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Translating Black English: the case of the Italian translations of “Their Eyes Were Watching God” by Zora Neale Hurston.

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*Alla zia Fede
che ci ha insegnato
a vivere e a morire.*

“it’s terrible to think that a child with five different
present tenses comes to school to be faced
with books that are less than his own language”
Toni Morrison. (Spoken Soul pag. 117).

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ABSTRACT

The following dissertation is focused on the translation of Black English analysing the case of the Italian translations of *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston. The work is divided in three chapters: the first one regards translation and its problems; the second one is about Black English; and the last one is about the specific case of *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston.

The first chapter focuses on translation, analysing various aspects such as the different strategies a translator can use, how the translator works, the importance of the Other and how the translator conveys it into the target language. Moreover, the chapter takes into account the works of Eco, and Cavagnoli aiming at underling the importance and the difficulties of the translator's work which has to think about multiple factors and not just about language itself.

The second chapter is focused on Black English starting from its history, how and when it developed, considering also the different ideologies about this language, Moreover, there will be a more concrete analysis that regards grammar, syntax and phonology of this language underling the differences between Black English and Standard American English taking into consideration the works of Green and Rickford.

Furthermore, the third chapter analyses the specific case of "*Their Eyes Were Watching God*" by Zora Neale Hurston. The chapter firstly discusses how different translators had dealt with the Black English language in literary works and then there will be the analysis of "*Their Eyes Were Watching God*" considering how different translators decided to translate both cultural concepts and Black language. The translations taken into account are from Bottini and Prospero who had dealt with the translation of this book.

Finally, the main aim of the dissertation is to underline and understand the importance of the translator's work who has to consider not just language, but also the culture embraced in the source text. Then the analysis aims at analysing Black English considering both the language and the history behind this specific language; and finally, to understand how the

translator moves when he/she deals with a language such Black English which holds culture and history.

INTRODUCTION

The challenges in the world of translation are numerous, but how hard can it be to translate a language and a culture that is different from the Standard, has always been considered inferior, and that does not have equivalences in Italian?

The following dissertation aims at analysing the different aspects of translating Black English, considering both the problems of translation itself and the problems about the language, since Black English differs from Standard American English in terms of language, but also in terms of history and culture. Hence, translating Black English might result difficult for the different language, but also for the different culture and history embraced in this language. In fact, the translator has to have a thorough knowledge of the history and culture embraced in this language to try and convey it into the target text to make the target audience grasp a little bit of the history and culture of African Americans.

The first chapter aims at discussing various aspects of translation, considering one of the main challenges of it, that is translating the culture embraced in the source text. In fact, since two languages and two cultures are different, it is impossible for a translator to convey all the meanings of the source text into the target one. However, the translator should aim to be faithful to the source text, respecting the author's ideas and intentions, trying to convey them into the target text to make the target audience grasp the source author's ideas. Also, in order to explain these ideas and concepts about translation, the works of Umberto Eco, and Franca Cavagnoli will be analysed.

Particularly, the focus will be on translating literature since its difficulties lie not only on culture itself, but also on the presence of rhythm, and style, which might be challenging to translate, since each language and culture has its own sounds, and images. For this reason, the translator has to make decisions step by step and choose what it is more important for that specific text in that particular moment of the narration.

The translator can opt for an adaptation strategy, which means to adapt the cultural element of the source text in the target text; in this way, the target audience will not have

any difficulties in understanding the text at the price of depriving the source text from the cultural concept and leading to the invisibility of the translators since their work will not be evaluated as important as the translated text will look like the original.

The other decision the translator can make is to use a foreignization strategy, which means to leave the foreign element as it is in the translation; in this way, the source text will not be deprived of the cultural concept, but the target audience will have to make an effort to grasp and understand the cultural concept. These decisions are made not only depending on the translator's interpretation, but also considering aspects such as the publishing house, which might ask the translator to opt for a translation strategy rather than another, and the target audience, reflecting on what strategy will be more appreciated.

Beside culture, rhythms, sounds, and images, another aspect to take into consideration in the translation process is the Other, and its importance. In fact, one of the major problems of translation is to mask the Other, making it fit into the values and canon of the target language. However, since translation is a dialogue between two distinct cultures, it is important to highlight their differences, and to make the Other acknowledged and appreciated by the target audience. In fact, the translator should make the Other feel respected and seen in the target text; in this way, the target audience will have the opportunity to discover and learn something new.

Finally, the last aspect to be tackled in the first chapter is time, and its relevance in translation studies. It is to be remembered that every translation is the product of a particular historical and cultural time, and, for this reason, as years pass, the translation might get old and there is the need for a new translation that will have something else to say for a new historical and cultural time.

Particularly, the first chapter aims at understanding that the main goal and challenge for a translator is to be faithful to the source text respecting the Other. As U. Eco suggested, the translator should aim at “dire quasi la stessa cosa”.¹ This definition leads to the

¹ Umberto Eco, *Dire quasi la stessa cosa*, Giunti, Milano 2019, pag.10.

awareness of the impossibility of saying exactly the same things of the source language texts due to the differences in terms of languages and cultures across the word; however, it also advises that the translator should be as faithful as possible to the source text, considering that being faithful does not mean being literal, but to convey a similar effect in the target text.

The second chapter aims at raising awareness about Black English, considering its cultural and historical background. In fact, there will be an overview of the history of African Americans, from the decades of slavery and segregation until the Harlem Renaissance; highlighting the inferiority and subalternity that characterized their history.

Particularly, the relevance is put on the theme of slavery in the plantation, how slaves were exploited to enrich the landowners, and how slavery was abolished due to the 13th Amendment of the USA Constitution. Also, there are references to the period of racial segregation due to the Jim Crow Laws; and, finally, the Harlem Renaissance, a period in which there was a rising awareness and development of African Americans' culture also for what regards language and literature. In fact, it is in this period that writers started to show the truthful way of speaking Black English, that is not Standard American English with mistakes, but a proper language with its own grammatical, phonological, and syntactical patterns.

The discourse about the history of African Americans is made also considering how Black English developed, and the different theories about its origins. Particularly, there will be references to Pidgin English, that is defined as a simplified variety of a dominant language; Plantation Creole that is a language with more complex rules and structures spoken in the plantations, and the British theory that supports the idea according to which that Black English comes from a white Southern variety of English. These theories about the origins of Black English have been devised by J.R. Rickford and J.L. Dillard.

Particularly, the first part of the second chapter highlights how the history of slavery and segregation led to the idea of Black English as an inferior language, as the bad way of speaking English, and as the way in which uneducated people speak.

In the second part of the chapter, the attention will be on language itself, focusing on grammar, syntax and phonology of Black English highlighting its differences with Standard American English showing numerous examples that have been studied mostly by L. Green and N. Bernini. For what regards the grammar rules, most of the differences are about verb tenses, but there are also differences about pronouns, and the possessive case; for what regards the syntax, there are examples about multiple negations, question formation, relative clauses, and the use of double modals; and finally, for what regards the phonological patterns there are examples about the various pronunciations of the words.

Finally, there will be a reference to the oral structure of Black English, that is a fundamental cultural element that makes Black English different from the Standard since the Standard does not have a relevant oral culture as Black English. Particularly, the importance of orality is due to the history of African Americans since, during the period of slavery, slaves did not have the right to write and so they were communicating just orally.

The considerations about the oral structures of Black English are made analysing various aspects of it, such as the concept of signifying, that is the most important and regards communication among one another, changing and distorting what the other person is saying; playing the dozens, that is talking about someone exaggerating what you are saying and the toast, that is a rhyming story in which you should invent lines that have a rhyming pattern with the previous or next line. Moreover, all the considerations are made with the aim of highlighting the relevance of the oral culture in the African Americans community.

Particularly, the second chapter aims at understanding the history and culture that lies behind Black English, and its differences with Standard American English; being aware that these differences between the two languages cannot lead to the idea that Black English is an inferior language, rather than to the idea that Black English with its structure, history, and culture is a proper language and cannot be discriminated for that.

The last chapter aims at analysing how challenging is it to translate Black English, taking into consideration the novel “Their Eyes Were Watching God” written by Zora Neale Hurston in 1937 and its three translations by Ada Prospero published by Frassinelli in 1938, Adriana Bottini published by Bompiani in 1998, and again Adriana Bottini published by Cargo in 2009. As it is noticed the last two translations were performed by the same translator; however, there is a significant and relevant difference between the two translations for what regards the title; in fact, the translation published in 1998 has for title “Con gli occhi rivolti al Cielo”, while the last translation published in 2009 has for title “I loro occhi guardavano Dio”. The reason of this different translation will be explained afterwords in the chapter.

The chapter starts with a brief introduction on the difficulties the translator can encounter during the translation of Black English, considering not only the problems of translation studied in chapter one, but also the problems due to the different language, history and culture explained in chapter two. Particularly, the focus is on the challenge of respecting the Other since, being a culture far away from the Standard, it might result hard for the translator to value the Other and make it feel seen and respected in the translated text. In fact, the major risk of translating Black English is to forget and to not recall the language, culture and history in the target text, depriving the target audience of the possibility of understating and discovering a new culture.

Moreover, the considerations made during the first chapter about translations, and the ones about Black English, led to the discussion of translating Black English, considering one of the most important novel and author for this culture that is “Their Eyes Were Watching God” by Zora Neale Hurston. The reason of this choice laid on the importance of the writer for the African American community, as she is considered one of the most significant and relevant Black writers.

Also, the choice of the book was made considering its relevance for the African American community, since its author, Zora Neale Hurston, was able to convey language, culture, and history throughout the narration of the story. Particularly, the analysis will consider

various paragraphs that contain historical, linguistic, and cultural problems and how the translators were able or not to transfer the source language text into the target text. Particularly, there are paragraphs that contain elements of history, such as the history of slavery and segregation; paragraphs that contain grammatical rules such as different verb tenses, multiple negation; paragraphs embraced with sounds and the orality of this culture; and paragraphs that show the inferiority of African Americans by using discriminating words. Indeed, the choice of this book was made considering these paragraphs that are able to show not only Black English as a language, but they are also able to express some cultural elements of the African American society.

Remarkably, the third chapter aims at understanding the challenges a translator can encounter in the process of translation when the source text recalls history and culture. As it is analysed in the first chapter, one of the main challenges of translation is to be able to make the target audience grasp the culture embraced in the source text; and, as it is analysed in the second chapter, Black English is a language developed during slavery, in a society characterized of segregation and discrimination; so how difficult and challenging can be to translate Black English? How difficult is to convey the history and culture embraced into Black English? And, finally, how challenging is it to make the Italian readers understand how Black people speak, and their emphasis on orality? These are all questions that will be answered through the analysis of the three translations.

Hence, as it will be analysed, translating Black English is not an easy job. The translator chooses step by step what to do, conveying part of the actual meaning of words and eliminating other shades of significance since there is not a direct equivalent in the target language. As frequently happens in the translation process, some shades of meaning are lost and crystallize in the source text, and, therefore, the target readers will only grasp just what the translator is able to transfer into the target text.

Finally, there are two reasons this dissertation is carried on. The first one is showing the challenges of the translator's work that are present in all the languages and cultures, tackling various aspects of translation such as the theme of culture, faithfulness, and the

otherness; being aware of the impossibility of saying the exact same thing or concept of the source text, but with the aim of reproducing a similar effect of the original text.

The second one is showing Black English in a context of no prejudices or stereotypes making objective observations on when, how and where this language developed, how it differs from the Standard, highlighting that these differences are not an excuse to consider Black English as an inferior language.

Then, the considerations on “Their Eyes Were Watching God” aim at understanding the difficulties in translating something far away from the Italian language considering its distance with Black English not only in terms of language, but also in terms of culture, sounds, and images making readers recognize and appreciate the Other acknowledging the differences between the English text and the Italian texts, seeing that the Italian texts will never be able to express the same concepts, sounds and images of the English text. However, it is important the two translators aimed at being faithful to the English text, being aware that they will never be able to express the same exact ideas and concepts of the source text.

Hence, translation in general is not an easy task due to the differences among languages and cultures. The translators have to be aware of the culture and history of both the source and target languages bearing in mind that their work is a mediation between the two languages and cultures. Also, translators have to consider that the target readers are able to read and discover the original author due to their work. Indeed, the translators have to be careful on choosing what and how to say since translation is the medium through which readers will acknowledge a foreign culture and language.

The difficulties become even challenging when the source text is a text embraced into a language with a complex history, and with a foreign culture that has always been considered inferior and, consequently, not studied. This means that the translators have to be extremely careful during the process of interpretation and translation because the risk of mocking and masking the Other is extremely high. As it will be discovered throughout the dissertation, the translators have to have a throughout understanding of

Black English, its history, culture and language, with the aim of providing the Italian readers the essence of it. However, how can the translators accomplish that?

Chapter 1: Culture and translation.

In the following chapter, the focus is on the link between translation and culture, analysing its importance and the different strategies of translation devised in recent times. The first aspect to be explored is the translation of literature, which implies not just translating the words of a text, but also translating its rhythm and style and all aspects contributing to its meaning. Moreover, the concepts of adaptation and faithfulness will be discussed underlining the difficulties a translator can encounter during the process of translation to create “a good translation,” a concept that will also be questioned. And finally, the invisibility of the translator will be considered, highlighting how the translator becomes invisible to the eyes of the target audience and why this happens.

Particularly, the analysis is developed around the discourse of the “Other” and the concept of “Otherness” in translation. In fact, it is important to consider translation as a way to embrace and understand the other with no prejudice, performing a type of translation that is not ethnocentric, but looks at the other and learns from it. Furthermore, the topic of retranslation will be addressed, highlighting how a few texts are translated more than once, why does this process happen, and how the retranslation is performed.

The main aim of this chapter, in other words, is to analyse and show the difficulties in translating literature, which is not just about an exchange between two different languages, but also an exchange between two distinct cultures. In fact, one of the problems the translator encounters concern cultural terms which do not have an equivalent in the target language. These terms are known as *realia*, which is to say “parole che denotano cose materiali culturospecifiche”². Moreover, culturally specific elements lead to the concept of “incommensurabilità delle lingue”³, which implies that literal translation is not possible since two languages have two different phonological and cultural systems.

² Bruno Osimo, *Manuale del traduttore*, Hoepli, Milano, 2004, pag.63.

³ Umberto Eco, *op.cit.*, pag.37.

Moreover, Realia have a strong impact, especially in literary texts; in fact, when the translator deals with them, he/she needs to find a way to translate them to convey their meanings to the target audience. The decision is made considering various aspects of text such as the style, the rhythm, and the target audience, and adopting different translation strategies that will be discussed and analysed further on in this chapter.

The interrelationship between culture and translation has been investigated in Translation Studies, pointing out that culture cannot be considered as something outside language, but rather something within language. In fact, recent studies underlined the importance of culture that cannot be pondered separate from language.

Furthermore, in the 1990s, the importance of culture became a central aspect in translation theory, indeed translation practice started to question the concepts of faithfulness and equivalence,⁴ since attention was drawn on culture, context, history, and convention. These changes are known as the “cultural turn”⁵: a massive intellectual phenomenon that was happening across the humanities in general and had a deep impact on translation. The cultural turn made clear that language and culture cannot be independent since language is embedded into culture, and every author is the result of his/her time and culture, as much as the translator is.

The cultural turn reflects the importance of cultural awareness in our world; it underlines the value of knowing and discovering other cultures far away from your own; it is a phenomenon that permits to understand more about the complexity of the world we live in, and it emphasizes cultural interactions among different populations.

Moreover, the cultural turn in translation does not draw attention only to a single cultural element in a text, but it considers the whole text as the cultural element, so the translator has to take into account and have a deep knowledge of the culture of the source text. Furthermore, assuming that there are just some words in the text that are culturally specific is partially wrong; it is true that there are words that express a specific cultural

⁴ Paul Ricoeur, *Tradurre l'intraducibile*, Urbaniana University Press, Città del Vaticano, 2021, pag.40.

