its implications

In *The Translator's Invisibility,* Venuti's main goal is to unveil the condition of anonymity to which translators have been confined in order to support the ideology of fluency and transparency as principal criteria for a worthy translated text. In his investigation, Venuti aims not only to present the main consequences of this condition, but also to explain the main reasons for the translator's invisibility: the two criteria that define a text acceptable – fluency and transparency – are actually the underlying ideological assumptions in the tradition of 'domesticating translation'. Through a series of genealogical soundings, he also explains how to resist the ideology of invisibility, presenting the 'foreignizing translation' as an alternative strategy.

Venuti introduces the topic by taking into account Schleiermacher's thesis that the translator can approach the text only in two ways: either he adapts the translation to the reader, or he adapts the translation to the message of the source text. As Venuti states, "Schleiermacher allowed the translator to choose between a domesticating method, an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values, bringing the author back home, and a foreignizing method, an ethnodeviant pressure on those values to register the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text, sending the reader abroad".[7] In this perspective, 'foreignisation' is based on retaining the culture-specific items from the original text – personal names, national cuisine, historical figures, streets or local institutions – and on deliberately breaking the conventions of the target language to preserve the original text's meaning. On the other hand, 'domestication' focuses on making the text conform as much as possible to the culture of the target language, which involves the minimization of the strangeness of the foreign text for the target readers by introducing common words used in the target language instead of providing readers with foreign terms.

According to Venuti the rise in the exportation of English and American literary works together with the domesticating translations into English of foreign literary works caused an incapacity in the UK and US to accept the foreign. Because of its aim to 'bring the author back home' and thus to facilitate the comprehension of the text through an easy readability of it, the publishing industry enforced the domesticating translation, neglecting accordingly any foreign texts whose translation respected more closely the

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[7] Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, p. 20.

original culture. Venuti cites as an example of this conception the translation of Suetonius's *The Twelve Caesars* done by Robert Graves. In the preface of the collection, Graves explains his translation policy: the reasons that brought him to change dates, cities and even currency from the Imperial Rome to the United Kingdom of 1957, underline his purpose to adapt the source-language culture to that of the target language. His aim to make an extremely fluent translation was an intentional choice, but it was also determined by a critical decay of classical languages studies among educated readers: in this situation, two important aspects converged – the use of a domesticating strategy to move toward the reader and the publication of the collection as paperback literature – , which allowed the massive propagation of classical texts to a wide range of readers. As Venuti reports, Graves's intentions were to present a classical text readable for an 'ordinary reader', who "wants mere factual information, laid out in good order for his hasty eye to catch".[8] Venuti argues that this translation strategy has produced much more than a simple familiarization of the text: taking into consideration a specific passage in which Suetonius tells about an event of Julius Caesar's life, he shows how Graves's translation adds words that underline and make explicit Caesar's homosexuality, which is only hinted at in Suetonius's text, and in addition they connote it in a negative way, . Venuti reports this example to show that the domesticating method can be dangerous since it risks not only to convey a different message from the one carried by the text, but also to present a fact created by the translator as an historical fact actually happened. As Venuti states, "Graves's fluently translated Suetonius participated in this domestic situation, not just by stigmatizing Caesar's sexuality, but by presenting the stigma as a historical fact".[9]

Graves's translation of Suetonius shows how the domesticating method can have a significant influence in the statement of historical facts, which falls in line with the representation of a foreign culture in a specific historical context. Venuti considers this factor extremely important when taking into consideration domestication: since the goal of a translation is "to bring back a cultural other as the same", Venuti reckons that the risk to identify that 'same' as something recognizable or even familiar can lead to a "wholesale domestication of the foreign text"[10]. This entails a double danger: from one

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[8] Robert Graves, "Moral Principles in Translation", *Encounter*, IV, 24, 1965, p. 51 quoted in Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, p. 31.
[9] Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, p. 34.
[10] Ivi, p. 18.

point of view, translation as 'representation of the other' has a strong influence in the creation of national identities for foreign cultures, and thus it can potentially fall into ethnic discrimination or ethnocentrism. From another point of view, translation enlists the foreign text into predetermined conceptual schemes of the target culture, becoming an integral part of the dominant conceptual paradigms of the latter. According to Venuti, all these factors convert translation into a 'cultural political practice', which has the capacity to construct or critique ideology-stamped identities for foreign cultures.[11]

The ideology that considers fluency as the main feature of a good translation, regardless its danger to compromise the transmission of the message of the foreign text, was shared by many well-known scholars, such as Eugene Nida. He is known to have formulated the concept of 'dynamic equivalence', according to which a translator seeks to translate the meaning of the source text in such a way that the target language wording will trigger the same impact on the target culture audience as the source language wording did upon the source text audience. As Venuti reports, Nida's study was an exaltation of the transparent discourse, a characteristic that in translation leads to a "complete naturalness of expression".[12] Venuti underlines how Nida's idea of translation – he thought that an easy readability allows the target receptors to experience the same feelings of the foreign ones when reading the original text, so that readers of both languages would understand the meanings of the text in a similar fashion – was actually a way to impose "the English-language valorization of transparent discourse on every foreign culture"[13], which means erasing completely the natural diversity that exists between two texts of different languages. This is a crucial factor for the American scholar, as the main aim of any translation theory should be avoiding any kind of ethnocentrism in order to show and give visibility to the cultural diversity between the two languages. As Venuti states, "the point is rather to develop a theory and practice of translation that resists dominant target-language cultural values so as to signify the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text".[14]

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[11] Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, p. 19.
[12] Eugene A. Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating. With Special Reference to Principles and Procedures Involved in Bible Translating,* Leiden, Brill, 1964, p. 159 quoted in Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, cit., p. 21.
[13] Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, p. 21.
[14] Ivi, p. 23.

Venuti clearly supports the foreignizing method: in fact, he takes as example Friedrich Schleiermacher to argue how foreignization, in its being violent and unnatural in the target reader's eyes, can be the appropriate translation strategy to give visibility to the message of the source text and the translator's work. In addition, Venuti agrees with Schleiermacher's concept about the translator's role: Schleiermacher argues that the ideal translator is not one who has mastered the foreign language so fully that he is completely 'at home' in it. In his opinion, such a translator can produce in the reader an impression of the text that resembles the one a native speaker of the language would have, that is to say the impression of a natural and familiar text. But in Schleiermacher's view, the best translator is never fully at home in the foreign language and seeks to evoke in the reader an experience like his own, that is, the experience of someone for whom the foreign language is simultaneously legible and alien.

Venuti also analyzes Philip Lewis's 'abusive fidelity', a translation practice that "values experimentation, tampers with usage, seeks to match the polyvalencies and plurivocities or expressive stresses of the original by producing its own".[15] In fact, Lewis's theory involves locating points where the original text resists or 'abuses' the norms of its own culture, which can be foregrounded and further intensified in translation. In this perspective, the translator can not only reproduce in some measure the resistance inherent in the language of the original text, but also create new points of resistance in his own. As a result, Lewis affirms that the translation can direct "a critical thrust back toward the text that it translates and in relation to which it becomes a kind of unsettling critical aftermath".[16] Thus, translation becomes primarily a place of difference rather than identity, in which tensions both within the source and target languages and between them, can be intensified and exploited. As Venuti states, "A translated text should be the site where a different culture emerges, where a reader gets a glimpse of a cultural other, and resistancy, a translation strategy based on an aesthetic of discontinuity, can best preserve that difference, that otherness, by reminding the reader of the gains and losses in the translation process and the unbridgeable gaps between cultures".[17]

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[15] Philip E. Lewis, "The Measure of Translation Effects" in Lawrence Venuti, *The Translation Studies Reader*, London, Routledge, 2003, p. 270.
[16] Ivi, p. 271.
[17] Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, p. 306.

As it can be noticed, Venuti underlines repeatedly that foreignization is the appropriate strategy when considering literary texts; however, he acknowledges that the choice of a translating strategy is not just up to the translator. Through the 'symptomatic reading' – a mode of reading literary and historical works which focuses on the underlying presuppositions of the text, revealing what it represses because of its ideological conviction – of the several translations he compared, Venuti argues that the development of a translation strategy does not depend only on the translator's individual choice in terms of the degree of violence he or she intends to create between the original text and the translated one, but it is also due to the cultural and social conditions under which the translator operates. Venuti affirms that the aims of symptomatic reading is to "situate canons of accuracy in their specific cultural moments".[18] This aspect is important because "canons of accuracy are culturally specific and historically variable"[19], which means that the criteria that establish a translation's fidelity or freedom, and even the notion of 'linguistic error' are historical determined categories. In this perspective, the analysis of a translator's work needs to consider his or her personal approach to the source text and the 'canons of accuracy' belonging to the cultural and historical context in which he or she operated. Through *The Translator's Invisibility*, Venuti manages to display how the different cultural context in which the translator works entails inevitable differences between the source text and the translation: in this perspective, Venuti – in line with Lewis's theory – maintains that rather than trying to suppress such differences, a translator should try and make something of them.

1.2 Retranslation

In the previous subchapter, I focused on Venuti's essay *The Translator's Invisibility*, in which he brings to light the many problems that the choice of a specific translation strategy – particularly domestication – can raise and he explains the reasons why foreignization should be reassessed as the more correct and respectful method to use. In the last fifty years, many scholars have argued about the best translation approach and since Venuti's book foreignization has become an important alternative option to domestication, which has led many translators to re-examine 'aged' translations and, in various cases, to proceed to make new versions of the same foreign texts. This

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[18] Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, p.38.
[19] Ivi, p. 37.

phenomenon, known as 'retranslation' – the repeated translation of a given work into a given target language –, is a widespread practice, even though its motivations remain relatively underexplored. Antoine Berman, a French translator and theorist of translation, in his essay "La retraduction comme espace de la traduction", claims that a possible justification for this repetitive act is due to the fact that an initial translation is necessarily "aveugle et hésitante"[20], while retranslation alone can ensure "la «révélation » d'une œuvre étrangère dans son être propre à la culture réceptrice".[21] This dynamic from flawed initial translation to accomplished retranslation has been consolidated into the Retranslation Hypothesis, which is based on the idea that "later translations tend to be closer to the source text".[22]

The Retranslation Hypothesis was considered well-grounded by many scholars, such as Antoine Berman, Annie Brisset and Anthony Pym. However, one of the last studies about this phenomenon made by Outi Paloposki and Kaisa Koskinen questioned this hypothesis, showing how retranslation is not always a process that produces 'better' translations within the passing of time. In this perspective, in the next sections I will deal with the most relevant aspects concerning the debate about retranslations: firstly, I will focus on the role that the passing of time has in this process, highlighting how this parameter can cause the ageing of the source text as well as to target text. Then, I will analyze the idea of retranslation as challenge, underlining how the human agency is another important parameter in the analysis of retranslations.

1.2.1 The Retranslation Hypothesis and the Ageing Text

Defined by Berman as any translation made after the first translation of a literary work[23], retranslation is essentially an act of repetition, giving rise to numerous versions of a given source text into a given target language. It is often referred to as 'the phenomenon of retranslation' or 'le phénomène de retraduction', a phrase suggesting not only that retranslation is considered in some way extraordinary, but also that it is an observable occurrence. Taking into consideration the first point, retranslation can be

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[20] Antoine Berman, "La Retraduction comme espace de traduction", *Palimpsestes*, XIII, 4, 1990, p. 5.

[21] Antoine Berman, *Pour une critique des traductions: John Donne*, Paris, Gallimard, 1995, p. 57.

[22] Andrew Chesterman, "Hypotheses about translation universals" in Gyde Hansen, Kirsten Malmkjaer, and Daniel Gile, *Claims, Changes and Challenges in Translation Studies*, Amsterdam, John Benjamins, 2004, p. 8.

[23] Antoine Berman, "Retraduction", p. 1.

defined a phenomenon because of its unique dynamics, a process that is distant from the ordinary binary idea of translation and implies a more complex or multifaceted process that can hardly be framed in terms of transfer from source text to a singular target text, since retranslation yields multiples of one, i.e. multiple target texts which relate not only to one source text, but to each other. As for the second point, retranslation is a phenomenon as it is a very tangible reality, even though theoretical models over its motivations and its results are disproportionate in their infrequency. As Susam-Sarajeva states, "[a]lthough the practice itself is common, theoretical discussions on the subject are rather rare".[24] Such absence of inquiry is perhaps the result of the prevailing assumption that initial translations, on account of their 'embryonic' status, are inexperienced and faulty, and that retranslation is consistent with progress and correction. This logic finds expression in the Retranslation Hypothesis, whose principle lies in the idea that "later translations tend to be closer to the source text"[25]; in this perspective, time is perceived as the 'restaurateur' of the source text identity.

The first to express this idea was Johann Wolfgang Goethe, who, in his essay 'Translation', postulated the existence of three stages of translation within a given culture: the first is a simple prosaic translation which acquaints us with foreign countries on our own terms; the second is a parodistic phase in which the translator only seeks to appropriate foreign content and to reproduce it in his own sense, even though he tries to transport himself to foreign situations; the last is the highest and the final one, i.e. the one in which the aim is to make the translation identical with the original.[26] These three phases of translation represent a gradual shift from the utter rejection of the foreign, through a tentative but still appropriating foray into the Other, culminating in the privileging of the source text in all its alterity. The idea of these three steps is based on the concept of time as progress, its passage 'compelling' us to greater achievements, towards what is 'perfect'. According to Goethe, it is precisely this aspect that discloses the power of the repetitive and chronological act of retranslation, which is to reveal the true identity of the source text within a receiving country.

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[24] Sebnem Susam-Sarajeva, "Multiple-entry visa to travelling theory: Retranslations of literary and cultural theories", *Target*, XV, 1, 2003, p. 2.
[25] Andrew Chesterman, "Hypotheses about translation universals", p. 8.
[26] Johann W. Von Goethe, "Translations", in Rainer Schulte, and John Biguenet, *Theories of Translation: An anthology of essays from Dryden to Derrida*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1992, pp. 60-63.

After Goethe, the question of retranslation was set aside until 1990, when Berman published 'La retraduction comme espace de la traduction' in the French journal *Palimpsestes.* In his theoretical approaches to retranslation, Berman engages with Goethe's logic that every human action, to fulfill itself, needs repetition.[27] In his essay, Berman states that "Toute première traduction est maladroite. […] C'est dans l'après-coup d'une première traduction aveugle et hésitante que surgit la possibilité d'une traduction accomplice".[28] The initial acts of translation are characterized by a sort of ineptitude and incertitude, summarized by Berman as 'la défaillance', which can be reduced by the retranslation. In this perspective, retranslation is conceptualized as a restorative operation, one that can correct the deficiencies inherent in initial translations. According to Berman, this progressive movement reaches its maximum completeness when it both restores the identity of the source text and enriches the target culture: such translation, called by Berman as 'la grande traduction', can only be realized in coincidence with "le kairos, le moment favorable"[29] for translating. Main feature of any 'grandes traductions' is that they reach the rank of major works and thus they exert a radiation on the receiving culture that few 'indigenous' works have.[30] In this perspective, Berman's solution to the perceived deficiency of initial translation is time, which implies that in his vision, all 'grandes traductions' have one characteristic in common: they are all retranslations. Berman's idea of retranslation is considerably demarcated by the chronological ordering of time. Because of their inexperience, initial translations are perceived deficient: the forward impetus of time is thus seen as an opportunity for the foreignness of the source text to be revealed and for the ascendancy of the 'grande traduction', which can bring the process of retranslation to an end. Goethe's thesis of the three phases of translation and Berman's idea of time as foreignness reconstructor, contributed to the formulation of the Retranslation Hypothesis. Development of this thesis can be found in the work of Finnish scholars at the beginning of the 21st century; of particular interest are the investigations of Andrew Chesterman, who makes use of retranslation as a means of enlightening causal models and potential universal features of translation. What Chesterman argues is that "the so-called retranslation hypothesis is a

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[27] Antoine Berman, "Retraduction", p. 4.
[28] Ivi, p. 4-5.
[29] Ivi, p. 6.
[30] Antoine Berman, *Pour une critique des traductions: John Donne*, p. 43.

descriptive hypothesis that can be formulated as follows: later translations (same ST, same TL) tend to be closer to the original than later ones".[31] In Chesterman's vision, time is a fundamental aspect of the realization of the greater translation, it is a 'path of experience' that allows to recover the specificities of the source text in order to reveal its foreign identity.

However, the Retranslation Hypothesis has been challenged by some scholars. Regarding Berman's notion of a progress from flawed to accomplished translation, Brisset states: "Cette position finaliste résume les postulats critiques qui, depuis le XVIIIᵉ siècle, inscrivent l'histoire dans un schéma temporel marqué au coin du *perfectionnement*: la traduction, comme l'histoire, serait en marche vers le progrès".[32] The perspective of a trajectory crowned with success arouses suspicion: isolated from the material conditions of its production, the drive of translation towards perfection is at once mechanistic and impersonal, and therefore it ignores the external influences and agents which exist beyond the confines of the text. In addition, the idea that translation generates translation assumes the presence of a symbiotic link between successive versions and thus excludes the possibility of a move backward. This idea does not consider several factors: it could be that a given retranslation has been carried out without prior knowledge of an antecedent, or that in practice a retranslation could, at any point and deliberately, contradict this theoretical blueprint for advancement. Furthermore, the notion of the 'grande traduction' hides a sort of prescriptivism: the characteristics of such a retranslation are judged according to its position along the temporal line and, more subjectively, the double contribution it makes to the source text and to the target culture.

The importance of the temporal dimension in the process of retranslation is linked to another relevant idea, that is the ageing text. In respect to this subject, Berman states: "alors que les originaux restent éternellement jeunes (quel que soit le degré d'intérêt que nous leur portons, leur proximité ou leur éloignement culturel), les traductions, elles, 'vieillissent'. […] Il faut retraduire parce que les traductions vieillissent".[33] As it can be noticed, retranslation and updating go hand in hand, but what is more relevant is that updating is located firmly on the side of the target texts and the preferences of the

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[31] Andrew Chesterman, "Hypotheses about translation universals", p. 23.
[32] Annie Brisset, "Retraduire ou le corps changeant de la connaissance sur l'historicité de la traduction", *Palimpsestes*, 15, 2004, p. 42.
[33] Antoine Berman, "Retraduction", p. 4.

receiving culture, while source texts appear to be invulnerable to the ravages of time. This notion emerges also in the essay by French linguist Yves Gambier, 'La retraduction, retour et détour', which describes retranslation as linked to the notion of the readjustment of texts, determined by the evolution of the receivers, their tastes, their needs, their skills.[34] In this perspective, the exception of the transcendent 'grande traduction' leads each target text to necessarily become frozen in the canons of a specific era. Such immobility then brings about retranslation, causing the process to repeat itself ad infinitum.

André Topia, however, sees the process from the opposite angle: "il faudrait dire que paradoxalement c'est l'œuvre qui change et la traduction qui ne change pas".[35] In his view, the source text alters, while the target text remains constant; Topia's aim is to underline that a source text, because of its organic integration into a wider network of literary works, is exposed to shifting interpretations which will necessarily modify the way in which the text is perceived. In this perspective, a source text should not automatically be considered as immutable, and its ageing thus becomes a corollary of its evolution. Consequently, the target text is denied any such organic interaction and is therefore unlikely to warrant any manner of re-evaluation. In opposition to Gambier's view, it is because the translation is frozen in a locked time once and for all that it avoids re-evaluation and thus the ageing process[36]. Taking into consideration all these arguments, it can be said that the notion of ageing is a matter of perspective: on one hand, it is because a target text is usually thought as timelessness that it actually ages, given the linguistic and cultural norms which it embodies; on the other hand, a source text may age since time can bring new readings of the work. It is thus clear that signs of ageing may be located on both sides of the equation.

1.2.2 Retranslation as challenge

Another significant aspect to consider is the influence exerted by the socio-cultural context in the retranslation production. In this perspective, Anthony Pym's essay *Method for Translation History* is of particular importance: in his view, time is rarely the only factor at stake in retranslation, because this phenomenon can only be explained by

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[34] Yves Gambier, "La retraduction, retour et detour", *Meta: journal des traducteurs*, XXXIX, 3, 1994, p. 413.
[35] André Topia, "Finnegan's Wake: La traduction parasite", *Palimpsestes*, 4, 1990, p. 46.
[36] *Ibidem*

multiple cause models. In his study, Pym introduces a distinction between 'active retranslations' and 'passive retranslations': the former share the same cultural context – and they often respond to a demand for challenge or rivalry –, and so are to be examined from a synchronic point of view; the latter are instead separated by wide expanses of time or space and have no influence on each other, and thus should be examined from a diachronic point of view. In his study, Pym suggests three cases of active retranslation: the first case shows the creation of different versions of a source text for different readers; the second regards a 'commanded retranslation' to correct linguistic errors in a previous version; in the third case, retranslation does not bring any improvement or worsening to the previous translation, but it functions as a mere claiming of having exclusive access over a particular book's content. Pym manages to distinguish these two major types of retranslation also on an empirical level: the study of passive retranslations is considered 'redundant', because "such a procedure can only affirm the general hypothesis that target-culture norms determine translation strategies".[37] Instead, the "study of active retranslations would […] seem better positioned to yield insights into the nature and workings of translation itself, into its own special range of disturbances, without blindly surrendering causality to target-culture norms".[38] In Pym's view, if the comparison between passive retranslations gives necessary information about historical changes in the target culture, that of active retranslations locates causes closer to the translator.

Annie Brisset analyses the same factors about synchrony and agents of retranslation in her essay 'Retraduire ou le corps changeant de la connaissance sur l'historicité de la traduction', in which she affirms, "il faudrait se pencher sur la conjoncture qui soudain met en concurrence plusieurs retraductions de la même œuvre. […] Une 'perspective de simultanéité' expliquerait les raisons 'locales' et systémiques de ces traductions parallèles".[39] Thus, Brisset, like Pym, assumes an interaction between competition and active retranslations; in addition, she recognizes the influence of the agents of translation as part of this phenomenon, but where Pym addresses the issue by adopting a macro perspective, Brisset focuses her analysis on the cognitive input of the translator. As she states, "L'analyse comparative d'un ensemble formé de (re)traductions *simultanées* ferait voir le *travail différentiel du sujet traduisant*. Dans la simultanéité, peut-être mieux que

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[37] Anthony Pym, *A Method for Translation History*, Manchester, St Jerome, 1998, p. 83.
[38] *Ibidem*
[39] Annie Brisset, "Retraduire", p. 63.

dans la succession, elle ferait émerger l'*acte cognitif*, l'acte de créativité du traducteur".[40] In this way, Brisset postulates a significant correlation between active retranslations and differentiation: from her point of view, the re-translator is led to operate by a sort of anxiety of influence, and thus he or she struggles to diversify his or her work from any other co-existing versions. In this sense, the challenge intrinsic in retranslation can also lie on a personal level.

The concept of retranslation as challenge is addressed also by Venuti in his essay 'Retranslations: The creation of value', though from a different angle. In fact, he believes that the capacity of a retranslation to distinguish itself from another is not limited by temporal restrictions. Since "retranslations are designed to challenge a previous version of the foreign text"[41], the older text is not necessarily part of the same generation – as Pym argued. Therefore, any new retranslation can compete with any of its predecessors, regardless of the time difference that separates them. Since in Venuti's view "retranslations deliberately mark the passage of time by aiming to distinguish themselves from a previous version through differences in discursive strategies and interpretations"[42], challenge is thus perceived as an integral and binding part of the temporal gap between two different versions of a translation. This highlights a significant difference between Pym's vision and Venuti's: while the former argues that passive retranslations are strictly linked to the updating of linguistic norms, the latter underlines that the many changes introduced in the discursive texture of a retranslation are signs of a premeditated differentiation.

In addition, Venuti also recognizes that the challenge of interpretation has implications beyond the text itself. This is particularly marked in those retranslations that are conceived so as to establish particular identities and to carry a significant institutional burden, like retranslations within religious or academic institutions that 'define and inculcate' the desired interpretation of a canonical text. In this perspective, the inner force of a retranslation is its capacity to "maintain and strengthen the authority of a social institution by reaffirming the institutionalized interpretation of a canonical text".[43] The

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[40] Annie Brisset, "Retraduire", p. 64.
[41] Lawrence Venuti, "Retranslations: the creation of value", in Lawrence Venuti, *Translation Changes Everything*, London, Routledge, 2013, p. 104.
[42] Ivi, p. 106.
[43] Ivi, p. 97.

active force of a retranslation can equally influence the fate of a marginal text, as according to Venuti, "A source text that is positioned in the margin of literary canons in the translating language may be retranslated in a bid to achieve canonicity through the inscription of a different interpretation".[44] Thus, challenge and differentiation are presented as fundamental aspects in the process of retranslation and keystones in achieving canonicity. In conclusion, the analysis conducted by Pym, Brisset and Venuti show that challenge, which is often expressed through reinterpretation and thus differentiation, is an aspect that incentives retranslation.

1.2.3 New approaches to the Retranslation Hypothesis

The latest studies on retranslation have dealt with other problematic aspects of the Retranslation Hypothesis. A fundamental aspect to consider is the possibility of a retranslation falling outside the scope of improving a translation of a given text, and thus diverging from those conditions that define the Retranslation Hypothesis. When Venuti claims that retranslation are often indicative of improvement since "they rely on a definitive edition of the source text which was not formerly available or because they employ a discursive strategy that maintains a closer semantic correspondence or stylistic analogy"[45], he also admits that a retranslation could result 'conservative', in the sense that it may not bring progress. Taking as an example the criticism charged by a retranslator to a previous version, Venuti highlights that "[he] casts doubt on the notion of progress in translation and returns to a discursive strategy or interpretation that was developed in the past, while admitting its inadequacy".[46]

Recent studies have shown relevant data in support but also in opposition to the Retranslation Hypothesis, concluding that Berman's scheme is not sufficient to explain the phenomenon of retranslation. In line with this theory, the investigation provided by the Finnish researchers Paloposki and Koskinen highlights that "there seems to be no substantial body of evidence in support of or against the retranslation hypothesis".[47] Although in their opinion the logic underlying Berman's theory seems 'plausible', their

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[44] Lawrence Venuti, "Retranslations: the creation of value", p. 97.

[45] Ivi, p. 107.

[46] *Ibidem*

[47] Outi Paloposki, Kaisa Koskinen, "Thousand and One Translations. Retranslation Revisited." in Gyde Hansen, Kirsten Malmkjaer, and Daniel Gile, Claims, Changes and Challenges in Translation Studies, Amsterdam, John Benjamins, 2004, p. 27.

study over several Finnish initial translations and the attendant retranslations shows that not only the Retranslation Hypothesis is refutable, but also that "different perspective may be needed to distinguish other variables that bear on the issue of retranslation" [48], that is to say textual profiles should be examined in conjuction with contextual factors. The first point addressed by Paloposki and Koskinen regards the verifiability of the hypothesis: depending on the period under investigation – in their case, early 19th-century Finnish fiction translations –, the succession of different retranslations confirms the claims of the hypothesis.

However, this scheme does not always occur: "RH may apply during an initial stage in the development of a literature, not to all individual first translations: domesticating first translation may be a feature of a *phase* in a literature, not of translation in general".[49] On one hand, this statement expresses Paloposki and Koskinen's belief in the importance of context, underlining that consideration should be given to whether or not particular translation strategies emerge from particular temporal phases. On the other hand, it suggests that, even though one can find examples that fit the Retranslation Hypothesis model, it cannot be presumed a priori that first translations are domesticating and subsequent translations are closer to the original. This logic shows the double complexity of the phenomenon of retranslation: the retranslation hypothesis generates a pattern that does not always fit into a predetermined scheme; in addition, the comparison between first and subsequent translations brings out the complexity of finding reliable methods for measuring their 'closeness' to the source text. Paloposki and Koskinen explore this last question through the analysis of the Finnish retranslations of Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield* and *The Thousand and One Nights*. The comparison between the initial translation and subsequent retranslations shows evidence that literal translation gives way to adaptation, which results into a reversal of the hypothesis. In this respect, Paloposki and Koskinen state, "literality of the first translation may be a sign of a changed attitude towards translation after the initial adaptive stage, with more space for introducing texts as such […] Idiosyncratic constraints – the translator's own preferences, or even difficulties in interpreting the text – may have a role to play".[50] Retranslation, then, may emerge in response to changes in the target language system – which is in line with the

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[48] Outi Paloposki, Kaisa Koskinen, "Thousand and One Translations", p. 209.
[49] Ivi, p. 29.
[50] Ivi, pp. 30-31.

concept of the ageing text –, but it may also proceed from the significant presence of human agency in the process, which is a leak in the Retranslation Hypothesis scheme. The example of the *Thousand And One Night* is used by Paloposki and Koskinen in order to highlight how the process of retranslation hypothesized by the Retranslation Hypothesis following specific phases – first domestication and then foreignization – does not always represent all the processes of retranslation. Analyzing three retranslations of the rope maker's tale, Paloposki and Koskinen note a homogeneous foreignizing behavior in all of them, and they explain the lack of variation in this way: "It seems that the first attempts at introducing something so 'foreign' were exotic enough […]; there was no need in the span of a few decades to foreignize in later versions".[51] Through this case study, Paloposki and Koskinen underline that the Retranslation Hypothesis fails to apply to all translations, in particular because it does not consider the possibility of homogeneous translation over time.

Paloposki and Koskinen afterwards take into consideration a study by Oittinen (1997) about three Finnish retranslations of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll, highlighting how Ottinen's findings are in line with the assumptions of the Retranslation Hypothesis about increasing closeness to the source text as time passes. The tendency to domestication during the early stages of translation followed by a constant moving towards foreignization is a recurring aspect in Finnish literary translation, which is explained by the fact that the passage of time leads to a growing familiarity with British culture, and thus to an easier acceptance of foreignizing strategies. However, this case study proves to be weak when Paloposki and Koskinen focus on a fourth retranslation that, with its domesticating textual behavior, reverses the path postulated by the Retranslation Hypothesis. Furthermore, in Paloposki and Koskinen's vision, the close temporal proximity of the translation with the previous version means that "the existence of any translation cannot be straighforwardly attributed to assumed datedness".[52] This allows them to point out the hypothesis's failure to explain synchronous retranslation and to affirm that this phenomenon cannot be related only to the temporal factor. As Paloposki and Koskinen state, "reasons behind the profiles need to be sought elsewhere as well […]

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[51] Outi Paloposki, Kaisa Koskinen, "Thousand and One Translations", p. 32.
[52] Ivi, p. 34.

retranslations are affected by a multitude of factors, relating to publishers, intended readers, accompanying illustrations and – not least – the translators themselves".[53]

As it can be deduced from the above survey, retranslation is a complex phenomenon, rich in peculiarities and hypotheses, and the debate is still evolving. In fact, the first model of retranslation hypothesized by Berman – which is based on the idea that initial translations are deficient by dint of inexperience, while retranslation restores the foreignness of the source text and can lead to the creation of a 'grande traduction' – has recently been reconsidered and revaluated. Paloposki and Koskinen's research on the Retranslation Hypothesis highlights that its linear progression is tenable in only specific phases of a literary culture. Of particular importance is also the questioning of the ageing text theory: Gambier together with Berman regards ageing as symptomatic of a target text that is left behind as target cultural and linguistic norms are updated. In contrast, Topia locates ageing on the side of the source text, which is open to reinterpretation, while the derivative target text evades any such evolution. A second important aspect addressed in this research field is the idea of retranslation as challenge in the work of Pym, Brisset and Venuti: while the first two scholars consider synchronic retranslations as potential rivals, Venuti claims that any retranslation has the capacity to compete with others. However, all three scholars agree on the fact that challenge, which is often expressed through differentiation, is an aspect that incentives retranslation.

1.3 AAVE and the constraints to translating it

In this third subchapter, I will discuss the constraints in the translation of literary works partially or entirely written in dialects or vernacular languages, with particular focus on Black English, also known as African American Vernacular English (AAVE). In order to be able to focus on the main problems faced in the translation of dialects, I need to first provide a general description of this dialect from a social and a linguistic point of view. As a consequence, I will begin with a short history of AAVE, presenting its belated recognition as an American English dialect and use in American Literature; then, my analysis will focus on the structure of AAVE, presenting its main phonological and grammatical features. After a general overview on the linguistic and cultural complexity of Black English, I will focus on the most common translation strategies of

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[53] Outi Paloposki, Kaisa Koskinen, "Thousand and One Translations", p. 34.

dialects and vernacular languages, basing on the investigations conducted by Antoine Berman over the 'Trail of the Foreign' and by Franca Cavagnoli. The study of these scholars will help to pinpoint the main obstacles of this particular type of literary translation, showing the pros and cons of different approaches.

1.3.1 AAVE is not "just a dialect"

The analysis of the most used strategies to translate particular dialects of a given language, needs to start from the acknowledgement of the linguistic and cultural structure of the given dialect. In the context of this dissertation, the dialect analyzed is Black English, or African American Vernacular English (AAVE). To be specific, this dialect is also referred as Ebonics: as John R. Rickford states in his article "What is Ebonics (African American English)?", this term, which is combination of *ebony* (term for heavy blackish timber from a mainly tropical tree) and *phonics* (term describing a method for teaching reading), was created in 1973 by a group of black scholars to contrast the negative connotations of the term 'Nonstandard Negro English', which was created in the 1960s at the beginning of the linguistic studies of African American speech-communities. As Rickford specifies, the term Ebonics was never caught on among linguistics; however, its use became popular with the 'Ebonics' controversy of December 1996, when "the Oakland (CA) School Board recognized it as the 'primary' language of its majority African American students and resolved to take it into account in teaching them standard or academic English".[54] There is no difference between AAVE and Ebonics, since they refer to the same sets of speech forms. To be specific, Rickford affirms that nowadays scholars use 'Ebonics' to "highlight the African roots of African American speech and its connections with languages spoken elsewhere in the Black Diaspora, e.g. Jamaica or Nigeria"[55], while AAVE is employed to "emphasize that [African American English] doesn't include the standard English usage of African Americans" .[56]

However, since its first use, this term began to be distorted and used to mock African Americans who claimed their own language. In fact, since the beginning the study of this language has risen many controversies, not only on its nature but also on its origins. As

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[54] John R. Rickford, "What is Ebonics (African American English)?", in *Linguistic Society of America*, <https://www.linguisticsociety.org/content/what-ebonics-african-american-english>, accessed 9 March 2019.
[55] *Ibidem*
[56] *Ibidem*

Luise DeVere explains in her essay "Black English: Problematic but Systematic", there are three main schools of thought regarding the derivation of Black English: the first one claims that AAVE formed from the British English spoken by the early settlers; the second hypothesis affirms that its origins can be found in West African languages, while the third one claims that Black English is the result of a pidgin-creole cycle. Despite the complexity in determining the origins of this dialect, most linguists agree that Black English is the characteristic language used by working-class African Americans, and thus it can be considered a 'social dialect' correlated to a socio-ethnic stratification. Moreover, it differs from standard and nonstardard dialects of nonblacks: although some features occur in other dialects, the high frequency of specific grammar and morphological features of Black English classifies them as indicative features of that specific language.[57]

Categorizing AAVE in racial terms caused several issues, two of which are particularly relevant. On one hand, one of AAVE's most critical problem was perceiving and considering it as a 'misspelled version' of Standard English. Scholars have shown that those features that characterize Black English from a linguistic point of view as a language in its own right are perceived instead by Standard English speakers as common mistakes deriving from lack of literacy. As Geoffrey Pullum puts it, "most speakers of Standard English think that AAVE is just a badly spoken version of their language, marred by a lot of ignorant mistakes in grammar and pronunciation, or worse than that, an unimportant and mostly abusive repertoire of street slang used by an ignorant urban underclass".[58] Describing this dialect as incorrect English denounces an "ethnocentric denial of its use in precise communication by a large section of the population".[59] This concept connects to the second point of discussion, which is the recognition of AAVE's status as a 'mere' dialect. Underestimating the cultural significance of dialect has serious repercussions is terms of social class and social inferiority. Thus, the 'just a dialect' idea is discriminatory, since a dialect is actually a language, or better it is "a particular form of a language which is peculiar to a specific region or social group".[60] As Pullum clarifies,

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[57] Louise A. DeVere, "Black English: Problematic but Systematic", *South Atlantic Bulletin*, XXXVI, 3, 1971, p. 38.
[58] Geoffrey K. Pullum, "African American Vernacular English is not Standard English with mistakes" in Rebecca S. Wheeler, *The Workings of Language: From Prescriptions to Perspectives*, Westport, CT, Praeger, p. 40.
[59] Louise A. DeVere, "Black English", p. 39.
[60] "Dialect" in Oxford Dictionaries, 2018, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/dialect>, accessed 29 November 2018.

"Dialects and languages are in fact the same kinds of thing. 'Dialect' does not mean a marginal, archaic, rustic, or degraded mode of speech. Linguists never say things like 'That is just a dialect, not a language.' Rather, they refer to one language as *a dialect of another*".[61] In this perspective, linguists agree that Standard English owns a prestige that AAVE does not; however, the categorization of a language variety as a subtype of a standard language is not a justification to consider its cultural and social weight less relevant. As Pullum states, "Linguistics […] merely note that grammar in and of itself does not establish social distinctions or justify morally tinged condemnation of nonstandard dialects".[62]

The origins of the diminishing idea of Black English as 'just a dialect' and a wrong English without cultural value, go back to 19th century American literature. In order to comprehend the causes that generated this idea, it is important to remember that, as Lisa C. Minnick suggests in *Dialect and Dichotomy Literary Representations of African American Speech*, the functions and traditions of literary dialect in the USA are strictly linked to humor, more than in any other literary culture. However, this was not an innovation by American writers: evidences on this use of dialect date back to the 5th century BC with the Greek playwright Aristophanes, followed three centuries later by the Roman playwright Terence, who managed to create a primordial model for the first writers of literary dialect in English.[63] During the Renaissance, dialect was not just used for humorous effect, but it had a more specific role: evidence shows that British writers employed dialect as benchmark to distinguish Standard English language from a lower class version of it and confer prestige to its speakers. In particular, English writers employed dialogues "to reconstruct various idiosyncratic types for reader recognition"[64], that is to say, to individualize substantially, or almost entirely, the characters by their speech. Between the 18th and the 19th century, this phenomenon crossed the ocean and some American writers began to feel the need to develop a literary representation of speech characterized by dialect features. This demand, however, was not due to the need to distinguish the 'King's English' from the lower class's language, but it generated from

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[61] Geoffrey K. Pullum, "African American Vernacular English", p. 44.
[62] Ivi, p. 57.
[63] Lisa Minnick, *Dialect and Dichotomy: Literary Representations of African American Speech*, Tuscaloosa, The University of Alabama Press, 2009, p. 2.
[64] Ivi, p. 3.

the will to democratize literature in a sort of rebellion against more genteel literary forms, which led to the development of the so-called "local-color literature" – a style of writing based on the presentation of the features and peculiarities of a particular locality and its inhabitants – and thus to the rise of realism. After the Civil War, dialect literature gained more importance in American literature, in particular for what concerns Black English: in the late 19th century, white American authors, such as Mark Twain and Joel Chandler Harris, began to represent African American speech in their works.

However, in her investigation Minnick highlights that the use of Black English in texts written by white authors was more connected to the radical shifts in the American patriarchal society produced by the emancipation of African Americans than to the literary movement of realism. When the conflict over slavery between North and South ended, among the literary attempts of reconciliation between the two factions there was the 'plantation tradition', a subgenre connected to the local-color movement that incorporated dialect and strong regional identification. The aim of this literary subgenre was to portray the South as a safe place where the management of blacks was under control without the intervention of the Northern states, in order to "reassure Northerners that conditions under slavery had been hugely exaggerated by former and escaped slaves and by abolitionists".[65] This subgenre is extremely important in the reconstruction of the 'just a dialect' ideology, since the black speech of the enslaved characters is represented in such a way as to highlight its inferiority in relation to the white characters' speech. In fact, the most typical scenario in the tales of the plantation tradition pictured former slaves who were still loyal to their masters, everything framed in a sort of nostalgia of the past. In this perspective, the black speech used by white authors was an attempt to reconstruct the racial and social hierarchy that had been overturned with the Civil War and the abolition of slavery.[66] Thus, the plantation tales helped not only to reinforce the idea of blacks' racial and social inferiority, but also to stereotype African Americans as linguistically inferior to white Americans. In relation to this aspect, Minnick quoting Michele Birnbaum states that "white representation of black dialect in general functions as 'a kind of white blackface' in which African Americans are stereotyped linguistically

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[65] Lisa Minnick, *Dialect and Dichotomy*, p. 10.
[66] Ivi, p. 12.

in order to relegate them to the social positions of 'other' or 'inferior', which generations of slavery taught many whites was the rightful place of African Americans".[67]

Because of the racial and derogatory connotation that Black English carried, many black writers of the late 19th and early 20th century did not adopt representations of dialectal speech in their work. However, this attitude changed between the 1920s and 1930s through cultural movements such us modernism and the Harlem Renaissance: dialect writing, particularly Black English, lost its comedic role and assumed new functions linked to the social and political shifts of the times. As Minnick claims, "No longer used for minstrel-like entertainment purposes or for the mostly humorous intent of nineteenth-century dialect writing, literary African American English was wielded by twentieth-century authors in new forms, to enact new themes, and to represent changing social and political ideas".[68] Despite this important change in the representation of AAVE, the use of black dialect by white authors throughout the 20th century seems controversial: white modernist writers' co-opting of black vernacular was declaredly motivated by a sort of rebellion against linguistic hegemony, but it served at the same time to support the social hegemony of white American speech. Minnick quotes Michael North, claiming that in this perspective the 'white masquerade' behind Black English was an efficient method to construct a rebellion towards conformity but also to reinforce it.[69] Through the slow but active social and political integration of the black population in American society, the presence of African American writers in literature increased, and with it also the awareness of the importance of using Black English in literary works, with the aim to give life to "literary representations of authentic African American voices".[70]

1.3.2 AAVE: structure and peculiarities

As explained previously, AAVE struggled in being recognized and accepted as dialect. As Devere suggests, its complexity is given by three aspects: firstly, Black English is a social dialect and because of its low prestige outside the black community, it enlarges the social gap between the races; secondly, it is defined as a nonstandard dialect that follows quite different rules from those of prestige speech; thirdly, it is a concrete

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[67] Lisa Minnick, *Dialect and Dichotomy*, p. 12.
[68] Ivi, p. 19.
[69] Ivi, p. 20.
[70] Ivi, p. 27.

part of the ethnic identity of African Americans.[71] This complexity is perceived as a complete distinctiveness not only in social terms, but also in linguistics terms: as Stefan Martin and Walt Wolfram explain in "The Sentence in African-American Vernacular English", speakers of English dialects may often perceive the structure of Black English as totally different from other English varieties, while in reality AAVE basic sentence structures are all essentially formed in the same way as other English dialects. In fact, the basic word order for Standard American English (SAE) sentences – declarative, imperative, and interrogative – is Subject-Verb-Object (SVO), which is quite the same for AAVE and other English dialects, even though AAVE presents some exceptions to this rule that will be addressed in the following paragraphs.

However, some of the most obvious differences that have been used to argue for syntactic distinctiveness of AAVE are actually lexical peculiarities of certain AAVE verbs. Martin and Wolfram propose this example:

1. There go the pencil. (AAVE)
2. There is the pencil. (SE)

In Standard English, the use of the verb *go* is limited to the beginning to move or act of objects, while in AAVE it can be employed to denote the location of the object.[72] Black English and other varieties of English forms share many verb forms, such the detransitiving of a verb – *The team beat!* of AAVE is similar to *The team rules!* of Standard English – but there are several cases in which lexical verbs of Black English differ from other varieties. This difference concerns also other aspects: taking into consideration the use of *been* it can be shown how English speakers can assign distinct interpretations to the verb. The sentence *The man been married* would be interpreted by Anglo-American English speakers to mean a man had been married at one point but no longer is, while AAVE speakers would understand it to mean that a man has been married and still is. This example used by Martin and Wolfram concerns 'camouflaging', a phenomenon in which a vernacular form closely resembles a standard form while being different in structure or meaning. Although the given examples may suggest a structural

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[71] Louise A. DeVere, "Black English", p. 38.
[72] Stefan Martin, Walt Wolfram, "The Sentence in African-American Vernacular English" in Salikoko S. Mufwene, Guy Bailey, John R. Rickford, John Baugh, *African-American English: Structure, History, and Use*, London, Routledge, 1998, p. 12.

diversity between AAVE and other English varieties, they may be misleading with respect to the sentence components in AAVE: as mentioned above, most part of the distinctiveness of AAVE regards lexicon, and in some cases, the lexical differences between English varieties may actually be emphasized more so than the structural differences signify. Rahman, in his "Middle-Class African Americans: Reactions and Attitudes Toward African American English", summarized some of the most commonly occurring grammatical features (Table 1) and segmental features (Table 3). [73]

TABLE 1
Commonly Occurring Grammatical Characteristics of AAVE

FEATURE	FUNCTION	EXAMPLE
Absence of copula	Occurs in constructions showing present-tense states and action	*He tall*: "He's tall."
Habitual *be*	Shows an unusual or regular activity or state	*He be at the store*: "He is usually at the store."
Stressed *BIN*	Marks remote past; shows that an action happened or state came into being a long time ago	*She BIN married*: "She's been married a long time and still is married."
Completive *done*	Emphasizes the completed nature of an action	*He done did his his homework*: "He has already finished his homework."
Be done	Resultative or future / conditional perfect	*He done walked before he crawled*: "He will have walked before he crawls."
Absence of -s tense inflection	Occurs in third-person singular present tense	*He go home late every day*: "He goes home late every day."
Double tense marking	Past tense or past participle suffix	*He swepted the floor*: "He swept the floor."
Negative concord	Negates the auxiliary verb and all indefinite pronouns in the sentence	*Can't nobody make none*: "Nobody can make any."
Existential *it*	Pleonastic	*It's a fly in my soup*: "There's a fly in my soup."
Complementizer *say*	Introduces a quotation	*I told him say, "You should go home"*: 'I told him "You should go home."'
Raising of auxiliaries	Occurs in question	*What time it is?*: "What time is it?"
They as possessive	Occurs in constructions showing possession	*This is they house*: "This is their house."

[73] Jacquelyn Rahman, "Middle-Class African Americans: Reactions and Attitudes Toward African American English", American Speech, LXXXIII, 2, 2008, p. 146.

One of the most visible characteristics – and one of the most criticized as illogical – of AAVE is the 'negative concord': also known as 'multiple negation' and 'pleonastic negation', it is the employment of two or more negative morphemes to indicate a single negation.[74] SAE relies instead on the logical structure form employing both only one negative operator and optional negative polarity items – that could be a quantifier word or a word phrase acting in the scope of the negative:

> *He does not have a car.*
> *He does not have any cars.*
> *He went out into the cold without any clothes.*

Comparatively, AAVE allows for multiple negations:

> *He doesn't got no car.*
> *He went out into the cold without no clothes or nothing.*

However, double negation can occur in SAE but it is not used with the same purpose of the negative concord in AAVE. This form is called 'logical double negation': it involves one negative element undoing another, based on the prescriptive dictum 'two negatives make an affirmative'. Logical double negative differs from AAVE multiple negative due to its contrastive stress:

a. *I didn't say nothing* – I just sat there.
b. *I didn't say **nóthing*** – I just said it softly.

In the logical double negative sentence of Standard English (b) the first negative word receives normal stress while the second one receives heavier stress and (often) a rising tone, meaning that the speaker did actually say something. Instead, the double negation in AAVE (a) conveys only one negation and it can be paraphrased in SAE as *I didn't say anything.*[75] It is important to mention that even though AAVE speakers use double negation more often than Anglo-American speakers, AAVE grammar does not demand the employment of this kind of negation in every location, just as SAE does not demand the employment of negative polarity items in every location, so that it can be said *I said nothing* in AAVE and *He went out into the cold without anything* in SAE. Although many standard speakers consider the multiple negation as an illogical language use, the examples proposed highlight that multiple negation is a grammar rule that requires the

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[74] Stefan Martin, Walt Wolfram, "The Sentence in African-American Vernacular English", p. 17.
[75] Ivi, p. 18.

use of negative words instead of indefinite words.[76] In this perspective, Pullum underlines that negative concord is not a singularity, as it is present also in other languages, such as Italian, Spanish and Russian. Taking into example the Italian language, he highlights that "[t]he AAVE sentence *Ain't nobody called* shows exactly the same negative concord as the Italian *Non ha telefonato nessuno*: the negative element *ain't* requires that *nobody* be chosen just as the negative element *non* requires that *nessuno* be choosen".[77] Moreover, Pullum states that AAVE is not the only English dialect to rely on negative concord: Cockney and several other working-class dialects in England and the US construct negative sentences through multiple negation.

Another distinctive feature of AAVE in terms of negation is the repositioning of the negative auxiliary verb at the beginning of the sentence in the case of an indefinite subject. As it has been mentioned before, the basic word order for SAE and AAVE is the same, but there are exceptions, and this is one of them. Example:

   a. *Ain't nobody gonna find out*
   b. *Nobody is going to find out*

As it can be seen in the second sentence, Standard English expresses the negation on the subject, while AAVE grammar requires to mark the auxiliary verb as negative (*ain't*), followed by the negative form of *somebody* (*nobody*), since AAVE is a negative-concord language. Following this logic, the clause should be *Nobody ain't gonna find out*; however, AAVE speakers switch quite commonly the order of the subject and the auxiliary verb, yielding the declarative sentence *Ain't nobody gonna find out*. A particularity of this grammatical rule is that negative inversion is not found with every type of subject noun phrase:

Ain't Mary gonna find out.
Ain't the teacher gonna find out.
Ain't your mother gonna find out.

When the subject is a simple name (*Mary*), or the subject has the definite article *the* or a possessive article like *your*, the negative inversion cannot be formed. In Standard English, this switch between subject and auxiliary occurs in interrogative sentences and not in

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[76] Geoffrey K. Pullum, "African American Vernacular English", p. 49.
[77] *Ibidem*

declarative sentences, showing that AAVE distinctiveness can occur also in syntactic terms.

Another important characteristic of AAVE grammar often perceived as a mistake is the 'random' omission of the copula *be*. Pullum explains that none of the motives about the omission of the copula are random, they rather follow strict rules, as shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2
Main cases in which the copula *be* is required [78]

FUNCTION	EXAMPLE
Copula bears accent (stress) for any reason.	*There already is one!*
∗ Auxiliary verbs at the end of a phrase are always accented, thus the copula is always retained at the end of a phrase.	*Couldn't nobody say what color he is*
∗ As *been* in special 'remote present perfect tense' (particular tense lacking in Standard English)	*She BEEN married* : "She is married and has been for some considerable time"
Copula is negated (*ain't*)	*You ain't goin' to no heaven* *I ain't no fool*
Copula infinitival in the base form *be*	*You got to be strong* *Be careful*
∗ *Be* expressing 'habitual aspect'	*He be singin'* : "He usually or habitually sings"
Copula in the past tense	*I was cool*
Present-tense Copula in first-person singular	*I'm all right*
Copula begins a clause	*Is that you?*
∗ Copula occurs in a confirmatory tag on the end of a sentence	*I don't think you ready, are you?*

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[78] Geoffrey K. Pullum, "African American Vernacular English", pp. 45-46.

In addition, the distinctiveness of this dialect is also due to its particular segmental features, that is to say, phonological features that can be extracted from a linear series of sounds in the context of speech.

TABLE 3
Commonly Occurring Segmental Features in AAVE [79]

FEATURE	EXAMPLE
Momophthongization of /ay/	bah, "buy"
Realization of word-initial /∂/ as [d]	dis, "this"
Deletion of postvocalic /r/	motha, "mother"
Vocalization of postvocalic /l/	personow, "personal"
Word-final consonant cluster reduction	col, "cold"
Merger of /I/ and /ɛ/ before nasals	pin, "pen"
Realization of /iŋ/ as /in/	lookin, "looking"

The mentioned tables about the grammar rules of AAVE show that this dialect is indeed rich in specificities, which increase its concreteness as a language. Its lexical, syntactic and phonological features structure the entire body of its distinctiveness from Standard English, highlighting how these differences are not 'ignorant mistakes', but actually results of a specific linguistic structure.

1.3.3 Translating dialects

As shown in the previous paragraph, Black English has its own characteristics and peculiarities that make it distinct from Standard English and other English dialects. These features, which occur in lexical, syntactic and phonological levels, are not linguistic distortions due to a lack of literacy, but they are instead rule-based linguistic structures. Because of its specificity, linguistics reckon AAVE as an actual variety of Standard American English, which can distinctly be recognized in any literary text; but how can this distinctiveness be marked in the translation of a given text into another language such as Italian? As it has been addressed in the first subchapter, critical point in literary translation is seeking a strategy to translate the Other without erasing it or deforming it. However, with AAVE as part of the source language, determining the translation method becomes more difficult, because of the cultural burden that connotes this dialect in the American historical context. This aspect eventually raises an important question: how to

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[79] Jacquelyn Rahman, "Middle-Class African Americans", p. 147.

translate this dialect and transmit its meaning to the Italian readership, who has no knowledge about its culture and history and whose language varieties are deeply linked to their historical and cultural contexts?

Antoine Berman manages to answer to this question in his study "Translation and the Trial of the Foreign": keystone of his essay is the explanation of the 'trial of the foreign' and why any translator should avoid it. According to Berman, translation is the 'trial of the foreign' in a double sense: on one hand, it establishes the relationship between the 'self-same' and the foreign with the purpose of making the reader familiar with the foreignness of the text. On the other hand, this condition of trial is due to the notion that the foreign work is uprooted from its own 'language-ground'.[80] By inspecting the system of textual deformation that operates in all translations, Berman observes that every translator is inescapably exposed to a play of forces: these forces are unconscious, and translators should regain control of their actions, in order to "free themselves from the system of deformation that burdens their practice".[81] The process of examination of the system of deformation constructed by Berman is denominated the 'analytic of translation'. Although he believes that this analysis should be enlarged and perfected by the addition of inputs from other 'domains' such as linguistics, 'poeticians' and psychoanalysts – the analysis is provisional since it is formulated only on the basis of his experience as translator –, Berman managed to structure it, by highlighting twelve 'deforming tendencies' inherent in the act of translation. Among these twelve deformities, two are of particular importance in the context of this dissertation: 'the destruction of vernacular networks or their exoticization', and 'the effacement of the superimposition of language'. Both these deformities occur when a literary text presents a plurality of vernacular elements or the internal intertextuality is built on the relationship between a dialect and a standard language. These aspects are extremely important, in particular in prose, since its tendency is towards realism, which can be achieved through the employment of the vernacular language, more iconic and oral than 'cultivated language'. In the presence of vernacular languages, Berman claims that two are the major mistakes committed, the effacement and the exoticization of vernaculars. Franca Cavagnoli, an Italian writer and translator of many contemporary and postcolonial novels, also

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[80] Antoine Berman, "Translation and the trials of the foreign", in Lawrence Venuti, *The Translation Studies Reader*, London, Routledge, 2003, p. 284.
[81] Antoine Berman, "Translation and the trials of the foreign", p. 286.

addresses this topic in her study *La voce del testo*, explaining in detail how these deformities occur and what are their specificities.

Taking into consideration the first deforming tendency, the effacement of vernaculars or dialects implies to not convey the peculiarities of the source language, suppressing narration's aesthetic function.[82] In fact, avoiding to translate the vernacular or dialect and erasing their presence in the text, can cause a serious injury to the backbone of a work. In particular, dialects and vernaculars base their richness on their colloquial and oral forms, which results to be also their weakness in the translation process. Although vernacular languages are much more concrete than cultured languages, and often richer in images and sound figures, precisely because they exist in the sphere of speech they risk being erased in the written form[83]. The effacement provokes consequently a homogenization of the literary text, producing a text without any trace of the original skeleton of the work.[84] In this way, translating vernaculars and dialects with a standard language – whose primal written form is more rooted in the literary tradition – implies a collision between two different forms of expression: thus, the risk is to neglect, or worse, to deeply deform the dialects and vernaculars. Indeed, deformation of vernaculars and dialects can occur also if the translator chooses the way of exoticization. According to Cavagnoli, this second deforming tendency can manifest in different ways. One occurs when the presence of vernaculars or dialects is stressed in the Italian text by translating the entire line of the dialogue in the standard target language and then writing it in italics. However, this literary device can provoke a sort of confusion in the reader, who wonders why there are so many words in italics in the novel. A second way to perpetuate the exoticization is the theoretical construction of an ad hoc dialect: this translating choice is extremely artificial, since it moves in the opposite direction to the original text, where the creative contribution of dialect gives naturalness to the narration. In addition, the creation of an ad hoc dialect would be based on stereotypes, risking to give a racialized represention of the dialect speakers which is absent in the source text. As Cavagnoli states, "chi opta per questa scelta tende sovente a calcare la mano, a rendere il dialetto straniero sulla base di

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[82] Franca Cavagnoli, *La voce del testo*, Milano, Feltrinelli, 2012, p. 83.

[83] Ivi, p. 84.

[84] Franca Cavagnoli, *Il proprio e l'estraneo nella traduzione letteraria di lingua inglese*, Monza, Polimetrica, 2010, p. 87.

stereotipi che a stento celano il paternalismo, se non il razzismo, di chi traduce".[85] A third method to translate vernaculars and dialects is a sort of variation of exoticization combined to popularization: literary translators often find the solution to dialects by transposing it into a local dialect of the target culture. This method can produce farcical outcomes, since dialect languages are deeply rooted in their homeland and they thus oppose strenuous resistance and refuse to be translated into another dialect.[86] Quoting Berman, Cavagnoli explains that this approach is wrong, as the Foreign from abroad cannot be transformed into the Foreign at home: translating a dialect into another dialect would not only risk to trivialize the target text, but also to appropriate the Foreign.

In *Il proprio e l'estraneo nella traduzione letteraria di lingua inglese*, Cavagnoli addresses these same deformities by providing also examples and illustrating how a translator should approach these kinds of translation. She states that, because dialects and vernaculars are languages born in oral contexts, the person in charge of the translation should find the best translating solutions drawing from oral Italian. The marked difference from standard language and dialect or vernacular in the source text can be highlighted in the target text through the employment of linguistic variation strategies at the morphosyntactic level, such as preferring parataxis instead of hypotaxis, using conjunctions demanding indicative verbs instead of conjunctions that presume subjunctive verbs. The syntactic segmentation given by left and right dislocation and cleft sentences together with the typical word repetition of oral speech, allow to develop a natural and spontaneous narrative flow.[87] I will specifically discuss other translating approaches in the following chapters, through direct examples from the novels; however, the examples proposed by Cavagnoli aim to present a way to translate dialects and vernaculars without erasing or deforming the Foreign presence in the target text. The translator should recognize the peculiarities of these languages and re-propose them in the target text through the means offered by orality. In this perspective, the translator should take control of his or her actions and produce a translation respectful of the source text, even if this sometimes means going against the publisher and the publishing market's requests. According to Cavagnoli, the translator should do an 'act of courage' and be ready to avoid requests suggesting a leveling of the most radical and innovative

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[85] Franca Cavagnoli, *La voce del testo*, p. 85.
[86] Ivi, p. 85.
[87] Franca Cavagnoli, *Il proprio e l'estraneo*, pp. 81-82.

experiments in the literary field, and to resist the temptation to accentuate the deviations from the literary language in order not to run the risk of ridiculing the Foreigner.[88]

1.4 Conclusion

As it can be noticed, the three major topics presented in the first chapter structure the theoretical background about literary translation on which I will base my comparative analysis of different Italian versions of the same novel. In fact, in the following chapters I will take into exam two novels belonging to American literature, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain and *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston. The topics addressed in this first chapter will be the basis for the comparison of two or more translation of these novels. The contemporary debate about domestication and foreignization and the consequences of either strategy over the translator and the reader will help me to analyze the approach of each translator to the text, identify the reasons of his or her choices and recognize connections and discontinuities between the different translations of the same novel.

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[88] Franca Cavagnoli, *La voce del testo*, p. 84.

2. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and its Italian translation: from domestication to 'othering' the Foreign

In this second chapter of my thesis, I will analyze three translations of one of Mark Twain's most famous novels, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. This novel is particularly relevant for my argument, since it presents unique language varieties: as Twain affirms in the Explanatory – an explicative introduction to the story – the text employs various dialects and variants, one of which is AAVE. Black English has significant relevance in the novel, since it characterizes the speech of one of the main protagonists, the black slave Jim. As it will be shown in the coming paragraphs, Jim's speech stands out because of its phonological representation, clearly distinguishing itself from the novel's other dialects. Huck's voice is also based on a vernacular form, which is quite similar to the one of Jim in terms of syntax and grammar: in this perspective, I will employ the dialogs between the two characters as example for my comparative analysis, in order to highlight similarities and differences between each translator' approach to the translation of Non-Standard English into Italian.

Before dealing with the strategies employed in the three translations I have chosen, I will introduce the novel highlighting its major themes and most discussed questions, such as the use of the N-word, Huck's confusing morality and Jim's minstrelization. Then, I will focus on the language of the source text, analyzing Twain's accuracy in the representation of language varieties and the characterization of Jim's Black English. My comparative analysis of the target texts, after a brief introduction to the translator's background, will center on selected passages from the novel. From the data collected, I will highlight the pros and cons of the different translating strategies used for the translation of the vernacular languages, in order to evaluate each translator's choices from a linguistic and socio-cultural perspective.

2.1 Mark Twain: life, works and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

Samuel Langhorne Clemens was born in Florida, Missouri, in 1835. He spent his youth in Hannibal, a small port town in Missouri town, where his family moved when he was four years old. Son of a lawyer, he did not do regular studies but he dedicated his time into various activities. At first, he was a printer's apprentice in the *Missouri Courier*, a local newspaper. He worked as a journalist for a few years and then became a pilot apprentice on the riverboats that navigated the Mississippi, until he obtained the pilot's

license in 1859 – several of these and other life experiences would appear in his literary works. The riverboat life gave him the idea to assume the pseudonym of Mark Twain: it originated from 'By the mark, twain', the signal used by the riverboat leadsmen to alert that the water was deep enough for safe passage. At the outbreak of the Civil War, he briefly volunteered in the confederate troops, then he left for the West where he mainly practiced as a journalist. Clemens, who started to sign articles with his pseudonym 'Mark Twain' in 1863, achieved most of his fame throughout the 1860s and 1870s: the quick wit and keen ear for language and dialect that characterized all his articles, stories and novels, became the trademarks that made him gain great celebrity. In those years, he published his first comic book *Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog* (1865), which was a great success, followed by the instant bestseller *The Innocents Abroad* (1869), in which Twain mixed together his experiences matured during a trip to Europe and in particular to Italy. In 1876, Twain released *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, receiving even greater national acclaim and establishing his position as a giant in American literary circles. The prospered economic situation of America in the post-Civil war positively impacted the writer, considerably increasing Twain's prosperity; in order to maintain this situation and capitalize the popularity of *Tom Sawyer*, Twain started writing the sequel entitled *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. However, the comfort did not last long: one of the major aims of the political program of the postwar period was the reintegration of the South into the Union as a slavery-free region, but the fear to lose power led Southern people to begin an oppressive control over African Americans. In parallel with this, Mark Twain's personal life began to collapse: after the death of his first son, born from the marriage with Olivia in 1870, Twain made some bad investments, which brought him several debts. After the release of *Huckleberry Finn* in 1883 – which was very well accepted by the public –, Twain continued to write for another decade, but he was never able to recreate literary works of great importance as *Huckleberry Finn.* Twain's state of depression and uneasiness caused by the death of his son and the numerous debts further worsened with the death of his wife and both her daughters, which fell on Twain's last writings, characterized by a sort of darkness and a righteous rage for the injustices of the world. He began to dictate his autobiography and continued to do it until his death in 1910 in Reddings, Connecticut.

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn opens by explaining to the reader the events of the novel that preceded it, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. Both novels are set in St. Petersburg, a town in Missouri that lies on the banks of the Mississippi River. The plot of *Tom Sawyer* closes with the two boys receiving the treasure of the Native American Injun Joe: after proving the Native American's guilt in stealing a stash of gold from a man, Tom and Huck find the treasure and the dead body of the robber in a cave. Due to their minor age, the sum – six thousand dollars each – must be administered for Tom by Aunt Polly, who raised him since the death of his parents, and for Huck – son of a drunkard who grew him up as a little savage and then adopted by the Widow Douglas – by Judge Thatcher. In *Huckleberry Finn* the focus changes from the character of Tom to the character of Huck, who describes his adventures with the runaway slave Jim from his personal point of view. The tale created by Twain is a story of emancipation: Huck desires to break free from the physical and mental constraints of society, while Jim is fleeing a life of enslavement. The journey towards freedom and social emancipation lies on Huck's internal conflict in learning what is good and bad: on the way down the Mississippi River, Huck meets different characters, who make him question what the real difference between right and wrong is. Huck's conflict with society begins with the character of the Widow Douglas, who tries to 'civilize' him in order to turn him into an upstanding citizen – which implies accepting social rules. Huck feels trapped, since his staying under the authority of the Widow, and so achieving 'respectability', is paradoxically a necessary precondition to remain in Tom Sawyer's robbers' gang. However, Huck's freedom is threatened when his drunken and abusive father kidnaps him. Huck manages to escape by faking his own death and running away to Jackson's Island, where he meets Jim, whose status as a runaway slave marks him as an even more serious victim of social strictures. The two characters decide to leave their places and set out on a raft down the Mississippi River: this marks not only the beginning of the bonding of these two main characters, but also the sprouting of Huck's conflict on the moral complications of helpong Jim escape.

Since the first obstacles, Huck tries to hide Jim, but he constantly questions himself whether his actions are good or bad. The conflict evolves with the encounter of the king and the duke, two wanderers claiming to be royalty but who are actually crooks specialized in deceptive tricks to defraud town folk. Witnessing the two false gentlemen's various scams, leads Huck to wonder what civilized society actually represents and to

acknowledge Jim's genuine kindness, in contrast to the self-interested hypocrisy of most of the people he meets. Huck decides to break off the two men's fraudulent practices when they conspire to rob Peter Wilks' daughter: the young boy reveals the evil plan to Mary Jane Wilks, Peter Wilk's daughter, in the hope to save her family from disgrace and also to get rid of the duke and the king. However, the two robbers manage to escape and sell Jim to gain some money. For the first time since the beginning of this travel, Huck cannot manage his feelings and starts crying. In the attempt to recover the situation, Huck decides to write to Tom Sawyer to tell Miss Watson, Jim's mistress, where Jim is, but he soon realizes that she would sell Jim anyway. So he finally decides to help Jim escape, even though it makes him feel ashamed of having helped a slave run away. The climax of the episode is when Huck, gripped by uncertainty, tries to find refuge in praying, but soon he finds no comfort in it. The social and religious belief systems that white society has taught him would impose him to turn Jim in, but he cannot do it, since he cares too much about the black man to deny his humanity. Thinking back to all his adventures in the Mississippi River, Huck always pictures Jim in his memories, which makes him realize that Jim is an important person for him: following this stream of consciousness, Huck listens to his own conscience and decides to find Jim in order to get him free, even though this would condemn him to hell.

Through a particular weaving of fortuitous cases – Jim is kept imprisoned by Silas Phelps, Tom Sawyer's uncle, and Tom himself is just about to arrive to stay over at his uncle's farm – Huck succeeds, with Tom's help, to free Jim. However, this happens slowly: seeing the escape as a chance for adventures like the novels he read, Tom devises an elaborate plan to free the black slave, complicating it every time it looks too easy to fulfill. Although Huck accepts each complication created by Tom, his main idea is to free Jim as fast as he can, showing that he is the only one understanding the moral gravity of the situation. Freeing Jim, Tom is shot in the leg, which allows Jim to reveal his true white character and to demonstrate to Huck how absurd racism society is. Jim, in fact, persuades Huck to seek help from a doctor, while he hides in the woods: the doctor returns Tom and Jim to Tom's uncles, revealing that the black slave gave up his own chance at freedom to help the boy. Although the difference between the two boys is clear since the beginning of this 'adventure', the aftermath of the escape reveals the true identity of the two characters. When Tom tells that Jim had already been legally emancipated following the

death of his owner, Miss Watson, and that he only wanted to help him escape to have fun, he reveals his boyish self-interest, while Huck's choices and behavior are signs of a newfound and adult morality. In fact, Tom's secrecy about Jim's freedom has relevant implications in Huck's final decision to go West to escape from the civilized life promised by Tom's aunt: the 'civilized' Tom, notwithstanding his rebellious attitude, is not scolded for making fun of a black man. In addition, Miss Watson, the one who should have brought Huck on the right track, decides to free Jim only at her death, so when he would no longer actually serve her; the Phelps, although they immediately try to make amends for their previous treatment of Jim, still own slaves. In this perspective when 'civilization' combines good behavior and the typical paternalism of the American enslavement system, Huck's going West is a refusal to be part of this system, although his rejection of slavery does not imply the idea of considering blacks and whites as equal. The idea of racial inferiority hovers throughout the narration and it is brought up not only by white characters but also by black ones, especially by Jim: while arguing with Huck about French language, Jim claims that, if someone spoke to him in French, he would hit him in the head only in the case he was black, since he would not dare to beat a white man.

Huckleberry Finn moves beyond questions of slavery, to broader questions of morality and race. Through the eyes of a young boy, Twain highlights the moral problems and dilemmas concerning American society and its enslavement system. Picking a young and rebellious boy to be the storyteller, Twain underlines the contradictions inside American society, highlighting how the idea of behaving properly means legitimating African Americans as racially inferior to White Americans. The journey down the Mississippi River represents Huck's inner journey to find balance between the rules dictated by the American patriarchal society and the respect for others, regardless of their race. Huck soon realizes that these two choices are mutually exclusive and decides to abandon 'civilization' and the divine salvation to defend Jim's life. The novel closes with a presentation of the final resolutions for all of the characters, except for Jim, whose future remains unknown to the reader, suggesting an open ending that will never be fulfilled.

2.2 'Was Huck racist?': critical aspects of the interracial friendship between Huck and Jim

When the novel was first released in England in 1884 and in the US in 1885, Twain was subject to criticism by several scholars, who defined *Huckleberry Finn* as a

rough, coarse and inelegant work, suited for low ranking readers. Louisa May Alcott, the author of *Little Women*, gave one of the most incisive critiques of those years, saying, "If Mr. Clemens cannot think of something better to tell our pure-minded lads and lasses, he had best stop writing for them".

[1]As Robert McParland reports in *Mark Twain's Audience: A Critical Analysis of Reader Responses to the Writings of Mark Twain* (2014), most of the first critiques focused on the antisocial and anti-educative figure of Huck; however, little attention was given to the novel's interrogation of racism, no one questioned the reasons behind the use of the word 'nigger' and Jim's minstrel characterization.[2] Eventually Twain's reputation turned during the 1900s: scholars started to study and analyze the novel from different points of view, highlighting Twain's innovative and revolutionary instinct in the literary field. Most of the commentaries underlined the author's distinctive capacity to represent oral languages – several scholars interpreted this aspect as Twain's attack to the conformism dictated by the literary hegemony of that time – and his innovative storyline developed around an interracial friendship, declaring that *Huckleberry Finn* was the most relevant novel in nineteenth-century American literature. Well-known American writers, such us Sherwood Anderson and William Cuthbert Faulkner, admitted Twain's influence in their works, but the greater recognition came from Ernest Hemingway, who stated, "All modern American literature comes from one book by Mark Twain called Huckleberry Finn. American writing comes from that. There was nothing before. There has been nothing as good since".[3]

However, in recent years, some scholars have questioned the novel's structure, analyzing those contradictory and ambiguous aspects that were passed over in the first commentaries. In this perspective, one of the most analyzed critical problems concerns the stereotyping and derision of Jim's character, especially in the last chapter. Lisa Minnick addresses this issue in her essay 'Articulating Jim', in which she analyzes the representation of Jim's speech to determine whether there are linguistic elements typical of racist caricatures. Minnick reports that signs of stereotyping and derision towards Jim's character can be found out of the linguistic sphere. Since the beginning of the novel,

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[1] Robert McParland, *Mark Twain's Audience: A Critical Analysis of Reader Responses to the Writings of Mark Twain*, Lexington Books, 2014, p. 107.
[2] *Ibidem*
[3] Ernest Hemingway, *The Green Hills of Africa*, New York, 1935, p. 29.

Twain describes Jim as a very superstitious man: the scenes in which he believes in the supernatural or he attributes to ill luck his unfortunate situations with Huck, are recurring and often comically conveyed. Although some scholars affirm that believing in the supernatural should not be seen as an element of denigration – Tom Sawyer has the same reaction as Jim in seeing Huck alive and believing he is a ghost, and Jim's beliefs could have their roots in his African legacy [4] – the episodes of Jim in the guise of superstitious buffoon are too many not to be considered in the analysis of the character's portrait. Toni Morrison wrote an introduction for *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* edited by S. Fisher Fishkin (1996), in which she examines this aspect by arguing that the 'over-the-top minstrelization of Jim', besides being a common representation of black characters in nineteenth-century American literature, is a narrative device used specifically to represent Jim as a buffoon. According to Morrison, every character is somehow ridiculed, but Jim is undoubtedly the most portrayed as idiotic. This may occur for three different reasons: besides accommodating a racist readership, "writing Jim so complete a buffoon solves the problem of 'missing' him that would have been unacceptable at the novel's end, and helps to solve another problem: how effectively to bury the father figure underneath the minstrel paint".[5] Making Jim a sort of minstrel character lowers his presence in the story, leading the reader to not miss a finale for this character and to forget that he has been a father figure for Huck. In fact, according to Morrison, since the first stages of the story, the reader can predict the inexorability of Jim's unfinished story. As Morrison states, "every reader knows that Jim will be dismissed without explanation at some point; that no enduring adult fraternity will emerge".[6] The idea of Jim as a surrogate father for Huck is further analyzed by Morrison, who argues that the whole novel seems centered on the question of fatherhood: after leaving his drunken and violent father, Huck meets many white men who might figure as surrogate fathers for him, but their hypocrisy, corruption and extreme violence resemble Pap's personality. However, Jim differs from all the other male figures: he cares about Huck, he worries when he is away and he helps the young boy every time there is a difficult situation. Huck becomes aware of Jim's figure as tender

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[4] Shelley Fisher Fishkin, *Was Huck Black?: Mark Twain and African-American Voices*, USA, Oxford University Press, 1993, p. 86.

[5] Toni Morrison, Ed. Huck Finn *in Context Coursepack*, New York, International Creative Management, 1996, p 156.

[6] Ivi, p. 156.

and caring father when the black slave tells how he discovered his daughter's deafness: love and responsibility transpire from Jim's tale, leaving Huck speechless, unable to say a word of compassion for Jim's sadness. The reader comes to know Huck's opinion only in the following chapter, in which the boy reflects upon Jim's paternal instinct and wonders if it can be 'natural': "I do believe he cared just as much for his people as white folks do for their'n. It don't seem natural, but I reckon it's so".[7] As Morrison argues, this statement is relevant "less for its racism that for the danger it deflects from Huck himself"[8], meaning that, besides considering Jim an inferior human being who is not supposed to show affection like a white man, Huck judges the black slave's role as a father, notwithstanding his inexperience in paternal love.