⁵ Susan Bassnett, “Culture and translation,” in *A companion to Translation Studies*, Piotr Kuhiwczak and Karin LittauCromwell Press Ltd, 2007.

concept; but it is also true that all the words in a literary text are about culture. This is because a literary text only exists in its cultural context and background.

Moreover, the focus on culture is particularly important when it regards the translation of literature. In fact, it perceives translation itself as a dynamic process that tries to negotiate between two languages, two cultures, and two different systems of understanding the world. Hence, translation is a game of balance between what the source language is, and what the translator is able to maintain and convey into the target language. This means that the translator should find an equivalence between what the source language says, and what the target language can say.

Moreover, the concept of culture is particularly important in translation studies because each text is not perceived as an individual entity, but as the product of the culture, history, and context in which it has been produced. So, the translator cannot analyse the language of a text without considering its culture.

Translation, indeed, cannot be defined as a mechanical exchange between languages but it is rather a complex negotiation between cultures that communicate between each other losing and gaining signification. Moreover, this implies that the translator conveys ideas, concepts, terms, images, and sounds from a culture into another culture. This does not mean that the translator erases the cultural identity of the author, although the translation makes the author and the text accessible and clear for the target audience.

It is important to underline that only by knowing its culture, the translator will deeply understand the meaning of the text and attempt to convey it in the target language. If the cultural context of the source text is unknown or only vaguely familiar to the translator, there will be a misunderstanding of the author's intention, whose outcome will be a bad translation. So, the cultural context in which the text was written is particularly important to provide a good translation. The risk of not having a thorough knowledge of the cultural context, is the loss of the cultural elements, or a non-appropriate translation of them.

Moreover, the translator should be aware that the process of translation allows the transmission of the source culture into the target one, enriching it; therefore, translating is the way through which people become aware of the other, learning something new.

Beside the source culture, another aspect to analyse is the target culture, which is extremely important when talking about translation because the translation itself is carried out to enrich that specific culture. In fact, a translation can be considered as a necessary act to complete the original text because, if the translation did not exist, the text would not be read by people outside its linguistic community, and its message would remain enclosed in the source language.

Hence, the challenge is, on the one hand, trying to carry the cultural concepts from the source to the target language, respecting the differences between them; on the other hand, the translator should attempt to avoid giving the target reader the impression of reading something strange or far away from their language and culture. To do so, the translator takes decisions step by step, choosing whether to adapt the culturally specific terms to the target culture or to leave its foreignness in the target text.

Hence, there are different techniques the translator can adopt, as there is not a standard scientific method to approach translation and, for this reason, the perfect translation does not exist. In fact, the translator decides what to do gradually, reflecting and choosing among different possibilities since translation is, firstly, an act of interpretation that is singular and not universal; secondly, every translator brings to the translation his/her own historical and cultural background and competences.

Finally, cultural translation is performed to enrich the target culture and language, allowing it to learn about cultures that are far away, in terms of customs and traditions and also in terms of time, since each language and culture change overtime and so, even within the same language, words and concepts will evolve and transform.

In fact, when the target audience reads a translation, they go with their minds and hearts into another language and culture. In this way, there is a dialogue and connection between the two systems of knowledge. It is also in this way that the target audience can embrace

new meanings due to translation. Hence, translation is a negotiation between two knowledge frameworks; the aim is to recreate the source text with the same effect, including the culture embraced in that specific text and author, but with other words, sounds, images.

Moreover, before starting the translation, in addition to a thorough knowledge of the text and its main elements, as well as of the author and the context, the translator has to have clear in their mind who the target reader is, as it is an important information to make decisions about the strategies to choose and use.

1.1 Translating literature

Considering translating literature as a translation of a text embedded into culture, the translator cannot just find equivalent words but has to pay attention to the deep meaning of the cultural elements. It is in this frame that the translator deals with the concept of adaptation, foreignization, and faithfulness. So, the translation of literature deals with a system of knowledge that goes beyond strictly linguistic elements and must also consider specific aspects of the text, such as rhythm, style, and culture.

Since two languages and two cultures are different, during the translation process, the loss the translator experiences happens at various levels, for example, at the level of language or at the level of rhythm. It is in this case that the translator might decide to lose something syntactically but gain something at the level of rhythm and style. This is because the goal is to reproduce a similar effect, that, in the case of literature, can be expressed by both the style and the rhythm or by the words of the source language text.

Furthermore, it is important to notice that translating literature means moving the author's identity, style, and voice into another language. To do so, the translator has firstly to understand the author's style and voice, and then look for equivalences to transfer these elements into the target language. Indeed, it is through translation that the author's language and culture become accessible to the target audience without being deprived of

its own identity; in fact, the challenge is to make the target readers perceive the identity of the source author even though it is expressed in another language.

Another challenge is to translate sounds; in fact, each word is embraced with a sound, an image, and culture. The aim, besides translating the meaning, is also to reproduce an equivalent sound into the target language. Of course, reproducing the same exact sound is impossible but the goal is to remain as faithful as possible to the source text, in terms of meaning, sounds, images, and voices.

Another challenge the translator faces, is to reproduce the same effect of the source text on the source audience, despite using a different language, different images, and sounds. Also, the challenge is even harder when the translation is performed years after the first publication of the author. Here the challenge is harder because beside the different languages, there is also a different timing. In fact, languages and cultures are not a static aspect of life but change overtime.

Moreover, to reproduce the same effect, the translator chooses what is more important for that text, and, therefore, loses something. However, it is important to remember that translation is a game between losing and gaining significance; so, despite the occasional loss of something, there will be other passages in which the translator can compensate for that loss.

As with culture, even when talking about sounds, there is a game of losing and gaining. When something of the source language is lost in terms of sounds, something else in the target text is gained. Indeed, each choice is a matter of responsibility; the translator chooses what it is better for the target text, and sometimes what it is less bad than any other choices. The aim is to find a balance among many choices, remembering that the goal is to find a good equivalence between the two languages and cultures.

In the discourse of translation, and particularly the translation of literature, the first act to do before translating is to interpret and decode the source text and its author. In fact, each choice is a choice based on the interpretation the translator gave to the source text and to

what the author wanted to express using specific words. It is about listening to the source text, exploring, and questioning the author.

The interpretation is linked to the dialogue, meeting, and comparison between the source language and culture, and the language and culture of the translation. It signifies conveying an experience, a thought, even if they are far away in terms of time and culture, into a different language; it is about giving new life to an author that would have been unknown if the translation did not exist.

Since a translation is, firstly, an act of interpretation, this means that no translation can be permanent. This is because different translators lead to different translations depending also on their personal experience, and the timing in which the translation is performed. It is also for these reasons that there are no perfect translations, but only attempts to convey as much as possible of the author's text in all of its aspects in the target language and culture; indeed, a translation embraces the life of the text and of the author and tries to take it into another system of knowledge creating a dialogue between the source and the target text.

Here lies the power and the importance of translation: preserving the author's voice, conveying it into another language and system of knowledge that will make both the source and the target language and culture richer.

1.2 The invisibility of the translator

For many years, translators have been considered as invisible figures; their job was seen as a simple mediation between two languages, respecting the source text as an authority, with no authorial freedom. Their work was invisible, they were producing a text that the reader could read as if it was originally written in the target language. Nowadays the situation is different; their role is considered truly relevant since the translation is no longer perceived as a mere copy of an original text in another language but is evaluated as a unique and autonomous text that is the outcome of an act of interpretation. The translator has the opportunity and responsibility to choose what strategy is the most appropriate to convey all the aspects of the source text in the target language.

The ideology behind the invisibility of the translator maintained that a good translation is a fluent text, which does not sound as a translation, but as an original text; this is an illusion of transparency, produced by the erasure of linguistic and cultural elements that show the target readers the cultural distance of the original text from their own cultural and linguistic system, and, consequently, the target audience does not recognize the importance of the translator's work.

The invisibility of the translator was a popular approach to translation and within translation studies; however, there are two problems: the first one is merely for the translator, who is not recognized for their challenging work. Indeed, it is important to remember that the exchange between two languages and two cultures is possible only due to the work of translators.

The second problem is for the target readers because they forget that the text they are reading was written in another language and comes from another culture. In this way, the target audience cannot recognize, appreciate, and grasp the source culture, and cannot learn anything new about it. This is problematic because one of the aims of translating different texts from various cultures is to create an exchange to make readers see, perceive, and understand the other culture.

Besides these two problems, the invisibility of the translator might be an asset for the target audience and in particular for the publishing house because, since there is no reference to the source text's culture, which may not be familiar to readers, the translation will be largely more accessible and so easier to read. However, the risk of embracing invisibility as a translating strategy is that the domestication of the linguistic and cultural structures of the source text does not lead to an understanding of a different language and culture, but rather to a superficial and often stereotyping interpretation of the text from a different world.

To avoid the invisibility, the translator can question the target culture's values and underline the source culture's values. In this way, the translation makes the target

audience perceive the differences between the source and the target language, and the target readers have the opportunity to think about cultural values present in both the source and target culture.

In conclusion, the illusion of transparency made through a fluent translation, strongly hides the cultural values of the source text. If the translation is performed in this way, the problem is that there are no questions about the cultural and linguistic differences between the two languages and cultures analysed; moreover, there is not a reflection upon possible cultural and social alternatives. For what concerns the translator, the more the invisible translations are performed, the more the translation's aims and goals are not seen and marginalized.

1.3 Adaptation

During the process of translation, the translator can apply different strategies, such as: adaptation, in which the translator decides to adapt the cultural concepts, and, consequently, to eliminate the cultural differences; or foreignization, which means leaving the foreign element as it is, giving the target readers the opportunity to acknowledge some differences between the two different cultures. In this way, the reader has the experience of reading something that comes from a different place with different concepts, images, and sounds.

Since the total equivalence is not possible, adaptation or foreignization are applied through a dialogue between the two languages and cultures. This is because every time the translator makes a decision, the goal is to accomplish what it is better for the text, and for what the author wanted to express. It is a continuous dialogue between the author and its audience, and the translation and its audience; a dialogue to understand what the best choice is, to communicate what the author wanted to express in the first place.

The concept of adaptation becomes particularly relevant in reference to culture. This is because the dilemma is between adapting the source text's culture to the target text's one or the other way around. Hence, the dilemma is between making readers feel completely in their comfort zone, at the price of depriving the original text of its cultural uniqueness;

or making the readers go outside their comfort zone, without depriving the original text of the culture it contains, but at the price of asking the reader to make steps forward to embrace and acknowledge the culture of the source text.

Furthermore, when the strategy of adaptation is used, the goal is to find an equivalent to every concept proposed in the source text. However, since translation is not a scientific process, there is no objectivity in saying if the chosen word is actually an equivalent; the metre is to understand if the chosen equivalent reproduces the same effect as in the source text.

Moreover, adaptation can occur when the target culture is too far away from the source one, and, for this reason, the translator decides that it is necessary to adapt the source culture to the target one. Otherwise, the translator can decide to leave the foreign element in the translation and make it accessible to the readers using glosses. In this case, the foreign element is given to the target audience, and, at the same time, it is explained to them. In addition, adaptation is used when the main aim of the translation is to create a text that is easy to grasp, without any type of foreign element. Hence, this choice depends on the target reader the translator has in mind.

Furthermore, adaptation leads to a fluent text which gives the illusion of being transparent, making the reader think that an exact equivalence between two languages and cultures exists. As a matter of course, this is just an illusion because the differences exist, and a translation is just a partial interpretation of what the original text and author wanted to say.

The risk of adaptation is to make a political choice providing an ethnocentric⁶ translation, which respects the canon and values of the target text; as the target cultural values influence how the translation is carried out and how the audience perceives it.

The concept of ethnocentric translation is particularly significant considering dominant cultures, such as the Western culture. Here, the risk is that, through adaptation, the

⁶ Franca Cavagnoli, *La voce del testo*, Feltrinelli, Milano, 2019, pag. 49.

translator submits the source text's culture to the canon of the Western one, taking away all the source's cultural elements to make it fit into this culture. Consequently, Western readers will never be able to experience a culture that is far away from them, and they will think that their culture is the only one possible. Furthermore, this implies the concept of *cultural hegemony*⁷, in which the western readers do not assimilate anything about other cultures, and so, they are deprived of the opportunity to discover something different and new from other cultures.

Moreover, considering the source text as a representation of the author's soul, style, and syntax, the translation can be considered as "a second-grade representation" since, only the original text can embrace the soul of the original author while the translation can never do that; indeed the audience may ask the translator to cancel this state of "second grade text", using the adaptation strategy and providing a transparent text; however, in this way, there is a decrease in the foreign values that are brought into the target culture, and even single words are transformed into something that is completely accessible to the target readers.

In conclusion, the challenge is to adapt the concepts and the voice of the author into another language, allowing the reader to understand and appreciate the translated text in its cultural difference. It is about finding a balance between how to transmit the voice of the author and, at the same time, make the author accessible to the reader.

The opposite choice would be foreignization through which the target audience realizes the differences between the two cultures, recognizing the values in the source language text which differs from the target culture and language.

Particularly, foreignization leads to a non-fluent text, to an openness towards the source language because the cultural elements are not completely lost, as the target audience can notice the unfamiliar cultural elements of the source text. However, using the foreignizing strategy does not lead to a transparency of the source text because the resulting translation is just a partial interpretation of it. Indeed, it is important to remember that a translation

⁷ Antonio Gramsci defined cultural hegemony as the dominance of the ruling class who decides the rules which are approved worldwide.

is always just a partial interpretation of what the source text wanted to say, regardless of what strategies and techniques the translator opts for.

Moreover, a translation that explicitly decides not to be fluent, but to underline the cultural differences between the two languages, is a type of translation that makes the target audience realize the ethnocentricity and cultural hegemony of the source language and culture. It can be perceived as a violent attack against the target culture because it is a way of proving that the way of thinking and perceiving life in the target culture is not the only one that exists, but there are multiple ways of seeing life and none is more relevant than the other. Indeed, a translation should be a text where the linguistic and cultural differences are noticed and acknowledged by the target audience.

In conclusion, foreignization means giving significance to the cultural alternatives found in the source text; considering translation as place of cultural differences that can contribute to create a new identity or transform it. Moreover, according to Benjamin,⁸ the translation should not be something that shadows the original text, but rather something that expresses the original text, making the reader assimilate what has been shown in the source text, that is, in fact, the goal and the task of a translator.

1.4 Faithfulness

Faithfulness is often used as a paradigm to define what a good translation is. However, since translation is not a scientific process, there is not a specific strategy that leads to the translation's faithfulness, but rather several decisions made during the translation process considering numerous factors, such as, who is the target audience, the source text, and its author.

However, being faithful means that the translation aims at reproducing the same effect and sense the source text had to its original audience. As Eco suggested, translating means "*dire quasi la stessa cosa*"⁹. This is because two languages imply two distinct cultures

⁸ Walter Benjamin, *Il compito del traduttore*, MIM EDIZIONI, Milano, 2023, pag.49.

⁹ Umberto Eco, *op.cit.*, pag.10.

and so two different systems of understanding the world, which suggests the impossibility of reproducing the same exact text.

There are two types of faithfulness: “linguistic faithfulness”¹⁰ and “cultural faithfulness”¹¹: the first one implies linguistic fidelity to the original text; the second one implies a fidelity that goes beyond words. However, a linguistic infidelity may lead to a cultural fidelity. As an example, word puns, which are saturated with culture, can be studied. In this case, a linguistic infidelity leads to cultural fidelity since, the translator decides to change the words to reproduce the same effect the author wanted to give. If a word pun is translated literally, there will be a *tradimento*¹² of the source text because translating it literally will not have any meaning for the target language. This also occurs with words which express a cultural concept that does not exist in the target language; in this case, translating them literally would create a sense of foreignness in the target reader. Hence, the translator cannot recreate the same exact text of the source language; indeed, he/she has to be faithful to the source text, as well as to the author’s intentions that have to be respected and reproduced in the target text.

So, since the aim of the translator is to reproduce the same sense and effect of the source text, being faithful does not mean to translate word by word the original text, but to consider different strategies to convey its deep meaning into the target language.

Generally, a good translation can be defined as a text that helps the reader understand better the original text, making explicit some ambiguities, but also being careful not to explain too much about the text itself. Hence, the translator mediates between what it is right to make explicit for the reader and what is too much. Indeed, the translator has to negotiate during the interpretation process, considering that it cannot be neutral or objective because translators bring their own history, background, studies of their time in the translation. Moreover, the interpretation is just hypothetical, since there is no assurance about what the author wanted to say unless there is a relationship between the

¹⁰ Franca Cavagnoli, op.cit., pag.62.

¹¹ Eadem.

¹² Paul Ricoeur, op.cit., pag.40.

author and the translator. Certainly, the interpretation is given by looking at the cultural context in which the author gave birth to the text.

Therefore, being faithful to the source text does not just mean to be faithful semantically. This is because, on the one hand, each text may lead to a different interpretation; even the single word may have different meanings and so different interpretations. On the other hand, the interpretation choices the translator make are affected by the historical context, and culture in which the translation is performed.

Particularly, besides words that have different meanings, there are words whose meanings depend on the context. In these circumstances, the translator uses the *disambiguazione contestuale*¹³ which means that the translator has to study and understand the context before translating a word, as it is only by looking at the context that the translator can find the right equivalent for that word in that very specific source text.

So, a translation is good when the translator recreates the same effect of the source text and finds the right equivalents. That is called “*ospitalità linguistica*”¹⁴ which means finding the right equivalent without altering the language of the source text. In this way, there is an exchange between the two cultures and an enrichment of the target language since it embraces unfamiliar terms and concepts of the source culture.

In conclusion, faithfulness is not a question of adaptation of the source language towards the target language rather than a question of conveying the characteristics of the source language into the target language text. It is about finding a balance of the differences and the similarities that exist between two different languages and cultures; it is a way of knowing the other and enrich your own language and culture.

¹³ Umberto Eco, op. cit., pag. 29.

¹⁴ Paul Ricoeur, op.cit., pag.42.

1.5 The “Otherness” of the source text

The concept of Otherness is a relevant aspect in translation, especially when the translation is performed between two languages and cultures that are extremely different from one another. This is because translation comes to be a way of understanding the other, underlining the differences and the similarity between one another. Hence, welcoming the Other into the target language is relevant since it is an opportunity for the target audience to know and learn something new from it.

Particularly, the concept of Otherness is relevant when the translator deals with two quite different cultures, such as the Western and the Eastern. Since the Western culture is dominant, the risk during the translation process is that it would overwhelm the Eastern culture. In fact, the western translator has to be careful not to erase the Other just to make the text fit into their own culture. Again, translation is not just about translating words, but also the culture embedded into that text. Hence, the translator has to acknowledge the Other and translate its culture without the prejudices of their own culture. Particularly, as Benjamin stated, the translation of the Other deals with embracing, accepting, and learning from it.

Translation strategies which adopt an ethnocentric point of view, on the contrary, are not able to accept the Other. but they adapt the source text to the target culture according to its values. Moreover, according to F. Cavagnoli, adapting the Other to the Self would be an act of appropriation; “è come se non solo si riducesse l’Altro al Sè, ma lo si assimilasse al punto di renderlo simile ad una piccolissima porzione di lettori”¹⁵

The question of the Other is connected to the concept of hospitality. In fact, it is through the hospitability of translation that the Other and the Self meet and have the possibility to grow. Hospitality is defined as “L’esperienza di una cultura che riconosce l’altro senza sottrarre all’altro la sua alterità o diversità, la sua identità di carattere e sapere e costume,

¹⁵ Franca Cavagnoli, op.cit., pag.85.

e nello stesso tempo pone colui che ospita nella condizione di non dover rinunciare alla sua singolarità, alla sua identità”.¹⁶

Consequently, the translator has the responsibility to make the Other feel accepted in the target text, and, at the same time, a responsibility towards the target culture and language since, the translator has to find words, sounds, and images in the target language which are able to express the otherness of the source language without depriving it from its culture, sounds and images, also respecting the uniqueness of the target language.

Furthermore, the aim is to find a balance between the source and the target culture. In this way, the translator should be able to translate the source text without the prejudices implied from the target culture and to give a text which expresses both the source and the target culture. The balance should be detected in the perspective of respect for the other, and for the target readers.

The question of “otherness” is particularly relevant when translating Black English. This is because, on the one hand, Black English might be considered as a marginal dialect without significant cultural elements, and, consequently, all these elements might be erased in the process of translation. However, Black English is a unique language with a history of marginalization, colonization, and slavery that has profoundly influenced it.

On the other hand, the risk in translating Black English, is to choose a foreignization strategy that ends up mocking the Other, misunderstanding the culture and history behind that specific language. In fact, the threat of performing this type of translation is to make a violent act on the source text. This happens when the translator does not respect the source culture and uses the translation as a way of confirming the hegemony of the target dominant culture.

The concept of otherness for what concerns Black English, relates to the idea of identity of African Americans. In fact, the repressive history of blacks Americans led to the creation of an oppositional identity that manifests itself also in the language. The complex

¹⁶ Antonio Prete, *All'ombra dell'altra lingua*, Bollati Editori, Torino, 2011.

history of slavery and segregation has led African Americans to create, maintain and develop their own culture using Black English to express it.

Moreover, the identity of Black Americans is associated with the idea of Blackness since the white define themselves as the contrary of Black to maintain and sustain their relationship of power and domination between the two. The relationship of power was embodied in literature when authors were mocking Black English, using it as a way of making the audience perceive the differences between Standard American English and Black English aiming at seeing Black English as an inferior and childish language.

Finally, the relationship with the other is constant and it develops and changes time to time because every author, text and translation is a specific and unique event depending on the historical time in which it is carried out; conceiving the other is not just a matter of giving the other the opportunity to exist in your own language, but to embrace the idea that the other will always bring new meanings to your own language and culture.

1.6 Retranslation

Retranslation refers to the translation of a text that has already been translated; it is a necessary act to connect the source text to new readers, and to embrace new cultural and linguistic aspects because every translation is part of a specific time and so, as years pass, it might have something else to offer. Indeed, retranslation is an aspect of translation significantly connected with the importance of time because, since translating is a process deeply influenced by a specific cultural context, it is often necessary to translate texts again to make them accessible to new target readers. Retranslation can be recognized as a way of giving new life to a classic and of making an author continuously alive in the contemporary world.

Furthermore, retranslation can also be perceived as a way of re-reading an author by discovering new meanings of the same literary text. As Benjamin sustained, while the author's voice lives eternally in the source culture, the translation lives and dies according to cultural and linguistic changes of the target's culture and language: each translation

belongs to a specific time, cultural and linguistic world which is destined to end. In fact, every translator brings to the translation the historical and cultural context in which the translation is performed. It is for this reason that the translation of the same book can be significantly different if it is carried out in a different time.

Besides the cultural, linguistic, and historical context, another aspect to take into consideration is the professional ability of the translator. Since there is a continuous technological development, a contemporary translator has far more possibilities to search for the right equivalent than previous ones. Indeed, the translator has more tools to consult for help during the translation process.

Moreover, another reason a retranslation may be performed is because of changes in the awareness of the target audience in which the Other appears to have not been respected or recognized in all of its cultural difference in the previous translations. In this case, the retranslation can be considered as a way of giving light to the Other, respecting it and showing it to the target audience. In this situation, the translator might choose different strategies and techniques that aim to make the Other accepted and welcomed into the target culture.

In conclusion, retranslation gives new light to the source text, highlighting different information and new aspects of both the source text and the target text. The retranslation's intention is, indeed, to create a new text that highlights different meanings and values in respect to the previous translation. This is the consequence of a changing society and culture which may embrace new values and, consequently, might need the retranslation of a text.

Finally, thanks to translations and retranslations even texts from the previous centuries can become accessible and have something to say to the new generations. It is performed to give the opportunity to that specific text to exist again and again despite changes and differences and it is due to historical, cultural, and linguistic changes in the target audience.

Chapter 2: Black English: from a historical perspective to the most concrete aspects of the language.

In the following chapter the focus is on Black English starting with a historical viewpoint, considering how, when, where, and why this language started to develop; and discussing if it should be considered a language, or if it is more appropriate to call it a dialect and why. Moreover, the analysis will underline the most concrete aspects of this language, such as grammar, syntax, and phonology stressing how it differs from Standard American English. Additionally, the importance of orality, speech events and rhetorical strategies used in African American culture's communication will be considered.

Particularly, the differences between Standard American English and Black English will be underlined and highlighted to support the theory according to which Black English is a proper language with its own rules, structures, and sounds understanding that these differences do not make Black English a sublanguage, but rather a proper language.

In fact, the following analysis aims at identifying unique features and structures of Black English that can result difficult to understand and translate. It is a way of proving that Black English cannot be considered as a second-grade language, or a variety spoken by uneducated people, since what appears to be ungrammatical or incorrect for a white speaker is just a different rule. Being different does not mean being incorrect, but just following a different grammar rule.

2.1 Black English, from slavery and segregation to the Harlem Renaissance

African American people have always lived in the American society with a complex history. In fact, for many years, they were exploited as slaves in plantation fields without the possibility of escaping, in a condition of poverty and segregation with zero

opportunities. Something started to change after the Civil War, when the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (1865)¹⁷ was approved, abolishing slavery.

The Civil War was due to two different ideas about how the United States wanted to develop in terms of economic structures and social conditions. Industrial development was just in the North, while the South was rich, but its economy was based on agriculture, and on the unpaid work of 4 million slaves. So, there was a significant difference between the South and the North and the two systems had very different needs in terms of policies and legislation.

Slavery was the reason of this collision between the North and the South, but the North wanted to abolish the slavery system not so much because of humanitarian reasons, but because white workers in the North did not want competition between themselves and the Black people. Indeed, Black people in the North still suffered from segregation and discrimination of all types.

The first step to abolish slavery was to stop the slave trade. Societies for the colonization of Africa started to send free blacks and freed slaves back to Africa. 15000 people were sent to Liberia in the first years of the 1800. But soon after, ideas changed due to economic reasons, as due to the Industrial revolution there was a huge demand for cotton. In fact, Slaves became important to cultivate cotton and, consequently, to enrich landowners.

The result of the Civil War was the abolishment of slavery without any type of compensation for the white owners. Black people were allowed to live in the United States with the same rights as the whites, at least in theory, even though Southern whites reacted against this and deprived blacks of their legal rights.

After the 13th Amendment, the situation for African American people did not improve; in fact, even though, slavery had been banned, African American people continued to be

¹⁷ The XIII Amendment to the U.S. Constitution states: “all persons held as slaves within any State, or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free.”

considered as inferior and on the edge of the American society through segregation that was manifested in schools and public places where Black people were separated from the white.

This situation of inferiority and degradation starting to change during the Harlem Renaissance 1918-1937. Those two decades were years of cultural and intellectual development for the African American culture. It is in these years people such as Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, Alice Nelson helped in the cultural and social development of the African American society.

In those years, Black people started to be proud of their language and conscious of the cultural baggage inherent with that language, expressing its power. Moreover, those years were important for the literary production of Black writers who decided to show Black lives in their books.

Particularly, Zora Neale Hurston wrote about Black characters, and used the Black variety as the main language of her books in which scholars can find syntactical, and phonological features of Black English, and a realistic representation of what it meant to be black in the United States of America, speaking Black English.

Hence, during the Harlem Renaissance, there was more awareness and consciousness towards Black language and Black lives; the authors wanted to show what it meant to be a Black American. While, at the beginning, speaking black was considered as a social label, meaning that the person belonged to a poor social status, during the Harlem Renaissance, speaking black began to be considered as a way to explore someone's culture and background.

The battle for the Civil rights between 1950s and 1960s, was the major attempt to recover the disparities between Black people and whites. Particularly, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 established the end of black segregation in public places leading to voting rights and opportunities of education.

For what regards Black English as a language, during the time of slavery and segregation there were three types of English:

1. African Pidgin English, spoken by slaves coming from Africa. They used this language as a way of communication among one another.
2. Plantation Creole, which was a development of the pidgin language. It was spoken by slaves in the plantation using more complex rules than the pidgin language.
3. Standard American English spoken by slaves who were exploited in the house of the white masters. These slaves were in contact with the white variety of English, and they had the opportunity to learn it.

Nowadays, Black people know both Standard American English and Black English, but they are more likely to switch to the Standard variety when they speak in public places. Even they have interiorized the white ethnocentric idea that the white variety is the “Good English”¹⁸, while any other non-Standard varieties are defined as the “Bad talk” or “the bad way”¹⁹ of speaking English. Furthermore, Black English has also been described as a language with “bad grammar and bad pronunciation,” and as an uneducated way of speaking English. However, In the United States, 80%²⁰ of the Black population knows and speaks Black English, which is the most spoken non-standard variety.

Nowadays, age-grading is a key factor to consider because Black people growing and living in the United States are increasingly in contact with the white, especially if we consider the period of slavery and segregation. This closeness towards the white and the standard variety, leads Black children to know much more the Standard variety than their grandfathers who were segregated and had to communicate through the non-standard variety. This does not mean that Black children will not know Black English, just that they are and will be more aware of the variety of language they are speaking.

¹⁸ Joey Lee Dillard, *Black English*, Random House, New York, 1973, pag. 208.

¹⁹ Ibidem.

²⁰ Ivi, pag. 229.

2.2 Theories about the origin of Black English: language or non-standard variety?

Black English is a topic discussed among American scholars; particularly, there are two views about Black English: one view supports the idea that highlights the importance of Black English as a language; the other sustains the idea according to which Black English is just a dialect of English and not an independent language.

On the one hand, scholars who supports the first idea, think that Black English is a proper language with its own grammar, history, and vocabulary; on the other hand, scholars who support the second idea underestimate the importance of Black English considering it as a substandard variety without the same importance of Standard American English.

According to the majority of American people, Black English is just a sub-language full of slangs and grammar mistakes. However, this view does not take into account the cultural and historical background of Black English, rather it compares Standard American English with Black English, pointing out how Black English differs from the standard and evaluating it negatively.

It is important to underline that in the USA there is not an official language. In fact, there is not an amendment in the American Constitution that states Standard American English as the official language of the United States. Hence, besides Standard American Language, other languages should be equally accepted.

Some scholars believe that Black English was developed by the slaves who arrived in the United States between the seventeenth and the nineteenth centuries; although they were not allowed to speak their native African languages, this does not mean that they completely forgot where they came from, but they were influenced by their African vocabulary in their use of the language of the masters. Indeed, slaves created their proper language of communication, which was a pidgin language, known as African Pidgin English.

A pidgin language can be defined as “a simplified variety of socially dominant language. In this case English.”²¹ Moreover,

“In addition of being simpler than any of the contact languages, the pidgin is usually mixed, in the sense that it shows strong grammatical influences from the language of the socially subordinate speakers who bear the primary burden of linguistic accommodation and play the central role in creating it.”²²

So, slaves were using African Pidgin English to communicate among one another, and gradually they constructed a language with more complex rules. This first language is known as Plantation Creole, that was, indeed, spoken in the plantations, and it is considered by some scholars as the antecedent of Black English. This hypothesis suggests that Black English is the result of the blending of native African languages and the English they were able to learn during the years of slavery.

Other scholars believe in The British origins theory which states that the Negro dialect comes from the Southern white dialect. This is because some stages of the Southern dialect correspond to the present Negro dialect, which is thus archaic. This archaism can be explained for by the lack of mobility of Black people, but this theory forgets to recall the Great Migration during the twentieth century. Also, this theory can be defined as racial because it does not allow the possibility of language innovation and its spread.

During the seventeenth century, one hundred of slaves arrived in the United States; scholars thought that Africans who arrived learnt English through the knowledge of other African Americans and so, they might have taken words from their native language mixing them with the Standard variety.

Even though, Africans did not represent the majority of the population, it is fair to say that the African American language developed due to the slave trade from the Caribbean, where forms of pidgin and creole started to be formed.