Huck's lack of paternal love makes him judge unnatural the black slave's behavior. Morrison affirms that Jim's confession is dangerous for Huck's story: since his adventures started when he freed himself from his father, accepting Jim's cares would prevent him to continue his journey. Huck has finally the possibility to experience the love of a father, but this would imply being tangled to a person, limiting his idea of freedom. What Huck desires is a father who can be an adviser, a trustworthy companion and, in particular, an under control person: by having the control over his surrogate father, Huck is not obliged to be committed to him for the rest of his life. In this perspective, Jim is the only one who can fulfill this role, since no white man can serve all these functions. As Morrison states, "because Jim can be controlled, it becomes possible for Huck to feel responsible for and to him – but without the onerous burden of lifelong debt that a real father figure would demand".[9]

In the same study, Morrison addresses other controversial aspects belonging to the story of *Huckleberry Finn*, including the use of the word 'nigger'. Morrison addresses this issue by telling how she felt 'fear and alarm' when she read the novel for the first times. She affirms that her curiosity to acknowledge her uncomfortableness and sense of danger led her to read the novel several times, affirming that "reading 'nigger' hundreds of times embarrassed, bored, annoyed – but did not faze me".[10] In fact, she affirms that much of the nervousness the book caused her was just partially due to the N-word –

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[7] Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, London, Harper Press, 2010, p. 147.
[8] Toni Morrison, *in Context Coursepack*, p. 157.
[9] Ivi, p. 158.
[10] Ivi, p. 153-154.

admitting, however, that she would have experienced it differently if her teacher had addressed the issue through a comprehensive discussion of the term. In this perspective, she takes a stand against the removal of the novel from the reading lists of public schools. Taking into consideration the context on which the novel is based, the use of the N-word is legitimized by the realism of the novel, since it was widely used by most of white Southerners in the Pre-Civil War era. However, several scholars have criticized the employment of this ethnic slur, which has led to questioning the appropriateness of teaching the book in the U.S. public school system. As a result, since the 1980s there have been several cases involving protests requests to ban the novel, considered by Morrison as "a purist yet elementary kind of censorship designed to appease adults rather than educate children".[11] In fact, in Morrison's opinion, the repeated attempts to remove the novel from libraries and public schools, does not only prevent children to understand racism, but it also contributes to "extend Jim's captivity on into each generation of readers".[12]

Another scholar that attempted to analyze the reasons for the employment of the N-word is Jonathan Arac. In his study *Huckleberry Finn as an Idol and Target*, Arac investigates the complexities and contradictions of the novel by focusing on Huck's stream of consciousness. Through the analysis of Huck's inner monologues, Arac argues that the reader acknowledges Huck's constant state of conflict between what he is supposed to do and what he feels he should do. In fact, even though he believes in social customs governing slavery, he refuses to respect the law in order to help and protect Jim's life – in his beliefs, such illegal act not only transforms him into an outlaw, but it also condemns him to eternal damnation, since social behavior goes along with Christian morality. As a result, Huck feels he is behaving improperly, while the reader perceives differently. As Arac states, "The worse he thinks he is, the better we know he is".[13] The constant conflict between good and bad, called by Arac as a 'pattern of opposites', can be perceived not only from the actions taken by Huck, but also from how they are described. Arac takes as example the passage in which Huck, after discovering Jim has been captured, thinks about how to find him and get him free. In the hurry of how to act, Huck

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[11] Toni Morrison, *in Context Coursepack*, p. 153.
[12] Ivi, p. 156.
[13] Arac Jonathan, "Adventures of Huckleberry Finn", in Franco Moretti, *The Novel: History, geography, and culture*, Princeton University Press, 2006, p. 845.

reckons that the proper thing would be returning Jim to Miss Watson, pursuing the principles of Christian morality taught by the Widow Douglas. However, Huck realizes that this decision would mark him as someone who helped a slave to escape. Thinking about the shame he would suffer, makes him enter in a sort of vortex of 'churchy voices':

> At last, when it hit me all of a sudden that here was the plain hand of Providence slapping me in the face and letting me know my wickedness was being watched all the time from up there in heaven, whilst I was stealing a poor old woman's nigger that hadn't ever done me no harm, and now was showing me there's One that's always on the lookout, and ain't agoing to allow no such miserable doings to go on only just so fur and no further, I most dropped in my tracks I was so scared.[14]

As it can be noticed, Huck's thoughts are muddling and twisted and the rhythm of the narration gives the feeling of agony: the employment of just one verb in a long period reproduces Huck's anxious and tormented mood. As Arac states, "the alien syntax suspends his identity and transports him into a space of moral agonizing". [15] However, thinking about Jim changes Huck's mood: after writing the letter that would have brought Jim back to his life of enslavement, Huck begins to remember all his time spent with him during their journey.

> And got to thinking over our trip down the river; and I see Jim before me all the time: in the day and in the night-time, sometimes moonlight, sometimes storms, and we a-floating along, talking and singing and laughing. But somehow I couldn't seem to strike no places to harden me against him, but only the other kind.[16]

As Arac reports in his study, the change of mood is evident: the cadenced use of commas slows down the rhythm of the narration. This state of mind mirrors Huck's tranquility, which brings him to take, clearly and firmly, the final decision to help Jim and 'go to hell'. Although Huck's involvement in Jim's escape symbolizes a stance against American society governing the enslavement system, there are some aspects that interfere with this idea, one of the most relevant is indeed the use of the N-word. As Arac states, "Huck melodramatically, in a gestural extravagance equal and opposite to what he rejects, chooses hell over heaven, Jim over the society that enslaves him, and yet he does it in language that seems to modern readers racist. He calls Jim a 'nigger'".[17] According to Arac, the use of this racist term seems both "willful and constrained", since the N-word can be considered as a characterizing and distinctive element of the social context in

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[14] Mark Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*, p 202.
[15] Arac Jonathan, "Adventures of Huckleberry Finn", p. 846.
[16] Mark Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*, p. 203.
[17] Arac Jonathan, "Adventures of Huckleberry Finn", p. 847.

which the novel is set, but it can also be seen as a literary device, or as Arac calls it, "a rhetorical strategy of deidealization" so as not to make Huck appear "too angelic".[18] Despite the legitimacy of using that term to emphasize the realism of the novel, Arac affirms that the recurrent presence of the N-word, because of its extreme negative and racial connotation towards black people, may drastically limit African Americans to be part of Twain's readership. Along with the different reasons for the use of the N-word, Arac argues that another critical aspect in *Huckleberry Finn* is indeed the minstrelization of Jim, which inevitably reaches its maximum at the end of the novel, when the black slave is used for Tom Sawyer's amusement. As it can be noticed, Arac, Morrison and Minnick underline the same questions in terms of racial representation, highlighting how the relationship between Huck and Jim presents contradictory aspects that complicate the idyllic idea of an interracial friendship. Huck's constant sense of confusion and guilt in helping Jim, who is always ready to sacrifice himself for Huck's sake, completely vanishes at the end of the story, when Tom reveals Jim's condition as a free man to Huck, underlining how his plan was all about 'adventure'. As Morrison describes, "Tom Sawyer's silence about Jim's legal status is perverse" and it is perhaps for this reason that Huck decides to not return to his town: Tom is a symbol of that education and civilization that accepts slavery. Huck, whose "cooperation in Jim's dehumanization is not total" and whose morality does not accept the principles of American society, feels he cannot return to his hometown, and decides to continue his journey and reach "the Territory". As Morrison states, "Huck cannot have an enduring relationship with Jim; he refuses one with Tom".[19] In conclusion, Huck refuses not only Jim's paternal love, but also Tom's friendship, since this would exist only within a context of civilization and respect for social rules.

2.3 Language in *Huckleberry Finn*: Twain's employment of Nonstandard American English dialects and his representation of AAVE

As shown above, various scholars focused on *Huckleberry Finn* from a socio-cultural perspective, bringing up many questions, such as the contradictory beliefs at the base of American society over moral education and enslavement, the social and moral conflict between good and bad, and the white Americans' belief of blacks' racial

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[18] Arac Jonathan, "Adventures of Huckleberry Finn", p. 848.
[19] Toni Morrison, *in Context Coursepack*, p. 160.

inferiority. However, other scholars analyzed this novel from a linguistic point of view, focusing on the significance of the language used by the author. In fact, the many vernacular languages used by Twain are a fundamental part of *Huckleberry Finn* since they do not only evoke realism in the story, but they are also an integral part of the characterization of each figure present in the novel. The realism of the world built by Twain can be proved not only by the choice of dialects, but also by how they are employed. The structure of each character's background and behavior is based on an accurate selection and representation of different language varieties spoken in Missouri, making the use of dialect the trademark of *Huckleberry Finn*. In the aim to analyze how Italian translators managed this language diversity, it is of prime importance focusing on the source language by showing its particularities and the issues that may generate from it.

Over the years, several scholars dedicated their time to analyze the language used by Twain in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, and most of them began their argumentation by taking into consideration Twain's statement at the beginning of the novel:

> "In this book a number of dialects are used, to wit: the Missouri negro dialect; the extremest form of the backwoods South-Western dialect; the ordinary "Pike-County" dialect; and four modified varieties of this last. The shadings have not been done in a hap-hazard fashion, or by guess- work; but pains-takingly, and with the trustworthy guidance and support of personal familiarity with these several forms of speech. I make this explanation for the reason that without it many readers would suppose that all these characters were trying to talk alike and not succeeding."[20]

This statement, entitled 'Explanatory', is indeed a descriptive declaration of the author's linguistic choices: its aim is not only to inform the reader about the language variation he or she may encounter throughout the reading, but also to underline the carefulness and meticulousness in using these language varieties. Twain lists the different dialects and language varieties employed to prevent the reader from perceiving the work as just a jocose attempt to represent the various population of Missouri: this gives the idea that the author wants to preserve his work from ridiculousness and to highlight the truthfulness of the languages used. Raphael Berthele, in explaining the most relevant problems that translators have to face when translating this novel into German, takes into consideration the same statement, declaring that "[Twain] identifies his dialect use as a deliberate choice

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[20] Mark Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*, p. 2.

motivated by the goal of literary realism. The authenticity of his regionally rooted Missouri characters is created – and explicitly signaled – by written representations of how they 'really' speak".[21] The declaration of 'linguistic accuracy' made by the author intrigued many scholars, who dedicated their research on locating dialects and language varieties in Twain's work to verify his statement. Among the many scholars that wrote linguistically oriented studies of *Huckleberry Finn*, of particular relevance is David Carkeet's article 'The Dialects in *Huckleberry Finn'*, in which he analyzes each character's speech in order to verify the presence of the seven dialects named by Twain in the Explanatory. His thesis is based on the assumption that Huck's dialect can be considered the 'norm' from which the variations spring forth. In this perspective, Carkeet compares Huck's speech with that of each character, taking into consideration not only the differences or similarities between them, but also other parameters such as Twain's researches and other literary works, in order to evaluate the truthfulness of the dialect in question. Carkeet's comparative analysis – which takes into account three main parameters, such as phonology, grammar and lexicon – has shown several relevant results, of which two of particular importance. One of the first comparisons developed by Carkeet is the one between Huck and Jim: although the two dialects spoken by these characters are grammatically and lexically quite similar – Jim's speech additionally shows the *done*-perfect construction, deletion of the copula and an -*s* suffix on the second-person present-tense verbs –, they differ phonologically, since Jim shows several phonological particularities, such as the loss of r, palatalization, voiced *th* with *d*, that Huck does not have. The most relevant factor of this comparison regards the frequency of producing non-standard forms: even though both vernaculars are systematic, Jim's use of it is more rule-based, as Carkeet explains: "where Huck and Jim share a rule producing non-standard forms, Jim's use of the rule is much higher in frequency".[22] This analysis does not only highlight the accuracy of Twain in reproducing Black English, but it also shows how AAVE is represented as a Non-Standard American English dialect having specific phonological and grammatical rules. The systematic use of this dialect by Jim's character is an important factor that will be taken into consideration in the comparison of the Italian retranslations.

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[21] Raphael Berthele, "Translating African-American Vernacular English into German: The problem of 'Jim' in Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn'*, *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, IV, 4, 2000, pp. 590.
[22] David Carkeet, "The Dialects in *Huckleberry Finn*", *American Literature*, LI, 3, 1979, p. 317.

In this perspective, it is important to mention the study conducted by Shelley Fisher Fishkin in 1994: in her *Was Huck Black?:Mark Twain and African-American Voices*, Fishkin analyzes the influence of African American culture in one of Mark Twain's major novel *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. For this study, Fishkin combines close readings of published and unpublished writings by Twain with intensive biographical and historical research and insights gleaned from linguistics, literary theory, and folklore, in order to highlight the role of African-American speech played in the genesis of *Huckleberry Finn*. One of the most relevant parts of Fishkin's investigation focuses on Twain's creation of Huck's character and speech, arguing that Twain took inspiration for the main protagonist of his novel from a black boy. Fishkin reports a passage from Twain's *Autobiography* in which he affirms that he based the figure of Huck Finn on Tom Blankeship, the poor-white son of the local drunkard, known to be the most uneducated and insubordinate boy of the town of Hannibal. According to Fishkin, the description of Tom Blankeship indeed resembles Huck's status as emarginated boy, but what does not leak out from Twain's report is Tom's way of talk, which in Huck is "the most memorable thing about him".[23] In fact, Fishkin suggests that Twain, maybe unconsciously, based Huck's character on a black boy. In 1874 Twain published an article in the *New York Times* entitled 'Sociable Jimmy', in which he used a child as principal voice for the first time: Twain reproduces the speech of a black boy, Jimmy, whom he had really met in 1871 or 1872 in a small town in the Midwest. Twain was amazed by the way the boy spoke and told his story, and he reports this curious encounter in a letter to his wife, speaking of a 'revelation'. As Fishkin reports, Twain wished to remember that chit chat with Jimmy, because it was "the most artless, sociable, and exhaustless talker"[24] he had ever met. In order to strengthen her thesis, Fishkin structures her investigation on a close comparison between Jimmy's and Huck's voice, highlighting the main points of convergence between the two speakers. In fact, although the two voices are represented differently on a phonological level, Fishkin underlines that phonology is not the only element to characterize a voice, since there are other important elements in it: "Voice involves syntax and diction, the cadences and rhythms of a speaker's sentences, the flow of the prose, the structures of the mental processes, the rapport with the audience, the

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[23] Shelley Fisher Fishkin, *Was Huck Black?*, p. 376.
[24] Mark Twain, "Sociable Jimmy", New York Times, 29 November 1874, quoted in Shelley Fisher Fishkin, *Was Huck Black?*, p. 376.

characteristic stance as regards the material related".[25] In this perspective, according to Fishkin, even though Jimmy's dialect is clearly similar to African Americans' dialect and thus to Jim's speech, he is more similar to that of Huck in other aspects. One of the first similarities observed by Fishkin concerns the two boys' character traits and topics of conversation: for both of them, the world governed by adults is obscure and confusing to the point that they sometimes do not understand jokes or sarcasm. This aspect becomes particularly relevant in the story of *Huckleberry Finn*, since Huck's naivety is not simply one of his personal traits, but it is a narrative device that allows to "unmask the hypocrisy and pretensions"[26] he is surrounded with. Another aspect common to the two boys is the aversion to violence and cruelty: as Fishkin reports in her study, Jimmy has difficulty talking about how to kill a chicken, admitting that that memory hunted him in his sleep: "I can't kill a chicken-well, I kin wring its neck off, cuz dat don't make 'em no sufferin scacely; but I can't take and chop dey heads off, like some people kin. It makes me feel so-so-well, I kin see dat chicken nights so's I can't sleep".[27] Similarly, Huck remembers with disgust the murdering scene during the feud, saying that he dreamt about it several times: "It made me so sick I most feel out of the tree. I ain't agoing to tell all that happened-it would make me sick again if I was to do that. I wish I hadn't ever come ashore that night, to see such things. I ain't ever going to get shut of them-lots of times I dream about them".[28] Jimmy and Huck do not only share the same fears and uncertainties: similarities between the two boys can be also found in the way they organize a narration, particularly in their attitude to engage their listeners' attention by articulating a long, name-filled family narrative. As Fishkin notes, in neither case the described family is the speaker's own. In fact, Jimmy describes the family that owns the inn in which he works, while Huck pretends to describe his own to the Grangerfords and to other characters he bumps into during his journey, always changing his version depending on the situation he has to face. Fishkin underlines that the two boys share the same family model, since both of them have fathers affected by alcohol problems that they "describe with unembarrassed frankness".[29] Fishkin notices other similarities between Jimmy and Huck,

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[25] Shelley Fisher Fishkin, *Was Huck Black?*, p. 377.
[26] Ivi, p. 379.
[27] Mark Twain, "Sociable Jimmy"
[28] Mark Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*, p 110-111.
[29] Shelley Fisher Fishkin, *Was Huck Black?*, p. 381.

such as the same amusement in clocks, and they are both found to own dead animals at home. As it can be noticed, the common aspects between Jimmy and Huck are several and significant: Twain's decision to write about his encounter with Jimmy and to report the black boy's stories with all his cadences and rhythms, reveals to be fundamental for the writer's imagination. Fishkin reports that Twain's idea of a child narrator raised exponentially after the publication of 'Sociable Jimmy': Twain's intentions were to tell a boy's story, and he acknowledges that the proper way to do it would have been letting himself tell the story "act[ing] merely as his amanuensis".[30] In Fishkin's opinion, Twain accomplished his goals in composing *Huckleberry Finn*, making Huck tell his own story.

Focusing more deeply on the language of *Huckleberry Finn,* Carkeet's comparative analysis shows another meaningful aspect: the totality of the collected data leads to single out nine different dialects, two more than those stated by Twain. In fact, Carkeet notices that there are some dialect representations that differ in the latter half of the novel and in the chapters 12-14 interpolation – which was written in June 1883 –, from the first part of the novel – written between July 1876 and June 1880[31]: the differences concern Jim and Huck's Pap, but they affect Huck's character in particularl. The inconsistency in the protagonist's speech appears both of the phonological and grammatical level: the change particularly regards the shift from standard forms to non-standard forms, such as *fur* (*for*), *pison* (*poison*), *kinder* (*kind of*) for what concerns phonology, while the grammatical changes regard possessive pronouns (*ours, yours*), which are then spelled with the nonstandard *–n* suffix (*ourn*, *yourn*), and redundant comparative marking (e.g, *more easier*).[32] According to Carkeet, Twain, after three years of separation from *Huckleberry Finn*, recollected imperfectly part of the details of the dialects he represented in the first part of the novel; moreover, he did not observe and correct these incongruities in revising the novel before publishing it. Despite these inconsistencies, Carkeet concludes his argumentation highlighting that, even though there are more than seven distinct dialects in the novel, Twain managed anyway to put in writing and make real what he had in mind. In fact, he expresses his intentions by writing the Explanatory: although the last sentence may be perceived as a sort of joke, the collected data by Carkeet – and other treatments of *Huckleberry Finn*, such as Pederson's

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[30] Shelley Fisher Fishkin, *Was Huck Black?*, p. 382.
[31] David Carkeet, "The Dialects in *Huckleberry Finn*", p. 327.
[32] Ivi, p. 328.

"Negro Speech in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*", in which he find concrete links between the dialects in the novel and the real dialects of actual Missouri speakers – and the notes of Twain on his characters, confirm the author's honest interest in reproducing a truthful linguistic context. As Carkeet states: "Clemens's abiding interest in folk speech, his impatience with Harte's use of dialect, and his working notes on the dialects in *Huckleberry Finn* all point to earnestness in the representation of dialect in this novel - as does the evidence of extensive revision of dialect spellings".[33]

Another sign of Twain's intentions to create an accurate linguistic context can be found in a particular detail in the Explanatory: by listing the dialects he meant to reproduce, he specifies the presence of the 'Pike Country' dialect, with four variations of it. Although Carkeet finds Twain's wrong about the seven dialects, he also shows how the 'Pike Country' language variation is so minimal, and thus accurate, that the reader can wonder why Twain made such a statement. After identifying the characters who are the Pike Country dialect speakers, Carkeet notices that the language variation is based on the presence of AAVE elements. Huck's speech belongs to the original 'Pike Country' dialect, while the four varieties are each spoken by the thieves on the Sir Walter Scott, the King, the Bricksville Loafers and the Phelps. All of them, except for Tom's uncles, are represented as shameful and morally objectionable figures, and their speeches show presence of AAVE specificities: the Bricksville Loafers' use of *gwyne* occurs also in the speech of slaves, the King's speech presents palatalization and the thieves lose r as in Jim's speech (*befo'*, *yo'*). Although this might be perceived as a way to 'lower' the characters' representation by inserting linguistic elements related to the black slaves, a closer analysis shows that Twain's linguistic choice aims to reproduce the reality, since white Southern speakers share several linguistic particularities with black speakers. As Carkeet affirms, "the speech of lower-class rural whites in the South shares a great deal with the speech of blacks. In *Huckleberry Finn*, *gwyne*, palatalization, and *r*-lessness are for both blacks and whites physical signals of low social status, and for whites only physical signals of 'substandard' morals. These white characters may share something of Jim's dialect, but they do not share in his goodness".[34]

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[33] David Carkeet, "The Dialects in *Huckleberry Finn*", p. 331.
[34] Ivi, p. 331-332.

Taking into consideration the last aspect emerged from Carkeet's study, another important element to analyze is how the language variety may affect the representation of the characters in the novel. As I mentioned before, the novel presents several contradictory aspects that are related to the racial and stereotyping representation of black people: the characterization of Jim and his development throughout the story presents aspects that rely on the minstrel tradition. In addition, Huck's figure and his relationship with Jim raise significant issues in terms of racial discrimination: Huck's will to save the black slave contrasts with his social conviction and Christian-based morality. Thus, it is important to take into consideration the critical application that dialect may have on the characterization of the figures in the novel. Lisa Cohen Minnick in 'Articulating Jim' attempted to make such an analysis: in order to understand if Mark Twain lapses into stereotypes in formulating Jim's character, Minnick examines first the linguistic features of Jim's speech to determine whether or not they follow the phonological and grammatical rules of AAVE. The linguistic data collected from the analysis of Jim's speech show that they do not totally conform to each rule of AAVE, in the sense that Jim's speech presents some documented features of AAVE and some elements that do not belong to AAVE. However, this cannot be confirmed a priori as a sign of inaccuracy; on the contrary, language variety is common in real speakers, since no speaker of Black English can incorporate every feature associated with this dialect into his or her speech.[35] Two tables illustrate the frequency of specific features of AAVE in Jim's speech. The first concerns the phonological features in Jim's speech: Minnick lists the main phonological features of AAVE, showing an example for each of the listed phonological features from the character' speech, followed by the relative frequency of occurrence for each feature. The second table presents the grammatical features in Jim's speech: she lists the main grammatical features of AAVE, determining which features is present in the character's speech, and if so, in what percentage. In the first table, most of the listed features present high frequency of use – between 82% and 100% – while the second table shows that twelve of the seventeen documented features are present in the character's speech. In conclusion, Minnick states: "The consistency with which Twain incorporates dialectal features in Jim's speech throughout the novel, along with minimal examples of stereotyped features, reveal that Twain was a sensitive (if not flawless) interpreter of the

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[35] Lisa Minnick, *Dialect and Dichotomy*, p. 64.

phonology and grammar associated with black speech".[36] In fact, the collected data clearly indicate that Jim's speech presents many occurrences of the target features and far fewer instances of nonoccurrence; in addition, the high occurrences for most of the selected phonological and grammatical features show consistency and accuracy from the author.

After demonstrating the linguistic accuracy characterizing Jim's speech, Minnick undertakes the second step of her research, thus researching and evaluating the effects that may arise from the characterization of Jim as an AAVE speaker. One of the first aspects that Minnick considers as an obstacle to the reception of the character, is the rightful acceptance of the dialect by the reader. If Black English is perceived not as a language variety governed by rules but as a set of phonological and grammatical errors, the reception of Jim's speech is almost destined to stereotyping and derision.[37] In addition, the use of 'eye dialect' – the nonstandard respelling of words to suggest dialectal or informal pronunciation – was another aspect interpreted by some scholars as being muddling and deliberately inappropriate: James S. Leonard and Thomas A. Tenney assert that Jim's and other black characters' speech is more marked by extreme forms of eye dialect than the white characters' speech, which makes black speakers be perceived as deviant in comparison to the white speakers.[38] Minnick argues that the thesis of Leonard and Thomas is only partially correct, since the respellings may actually be alternative pronunciations documented as regionally or socially distributed. However, the aspect concerning the regionalism of dialect can be misleading: the research conducted by Susan Tamasi about *Huckleberry Finn* shows that in Huck's speech the alternation of /n/ for /ŋ/ in present-participle forms or in other final unstressed /ŋ/ constructions, or the *g*-dropping never occurs.[39] Although this phonological feature is a very frequent nonstandard articulation, its omission could be due to the fact that it is a widespread feature among many varieties of American English, thus Twain may have assumed that the reader would 'hear' the *–ing* spelling as /n/. This particular aspect is argued by Sumner Ives as part of 'the accepted criteria' of authors' representation of their own regional dialect: an author

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[36] Lisa Minnick, *Dialect and Dichotomy*, p. 66.
[37] Ivi, p. 68.
[38] Leonard, James S. and Thomas A. Tenney. Introduction. Leonard, Tenney, and Davis, p. 5, quoted in Lisa Minnick, *Dialect and Dichotomy*, p. 69.
[39] Susan Tamasi, "Huck Doesn't Sound Like Himself: Consistency in the Literary Dialect of Mark Twain", Language and Literature, X, 2, 2001, pp. 140-141 quoted in Lisa Minnick, *Dialect and Dichotomy,* p. 70.

would use nonstandard respellings to represent dialectal variants that do not occur in their own speech varieties.[40] In this perspective, not representing specific features of a character's speech that may be regional characteristics would not lead to lowering the designated character. However, this thesis fails when considering Jim's figure: Twain respells almost all Jim's articulations of *–ing* words as *–in*, which was a common linguistic feature among Missouri black and white speakers according to Pederson.[41] In this perspective, Twain might have not intended to present Jim as an inferior character to Huck, but representing features common to both of them with respellings only for Jim and standard orthography for Huck, symbolizes detachment and disparity towards Jim, who is perceived as the other.

As it can be noticed, Jim's character has raised several critical points in the debate over Mark Twain's tendency to racial representation of black slaves. Although the many linguistic studies over *Huckleberry Finn* have shown the author's accuracy in the representation of black speech, those critics that focus solely on the portrait of the character find support to the idea that Jim is a stereotyped character. As Minnick affirms in the conclusion of her essay, Jim is not just a comic character, since he can be found involved in some critical and dramatic scenes – a powerful passage is Jim's telling Huck how he discovered his daughter's deafness. However, evidence that Twain portrays Jim stereotypically in order to create humor cannot be overlooked, which results "ironic in a novel that just as clearly satirizes and criticizes racism".[42] How shown above, Twain's creation was partially affected by the racism of antebellum America, even though his linguistic choices are clearly accurate and well-considered for the social context of the novel. The result is a complex story, full of emotions and contradictions typical of the American South: Huck's personal point of view throughout the novel aims to show the cruel reality of a civilization that perceives enslavement as part of its essence, and Jim's character, along with his stereotypical representation, helps to depict the racist South American society, transforming the complexity of the story into the greatness of the novel.

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[40] Sumner Ives, "A Theory of Literary Dialect" in *A Various Language: Perspectives on American Dialects*, ed. Juanita, V. Williamson and Virginia M. Burke, New York, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1971, pp. 145-177 quoted in Lisa Minnick, *Dialect and Dichotomy,* p. 71.
[41] Lee Pederson, "Negro Speech in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*", *Mark Twain Journal,* 13, 1965, p. 3, quoted in Lisa Minnick, *Dialect and Dichotomy,* p. 71.
[42] Lisa Minnick, *Dialect and Dichotomy,* p. 75.

2.4 Retranslations in comparison
2.4.1 The translators' personal perspectives

The linguistic analysis of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* in the previous paragraph showed the complexity of the novel, due to the presence of an accurate representation of Black English and also of a well-defined language variety, although not always perceptible – the variants of the Pike Country dialect differ from each other in just a few phonological features. By focusing on selected passages in which the presence of Black English prevails – thus Jim's character is involved –, the aim of this section will be to highlight the major differences between the three chosen retranslations, trying to pinpoint either the problems posed by some questionable translating choices or the accuracy of the translators' work. Before focusing on specific passages of the source text, I will provide basic information on each translator and to the general presentation of the three target texts, in order to clarify the translator's approach in the years in which he or she worked. The comparative analysis will be based on the 1949 translation by Enzo Giachino for Garzanti[43], the 2000 translation by Franca Cavagnoli for Oscar Mondadori[44], and the one done by Giuseppe Culicchia for Feltrinelli, published in 2005.

Among the three translators chosen for this analysis, Enzo Giachino is the only one for whom little information is available, except for the literary works he translated. His name can be found near the greatest American authors of the nineteenth century: besides translating three works by Mark Twain, he translated *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne and *Leaves of Grass* by Walt Whitman; he also translated three novels by Herman Melville and one by Edgar Allan Poe. In addition, he committed to Butler and Stevensons, nineteenth century authors from the United Kingdom. From the limited information available online, it can be deduced that this Italian translator specialized in the nineteenth century American literature, since he is sometimes mentioned as editor and publisher as well.[45] In the 1976 version of *Huckleberry Finn* for Garzanti, Giachino introduces his translation with a meticulous and rigorous biography of Twain, in which he contextualizes the author's works and his most important themes in the light of the historical period he lived in and his life experiences. The presentation of Twain's life is

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[43] This version of *Huckleberry Finn* was first published by Einaudi in 1963 and then by Garzanti in 1976.

[44] The 2000 version of *Huckleberry Finn* by Franca Cavagnoli was re-published by Oscar Mondadori in 2010.

[45] "Enzo Giachino", in *Goodreads*, < https://www.goodreads.com/search?utf8=%E2%9C%93&query=Enzo+Giachino>, accessed 15 January 2019.

then followed by a detailed analysis of the novel: after a short synopsis of *Tom Sawyer* as the novel anticipating Huck's story, the translator highlights the main topics addressed by Twain and his writing style, and he refers to the language variations in the source text. However, the mention of Twain's innovative linguistic choice is very brief and there is nothing about the translator's linguistic choices or the problems he had to solve in his work.

The second translator involved in this comparison is Franca Cavagnoli, literary translator by trade and professor of translation theory at Università degli Studi di Milano and at ISIT in Milan. She specializes in postcolonial literature in English, with particular interest for Australia, South Africa and the Caribbean islands.[46] In her volume *Il proprio e l'estraneo nella traduzione letteraria di lingua inglese,* she collects essays on novels characterized by English dialects or vernaculars such as Pidgin and Creole. By examining some passages of selected novels, Cavagnoli presents the linguistic peculiarities of the source text and then evaluates the most appropriate translation technique in order to convey the main sense of the passage in the target language. She committed to the translation of works by Toni Morrison, Nadine Gordimer, Jamaica Kincaid, J.M. Coetzee, V. S. Naipaul e David Malouf, and since 1987 she has been working as translator and reviser for the publishing houses Adelphi, Einaudi and Feltrinelli. Her version of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* was published in 2010, for which the translator wrote an introduction entitled 'Compagni di Fiume': in this rich and systematic preface, Cavagnoli tells about the dynamics and the strategies she decided to employ to 'assimilate' all the particularities and shades of the source text in terms of narration and language. In this perspective, she states she has worked on the original manuscript, which allowed her to better understand the rhythm of the narration and, in particular, to comprehend the characterization and speech of some characters, like Jim, through passages and stories omitted in the standard version of the novel. The analysis of the source text led her to identify Huck's speech as an overlapping of two different linguistic norms: the non-coded norm, used to express spontaneity, and the spoken norm, more appropriate to a young almost illiterate boy. The analysis of the two main characters' speech and the significance behind the explanatory written by Twain – she quotes Carkeet's thesis to analyze this

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[46]   "Franca   Cavagnoli",   in   *La   Nota   del   Traduttore*, <http://www.lanotadeltraduttore.it/search.php?action=adv_search&search_title=du&start=100&num_ record_tot=241>, accessed 20 January 2019.

passage – led Cavagnoli to employ specific translating strategies. In fact, she affirms she has privileged parataxis for Huck's character, drawing from colloquial forms of Italian to the youth jargon, and that she has borrowed from different variants of non-standard Italian for Jim's character. For what concerns the other characters, Cavagnoli states she has tried to maintain the differentiation stated in the Explanatory, by using language variants from central and southern Italy belonging to the neo-standard Italian.

Lastly, Giuseppe Culicchia is an Italian writer and translator from Turin. As he stated during an interview, literary translation is not his main occupation, since he is primarily an author of novels and essays. In the same interview, he tells how he began his path as literary translator: the interview he made to Breast Easton Ellis and his literary background, privileging American authors such as Mark Twain, Ernest Hemingway, Francis Scott Fitzgerald and Raymond Carver, led the publishing house Einaudi to ask him to translate *American Psyco*. He confirms he had been worried at the beginning, then he found that experience demanding but also rewarding.[47] In fact, he also translated another Ellis novel, *Luna Park*, and he committed to *Rope Burns: Stories from the Corner* (in the Italian version is *Lo sfidante*) by F.X. Toole for Garzanti. Culicchia's translation of *Huckleberry Finn* was published by Feltrinelli in 2005 and it is introduced by a preface in which the translator explains to the reader the particularity of the source text in terms of language variety. By translating and paraphrasing the 'Explanatory', Culicchia highlights the linguistic particularities of the novel, describing Jim's speech as a great representation of oral language and considering Huck's language as a 'defacement' of English grammar and syntax.[48] He acknowledges the relevance of this aspect and explains his strategy in order to maintain this 'defacement', by avoiding the correction over Huck's mistakes and the use of Italian dialects.

The choice to analyze these Italian versions over the eighteen recorded translations of *Huckleberry Finn* has to do partially with the commercial non-availability of some of them – especially the first translations of the 1930s – and with the need to choose translators with a different background and historical context. Taking into consideration

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[47] "Giuseppe Culicchia: il mestiere di tradurre", in *Rai Cultura*, <http://www.letteratura.rai.it/articoli-programma-puntate/giuseppe-culicchia-il-mestiere-di-tradurre/638/default.aspx>, accessed 20 January 2019.

[48] Mark Twain, *Le Avventure di Huckleberry Finn*, trad. Giuseppe Culicchia, Feltrinelli, 2005, p. 8.

the Retranslation Hypothesis and its critique mentioned in the first chapter, the temporal parameter needs to be considered as important as the parameter evaluating the translator's studies and background. In fact, the decision to compare three translations, two of which belonging to the same historical context, is due to evaluate the translator's work as product of time and of his or her personal choices. In this perspective, the choice fell on Giachino's translation, which occurred in 1949 when Translation Studies were still an 'embryonic' subject and there was no great consideration for the role of the translator, and on Cavagnoli's and Culicchia's, whose translations were produced in the 2000s and just five years apart from each other, but they present several discordant and sometimes 'conflicting' elements, highlighting this different approach to the original text. The differences between the three translations can be already perceived from the introductions or prefaces written by the translators, since they represent the first clue to what may be the translator's approach to the source text. Each introduction highlights different particularities: Giachino writes a very precise preface about Twain's life and novel, but neither he explains the linguistic particularity of the source text, nor he mentions the translation poetics he applied to his Italian version, unlike Culicchia, who writes a brief preface that focuses on his work as a translator in order to produce a target text as close as possible to his interpretation of the source text. Cavagnoli's introduction differs in several ways from the other two: she does not focus much on the plot of the novel, rather on the development of the work by Twain and the criticisms he received. Moreover, by exposing the results of her research on the language of the novel, she explains how her translation process occurred, highlighting her most meaningful translation choices. At a first reading, it may be assumed that two main approaches emerge: Giachino is a scrupulous editor of the novel, but the lack of references to the source language and to his translating process, suggests a translation aiming to avoid the representation of the Other in order to conform it to the target culture. Instead, Culicchia and Cavagnoli, even though their assimilation of the source language is completely different – as it will be discussed later through example from the texts –, explain their own strategies to maintain the language varieties of the source text in order to transmit it in the target text, which suggests a translation strategy conforming to the foreignization approach. From this first stage of analysis, the three translations seem to conform to one of the postulates of the Retranslation Hypothesis indicated by Chesterman, who states "later translations tend to

be closer to the source text".[49] However, as it has been explained in the first chapter, the RH does not take into account a possible 'move backward' given by the translator's personal choices, which can be dictated by many factors, such as the 'anxiety of influence' (Brisset) or by the 'challenge' to diversify his or her own translation from the previous one (Venuti), or by 'idiosyncratic constraints' related to the translator's preferences or the difficulties in interpreting the text (Paloposki).

2.4.2 Le avventure di Huckleberry Finn*: Huck's and Jim's Italian voices*

In order to better understand the translation strategies employed by the three translators, I will now base my comparative analysis on specific passages of *Huckleberry Finn*: the first passage focuses on the dialog between Huck and Jim on the Dauphin's life and the struggles to understand a French speaker. The back and forth exchange between the two protagonists is particularly suitable for the comparison, since it fully shows the different features of both character's dialect. Each sentence has been numbered to create a simple frame of reference.

PASSAGE 1
The Dauphin and the French Language[50]

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1. I told about Louis Sixteenth that got his head cut off in France long time ago; and about his little boy the dolphin, that would a been king, but they took and shut him up in jail, and some say he died there.
2. «Po' little chap.»
3. «But some says he got out and got away, and come to America.»
4. «Dat's good!
5. But he'll be pooty lonesome – dey ain' no kings here, is dey, Huck?»
6. «No.»
7. «Den he cain't git no situation.
8. What he gwyne to do?»
9. «Well, I don't know.
10. Some of them gets on the police, and some of them learns people how to talk French.»
11. «Why, Huck, doan' de French people talk the same way we does?»
12. «*No*, Jim; you couldn't understand a word they said – not a single word.»
13. «Well, now, I be ding-busted!
14. How do dat come?»
15. «*I* don't know; but it's so.
16. I got some of their jabber out of a book.
17. S'pose a man was to come to you and say *Polly-voo franzy* – what would you think?»
18. «I wouldn' think nuff'n; I'd take en bust him over de head.
19. Dad is, if he warn't white: I wouldn' «low no nigger to call me dat.»
20. «Shucks, it ain't calling you anything.
21. It's only saying do you know how to talk French.»

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[49] Andrew Chesterman, "Hypotheses about translation universals", p. 8.
[50] Mark Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*, pp. 77-78.

22. «Well, den, why couldn't he *say* it?»
23. «Why he *is* a – saying it.
24. That's a Frenchman's *way* of saying it.»
25. «Well, it's a blame' ridicklous way, en I doan' want to hear no mo' 'bout it.
26. Dey ain' no sense in it.»

As it has been reported in the previous section, Carkeet states that most of the differences between the two characters' speech are of phonological origin, while their grammar and lexis is quite similar – taking into account the whole novel, I recorded that they both use *ain't* , the double negation and the *a*-prefixing. As it can be noticed from this passage, the most visible aspect is indeed the difference in the transcription of Jim's speech, which is the most marked one between the two speakers. This contrast has also been reported by Peter Douglas in his "Tradurre l'Altro: Uno Studio Diacronico", in which he compares three different Italian translation of *Huckleberry Finn* produced in different historical periods. In his analysis, Douglas collects all the non-standard elements that characterize the two characters in the same dialog, and of particular relevance is the gap in terms of speech representation:

TABLE 1
Phonological and grammatical non-standard features in Huck and Jim's speech[51]

Phonological features		Grammatical Features	
HUCK	JIM	HUCK	JIM
17.S'pose (suppose) [19]	1. Po' (poor) [11]	1. I told about (I told him about) [14]	5. ain' no (aren't any) [4]
1. would a (would have) about) [28]	4. dat's (that's) [20]	1. long time ago (a long time ago) [1]	8. What he gwyne to do (What is he going to do) [12]
	5. pooty (pretty) [7]	3. some says (some say) [12]	11. we does (we do) [14]
	5. dey (there) [34]	3. come (came) [129]	13. I be (I am) [2]
	5. ain' (ain't) [15]	10. some…gets on (some…get in) [12]	14. (How do dat (How does that) [14]
	7. den (then) [29]	10. some…learns (some…learn) [12]	18. wouldn' think nuff'n (wouldn't think anything) [*]
	7. cain't (can't) [2]	20. ain't (isn't) [266]	25. no mo' (any more) [13]
	7. git (get) [53]	23. a-saying (saying) [*a* + ING, 183]	
	8. gwyne (going) [47]		
	11. doan' (don't) [34]		
	11. de (the) [244]		
	13. dat (that) [59]		
	18. wouldn' (wouldn't) [15]		
	18. nuff'n (nothing) [7]		

18. en (and) [215]
19. warn't (wasn't) [214]
19. 'low (allow) [6]
25. ridicklous (ridiculous) [1]
25. mo' (more) [23]
25. 'bout (about) [26]
26. dey (there) [29]

* The double negative is frequent throughout the novel to all characters

As it can be noticed, Douglas pinpoints the distinctive elements of each character's speech and the frequency of use of each feature in the whole novel. This scheme shows that Jim's speech is characterized by a frequent use of eye dialect, which could give the idea that his speech is widely more irregular than Huck's one; however, the collected data about the frequency of use of phonological features shows that Jim's language is systematic. As Douglas reports, the shift from *th-* (Standard English) to *d-* occurs systematically: 'that' becomes *dat,* 'then' becomes *den*, and 'there' becomes *dey*. Moreover, Jim's tendency to elide finals occurs throughout the novel: 'wouldn't' becomes *wouldn'*, while 'nothing' becomes *nuffn'*.[52] The grammatical features collected in the right section of the table show that both characters frequently use non-standard elements in their speech, which happens not only in this passage, but it is a regularity in the whole novel. The third type of elements that need considering are the ones belonging to each characters' idiolect. In this context, one of the most peculiar elements is the current use of *learn* instead of *teach* by Huck: as Douglas states in his research, this non-standard use of the verb *learn* occurs fifteen times in the whole novel, while its standard use occurs seven times.[53]

[52] Peter Douglas, "Tradurre l'Altro", p. 450.
[53] Ivi, p. 448.

TABLE 2
Lexical non-standard features in Huck and Jim's speech[54]

HUCK	JIM
1. dolphin (dauphin) [1]	13. ding-busted (amazed) [1]
10. learns people (teaches people) [15]	13. come (happen/occur) [3]
16. jabber (talk/speech) [3]	18. bust (hit) [2]
7. polly-voo-franzy [1]	25. blame' (really) [12]
20. Shucks (interjection) [14]	25. blame (proves) [1]

Both characters have a varied idiolect, composed also by repetitive terms that help to characterize the language of each character and to distinguish it from that of other characters. Taking into account all the collected data, two aspects need consideration: on one hand, the major difference between the two protagonists is clearly the phonological representation of their speech. On the other, Twain's representation of dialects and each characters' idiolect is precise and systematic. In this perspective, the author codifies precisely each character's speech, which means that, in terms of translation, ignoring or misrepresenting the characteristic forms of Huck and Jim's speech would not only contradict the intentions of the author, but it would seriously threaten to compromise the representation of the voice of the marginalized.[55]

After analyzing the source text, I will now consider the three translation of the selected passage, focusing on how they represent the language diversification between Huck and Jim.

COMPARISON 1
The Dauphin and the French Language

GIACHINO (1949) [56]	CAVAGNOLI (2000) [57]	CULICCHIA (2005) [58]
1. Gli parlo di Luigi Sedicesimo, che gli avevano tagliato la testa in Francia, tanto tempo fa, e del suo bambino, il Delfino, che doveva diventar anche lui	1. Ho parlato di Luigi 16, quello che tanto tempo fa gli hanno tagliato la testa in Francia; e del suo figlioletto, il delfino, che doveva diventare re ma l'hanno	1. Gli ho detto di Luigi Sedicesimo che gli avevano tagliato la testa in Francia un mucchio di tempo fa. E di suo figlio, il Delfino, che doveva diventare re pure lui

[54] Peter Douglas, "Tradurre l'Altro", p. 448.

[55] Ivi, p. 451.

[56] Mark Twain, *Le Avventure di Huckleberry Finn*, trad. Enzo Giacchino (1949), Giulio Einaudi Editore, 1963, p. 91.

[57] Mark Twain, *Le Avventure di Huckleberry Finn*, trad. Franca Cavagnoli (2000), Oscar Mondadori, 2010, pp. 99-100.

[58] Mark Twain, *Le Avventure di Huckleberry Finn*, trad. Giuseppe Culicchia, pp. 86-87.

re, ma l'hanno preso, e chiuso in prigione, dove certi dicono che è morto.	preso e l'hanno schiaffato in galera e certi dicono che è morto lì.	ma l'hanno preso e messo in prigione, e c'era chi diceva che lì era morto.
2. – Povero piccolo!	2. «Poverino.»	2. «Povero lui piccolo di ragazzo!»
3. – Ma altri dicono che è uscito, è potuto scappare e è venuto in America.	3. «Ma certi dicono che è riuscito a scappare e è venuto in America.»	3. «Ma altri dicono che è scappato, e che è venuto qui in America.»
4. – Così va meglio.	4. «Bel colpo!	4. «Questo bene!
5. Ma certo che si sentirà piuttosto solo. Qui non ci son mica dei re, vero, Huck?	5. Ma sarà solo soletto – qua non ce ne sono mica di re, vero Huck?»	5. Ma qui lui sente solo solissimo, che qui non stare re nossignore, eh, Huck?»
6. – No.	6. «No.»	6. «No.»
7. – Allora non può farsi una posizione.	7. «Allora non potrà farsi una posizione.	7. «Allora niente lui può fare.
8. Cosa può fare?	8. Che farà?»	8. Che può fare?»
9. – Be', non so.	9. «Be', non lo so.	9. «Boh, non lo so.
10. Alcuni fanno i poliziotti, altri imparano alla gente a parlare francese.	10. Certi entrano nella polizia, e certi imparano alla gente a parlare francese.»	10. Certi fanno i poliziotti, e certi imparano alla gente come si parla francese.»
11. – Come, Huck? Ma i francesi non parlano come noi?	11. «Ma come, Huck, i francesi non parlano mica come noi?»	11. «Perché, Huck, i francesi non parla come noi nossignore? »
12. – No, Jim, non capiresti una parola di quello che dicono, non una sola parola.	12. «No, Jim; non capiresti una parola di quel che dicono, non una sola parola.»	12. «No, Jim, tu non capivi una sola parola di quello che dicono, non una sola parola.»
13. – Be', adesso, che sia benedetto!	13. «Mi prenda un colpo!	13. «Beh, questa sta grossa grossissima!
14. Come mai capita una cosa così?	14. E come mai?»	14. E perché?»
15. – Non lo so, ma è così.	15. «Non lo so, ma è così.	15. «Non lo so, ma è così.
16. Io ho imparato un po' del loro parlare da un libro.	16. L'ho trovato in un libro come parlano.	16. Io ho imparato un po' delle loro chiacchiere da un libro.
17. Supponi che un uomo viene da te e ti dice: *Pallé-vú-fransé*, cosa ne pensi?	17. Immagina che un uomo viene da te e ti fa: '*Parlé-vufransé?*' Tu che pensi?»	17. Fai finta che un uomo viene da te e ti fa, *Pallé-vúfransé* … che ne pensi?»
18. – Niente ne penso, ecco. Lo prendo e gli mollo una bella pacca sulla zucca, beninteso se non è un bianco.	18. «Non penso niente; ci do una botta in testa. Cioè, se non è un bianco.	18. «Me pensa niente, me dà lui scapaccione su testa. Sissignore, se lui non sta bianco.
19. Vi assicuro che nessun negro se la sente di insultarmi così.	19. Non ce lo permetto a un negro di chiamarmi così.»	19. Me non permette negro insulta me così, nossignore. »

20. – Ma non è un insulto!	20. «Cribbio! Non ti sta chiamando in nessun modo.	20. «Ma che dici? Non è un insulto.
21. È solo per chiederti se sai parlare francese.	21. Sta solo dicendo: 'Parlate francese?'»	21. È solo per chiederti se sai parlare francese.»
22. – Allora, perché non poteva dirmelo così?	22. «Be', allora perché non lo dice?»	22. «Embè? Perché lui non dice me così?»
23. – Ma te l'ha detto.	23. «Ma come, è ben quello che sta dicendo.	23. «Ma perché te l'ha detto.
24. Come lo dicono i francesi.	24. I francesi lo dicono in un altro modo.»	24. Nel modo come lo dicono i francesi.»
25. – Be', è un modo proprio da scemi di dirlo e non voglio neanche più sentirne parlare.	25. «Be', è proprio un modo ridicolo, per la miseria. Non ne voglio più sentir parlare.	25. «Beh, me pensa che sta modo scemo scemissimo di dice così, e me no vuole più sentire, nossignore.
26. Non c'è senso in una cosa del genere.	26. Non ha senso.»	26. Me pensa cosa senza senso.»

At first glance, the main difference is between Giachino's translation and the other two: as it can be seen, the oldest translation presents a linguistic homogeneity, since there are few differences between Huck and Jim's speech in terms of register, syntax and lexis. In fact, both protagonists use colloquialisms to begin a sentence, such as *Be'* (9, 25), and they sometimes change from a colloquial register to a more formal one: according to Douglas, *Supponi* is not the most suitable translation for *S'pose* (17), while *beninteso* (18) and *Vi assicuro* (19) highlight a sudden change of register that contrasts with Jim's informal and spontaneous way to talk. Jim's language mostly differs from Huck's in terms of syntax: Huck speaks a standard Italian, while in Jim's speech all the verbal forms are reduced to the present indicative, including the conditional structure in the source text (18,19). Douglas argues that such a simplification of Jim's language may be a compensation strategy to underline differences in the two characters' speech in syntactic terms rather than in phonological terms. In fact, the difficulty to represent phonological variations in the target language would explain the strategy to simplify Jim's syntax, which however conflicts with the aforementioned changes of register, making the presentation of the character even more problematic.[59]

The second translation clearly presents a different approach: the language used by the two characters is rich in colloquialisms and the informal register is maintained throughout the whole dialog. In fact, the way of talking of both characters presents typical

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[59] Peter Douglas, "Tradurre l'Altro", p. 452.

elements of the oral forms of Italian: of particular relevance is the frequent use of interjections and way of sayings belonging to the spoken Italian, such as *Bel colpo* for *Dat's good!* (4) and *Mi prenda un colpo!* for *I be ding-busted!* (13). This aspect particularly differs Cavagnoli's translation from the other two, since the use of typical interjections of spoken Italian are frequently used also when the source text does not present one. A clear example is the sentence *Well, it's a <u>blame'</u> ridicklous way* (25): Cavagnoli stresses Jim's judgment with an interjection expressing annoyance – *Be', è proprio un modo ridicolo, <u>per la miseria</u>* –, while the other two translators maintain the syntactic structure of the source text, translating it with an adverb – Giachino: *Be', è un modo <u>proprio</u> da scemi di dirlo*; Culicchia: *Beh, me pensa che sta modo scemo <u>scemissimo</u> di dice così*. In this perspective, it is important to underline that idioms and metaphorical expressions are often employed throughout the whole novel, particularly in Huck's language as narrator. Here are three examples of ways of sayings and their translations:

COMPARISON 2
Extracts from *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

Source Text	GIACHINO (1949)	CAVAGNOLI (2000)	CULICCHIA (2005)
A. So she'd had a rough time.[60]	A. Così capisco che non aveva avuto una navigazione molto tranquilla.[61]	A. Doveva proprio aver visto i sorci verdi.[62]	A. Doveva averne viste di tutti i colori.[63]
B. Well, I felt sheepish enough to be took in so,[64]	B. Be', io mi sento abbastanza stupido, per essermi lasciato turlupinare così[65]	B. Be', io mi sentivo piuttosto imbarazzato che m'avevano preso per il naso a quel modo[66]	B. Beh, mi sono sentito abbastanza stupido, per esserci cascato a quel modo[67]
C. …and it most scared the livers and lights out of me. [68]	C. …e mi dà un tale giro al sangue che non capivo più niente [69]	C. …e così mi son preso una strizza boia. [70]	C. …e per un pelo non ci rimanevo[71]

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[60] Mark Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*, p. 87.
[61] Mark Twain, *Le Avventure di Huckleberry Finn*, trad. Enzo Giacchino, p. 96.
[62] Mark Twain, *Le Avventure di Huckleberry Finn*, trad. Franca Cavagnoli, p. 105.
[63] Mark Twain, *Le Avventure di Huckleberry Finn*, trad. Giuseppe Culicchia, p. 91.
[64] Mark Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*, p. 152.
[65] Mark Twain, *Le Avventure di Huckleberry Finn*, trad. Enzo Giacchino, p. 168.
[66] Mark Twain, *Le Avventure di Huckleberry Finn*, trad. Franca Cavagnoli, p. 183.
[67] Mark Twain, *Le Avventure di Huckleberry Finn*, trad. Giuseppe Culicchia, p. 105.
[68] Mark Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*, p. 206.
[69] Mark Twain, *Le Avventure di Huckleberry Finn*, trad. Enzo Giacchino, p. 229.
[70] Mark Twain, *Le Avventure di Huckleberry Finn*, trad. Franca Cavagnoli, p. 245.
[71] Mark Twain, *Le Avventure di Huckleberry Finn*, trad. Giuseppe Culicchia, p. 205.

As it can be noticed, each translator has a different approach: most of the time, Giachino suggests a translation that is too formal for the register used by Huck in the source text. Besides using standard Italian, Giachino sometimes uses terms too sophisticated (*turlupinare*) that conflict with the rough and poorly educated Huck character. Instead, Cavagnoli and Culicchia base their translation on the use of idioms and metaphorical expressions that are common to spoken Italian, but in a different way. In fact, Culicchia uses a vocabulary widely used in spoken Italian and extremely current nowadays. Instead, Cavagnoli uses idioms that may seem less common, but they evoke images and feelings that emphasize better the emotions experienced by Huck. *Aver visto i sorci verdi* (A) is an idiom that became part of spoken Italian during the Fascist period: a special unit of the Italian Royal Air Force, whose coat of arms was three green mice, was so famous for its strength in fighting skills that seeing them flying meant that a terrible battle was going to happen.[72] *Averne viste di tutti i colori* is an idiomatic expression that means having had many life experiences, which might be negative or not.[73] Cavagnoli's translation provokes a feeling of fear and terror more amplified than Culicchia's, transmitting a more similar feeling to the original sentence *So she'd had a rough time*. For what concerns the sentence C, *mi son preso una strizza boia* is clearly less common than *per un pelo non ci rimanevo*, but Cavagnoli's translation seems more appropriate for two aspects: on one hand, it evokes the same sensation of physical pain felt by Huck – in the source text Huck describes his feelings as if his *livers* were taken out of him, while in the target text *strizza* means an intestinal spasm. On the other hand, the adjective *boia* is a very common term in the youth jargon, which helps to maintain Huck's characterization of a young and rough boy.

This aspect is particularly important in Cavagnoli's translation, as the youth jargon is part of the linguistic devices employed to distinguish Huck from Jim: *Shucks!* (20) is an interjection that appears different times in the whole novel, and Cavagnoli translated it as *Cribbio!*, a typical Italian exclamation particularly used by teenagers in the past. In addition, Cavagnoli seems to maintain the rich idiolect of Huck by using a metaphorical

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[72] Sala, Alessandro, "Perché si dice 'far vedere i sorci verdi'", in *Corriere*, < https://www.corriere.it/cronache/18_gennaio_31/perche-si-dice-far-vedere-sorci-verdi-8a456de0-06b0-11e8-8b64-d2626c604009.shtml?refresh_ce-cp>, accessed 20 February 2019.

[73] "Vederne di tutti i colori", in *Dizionari.Corriere*, < http://dizionari.corriere.it/dizionario-modi-di-dire/C/colore.shtml#10>, accessed 20 February 2019.

language: besides the idioms aforementioned, it can be noticed that Cavagnoli's sentence 1 differs from the other by the use of the verb 'schiaffare in prigione', which gives the idea that Huck uses an unconventional terminology for what he is narrating. These elements do not appear in Jim's speech, who, however, presents a different syntactic structure from Huck's: it differs by a frequent use of prepositions typical of oral discourse, such as the use of the pronoun 'ci' (18), which becomes 'ce' before personal and demonstrative pronouns (19). Another typical element of oral discourse used for Jim's speech is the adverb 'mica', used to reinforce a denial: (5) *dey ain 'no kings here* becomes *qua non ce ne sono mica di re*, (11) *doan' de French people talk the same way we does it?* is translated as *i francesi non parlano mica come noi?*.

In the third translation, Culicchia adopts a translating approach for Huck's speech similar to that of Cavagnoli: his way of talking is rich in colloquialisms, which are even more contemporary and more rooted in the time of publication. This feature can be noticed in the aforementioned idioms – (B) *abbastanza stupido*, *esserci cascato*, (C) *per un pelo* – and in the dialog between the two characters – (1) *un mucchio di tempo fa* ; (9) *Boh, non lo so*.

However, the most distinguishable features of Culicchia's work is the translation of Jim's speech: like the two previous translations, this version adopts a non-standard syntactic-grammatical approach, rather than represent the non-standard phonological variations of the source text, but the result is an extremely deviant language from standard Italian. In fact, Jim always declines verbs in the third-person singular, even when he is referring to himself – (18) *Me pensa niente, me dà lui scappaccione su testa* – or to other persons – (11) *Perché Huck, i francesi non parla come noi?* In particular, Jim's lines show other singularities, like the incorrect use of the object pronoun *me:* when Jim speaks about himself, he uses it as a personal pronoun – which occurs in the sentence 18 and also in (19) *me non permette* and (25,26) *me pensa*. *Me* is also used incorrectly as object pronoun, since in (19) *insulta me così* and (22) *lui non dice me così*, the right form would be *mi* or *a me*. For what concerns Jim's idiolect, his speech presents the repetition of adjectives to form the absolute superlative, as in (5) *solo solissimo*; (13) *grossa grossissima*; (25) *scemo scemissimo*. This 'overuse' of lexis to stress Jim's idiolect appears also in (2) *Povero lui piccolo di ragazzo!* : as it can be noticed, there is an exaggeration in the translation of Jim's judgment that not only emphasizes his incorrect

language, but it also conveys a deviant characterization of Jim, which extremely diverges from the original one in terms of language and personality. In fact, Douglas affirms that such lexical and grammatical choices tend to present Jim as a childish and foreign character, giving the impression that Jim's native language is not the same as his interlocutor Huck.[74] Culicchia's characterization of Jim's speech presents another relevant aspect: the use of the expressions *sissignore* (18) and *nossignore* (11, 19, 25) marks the difference of social status between Huck and Jim, underlining Jim's inferiority towards his white companion Huck. Even though this linguistic device may be useful to recall the racial division between whites and blacks of the 1850s South America, it may also give the idea of a relationship master-slave rather than a relation between two friends.

One common feature to all three translations is the preservation of Huck's semantic mistake in using 'learn' instead of 'teach' (10). According to Douglas, it is an idiosyncratic use, in line with Huck's age and low level of education.[75] Thus, in all three Italian versions the error is preserved by using 'imparare' instead of 'insegnare'. As mentioned above, the incorrect use of *teach* often occurs in the ST, so much so that its correct use is far more infrequent. Given the above, it is important to consider the employment of *imparare* in the TTs when it is not the literal translation of *learn*. This case happens in the line 16:

COMPARISON 3
Focus on Passage 1

SOURCE TEXT	GIACHINO (1949)	CAVAGNOLI (2000)	CULICCHIA (2005)
10. Some of them gets on the police, and some of them learns people how to talk French.»	10. Alcuni fanno i poliziotti, altri imparano alla gente a parlare francese.	10. Certi entrano nella polizia, e certi imparano alla gente a parlare francese.»	10. Certi fanno i poliziotti, e certi imparano alla gente come si parla francese.»
16. I got some of their jabber out of a book.	16. Io ho imparato un po' del loro parlare da un libro.	16. L'ho trovato in un libro come parlano.	16. Io ho imparato un po' delle loro chiacchiere da un libro.

As it can be seen, in line 10 occurs the verb *learn*, whose incorrect use is translated in all three Italian texts accordingly. *Imparare* is also used in Giachino's and Culicchia's translation of line 16, where the main verb is *get (something) out of (something)*. Instead,

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[74] Peter Douglas, "Tradurre l'Altro", p. 446.
[75] Ivi, p. 445.

Cavagnoli proposes a different translation, using the verb *trovare*. Cavagnoli seems to have approached differently the source text, thinking that there might be a reason why Huck did not use *learn* in its correct form to inform his interlocutor that he has some knowledge of the French language. In fact, among its many meanings, in this context *get something out of something* conveys a more materialist idea of learning, that is, extracting a piece of information and keeping it in mind. In this perspective, it may be argued that Huck's limited knowledge of French is due to a cursory reading of a French book rather than a careful study of the foreign language, which would also better represent his being an unschooled kid. Thus, *L'ho trovato in un libro come parlano* suggests an idea of a casual and basic study of French, which is similar to the main idea of *I got some of their jabber out of a book*. Even though Giachino's and Culicchia's translations do not completely distort the main meaning of line 16, the employment of *imparare* in its correct form after its incorrect use in line 10, risks to give a fuzzy characterization of Huck's speech.

The second passage of this comparative analysis deals with Jim's story of how he discovered his daughter's deafness. This passage shows Huck's and Jim's characters from a different perspective, since both of them appear as narrators. In fact, Huck introduces the sequence by noticing Jim's sadness due to the nostalgia for his family. Then, Jim tells his sad story of how he once mistreated his daughter and how he felt guilty towards her. This passage gives the possibility to observe and analyze linguistic details that probably do not appear in chitchats or dialogs. Due to the length of the sequence, I will split the analysis into two parts, focusing on Huck in the first part, and on Jim in the second one.

PASSAGE 2.1
Jim's daugther[76]

1. I went to sleep, and Jim didn't call me when it was my turn. He often done that.

2. When I waked up just at daybreak he was sitting there with his head down betwixt his knees, moaning and mourning to himself. I didn't take notice nor let on. I knowed what it was about.

3. He was thinking about his wife and his children, away up yonder, and he was low and homesick; because he hadn't ever been away from home before in his life; and I do believe he cared just as much for his people as white folks does for their'n.

4. It don't seem natural, but I reckon it's so. He was often moaning and mourning that way nights, when he judged I was asleep, and saying,

5. "Po' little 'Liza-beth! po' little Johnny! it's mighty hard; I spec' I ain't ever gwyne to see you no mo', no mo'!"

[76] Mark Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*, pp. 158-159.

6. He was a mighty good nigger, Jim was. But this time I somehow got to talking to him about his wife and young ones; and by and by he says:

COMPARISON 4.1
Jim's daugther

GIACHINO (1949) [77]	CAVAGNOLI (2000) [78]	CULICCHIA (2005) [79]
1. Poi vado a dormire, e Jim non mi sveglia quando è il mio turno. Faceva sovente così.	1. Sono andato a dormire e, quand'è stato il mio turno, Jim non m'ha chiamato. Lo faceva spesso.	1. Me ne sono andato a dormire, e quand'è arrivato il mio turno Jim non mi ha svegliato. Lo faceva spesso.
2. Quando mi sveglio, all'alba, lo trovo seduto con la testa tra le ginocchia, tutto triste e piagnucoloso. Allora faccio finta di non vederlo, ché non si metta a parlarmi. Sapevo benissimo a cosa pensava.	2. Quando mi sono svegliato, proprio all'alba, lui se ne stava seduto con la testa tra i ginocchi, piangendo e lamentandosi. Io non ci ho fatto caso, e ho fatto finta di niente. Sapevo perché faceva così.	2. Quando mi sono alzato, proprio all'alba, se ne stava lì seduto con la testa tra le ginocchia, gemendo e lamentandosi tra sé. Ho fatto finta di niente, sapevo che cos'aveva.
3. Pensava a sua moglie, e ai suoi bambini, che erano rimasti lassù, e si sentiva giù di corda, e molto melanconico, perché in vita sua non era mai stato così lontano prima, e credo che lui voleva bene alla sua famiglia, quasi come un bianco alla sua.	3. Pensava a sua moglie e ai suoi figli, così lontani; era triste e aveva nostalgia di casa perché, prima di allora, non era mai stato via da casa e sono sicuro che si preoccupava dei suoi proprio come un bianco.	3. Stava pensando a sua moglie e ai suoi figli, lontani, lassù, e stava male, aveva nostalgia, perché in vita sua non si era mai allontanato da casa, e credo che voleva bene ai suoi proprio come se era un bianco,
4. Non sembra naturale, ma penso che era proprio così. Sovente gemeva e piangeva di notte, e quando credeva che io ero addormentato, e si metteva a esclamare:	4. Non vi sembrerà naturale, ma io penso che è così. La notte piangeva e si lamentava spesso a quel modo, quando credeva che dormivo, e diceva:	4. Lo so che non sembra vero, ma secondo me era così. Gli capitava spesso di gemere e di lamentarsi a quel modo, la sera, quando pensava che mi ero addormentato, e diceva:
5. «Piccola Lizabeth, piccolo Johnny! Oh, che tristezza pensare che magari non vi vedo mai più, mai più, mai più!»	5. «Povera piccola Elizabeth! Povero piccolo Johnny! Com'è dura, chissà se vi rivedrò ancora, chissà!»	5. "Povera piccola Elizabeth, Povero piccolo Johnny! È dura durissima, quando me pensa che non vede voi più, mai più!".
6. Certo che Jim era proprio un bravo negro. Ma questa volta, manco so come, mi metto io a parlargli di sua	6. Era proprio un bravo negro, Jim. Stavolta, però, mi son sentito di chiedergli	6. Era proprio un buon negro, Jim. Ma questa volta alla fine ci siamo messi a

[77] Mark Twain, *Le Avventure di Huckleberry Finn*, trad. Enzo Giacchino, pp. 175-176.

[78] Mark Twain, *Le Avventure di Huckleberry Finn*, trad. Franca Cavagnoli, pp. 189-190.

[79] Mark Twain, *Le Avventure di Huckleberry Finn*, trad. Giuseppe Culicchia, pp. 157-158.

moglie e dei suoi piccoli e allora lui mi conta:	di sua moglie e dei suoi figli e dopo un po' lui fa:	parlare di sua moglie e dei figli, e dopo un po' lui mi fa:

One of the main features of Huck's narration style is parataxis: as it can be noticed in the table presenting the source text, the cadenced narration is given by short and simple periods. In 'Tradurre l'Altro', Douglas argues that Huck as narrator uses a more standardized English than Huck as character[80]; however, several colloquialisms and grammatical mistakes can be detected: he does not know paradigms of irregular verbs (2. *I knowed*), he incorrectly declines verbs (4. *It don't*) and he misspells common words (2. *Betwixt*). Each translator has a different approach to translate these singularities. As it has been mentioned above, Giachino does not completely translate the particularities of Huck's and Jim's speech, using for the most a standardized Italian and creating a sort of indistinguishableness between the two. Giachino manages to partially reproduce Huck's speech by using of indicative verbs when subjunctive verbs are required (3. *credo che lui voleva bene alla sua famiglia*, 4. *ma penso che era proprio così*, 4. *quando credeva che io ero addormentato*). However, some correct subjunctives still remain (2. *Ché non si metta a parlarmi*) creating a slight confusion in Huck's speech. As in the above passage, Giachino's translation presents some changes of the register (*sovente* in 1 and 4), destabilizing the familiar and colloquial tone of the original Huck.

Cavagnoli's and Culicchia's translations seem more precisely mirroring Huck's original narration style: both of them maintain a paratactic structure and avoid the use of subjunctive verbs in order to reproduce Huck's spontaneous grammatical mistakes. In this perspective, Cavagnoli's version presents an 'error' quite significant: the sentence (2) *he was sitting there with his head down betwixt his knees* presents a misspelling of the word 'between', while Cavagnoli's translation *lui se ne stava seduto con la testa tra i ginocchi* shows a common distortion of 'ginocchia'. It seems that transferring the original error of *betwixt* to *ginocchi* – which is a common mispronunciation of spoken Italian – is a deliberate choice in order to maintain the oral form of Huck's speech. Repetitions and redundancies typical of Huck's oral speech are preserved through linguistic structures such as dislocation: the sentence (6) *He was a mighty good nigger, Jim was* is translated

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[80] Peter Douglas, "Tradurre l'Altro", p. 450.

by preserving the right dislocation of the subject, resulting *Era proprio un bravo negro, Jim* in Cavagnoli's version and *Era proprio un buon negro, Jim* in Culicchia's one.

PASSAGE 2.2
Jim's daughter [81]

7. "What makes me feel so bad dis time 'uz bekase I hear sumpn over yonder on de bank like a whack, er a slam, while ago, en it mine me er de time I treat my little 'Lizabeth so ornery.

8. She warn't on'y 'bout fo' year ole, en she tuck de sk'yarlet fever, en had a powful rough spell; but she got well, en one day she was a-stannin' aroun', en I says to her, I says: 'Shet de do'.

9. She never done it; jis' stood dah, kiner smilin' up at me. It make me mad; en I says agin, mighty loud, I says: 'Doan' you hear me? Shet de do'!'

10. She jis stood de same way, kiner smilin' up. I was a-bilin'! I says: 'I lay I make you mine!' En wid dat I fetch' her a slap side de head dat sont her a-sprawlin'.

11. Den I went into de yuther room, en 'uz gone 'bout ten minutes; en when I come back dah was dat do' a-stannin' open yit, en dat chile stannin' mos' right in it, a-lookin' down and mournin', en de tears runnin' down.

12. My, but I wuz mad! I was a-gwyne for de chile, but jis' den—it was a do' dat open innerds—jis' den, 'long come de wind en slam it to, behine de chile, ker-blam!—en my lan', de chile never move'!

13. My breff mos' hop outer me; en I feel so—so—I doan' know how I feel. I crope out, all a-tremblin', en crope aroun' en open de do' easy en slow, en poke my head in behine de chile, sof' en still, en all uv a sudden I says pow! jis' as loud as I could yell. She never budge!

14. Oh, Huck, I bust out a-cryin' en grab her up in my arms, en say, 'Oh, de po' little thing! De Lord God Amighty fogive po' ole Jim, kaze he never gwyne to fogive hisself as long's he live!'

15. Oh, she was plumb deef en dumb, Huck, plumb deef en dumb—en I'd ben atreat'n her so!"

COMPARISON 4.2
Jim's daugther

GIACHINO (1949) [82]	CAVAGNOLI (2000) [83]	CULICCHIA (2005) [84]
7. «Se sono tanto triste adesso, è perché ho sentito un rumore là sulla riva, come di uno schiaffo o di uno scapaccione, poco tempo fa, e mi sono ricordato della volta che ho trattato così male la mia povera Lizabeth.	7. «Quello che mi fa stare tanto male, stavolta, è che poco fa ho sentito qualcosa, lungo la riva, una specie di colpo o una botta, e m'è venuta in mente la volta che ho fatto il buzzurro con la mia piccola Elizabeth.	7. "Cosa che fa me triste tristissimo ora è perché me sentito rumore su riva prima, come di schiaffo, o scapellotto, e me ricorda quando tratta male malissimo mia piccola Elizabeth.

[81] Mark Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*, pp. 158-159.
[82] Mark Twain, *Le Avventure di Huckleberry Finn*, trad. Enzo Giacchino, pp. 175-176.
[83] Mark Twain, *Le Avventure di Huckleberry Finn*, trad. Franca Cavagnoli, pp. 189-190.
[84] Mark Twain, *Le Avventure di Huckleberry Finn*, trad. Giuseppe Culicchia, pp. 157-158.

8. Aveva solo quattro anni, e aveva fatto la scarlattina, e era stata molto malata, ma stava già meglio, e un giorno me la vedo in piedi davanti e gli dico: <Chiudi la porta>.

9. Lei manco si muove, resta in piedi sempre sorridendo, e io mi viene la mosca al naso e gli dico di nuovo molto forte: <Non mi hai sentito? Chiudi la porta!>

10. Lei continua sempre lo stesso, a sorridere. Io non ci vedo più. Allora gli dico: <Stà a vedere che adesso ti insegno io>. E gli mollo uno scapaccione sulla testa che la sbatto per terra, lunga e distesa.

11. Poi vado nell'altra stanza e ci resto per quasi dieci minuti, e quando torno ecco vedo la porta che è sempre aperta, e la bambina che ci sta quasi accanto, con un'aria tutta triste, e piangeva, e le lacrime gli correvano per la faccia!

12. Be', vi assicuro, avevo la schiuma alla bocca, mi avvicino alla bambina e proprio in quel momento, la porta si apriva verso l'interno, proprio quel momento un colpo di vento sbatte quella porta e la chiude alle spalle della mia bambina con un colpo da far paura…. E la bambina… manco si muove!

13. Resto che quasi non potevo respirare e mi sentivo… be' non so dirvi come che mi sentivo. Allora mi volto tutto tremante, mi giro attorno, apro adagio la porta, sporgo la testa vicino a quella della bambina senza

8. Non aveva nemmeno quattro anni e aveva preso la scarlattina; era stata malissimo ma si era ripresa, e un giorno che era con me ci ho detto: 'Chiudi la porta'.

9. Lei non l'ha fatto: è rimasta ferma dov'era e mi sorrideva. Io mi sono arrabbiato tantissimo e ci ho detto un'altra volta, più forte: 'Non hai sentito? Chiudi la porta!'

10. Lei continuava a stare dov'era, sempre sorridendo. Io non ci vedevo più dalla rabbia! Così dico: 'Adesso ti sistemo io!' E ci do un manrovescio che la mando per terra lunga distesa.

11. Poi vado di là e sto via una decina di minuti e quando che torno la porta è ancora aperta e la bambina è lì tutta triste che piange con certi lacrimoni che non vi dico.

12. Mamma mia, com'ero arrabbiato! Stavo per buttarmi sulla bambina quando che la porta – era una porta che si apriva da dentro – si chiude di botto per via di una folata di vento, bang! proprio dietro la bambina e lei non fa una piega!

13. Mi va il cuore in gola che quasi non riesco a respirare e mi sento così… così… non lo so nemmeno io come mi sento. Allora, tremando come una foglia, vado fuori, faccio il giro, apro adagio la porta, metto dentro la testa

8. Lei stava solo di quattro anni e aveva scarlattina e stata male malissimo ma poi sta meglio e uno di giorno che lei stava fronte di me, me dice lei: 'Chiudi porta'.

9. Lei non chiude, sta lì ferma fermissima, e sorride me, e me infuria, e dice forte fortissimo:
'Tu sorda? Chiudi porta!'.

10. Lei sta lì come prima, e sorride me. Me viene attacco di bile! Me dice: 'Ora me fa vedere!'. E me molla lei schiaffone su lato di testa che lei cade giù per terra.

11. Poi me va in altra stanza, resta via circa dieci minuti, e quando me torna, porta sempre aperta apertissima, e bambina lì vicino con aria triste tristissima e lacrime che corrono giù per faccia.