²¹ John Russell Rickford, *Spoken Soul*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc, New York, 2000, pag.132.

²²Ibidem.

During the eighteenth century, the African population increased covering the 40%²³ of the population in the South and the 87%²⁴ of Black people were in the South; it is for this reason that scholars consider the South as the place in which African American English developed.

The increase of the black population had two linguistic impacts: one the one hand, it increased the possibility of Blacks to learn English not from the whites, but from other blacks who might not have known the perfect Standard English, but spoke vernacular dialects; on the other hand, whites felt the threat and wanted to show their economic and linguistic dominance adopting laws against blacks. It is in this century that scholars started to comment about African American English and, particularly, about how it is different from the Standard English of white Americans.

During the twentieth century, there was the Great Migration, that is the Migration from the South to the industrialized North. The pull factor was World War I in Europe because it increased the need to produce weapons. Black people started to move from the rural South to the industrialised North due to its economic prospects and the will of leaving the South which was the land of slavery, discrimination, inferior education, and social exclusion. Figures stated that 1.8²⁵ million of black southern migrate from the South to the North between the 1914 and 1930²⁶.

Black people arriving from the South were not free as they expected to be, but they were segregated in ghettos or exploited as domestic slaves. This mass migration linked to the black segregation, had a linguistic influence on vernacular English, and Scholars as Labov underlined how the divergence between standard English and African American English started to explode.

African American English is the language used to recall the spirit, creativity, and soul of the Black community; without forgetting its historical and economical background, while

²³Ivi, pag. 134.

²⁴ Ibidem.

²⁵ Ivi, pag. 141.

²⁶ Ibidem.

Standard English is considered to be the needed language in a white-dominant world, as the American society is.

Finally, Black people were considered to be inferior, and, consequently, their language was considered inferior. Even today, besides all the studies, some still define Black English as baby-talk; as a language, uneducated children speak. This consideration together with the idea that Black English was Standard English with mistakes endure until the XX century when there was a growing attention towards this language. Moreover, considering Black English just as a variety of Standard American English is not correct because it is meaningful to reflect on the historical and cultural aspects behind this language.

In fact, from the 1960s, scholars started to show interest in the Black language, trying to understand and study the history of this language, how it was created and from where it started from. All the hypothesis explained before are attempts to show and explain where Black English came from; however, there is not a secure hypothesis because there are not enough sources to determinate the real and true origins.

As regards the use of Black English in literature, writers before the Harlem Renaissance were using Eye-dialect which is defined by the Collins Dictionary as: “non-standard spelling of words to suggest dialectal or informal pronunciation.” It was, indeed, a way in which writers were mocking Black English and used the eye-dialect to give readers the illusion of knowing how Black people expressed themselves, with the prejudice of using spelling or grammatical mistakes thinking that Black English was just that. Fortunately, during the Harlem Renaissance, some writers were open to express Black English, using the proper grammatical, lexical, and syntactical rules highlighting one of the most important features of the African American culture, which is orality.

2.3 Grammar²⁷

There are some grammatical features in Black English that differs from the rules in Standard American English. The following list of grammatical rules and structures mainly concern verb tenses which are particularly different from Standard American English. As Geneva Smitherman claimed in her “Talking and Testifyin,” 1986 “Linguistically speaking, the greatest differences between contemporary Black and White English are on the level of grammatical structures”.

It is to notice that each point has few examples where the first one refers to Black English, and the second one refers to Standard American English.

1. The plural: the use of plural with the suffix *-s* is not mandatory in Black English if in the sentence there are other elements to identify the plural statement. For example: *He have two dogs*. The word “*dog*”, does not have the *-s* for the plural because through the context, it is possible to understand that the sentence is in the plural form.
2. To be: after the wh-question words, the verb *to be* is used in its contracted form. *Where's it?*. When it is used to indicate actions in the Present simple, the verb is not used as in Standard American English (am, is, are), but it stays in the infinitive form *to be*, except for some cases in which it is inflected; while, when it indicates the aspect it is never inflected and used in the infinite form to express a routine action in a positive and negative way. For example: *He be runnin'/He is running*. *He be walkin'/he don't be walkin'*
3. The present simple: In Standard American English, the third person singular, has the addition of the suffix *-s* to the verb; in Black English there is no need to add *-s* at the end of the verb. For example: *She give it to me/she gives it to me*. The same happens with the verb *to have* which stays at the infinite form, for all the persons: *He have a dog/he has a dog*. This happens also with the negative and

²⁷ The examples of this section are taken from
Novella Bernini, *La storia del Black English*, 2012, pp.13-36.
Lisa Green, *African American English. A Linguistic Introduction*, Cambridge University Press,
Cambridge, 2007, pp.36-74.
John Russell Rickford, op. cit., pp.109-128.

interrogative forms in which there is *do* and *don't*, with no need to add the *-s*. As an example: *She don't understand nothing/she doesn't understand anything. Don't he look good?/Doesn't he look good?*. Moreover, if in the question there is the wh-question word, *do* disappears. As an example: *Why you wanna do that to me?/why do you wanna do that to me?*

4. Ain't: is the word used to form the negative form of the verbs *to be* and *have got*. As an example: *Death ain't nothing/Death is nothing. I ain't got not extra money/I haven't got any extra money*. Also, it substitutes the auxiliary *did not* *You ain't stopped by yesterday/ you didn't stopped by yesterday*.
5. Present continuous: in the affirmative form, there is no copula *to be*. As an example: *he talkin'/he is talking*. In the negative form there is *ain't*, that is the negative form of the verb *to be*. As an example: *I ain't saying that/I'm not saying that*. In the interrogative form there is not the copula *to be*. As an example: *He talkin'/?/ is he talking?. What he talkin' about? What is he talking about?*
6. Past simple: generally, it is formed as in Standard American English adding the suffix *-ed* at the end of the word; however, when in the sentence there are other elements that express the past tense, the suffix *-ed* is eliminated. As in the example: *hitting in the seats...he want to hit over everything/hitting in the seats...he wanted to hit over everything*. In the negative form, *didn't* is substitute by *ain't* and the verb is at the past participle. As in the example *I ain't said nothing/I didn't say anything*. The interrogative form is constructed as in Standard American English; however, if in the sentences there are other elements highlighting the past form, *did* is not needed. As in the example *what he say?/ what did he say?*. Furthermore, in Black English it is frequent the use of *done* to highlight the conclusion of a specific action and it is put between the subject and the verb. As in the example *you done bought her a drink or two/ you bought her a drink or two*.
7. Been: as an auxiliary verb, it is used with verbs of action to describe an action happened a long time ago. As an example, *she been told me that/she told me that a long time ago*. Also, it can be used with stative verbs to describe an action that started a long time ago and it is still happening; it is the equivalent of the Present

Perfect Continuous in Standard American English. As in the example *it's been long time/it has been for a long time*.

8. Present perfect simple: there is not an equivalent between the present perfect simple in Standard American English and in Black English. The use of *been* in Black English, as explained before, is completely different from the use of *been* in Standard American English. As in the example, *he has been married* means that this person was married and it is not anymore; while, *he been married* in Black English means that this person is still married. However, the only possible equivalent would be a sentence with *done*. As in the example *he done eaten his dinner/he has eaten his dinner*.
9. Present perfect continuous: it is constructed with *subject + been + gerund*. It is used to describe an action that continued in the past in both Standard American English and Black English. As in the example *he been runnin'/he has been running*.
10. Remote past: it is used to talk about actions that started a long time ago and are still present. It is constructed with *subject + been + past participle*. As in the example *he been had that job/he has had that job for a long time and still has it*.
11. Future: the immediate future is constructed with *subject + fixin' to or finna + verb*. As in the example *he finna go to work/ he is about to go to work*. Also, *gonna* can be used. As in the example *you gonna stay for supper/you are going to stay for supper*.
12. Have: *have* used in Standard American English differs from Black English. As examples *is you seen him?/have you seen him?; have they gone there?/is they gone there? Or I is seen him /I have seen him/*. In the past form *had* can be used to indicate the remote past perfect, so an action performed in the past before the past, or as a preterite *had* to indicate an action performed in the past in the narrative context.
13. Zero copula: is the absence of the verb which alternates with its presence; as an example, *you right/is he right?* Or in the long form, it becomes *Is I right? Yes, you is*. However, there are some exceptions; you cannot leave out the copula when it refers to the past tense and when it is the first-person singular (I am). Whereas

when the copula is “is or are” it can be delated if it is not stressed or if it is not at the end of the sentence.

14. DƏn: it is used as an auxiliary to indicate an action that has ended or to indicate recent past. As in the example: *I told him you dƏn changed/I told him you have changed*. Moreover, it can be used in combination with *be* and *been*: *Be dƏn* indicates a habitual resultant state; the habitual is denoted by *Be* and the resultant state is denoted by *dƏn*. As an example, *be dƏn told them something before you get there/you should have told them something before you get there*. Furthermore, the combination occurs with the adverbs: *usually, always, and already*. Beside the habitual resultant state, the combination *be dƏn* can be used to indicate a future resultant state, so an action that will be completed in the future, as an example: *They be dƏn grewed out that by then/they will have already grown out of that by then*. Another meaning of the combination *be dƏn* is the modal resultant state, used to indicate imminent actions, or with if/then-clauses. As an example, *Boy, I make any kind of move, this boy be dƏn shot me/If I move, this boy will shoot me*. Another possible combination is: *been dƏn* with the same meaning of *been*, that is an event in the remote past. Since there is no difference between *been* and the combination *been dƏn*, it is assumed that *dƏn* is used to emphasise the actual meaning of the sentence underling its result state.
15. Do: the auxiliary do is used in questions with *be*. Since, the negative form of *be* (*ben't*) is ungrammatical, there is the use of *don't* to construct the negative questions. Also, *do* is used in negative and emphatic sentences. As an example: *where else do you be at eight in the morning?/usually, where else are you at eight in the morning?, I really don't be feeling too good/Usually I really don't feel well, I do be all over the place/I am usually all over the place*.
16. Steady: is used with the progressive form to indicate an action carried out in a consistent and continuous manner. As in the example *they want to do they own thing, and you steady talking to them/they want you to do their own thing, and you're continuing to talk to them*. Although, it can be used in combination with aspectual *be*, as in the example *they be steady having money*. In this sentence, *be* indicates a habitual meaning, while *steady* is referred to the action of taking money.

17. Come: it is used to express indignation for the speaker. As in the example: *you the one come telling me it's hot/you're the one who had the nerve to tell me that it's hot.*
18. Absence of 's possessive: while in Standard American English there is the use of 's to indicate possession, in Black English there is not 's, but just a juxtaposition of the two nouns. As an example: *girl house/girl's house.*
19. Pronouns: in Black English there is the use of double subject which means that there is the use of pronouns corresponding to the subjects inserted immediately after them. As in the example: *My mother, she told me.* Another feature is the use of the benefactive pronoun in the example *Ahma git me a gig/I am going to get myself a job.* However, there are cases in which Black English allows to delete relative pronouns in sentences where they refer to an object, or where the relative pronouns refer to the subject of the verbs. The examples are: *Alan saw the car Charlie sold/Alan saw the car that Charlie sold; He the man got all the old records/he is the man that got all the records.*

According to Toni Morrison, Black English might have five present tenses. Scholars are not sure if she meant really five different present tenses or if she was stressing the fact that Black English has more Present tenses than Standard American English. The five tenses might be as follows:

1. He runnin. (He is running).
2. He be runnin. (He is usually running/He will be running).
3. He be steady runnin. (He is usually running in a consistent manner/He will be running).
4. He been runnin. (He has been running and now he is not doing it anymore).
5. He been runnin. (He has been running and he is still doing it).²⁸

²⁸ John Russell Rickford, op. cit., pag. 119.

GRAMMAR STRUCTURES.	BLACK ENGLISH	STANDARD AMERICAN ENGLISH
PLURAL	I have two dog.	I have two dogs.
TO BE	He be runnin.’	He is running.
AIN’T	Death ain’t nothing. I ain’t got not extra money. You ain’t stopped by yesterday.	Death is nothing. I haven’t got extra money. You didn’t stopped by yesterday.
PRESENT SIMPLE	She give it to me. He have got a dog. She don’t understand. Don’t he look good? Why you wanna do that to me?	She gives it to me. He has got a dog. She doesn’t understand. Doesn’t he look good? Why do you wanna do that to me?
PRESENT CONTINUOUS	He talkin.’ I ain’t saying that. He talkin’?	He is talking. I am not saying that. Is he talking?
PAST SIMPLE	Hitting the seats...he want to hit over everything. I ain’t said nothing. He say? You done bought her a drink or two.	Hitting the seats...he wanted to hit over everything. I didn’t say anything. Did he say? You bought her a drink or two.
BEEN	She been told me that. It’s been long time.	She told me that. It has been for a long time.
PRESENT PERFECT SIMPLE.	He done eaten his dinner.	He has eaten his dinner.
PRESENT PERFECT CONTINUOUS	He been runnin’	He has been running .

REMOTE PAST	He been had that job.	He has had that job for a long time and still has it.
FUTURE	He finna go to work. You gonna stay for supper.	He is about to go to work. You are going to stay for supper.
DƏn	I told him you dƏn changed. be dƏn told them something before you get there. They be dƏn grewed out that by then. Boy, I make any kind of move, this boy be dƏn shot me.	I told him you have changed. you should have told them something before you get there. they will have already grown out of that by then. If I move, this boy will shoot me.
DO	Where else do you be at eight in the morning? I really don't be feeling too good. I do be all over the place.	usually, where else are you at eight in the morning? Usually, I really don't feel well. I am usually all over the place.
STEADY	They want to do they own thing, and you steady talking to them.	They want you to do their own thing, and you're continuing to talk to them.
COME	You the one come telling me it's hot.	You're the one who had the nerve to tell me that it's hot.
POSSESSIVE 'S	Girl house.	Girl's house.
PRONOUNS	Ahma git me a gig	I am going to get myself a job.

	Alan saw the car Charlie sold.	Alan saw the car that Charlie sold.
	He the man got all the old records.	He is the man that got all the records.

2.4 Syntax and phonology²⁹

Besides different grammatical features, Black English and Standard American English differs also for their syntax and phonology. Syntax regards how a sentence or clause is constructed, and how words are put in a sentence to form a correct structure, while phonology regards the pronunciation of sounds. Both the two categories are different between Standard American English and Black English. Here is the list of some syntactic differences between Standard American English and Black English.

In the following list there are some examples, in each couple, the first example refers to Black English, while the second one refers to Standard American English.

1. Multiple negation: in Black English there is the use of two negatives in the same sentence, while in Standard American English one sentence must contain just one negative. For example: *he ain't go no car/ he doesn't have any car.*
2. Negative inversion sentences: the auxiliary and the subject can exchange position. As in the example *Can't nobody say nothin'/nobody can say anything.*
3. Semantic inversion: there are some words in Standard American English that means the exact opposite in Black English, even though the meaning is not completely covered.
4. Existential sentences: when there is the introduction of a new person, place, or thing in the discourse, the majority of the varieties of English use *there*, whereas

²⁹ Examples in this section are taken from:
 Salikoko S. Mufwene, John R. Rickford, Guy Bailey, and John Baugh, *African American English: Structure, History and Use*, Taylor, and Francis, Abingdon, 2005, pp.17-34.
 Novella Bernini, op.cit., pp.27-39.
 Lisa Green, op.cit., pp. 106-123.

Black English use *it/they*. As an example: *It/they ain't nobody round here got nothing to say/ there isn't anybody around here who has anything to say.*

5. Question formation: generally Black English follows the same rules as Standard American English in constructing questions; however, there are some exceptions. For example, Black English allows the subject-auxiliary inversion in embedded questions, as an example: *I asked Alvin whether did he know how to play basketball/I asked Alvin whether he knows how to play basketball.* Another difference is the use of non-inverted questions such as *Who that is?/Who is that?*
6. Relative clause: the difference between Black English and Standard American English is the ability of the first one to form subject relative clause in which the noun is linked to the subject position in the relative clause. As an example, *He the man got all the old record/He is the man who has all old records.*
7. Double modals: Black English uses modals with various combinations and they carry the same tense or, in some cases, mixed tenses. Example: *He might could go.* The modal verb *could* is the only verb that appears in tag questions, as in the example: *Could we might do it?*, while *might* can be used as an adverb meaning possibly, perhaps, as in the example: *she could possibly go to the show/she could might go to the show.*

SYNTACTIC STRUCTURES	BLACK ENGLISH	STANDARD AMERICAN ENGLISH
MULTIPLE NEGATIONS	He ain't go no car.	He doesn't have any car.
NEGATIVE INVERSION SENTENCES	Can't nobody say nothin.'	Nobody can say anything.
SEMANTIC INVERSION	Bad	Good
EXISTENTIAL SENTENCES	It/they ain't nobody round here got nothing to say.	There isn't anybody around here who has anything to say.
QUESTION FORMATION	I asked Alvin whether did he know how to play basketball. Who that is?	I asked Alvin whether he knows how to play basketball. Who is that?

RELATIVE CLAUSE	He the man got all the old record.	He is the man who has all old records.
DOUBLE MODALS	He might could go. Could we might do it? She could might/possibly to the show.	

Here it follows a list of some of the phonological differences between Standard American English and Black English.

1. TH it is pronounced as D when it is found at the beginning of the sentence. Moreover, if the TH is found in the middle of the word, it is pronounced as V. Some examples: *that-dat; other-ovvah.*
2. R is not pronounced, especially when it is found at the end of a word. As an example, *ever-evvah.*
3. Drop the last consonants: lot of words are pronounced without the last consonance. As example, *last-las.* When we are dealing with the plural form, the last consonant is not pronounced and the suffix *-es* is added and pronounced, as in the example *des-desses.*
4. N and T are never pronounced at the end of the word. As an example, *bat-ba; man-ma.*
5. L is not pronounced after a vowel. As an example, *help-he'p.*
6. D and G are not pronounced at the beginning of the word. As an example, *I don't know- Ah 'on know.*
7. Unstressed syllables at the beginning of the words are not pronounced. As in example *afraid- 'fraid.*
8. Ing-ink are pronounced as *ang-ank.* As in the example *thing-thang; sink-sank.*
9. G at the end of the word is never pronounced as in the example *walking-walkin.*

10. Skr in initial position when there is *str* in Standard American English: *skeert-street*. This phonological pattern occurs among young people who speak Black English.
11. Oi is a diphthong that occurs when in Standard American English there is the diphthong *oa* as in the word *road* which is pronounced *roid*. It is a pattern that occurs among people of a certain age who speak Black English.
12. Lowering of the sound Er as in the word *prepare*, in which the second syllable is pronounced as *par*.

PHONOLOGY	BLACK ENGLISH	STANDARD AMERICAN ENGLISH
TH	Dat-ovvah.	That- other.
R	Evvah.	Ever.
Drop of the last consonants	Las'-desses.	Last-desks.
N and T	Ma'-ba.'	Man-bat.
L	He'p.	Help.
D and G	Ah 'on know.	I don't know.
Unstressed syllables	'fraid.	Afraid.
ING-INK	Thang-sank.	Thing-sink.
G	Walkin.'	Walking.
STR	Skreert.	Street.
OI	Roid.	Road.
ER	PrepEr.	Prepeare.

2.5 An oral culture-signifying

Black English cannot be studied without considering the oral culture it is embedded with, since it firstly developed in plantations where people did not have the right to write, so this language and culture was developed at an oral level. This led to an importance of orality that Standard American English does not have. Indeed, speech events and interactions among people are performed according to some specific rules. Moreover, this

does not mean that the written word is not important, even though it is considered to be not as powerful as the oral word. According to Baily Guy, the African oral tradition is linked to the power of word; indeed, “Nommo”³⁰ (the word) is believed to be the force of life. So, once something is talked about, it acquires the force of existence.

Furthermore, in the African American community the role of conversation is particularly important. Indeed, it is not seen as one person talking to the other, but as an active dialogue between the two people involved. It is a constant exchange between people who are part of the dialogue. This type of conversation is studied as “Call-Response”³¹. Considering this way of talking, the major mistake a person can do is to not respond actively in the conversation: the missing talk can be seen as a way of distance and emotionally disconnection from the conversation itself and from the other person.

Interestingly, the Black church played an important role in preserving this feature of the black community. Since it was the only institution free from any pressure of the white culture, it was able to maintain and praise the importance of oral communication and, in fact, during the celebrations, there is a continuous exchange between the pastor and the people attending.

Moreover, the continuous exchange in African American churches is not just verbal, but also non-verbal. As concerns verbal communication, there is a call-response communication where the pastor makes a statement, and the congregation respond. As concerns non-verbal communication, there is clapping hands with the musical prayer, and head nodding.

It is important to notice that writers tried to convey speech events in their texts, as to embrace the African American culture. The problem was that, before the Harlem Renaissance, the use of these structures in the texts were a way of mocking Black people’s culture and their way of living. In fact, writers were adopting an eye-dialect through which they showed how Black people were communicating among one another with the

³⁰ Salikoko S. Mufwene, John R. Rickford, Guy Bailey, and John Baugh, *op.cit.* pag.208.

³¹ *Ibidem.*

prejudice of truly knowing their culture. It is from the Harlem Renaissance when writers started to truly reveal what it meant to be Black American using these oral strategies in the correct way and not as a way of mocking the Other.

According to Smitherman, there are various verbal traditions within the Black community such as:

1. Signifying: is the most important pattern of oral tradition. It is an insult on a social level in which the person uses language to criticize someone else's actions or words with clever and humorous language. It is linked to the concept of speakerly text conceived by Gates. This concept was a way of conceiving the oral structure of the African American community into a written story. Gates studied the concept of signifying through the text "The signifying monkey" in which the monkey plays with other characters and is able to modify and destroy what the others are saying through the continuous repetition and revision of what they are saying and doing. The monkey relates to Esu, a God which embraces the critique and interpretation towards an oral or written text. However, the monkey is also linked to a racist stereotype of Black people who are compared with monkeys with a lack of linguistic ability. Also, it was a survival strategy during the decades of slavery through which people could tell stories with different level of meaning and understanding.
2. Playing the dozens, which is a kind of insult where you talk about a person saying something funny, humorous and, at the same time, exaggerated.
3. Braggadocio, through which a person celebrates someone else's accomplishments in an exaggerated language.
4. Toast: is about telling a long story with rhyming forms. Usually, it is a fixed text; however, if you forget some lines, you should be creative enough to invent other lines with a rhyme pattern along with the previous or with the next line. This speech event recalls the role of the African griot who was responsible in the preservation of the community.
5. Rapping: it is used to refer to casual talk in which one person conveys some pieces of information to another.

6. Marking: it is used when the speaker imitates the words or actions of another person and makes comments about that. It is similar to mockery; however, marking also implies a replication of someone's attitude and character. Indeed, the marking strategy is usually followed by facial expressions and body movements which are particularly significant when it comes to expressing something. These body movements are eye movements, head, and neck movements.
7. Loud-talking it is used when the speaker talks loud enough to make people outside the conversation hear what he/she is saying.
8. Woofing: is a strategy used to intimidate the other and avoid a violent confrontation.

Chapter 3: Translating Black English. Analysis of Their Eyes Were Watching God by Zora Neale Hurston.

In the following chapter there will be an overview about what it means to translate Black English, what are the difficulties the translator encounters and what strategies he/she can adopt. Moreover, there will be an analysis of the use of Black English in the novel “Their Eyes Were Watching God” by Hurston discussing how the writer tried to convey the African American language and culture into a literary novel and how different translators decided to transmit the African American language and culture in the Italian translations.

It is significant to underline that before the Harlem Renaissance, the use of Black English in literary text was problematic for African American writers since it was employed as a way of mocking the African American culture and language using incorrect grammatical and syntactical features to represent the way African Americans spoke. This was problematic since, as analysed in the previous chapter, Black English has a history, specific grammatical, syntactical, and phonological structures, and particular rhetorical strategies.

During the Harlem Renaissance Black English started to be used in an appropriate way and it represented the language of African Americans more objectively. The attention drowned on the cultural aspects of this language, led to an awareness about translation, since the translator has to acknowledge the culture embedded in the source text to convey it in the target language.

3.1 Translating Black English.

Translating Black English can be particularly challenging considering the history and culture embraced within this language. In fact, the problem during the translation process

lies on how to convey the history and culture beyond this language. Also, the challenge is within language itself due to its differences with the Standard.

According to Cavagnoli, the main risk of translating Black English is to mock the Other, making it not feel accepted. The publishing houses might ask translators to deprive a text from its sounds, and images just to make it more accessible and easier to grasp for the target audience.

This is particularly relevant in the African American culture which is mainly constructed around speech events and rhetorical strategies. Translating this language and culture into a culture that does not have a relevant oral structure is dangerous because the risk is to eliminate all the sounds and images presented in the source text.

A way of recognizing the Other and transmitting it into the target culture is to underline the different language used in the source text. As an example, the words that express a cultural concept can be written in italics in the Italian translation followed by the literal translation of the same words. Another way of recognizing the Other would be to recreate a similar language in the target text. Both these attempts have some problematics: in fact, in the first case, the target audience would not understand why there are different words in italics, in the second case, the invention of a language can be problematic since it will be performed with a prejudice and stereotypical base. Moreover, the risk is to trivialize the Other and to adopt an ethnocentric point of view.

An example is *Sozaboy* written by Ken Saro-Wiwa who talks about the Civil War from the eyes of a young soldier. As regards language, the young soldier who narrates the story uses a mix of ungrammatical English, Pidgin English, and Standard American English. To help the reader, the writer used a glossary and a preface in which he declares and explains the use of the language, so both the reader and the translator have tools to understand better the text.

In the Italian translation, indeed, there is the use of the indicative tenses rather than the subjunctive mood to respect the English used in the source text. Another interesting aspect

is the use of the punctuation. Since, the source text has a significant oral structure, the translator decided to reproduce this speech event with a non-standard use of the punctuation, but to underline the stream of consciousness of the main character. Another aspect to consider is the use of informal words or typical oral structures to represent the use of Pidgin English in the source text as the translator decided to leave some words in Pidgin English in the target audience. Of course, this choice led the Italian reader to think about these words found in the translation. At the same time, the glossary at the end of the book might result as particularly useful to help the target audience understand better the text and to appreciate the Other. Finally, the use of the language in this book wanted to represent the fragmentation the main character lived, in a language that is between his native language and English.

Toni Morrison in her book *Song of Solomon*, there are dialogues written in Black English. To reproduce the features of this language, the translator opted for some features of oral Italian together with informal words and structures. It is important not to mask the culture and language of the source text, but to find a way of reproducing it, making the Other felt accepted in the target culture and language and, making the target audience see the Other.

3.2 Their Eyes Were Watching God by Zora Neale Hurston.

One of the most important and significant writers of the Harlem Renaissance is Zora Neale Hurston. In her famous novel “*Their Eyes Were Watching God*,” she uses Black English, making the readers see the African American world and culture. She used the grammatical, syntactical, and phonological features and structures of Black English together with the rhetorical strategies owned by the African American culture. Her characters used the language of the folk to express their own thoughts, ideas, experiences, and feelings. Also, all the dialogues in the text appear to be authentic, not constructed to make a narration. It is understandable for the ones who know something of Black English, and it can result peculiar for the ones who are unfamiliar with this language and culture.

In particular, readers who know something about Black English will have a thorough knowledge of the text, whereas those who are not will have a superficial understanding

of the text. Importantly, her characters are not labelled as a lower class, but they are truly represented in their way of speaking and acting; as to highlight that Black English uses different features and structures from Standard American English. Of course, the use of Black English will highlight cultural concepts, sounds, images that are impossible to transmit if using Standard American English.

Moreover, the writer attempted to reproduce the linguistic and cultural habits of a non-standard variety of English by using an orthography that differs from the Standard pronunciation of words. Moreover, the use of respelling and non-standard grammatical features raises the question of accuracy, questioning if this particular use of language is true or if it is just a stereotypical representation. However, as regards Hurston, she claimed to be born and raised in an African American town listening to Black English. Hence, the use of Black English performed in her text is based on her life and on the language and culture of her community. Nonetheless, the use of language permits, on the one hand, to understand the text, on the other hand, to have a clear and truthful experience of what Black English is.

Beside the use of language, another interesting aspect to discuss and analyse is the use of the voice. In fact, there is a third person narrator who speaks in Standard American English; there is a narrator who has access to the inner lives of the characters; and at the same time, it looks like the protagonist is telling the story herself as the third person narrator is an abstraction of the protagonist. In addition, the issue of voice is a central aspect of the book since the main character aims at finding her own voice in a world that wants her to be silent and to stick to social conventions, she does not feel appropriate for herself.

The following part will analyse different paragraphs of each chapter, considering language, sounds, rhythm, history, and culture of Black English. The analysis will take into consideration three translations: the first one by Ada Prospero published in 1938, the second one by Adriana Bottini published in 1998 and the last one by Adriana Bottini published in 2009. It is interesting to notice that the last two translations were performed by the same translator; indeed, they are nearly identical except from a substantial

difference in the title. The translation of 1998 has for title “Con gli occhi rivolti al Cielo”, while the last one has “I loro occhi guardavano Dio” which is the literal translation of the source text.

So, the title is the first substantial difference to consider in the translations as the first and the third translations opt for “I loro occhi guardavano Dio,” the second one uses “Con gli occhi rivolti al cielo.” It is interesting to notice that the first translation is the literal translation of the source text, while the second one is a bit different. Of course, the meaning is conveyed in all the translations, even with some variations. For example, the first translation with an imperfective tense, lead the readers think about an active action, as somebody who actively is looking at the sky looking for God. The second translation, however, due to the use of the past participle, leads to a passivity in the action and most importantly there is not the mention of God, but just the sky.

According to G. Fofi in the afterword of “I loro occhi guardavano Dio” (2009), the title of the second translation “con gli occhi rivolti al cielo” was due to the choice of the publishing house since when in chapter 18 there is the mention of this sentence, all three the translations opt for “I loro occhi guardavano Dio” as it will be discussed further on in this chapter.

CHAPTER 1:

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
What she doin'coming back here in dem overhalls? Can't she find no dress to put on?	Cosa diavolo torna qui a fare, con quella tuta? Non aveva più un vestito da mettersi?	Cosa crede di fare? Tornare qui con quegli stracci addosso, non ce l'ha un vestito?	Che cosa crede di fare? Tornare qui con quegli stracci addosso? Non ce l'ha un vestito?

The first translation uses the word “diavolo” to emphasize the meaning of the sentence, while the second and the third translations do not use this word. Moreover, the first translation is more literal using the word “tuta,” while the other translations use the word “stracci” to underline the quality of Janie’s life and also as an insult towards her poverty now that she is alone.

Another difference between the translations is the sentence formation. In the original text there are two questions; just the first translation is literal in conveying the questions of the source language into the target language; while the second translation uses the first question at the beginning of the sentence and leaves the second question for the end; finally, the third translation decides to break the second part of the dialogue and uses three questions.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Where all dat money her husband took and died and left her? What dat ole forty-year ole’oman doin’ wid her hair swingin’ down her back lak some young gal?	Dove sono andati a finire tutti i soldi messi insieme da suo marito, che poi è morto e glieli ha lasciati? Non si vergogna a quarant’anni, a tenere la treccia giù per le spalle come una ragazzina?	E tutti quei soldi che suo marito aveva guadagnato? Quando è morto glieli ha lasciati. Che cosa ci fa una donna di quarant’anni con i capelli sulle spalle come una ragazzina?	E tutti quei soldi che suo marito aveva guadagnato? Quando è morto glieli ha lasciati. Che cosa ci fa una donna di quarant’anni con i capelli sulle spalle come una ragazzina?