12. Ah, me pazzo rabbia, me va verso bambina, ma in quello momento, porta apriva verso dentro, ma in quello di momento viene colpo vento che chiude porta dietro bambina, SBAM! e diomio, bambina manco muove!

13. Me resta senza fiato, me sente… me, me solo sa come sente. Me gira, me trema, me gira e apre porta piano pianissimo e poi mette testa vicino testa di bambina e subito dice BU'! più forte

far rumore, e di colpo un urlo, più forte che potevo! Ma lei niente.	alle spalle della bambina, piano piano, e di colpo ci dico: 'Bau!' – più forte che posso. Lei non si è mossa!	fortissimo che può: ma lei ferma.
14. Oh Huck, mi si è spezzato il cuore, e me la stringevo tra le braccia, e le dico: <Oh povera, povera bambina mia! Che Dio Onnipotente, che perdoni lui il povero vecchio Jim, perché Jim già non può mai perdonarsi finché vive>.	14. Oh, Huck, sono scoppiato a piangere e l'ho stretta forte dicendo: 'Oh, poverina! Dio Onnipotente, perdonate il povero Jim perché lui non si perdonerà mai finché campa!'	14. Oh, Huck, me allora scoppia piangere e prende lei tra mie braccia, e dice: 'Oh, povera piccola! Dio Onnipotente persona vecchio Jim, che lui non perdona me fino che vive!'.
15. Era sordomuta, Huck, sordomuta, e io gli avevo mollato quella pacca!»	15. Era diventata sordomuta, Huck, sordomuta – e io che l'avevo trattata così male!»	15. Oh, lei stava sorda e muta, Huck, sorda e muta, e me tratta lei quello di modo!".

Similarly to Huck, Jim's narration is characterized by a paratactic structure, but with a little difference: his speech is composed by shorter sentences, linked mostly by commas and by the conjunction *en* (and). This stylistic feature denotes a simple and basic narration style, which may be due to Jim's status as slave, and thus as unschooled man. This paratactic structure is maintained in all three translations: in this sequence, Giachino's version, which seems the most domesticating translation so far, does not present corrections or adaptations that would conform the text to a more standard narration. However, this slight attempt at foreignization is limited by other choices that demonstrate a tendency towards standard Italian, such as the use of the subjunctive (14) *che perdoni lui il povero vecchio Jim*. In addition, Giachino omits the two onomatopoeias present in the source text: (12) *ker-blam*! and (13) *pow* are not translated as common Italian onomatopoeias – as Cavagnoli and Culicchia do –, they are instead paraphrased and their sound is described: (12) *con un colpo da far paura*, (13) *e di colpo un urlo, più forte che potevo!* Another questionable choice is the repetitive use of the first person singular pronoun when not needed: in the sentences (9) *e io mi viene la mosca al naso*, (10) *Io non ci vedo più*, (15) *io gli avevo mollato* the use of the pronoun *io* is redundant and it hardly belongs to the Italian oral discourse, in which the speaker often omits the personal pronoun *io*.

Cavagnoli's translation of this sequence shows the same particularities described in the first analyzed passage, such as the extend use of colloquialisms – (10) *manrovescio*, (12) *Mamma mia*, (13) *il cuore in gola*, (14) *finché campa* –, and the pronoun 'ci' – (9) *e*

ci ho detto, (13) *di colpo ci dico*. Another aspect that helps to maintain the oral form of Jim's speech is the employment of 'che' after conjunctions such as (11,12) *quando che*, since it is a regionalism frequently used by Italian speakers, as well as 'siccome che'. Culicchia's version of this passage shows other particularities of the characterization of Jim's speech, such as the random omission of definite articles and various prepositions, and the unnecessary use of the preposition 'di' in the sentences (12) *ma in quello di momento viene colpo vento*, (15) *me tratta lei quello di modo*.

In this passage, in particular in Giachino's version, a relevant factor emerges: when Jim refers to Huck, he uses the courtesy pronoun *voi*: (12) *Be', vi assicuro, avevo la schiuma alla bocca*, (13) *be' non so dirvi come che mi sentivo*, even though the reference to Huck is not present in the ST: (12) *My, but I wuz mad!*, (13) *en I feel so— so—I doan' know how I feel.* Even though this form of deference is not present in the other two translations of this passage, the use of this courtesy pronoun is shared by Cavagnoli and Culicchia throughout the novel as well. Here an example:

COMPARISON 5
Extract from *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

SOURCE TEXT [85]	GIACHINO [86]	CAVAGNOLI [87]	CULICCHIA [88]
1."How do you come to be here, Jim, and how'd you get here?" […]	1. «E tu, com'è che ti trovi qui, Jim, e come ci sei giunto?» […]	1. «Com'è che sei qui, Jim, e come ci sei venuto?» […]	1. "Com'è che sei qui, tu, Jim? E come hai fatto ad arrivarci?" […]
2. "Maybe I better not tell."	2. «Forse è meglio se non ve lo dico.»	2. «Forse è meglio se non dico niente».	2. "Forse meglio se me non parla"
3. "Why, Jim?"	3. «E perché Jim?»	3. «Perché, Jim?»	3. "Perché Jim?"
4. "Well, dey's reasons. But you wouldn' tell on me ef I uz to tell you, would you, Huck?"	4. «Perché, perché ho i miei motivi, ma voi non mi tradite mai con nessuno, se ve lo dico, vero, Huck?»	4. «Be', lo so io perché. Però voi non la fate mica la spia, vero, se io vi racconto tutto, eh?»	4. "Beh, per motivi. Ma voi non tradite me, se me parla, vero Huck?"
5. "Blamed if I would, Jim."	5. «Che sia dannato, se lo faccio, Jim.»	5. «Mi venga un colpo, Jim.»	5. "Che sia dannato se lo faccio, Jim."
6. "Well, I b'lieve you, Huck. I—I run off."	6. «Be', io vi credo, Huck… Io… io sono scappato.»	6. «Vabbe', vi credo, Huck. Sono... sono scappato.»	6. "Beh, me crede voi, Huck. Me…me fuggito."

[85] Mark Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*, p. 45.
[86] Mark Twain, *Le Avventure di Huckleberry Finn*, trad. Enzo Giacchino, p. 50.
[87] Mark Twain, *Le Avventure di Huckleberry Finn*, trad. Franca Cavagnoli, pp. 57.
[88] Mark Twain, *Le Avventure di Huckleberry Finn*, trad. Giuseppe Culicchia, pp. 52-53.

7. "Jim!"	7. «Jim!»	7. «Jim!»	7. "Jim!"
8. "But mind, you said you wouldn' tell—you know you said you wouldn' tell, Huck."	8. «Be', ricordatevi che me l'avete promesso, che non lo dicevate a nessuno, ricordatevi che me l'avete promesso, Huck.»	8. «Attento, avete detto che non farete la spia; lo sapete che avete detto che non farete la spia.»	8. "Ma voi ricorda che voi detto che voi niente dice nessuno, voi sa che voi detto che voi niente dice nessuno, Huck"

This passage deals with another dialog between the two protagonists, in which Jim reveals to be a runaway slave to Huck. As it can be noticed, in this sequence Jim refers directly to his interlocutor calling him by name – (6) *I b'lieve you, Huck* – or addressing him with the second-person singular pronoun – (4) *you wouldn' tell on me*, (8) *you said you wouldn' tell*. All three translations present the employment of the courtesy pronoun *voi*, but for what concerns Cavagnoli's and Culicchia's translations, the use of this form of deference is limited to the cases in which Jim refers directly to Huck. Instead, Giachino employs it even when there is no presence of this in the source text: in the sentence (2) *Forse è meglio se non ve lo dico*, the reference to Huck is mentioned through the object pronoun *ve*, even though in the sentence (2) *Maybe I better not tell* the reference to Huck is not present. Giachino's tendency to overuse the courtesy pronoun may be perceived as an attempt to stress further Jim's obeisance to Huck. In fact, according to Douglas, the use of this compensation strategy to overcome the loss of linguistic distinction between Jim and Huck, may be useful to embody the racial division between whites and blacks in the target text. However, because Huck and Jim are actually friends and they call each other by name, the employment of the courtesy pronoun may result unnatural to the reader.[89] In this perspective, Giachino's intensive use of this form of deference may appear even more unnatural, underlining Jim's sense of inferiority towards Huck.

This comparison shows other significant elements for what concerns Jim's speech in Culicchia's translation. The use of the courtesy pronoun changes just partially Jim's peculiar verb conjugation: sometimes the verb is correctly conjugated in the second-person plural – (4) *ma voi non tradite me* –, or it is just partially correct and the auxiliary verb is missing – (8) *che voi detto* – or it is completely incorrect and maintains the conjugation to the third-person singular – (8) *voi sa*. In addition, this sequence underlines

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[89] Peter Douglas, "Tradurre l'Altro", p. 453.

once again Jim's lack of knowledge on pronouns: besides using *me* as personal pronoun, he uses *voi* both as personal and as object pronoun: (6) *Beh, me crede voi, Huck.*

2.4.3 Final remarks: the limitations of the Retranslation Hypothesis

The comparative analysis of various passages of *Huckleberry Finn* and their relative translations has brought to light numerous relevant aspects about each translator's strategy. The different choices carried out for the translations of the novel, show different approaches to the source text and its language variety. If fact, even though all three translators adopt a syntactic-grammatical approach to represent the phonological variations of Jim's speech in the source text, the three translations represent different characterizations of Huck's and Jim's speech, conveying different messages to the reader. Considering the first translation, it can be argued that Giachino used a domesticating method to translate *Huckleberry Finn*. In fact, his translation shows a tendency to ignore the presence of language varieties and to conform the target text to standard Italian for both protagonists of the story. The difference between the two main characters lies on Jim's employment of a simpler and more basic Italian, formed by a constant use of indicative verbs and a linear and elementary narrative style. The use of colloquialisms and interjections typical of the spoken language is limited, barely conveying the oral form of the source language; in addition, the employment of sophisticated terms that belong to a formal register contrasts with the informal context of the dialogs, creating a vague representation of Huck's and Jim's speech. In this perspective, Giachino's aim seems to produce a homogenous text written in a standard language in order to bring the source text closer to the reader. According to Venuti, the domestication method is directly linked to the status of invisibility of the translator: in this version produced in 1949, the translator's invisibility is given not only by the lack of personalization of the target text, but also by the absence of any commentary about the language of the source text or about his work as translator, making Giachino imperceptible to the reader.

Instead, Cavagnoli's translating strategy is completely different. From a linguistic point of view, Cavagnoli manages to maintain the informal and colloquial register throughout the whole novel, not only by frequently using colloquialisms and common interjections in the spoken language, but also by employing idioms and way of sayings typical of common Italian. As I showed in the third comparison, the expressions in Cavagnoli's translation may result outdated and less common compared to the ones in

Culicchia's version, but a closer analysis between the source text and Culicchia's target text highlights a more accurate choice of lexis to convey the original message of the source text. Cavagnoli's careful choice of words occurs also in the differentiation of Huck's and Jim's speech: while Huck uses a youth jargon, characterized by a distinctive idiolect and occasional grammatical errors, Jim's speech is rich in prepositions typical of oral discourse – 'ci', 'mica' – and regionalisms – 'quando che', 'siccome che' –, underlining his status as unschooled man but without ridiculing him. Cavagnoli's translating method is clearly foreignization: the language variation of the source text is maintained in the target text through compensation strategies that aim to highlight the oral and popular tradition of the source language and to avoid its exoticization. Thus, the reader is led to experience the story by adapting to a non-standard language and to embrace the Other as it is. Cavagnoli plays an active role, introducing the novel by explicating her translating strategy to the reader, who perceives her visibility also in the use of notes at the end of the novel, aiming partially to explain her translating choices, and partially to describe cultural-specific elements that might be unknown to the Italian readership.

Culicchia's version of *Huckleberry Finn* distinguishes itself for the peculiar representation of the language spoken by Jim. In fact, while Huck's speech is characterized by colloquialisms and expressions typical of present-day youth jargon, Jim's language is so deviant that it does not resemble any variety of Italian. The recurrent incorrect verb conjugations, the omission of prepositions and articles and the improper use of personal and object pronouns, mark Jim as a foreign character, as someone whose first language is not Italian. In addition, the pronounced idiolect composed by the repetition of adjectives and their absolute superlative – 'scemo scemissimo', 'forte fortissimo' – conveys a childish way of speaking, marking Jim as an infantile figure. The peculiarity of Jim's speech lies on another relevant feature: the expressions 'sissignore' and 'nossignore' used by Jim towards Huck, mark the presence of an unequal relationship between the two characters, which is further stressed by the use of the courtesy pronoun 'voi'. This form of deference used by Jim towards Huck also occurs in the other two translations, but with a different emphasis: Giachino is found using it even when Jim does not refer to Huck in the ST, emphasizing further the social gap between the two characters. In fact, the use of the courtesy pronoun may be useful to recover the racial

division between whites and blacks, but it may also distort the relationship between Huck and Jim, originally conveyed as a relation between two friends. Culicchia's intention is clearly to produce a foreignizing translation: in his introduction to the novel, he alludes to Twain's Explicatory, highlighting the importance of dialects in the novel and appreciating the dynamic quality of Huck's speech. He recognizes the significance of the language variety in the source text, and the difficulties that it creates on a translating level. However, his observations on Twain's 'massacre on grammar and syntax' underline a wrong interpretation, suggesting that non-standard languages are actually languages devoid of rules. Culicchia states:

> Da parte mia ho cercato di non correggere gli errori di Huck, che in questa versione del libro non usa quasi mai il congiuntivo, e non volendo ovviamente ricorrere ai dialetti della valle del Po o di altre regioni italiane, mi sono limitato a tradurre dove possibile lo scempio operato da Twain sulla grammatica e sulla sintassi americana con il mio personale scempio della grammatica e della sintassi italiana. [90]

Culicchia perceives dialect as a deformation of English and claims to offer his deformed version of Italian in order to mirror Twain's linguistic choices, highlighting his unawareness of what dialects and vernacular languages are. As Douglas states, Culicchia shows not only a lack of distinction between phonological and syntactic-grammatical non-standard elements, but also an insufficient awareness that even a dialect has its own rules.[91]

From the data collected, it can be shown how the translation of a novel presenting a vernacular language is extremely difficult to fulfill without erasing or deforming its linguistic and cultural structure. As Berman states, "a vernacular clings tightly to its soil and completely resists any direct translating into another vernacular".[92] In the case of *Huckleberry Finn*, the presence of a well-defined language variety, which was deliberately chosen by the author, poses the translator to face a great challenge, which cannot be won by ignoring or, worse, misunderstanding the non-standard variations. The language variety, besides contributing to a realistic representation of the characters – meaning that the personality of each figure can be extrapolated from their speeches –, determines implications of wider scope. In fact, dialect represents the identity of a social group, or even of an entire ethnic group: ignoring it or distorting its role in the target text

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[90] Mark Twain, *Le Avventure di Huckleberry Finn*, trad. Giuseppe Culicchia, p. 8.
[91] Peter Douglas, "Tradurre l'Altro", p. 457.
[92] Antoine Berman, "Translation and the trials of the foreign", pp. 294.

means not giving the right consideration to the group in question and to the reader of the target text as well. As Douglas states, the worst action would be neglecting it, since it could drastically reduce the important role that the original text gives to the voice of the marginalized, the voice of the Other.[93]

From a wider point of view, the pattern created by the three translations of *Huckleberry Finn* partially confirms Chesterman's thesis about the closeness of later retranslations to the source text, since of the three target texts, Cavagnoli's translation appears to be the closest to the source text, respecting the language variety without erasing or exoticizing it. In fact, Giachino's version of Twain's novel respects the canons of accuracy that characterized the pre-Translation Studies era: his domesticating translation aims to produce a text more oriented to the target language rather than to the source language, which leads to an effacement of Huck's and Jim's dialect. However, in *The Translator's Invisibility* Venuti shows that a translation cannot be analyzed and valued only by considering the canons of accuracy defined in the period of its production, since it depends also on the translator's individual choices. In this perspective, Cavagnoli's and Culicchia's versions highlight this important aspect of literary translation, since they operate in the same historical period but they approach differently the text, producing two completely diverging translations. In fact, even though their representation of Huck's speech is quite similar – to be specific, in the last version of 2005, Huck's speech shows a frequent use of more present-day expressions comparing to Cavagnoli's translation of 2000 –, their translations of Jim's speech evidently diverge, underlining a different approach to dialects. This may be due to the different backgrounds of the two translators: while Cavagnoli is an experienced literary translator, specialized in postcolonial literature, Culicchia is an Italian writer who only marginally approached the world of literary translation. Even though Culicchia's short experience does not automatically define him as an inexperienced translator, his version of *Huckleberry Finn* highlights a lack of knowledge about the different translating techniques concerning dialects and vernaculars and about the problems that an improper translation strategy might cause to the subject of the novel.

In conclusion, it can be argued that these three retranslations of Huckleberry Finn confirm the weakness of the Retranslation Hypothesis. The thesis about the 'grand

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[93] Peter Douglas, "Tradurre l'Altro", p. 459.

traduction' and the closeness of the latest translation to the source text, are clearly parameters that limit the phenomenon of retranslation to a linear and faultless path. Scholars such as Brisset, Venuti, Paloposki and Koskinen have shown that the idea of a continuous improvement given by retranslations after retranslations, may not always happen, since relevant factors concerning the translator's persona need to be considered. In this case, the main factor that highlights the complexity of the retranslation phenomenon is the translator's idiosyncratic constraint to interpret the language variety of the novel. From Giachino's version to the one of Cavagnoli, the improvement concerns the approach to the source language as an oral language: while Giachino adapts it to a standard Italian, thus translating an oral language to a written language, Cavagnoli's approach is based on recovering elements of the spoken Italian in order to maintain the oral form of the source language. Similarly, Culicchia characterizes Huck's speech with typical features of spoken Italian, but he denaturalizes Jim's speech in the attempt to respect the 'defacement' he assumes Mark Twain operated on the source language. Culicchia's misinterpretation reverses the path postulated by the Retranslation Hypothesis, showing the relevance of human agency in the process of retranslations.

3. *Their Eyes Were Watching God* and its Italian translation

The third chapter of my thesis will deal with the comparison of the two Italian translations of Zora Neale Hurston's best known novel, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. As it will be later analyzed, the presence of AAVE in this novel is extremely significant, since it recurs for half of the entire narration: this dialect, which is used quite similarly by all the characters, is the language for private and public communicating within the African American community, for telling stories and in particular, for experimenting one's own identity. In fact, Hurston's novel focuses on Janie, a beautiful mulatto girl, whose dream is to find the same unconditional, authentic and passionate love she perceives in the nature that surrounds her. After a long life of sufferings, psychological violence and forced silence, Janie will start to discover her identity by giving strength and power to her voice, finding her true self as a black woman and finally experiencing true love.

In order to understand the importance of language in the novel as paramount expression of Black folklore, I will begin my analysis by firstly highlighting the major themes of the story, with a particular focus on Hurston's authorial voice and the opinions of critics discussing whether the protagonist actually achieves her own voice. Then, after analyzing Hurston's representation of Black English and highlighting the reasons behind the lack of linguistic variations within the characters' speech, I will focus on the comparative analysis of the two Italian translations. Firstly, I will present the translators' biographical information and their involvement in the making of the Italian version of the novel; secondly, I will analyze selected passages from the novel, through which I will collect data to discover and evaluate each translator's strategy from a linguistic and socio-cultural point of view.

3.1 Zora Neale Hurston: a life of suffering and success

Zora Neale Hurston was an American writer, anthropologist and folklorist. Born on January 7 1891 in Notasulga, Alabama, she was the sixth child and second daughter of John Hurston and Lucy Potts. When she was 2 years old, her family moved to Eatonville, Florida, the first incorporated all-black town in the country: in this all-Black community rich in folk-tradition and free of direct experienced racial prejudice, Zora spent most of her childhood, developing her creativity in languages and art. In fact, the education she received at the local school from followers of Booker T. Washington stressed self-reliance as well as basic academic skills, leading Zora to show her great

talent as storyteller and performer. Her mother Lucy, a former teacher who routinely helped her young children with their schoolwork, encouraged Zora's attitude to arts, urging her spirited and precocious daughter to "jump at de sun".[1] However, her father John did not share her wife's enthusiasm for Zora's talent, which caused constant conflicts between him and his daughter. These dynamics drastically changed after Lucy died in 1904 and John remarried in 1905: because of her turbulent relationship with her father – as well as with her stepmother – Zora was often sent to live with relatives and friends, forcing her to attend school occasionally. Moreover, Zora was soon at odds with her stepmother, and she left her family home at the age of 14 feeling "orphaned and lonesome".[2] She began life on her own, working mainly as housekeeper; however, her temper and creativity was unbecoming for a black housekeeper, forcing her to often change place of work. As Lovalerie King states in *The Cambridge Introduction to Zora Neale Hurston*, "she failed at housekeeping jobs because she was simply not the subservient type and because she was more interested in her employers' books than in cleaning their homes".[3]

At 16 she joined a traveling theatrical company, giving her the opportunity to live among diverse groups of human beings, to read books – borrowed from a Harvard-trained troupe member – and to acquire knowledge about music and theatrical production. When the theatrical company arrived in Baltimore in 1917, she decided to focus more on her education: she left the company and enrolled at the Morgan Academy high school, where she met May Miller, who encouraged Zora to apply for Howard University. She attended Howard University from 1921 to 1924 and in 1925 won a scholarship to Barnard College in New York. In those years several Zora's works, like the short story "Magnolia Flower", and the essay "The Hue and Cry about Howard University", were published. In addition, she met important scholars, such as Carl Van Vechten, a journalist, photographer, author, and most importantly, patron of the Harlem Renaissance, and the anthropologist Franz Boas, with whom she began her revolutionary research in southern and Caribbean folk culture that would culminate in *Mules and Men* and *Tell My Horse*. In fact, thanks to a research fellowship arranged by Boas, in 1927 Zora, along with Langston Hughes,

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[1] Zora Neale Hurston, *Dust Tracks on a Road*, Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1984, p. 21.
[2] Lovarie King, *The Cambridge Introduction to Zola Neale Hurston*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008, p. 3.
[3] *Ibidem*

traveled south to collect folk songs and folk tales: she recorded this significant experience also in her biography *Dust Tracks on a Road*, in which she underlines how her first attempts to collect folk tales and songs among local people were not particularly fruitful. As King states, her manners and academic aptitude acquired in the north distanced her from her rural black southerners, who were her richest potential sources of information. In the subsequent trips, she adopted a different approach: she noticed that by becoming part of the community she would gain the local people's trust, making them more willing to tell her their stories. This approach was successful and "[it] became the hallmark of her subsequent research experiences".[4] However, Hurston's financial stringency limited her studies. On the advice of her colleague Hughes, Zora asked for help to Charlotte Osgood Mason, a wealthy widow and patron of the African-American arts: in December 1927 the two signed a contract, which stipulated that Mason would support Hurston's research and writing for several years to come. Although Hurston described quite positively Mason's patronage, the reality about Mason's control over Hurston has been well documented in her biographies and collected letters. As King states, "the contract between the two women meant that Hurston would collect materials that could only be published with Mason's consent. Mason would later attempt to assert her authority over all of Hurston's work".[5] In the same year she married Herbert Sheen, a medical student met during her studies at Howard University. However, the two were both focused on their own research, which caused their marriage to end in 1931.

Meanwhile, she continued to write and publish her works in a variety of venues, maintaining her status as a member of the black literary world. In particular, the 1930s was a fruitful decade for Hurston: in 1930 she collaborated with Hughes on a play titled *Mule Bone: A Comedy of Negro Life in Three Acts* – the play was never finished and was published posthumously in 1991. In 1934 she published her first novel, *Jonah's Gourd Vine*, which was well received by critics for its portrayal of African American life uncluttered by stock figures and sentimentality. In 1935 *Mules and Men*, a study of folkways among the African American population of Florida, was published. Her travels between 1936 and 1937 to Jamaica and Haiti sponsored by the Guggenheim Fellowships would result in *Tell My Horse* (1938), a blend of travel writing and anthropology based

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[4] Lovarie King, *Zola Neale Hurston,* p. 7.
[5] Ivi, p. 8.

on her investigations of voodoo. During this trip, she also wrote *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937), which would become one of her most famous novels. In 1939 she published *Man of the Mountain*, a novel that would firmly establish her as a major author; in the same year she married the twelve-years younger Albert Price III: even though their marriage was short, Hurston's relationship with Prince particularly signed her life, so much so that some scholars found in it resemblance with the relationship between Janie and Tea Cake, the two protagonists of *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. She would have a last unsuccessful and short marriage with the Cleveland businessman James Howell Pitts in 1944.

She continued to write articles and essays also in the 1940s: of particular importance is her autobiography *Dust Tracks on a Road*, published in 1942. Her last book and fourth novel, *Seraph on the Suwanee*, appeared in 1948, the same year she was arrested after being falsely accused of molesting a 10-year-old boy. Even though the case was dismissed few months later, the charge of molestation marked the beginning of her professional life's decline. Between 1951 and 1956, she lived in Eau Gallie, Florida, on very modest earnings: during those years she wrote her last novel *Herod the Great*, but she was unable to find a publisher for the manuscript. Due to a stroke in 1959, she spent the last year of her life in St. Lucie County (Florida) welfare home, where she died the following year on January 28 of hypertensive heart disease; an appeal was made for funds for her burial, and Zora Neale Hurston was buried in an unmarked grave at Fort Pierce's segregated cemetery, the Garden of Heavenly Rest. Despite her early promises, the numerous honors and awards she received for her essays and researches, by the time of her death Hurston was little remembered by the general reading public. However, Hurston's life and works would be rediscovered in the late twentieth century, in particularly thanks to Alice Walker's dedication to this author: in fact, Walker led the way toward Hurston's resurrection as a 'literary foremother' just in time for the flourishing of African American women's literature during the final decades of the twentieth century. The woman-centered narrative characterizing Hurston's works would become the benchmark of the African American women's literary production from the late nineteenth century and beyond: the topic of black female sexuality and its objectification explored in *Their Eyes Were Watching God* can be found not only in Harriet Jacobs' *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861), but also in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970) and *Sula* (1974), Alice

Walker's *The Color Purple* (1982), and also in Alice Randall's *The Wind Done Gone* (2001).

3.2 *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

Their Eyes Were Watching God focuses on Janie Crawford, an attractive, confident, middle-aged black woman, and her search of self-fulfillment. The novel opens with Janie's return to Eatonville, Florida, after a long absence. Her presence is not welcome in the village: the black townspeople gossip about her, speculating about where she has been and what has happened to her young husband, Tea Cake. Amidst their gossiping, her friend Pheoby Watson stands up for Janie and goes to visit her, asking news about her life, so Janie starts to tell Pheoby her life story, which will constitute the rest of the novel. Janie begins her tale from her childhood, explaining that her grandmother Nanny raised her after her mother ran off. Nanny has great affection for her granddaughter, but her life experiences as a slave have sharpened her worldview: Nanny's greatest hope is for Janie to find improved social standing and financial security in life; thus, when she sees Janie kissing a boy, she quickly arranges for Janie to marry the wealthy and much older farmer Logan Killicks.

After moving in with Logan, Janie feels miserable: he is pragmatic, unromantic and abuses her, treating her like a pack mule. Janie's wish for love resurfaces when one day she meets Joe Starks, a smooth-tongued and ambitious man, who ambles down the road in front of the farm: after two weeks of secret meetings between the two, Joe encourages her to run away from Logan and marry him. Janie and Jody, as she calls him, head off together to the all-black town of Eatonville, Florida, where Jody hopes to become a 'big voice'. Thanks to his political rhetorics, Jody becomes the mayor, postmaster, storekeeper and the biggest landlord in Eatonville. Janie's great love and admiration for Jody soon fades: his desire for control and power over his properties – among which there is also Janie – stifles Janie, who is also forced to avoid any types of interaction with town folks. In fact, in Jody's idea of what a mayor's wife should be, Janie represents the fitting ornament to his wealth and power, which must be preserved from the town folks' lowness. Janie learns to be quiet in front of her husband and not to express her thoughts, while she slowly and constantly develops a new self-awareness, making her realize the stifling life she is sharing with him. Jody eventually becomes ill and his treatment of Janie worsens along with his deteriorating health, but it is in this instance that Janie finally asserts

herself: when Jody insults her appearance, Janie speaks up for herself, telling him how ugly and impotent he is in front of the townspeople; in retaliation, he savagely beats her. However, the humiliation to be insulted by his wife weakens further Jody's health, who is forced to lie in bed; despite Janie's numerous attempts to take care of him, Jody forbids her to go to his bedroom. After months without interacting, Janie ceases to be silent: she visits Jody on his deathbed and tells him how miserable her life has been because of his obsessions over her; soon after this conversation, Jody dies.

After Jody's funeral, Janie feels free for the first time in years: she finally wears her hair down – Jody forced her to wear a head rag to hide it – and white and colorful clothing. Her regained beauty attracts the attention of numerous suitors, whom Janie rebuffs in the name of her newfound independence. However, when Tea Cake, a man twelve years her junior, appears in her store and starts flirting with her, Janie revaluates her priorities. Despite townspeople's gossiping about Tea Cake's younger age and lower social status, Janie decides to date him, disregarding their judgment and listening to her feelings instead. Nine months after Jody's death, Janie marries Tea Cake, sells Jody's store, and leaves town to go with her new husband to Jacksonville. Janie and Tea Cake's first week of married life together is not perfect: he steals her savings and leaves her alone one night, making her think that he married her only for her money. Fortunately, he returns, explaining that he never meant to leave her and that his act was a moment of weakness. They promise to be always honest with each other, and after managing to regain all of her money, they move to the Everglades to work on the 'muck' during the harvest seasons and to socialize during the summer off-season: in fact, Tea Cake's quick wit and friendliness spread all over the black workers, making their shack the center of entertainment and social life. However, some difficulties arise in their marriage: Mrs. Turner, a mulatto woman known for her racist views towards blacks, often encourages Janie to leave Tea Cake for her lighter-skinned brother Mr. Turner. Janie replies that she would never separate from her husband: he treats her as an equal and their marriage is built on true love and mutual respect. Unfortunately, rumors of Janie and Mr. Turner starts spreading, making Tea Cake tremendously jealous: in order to put down these rumors and to assert power over his wife, Tea Cake whips Janie, who passively undergoes this violence. Eventually, jealousy appears from both sides: one day Janie finds Tea Cake

wrestling playfully with another girl in town named Nunkie; the couple argues about this, but Tea Cake convinces Janie that there is nothing between him and the girl.

Even though they manage to overcome these difficulties, a greater and disastrous complication bursts into their lives: one day a massive hurricane hits the area, forcing them to leave the Everglades. During the storm, a rabid dog tries to attack Janie, but Tea Cake defends her, taking a bit from the dog, which infects him with the disease. At the time, Tea Cake does not realize his condition, but three weeks later he falls ill. Janie seeks help from a doctor, who tells her that he will send her a medicine to cure Tea Cake. However, Tea Cake's health worsens: Janie realizes that in his ill and manic state, Tea Cake has convinced himself of Janie's infidelity, and has been hiding a loaded pistol beneath his pillow. One day, Tea Cake, unable to reason, starts firing a pistol at Janie, who is forced to kill him to save her life. She is immediately arrested and put on trial for murder, but the all-white, all-male jury finds her not guilty. Unable to live in the muck without Tea Cake, Janie returns to Eatonville and concludes her story to Phoeby. Despite her sadness and grief for Tea Cake's death, Janie tells her friend that she is happy to be back, now feeling at one with Tea Cake and at peace with herself.

3.3 "De nigger woman is de mule uh de world": Janie's search of identity within a coercive male-dominated society

The keystone of the story behind *Their Eyes Were Watching God* is a struggling and rough search for identity by a mulatto woman within a patriarchal society. Janie, the protagonist of Hurston's story, is a woman whose biggest dream is finding and experiencing the same love she perceives in nature: the image of the bees interacting with the pear tree flowers is symbolic of Janie's idealized love as a combination of erotic energy, passionate interaction and blissful harmony. However, she soon realizes that the harmony belonging to the natural world is just an illusion in the human world: her status as woman and as mulatto makes her subjected to the patriarchal conception of women as objects of men's desire and control, bringing her to experience marginalization within her own community. Janie's search for love eventually becomes a search for identity, since, through her three relationships, she comes to understand her depriving situation, gaining gradually self-awareness of who she truly is. Janie's story is a journey towards self-actualization in 1920s black America, where the dominant patriarchal conception that reduced black female sexuality to licentiousness, making black women victims of abuse

and exploitation, was opposed to the Cult of Domesticity or True Womanhood ideology, according to which becoming a 'true woman' meant exhibiting qualities of domesticity, piety, purity and submissiveness. This ideal of femininity was a prerogative of bourgeois white women, since black, working class, and immigrant women were often excluded from the definition of 'true women' because of social prejudice. However, the True Womanhood ideology was shared by many black women, in particular among those who saw in white people's living style their dream life, but also as a strategy for integration.

In her works, in particular in *Their Eyes Were Watching God,* Hurston resisted the influence of dominant nineteenth-century ideologies of womanhood, showing instead the consequences of the idea of black women's licentiousness and of black people's dream of a 'white life'. As King states, Hurston deals with the issue of black female sexuality through Janie's genealogic tree: during her conversation with Phoebey, Janie recollects Nanny's story of sexual exploitation under slavery and Janie's mother's rape in freedom, showing how her existence is the result of multiple sexual violence to African American women.[6] Most significantly, Nanny's experiences of her abuse and of her daughter's lead her to conceive black women's sexuality as something to suppress in order to preserve their integrity. In addition, her experience as slave significantly affected her idea of what a perfect life should be, dreaming for Janie a life without difficulties like the one of her white mistress. As Mary Helen Washington suggests in her article 'The Black Woman's Search For Identity' (1972), Nanny's dream for Janie is 'a white one', since she "has evolved a whole set of standards based on being as much as possible like that white woman she used to have to bow and scrape to".[7] Her fantasy to gain such freedom to be able to "sit on high" and live without working is firmly rooted in African American folk history: imitating the lives of the white folks did not only symbolize the end of abuses and forced labor, but it meant also gaining the power to "protect one's self from the degradation of which a slave was subjected".[8] Thus, when Nanny catches Janie kissing a guy, she decides to 'protect' her by arranging for her a marriage with Logan Killicks, a much older man of property. From Nanny's perspective, Logan is the right person to take care of her granddaughter: he is a landowner and can provide her physical security and a

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[6] Lovarie King, *Zola Neale Hurston*, p. 24-25.

[7] Mary Helen Washington, "The Black Woman's Search For Identity", *Black World*, XXI, 10, August 1972, p. 70.

[8] *Ibidem*

comfortable life; however, Janie's perspective is quite different: her romantic nature and dreamer aptitude collides with Logan's pragmatism, sense of duty and seriousness. Janie feels left aside: her dream of a deep connection with Logan, one that may offer both physical passion and emotional connection, soon disappears, making her cold and disinterested in her husband. Reading her disinterest as ingratitude, Logan manages to make Janie work alongside him, but this worsens the situation: besides seeing her dreams fall apart, she feels used and unloved. Barbara Christian in *Black Feminist Criticim: Perspectives on Black Women Writers* (1985) suggests that "in her relationship with her first husband, Logan Killicks, Janie is treated like a mule". [9] This is particularly relevant considering that Nanny's hopes were to provide Janie a life different from hers. In fact, in Nanny's worldview "de nigger woman is de mule uh de world"[10], compelled to renounce her dreams in order to serve the people around her, both white people and black men.

When Janie meets Joe Starks, she believes she has found the man of her dreams: he dazzles her with his big dreams, he constantly adulates her beauty, and Janie's hopes for love come alive again. When the couple arrives in Eatonville, Joe's plans are clear: he wants to become an important man of property and a reference for all the people in the village; in doing so, he has a specific aim in mind, that is distinguishing himself from the rest of the townsfolk. As Washington suggests, all his actions aim to make him appear greater than the rest of Eatonville's citizens: he becomes the mayor, he buys numerous lands, and he builds a magnificent white house that makes the rest of the town look like "servants quarters surrounding the 'big house'".[11] Joe's umpteenth display of his power happens when he buys two spit cups, a gold one for himself and a little flowered one for Janie, which is the ultimate "slap in the face to the townspeople".[12] Clearly, Jody's behavior resembles the one of a white master: as Washington states, Jody, like Nanny, settles his dream life on standards dictated by white society[13], which inevitably has consequences upon Janie's existence. In fact, Jody bases his power on showing his possessions, of which Janie is also part: her exceptional Caucasian beauty due to her light-

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[9] Barbara Christian, *Black Feminist Criticism: Perspectives on Black Women Writers*, Pergamon Press, 1985, p. 174.

[10] Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, New York, Perennial Classics, 1998, p. 14.

[11] Ivi, p. 47.

[12] Mary Helen Washington, "The Black Woman's Search For Identity", p. 71.

[13] Ivi, p. 70.

colored skin and straight hair makes her the perfect wife to show and to be proud of. In Jody's view, Janie's partial whiteness needs to be preserved accurately: in order to elevate her to 'queen of the porch', Jody limits her interactions with the community, whose blackness might lower her status. Thus, since the beginning of their life in Eatonville, Jody limits Janie's relationship with townsfolk: this separation is not physical – it would be difficult since Jody puts Janie to work in the store, which is the center of townsfolk's social life – but verbal. In fact, Jody imposes his power by suppressing Janie's voice: when he becomes Mayor of Eatonville, the crowd asks for a speech from Mrs. Mayor Starks, but he promptly cut it shorts, saying "but mah wife don't know nothin' 'bout no speech-makin'. Ah never married her for nothin' lak dat. She's uh woman and her place is in de home".[14] As it can be noticed, Jody not only silences her, but he also degrades her by stating Janie's inability in speaking.