The first translation uses a more informal vocabulary than the others, as the use of “messi insieme” instead of “aveva guadagnato” which is more appropriate when it is referred to the use of money. In the second part of the dialogue, there is a reference to Janie’s hair;

while the first translation adopts the term “treccia,” the other two use a more general term such as “capelli” which is also the term adopted in the source text.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Where she left dat young lad of a boy she went off her wid-thought she was going to marry?-where he left her?- what he done wid all her money?	E dove avrà lasciato quel moccioso con cui se n'è partita? Credeva forse che la sposasse? O non sarà stato lui a piantarla? Cosa se ne sarà fatto di tutti i suoi soldi?	Dove ha lasciato quel ragazzo con cui è andata via? Non doveva sposarla? È stato lui a lasciarla? Che cosa ne avrà fatto di tutti i suoi soldi?	Dove ha lasciato quel ragazzo con cui è andata via? Non doveva sposarla? È stato lui a lasciarla? Che cosa ne avrà fatto di tutti i suoi soldi?

The first translation uses the term “moccioso” to indicate the young boy underling the pejorative tone of the term, while the second and third translations use a more general term as “ragazzo.” Moreover, the first translation uses a more colloquial and informal vocabulary to complete the sentence “se n'è andata” instead of “con cui è andata via” which is less colloquial than the first one. For what regards the second question, the first translation is more literal while the second and the third translations use the negative form to introduce the question. Once again, in the third question, the first translation appears to be more colloquial due to the use of the term “piantarla” instead of “lasciarla.”

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Betcha he off wid some gal so young she ain't even got	Ci gioco che se l'è filata con qualche ragazzetta col latte	Scommetto che se la sta spassando con una ragazzina	Scommetto che se la sta spassando con una ragazzina

no hairs- why she don't stay in her class?	ancora sulle labbra...perché non ha saputo stare al suo posto?	ancora senza peli. Perché non se ne sta al suo posto?	ancora senza peli. Perché lei non se ne sta al posto suo?
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Once again, the first translation uses a more colloquial and oral language than the others as “ci gioco” instead of “scommetto che.” Interestingly, is to analyse the second part of the dialogue. The second and the third translations are a literal translation of the source text, while the first one changed the words to convey the same effect in the target language. Indeed, in the source text there is a reference to the absence of hair to indicate the youth of the girl the author is referring to. In the first translation to indicate the youth of the girl, there is a reference to the milk newborns eat, while the other two translations translate this concept literally.

The last question is different for each translation: the first and the second ones leave ambiguities regarding the subject of the sentence, it is not clear if it is referred to Janie or her husband; while the third translation determines that the sentence is referred to Janie and it is also a literal translation of the source text.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Humph! Y'all let her worry yuh. You ain't like me. Ah ain't got her to study 'bout. If she ain't got manners enough to stop and let folks know how she been makin' out, let her g'wan!	Peuh! Guardali lì! Tutti affannati per lei! Ma io no, veh! Non ci penso neanche io! Se è tanto maleducata che non si ferma a contarci cos'è capitato, lasciatela perdere!	Pfui! Tutti a pensare a quella. Non come me. Io ho altro per la testa. Se non ha la buona creanza di fermarsi e far sapere alla gente perbene come se l'è cavata, che vada a quel paese!	Pfui! Tutti a pensare a quella. Non come me. Io ho altro per la testa. Se non ha la buona creanza di fermarsi e far sapere alla gente perbene come se l'è cavata, che vada a quel paese!

All the translations underline the orality of the African American culture by using exclamations, in this case “Peuh!” in the first translation and “Pfui!” in the second and in the third one. Moreover, the first translation also uses another exclamation as “veh,” while the other two do not. Also, the first one adopts a more literal translation by using a lot of negations in the sentences and multiple exclamations to underline the speaking part of the dialogue.

In the second part of the dialogue the first translation uses “maleducata” in a positive sentence; while the other two translations use a negative sentence and the word “creanza” which is more formal than the word used in the first translation. Through the use of the word “contarci” the first translator wanted to underline the storytelling involved in the African American society. Moreover, in this case, the focus is on the storytelling itself, while the other translations use the clause “far sapere” as the listeners are going to hear a story just to be informed; and also there is the focus on who are the listeners as “gente perbene”; in this case the adjective “perbene” might be added to underline the difference between Janie and these people.

Moreover, the last two translations use the term “se l’è cavata” as a way of underling how Janie had survived and not lived her life fully, while the first translation uses a more general clause as “cosa è capitato” not a way of blaming Janie herself, but to leave the story open to different interpretations.

Finally, the end of the dialogue is different for each translator: the second and the third one are more direct and violent because use “che vada a quel paese” as a way of showing the violent society in which Janie was living, while the first one opts for “lasciatela perdere.”

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
She ain't even worth talkin' after. She sits high, but she looks low. Dat's what Ah say 'bout dese ole women runnin' after young boys.	Non merita neanche che ci si occupi di lei. Si da delle grandi arie, ma mi sembra belle che a terra. Così imparerà a correr dietro ai giovanotti.	Non vale neanche la pena parlarne. La sedia è alta, ma ha i piedi nella polvere: così la penso io di queste vecchie che corrono dietro ai ragazzini.	Non vale neanche la pena parlarne. La sedia è alta, ma ha i piedi nella polvere: così la penso io di queste vecchie che corrono dietro ai ragazzini.

The first translation uses the term “occupare” to underline the incapacity of Janie to live with her own strength; while the other two translations highlight the storytelling is about to happen. Also, the first translator is more literal, while the other two refer to a metaphorical meaning using the terms “sedia, piedi and polvere” which are not present in the source text, but are used to convey the same effect of the source language text into the target language text.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Lawd, Ah done scorched-up dat lil meat and bread too long to talk about. Ah kin stay 'way from home long as Ah please. Mah husband ain't fussy.	Signore Iddio, a quest'ora quel po' di roba che ho messo sul fuoco dev'essere già bell'e bruciata: posso starmene via da casa finchè	Ossignore, sa Dio se non mi sono data da fare per quel po' di pane e companatico, e se non posso stare fuori finchè voglio. Mio marito non fa il difficile.	Ossignore, sa Dio se non mi sono data da fare per quel po' di pane e companatico, e se non posso stare fuori finchè voglio. Mio marito non fa il difficile.

	voglio. Mio marito non è pignolo.		
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In this passage it is interesting to notice how different translators conveyed the terms about food into the target text. The first one is more general, and it talks about “roba che ho messo sul fuoco,” the other translators use a more concrete vocabulary that is “pane e companatico.” Moreover, the first translation is more concrete in the use of the adjective for the husband: “pignolo” instead of the more general term used in the second and third translations “difficile.”

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Oh, er, Phoeby, if youse ready to go, Ah could walk over dere wid you. It's sort of duskin' down dark. The boogerman might ketch yuh. Naw, Ah thank yuh. Nothin' couldn't ketch me dese few steps Ah'm goin.' Anyhow mah husband tell me say no first class booger would have me. If she got anything to	Ohi, Phoeby, se tu vai, potrei venire con te. È già buio laggiù e il babau potrebbe prenderti e portarti via. No no grazie. Chi vuoi che mi prenda di qui a là? E poi mio marito dice sempre che nessun babau che si rispetti si scalmanerebbe per prendermi. Se avrà qualcosa da dirvi, lo saprete poi.	Oh, ehm, Pheoby, se sei pronta ti posso accompagnare, si sta facendo buio. Magari il diavolo ti porta via. No grazie. Sono pochi passi, non mi porterà via nessuno. E mio marito dice sempre che nessun diavolo che si rispetti mi vorrebbe. Se Janie ha qualcosa da dirvi, lo saprete.	Oh, ehm, Pheoby, se sei pronta ti posso accompagnare, si sta facendo buio. Magari il diavolo ti porta via. No grazie. Sono pochi passi, non mi porterà via nessuno. E mio marito dice sempre che nessun diavolo che si rispetti mi vorrebbe. Se Janie ha qualcosa da dirvi, lo saprete.

tell yuh, you'll hear it.			
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All the translations underline the orality of the African American society with words as “Ohi” in the first translation and “Oh, ehm” in the second and third translations. The second and the third translations adopt a literal translation “se sei pronta ti posso accompagnare,” while the first one is more general even though it conveys the same meaning of the source text by using “se vai, potrei venire con te.”

More interestingly, is the translation of the term “booger man,” an expression used to indicate the Black man in a negative way. The first translation use “babau,” while the other translations use “diavolo,” transmitting the negative connotation. of the term. Particularly, “babau” is used in the European folklore to indicate an imaginative monster who scares children, and it is generally related to the Black man. Otherwise, the term “diavolo” is more general, but it characterizes a bad person with bad intentions. Finally, in the last sentence, the first translation is not specific while the others specify that it is referred to Jainie.

Furthermore, this passage underlines both the condition of African Americans and woman. On the one hand, for what concern African Americans there is the use of a very negative term to define them, as to compare them to monster and also to an evil character; on the other hand, the reader sees a woman who is disparaged by her husband who thinks that nobody would take her. The audience sees the inferiority in which Black people and women were obliged to live in the United States.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Ah knowed you'd be hungry. No time to be huntin' stove wood after dark.	L'ho pensato che dovevi aver fame. Non è più l'ora di andar a cercare	Sapevo che avresti avuto fame. Non è il momento di cercar legna per la stufa,	Sapevo che avresti avuto fame. Non è il momento di cercar legna per la stufa,

Mah mulatto rice ain't so good dis time. Not enough bacon grease, but Ah reckon it'll kill hungry.	legna per accendere la stufa dopo il tramonto. Il mio riso non dev'essere granchè questa volta. Non c'è abbastanza grasso di maiale, ma credo che se non altro servirà a toglierti la fame.	quando viene buio. Questa volta il riso alla creola non mi è uscito troppo bene. Non c'è abbastanza unto di pancetta, ma può servire ad ammazzare la fame.	quando viene buio. Questa volta il riso alla creola non mi è uscito troppo bene. Non c'è abbastanza unto di pancetta, ma può servire ad ammazzare la fame.
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The first aspect to be noticed is the different length of the translations; the first one is longer than the others. In the first part of this passage, the first translation gives a lot of details while the others convey the same meaning with a simpler and a more general sentence as "non è il momento di cercare la legna per la stufa quando viene buio", instead of "non è più l'ora di andar a cercare legna per accendere la stufa dopo il tramonto".

Moreover, it is interesting to analyse the reference to distinct types of food. The first translation uses more general terms such as "riso", "grasso di maiale"; while the other translations are more specific using the term "riso alla creola" to indicate a very specific type of rice, and "unto di pancetta" that specifies what part of the pig it was used to make this recipe.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Well, Ah see Mouth-Almighty is still sittin' in de same place. And Ah reckon they got me	Ah, ah, a quel che sento, il Gran Consesso si raduna sempre al medesimo posto. Sì	Vedo che Bocca Onnipotente è sempre al suo posto. E mi sa che	Vedo che Bocca Onnipotente è sempre al suo posto. E mi sa che

up in they mouth now.	che ne avranno adesso da raccontare sul mio conto.	ci sono io sulla loro bocca, adesso.	ci sono io sulla loro bocca, adesso.
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The second and the third translations are more literal than the first one, the term “Bocca Onnipotente” is the literal translation of the English term. Also, it is used to underline the orality of the African American culture and to highlight the importance of the storytelling. Moreover, in the second and third translations there is the emphasises on Janie using “io” which underlines how the story and the storytelling is about herself. However, also the first translation understands the importance of storytelling and underlines it with the expression “da raccontare sul mio conto.”

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Yeah, Sam say most of'em goes to church so they'll be sure to rise in Judgment. Dat's de day dat every secret is s'posed to be made known. They wants to be there and hear it all.	Già, e Sam dice che i più di loro vanno in chiesa unicamente per essere sicuri di risuscitare il giorno del giudizio. In quel giorno dicono che tutti i segreti saranno rivelati. E loro vogliono esser presenti per sentire tutto.	Già, Sam dice che quelli che quelli vanno in chiesa solo per essere sicuri di risorgere il giorno del Giudizio, quando tutti i segreti saranno svelati. Quelli vogliono essere presenti per non perdersi niente.	Già, Sam dice che quelli che quelli vanno in chiesa solo per essere sicuri di risorgere il giorno del giudizio, quando tutti i segreti saranno svelati. Quelli vogliono essere presenti per non perdersi niente.

The main difference between the translations is that the first translator used a literal translation of the source text, while the other two translators do not. Particularly, in the

translation of the second sentence, the first translation introduces it with a full stop as in the source language text, while the other translations link it to the first one through a comma. Moreover, it is interesting to see the translation of the last sentence; the first translation adopts a literal translation and uses affirmative words “vogliono essere presenti per sentire tutto”, while the other translations do not adopt a literal translation and change the affirmative terms in negative to convey the same meaning of the source language into the target language text “vogliono essere presenti per non perdersi niente”.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Uuh hunh. He says he aims to be there hisself so he can find out who stole his corn-cob pipe.	Ah, ah! E dice che vuol esserci anche lui per scoprire chi è stato a rubargli la sua pipa di granturco.	Aha. Dice che vuole esserci anche lui, il giorno del Giudizio, per scoprire chi gli ha rubato la pipa di tutolo.	Dice che vuole esserci anche lui, il giorno del Giudizio, per scoprire chi gli ha rubato la pipa di tutolo.

It is interesting to notice that just the first two translations are highlighting the oral structure of the dialogue as in the source language text. Moreover, as it happened for other passages, the first translation happens to be a literal translation, while the other translations insert a clause “il giorno del Giudizio” to be more specific and leaving ambiguities asides. The translation of “corn-cob pipe” as “pipa di granturco” and “pipa di tutolo” are both translations that aim at conveying the same effect produced in the source language text in the target language text, even though a more precise translation would have been “pipa di pannocchia.”

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Zigaboos	pettegoli	Morti di fame	Morti di fame

It is interesting to see the translation of this word, usually used to indicate a Black person in a negative and pejorative way. Indeed, the translations underline different connotations. The first translation “pettegoli” underlines the storytelling with prejudices performed by these people but excludes the reference to a Black person. The other translations use “morti di fame” to underline the necessities for these people of hearing stories through which they can judge the person involved, but also through this term there is the absence of reference to a Black man. Hence, both translations wanted to underline the oral structure and importance of the African American society, but they both omit the pejorative reference to the Black man.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
To start off wid, people like dem wastes up too much time puttin' they mouth on things they don't know nothin' about. Now they got to look in to me loving Tea Cake and see whether it was done right or not! They don't know if life is a mess of corn-meal	Tanto per cominciare, gente come loro perde il tempo a metter bocca in cose di cui non capisce niente. Che ne sanno loro del mio amore per Tea Cake e se ho fatto bene o male! Ma se per loro la vita non è altro che un piatto di polenta	Per cominciare, gente come quella spreca il tempo a metter bocca in cose che non conosce. Così adesso si impicciano del mio amore per Tea Cake e pretendono di dire se era giusto o no! Ma se non sanno neanche distinguere la vita da un piatto	Per cominciare, gente come quella spreca il tempo a metter bocca in cose che non conosce. Così adesso si impicciano del mio amore per Tea Cake e pretendono di dire se era giusto o no! Ma se non sanno neanche distinguere la vita da un piatto

dumplings, and if love is a bed-quilt!	e l'amore una coperta da letto!	di gnocchi gialli, e l'amore da un copriletto.	di gnocchi gialli, e l'amore da un copriletto.
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All the translations underline the judging attitude people have towards Janie and her story even though they do not know about Janie's story, For what concerns the last sentence, the first translation underlines the material and emotional poverty of these people comparing life to "piatto di polenta", and love to a quilt. However, the other translations make a difference, saying that life is not just that, but it is more than that, even though unfortunately these people do not know.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Muck	Piantagione	Paludi	Paludi

Generally, the term "muck" is used to indicate earth mixed with water, in Italian "fango." The first translation opts for the term "piantagione," and the translator adds a gloss to explain why she decided to opt for this translation. The gloss explains that the term "piantagione" was a general term to indicate a big piece of land linked with the history of Black Americans. The other translations, instead, use a generic term that is not linked to the history of Black Americans.

CHAPETER 2

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Ah ain't never seen mah papa. And Ah	Non ho mai visto mio padre. E, anche	Non ho mai veduto il mio papà. E se	Non ho mai veduto il mio papà. E se

<p>didn't know 'im if Ah did. Mah mama neither. She was gone from round dere long before Ah wuz big enough tuh know. mah grandma raised me. Mah grandma and de white folks she worked wid. She had a house out in the back-yard and that's where Ah wuz born. Ah never called mah grandma nothin' but Nanny, 'cause dat's what everybody on de place called her.</p>	<p>se l'avessi visto, non l'avrei riconosciuto. E neanche mia madre. Se ne andò molto prima che fossi abbastanza grande per conoscerla. Mi tirò su mia nonna. Mia nonna e i bianchi con cui viveva. Avevamo una casetta nel giardino dove appunto ero nata. (...) e anch'io chiamai sempre la nonna Nanny, perché tutti laggiù la chiamavano così.</p>	<p>l'ho visto, non l'ho riconosciuto. E nemmeno la mia mamma. Se ne andò molto prima che fossi abbastanza grande per capire. Mi ha allevato la nonna. La nonna e i signori bianchi per cui lavorava. Aveva una casa nel cortile sul retro, e lì sono nata io. (...) è per questo che non ho mai chiamato mia nonna altro che Nanny, perché così la chiamavano tutti laggiù.</p>	<p>l'ho visto, non l'ho riconosciuto. E nemmeno la mia mamma. Se ne andò molto prima che fossi abbastanza grande per capire. Mi ha allevato la nonna. La nonna e i signori bianchi per cui lavorava. Aveva una casa nel cortile sul retro, e lì sono nata io. (...) è per questo che non ho mai chiamato mia nonna altro che Nanny, perché così la chiamavano tutti laggiù.</p>
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The second chapter introduces the reader to Janie's story starting from her childhood, and particularly highlighting her origins. In this way, the reader acknowledges both the story of Janie herself, but also a piece of Black history. In fact, in this passage the audience acknowledge the condition of slavery in which Black Americans lived. First of all, there is the absence of a father who might have been a white man, and the mother who escaped from slavery. An important aspect to notice is the following sentence in which Janie affirms that her mother escaped when Janie was not old enough to "conoscerla" and "per capire". The first translation is limited, revealing just that Janie does not know who her mother is; however, the other translations with "per capire," reveal not only that Janie does not know her mother, but also the reason she escaped.

Furthermore, the audience gets to know Janie’s grandmother, the person who raised her. Particularly, it is said where they were living; the first translation says that the Janie and her grandmother were living in a house with the white man, while the other translations underline that Janie, and her grandmother were working for a white family. The difference between the two translations is important since the first one leaves aside the fact that her grandmother was exploited by the white masters, while the others highlight this fact.

Finally, the last significant aspect to underline is the nickname given to Janie’s grandmother. It is interesting to notice that Janie refers to her grandmother with the term Nanny because everyone else was calling her this way. Here there is another significant aspect of Black American history, that is how Black women were taking care of white children. In fact, Janie learns to call her grandmother Nanny because the other white children were calling her in this way.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Dat’s where Ah wuz s’posed to be, but Ah couldn’t recognize dat chile as me. Aw, aw! Ah’m colored! Den dey all laughed real hard. But before Ah seen de picture Ah thought Ah wuz just like de rest.	Era là che dovevo esserci io ma come potevo riconoscermi in quella bambina nera? (...) Ma guarda un po’ sono nera! Risero tutti come matti. Ma io, prima di vedere quella fotografia, avevo sempre creduto di	Si trovava dove avrei dovuto essere io. Non mi riconoscevo in quella bimbetta scura. (...) Oh, sono nera! E tutti a ridere. Ma prima di vedere quella foto credevo di essere uguale agli altri.	Si trovava dove avrei dovuto essere io. Non mi riconoscevo in quella bimbetta scura. (...) Oh, sono nera! E tutti a ridere. Ma prima di vedere quella foto credevo di essere uguale agli altri.

	essere come gli altri.		
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In this passage the audience see a little Janie who looks at a picture and does not recognize herself. The little Black girl does not know that she is Black until the white family makes her see the picture. It is a question of identity; the white recognizes himself as white in contraposition to the black, but the innocent little girl does not understand this difference of power. It is the first time in which she realizes she is different from the others, and so it is an anticipation of the fact that her life will be different from the other family members. She is innocent thinking to be equal to the others, while the others laugh because they embrace this vision of power in which they are the powerful part of the society, and the Black people are the inferior part.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Us lived dere havin' fun till de chillum at school got to teasin' me'bout livin' in de white folks' backyard.	La vita là era molto piacevole; ma ad un certo punto le ragazze a scuola cominciarono a tormentarmi perché vivevo nella casa dei signori bianchi.	Vivevamo insieme contenti, finchè a scuola i bambini cominciarono a prendermi in giro perché abitavo nel cortile di una casa di bianchi.	Vivevamo insieme contenti, finchè a scuola i bambini cominciarono a prendermi in giro perché abitavo nel cortile di una casa di bianchi.

This passage highlights the different perspectives of life of Janie and the white man; in fact, at school people started to joke about the fact that Janie was living with the white masters. It is interesting to see how in the first translation, the translator underlines that Janie was living in the same house of the white masters; while the other translations underline the status of poverty and slavery in which Janie and her grandmother were living. In fact, the other translations opt for “abitavo nel cortile di una casa di bianchi” instead of “vivevo nella casa dei signori bianchi.” Moreover, the affirmation of living in

the “cortile di una casa di bianchi” might allude to a state of marginalization, which is something that Blacks suffered from.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Naw, Nanny, no ma'am!	No, Nanny, no ti prego.	No, Nanny, nossignora!	No, Nanny, nossignora!

This passage is relevant in terms of phonology and oral structure. The source text has the repetition of the letter “n” and all the translators tried to reproduce this in two different ways: the first translation is more literal, while the second and the third opt for the term “nossignora” to reproduce the alliteration of the letter “n” and also to reveal a sort of respect Janie has towards her grandmother.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Whut Ah seen just now is plenty for me, honey, Ah don't want no trashy nigger, no breath- and- britches, lak Johnny Taylor usin' yo' body to wipe his foots on.	Ciò che ho visto or ora è più che sufficiente, tesoro. Non voglio che un mascalzone di negro come Johnny Taylor, possa calpestarti come se tu fossi uno straccio.	Quello che ho appena visto basta e avanza, tesoro. Non voglio che uno sporco negro come Johnny Taylor, ricco solo di un paio di bretelle, usi il tuo corpo per pulircisi sopra i piedi.	Quello che ho appena visto basta e avanza, tesoro. Non voglio che uno sporco negro come Johnny Taylor, ricco solo di un paio di bretelle, usi il tuo corpo per pulircisi sopra i piedi.

Here, there is a reference to a Black character as “trashy nigger,” of course, this a negative and pejorative affirmation to define a Black person. The first translation uses the term “mascalzone” to highlight a disrespectful character, while the second translation,

translated the term literally. Moreover, the second translation translate the concept of “breath and britches” as a man of no substance with “ricco solo di un paio di bretelle,” while the first translation totally omits this part.

Finally, the last part is different among the translations: the first translation tries to convey the meaning of inferiority, while the other translations are more literal and equally convey in the target text the sense of inferiority and submission Janie might feel.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Honey, de white man is de ruler of everything as fur as Ah been able tuh find out. Maybe it's some place way off in de ocean where de black man is in power, but we don't know nothin' but what we see. So de white man throw down de lead and tell de nigger man tuh pick it up. He pick it up because he have to, but he don't tote it. He hand it to his womenfolks. De	Tesoro mio, l'uomo bianco è padrone del mondo, ecco quel che ho potuto capire. Forse esiste un paese lontano nell'oceano dove comandano i neri; ma come credere quel che non si vede? E l'uomo bianco ha gettato via il suo carico e ha detto al negro di raccogliarlo. E lui l'ha raccolto perché non poteva farne a meno, ma non l'ha mica portato: l'ha passato alle sue	Dolcezza, da quello che ho visto, l'uomo bianco è il padrone di tutto. Sì, ci sarà forse qualche posto, lontano lontano, in mezzo all'oceano, dove l'uomo nero detiene il potere, ma noi sappiamo soltanto quello che vediamo. Dunque l'uomo bianco butta via il fardello e dice all'uomo negro di raccogliarlo. L'uomo negro lo raccoglie perché è costretto, ma mica	Dolcezza, da quello che ho visto, l'uomo bianco è il padrone di tutto. Sì, ci sarà forse qualche posto, lontano lontano, in mezzo all'oceano, dove l'uomo nero detiene il potere, ma noi sappiamo soltanto quello che vediamo. Dunque l'uomo bianco butta via il fardello e dice all'uomo negro di raccogliarlo. L'uomo negro lo raccoglie perché è costretto, ma mica

nigger woman is de mule uh de world so fur as Ah can see.	donne. E così, come si vede, la donna negra è il mulo della creazione.	se lo tiene. Lo passa alle sue donne. La donna negra è il mulo del mondo, da quello che ho visto.	se lo tiene. Lo passa alle sue donne. La donna negra è il mulo del mondo, da quello che ho visto.
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Here, it is significant to notice the history in this passage. It is the grandmother talking and realizing the power of the white man spread in the world she knows. However, she leaves open the idea that maybe somewhere else is it not like that, even though she is not sure about it. There is the evidence on how the white man is in power in respect to the Black man and also, there is a difference between the Black man and the Black woman who are considered to be inferior and submitted to the Black man.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
You know, honey, use colored folks is branches without roots and that makes things come round in queer ways. You in particular. Ah was born back due in slavery so it wasn't for me to fulfil my dreams of whut a woman oughta be and to do. Dat's one of de hold-backs of slavery. But	Lo sai, tesoro, che noi, gente di colore, siamo come rami senza radici; ecco perché capitano cose tanto strane. Per te in particolare. Quando nacqui c'era ancora la schiavitù e non si poteva toccare a me di far sì che si attuasse il mio sogno di quel che una donna dovrebbe essere e	Vedi, dolcezza, noi gente di colore siamo alberi senza radici, e allora le cose vanno per uno strano verso. Per te specialmente. Io sono nata ai tempi degli schiavi, sicché non era destino che realizzassi i miei sogni su come dovrebbe essere e cosa dovrebbe fare una donna. È una	Vedi, dolcezza, noi gente di colore siamo alberi senza radici, e allora le cose vanno per uno strano verso. Per te specialmente. Io sono nata ai tempi degli schiavi, sicché non era destino che realizzassi i miei sogni su come dovrebbe essere e cosa dovrebbe fare una donna. È una

<p>nothing can't stop you from wishin.' You can't beat nobody down so low till you can rob 'em of they will. Ah didn't want to be used for a work-ox and brood-sow.</p>	<p>dovrebbe fare. Ecco uno dei tanti guai della schiavitù. Ma nessuno può impedirti di desiderare. Nessuno, a furia di botte, può abbassarsi al punto di toglierti la volontà. E io non volevo essere trattata come una bestia da lavoro e una vacca da razza.</p>	<p>delle catene della schiavitù. Ma te, niente e nessuno può impedire di avere desideri. Nessuno può essere calpestato al punto di rubargli la volontà. Io non volevo essere adoperata come bue per lavorare o come scrofa per figliare.</p>	<p>delle catene della schiavitù. Ma te, niente può impedire di avere desideri. Nessuno può essere calpestato al punto di rubargli la volontà. Io non volevo essere adoperata come bue per lavorare o come scrofa per figliare.</p>
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In this passage the grandmother tells her story, talking about slavery and how she was involved in this situation. She talks about wishes she could not fight for, and how she remained strong all over this period and, at the end, she was free to go. She talks about how she did not want to be enslaved and exploited; in the first translation the focus is on being a slave working in the fields; in the other translations the focus is also put on pregnancy and how she did not want to be exploited for that.

Furthermore, the first part is relevant because the grandmother talks about the Black population in general as people with no roots; however, this is what the white man wanted them to think; since, as the readers know, Black Americans have roots and a complex history behind them.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Nigger, whut's yo' baby doin' wid gray eyes and yaller hair? But then she kept on astin me how come mah baby look white. Ah don't know nothin' but what Ah'm told tuh do, 'cause Ah ain't nothin' but uh nigger and uh slave	Come va, negra, che la tua bambina ha gli occhi grigi e i capelli biondi? (...) Ma lei continuava a chiedermi come mai mia figlia sembrava una bianca. (...) Alla fine le dissi "io non so altro che quel che mi si dice di fare perché non sono che una negra e una schiava.	Negra, che ci fa tua figlia con gli occhi grigi e i capelli gialli? (...) Ma lei continuava a chiedere come mai la mia bambina avesse la pelle bianca. (...) Perciò le dissi "io faccio come mi si comanda, perché sono soltanto una povera negra e una schiava.	Negra, che ci fa tua figlia con gli occhi grigi e i capelli gialli? (...) Ma lei continuava a chiedere come mai la mia bambina avesse la pelle bianca. (...) Perciò le dissi "io faccio come mi si comanda, perché sono soltanto una povera negra e una schiava.

In this passage, the woman of the white master denigrates Janie's grandmother since her child looks white. Here, the reader notices another prejudice about Black people as they look different from the white. Indeed, the white master has a clear idea on how a Black child should look like and pretends to know why this child does not look like she has imagined.

This last sentence in which the grandmother defines herself just as a Black slave is a question of identity: a person that defines herself just as a Black slave means that the white masters have imposed on her this perception about herself and now, she cannot define herself as something different. Of course, this is a stereotypical view on African Americans since they are perceived and identified by the colour of their skin and by their status of slaves.

CHAPTER 3

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
You and Logan been fussin’? Lawd, Ah know dat grass-gut, liver- lipted nigger ain’t done took and beat mah baby already! Ah’ll take a stick and salivate ‘im.	E allora, ti sei forse bisticciata con Logan? Signore Iddio, che quel vigliaccone infingardo di un negro abbia già incominciato a battere la mia piccina? Prenderò un bastone e lo ungerò bene bene!	Tu e Logan avete litigato? Signore, se scopro che quel mangia-erba, labbra di salsiccia di un negro ha già cominciato a battere la mia bambina, prendo un bastone e gli faccio venire la bava.	Tu e Logan avete litigato? Signore, se scopro che quel mangiaerba, labbra di salsiccia di un negro ha già cominciato a battere la mia bambina, prendo un bastone e gli faccio venire la bava.

In this passage the grandmother is talking to Janie referring to Logan with negative terms. The first translation opts for “vigliaccone infingardo di un negro” as to underline the emotional inferiority of a Black man, to convey the meaning of a person with bad intentions; the other translations instead opt for “mangia-erba, labbra di salsiccia” that are more literal translation to underline the physical differences between white and black. Particularly, the other translations suggest an extremely negative description of a Black man, nearly compared to an animal who eats grass, with very big lips that is something that differs them from the white man. The last sentence is, once again, a metaphor between the Black man and an animal.

Interestingly, this negative comment about the black man comes from a black woman. This is due to the idea of internalized racism which means that even black people have a bad and negative idea about themselves since they have interiorised the white idea

according to which the white people are in power, and the black people are inferior to them.

CHAPTER 4

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
<p>But when 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.</p>	<p>Però quando aveva sentito che avrebbero costruito una città tutta di gente di colore, aveva capito che quello era proprio il posto per lui. Aveva sempre desiderato di farsi un nome, ma là donde veniva tutte le cariche toccavano ai bianchi, e non là soltanto, ma dappertutto, tranne che in questa città nuova che i negri stavano fabbricando.</p>	<p>Ma quando aveva sentito dire che volevano costruire una città solo di gente di colore, aveva capito che quello era il posto per lui. Da sempre gli sarebbe piaciuto aver voce in capitolo, ma là dove stava, e dappertutto, erano i bianchi ad avere l’ultima parola, dappertutto tranne che in questo posto che la gente di colore stava costruendo.</p>	<p>Ma quando aveva sentito dire che volevano costruire una città solo di gente di colore, aveva capito che quello era il posto per lui. Da sempre gli sarebbe piaciuto aver voce in capitolo, ma là dove stava, e dappertutto, erano i bianchi ad avere l’ultima parola, dappertutto tranne che in questo posto che la gente di colore stava costruendo.</p>

This passage refers to the development of the African American society, and particularly to the to the period of Reconstruction, when Blacks had high hopes for the future, and it

is underlined how, before these new cities, the white masters had power and voice all over the world.