Janie's confinement to the house continues and becomes always more insidious and limiting: besides silencing her, Jody decides how she has to behave in the store – he forced her to wear a head-rag to hide her hair, symbol of her beauty – and he even limits what she can hear, making her leave every time the men of the community gather under the store porch and tell stories about Matt Bonner's yellow mule. The tales about the mule, called 'the mule talk', have a significant meaning inside the novel: as Yvonne Johnson states in her study *The Voice of African American Women* (1998), the mule talk is expression of Hurston's anthropological and feminist voice. On one hand, the stories made up by the community about the animal represent the typical folk tales of African American tradition. In this way, the mule talk represents the essence of Eatonville's community, which Janie cannot experience because Jody relegated her to the role of mayor's wife, forcing her to not be part of the community in order to preserve her social highness. As a result, Janie is isolated from her people, from her tradition and culture. As Washington states, "Jody has really tried to separate her from the Black people around her, symbolically separating her from her own Blackness, that essential dimension to her identity".[15] On the other hand, the mule is a recurrent image and myth in African American folklore, and it is used by Hurston to metaphorically represent women.[16]

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[14] Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes*, p. 43.

[15] Mary Helen Washington, *"*The Black Woman's Search For Identity*"*, p. 72.

[16] Yvonne Johnson, *Voices of African American Women: Use of Narrative & Authorial Voice in the Works of Harriet Jacobs, Zora Neale Hurston & Alice Walker*, Peter Lang Publishing, 1998, p. 56.

Mentioned at the beginning by Nanny to enlighten Janie about women's role in the world, the image of the abused and mocked mule helps Janie become aware of men's behavior and take position against them. However, her stance is weak: used to repressing her voice, she mutters to herself how despiteful men can be, wishing she could rescue the poor mule from the community's violence. Despite her silent protest, she is firmly convinced of her position, which is highlighted also by the narrator: "People ought to have some regard for helpless things. She wanted to fight about it."[17] Eventually, Jody hears Janie's muttering and decides to buy the mule to get him free from his harsh owner: Janie appreciates Jody's act of kindness – she compares him to Lincoln's freeing of the slaves –, and thanks him publicly. Janie's talk is completely unexpected, not only because of her known submissiveness, but also because it uncovers her cleverness and judgment. In this way, Janie not only discovers the power of her voice, but she takes a public stand against the mule's abuse, representing metaphorically an attack to violence against women.

Janie's determination becomes increasingly more evident to Jody, marking the distance between the two Starks. Jody's egocentrism and sexism become clear to Janie: during the umpteenth discussion between them, Jody ends the conversation by lowering and comparing women to animals, which need someone – a man – to take care of them. Janie starts to think about "the inside state of her marriage" and realizes that Jody "wanted her submission and he'd keep on fighting until he felt he had it".[18] This moment makes her recollect the time when he slapped her very hard because of a bad-cooked dinner and she felt something falling off inside her: it is Jody's image. She understands that "she had no more blossomy openings dusting pollen over her man, neither any glistening young fruit where the petals used to be", making her realize that not only Jody is not the man of her dreams, but also she has "an inside and an outside now and suddenly she knew how not to mix them".[19] Johnson states that "soon after this realization Janie begins to find her voice"[20]: in fact, awareness of her submissive and degrading status dictated by Jody give her the right determination to use her voice to express her feelings. Janie's change can be perceived at the end of the sixth chapter, where she decisively enters the porch men's conversation about the stupidity and meanness of mules and women, firmly standing

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17 Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes,* p. 57.
18 Ivi, p. 71.
19 Ivi, p. 72.
20 Yvonne Johnson, *Voices of African American Women*, p. 69.

against men's sexism and harsh violence. Even though Jody hastily shuts her up, Janie shows a growing awareness of her and women's servile role inside society, which would give her the power to publicly confront Jody. As Johnson states, "Janie reflects the narrator's ideological stance against the values of the community. These values place the woman in the position of 'the mule'. Always subservient to the male. Janie's growing awareness of her chatteldom causes her to become less subservient and more resistant to Joe's domination".[21] Janie's voice reaches its maximum power in the following chapter: when Janie makes a clumsy mistake in the store that makes Jody furious, he begins berating her in front of the store crowd, not only mocking her incompetence but also insulting her looks. Eventually, Janie releases her pent-up feelings and insults Jody's sagging body, stating that he looks like "de change uh life" when naked. The insult is so powerful to stun the men on the porch, while Jody feels impotent: he feels being robbed of "his illusion of irresistible maleness that all men cherish"[22], diminishing forever his reputation and power over townsfolk. Already physically exhausted because of a renal dysfunction, Jody's public humiliation by Janie weakens further both his health and his ego, forcing him to hide from his wife in his bedroom. Janie's last talk with Jody will be fatal: she reaches him in his deathbed to talk to him one last time; she berates him, accusing him of tyranny and egoism. Jody dies and Janie finally feels free from her husband's persecution. As Johnson states, "Joe's death is a major turning point in the novel, an event that enables Janie to act upon her new-found sense of power". [23]

Despite her new-found sense of freedom, Janie really discovers her true self through the relationship with Tea Cake: differently from Nanny and Janie's second husband, who attempted to shape Janie according to their vision, Tea Cake embraces her as she is. Another important difference is in their worldview: while Nanny and Jody based their life on standards dictated by the white society – both characters dreamed a life sitting 'on the porch' for Janie – Tea Cake has not such standard. On the contrary, King describes him as "human and therefore flawed […] in touch with his natural and organic self".[24] Washington argues that Tea Cake "retain[s] close bonds with the Black community and

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[21] Yvonne Johnson, *Voices of African American Women*, p. 69-70.
[22] Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes,* p. 79.
[23] Yvonne Johnson, *Voices of African American Women*, p. 70.
[24] Lovarie King, *Zola Neale Hurston,* p. 54.

consequently [has] about them a kind of integrity and freedom".[25] This is particularly important for Janie's identity, since she can finally experience black culture, allowing her to fully achieve her black self: she leaves Eatonville to reach the Florida Everglades to work in the muck, symbolically retreating furthest from white models and deeper into Blackness. In fact, thanks to Tea Cake's quick wit and friendliness, their house becomes the center of the muck workers' entertainment and social life, which allows Janie not only to discover black folklore, but also to experience the sense of belonging to a community – which she could not experience back in Eatonville because of Jody's restrictions:

> Sometimes Janie would think of the old days in the big white house and the store and laugh to herself. What if Eatonville could see her now in her blue denim overalls and heavy shoes? The crowd of people around her and a dice game on her floor! She was sorry for her friends back there and scornful of the others […] Only here, she could listen and laugh and even talk some herself if she wanted to. She got so she could tell big stories herself from listening to the rest.[26]

In contrast to her previous life of limitations and silences, in the Everglades Janie experiences membership to the community as an active member, feeling free to express herself whenever she wants to. As Washington states, "Janie herself is truly a part of this community, not just an observer as Jody wanted her to be".[27] Moreover, not only does meeting Tea Cake influence Janie's search for identity, but it shows her a new way to conceive male-female relationship, based on equality between partners. In this regard, Johnson quotes Melvin Dixon, who states "Hurston's language demonstrates the equality; her sentences balance compound subjects engaged in a single action: 'Tea Cake and Janie gone haunting. Tea Cake and Janie playing checkers; playing coon-van; playing Florida flip on the store porch all afternoon as if nobody else was there'".[28] The narration clearly aims to represent the harmonious relationship shared by the two characters, which brings both Tea Cake and Janie to experience joy and cheerfulness together, revealing the equality in their relationship. As Johnson states, "Janie and Tea Cake are indeed engaged in thinking new thoughts and creating a new language that will bridge the communicative chasm that separates male from female".[29]

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[25] Mary Helen Washington, "The Black Woman's Search For Identity", p. 71.
[26] Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes.,* p. 134.
[27] Mary Helen Washington, "The Black Woman's Search For Identity", p. 74.
[28] Melvin Dixon, *Ride Out the Wilderness: Geography and Identity in Afro-American Literature*, Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 1987, p. 89 quoted in Yvonne Johnson, *Voices of African American Women*, p. 71.
[29] Yvonne Johnson, *Voices of African American Women*, p. 71.

The importance of the relationship between Janie and Tea Cake goes beyond the text itself, since it is partially built on Hurston's personal experience with her second husband. As Johnson argues, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* contains autobiographical elements that highlight a deep connection between Janie and Hurston: both of them left their hometown and their families, and did not go back.[30] In addition, Hurston's Eatonville is very similar to Janie's Eatonville: not only the town's store served as meeting place for both communities, but also both store owners' wives were abused by their husbands.[31] However, the most relevant similarity between the author and the protagonist of this story is their relationship with their husband. In particular, Hurston based most of Janie's relationship with Tea Cake on her relationship with her second husband Albert Price III: to be specific, Johnson highlights that Hurston represented in Janie and Tea Cakes' relationship two main issues that constituted the conflict between her and Price, which are their age difference and Price's insecurities. In fact, both Price and Tea Cake were younger than their female counterpart and both of them felt their relationships threatened by other men, which caused many insecurities that eventually resulted in jealousy and violence against their partner. In this instance, particularly important is how Hurston's and Janie's abusing experience are described as quite insignificant: in her autobiographical work *Dust Tracks On A Road*, Hurston seems to describe this event lightly, as if she would like to make it appear a minor violence and also to excuse it through her prior slap towards him: "He paid me off then and there with interest. No broken bones, you understand, and black eyes."[32] The same emphasis can be perceived in the novel when Janie is beaten by TeaCake after rumors of Mr. Turner's attention towards her: "Before the week was over he had whipped Janie. Not because her behavior justified his jealousy, but it relieved that awful fear inside him. Being able to whip her reassured him in possession. No brutal beating at all. He just slapped her around a bit to show he was boss".[33] Like in *Dust Tracks On A Road*, the violence is not only described as soft and almost imperceptible, but it is also justified since it is meant as an act against Mr. Turner – "to show he was boss" – rather than against Janie. Hurston seems to justify this 'soft' type of male domination over women as expression of insecurities. As a result,

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[30] Yvonne Johnson, *Voices of African American Women*, p. 50.
[31] Ivi, p. 47.
[32] Zora Neale Hurston, *Dust Tracks*, p. 187.
[33] Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes*, p. 147.

Hurston's justification of gender violence seems to break the balance inside the equal relationship between Janie and TeaCake, negating an end to male domination. However, according to Johnson, who in this instance quotes Dianne Sadoff, Hurston condemns and does put an end to male domination: "Hurston has motivated her narrative, perhaps unconsciously, to act out her rage against male domination and to free Janie, a figure for herself, from all men". [34] In fact, by killing TeaCake, Hurston creates a narrative in which the beater is then killed by the beaten: this happens firstly with Jody, whose humiliation by Janie, followed by her speech in his deathbed, will be fatal for Jody, killing him metaphorically with her language. Then Tea Cake, gripped by a hallucination due to rabies, tries to shot Janie, who instead shots him first.

Killing Tea Cake gives Janie the opportunity to free herself from male domination; the Everglades mean nothing to Janie without Tea Cake, so she decides to go back to Eatonville, returning to the point where the novel started, with Janie's narration of her story to Pheoby. This return to the opening of the novel mirrors Janie's return home; however, she is not the same as before: thanks to Tea Cake, she has experienced that harmonious and passionate love she dreamt since she was a young girl, which also allowed her to fully discover herself as black woman. As Johnson states, "Janie comes back to Eatonville a new woman"[35]: despite all her abuses from her first husbands and her ultimate decision to shot the love of her life, she is in peace with herself and feels sure and free with the power she has discovered within herself. Although Tea Cake is no longer by her side, she feels his presence within her, in the person that she has become: her act of "pull[ing] in her horizon"[36] around herself mirrors the harmony that she has finally established with the world around her.

3.4 Hurston's authorial voice and her condemnation within the African American literature

In Janie's path towards freedom and her African American identity, of particular importance is how the reader comes to know about Janie's inner growth. In fact, although most of the novel's structure is based on the third person narration, a close reading of the

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[34] Dianne Sadoff, "Black Matrilineage: The Case Of Alice Walker and Zora Neale Hurston", *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, II, 2, 1985, p. 22, quoted in Yvonne Johnson, *Voices of African American Women*, p. 52.
[35] Yvonne Johnson, *Voices of African American Women*, p. 76.
[36] Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes*, p. 193.

text shows a tangled web of narrative voices that brings the reader to discover Janie and the other characters from within. According to Johnson, in *Their Eyes Were Watching God* there are two narrators: a public narrator who "serves as a multivoiced creator and authority within the story world"[37], and a private narrator, represented by Janie, "since she functions within the story as the protagonist and tells her story to a narratee who also functions within the story".[38] In particular, the public narrator's voice is not directly accessible, but the reader can identify her gender and perspective: in fact, Johnson argues that the narrator's sympathy and closest identification is with Janie, which factor marks out the narrator as female. According to Johnson, the reader can understand that the public narrator is female since the beginning of the novel: the narrator announces that "the beginning of this was a woman"[39], making the reader aware that the perspective is female.[40] In addition, the public narrator uses the free indirect discourse, where "the narrator adopts the tone or phraseology of a character, incorporating it within the narrator's own speech activity", and conversely "the narrator's speech infiltrates the character's discourse…where the thoughts, words, or perceptions represented are those of the character, but the syntax is that of the narrative voice".[41] In this way, the narrator brings the reader closer to Janie's consciousness, helping him or her to empathize with the protagonist. Although "it is primarily through [Janie's] consciousness that the story unfolds"[42], the narrator is found using the free indirect discourse with other characters: this narrative device not only provides an 'inside view' of each character, but it also shows the public narrator's positive and negative inclination towards them. As Johnson shows, the narrator's focalization on Eatonville's community's mind at the opening of the novel highlights her distance from the men and women's gossiping and making judgments about Janie's return, making "the reader […] aware that the narrator is not in sympathy with their thoughts".[43] The same aloofness can be perceived in Joe Starks's presentation of his plans for his future life in Eatonville:

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[37] Yvonne Johnson, *Voices of African American Women*, p. 60.
[38] Ivi, p. 64.
[39] Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes*, p. 1.
[40] Yvonne Johnson, *Voices of African American Women*, p. 61.
[41] Susan Sniader Lanser, *The Narrative Act: Point of View in Prose Fiction*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1981, p. 186, quoted in Yvonne Johnson, *Voices of African American Women*, p. 61.
[42] Yvonne Johnson, *Voices of African American Women*, p. 61.
[43] Ivi, p. 63.

> Joe Starks was the name, yeah Joe Starks from in and through Georgy. Been workin' for white folks all his life. Saved up some money—round three hundred dollars, yes indeed, right here in his pocket. Kept hearin' 'bout them buildin' a new state down heah in Floridy and sort of wanted to come. But he was makin' money where he was. But when he heard all about 'em makin' a town all outa colored folks, he knowed dat was de place he wanted to be. He had always wanted to be a big voice, but de white folks had all de sayso where he come from and everywhere else, exceptin' dis place dat colored folks was buildin' theirselves. Dat was right too. De man dat built things oughta boss it. Let colored folks build things too if dey wants to crow over somethin'. He was glad he had his money all saved up. He meant to git dere whilst de town wuz yet a baby.[44]

As it can be noticed, Hurston not only uses the free indirect discourse, but she also employs features of Black English, showing Jody's character from within, thus providing an 'inside view' of him. However, the narrator's closeness to Jody's mind does not mirror sympathy or affinity. As Johnson states, "although the narrator focalizes Joe's consciousness, any sense of connection between Joe's voice and the narrative voice is absent". [45] The narrator's stance on Janie's discovery of her voice and position among townsfolk and her clear stance against Jody's and the community's judgment, reveals a strong bond with Hurston's authorial voice. In fact, Hurston, whose voice "can also be identified by locating her obsessions, the images and metaphors that occur repeatedly in her texts"[46], and the narrator share the same ideological stance as both advocate freedom from sexist and racist oppression and speaking against the cultural values that enforce such oppression.[47] It can be noticed how Hurston had a great personal involvement in the making of this novel, not only because of the numerous autobiographical elements present inside the story, but also because her authorial voice emerges clearly from the narration, highlighting her perspective against Janie's objectification and her support of Janie's search for identity.

Despite Hurston's aim to give voice to African American women and to subvert patriarchal discourse, at the time of its publication, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* was subjected to sharp criticism from important representatives of African American literature. In fact, when the novel was published in 1937, racialized social oppression was a major issue of American life, which had led most of the Harlem Renaissance exponents to focalize their artistic work on African Americans' segregation and discrimination. In this perspective, Richard Wright criticized Hurston for her use of Black English: as King

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[44] Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes,* p. 28.
[45] Yvonne Johnson, *Voices of African American Women*, p. 67.
[46] Ivi, p. 54.
[47] Ivi, p. 74.

states, Wright did not appreciate Hurston's employment of dialect, which to him condemned her to carry on in the tradition of minstrelsy.[48] More significantly, Wright contested Hurston's novel – and most of her works – because they were not social protest literature. As Minnick reports in "Community in Conflict", Wright judged her novel as a 'political failure': according to Wright, she not only failed to focus on African Americans' social and racial issues, but she also adjusted African Americans' portrayals to please her mostly or exclusively white readership.[49] In this perspective, Minnick quotes Barba Johnson's article "Metaphor, Metonymy and Voice in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*", in which she highlights how Wright, along with many other Hurston's African American male predecessors and contemporaries, such as W. E. B. DuBois and James Weldon Johnson, shared the idea that her works were to be considered non-political because "readers of Afro-American literature tend to look for confrontational *racial* politics, not sexual politics".[50] Johnson underlines how this limiting conception of politics was actually based on the main idea that "the black subject is male": in this shortsightedness of many African American male authors' view, Janie's story of abuses and discrimination within a patriarchal system that forces her to stay silent, is seen as a betrayal of racial solidarity and a failure. A betrayal because "If the black woman voices opposition to male domination, she is often seen as a traitor to the cause of racial justice"[51]; and a failure to represent black life in America because "the black woman is totally invisible in [their] descriptions of the black dilemma".[52]

Because of the widespread conception in the 1930s among most famous exponents of African American literature as a tool of social protest and their rejection of any African American folk forms, Hurston's works were not well accepted and did not earn great success in twentieth-century African American literature. Until the 1970s, when her works would be rediscovered and revaluated thanks to Alice Walker's research: firstly with her 1975 essay, published in the March issue of *Mr.* magazine, "The Search for Zora Neale Hurston", and subsequently as editor of the 1979 anthology *I Love Myself When I Am Laughing… And Then Again: A Zora Neale Hurston Reader*, Walker is largely

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[48] Lovarie King, *Zola Neale Hurston,* p. 113.
[49] Lisa Minnick, *Dialect and Dichotomy*, p. 145.
[50] James Weldon Johnson, "Preface", *The Book of American Negro Poetry,* 1922, Gates and McKay, p. 53, quoted in Lisa Minnick, *Dialect and Dichotomy*, p. 146.
[51] *Ibidem*
[52] Ivi, p. 52-53.

responsible for Hurston's resuscitation in contemporary American literature. As King states in her article "African American Womanism: From Zora Neale Hurston to Alice Walker", Walker's research in this field not only brought *Their Eyes Were Watching God* to attain its present-day canonical status. Through her 1983 anthology *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens: Womanist Prose*, Walker illustrates the great contribution that Hurston's work in the woman-centered narrative brought in African American women's literary production from the nineteenth century to even the second half of the twentieth century. In *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens*, Walker presents Hurston and other black writers as her foremothers, paying them tribute for paving the way, even under the most difficult circumstance, to her current generation of African American women writers.

After an initial unanimous acclaim, celebrating the novel's feminism, another series of criticism concerning *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, this time focused on Hurston's portrayal of African American women in 1930s America, has started to emerge. In fact, after confirming Hurston's huge anthropological and literary contribution to African American folklore and Black women feminism, these critical issue whether Janie has actually achieved her voice, and thus her freedom within a patriarchal society. In this context, one of the most notorious critique is Jennifer Jordan's: in her article "Feminist Fantasies: Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*", Jordan states that the novel fails to faithfully represent black feminism because Janie actually never perceives herself as an independent, intrinsically fulfilled human being. According to Jordan, although Hurston's novel can be considered a vehicle of feminist protest because of its condemnation of the restrictiveness of bourgeois marriage and its exploration of verbal and physical male violence, it fails not only to represent the complexity of black women discourse in America, but also to transform Janie into a free and realized individual. In fact, Jordan states that Hurston's work "belittles the suffering of the majority of black women whose working-class existences are dominated by hard labor and financial instability"; moreover, Janie does not effectively find personal identity since "she never defines herself outside the scope of her marital or romantic involvements and, despite her sincere relationship with her friend Pheoby, fails to achieve a communal identification with the black women around her or with the black community as a whole".[53] However,

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[53] Jennifer Jordan, "Feminist Fantasies: Zora Neale Hurston's Their Eyes Were Watching God", *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, VII, 1, Spring 1988, p. 108.

most critics and many black feminist critics seem to disagree with Jordan's argument, including Johnson: in her opinion, Jordan's thesis "negates the traditional subject-object dichotomy associated with gender by transforming Janie into a speaking subject".[54] As a matter of fact, in *The Voice of African American Women* Johnson repeatedly shows how Janie achieves her freedom by discovering and empowering her voice, transforming herself from object to subject, from being one of Jody's belongings to being a woman in charge of her own self.

Washington wrote the 'Foreword' for *Their Eyes Were Watching God* published by Perennial in 1998, in which she mentions another significant and complex critique, launched by Robert Stepto at the MLA convention in San Francisco in December 1979, during a session titled "Traditions and Their Transformations in Afro-American Letters". In her essay, Washington underlines how Stepto brought up one of the most highly controversial and discussed aspects of the novel: whether or not Janie actually achieves her voice. As Washington reports, Stepto's skepticism arises from the courtroom scene in which the protagonist, called to defend herself and to make the jury understand the meaning of her life with Tea Cake, faces the trial 'in silence', without actually speaking. In fact, the reader comes to know Janie's defense not in her own first-person voice, but through Hurston's voice as omniscient third-person narrator. For this reason, Washington reports that "Stepto was quite convinced (and convincing) that the frame story in which Janie speaks to Pheoby creates only the illusion that Janie has found her voice, that Hurston's insistence on telling Janie's story in the third person undercuts her power as speaker".[55] After Stepto's comments, Alice Walker took the floor, claiming that it was in every woman's right to decide where and when to speak, because they know when it is better or not to use their voice. Walker's defense of Hurston's choice had a great impact on many Hurston scholars, including Washington: despite her sharing with Stepto doubts about the courtroom scene, Washington states that Janie's silence may mirror Hurston's discomfort with the prototypical male hero who affirms himself through his 'big voice'.[56] Thus, women's silence may be intentional and useful to characterize and differ the female hero from the male hero: as Washington argues, silence is the tool through which Janie

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[54] Yvonne Johnson, *Voices of African American Women*, p. 75.
[55] Mary Helen Washington, Foreword in Hurston, Zora Neale, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, New York, Perennial Classics, 1998, p. xiv.
[56] Mary Helen Washington, Foreword, p. xiv.

achieves inner growth, highlighting how language may be useless if it is separated from experience.[57] Since its resuscitation in the 1970s, Hurston's novel has been continuously reprinted, gaining popularity and acquiring new readers every year. More importantly, this novel has been and still is taught in colleges all over the country: because of Janie's ambiguous portrait as heroic female character, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* is still source of studies and research on Hurston's concept of black sexuality and feminism, highlighting how this novel shows actually "a woman writer struggling with the problem of the questing hero as woman and the difficulties in 1937 of giving a woman character such power and such daring".[58]

3.5 Hurston's use of Black English: 'the voice of a collective community'

Despite Wright's harsh criticism over Hurston's use of black folklore, since her literary resuscitation Hurston has been revaluated not only for her strong and authentic feminism, but also because of her innovative and concise use of Black English. In fact, one of the most analyzed aspects of the novel is Hurston's split style of narrative: as I mentioned before, the narration is delivered by two narrators, the public narrator – an omniscient, third-person narrator, whose voice is decidedly literary and intellectual, full of metaphors and figurative language – and the private narrator – represented by Janie's voice. The public narrator's voice anchors the entire novel, and it clearly distinguishes itself from the long and frequent passages of dialogue: while the public narrator uses Standard Written English, the dialogues between the characters are marked by their highly colloquial language – Black Vernacular English – and colorful folksy aphorisms. In fact, Hurston's use of Black English distinguishes oral discourse from the narrator's voice, highlighting the characters' voices and marking the novel's strong connection to African American oral tradition.

In "Community in Conflict", Minnick analyses Hurston's employment of Black English in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, underlining how its use is significant not only because of its wide presence inside the novel, but also because of the role it has for the story: as Minnick states, the novel contains approximately 60,000 words, half of which are represented as direct speech of characters.[59] However, what is more significant is how

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[57] Mary Helen Washington, Foreword, p. xiv.
[58] Ivi, p. xvi.
[59] Lisa Minnick, *Dialect and Dichotomy*, p. 123.

this dialect is represented: by using computational methods and qualitative analysis, Minnick gathers important data about the phonological and grammar features used by most of the characters, highlighting how there is a sort of homogeneity in the use of Black English, meaning that all characters' speeches are characterized by the same features. For what concerns phonological features, Minnick gathers data about the type of features used and their frequencies for each major character: the collected data show little interspeaker variation for what concerns both the specific dialectal features of AAVE present in the speech of a given character and the frequencies at which those features are produced. Indeed, Minnick states that "with only a few exceptions, then, nearly all the characters use mostly the same features, and they tend to use them at comparable frequencies".[60] She uses the same methodology for the grammar features – not collecting their frequencies though – and she notices that there is a direct proportion between the frequency of a character's speech and the number of grammatical features used: in fact, those characters who produce more total speech are found to produce a greater number of total grammatical features.[61] Accordingly, those characters that are less involved in direct speech use a lower number of grammatical features – with the exceptions of Joe and Pheoby, with Joe producing more words than Pheoby but a smaller number of different features.

In this perspective, it can be noticed how there is a sort of linguistic homogeneity despite the differences between the characters. In fact, characters differ by age, level of education and social and geographical background, but they share phonological features and even frequencies. This situation may arise skepticism on whether the novel succeeds in representing realistic speech, since the differences between the characters may lead to expect phonological and grammar variation in their speech. However, Hurston's representation of dialect is actually consistent with the actual Black dialect spoken in 1930s Florida. As Minnick reports in her study, when comparing Hurston's use of phonological features with linguistic data gathered for LAGS (Linguistic Atlas of the Gulf States) and LAMSAS (Linguistic Atlas of the Middle and South Atlantic States) from African American speakers, results show great accuracy in the representation of the characters' speech – data were collected from Hurston's contemporaries in the 1930s and

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[60] Lisa Minnick, *Dialect and Dichotomy*, p. 124.
[61] Ivi, p. 125.

from Floridians interviewed between 1968 and 1983. In this perspective, Minnick quotes Betsy Berry, who states that Hurston's representation of dialect indicates "important phonetic and phonological differences in pronunciation that reflect features typical of both southern American English and AAVE" and that "her use of 'non-standard' grammatical constructions reinforces the linguistic authenticity of her representation".[62] In addition, Minnick underlines how Hurston's capacity of incorporating a wide range and large quantity of grammatical and phonological features – Minnick counts thirty-eight different features – was actually very impressive, which indicates Hurston's representation of AAVE as "an artistic and linguistic tour de force". [63] As a result, it can be noticed how dialect is not used as factor to individualize characters: differently from *Huckleberry Finn*, in which each character speaks a specific dialect or a linguistic variation of a given dialect, in *Their Eyes Were Watching God* no character's speech stands out for a particular use of phonological and grammar features of AAVE. Thus, in Hurston's novel there is no differentiation between characters' voices and "individuating characters, then, is not left to differential feature-production in the speech of the characters".[64]

According to Minnick, there are three possible reasons to explain the lack of phonological and grammar variations among characters' ways of speaking: the first is the functionality theory, based on the idea that dialect is used to characterize the characters' function in the novel, in the sense that each character has a specific function inside the story that is expressed through a specific use of particular features of AAVE. Minnick illustrates this theory by highlighting the use of tense and aspect features denoting past event by four of the major characters.

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[62] Betsy Barry, "It's Hard fuh Me to Understand What You Mean, de Way You Tell It: Representing Language in Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes* Were *Watching God.", Language and Literature,* X, 2, 2001, p. 172, quoted in Lisa Minnick, *Dialect and Dichotomy*, p. 128.
[63] Lisa Minnick, *Dialect and Dichotomy*, p. 128.
[64] Ivi, p. 131.

TABLE 1
Tense and Aspect Features Denoting Past Events in Speech of Several Major Characters [65]

FEATURE	TEA CAKE	EATONVILLE MEN	NANNY	JOE
<u>Be</u> + <u>done</u>	X			
Completive <u>been</u>	X	X		
<u>Done</u> + <u>been</u>			X	X
<u>Done</u> + verb	X	X	X	
Simple past <u>done</u>	X	X	X	X
Unmarked past	X	X	X	X
Regularized past	X	X	X	

Despite Nanny's slight presence in the story, with nearly 3,000 words produced, she is the third leading individual speech-producer and grammatical-features-producer in the novel. In fact, her speech is mostly made of stories of her past that have a link to her presence: her stories contain a great employment of features that mark tense or aspect demarcating past events – describing how she runs away with her infant daughter from her mistress – and continuing actions – telling Janie her plans for a bright future for her. Quite similarly, Eatonville men's speech contains an extended use of tense about past events, due to their tendency to participate in verbal games such as flirting with young single women and making up stories about the yellow mule. According to Minnick, these grammatical structures regarding past tense have a specific function in determining each character's role: Nanny's function is to be "Janie's link to the past and her family's history", while the Eatonville men function as "bearers and exemplifiers of the vernacular tradition".[66] For what concerns the other two analyzed characters, the data collected by Minnick show an important difference between Tea Cake and Jody: similarly for Nanny, Tea Cake's speech presents an extended use of dialectal tense and aspect features, since storytelling is a great component of his speech; while Joe's speech presents just three out of seven grammatical features, highlighting his aversion to discuss past events and to participate in the community storytelling sessions.[67] Considering that a specific choice of dialectal features determines a function of a given character inside the story, it can be argued that the linguistic difference between Tea Cake and Joe Starks highlights their

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[65] Lisa Minnick, *Dialect and Dichotomy*, p. 129.
[66] Ivi, p. 131.
[67] Ivi, p. 129.

different approach to dialect as expression of African American folklore. By avoiding the past tense, Joe avoids storytelling, which may represent a moving away from the community and underlining of his higher status. On the contrary, Tea Cake enjoys storytelling, which characteristic contributes to his being in touch with black folklore. As I mentioned in the previous analysis of the novel, Washington suggests a similar idea, highlighting how Janie, after being isolated from the community by Joe because of his supposed superiority towards the townspeople, finds Tea Cake, who allows her to finally experience black culture in the Everglades. Minnick illustrates how these aspects can also be found in the characters' speech.

Following Minnick's argumentation, a second reason that may explain the lack of linguistic variability among the characters, is based on the idea that Hurston's main aim was to illustrate a community of African American characters, which develop membership through their shared experiences. In this perspective, the differences between them due to age and social and geographical background, are overcome by their common African American origins, represented through voices speaking a single language. As Minnick states, "Hurston may be indicating that the shared experiences of being African American transcend the individual dissimilarities and interpersonal and intergroup conflicts resulting from imbalances in gender, class, and other relations."[68] This idea of a common language representing African Americans as a great and unique community brings Minnick to argue a third reason, based on the idea that Hurston's employment of dialect is not only a way to establish it as a "method of communicating black meanings to black audiences, a kind of community reinforcing and collective cultural celebration"[69], but it is also a way to celebrate black folklore "reclaim[ing] it from the stereotypical and minstrelized representations that so repulsed James Weldon Johnson and many of the Harlem Renaissance writers".[70] Thus, according to Minnick and other critics she quotes, such as Henry Louis Gates, Hurston's employment of Black English in her fiction highlights how she aims to present dialect as a celebration of a shared culture, one that is a 'uniquely oral culture'. In this perspective, each character's voice is considered as arising from a collective and single culture representing the black vernacular tradition: each individual speaker in the novel is considered as speaking from

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[68] Lisa Minnick, *Dialect and Dichotomy*, p. 131.

[69] *Ibidem*

[70] *Ibidem*

and for a collective culture, with the textual voice "extending far beyond the merely individual".[71] The collected data showing the phonological and grammatical homogeneity in the employment of dialectal features, mark the collective form of Hurston's representation of Black English, determining *Their Eyes Were Watching God* as a "document of the voice of a collective society".[72] Although the representation of the diverse speech of characters as similar in terms of linguistic features used, may rise suspicions over the realism of the novel, the variety among characters resulting from individual as well as gender and class differences, help the story to achieve realism and to humanize the community. As Minnick states, "Hurston humanizes rather than idealizes, showing that the community still exists as a strong entity, with intracommunity conflict simply a defining distinction of any thriving community".[73]

However, creating a community with internal problems and conflicts might complicate the perception of the novel: even though conflicts convey a realistic image of a community, they may also raise issues in the recognition of the novel as mainly a celebration of community by way of a celebration of oral culture. One of the major issues that may cause this perception is the intragroup racism carried up by Mrs. Turner, a light-skinned African American woman who judges people on the basis of their blackness. In fact, the reader comes to know Mrs. Turner's disdain for dark-skinned people through her conversations with Janie, considered worth of talking to because of her mulatto origins, even though she cannot "forgive her for marrying a man as dark as Tea Cake".[74] Despite her clear racist attitude towards black people, Minnick shows how her use of dialect is very much similar to the other African American characters' one: "Mrs. Turner produces only about 750 words of direct speech in the novel, but even within this relatively small sample, her frequencies for eight phonological features are statistically significant, with high frequencies for seven of them".[75] To be specific, this character's speech presents eight of the twenty-three grammatical features collected by Minnick in her research – this fact fulfills the rule of the direct proportion between frequency of a character's speech and number of grammatical features used – and ten out of thirteen phonological features

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[71] Henry Louis Gates, *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism*, New York, Oxford Up, 1988, p. 183, quoted in Lisa Minnick, *Dialect and Dichotomy*, p. 132.

[72] Lisa Minnick, *Dialect and Dichotomy*, p. 132.

[73] *Ibidem*

[74] Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes*, p. 140.

[75] Lisa Minnick, *Dialect and Dichotomy*, p. 133.

addressed, which are present in frequencies of occurrence similar to those of other characters. This is particularly relevant, since Mrs. Turner's speech characteristics make her appear close to the community of people she considers inferior because of their dark skin. In fact, from Mrs. Turner's perspective, social class status depends on skin color, where dark-skinned people belong to the lower social class. However, this conception is not shared by Eatonville citizens, who instead base social class status on money. In this perspective, Joe Starks symbolizes the higher social class in the Eatonville community: as I analyzed in the previous paragraph, Joe sets his superiority not only by owning many lands and belongings, but also by visibly separating these belongings – Janie is among them – from the community in order to elevate himself socially and economically. Precisely because of his political abilities, Joe makes himself appear superior to the townsfolk: "There was something about Joe Starks that cowed the town. It was not because of physical fear. He was no fist fighter. His bulk was not even imposing as men go. Neither was it because he was more literate than the rest".[76] Even though this description shows how his diversity from the townsfolk is not due to his physical appearance or his higher knowledge, village people criticize him because oh his literate linguistic style and content: "'Whut Ah don't lak 'bout de man is, he talks tuh unlettered folks wid books in his jaws," Hicks complained. "Showin' off his learnin'".[77] However, according to Minnick, Joe's speech data are not consistent with the townsfolk's perspective:

[76] Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God,* cit., p. 47.
[77] Ivi, p. 49.

TABLE 2
Phonological Feature Frequency Comparison for Joe and Eatonville Men* [78]

FEATURE	JOE	EATONVILLE MEN	DIFFERENCE
Vocalization of postvocalic /r/	39/80 (49%)	93/167 (56%)	Not significant
Stopping of syllable-initial fricatives	91/99 (92%)	293/328 (89%)	Not significant
Stopping of voiceless interdental fricatives	12/14 (86%)	26/28 (93%)	Not significant
Consonant cluster reduction	9/112 (8%)	23/328 (7%)	Not significant
Deletion of unstressed syllable	17/31 (55%)	71/123 (58%)	Not significant
Final unstressed /n/ for /ŋ/ in present participle	40/41 (98%)	101/104 (97%)	Not significant
Other final unstressed /n/ for /ŋ/	18/25 (72%)	34/44 (77%)	Not significant
Merger of /ɛ/ and /I/	9/15 (60%)	36/40 (90%)	Significant
Glide reduction of /aI/ to /a/	80/96 (83%)	179/187 (96%)	Not significant

*Frequencies are significant at p < .05. Difference is significant at p< .05.

These data collected by Minnick show that Joe's speech presents specific phonological features, which are also present in Eatonville men's speech; moreover, the data show that Joe's speech is very similar to the one of Eatonville men in terms of frequencies of the features used. Minnick observes that linguistic similarities occur also in other two aspects: Joe and Eatonville men are found producing quite the same length sentence; in addition, despite Hick's observation concerning Joe's literacy, there is no concrete evidence that Joe's speech is more articulated and complicated than that of the other men.[79] A particular linguistic feature that characterizes Joe's speech and marks his personality is the frequent use of the expression 'I god': as Minnick observes, Joe uses *Ah* to articulate the first-person pronoun *I*, a characteristic shared by all the other characters of the novel; however, Joe is the only character to also use the standard English transcription *I*, pronounced on fourteen occasions, each time followed by the term *god*. In the progressing of the story, the expression comes to identify Joe's way of speaking, so much so that Hezekiah, a

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[78] Lisa Minnick, *Dialect and Dichotomy*, p. 136.
[79] Ivi, p. 137.

young man who helps Janie in the store after Joe's death, uses the same expression to impersonate him in the expectation to become Joe's successor one day. According to Minnick, who cites Barbara Johnson and Henry Louis Gates Jr., "Joe uses the expression to name himself as godlike",[80] which intensifies his perception as a superior being in the townsfolk's mind.

Taking into consideration the complex and accurate research of Minnick on the language in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, it can be noticed how Hurston's representation of Black English is extremely accurate and follows a precise line of employment: African American speech is not only used to represent a way of speaking, but its "poetry of sound and meaning"[81] clears dialect from its negative literary reputation. By making a homogeneous representation of this dialect, used by all characters in the same way, Hurston characterizes her dialect as a collective linguistic form of expression, which allows her to exalt its power of expression of a strong oral culture.

3.6 Retranslations in comparison
3.6.1 The translators' personal perspectives

As it has been showed in the previous paragraph, the linguistic analysis of *Their Eyes Were Watching God* shows ample linguistic homogeneity in the employment of Black English among the numerous characters, which appears to be a conscious decision from Hurston in order to represent dialect as a collective form of expression. By these means, Hurston's representation of AAVE aims to exalt its value as linguistic expression of black folklore and to de-stereotype it, detaching it from its use in the minstrel-like representation of African Americans. In this perspective, it is important to underline how Hurston's celebration of black culture is extremely studied not only because of the accurate representation of phonological and grammar features of AAVE, but also because of the recurrent employment of figurative language, which is often a production of Hurston's own linguistic creativity. For this reason, in what follows my analysis will focus on how Black English is translated into Italian, with a particular interest on how metaphors and figurative speech are conveyed in the target texts. Before focusing on specific passages of the source text, I will present the target texts by analyzing their general presentation to the readership – foreword, afterword, etc. – and by providing basic

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[80] Lisa Minnick, *Dialect and Dichotomy*, p.136.
[81] Ivi, p. 152.

information about the translators. On the Italian publishing market, three editions of Hurston's novel have appeared: the first, *I loro occhi guardavano Dio*, was translated by Ada Prospero and published by Frassinelli in 1938; the second Italian edition is a translation by Adriana Bottini, published by Bompiani in 1998 with the title *Con gli occhi rivolti al cielo*. The third edition was published by Cargo in 2009, and it is a reproposal of Bottini's translation with a new title, exactly like that of the 1938 version.[82]

Ada Prospero (1902-1968) was a journalist and translator, mostly known in the Italian cultural panorama for her great activism as Partisan during the Fascist regime. She began her career studying literature and philosophy – she graduated in Turin with a thesis on Anglo-American pragmatism – and she later devoted herself to pedagogical studies. Deeply marked by the critical social and political situation created by the Fascist dictatorship – her husband Piero Gobetti, an antifascist activist, died because of violence perpetrated by a fascist military squad –, her political and working life would always be the two spheres that influenced Prospero's writings. As Francesca Tosi states in "Enciclopedia delle donne", Prospero's philosophy was based on the idea that political action and personal studies, in the forms of translation, writing and pedagogy, were different aspects belonging to the same civil commitment.[83] Thanks to her mentor and close friend Benedetto Croce, she committed herself to developing her translation studies in French, Russian and English, specializing in British and American authors, such as Henry Fielding, Charles Dickens, Archibald J. Cronin, Eugene G. O'Neill, John Galsworthy. Alongside her activity as translator, she wrote pedagogical essays and kept a strong commitment to the Italian press: from her first newspaper edited together with her husband Piero before the advent of Fascism, until the one she founded in the aftermath of the Second World War, she dedicated her activity as journalist to promote education to democracy and freedom of thought.[84]

Prospero introduces the reader to her version of *Their Eyes Were Watching God* through a preface about the author's life and the main themes of the novel, focusing on

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[82] Since this edition presents a foreword by Zadie Smith and an afterword of Goffredo Fofi that will be later quoted for the comparative analysis, in the following paragraphs I will refer to Bottini's translation by quoting the Cargo edition.

[83] Francesca Tosi, "Ada Gobetti", in *Enciclopedia delle donne*, < http://www.enciclopediadelledonne.it/biografie/ada-gobetti/>, accessed 8 May 2019.

[84] Tiziana Pironi, "Prospero Ada", in *Treccani*, <http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/ada-prospero_(Dizionario-Biografico)/>, accessed 8 May 2019.

how Janie's journey from abnegation and enforced silence to experiencing true love, allows her to "discover the sense of reality and life".[85] In the context of my comparative analysis, of particular relevance is Prospero's note about her translating choices, in which she explains her difficulties as translator to convey the linguistic peculiarities that characterize the imaginative and extremely picturesque style of the story. She pinpoints three main issues, one of which is the recurrent presence of dialect: even though she considers black vernacular a misspelled American English, Prospero recognizes its significance in the novel, underlining how translating it with a misspelled Italian would be grotesque because of its 'literary value' as the language of black people. For these reasons, Prospero's intention is to translate it not in a formless jargon, but in such a way as to convey its tone and atmosphere.[86] The second issue concerns the differences between the characters' speech: while the main characters, such as Nanny, Janie and Tea Cake, express themselves in a tone partly lyric and partly inspired, the secondary characters speak incorrectly and often coarsely. According to Prospero, this variety needs to be translated because the constant wavering between an almost obscene materiality and a lyric sense of poetic liberation represents the very spirit of the black race. Hurston's figurative language, mostly connoted through metaphors, represents Prospero's third obstacle: because the evocative images created by the author are 'alien' to the Italian readership, the translator was doubtful whether to preserve the image as it was or to convert it into an Italian one carrying a similar meaning. Because a literal translation would have ridiculed the text and a translation that normalized it would have suppressed the 'pungent and nostalgic tone' of the novel, Prospero decided to maintain most of the foreignness of the text without making it grotesque or ridiculous.[87]

Unfortunately, little is known about the second translator involved in this analysis, Adriana Bottini. She was born in Milan, where she attended the Manzoni grammar school and then the University of Milan, but she did not complete her degree. However, she never gave up her passion for English language and culture and, after a period of enriching political and social work experience, in 1969 she began her career as translator, which

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[85] Zora Neale Hurston, *I loro occhi guardavano Dio*, trad. Ada Prospero, Frassinelli Tipografo Editore Torino, 1938, p. xx.
[86] Ivi, p. xxii.
[87] *Ibidem*

would become her main occupation.[88] Besides translating English novelists such as Graham Green – *The Power and the Glory*, *The Heart of the Matter*, *Our Man in Havana* and *The Human Factor* – and Virginia Woolf – she focused on her many tales and essays about personal life, such as *Three Guineas* – [89], she specialized in the translation of sociological and psychoanalytic essay-writing. This area of translation led her to settle a collaboration with the publishing houses Feltrinelli and Adelphi; in particular, the latter is responsible for the encounter of Bottini with the one who she would later consider 'her author', the Jungian psychoanalyst James Hillman, of whom she translated *The Soul's Code*, *The Dream and the Underworld*, *A Terrible Love of War*.[90]

Unlike Prospero's strategy to present the novel and explain her choices, Bottini does not introduce her translation to the reader. In fact, the 1998 version, besides entitling the novel as *Con gli occhi rivolti a Dio*, does not contain any foreword or afterword, and being presented as the first translation of this novel – this statement can be found in the black flap of the book cover, alongside information on Hurston's life – it obviously ignores the existence of Prospero's version. Goffredo Fofi would then clarify this ambiguity in his afterword to the Cargo version, stating that Prospero's translation was the first to be published in Italy, and it was also reprinted and published in Turin in 1945[91]; thus, Bottini's version is actually the second translation of the novel. The large time gap between the first and second translation may be due to Hurston's fall into oblivion after her death: as I have mentioned in the first paragraphs of this chapter, Hurston was then rediscovered by Alice Walker in the 1970s, which led to numerous reprints of the novel in the U.S. and thus to a new interest for it in the Italian publishing market. Moreover, Fofi explains that the choice of the title of the 1998 version was certainly due to the publisher[92], since the passage narrating the great hurricane that disrupts Janie's life, in which there is the reprise of the original title, is translated as: "Tea Cake e Janie e Motor Boat rimasero a vegliare come tutti gli altri nelle baracche, gli occhi sbarrati sulle pareti

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[88] "Adriana Bottini", in *Traduzione editoria FUSP*, <traduzione-editoria.fusp.it/persone/adriana-bottini>, accessed 9 May 2019.

[89] "Adriana Bottini", in *Goodreads*, < https://www.goodreads.com/search?utf8=%E2%9C%93&query=adriana+bottini>, accessed 9 May 2019.

[90] "Adriana Bottini", in *Traduzione editoria FUSP*

[91] Goffredo Fofi, Postfazione in Zora Neale Hurston, *I loro occhi guardavano Dio,* trad. Adriana Bottini (1989), Cargo, 2009, p. 265.

[92] Ivi, p. 264.

nude, l'anima che chiedeva a Dio se davvero volesse misurare le loro misere forze contro la Sua. Pareva che fissassero il buio, ma i loro occhi guardavano Dio".[93]

This first general overview on the two translations of Hurston's novel may already give a clue about each translator's approach: as it can be noticed, Prospero aims to play an active role in the reception of the novel from the Italian readership, explaining her intentions to preserve the originality of the source text without falling into a grotesque representation of Black characters. In particular, she states how her approach is based on a 'close spiritual allegiance' with the author, underlining not only her endorsement of the image of empowered womanhood created by Hurston, but also her will to promote this image in the Italian literary scene. In this perspective, Rita Filanti's essay "'The translatress in her own person speaks': Ada Prospero's preface and note to *I loro occhi guardavano Dio* (1938)" is particularly relevant to understand Prospero's involvement in Hurston's work. By analyzing her life and her preface and note for the Frassinelli version, Filanti highlights how Prospero's active role as translator may have been influenced by her activism as journalist and writer in the Partisan propaganda against the oppressive and corrosive Fascist establishment:

> Ada Prospero in particular actively contributed to her late husband Piero Gobetti's radical periodicals *Energie Nove* and *La Rivoluzione Liberale*, participated in the clandestine movement "Giustizia e Libertà" and would repeatedly risk her life, together with her son's and other partisans', in the Resistance fight. She also figured among the founders, in 1942, of the political party, the "Partito d'Azione", that played a crucial role in the final defeat of fascism. It seems unlikely that she could have been oblivious to the socio-political implications of Hurston's novel or accepted her position as its invisible *translatress*. Quite the opposite, she was indeed fully participant and, in fact, eagerly supportive of Hurston's innovative language and vision.[94]

Prospero's engagement in the translation of *Their Eyes Were Watching God* arises not only from the preface and note she wrote, but also from the various explanatory footnotes present throughout the novel. These footnotes aim to facilitate the Italian readership in understanding certain elements that may result unknown or unclear: besides clarifying certain translating choices – such as why she translated *muck* as *piantagione* –, Prospero's notes focus on explaining the meaning of some characters' names, such as Teacake and Stew Beef, and on describing culture-specific elements, such as the author and orator

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[93] Zora Neale Hurston,*I loro occhi guardavano Dio,* trad. Adriana Bottini, p. 215.
[94] Rita Filanti, ""The translatress in her own person speaks": Ada Prospero's preface and note to *I loro occhi guardavano Dio* (1938)", *Palimpsestes*, XXI, 2, 2018, p. 78.

Booker Taliaferro Washington and the myth of Big John in black folklore. In this perspective, it may be argued that Prospero's calling attention to the particularity of the source language and her personal engagement to respect the foreignness of the text, not only underline her visibility as translator and author or the Italian version of the novel, but they also suggest a foreignizing approach to the translation of the source text. On the other hand, the lack of any kind of presentation or comment on the source text by Bottini suggests a translating strategy that seems to avoid representing the foreignness of the text. These assumptions will be later verified through a comparative analysis of specific passages taken from the target texts: this analysis will help me not only to highlight the translators' strategies for the representation of Black English, but also to discover whether the reasons behind their approach to the text are dictated by the social and political context in which each translator worked. In fact, because the two target texts belong to two different historical and cultural contexts, the canons of accuracy dictated by the different eras may be a relevant factor in the analysis of the two translations. However, as I showed in the first chapter, the latest research on retranslation by Paloposki and Koskinen shows how human agency also plays an important role in the making of the translations; thus, the translator's personal approach to the source text is an equally important factor that may profoundly influence his or her interpretation of the text.

3.6.2 I loro occhi guardavano Dio*: Janie's search of her (Italian) voice*

As it has been mentioned in the previous paragraphs, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* deals with Janie's search and achievement of her own voice as an expression of her identity as African American woman. Janie's path towards freedom occurs gradually, and it is represented by her capacity to give voice to her thoughts in order to express her feelings and to defend herself. The following passage represents the first real expression of Janie's opinions: until this moment of the story, the reader has known Janie's feelings through the free indirect discourse that allows the third-person narrator to project the characters' inner view. After the umpteenth mockery and abuse on the yellow mule by Eatonville's men, Janie hides in the store and gives vent to her feelings by mumbling to herself, revealing her aversion to people taking advantage of weaker creatures such as the mule, which allegorically represents black women.

Source Text[95]	PROSPERO (1938)[96]	BOTTINI (1989)[97]
1. She snatched her head away from the spectacle and began muttering to herself.	1. Ella volse il capo bruscamente dallo spettacolo e cominciò a mormorare tra sé:	1. Janie distolse bruscamente gli occhi da quello spettacolo, mormorando tra sé:
2. "They oughta be shamed uh theyselves! Teasin' dat poor brute beast lak they is! Done been worked tuh death; done had his disposition ruint wid mistreatment, and now they got tuh finish devilin' 'im tuh death. Wisht Ah had mah way wid 'em all." […]	2. - Dovrebbero vergognarsi! Tormentare quella povera bestia in questo modo! È mezzo morto a furia di lavorare: gli han guastato il carattere a furia di maltrattarlo e ora vogliono farlo imbizzarrire a morte. Se facessero così anche a loro! […]	2. «Non si vergognano? Tormentare così quella povera bestia! Sfinita dalle fatiche, il carattere rovinato dai maltrattamenti, e adesso quelli a stuzzicarla a morte. Se potessi fare a modo mio…». […]
3. She got up without a word and went off for the shoes. A little war of defense for helpless things was going on inside her. People ought to have some regard for helpless things. She wanted to fight about it.	3. Lei si alzò senza una parola, e andò a cercare le pantofole. Una piccola guerra in difesa delle creature deboli si svolgeva nel suo intimo. Perché la gente aveva così poca pietà per i poveri animali indifesi. Avrebbe voluto dirlo a tutti, lottare.	3. Janie si alzò senza dire una parola e andò a prendergli gli stivali. Dentro di lei si combatteva una piccola guerra in difesa delle creature inermi. Avrebbe voluto difenderle apertamente.
4. "But Ah hates disagreement and confusion, so Ah better not talk. It makes it hard tuh git along."	4. «Ma non posso soffrire le discussioni, le liti; è meglio che non parli. Vivere è già così difficile!»	4. "Ma detesto i litigi e le urla, meglio dunque stare zitta. Così è più facile vivere".

The comparison of the two target texts of this passage of the novel shows the first differences in the translation of Black English. From a macro point of view, Bottini tends to use constructs and terms closer to spoken Italian rather than Prospero. The sentence (2) *They oughta be shamed uh theyselves!* contains the contracted form of the conditional *ought to*, which is used with reference with the present or future to express a duty or an obligation. Even though Prospero with (2) *Dovrebbero vergonarsi!* conveys the same sense of duty, Bottini manages to avoid the conditional form by reversing the affirmative exclamation of the ST into a negative rhetorical question (2) *Non si vergognano?* In

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[95] Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes*, p. 56-57.
[96] Zora Neale Hurston, *I loro occhi guardavano Dio*, trad. Ada Prospero, p. 75.
[97] Zora Neale Hurston, *I loro occhi guardavano Dio,* trad. Adriana Bottini, p. 92-93.

addition, the use of this figure of speech is characteristic of oral arguments, allowing Bottini to convey the orality of the source language. Bottini's tendency to use a language closer to spoken Italian can be noticed also in sentence 4: contrary to Prospero who translated *so Ah better not talk* as *è meglio che non parli* , thus using a subjunctive verb, Bottini translates it as *meglio dunque stare zitta*, which not only mirrors the shortened form of *Ah better* by omitting the copula, but it also presents the colloquial term *stare zitta*. Another construct typical of spoken Italian used by Bottini is dislocation: (4) *It makes it hard tuh git along* is literally translated by Prospero as *Vivere è già così difficile!*, while Bottini, by using the Italian antonym of the adjective *hard*, postpones the subject *vivere* at the end of the sentence, which results in a right dislocation *Così è più facile vivere*. This last comparison shows another relevant aspect: while Bottini opts for a translation mirroring Janie's tone of discomfort, Prospero chooses to end Janie's speech with an exclamation that amplifies the character's state of mind. This aspect occurs also in the previous speech: (2) *Wisht Ah had mah way wid 'em al* conveys an unrealizable situation for Janie, which ends with dark tones that evoke disappointment; Bottini opts for *Se potessi fare a modo mio…* , thus closing Janie's thought with ellipses that symbolize the protagonist's incapability to act. Instead, Prospero translates it as *Se facessero così anche a loro!* which intensifies Janie's discomfort. Intensifying the tones of Janie's speech may be a result of Prospero's differentiation between characters in terms of their way of speaking: according to her analysis of the novel, Janie is among those characters that express themselves in a lyric and inspired tone. As a result, Prospero's amplifying Janie's expressing tones may be due to the will to express the lyricism of the protagonist's way of speaking in the target text.

In this second passage, Janie gives voice to her thoughts in the presence of her husband Jody and Eatonville's men: the men's despiteful idea of women and their behavior towards them encourages Janie to take a stance against them, highlighting her will to defend womankind.

Source Text[98]	PROSPERO (1938)[99]	BOTTINI (1989)[100]
1. Janie did what she had never done before, that is, thrust herself into the conversation.	1. Janie fece allora una cosa che non aveva mai fatto prima: s'intromise nella conversazione.	1. Janie fece una cosa che non aveva mai fatto prima: si intromise nella conversazione.
2. "Sometimes God gits familiar wid us womenfolks too and talks His inside business. He told me how surprised He was 'bout y'all turning out so smart after Him makin' yuh different; and how surprised y'all is goin' tuh be if you ever find out you don't know half as much 'bout us as you think you do. It's so easy to make yo'self out God Almighty when you ain't got nothin' tuh strain against but women and chickens."	2. - Voi non sapete che Dio certe volte si fa amico con noialtre donne e ci fa le sue confidenze. Se sapeste com'è rimasto sorpreso nel vedere che siete diventati così furbi, mentre lui vi aveva fatti tanto diversi! E come restereste male se scopriste che non sapete neanche la metà di quel che credete di sapere! È facile per ciascuno di voi credersi un dio onnipotente, quando state a misurarvi soltanto con donne e pulcini!	2. «Certe volte Dio dà confidenza anche a noi donne e ci racconta i Suoi affari intimi. Per esempio, mi ha detto di com'è rimasto sorpreso nel vedervi diventare tutti così furbi, dopo che Lui vi aveva fatti diversamente; e di come rimarrete sorpresi voi, quando vi accorgerete che di noi donne non capite neanche la metà di quello che credete di capire. Troppo facile fare i domineddio quando si ha a che fare solo con donne e pulcini».
3. "You gettin' too moufy, Janie," Starks told her. "Go fetch me de checker-board and de checkers. Sam Watson, you'se mah fish." [75]	3. - Fai troppe chiacchere, Janie, - le disse allora Starks. – Va' piuttosto a prendere la scacchiera e le pedine. Sam Watson, sarai tu il mio avversario. [100/1]	3. «Ti sta venendo la bocca troppo grande, Janie» disse Starks. «Vammi a prendere la scacchiera con *tutte* le pedine. Sam Watson, preparati a perdere». [115]

Bottini's translation is more literal and she sticks to the phrasal construction of the source text. Looking at Janie's speech in (2), Bottini maintains the parataxis present in the source text, without adorning it with main clauses and subordinate clauses as Prospero does: as it can be noticed, Prospero employs two main clauses – *Voi non sapete che…* and *Se sapeste…* – to introduce Janie's speech: in this way, she uses conditional verbs and extends Janie's remarks, which consequently appear more formal and articulate than the original ones. For what concerns the lexis, Bottini seems to use more specific terms that carry a precise connotation. In the source text, Janie says *It's so easy to make yo'self out God Almighty*: in Prospero's translation, the epithet is translated as *dio onnipotente*, a

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[98] Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes*, p. 75.
[99] Zora Neale Hurston, *I loro occhi guardavano Dio*, trad. Ada Prospero, p. 100-101.
[100] Zora Neale Hurston, *I loro occhi guardavano Dio,* trad. Adriana Bottini, p. 115.

direct translation of *God Almighty* without capital letters, a choice that probably aims to underline the profanity of Eatonville men's behavior towards the mule. Instead, Bottini chooses *domineddio*, which is a derogatory way to indicate a person behaving like a god.[101] The same situation occurs in sentence 3: the adjective *mouthy* is translated as *chiacchere* in Prospero's version, while Bottini chooses the idiom *la bocca troppo grande*, which not only further highlights Joe's disparaging remark toward his wife, but it also recovers the image of Janie's mouth given by the derived adjective *mouthy*. However, Bottini's tendency to emphasize terms or idioms' connotations – mostly negative – occurs also when the source text does not evoke such connotations: Joe's command to Janie to bring him the *de checker-board and de checkers* is translated as *Vammi a prendere la scacchiera con tutte le pedine*. As it can be noticed, Bottini adds the indefinite adjective *tutte* in italics, marking Joe's command as an intimidation – which suggests a past omission of Janie in following Joe's orders – that is not present in the source text. On the contrary, Prospero translates such sentence as *Va' piuttosto a prendere la scacchiera e le pedine*, maintaining Joe's tone of command. In this perspective, it can be argue that both translations partially fail the representation of Black English: by constructing a hypotactic period and using conditional verb tense, Prospero makes Janie's speech too formal for the original colloquial form represented in the source text, partially diverging from translating Black English as an oral language. On the other hand, Bottini seems to maintain the informal and colloquial form of Janie's speech by using paratactic constructions, indicative verb tense and idioms and terms that carry the same negative connotation of specific sentence analyzed above. However, Bottini tends to overemphasize certain behavior – in this case, Joe's remark to Janie –, evoking negative expressions that are not present in the source text.

The third passage deals with Joe's humiliation in front of Eatonville's people: Janie, who is used to be harshly scolded by her husband for her inability in managing the store, decides for the first time to counter Joe's reproach by mocking his body as he did firstly with her. In fact, Joe defends his argument by recurrently criticizing Janie's ageing body; Janie strikes back, claiming how time affected not only his body, but also his virility.

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[101] "Domineddio" in *Wikizionario*, < https://it.wiktionary.org/wiki/domineddio >, accessed 10 May 2019.

Source Text [102]	PROSPERO (1938) [103]	BOTTINI (1989) [104]
1. "I god amighty! A woman stay round uh store till she get old as Methusalem and still can't cut a little thing like a plug of tobacco! Don't stand dere rollin' yo' pop eyes at me wid yo' rump hangin' nearly to yo' knees!" […]	1. - Ehi, dico io, Signore onnipotente! Una donna potrà stare in una bottega finché sia vecchia come Matusalemme e non avrà ancora imparato a tagliare un rotolo di tabacco! È inutile che tu sia lì a guardarmi con gli occhi fuori della testa e il didietro che ti arriva alle calcagna! […]	1. «Dio onnipotente, le donne possono starsene in negozio fino all'età di Matusalemme e non imparare a tagliare giusto neanche un trancio di tabacco! E tu non startene lì a fissarmi con gli occhi fuori dalla testa e le chiappe fino alle ginocchia!» […]
2. "Stop mixin' up mah doings wid mah looks, Jody. When you git through tellin' me how tuh cut uh plug uh tobacco, then you kin tell me whether mah behind is on straight or not."	2. - Smettila di confondere quello che faccio con quello che sono, Jody. Finisci di spiegarmi come si deve tagliare un rotolo di tabacco e dopo potrai dirmi se il mio didietro è ben fatto o no.	2. «Smettila di mischiare le cose che faccio con l'aspetto che ho, Jody. Quando avrai finito di insegnarmi come si taglia un trancio di tabacco, allora potrai dirmi se il mio didietro è al suo posto oppure no».
3. "Wha—whut's dat you say, Janie? You must be out yo' head."	3. - Cosa… cosa dici, Janie? Hai perduto la testa?	3. «Co.. cos'hai detto, Janie? Devi essere fuori di testa»
4. "Naw, Ah ain't outa mah head neither."	4. - No, non l'ho perduta affatto.	4. «No, non sono affatto fuori di testa».
5. "You must be. Talkin' any such language as dat."	5. - Per forza devi averla perduta a parlare in questo modo.	5. «Si, invece: dire parole del genere».
6. "You de one started talkin' under people's clothes. Not me."	6. - Sei tu che hai incominciato certi discorsi, non io.	6. «Sei tu che hai incominciato a nominare quello che c'è sotto i vestiti, non io».
7. "Whut's de matter wid you, nohow? You ain't no young girl to be gettin' all insulted 'bout yo' looks. You ain't no young courtin' gal. You'se uh ole woman, nearly forty."	7. - Ma cosa ti prende adesso? Non sei mica una ragazza poi da offenderti perché ti si critica. Non sei mica più una ragazza da corteggiare. Sei vecchia ormai, hai quasi quarant'anni.	7. «Cosa ti prende, si può sapere? Non sei una ragazzina, per offenderti quando si parla dell'aspetto che hai. Non sei certo una ragazza da marito. Sei una donna vecchia, vicina ai quaranta».
8. "Yeah, Ah'm nearly forty and you'se already fifty. How come you can't talk	8. - Sì, ma se io ne ho quasi quaranta tu ne hai quaranta passati. Perché non dici	8. «Già, io sono vicina ai quaranta, e tu hai passato i cinquanta. Com'è che di

[102] Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes*, p. 78-79.
[103] Zora Neale Hurston, *I loro occhi guardavano Dio*, trad. Ada Prospero, pp. 104-106.
[104] Zora Neale Hurston, *I loro occhi guardavano Dio*, trad. Adriana Bottini, p. 119-120.

about dat sometimes instead of always pointin' at me?"	questo invece di tirare sempre me in ballo?	questo non ne parli mai, invece di puntare sempre il dito su di me?».
9. " 'Tain't no use in gettin' all mad, Janie, 'cause Ah mention you ain't no young gal no mo'. Nobody in heah ain't lookin' for no wife outa yuh. Old as you is."	9. - È inutile che tu t'arrabbi, Janie, perché dico che non sei più giovane. Non c'è nessuno qui che abbia intenzione di sposarti. Vecchia come sei.	9. «È inutile che ti arrabbi tanto se faccio notare che non sei più una ragazzina, Janie. Nessuno qui dentro pensa di prenderti in moglie, vecchia come sei».
10. "Naw, Ah ain't no young gal no mo' but den Ah ain't no old woman neither. Ah reckon Ah looks mah age too. But Ah'm uh woman every inch of me, and Ah know it. Dat's uh whole lot more'n you kin say. You big-bellies round here and put out a lot of brag, but 'tain't nothin' to it but yo' big voice. Humph! Talkin' 'bout me lookin' old! When you pull down yo' britches, you look lak de change uh life."	10. - Non sono più una ragazza, ma non sono neanche una vecchia. Anche se dimostro la mia età. Ma sono ancora una donna, tutta quanta, e lo so. E questo è molto più di quello che potresti dire tu. Tu fai il fanfarone e canti da gallo, ma ormai non hai più altro che la voce. Peuh! E osa dire che io sono vecchia! Se ti tirassi giù i pantaloni, si vedrebbe qualcosa di bello!	10. «Vero, non sono più una ragazzina, ma neanche sono una vecchia. La mia età la dimostro, certo. Ma sono una donna, dalla testa ai piedi, e io lo so, questo. Che è molto di più di quello che puoi dire *tu*. Tu butti in fuori la pancia, qui dentro, e ti dai tante di quelle arie, ma di grosso hai soltanto la voce. Pfui! Dire *a me* che sono vecchia! Ma se quando ti tiri giù i calzoni sembri in menopausa!».

For what concerns the structure of Janie's speech, it can be noticed how Prospero employs certain colloquialisms, such as the adverb *mica* (7), and terms and idioms belonging to an informal context – *didietro* (1,2), *fanfarone* and *canti da gallo* (10). However, the frequent use of subjective and conditional verbs creates contrast, since they evoke a more formal speech. On the contrary, Bottini avoids the use of subjective and conditional verbs, maintaining the oral form present in the source text by structuring the sentences on the indicative verbs and by using syntactical structures belonging to spoken Italian, such us introducing the sentence with the relative pronoun *Che* (10) or with *Com'è che* (8), which conveys an ironic astonishment. However, the most relevant aspect that emerges from this passage is the different strategies used to convey the numerous sexual references present in the source text. In fact, it can be noticed how Prospero tries to avoid referencing to body parts: the reference to *under people's clothes* (6) is generalizes as *certi discorsi*, while *rump* (1), which is a jocular and quite vulgar denotation for a person's bottom, is translated as *didietro* by Prospero and as *chiappe* by Bottini. In this case, it can be argued how *didietro*, even though it is a euphemism to convey a person's behind, appears less

succinct than *chiappe,* taking into consideration the highly explicit language of the source text. In this perspective, Bottini differs from Prospero and maintains the sexual references, either implicit – *but 'tain't nothin' to it but yo' big voice* (10) is translated as *di grosso hai soltanto la voce* – or explicit – *you look lak de change uh lif*e (10) is translated as *sembri in menopausa*, which is the literal meaning of change of life.

In this perspective, it is important to highlight how Prospero's tendency to neutralize references to body parts occurs throughout the novel, especially when they are used in a sexual context. Taking into consideration different extracts from the novel containing sexual references, it can be noticed how Prospero's translation significantly differs in meaning from the source text, highlighting how she manages to manipulate the sense of certain images in order to convey a less explicit and carnal representation.

COMPARISON 4
Extracts from *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

Source Text	PROSPERO (1938)	BOTTINI (1989)
A. The men noticed her firm **buttocks** like she had **grape fruits** in her hip pockets.[105]	A. Gli uomini osservavano la saldezza dei suoi **fianchi** simili a **frutti maturi**, chiusi nella tuta aderente.[106]	A. Gli uomini notarono le **natiche** sode, come se avesse due **pompelmi** nelle tasche posteriori.[107]
B. Heah, Ah just as good as take you out de White folks' kitchen and set you down on yo' **royal diasticutis** and you take and low-rate me![108]	B. Ma guarda un po': l'ho tirata fuori dalla cucina dei bianchi **per tenerla come una regina,** e adesso lei mi guarda dall'altro in basso.[109]	B. Non ho fatto in tempo a toglierti dalla cucina dei bianchi e a metterti comoda su quel tuo **sedere di regina**, che alzi la cresta con me![110]
C. […] he had done **raped** mah baby and run on off just before day.[111]	C. […] s'era **presa** la mia bambina e poi se n'era scappato prima di giorno.[112]	C. […] aveva **violentato** la mia bambina, e appena prima dell'alba era fuggito.[113]

Taking into consideration the example A, it can been noticed that Bottini favors a literal translation, employing the terms *natiche* which has an anatomical connotation, and *pompelmi*, thus conveying the same sensual description of Janie's body present in the

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[105] Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes*, p. 2.
[106] Zora Neale Hurston, *I loro occhi guardavano Dio*, trad. Ada Prospero, p. 4.
[107] Zora Neale Hurston, *I loro occhi guardavano Dio,* trad. Adriana Bottini, p. 27.
[108] Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes*, p. 31.
[109] Zora Neale Hurston, *I loro occhi guardavano Dio*, trad. Ada Prospero, p. 43.
[110] Zora Neale Hurston, *I loro occhi guardavano Dio,* trad. Adriana Bottini, p. 62.
[111] Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes*, p. 19.
[112] Zora Neale Hurston, *I loro occhi guardavano Dio*, trad. Ada Prospero, p. 28.
[113] Zora Neale Hurston, *I loro occhi guardavano Dio,* trad. Adriana Bottini, p. 48.

source text. Instead, Prospero 'smooths' this image by using *fianchi* which is a more neutral and general term to define a woman's backside; this neutralization also involves the simile with *grape fruits*, translated by Prospero as *frutti maturi*,: despite the adjective *maturi* gives the idea of a fruit that has fully developed in terms of physical appearance, it does not give information about its size as the direct reference to *grape fruit / pompelmi* does. However, Prospero completes the simile by adding *chiusi nella tuta aderente*, whose indirect reference to the prosperity of Janie's body may be used to compensate the neutralization of the sexual image of the buttocks. Prospero's tendency to neutralize sexual references occurs in correspondence with narration passages – so when Standard English is used – as well as in dialogues between characters, who express themselves in Black English. The examples B and C belong to this last case: in the second example, another reference to Janie's backside occurs, this time through the term *royal diasticutis*. The difference between the two target texts is quite significant: while Bottini opts for *sedere di regina*, thus maintaining the reference to the slang term indicating buttocks, Prospero avoids the physical reference and revers the adjective *royal* into the simile *come una regina*. The third example differs from the others because it does not contain a sexual reference to body parts, but it presents a term belonging to the semantic field of sexual violence. The verb *had done raped* is translated by Bottini as *aveva violentato*: both verbs are semantically equal, since they mean to force sexual intercourse or other sexual activity upon (someone) without their consent. Instead, Prospero chooses the verb *s'era presa*, which does not directly equals to *rape*, but in the context of the sentence, it implicitly conveys an act of sexual violence. The analysis of these examples shows how while Bottini, by approaching the text through a literal translation, manages to portray explicit images of Janie's body, conveying sexual references similarly to Hurston in the source text; instead, Prospero's aim seems to smooth or cover these images by neutralizing and generalizing their effect on the reader, conveying the many sexual references in an implicit way. According to Filanti, Prospero's neutralizing approach may have been a forced translating choice: in her essay, Filanti highlights how the translator's choices in this context contradict her own theoretical stance to respect and convey the sense of the source text, and thus to not adopt a domesticating practice. However, it is important to consider that Prospero worked at this translation during the Fascist regime, whose anti-feminist policy that limited women's role to that of wife and mother would not have

allowed publishing a book with unequivocal references to female corporeality and rape. As Filanti states, "to use an explicitly erotic language in 1930s Italy might have provoked a violent reaction from Mussolini's bureaucrats and blocked the publication of the novel".[114] In this perspective, Prospero's domesticating approach may be due to the effort to prevent any kind of censorship from the current authoritarian government.

Despite the literal translation may help to convey the meaning of certain images, such as the numerous sexual references, it does not help, rather it may damage the translation, when these images, conveyed through metaphors, similes and idioms, belong to the figurative language used by the author to characterize the characters' speech.

COMPARISON 5
Extracts from *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

Source Text	PROSPERO (1938)	BOTTINI (1989)
D. Ah'm gointuh run dis conversation **from uh gnat heel to uh lice**.[115]	D. Voglio **tagliar la testa al toro**.[116]	D. Sta' a vedere come ti sbroglio la questione **da calcagno di zanzara a pidocchio**.[117]
E1. "But now, Sam, you know dat all he do is **big-belly round** and tell other folks what tuh do. He loves obedience out of everybody under de sound of his voice." E.2 "You kin feel a switch in his hand when he's talkin' to yuh," Oscar Scott complained. "Dat chastisin' feelin' he totes sorter gives yuh de **protolapsis uh de cutinary linin'**."[118]	E1. - Sarà, ma adesso, Sam, non puoi negare che **va soltanto bighellonando in giro** a dire agli altri quel che devono fare. E vuole essere obbedito appena apre bocca. E2. - Par che abbia sempre lo scudiscio in mano, quando ti parla, - si lagnò Oscar Scott. – Ha sempre un tono di rimprovero che ti **fa accapponar la pelle**.[119]	E1. «Via, Sam, sai bene che non fa altro che **grattarsi la pancia** e dire agli altri cosa devono fare. Gli piace far scattare la gente al suono della sua voce.» E2. «Pare di vedergli la frusta in mano, quando parla» si lamentò Oscar Scott. «Quell'aria da padreterno che si dà ti fa venire il **protelasso delle mucose cutinarie**»[120]
F. "Ah ain't goin' tuh no hospital no where. **Put dat in yo' pipe and smoke it**."[121]	F. - Io non andrò all'ospedale, **levatelo pure dalla testa**.[122]	«Io non vado in nessuno ospedale. **Ficcatelo nella pipa e fumatelo**»[123]

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[114] Rita Filanti, "The translatress in her own person speaks", p. 86-87.

[115] Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes*, p. 64.

[116] Zora Neale Hurston, *I loro occhi guardavano Dio*, trad. Ada Prospero, p. 85.

[117] Zora Neale Hurston, *I loro occhi guardavano Dio,* trad. Adriana Bottini, p. 102.

[118] Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes,* p. 49.

[119] Zora Neale Hurston, *I loro occhi guardavano Dio*, trad. Ada Prospero, p. 65.

[120] Zora Neale Hurston, *I loro occhi guardavano Dio,* trad. Adriana Bottini, p. 82.

[121] Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes*, p. 182.

[122] Zora Neale Hurston, *I loro occhi guardavano Dio*, trad. Ada Prospero, p. 237.

[123] Zora Neale Hurston, *I loro occhi guardavano Dio,* trad. Adriana Bottini, p. 242.

As it can be noticed, each of the three passages given in this table contains one or two figures of speech that are either invention of the author (D, E1, E2) or culture-specific (F). The first example contains the innovative idiom *from uh gnat heel to uh lice*, which is literally translated by Bottini as *da calcagno di zanzara a pidocchio*: while this image carries no sense in the target culture, Prospero opts for *tagliar la testa al toro*, which is a common idiom in spoken Italian. By choosing this idiom familiar to Italian readership, the translator manages not only to convey the idea of running out of a conversation expressed in the source text – in fact, the Italian idiom means to quickly end a dispute –, but also to recover the animalistic aspect by employing the bull (*toro*) figure. Bottini employs a similar approach also in translating the idiomatic expression *Put dat in yo' pipe and smoke it* (F), mostly used in colloquial contexts to state something surprising or undesired in order to emphasize its truth; it is also used after refuting an argument. Bottini literally translates it as *Ficcatelo nella pipa e fumatelo*, which has no meaning in the target language, while Prospero opts for *levatelo pure dalla testa*, a recurrent idiom in spoken Italian used as a sort of command towards someone to get something off his or her head: in this case, this order is used by the speaker to refute doing something, which conveys the same situation occurring in the source text. However, Bottini's most extreme form of literal translation can be found in sentence E2, where *de protolapsis uh de cutinary linin'* is translated as *il protelasso delle mucose cutinarie*: the terms *protolapsis* and *cutinary*, created by Hurston to reference to something that upsets the stomach and makes a person nervous, are Italianized by Bottini respectively as *protelasso* and *cutinarie*. This translation, besides carrying no sense since they are words unknown in the Italian dictionary, conveys the idea of AAVE as a mixed language lacking in sense. Instead, Prospero adopts another approach: by translating the original idiom as *fa accapponar la pelle*, the translator manages to express an odd physical feeling due to a strong emotion of fear or terror, by employing a figure of speech belonging to the target culture. Among the four given examples, the translations of the expression *big-belly round* (E1) seem to carry a sense in both target texts, even though a closer analysis highlights a significant difference: while Bottini opts for *grattarsi la pancia*, a colloquial idiom that means lazing about and that recovers the image of Joe's *big-belly*, Prospero translates it as *bighellonando in giro*, a less colloquial idiom that, however, means wandering about while doing nothing. In this way, Prospero manages to completely convey the image of

Joe who *big-belly round*, that is wandering a-*round* and doing nothing. Despite this last example, it can be noticed how Bottini's approach based on literal translation conveys a distorted and rough representation of Black English: because idioms are based on images bound to the source culture, literally translating them would lead not only to produce a senseless text for the target readership, but also to exoticize and ridicule the Foreign.

3.6.3 Final Remarks: the political and social influence in translating Black English

Through the comparative analysis of certain passages of the novel's translations, I was able to gather enough data to pinpoint each translator's approach to the source text and its linguistic peculiarities. In particular, the first three comparisons based on Janie's path towards the achievement of her own voice and the discovery of her own identity, were useful to understand how Prospero and Bottini managed to translate Black English into Italian, which is quite different from the first analysis I gave on the basis of each translator's engagement to the target text. In fact, although in her note Prospero states her willingness to respect the linguistic value of Black English, she does not manage to convey the orality and informal tone typical of a dialect, while Bottini seems more precise in translating it as an informal language, mostly structured in parataxis and rich in colloquialisms. With a recurrent use of conditional and subjunctive verbs, and a tendency to structure hypotactic sentences, Prospero marks the tone of Janie's speech as too formal and too lofty in comparison to the original one – even though she perceives a sort of lyricism in the protagonist's speech and aims to recover it in her translation.

In this perspective, it is important to highlight how Prospero's approach may have been heavily influenced by the political and social context in which she produced her translation: as Filanti underlines, Prospero had to face two lines of oppositions, a political one operated by the Fascist regime, and an artistic one operated by the Italian literati. For what concerns the political aspect, Prospero's difficulties in publishing *I loro occhi guardavano Dio* lay not only in the subject of the novel – an African American woman in search of her place inside the community – but also in the language of the story, a dialect that is the expression of Black culture. In fact, these two factors were in conflict with two projects belonging to Mussolini's agenda: on one hand, the black characters of the novel would definitely contrast with the cornerstone of the Fascist regime, which was

constructing a society belonging to a single white race.[124] On the other hand, translating a novel mostly narrated in dialect collided with the Fascist propaganda in favor of standardization through a non-existent national language and arguing for the suppression of numerous regional dialects.[125] In addition, Black English – being a specific version of American English, which at that time was often referred to as 'American slang'– was unpopular among many Italian literary circles, since it was conceived as a formless language used only to chat and gossip. As Filanti states, "many literary critics, such as Emilio Cecchi, condemned American slang because it changed too quickly, multiplied useless words, and passed rapidly from fashion".[126] For these many reasons, it can be argued that Prospero's strategies to translate Black English partially fail in order to avoid immediate censorship from the Fascist regime and a direct condemnation from the Italian literati. Moreover, Prospero had to face another complicated aspect, which is the translation of many sexual references: as I mentioned in the previous paragraph, the comparison between the source text and the two target texts clearly shows a 'smoothing' approach by Prospero that aims to neutralize explicit sexual content. According to Filanti, Prospero's choice may be due to the need to avoid a direct clash with Fascist regime's restrictive and sexist policy about women, which aimed to limit women's role to that of wife and mother. Instead, by favoring a literal translation, Bottini manages to portray explicit sexual images that resemble the ones in the source text, conveying Hurston's free approach to sexual narration.

However, Bottini's tendency to literal translation fails in those passages characterized by an intense and innovative use of figurative language by Hurston: the idioms and metaphors given by the author – which are often result of her own linguistic creation – mark the presence of Black folklore in the characters' speech. Because these figures of speech are culture-specific, thus they are unknown to the target culture, Bottini's strategy to literally translate them not only compromises the comprehension of the text by the target readership, but it also distorts the representation of the Foreign, marking Black English speakers as ridiculous and illogical. In addition, she emphasizes

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[124] Significant was the release of the Italian "Manifesto della Razza" in 1938, which anticipates the enactment of Italian racial laws, known as *Leggi razziali*: this set of laws, promulgated by Fascist Italy from 1938 to 1943, acknowledged the existence of a 'pure' Italian race and promoted its defense from other races, such as the Jewish race and the African race.
[125] Rita Filanti, "The translatress in her own person speaks", p. 82.
[126] *Ibidem*

the incomprehensibility of the Foreign by Italianizing certain words made up by the author: in this way, Bottini adopts an exoticizing approach, conveying Hurston's innovative employment of figurative language as a senseless and muddling language. On the contrary, Prospero shows another approach, focused on conveying the same meaning of the source text by employing idioms and figures of speech recurrent in spoken Italian: by these means, Prospero not only restores the colloquial tone and informal structure of dialogs, but she also manages to convey the characters' speech as comprehensible and coherent.

In conclusion, it can be argued that Prospero, despite her tendency to adorn and over-structure the characters' speech, adopts a strategy that allows her to represent Black English as a comprehensible and extremely figurative language. Although her choices to avoid colloquialisms and her tendency to neutralize images of sexual content are part of a domesticating strategy, it is important to consider how these choices allowed her to publish this novel avoiding the Fascist regime's censorship. She can be considered a great innovator not only because she foresaw the linguistic and social value of Hurston's work – thus the importance of translating it – before its resurrection in the 1970s by Alice Walker, but also because of her active role as translator: through her preface and note, she highlights the importance of understanding and respecting the Other in order to convey it in another language without damaging its value. On the other hand, Bottini's foreignizing strategy may be defined contradictory: in fact, she manages to convey the orality of Black English by adopting colloquialisms and parataxis structures; in addition, she translates explicitly the many sexual references without submitting them to any kind of censorship. However, her tendency to literal translation leads her to convey idioms and metaphors belonging to Black folklore by ignoring the cultural difference between the source and target language: in this way, she emphasizes the diversity of the source language, ridiculing the Foreign.

This comparative analysis shows once again how the Retranslation Hypothesis is limited because it does not consider important factors, such as the consequences of human agency: although the two target texts trace a path from a partly domesticating translation to a foreignizing one – which respects Chesterman's thesis about the closeness of later retranslations to the source text –, both translators operate certain choices that mark a deviation from this path. On one hand, Prospero's presentation of her own work and of

her translating strategy highlights her forerunning behavior as translator and her innovative insights in the translation of dialects. In this way, she highlights the translator's importance in the making of the novel's Italian version, while Bottini does not present either the novel or her translation, marking herself as an invisible translator. On the other hand, Prospero, due to the set of conditions aforementioned, mostly nullifies the particularity of the source language, while Bottini manages to convey its oral quality, but she emphasizes its diversity, making the characters' speech sound ridiculous. In this perspective, the notion of improvement argued by Berman in his Retranslation Hypothesis can be considered just partial: Bottini's translation of characters' speech better mirrors the orality characterizing Black English, bringing a notable improvement from Prospero's translation. At the same time, it is important to highlight how Prospero seems to be more alert than Bottini to the necessity of respecting the Foreign when it involves figures of speech belonging to the source culture, focusing on conveying the meaning of idioms and metaphors, rather than operating a text-oriented translation and emphasizing the otherness of the source language. Once again, this case shows the truthfulness of Paloposki and Koskinen's thesis over the importance of human agency in a situation of retranslation, showing how this phenomenon cannot be studied by exclusively considering the change of the canons of accuracy dictated by different eras.

Conclusion

The literary translation of Black English has showed to be extremely complex from many perspectives, in particular from a linguistic and a socio-cultural point of view. The comparative analysis of different translations of the same novel haVE brought up the constraints to translate an oral language and the many implications that a chosen strategy can cause to the target text and to the original novel itself. As it has been showed in the first chapter, AAVE's reputation as 'just a dialect' had strong implications on its use in literature, which led not only to neglect its solid and complex grammatical and phonetic structure, but also to deny its cultural value as the highest expression of Black culture. Most importantly, the struggles to acknowledge AAVE's cultural value was also due to its recurrent employment as literary device to stereotype African Americans as linguistically inferior to white Americans. Consequences of this stigmatized idea of Black English can be found in the reception of the two novels considered for this thesis. On one hand, Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* was questioned by several scholars over whether Jim's character was stereotyped through the use of Black English; however, Minnick in "Articulating Jim" shows how Jim's stigmatization as minstrel character was not due to a forced and incoherent way of speaking, rather, she shows how Twain's representation of Black English – along with the other dialects present in the novel – was particularly accurate and realistic. On the other hand, Zora Neale Hurston was sharply criticized for her novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by great exponents of African American literature: besides being blamed for not representing the African Americans' sociological and political problems – a black female subject dealing with sexism and psychological violence was not considered representative of the black dilemma –, her employment of Black English was seen as an outrageous device to carry on in the tradition of minstrelsy. Hence, the presence itself of AAVE is considered problematic and even stereotyping the black subject; however, Minnick in "Community in Conflict" shows not only Hurston's accuracy in representing dialect, but also how its unified form among all characters aims to portray Black English as common vehicle of Black folklore.

The comparative analysis that I structured for both novels' translations, has brought up two main critical aspects: the consequences that an effacing or exoticizing strategy may have on the source culture, and the limitations of the Retranslation

Hypothesis when considering retranslations as better translations. Considering the comparative analysis about the three translations of *Huckleberry Finn*, it has been showed that only Cavagnoli's translation presents a linguistic variation aiming to mirror that of the source text, given by Huck's use of a youth jargon – characterized by a distinctive idiolect and occasional grammatical errors –, and by Jim's marked use of regionalisms and prepositions typical of oral discourses. Instead, Giachino and Culicchia ops for strategies that accordingly cancel or deface the linguistic variation of the source text. To be specific, Giachino's translation falls within the domesticating strategies: his translation presents a levelling of language varieties and an effacement of dialectical features of Black English, thus he produces a homogenous text aiming to bring the source text closer to the reader. Alongside the absence of any kind of personalization of the target text, the lack of commentary about the source language or his translating choices makes Giachino imperceptible to the Italian reader, exalting his status as invisible translator. On the other hand, Culicchia manages to differ the two protagonist's speech, but by failing to respect Black English as a rule-based language. Even though he characterizes Huck's speech with colloquialisms and expressions typical of the present-day youth jargon, he marks Jim's speech with frequent grammatical mistakes – the most significant are the recurrent incorrect verb conjugations –, thus presenting Jim as a foreign character unable to speak Italian. Culicchia, who in his preface claims to plan to translate Twain's 'massacre on American English grammar and syntax' with his 'massacre on Italian grammar and syntax', shows a wrong interpretation of dialect as a language devoid of rules, which not only leads him to translate it as a deformed version of Italian, but it also proves the inaccuracy of Berman's thesis about the 'grand-traduction'. In fact, even though the path marked by the three translations, from domestication to foreignization, respects Chesterman's thesis about the closeness of later retranslations to the source text, Culicchia's exoticization of Black English marks a move backward in the continuous improvement given by retranslations after retranslations theorized in the Retranslation Hypothesis. This case clearly shows how human agency is a significant parameter to consider when studying retranslation: the translator's personal choices may differ from the canons of accuracy dictated by the period in which the translator works, which may improve or worsen the retranslation of a novel.

Similarly, the comparative analysis of the two translations of Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* highlights the relevance of human agency as parameter to analyze the phenomenon of retranslation. The data collected from the comparison of the two target texts show a clear passage from a prevalent domesticating translation to a foreignizing one; however, a closer analysis of the two texts highlights how Prospero's 1938 version presents certain aspects that show a better comprehension and respect of the Foreign compared with Bottini's 1989 version. In fact, in her note Prospero states her aim to respect the particular dialect of the characters, without ridiculing it. However, Prospero's translation of Black English presents some critical points, such as the recurrent use of conditional and subjunctive verbs and hypotactic structures, which mark the characters' speech as too formal and do not convey the orality of dialect. As it has been discussed, these strategies may be due to conform to Fascist policy of repression of regional dialects and thus to avoid any kind of censorship. The influence of the Fascist regime in Prospero's work can be also noticed from the neutralization of many sexual references: by 'smoothing' the sexual representation of women in the novel, Prospero avoided a direct clash with the restrictive and gender-role policy imposed by Fascism.

Confronting this translation with the one made in 1989, it can be noticed that Bottini not only manages to convey the oral form of dialect by characterizing dialogs with parataxis structure and many colloquialisms, but she also portrays explicit sexual images that resemble the ones in the source text by favoring a literal translation. Bottini uses this strategy also to translate Hurston's innovative use of figurative language, but she fails to convey the sense of the author's vivid imagination: by literally translating idioms and metaphors that are culture specific of Black folklore, Bottini not only undermines the comprehension of the text by the Italian readership, but she also ridicules the characters, distorting the representation of the Foreign. Instead, Prospero uses idioms and figures of speech recurrent in spoken Italian to convey the main sense of the source text, representing Black English as a comprehensible and coherent language. Once again, it can be noticed how the phenomenon of retranslation cannot be considered a linear and faultless path: Bottini's choice to literally translate figurative language clearly compromises her foreignizing strategy, partly representing the Foreign as an entity that cannot be understood. Thus, the retranslation of *Their Eyes Were Watching God* can be

considered just a partial improvement, highlighting how giving an Italian voice to African American must come with a deep respect of the Foreign.

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RIASSUNTO

Durante la mia carriera universitaria basata sullo studio della lingua inglese, francese e spagnola ho avuto la possibilità di frequentare numerosi corsi di letteratura, tra i quali i corsi riguardanti lettura anglo-americana: lo studio di questa materia mi ha portato a scoprire la letteratura afro-americana, per la quale è nato un vero e proprio interesse e curiosità nel studiare le origini e lo sviluppo della relativa cultura, ampiamente caratterizzata da discriminazioni e stereotipi. Ho pensato, quindi, di unire questa mia forte passione con gli studi di traduzione affrontati nel corso del biennio magistrale in Lingue Moderne per la Comunicazione e Cooperazione Internazionale, focalizzandomi sulla rappresentazione di personaggi afro-americani nelle traduzioni italiane di determinati romanzi appartenenti alla letteratura americana, con particolare attenzione alla traduzione italiana del dialetto afro-americano, conosciuto come Black English o African American Vernacular English. I romanzi che ho preso in esame per questa tesi sono *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* di Mark Twain e *Their Eyes Were Watching God* di Zora Neal Hurston, due testi diventati famosi sia perché trattano temi importanti quali schiavitù e emarginazione, sia perché presentano un ampio uso del Black English. Scegliendo passi significativi dei romanzi e le relative traduzioni ho studiato le principali strategie di traduzione utilizzate per tradurre questo dialetto, analizzando gli effetti positivi e negativi che potrebbero avere sul testo di partenza e di arrivo. Inoltre, le analisi comparative sono state utilizzate per studiare la relazione tra le diverse traduzioni dello stesso romanzo, evidenziando come la dimensione temporale possa non portare progressi nel campo della traduzione letteraria.

CAPITOLO 1 – La traduzione letteraria: teorie e sviluppo
Per poter affrontare e capire la complessità linguistica e culturale di questo dialetto nella letteratura americana e afroamericana è stato fondamentale iniziare la mia tesi acquisendo nozioni di base sulla traduzione letteraria: il mio primo capitolo rappresenta infatti una base teorica su cui ho potuto basare le analisi comparative delle diverse versioni italiane dei due romanzi sopra citati. In primo luogo, ho discusso il conflitto nella traduzione letteraria tra addomesticamento ed estraniamento presentato da Lawrence Venuti nel suo famoso studio *The Translator's Invisibility*. Prendendo in considerazione la tesi di Venuti sull'evoluzione del ruolo del traduttore e il conseguente sviluppo delle strategie di

traduzione, ho evidenziato come la scelta di una determinata strategia venga determinata sia dal traduttore che dalle condizioni culturali e sociali in cui lo stesso lavora. Pertanto, la traduzione letteraria può essere considerata una disciplina in continuo stato di cambiamento: l'evoluzione dei contesti storici e sociali ridefinisce costantemente i 'canoni di accuratezza' che stabiliscono gli standard per una buona traduzione.

Lo costante sviluppo delle teorie della traduzione spinge i traduttori a focalizzarsi su opere letterarie già tradotte in passato: questo fenomeno, meglio noto come ritraduzione, è aspetto fondamentale del mio capitolo teorico che coinvolge complesse questioni quali l'invecchiamento del testo e l'idea della ritraduzione come sfida. In particolar modo, è stato fondamentale individuare e comprendere le teorie alla base di questo fenomeno: partendo dall'ipotesi di ritraduzione di Antoine Berman, successivamente supportata da Andrew Chesterman (il quale recupera l'idea di Goethe sul tempo come 'restauratore di estraneità'), ho cercato di evidenziare gli aspetti principali della Retranslation Hypothesis, secondo cui la ritraduzione è un processo che conduce a una maggiore estraneità e quindi a una traduzione migliore, definita come la "grande traduction". L'analisi di ulteriori studi su questo fenomeno mi ha portato a sottolineare la principale debolezza della Retranslation Hypothesis, cioè non considerare una possibile retrocessione di qualità di traduzione dovuta alle scelte personali del traduttore. Le ricerche fatte da Brisset e Venuti hanno evidenziato come codesta inversione di percorso possa essere dettata da molti fattori, tra cui l'ansia del traduttore di farsi influenzare da traduzioni precedenti o un senso di competizione nato dal desiderio di diversificare la propria traduzione dalla precedente. In particolare, una delle teorie più recenti suggerite da Paloposki e Koskinen evidenzia due principali punti deboli della Retranslation Hypothesis: in primo luogo, sebbene questa tesi possa effettivamente rappresentare determinati percorsi traduttivi, non può presumere a priori che le prime traduzioni siano addomesticanti e le successive siano più vicine all'originale. In secondo luogo, i due studiosi finlandesi sottolineano come la Retranslation Hypothesis fallisca parzialmente poiché non tiene conto né dei "vincoli idiosincratici" relativi alle preferenze del traduttore né delle difficoltà di interpretazione del testo, fattori che possono causare un errore nel percorso di miglioramento teorizzato da Berman.

Dopo questa panoramica generale sulla traduzione letteraria mi sono concentrata sul tema principale della mia tesi, cioè sulla traduzione dell'inglese americano vernacolare. Nei

paragrafi finali del primo capitolo ho voluto presentare questo dialetto da un punto di vista storico e sociale, fornendo inoltre una panoramica generale sulle sue principali caratteristiche fonologiche e grammaticali. Comprendere la storia e la struttura linguistica di questo dialetto è stato fondamentale non solo per una migliore comprensione dei testi di partenza, ma anche per un'analisi più approfondita delle più comuni strategie di traduzione riguardanti dialetti e linguaggi vernacolari. In questa prospettiva ho fatto affidamento sul saggio di Antoine Berman "Translation and the Trail of the Foreign", in cui spiega come i traduttori dovrebbero sempre avere il controllo delle loro azioni per non essere fuorviati dal sistema di deformazione imposto dalla loro pratica. Tra queste deformazioni Berman individua la cancellazione e l'esotizzazione come le due principali "tendenze deformanti" relative ai dialetti e lingue vernacolari. Franca Cavagnoli analizza attentamente questi problemi, evidenziando come questi approcci possano avere gravi ripercussioni sia sul testo di partenza che su quello di arrivo, poiché manipolano il messaggio originale presente nel testo sorgente. Cavagnoli illustra questi meccanismi nei suoi due lavori, *La voce del testo* (2012) e *Il proprio e l'estraneo nella traduzione letteraria di lingua inglese* (2010), fornendo esempi tratti da traduzioni italiane: questi due studi si sono rivelati estremamente importanti per l'organizzazione delle analisi comparative presenti nei capitoli 2 e 3, poiché mi hanno dato una panoramica generale sulle strategie di traduzione letteraria italiana riguardanti dialetti e lingue vernacolari.

CAPITOLO 2 – Le avventure di Huckleberry Finn *di Mark Twain*
Il secondo capitolo riguarda lo studio del romanzo *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1883) di Mark Twain e di tre delle sue traduzioni italiane. Ambientato nella seconda metà del diciannovesimo secolo nel sud degli Stati Uniti, il romanzo racconta la storia del giovane Huckleberry Finn intento a scappare dal padre violento e alcolizzato. Durante il suo viaggio, che avviene lungo il fiume Mississippi, Huck incontra Jim, uno schiavo fuggiasco, il quale si unisce al ragazzo nella speranza di raggiungere gli stati liberi per ricongiungersi in futuro con la sua famiglia. Il loro viaggio è ricco di imprevisti e difficoltà: l'incontro con il Duca e il Delfino, due truffatori che si spacciano per reali caduti in povertà, porterà Huck e Jim ad affrontare ostacoli dovuti all'avarizia e malvagità dei due falsi reali. La loro ultima cattiveria sarà vendere Jim per guadagnare un po' di soldi, portando Huck ad affrontare una profonda crisi morale: costretto a scegliere tra la

sua coscienza, influenzata dai dettami della società americana che giustifica la schiavitù, e il suo cuore, che considera Jim come un grande amico, Huck alla fine sceglierà di dare ragione ai suoi sentimenti, e con l'aiuto di Tom Sawyer riuscirà nell'intento di liberare Jim dalla casa dei Phelps, dov'era tenuto prigioniero come schiavo fuggiasco. Dopo la sua liberazione Huck decide di abbandonare per sempre quei territori in cui vigeva la schiavitù e di raggiungere le terre dell'est, in cerca di libertà. Il capitolo, che si apre con una breve presentazione della vita dell'autore, presenta una panoramica generale della storia del romanzo e dei suoi temi principali; in seguito ho evidenziato gli aspetti critici derivanti dall'amicizia interrazziale tra Huck e Jim, tra cui la rappresentazione stereotipata di Jim come "minstrel" (particolare tipo di attore ambulante bianco che, nei primi anni del Novecento, si tingeva il volto di nero per imitare e ridicolizzare gli afro-americani) argomentata da Toni Morrison, e le implicazioni dell'uso della parola *nigger* evidenziato da Jonathan Arac nel suo studio *Huckleberry Finn come Idol and Target* (1997).

In seguito ho analizzato il linguaggio del testo di partenza, concentrandomi sulle complesse variazioni linguistiche derivanti dal discorso dei personaggi: lo studio di David Carkeet "The Dialect in Huckleberry Finn" (1979), basato su un'analisi comparativa tra la parlata di Huck e quella di ogni personaggio, è risultato utile per discutere due punti principali: 1) l'accuratezza di Mark Twain nello sviluppare personaggi parlanti dialetti diversi, e 2) la somiglianza tra il modo di parlare di Huck e quello di Jim (sono grammaticalmente e lessicalmente simili, ma differiscono fonologicamente). Con particolare attenzione a quest'ultimo aspetto, l'analisi di Carkeet mostra l'accuratezza della rappresentazione fonologica del Black English da parte di Twain e mette in evidenza come l'utilizzo di forme non standard da parte di Jim sia più regolare e preciso rispetto a quello di Huck. Tuttavia, l'affinità del discorso di Huck al Black English è stata ulteriormente analizzata da Shelley Fisher Fishkin nel suo saggio *Was Huck Black?: Mark Twain and African-American Voices* (1993). In questo studio Fishkin paragona la parlata di Huck con quella di Jimmy, un ragazzo nero incontrato da Mark Twain in uno dei suoi numerosi viaggi. Attraverso i dati raccolti dall'autobiografia di Twain e altri suoi lavori, tra cui il suo articolo "Sociable Jimmy" (1874) scritto per il New York Times, Fishkin evidenzia come il dialetto di Jimmy sia fonologicamente più vicino al dialetto afroamericano, ma è anche molto simile a quello di Huck in termini di modalità di narrazione e argomenti di conversazione (entrambi sono descritti come ragazzini ingenui

e contrari alla violenza e alla crudeltà). Dopo questa analisi linguistica del testo di partenza, mi sono concentrata sulle tre traduzioni scelte per questa tesi: la versione di Enzo Giachino del 1949, quella di Franca Cavagnoli dell'anno 2000 e la versione 2005 di Giuseppe Culicchia. L'analisi comparativa tra queste tre versioni si è basata su passaggi specifici del romanzo riguardanti i dialoghi tra Huck e Jim, al fine di evidenziare come ogni traduttore sia riuscito a rappresentare la variazione linguistica tra i dialetti dei due personaggi, e soprattutto quali strategie abbiano usato per tradurre il Black English.

L'analisi comparativa di queste tre traduzioni ha evidenziato come solo la traduzione di Cavagnoli presenti una variazione linguistica che mira a rispecchiare quella del testo sorgente, data dall'uso di Huck di un gergo giovanile (caratterizzato da un distintivo idioletto e occasionali errori grammaticali) e da un marcato uso di regionalismi e preposizioni tipiche dei discorsi orali da parte di Jim. Giachino e Culicchia, invece, optano per strategie che, rispettivamente, cancellano o deturpano la variazione linguistica del testo sorgente. Entrando nello specifico, la traduzione di Giachino rientra nella cosiddetta strategia di addomesticamento: la sua traduzione presenta un livellamento delle varietà linguistiche e un annullamento delle caratteristiche dialettiche del Black English, producendo di conseguenza un testo omogeneo che mira ad avvicinare il testo sorgente al lettore. In aggiunta all'assenza di qualsiasi tipo di personalizzazione del testo di arrivo, la mancanza di commenti sulla lingua di partenza e sulle scelte traduttive contribuiscono ad evidenziare l'assenza del ruolo di Giachino agli occhi del lettore italiano e a esaltare, quindi, il suo essere un traduttore invisibile.

Al contrario, Culicchia riesce a differenziare il discorso dei due protagonisti dimostrando, però, di non considerare il dialetto di Jim come un linguaggio avente regole precise. Sebbene Culicchia caratterizzi il discorso di Huck con espressioni colloquiali prendendo spunto dal gergo giovanile dei nostri giorni, egli contraddistingue il discorso di Jim con frequenti errori grammaticali (tra i più significativi, le ricorrenti coniugazioni verbali), descrivendo Jim come un personaggio straniero incapace di parlare italiano. Culicchia, che nella sua prefazione afferma di aver cercato di tradurre il "massacro della grammatica e della sintassi inglese americana" di Twain con il suo "massacro sulla grammatica e la sintassi italiana", dimostra di aver interpretato erroneamente il dialetto come un linguaggio privo di regole, conducendo il traduttore a tradurre il dialetto con una versione deformata dell'italiano. Questo aspetto dimostra inoltre l'inesattezza della tesi di Berman

sulla "grande traduction": sebbene le tre traduzioni segnino un percorso che va dalla domesticazione all'estraniamento, rispettando quindi la tesi di Chesterman sulla vicinanza delle successive ritraduzioni al testo di partenza, l'esotizzazione del Black English da parte di Culicchia segna un passo indietro nel costante miglioramento insito nelle ritraduzioni teorizzato dalla Retranslation Hypothesis. Questo caso dimostra chiaramente come lo studio sulla ritraduzione debba necessariamente considerare il fattore umano tra i parametri più significativi di questo fenomeno: le scelte personali del traduttore possono differire dai canoni di accuratezza dettati dal periodo in cui il traduttore lavora, portando quindi un miglioramento o un peggioramento nella ritraduzione di un romanzo.

CAPITOLO 3 – I loro occhi guardavano Dio *di Zora Neale Hurston*

Il terzo capitolo riguarda l'analisi del romanzo *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937) di Zora Neale Hurston e delle sue due traduzioni italiane. Il romanzo racconta la storia di Janie Crawford, una ragazza mulatta, e della sua ricerca del vero amore. In giovane età, la nonna di Janie costringe la ragazza a sposare Logan Killicks, un uomo di proprietà che pretende massima obbedienza dalla ragazza; Janie, stanca della sua vita con Logan, decide di fuggire con il bellissimo e affascinante Joe Starks, il quale promette di trasformarla nella donna più rispettata e altolocata di Eatonville, la prima città autogovernata da neri in America. Tuttavia, Joe si dimostra essere estremamente restrittivo e oppressivo nei confronti di sua moglie, tanto da impedirle qualsiasi tipo di interazione con la comunità di Eatonville e da umiliarla ogni qual volta compia un piccolo errore nel negozio che egli possiede. Janie sopporta la violenza psicologica e fisica di suo marito, diventando pian piano consapevole del suo essere inferiore all'interno della comunità. Un giorno però Janie si ribella e risponde a tono a suo marito mortificandolo di fronte a tutti gli uomini di Eatonville: l'umiliazione è così pesante da indebolire ulteriormente le già precarie condizioni fisiche di Joe, portandolo alla morte pochi giorni dopo. Senza Joe, Janie può finalmente sentirsi libera; l'incontro con Tea Cake, un ragazzo nero molto più giovane di lei, sancisce la felicità della donna, la quale trova in lui un uomo che la tratta come una sua pari. Insieme si trasferiscono nelle Everglades della Florida per lavorare nelle piantagioni, dove Janie diventa finalmente membro della comunità nera. Purtroppo la loro vita insieme finisce quando un uragano colpisce l'area: Tea Cake viene

morso da un cane rabbioso, contrando la malattia. Tea Cake diventa sempre più violento e, nel tentativo di uccidere Janie, lei prende una pistola e gli spara, uccidendolo. Janie viene processata per omicidio ma viene assolta; decide infine di tornare a Eatonville, dove incontra la sua amica Phoeby e le racconta tutta la sua storia.

Dopo una breve presentazione della vita dell'autore ho analizzato dei temi principali del romanzo, focalizzandomi sul percorso di Janie nel conquistare la propria identità all'interno di una società coercitiva dominante maschile. Grazie all'articolo di Mary Hellen Washington "The Black Woman's Search for Identity" (1972), ho potuto evidenziare come le sofferenze di Janie provengano da persone (Nanny e Joe Starks) che hanno costruito i loro ideali su standard dettati dalla società bianca: Nanny spera per Janie un futuro fatto di ozio e comodità dato da un matrimonio con un uomo che possa sostenerla economicamente; Joe, invece, vede nella bellezza mulatta di Janie la perfetta moglie da mostrare come trofeo per ostentare ricchezza e agio. In entrambi gli scenari, Janie viene costretta a rispettare l'ideale della perfetta donna bianca americana, dedita alla cura della casa e della famiglia. Washington sostiene che l'incontro con Tea Cake permetta a Janie non solo di sperimentare il vero amore, ma anche di avvicinarsi alla cultura afro-americana e di sperimentare l'appartenenza alla comunità nera (due fattori che le erano stati negati dalle regole imposte da Joe). Inoltre, la ricerca di Yvonne Johnson *The Voice of African American Women* (1998) è stata importante per studiare il percorso Janie di riconoscimento della sua identità di donna afro-americana attraverso la scoperta del potere della sua voce: Johnson concentra, infatti, la sua ricerca sulla relazione tra il narratore in terza persona e il personaggio di Janie, evidenziando come il lettore venga a conoscenza della crescita interiore di Janie attraverso una rete intricata di voci narrative. Per fornire una presentazione completa del romanzo ho inoltre analizzato le varie critiche poste a Hurston e alle sue opere, discutendo maggiormente della severa condanna di Richard Wright in merito alla mancanza di Hurston nel trattare argomenti socio-politici a favore della comunità afro-americana, per poi spostarmi allo scetticismo di Robert Stepto sul vero successo di Janie nel conquistare un propria voce all'interno della storia.

In seguito ho analizzato il romanzo da una prospettiva linguistica: attraverso i dati grammaticali e fonologici raccolti da Minnick nel suo studio 'Community in Conflict' ho evidenziato come Hurston abbia rappresentato il Black English in modo uniforme tra i modi di parlare di tutti i personaggi presenti nell'opera. Minnick sostiene che

l'omogeneità linguistica delle parlate di tutti i personaggi rispecchi la volontà dell'autore di rappresentare il dialetto come un linguaggio comune attraverso il quale si rafforza l'appartenenza culturale e si celebra il folclore nero. Dopo l'analisi della lingua del testo sorgente mi sono focalizzata sulle due traduzioni di questo romanzo: la versione di Prospero del 1938 e quella di Bottini del 1989. Ho basato la mia analisi comparativa su quei passaggi che rappresentano momenti cruciali nella scoperta da parte di Janie della sua voce, evidenziando le principali differenze tra i due testi di arrivo e le conseguenze di alcune strategie utilizzate dai traduttori per tradurre il Black English. L'analisi comparativa di queste due traduzioni ha messo in luce l'importanza del fattore umano come parametro nell'analisi del fenomeno della ritraduzione: i dati raccolti dal confronto dei due testi di riferimento mostrano un chiaro passaggio da una traduzione prevalentemente addomesticante ad una estraniante; tuttavia, un'analisi più approfondita ha evidenziato come la versione di Prospero del 1938 presenti alcuni aspetti che mostrano una migliore comprensione e rispetto della lingua straniera rispetto alla versione di Bottini del 1989. Infatti, nella sua nota precedente il testo tradotto, Prospero afferma il suo obiettivo di rispettare la particolarità del dialetto dei personaggi senza ridicolizzarlo. Ciononostante, la traduzione di Prospero del Black English presenta alcuni punti critici, come l'uso ricorrente di verbi al modo condizionale e congiuntivo, e strutture narrative ipotattiche, che contrassegnano il discorso dei personaggi come troppo formale e non trasmettono l'oralità caratteristica del testo di Hurston. Considerando il periodo storico in cui Prospero ha prodotto la traduzione, ho evidenziato come queste strategie potrebbero essere dovute alla necessità di conformarsi alla politica fascista di repressione dei dialetti regionali allo scopo di evitare ogni tipo di censura. L'influenza del regime fascista nel lavoro di Prospero si può notare anche nella neutralizzazione di molti riferimenti sessuali espliciti: livellando la rappresentazione sessuale delle donne nel romanzo, Prospero evitò uno scontro diretto con la restrittiva politica di genere imposta dal fascismo.

Confrontando questa traduzione con quella fatta nel 1989, si può notare che Bottini non solo riesce a trasmettere la forma orale del dialetto caratterizzando i dialoghi con strutture paratattiche e numerose espressioni colloquiali ma, attraverso una traduzione letterale trasmette le diverse immagini sessuali in modo esplicito come lo sono nel testo sorgente. Bottini usa questa strategia traduttiva anche per tradurre l'uso innovativo di Hurston del linguaggio figurativo, non riuscendo però a trasmettere il senso delle diverse immagini,

per la maggior parte frutto dell'inventiva dell'autore. Traducendo letteralmente idiomi e metafore appartenenti alla cultura afro-americana (e quindi lontani e stranieri alla cultura italiana), Bottini non solo mina la comprensione del testo da parte dei lettori italiani ma ridicolizza anche i personaggi stessi, distorcendo la rappresentazione dello Straniero. Al contrario, Prospero usa idiomi e figure retoriche familiari nell'italiano parlato per trasmettere il senso principale del testo sorgente, rappresentando il Black English come un linguaggio comprensibile e coerente. Ancora una volta si è potuto dimostrare come il fenomeno della ritraduzione non possa essere sempre inteso come processo che segue un percorso lineare e ineccepibile: la scelta di Bottini di tradurre letteralmente il linguaggio figurativo compromette chiaramente la sua strategia estraniante, rappresentando in parte lo Straniero come un'entità che non può essere compresa. Pertanto, la ritraduzione di *Their Eyes Were Watching God* può essere considerata solo un parziale miglioramento e, insieme all'analisi svolta su *The Advetures of Hucleberry Finn*, evidenzia come dare una voce italiana agli afro-americani debba fondarsi su un profondo rispetto e comprensione della loro cultura e della loro lingua.