The first translation focuses on the concept of power, and the fact that the white masters had power all over the world and on Black people who were obliged to listen to them. The other translations, instead, focus on the concept of voice, highlighting the theme of finding your own voice, and having voice and power in a society.

Finally, the first translation refers to Black people as “negri” as a disparaging term with a negative connotation, while the other translations use a softer definition as “uomini di colore.”

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Ribbon-cane syrup	Sciroppo di canna	Melassa di canna	Melassa di canna

Ribbon-cane syrup is a type of sugarcane, colour brown. The first translation is superficial and does not reproduce the same effect of the source text into the target text; in fact, the translation “sciroppo di canna,” does not lead to an understanding of what ribbon-cane syrup is. Hence, the other translations “melassa di canna” is more appropriate since it gives the target audience the idea of a dark component as the ribbon-cane syrup is.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Shucks! ‘Tain’t no mo’ fools lak me. A whole lot of mens will grin in yo’ face, but dey ain’t gwine	Già! Come se fossero tanti gli scocchi del mio genere! Chissà quanti te le	Balle! Non ce ne sono altri di stupidi come me in giro. Puoi trovare uomini che ti fanno dei	Balle! Non ce ne sono altri di stupidi come me in giro. Puoi trovare uomini che ti fanno dei

<p>tuh work and feed yuh. You won't git far and you won't be long, when dat big gut reach over and grab dat little one, you'll be too glad to come back here. You don't take nothing to count but sow-belly and corn-bread.</p>	<p>farebbero buone, ma quanto poi a lavorar per te e darti da mangiare! Non andresti lontano e non ci staresti un pezzo; e non appena ti sentissi la pancia vuota, saresti anche troppo felice di tornare. Non sai pensare ad altro che alla pancia e al modo di riempirla.</p>	<p>gran sorrisi, ma non che siano disposti a sgobbare per darti da mangiare. Non andrai lontano; non starai via molto-il tempo in cui un ragno si mangia una mosca-e sarai ben contenta di tornare qui. Per te conta solo trovare in tavola il lardo e la focaccia di granturco.</p>	<p>gran sorrisi, ma non che siano disposti a sgobbare per darti da mangiare. Non andrai lontano; non starai via molto-il tempo in cui un ragno si mangia una mosca-e sarai ben contenta di tornare qui. Per te conta solo trovare in tavola il lardo e la focaccia di granturco.</p>
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The first sentence is different for each translation. The first one uses an exclamative sentence and a mocking tone, while the other two translations consider this statement as something sure and truthful. Moreover, in the second part of the passage, the first translation seems a bit confused on what it is happening, it uses words and the structure of the sentence that is not very clear for the reader; instead, the other two translations convey the meaning of a person who is not willing to make any sort of effort for her.

Furthermore, there are a series of negative sentences. The first translation opts for three negations and the resulting translation might seem hard to understand, while the other two translations opt for two negations and a metaphor to convey the meaning the source language text had. The metaphor links Janie to a spider and reflects on how quickly she would come home.

Finally, the last part is different between the translations. The first translation uses a generalization talking about the belly, while the other two translations are more precise and talk about food as the source language text does. In this case, the second and the third

translations are more precise than the first one which gives just a general overview about what the source text was talking about.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Don't you change too many words wid me dis mawnin,' Jainie, do Ah 'll take and change ends wid yuh! 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!Ah'll take holt uh dat ax and come in dere and kill yuh! You better dry up in dere!	Tieni a posto la lingua, Jainie, non ho voglia discutere con te. Ma guarda un po': l'ho tirata fuori dalla cucina dei bianchi per tenerla come una regina, e adesso lei mi guarda dall'alto in basso. Ma io son capace anche di prender quell'ascia e di accopparti, sai! Smettila ch' è meglio!	Non sprecare troppe parole con me, stamattina, Janie, o ti cambio i connotati. 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! Ma io prendo la scure e ti ammazzo! Faresti meglio a chiudere il becco!	Non sprecare troppe parole con me, stamattina, Janie, o ti cambio i connotati. 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! Ma io prendo la scure e ti ammazzo! Faresti meglio a chiudere il becco!

All the translations underline the absence of Janie's voice, as the absence of woman's voices in general. Moreover, in all the translations is underlined how the man perceives himself as savor, since it was for him that Janie does not live in the backyard of white masters. However, there are some differences: the first translation does not translate the source text literally but tries to convey the same meaning and effect into the target text. It refers to Janie with a royal aspect by saying "mi guarda dall'alto in basso," while the other translations use a more literal translation using "sedere di regina."

Another significant difference between the translations is that the second and third translations use terms and a vocabulary with a strong reference to animals as “creste” and “becco.” This may be a translator’s choice to make the reader see Janie compared to different animals at different stages of the story. This is something that the first translation does not reveal to its audience.

CHAPTER 5

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
A whole heap uh talk and nobody doin’ nothin.’	Chiacchere si, tante, ma fatti niente.	Tante chiacchere, e nessuno che faccia niente.	Tante chiacchere, e nessuno che faccia niente.

Here, a phonology aspect emerges: the repetition of the letter “n.” It is significant to notice that all the translators have conveyed the meaning of the source text into the target one. However, just the second and third translations reproduce the same effect in the target audience, since the translators opted for a construction of a sentence that reproduce the “n” sound as the source text did.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Mayor Middle Georgy Guv’nor South Carolina	Sindaco Media Georgia - Carolina del Sud	Sindaco Georgia Centrale Comandante South Carolina	Sindaco Georgia Centrale Comandante South Carolina

At the beginning of chapter 5, Joe Starks and Janie arrive in a new city where they encounter different people in a position of power and mention different geographical areas.

The first word is “mayor” translated in all the translations as “sindaco” appropriately. The second word is “Middle Georgy” translated as “Media Georgia” and “Georgia Centrale.” The first translation is a literal translation which, however, is not appropriate, since in Italian “Media Georgia” is not used, while the other two translations opt for “Georgia Centrale” which result to be more appropriate. Then there is the word “Guv’nor” that is omitted in the first translation and translated as “comandante” in the others. Leaving the word untranslated might led to a misunderstanding for the audience who is not able to identify the role of the person the text is talking about. Finally, the word “South Carolina” translated as “Carolina del Sud” or left in English. The major problem here is a problem of coherence, if the translator decided to translate Middle Georgy, she should have also translated this geographical element as the first translator did correctly.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Umph!	Ehm!	Uhm!	Uhm!
Umph!	Ehm!	Uhm!	Uhm!
Umph!	Ehm!	Uhm!	Uhm!
Umph!	Ehm!	Uhm!	Uhm!

In the first pages of chapter 5, there is a dialogue between Hicks and Coker about Janie and Joe. Particularly, there is a sequence of four sounds repeated “Umph” which is translated as “Ehm!” or “Uhm!.” The focus here is not on translation itself, rather to the presence of these sounds. In fact, it is to remember that the African American culture has an important oral structure which is expressed using these sounds repeated, to give the reader an idea of what an oral language would sound like. It is important that all the translators were aware of the importance of the oral structure for Black Americans and

convey it into the target language to make the target audience understand how Black English sounds like.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Y'all ain't got enough here to cuss a cat on without gittin' yo' mouf full of hair.	Avete così poca terra qui che non potete litigar con un gatto senza mangiargli il pelo.	Qui non ne avete abbastanza da bastonare un gatto senza riempirvi la bocca di peli.	Qui non ne avete abbastanza da bastonare un gatto senza riempirvi la bocca di peli.

Joe is talking about the land in which the town would be constructed. It is interesting to notice how all the translations using different words and terms, convey the same meaning and effect of the source text. In fact, the first translation implies a physical or verbal attack between people and a cat; the other two translations imply a violent attack on the cat itself. However, the meaning and effect is produced in the target texts. Also, the idea that the land is very small, with no space to live in or to construct something on it is reproduced.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Sun-maker De first street lamp in uh colored town. Lift yo'eyes eyes and gaze on it. And when Ah touch de match tuh dat lampwick let de light penetrate	Il Creatore Il primo fanale in una città tutta di negri. Alzate gli occhi e guardate. E quando avvicinerò il fiammifero al lucignolo, la luce penetri anche	Il Creatore del sole Il primo lampione di una città di gente di colore. Alzate gli occhi e guardate bene. E quando avvicinerò il fiammifero allo stoppino, lasciate	Il Creatore del sole Il primo lampione di una città di gente di colore. Alzate gli occhi e guardate bene. E quando avvicinerò il fiammifero allo stoppino, lasciate

inside of yuh, and let is shune, let it shine, let it shine.	dentro di voi, e vi illumini.	che la luce penetri dentro di voi, e che risplenda, risplenda, risplenda.	che la luce penetri dentro di voi, e che risplenda, risplenda, risplenda.
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This passage is focused on light, and it uses terms and vocabulary that suggest the idea of light, and brightness. The first concept to be expressed is “Sun-maker” translated as “Creatore” and “Creatore del sole.” The first translation omits the sun, but recreate the concept of the maker; however, the other translations are more precise since they also convey the sun in the target language.

The passage that follows in an extract of when the first street-light was turned on and the focus is on light. However, the translations are different since the first one uses the term “fanale” to indicate the street-lamp which is not appropriate; while the other translations use the term “lampione” that is more appropriate. Another difference is the translation of “colored town” as “città tutta di negri” and “città di gente di colore.” The first one result to be more negative towards Black people, while the others use a more positive term to refer to Black people.

Finally, the end of the passage is particularly different. The source text use “let is shine, let is shine, let it shine.” Even if all the translations convey this effect of lightness and brightness, just the second and third translations convey also the same sounds. In fact, in the English version, there is a sentence repeated three times, as the second and third translations do, while the first one does not.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
We'll walk in de light, de beautiful light Come where the dew drops of mercy shine bright Shine all around us by day and by night Jesus, the light of the world.	Andremo nella luce, nella bella luce, venite dove brilla lucente la rugiada della misericordia, splendendo a noi d'attorno giorno e notte! Gesù luce del mondo.	Cammineremo nella luce, bellissima è la luce. Venite dove risplende la rugiada della misericordia. Risplende tutt'intorno di notte e di giorno Gesù, luce del mondo.	Cammineremo nella luce, bellissima è la luce. Venite dove risplende la rugiada della misericordia. Risplende tutt'intorno di notte e di giorno Gesù, luce del mondo.

This is a prayer-poem, Brother Davis did to pay homage to the Sun-maker. The aim is to highlight the theme of brightness, as it is conveyed in all the translations.

In the English text, the prayer is divided into four lines as the translators conveyed into the target text. The significant difference between the source text and the target texts is the rhyming scheme. In fact, three of the four lines in the source text end with “ight,” while in the Italian translations this was not possible. It is a case in which the translators have decided to lose something at the level of the rhythm to reproduce the same effect in terms of vocabulary.

CHAPTER 6

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
y-y-y-	Ve-ve-vergognati!	t-t-t-tu!	t-t-t-tu!

Ah-ah-ah d-d-does feed 'im! Ah g-g- gived' im uh full cup uh cawn every feedin.'	i-i-io gli do da ma- ma-mangiare! Io gli d-d-do ogni volta una misura piena di biada.	Gl-gl-gli d-d-do si d-d-da mangiare! Una t-t-tazza piena di g-g-granturco a ogni pasto.	Gl-gl-gli d-d-do si d-d-da mangiare! Una t-t-tazza piena di g-g-granturco a ogni pasto.
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The interesting aspect to be investigated here is the sounds, and the oral structure of the African American society. Particularly, there are various letters repeated such as “y,” “ah,” “d,” and “g” and it is interesting to see how translators have dealt with this aspect of the story considering that the aim was to reproduce the same effect as in the source text.

The first translation tries to repeat some letters, even though they are different from the letters repeated in the source text. The main differences between the source text and the first translations are: in the English text, the reproduction of the letter “y” is translated as a reproduction of two letters “ve”; then the source text uses the reproduction of the letters “ah” and it is reproduced as “i”; the English reproduction of “d” is replaced by “ma”; and finally, “g” is translated as “d”. The main problem of this translation is that, considering that it was impossible to use the same letters, here the translator does not reproduce the same number of letters. However, it gives the target readers the idea of reading something embraced with an oral culture.

The other translations are more precise since they reproduce also the number of the letters as in the source text. “y” is translated as “t,” “ah” as “gl,” “d” with “d,” and “g” with “g,” and also another sound “t.” Also, it gives the target readers the same effect as the source text created.

For what regards the meaning, all the translations make the target readers understand what the text is talking about. Particularly, the first translation is more precise since it uses the term “biada” which indicates a mixture of various cereals, while the other translations are more generic adopting the term “granturco.”

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Old black gaiters	Vecchie pantofole nere	Soliti stivaletti neri	Soliti stivaletti neri

The translation of the term gaiters is problematic. In fact, none of the three translations is able to reproduce the same effect the source language text had to its audience and neither of the translator found the right equivalent for this word.

Indeed, the term “gaiters” indicate garments worn over the shoe and the bottom of the trousers’ leg used as a protection. The first translation uses “pantofole” which leads readers to think about a shoe used in the house, that is completely different from the meaning and intention of the source text. The other translation “stivaletti” is more appropriate since, at least, it gives the reader the idea of something worn for the outside world, and not to stay at home.

Moreover, the first translator use “vecchie” as the correct and right equivalent of “old”; while, the other translations opt for “soliti” which might lead to the idea of something that is worn daily and so, it might also lead to the concept of something old, but it is not exact as the first translation which gives just the idea of oldness, and not as something used daily.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
I god you’s e as crazy as uh besty bug!	Sei matto da legare!	Perdio, sei matto come una cavalletta!	Perdio, sei matto come una cavalletta!

All the translations reveal to have some problems. The first translation omits the first part of the sentence “I god;” however, it translates in the correct way the rest of the sentence. In fact, the translator replaces the metaphor in the source language text with a word pun used in Italian, and so she was able to convey the same meaning and effect into the target text.

The other translations do not omit the first part of the sentence; however, the translator sticks on the vocabulary of rest of the sentence. In fact, the translator replaces the metaphor in the source text with a literally equivalent in the target text which is not something a target reader would understand.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Something like George Washington and Lincoln. Abraham Lincoln, he had de whole United States yuh rule so he freed de Negroes.	Un po' come Giorgio Washington e Lincoln. Lincoln ha voluto governare gli Stati Uniti per poter liberare i negri.	Un po' come George Washington e Lincoln. Abraham Lincoln aveva tutti gli Stati Uniti da governare, e ha liberato i negri.	Un po' come George Washington e Lincoln. Abraham Lincoln aveva tutti gli Stati Uniti da governare, e ha liberato i negri.

After Joe has freed a mule, he gets the compliment for what he has done. There is a significant reference to two important characters of the United States: Washington e Lincoln and their role in the abolition of slavery. The translations are different: the first one translate the name George Washington in Italian and omits the name of Lincoln in the target text, while the other translations correctly opt for the reproduction of the same names in the target text with no translation of them.

Another significant difference between the translation regards the use of verbs: the first translation use verbs of wishes such as “ha voluto governare” and “poter liberare” to

suggest the idea of will President Lincoln had. The other translations use verbs of power “aveva tutti gli Stati Uniti da governare” and “ha liberato,” there is not the idea of will or wish to do something, but it expresses the role of power of a President.

Finally, and interestingly, all the translations opt for “negri” for the term “Negros,” which is the appropriate equivalent for the English term.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Ah aims tuh keep yuh in de dark all de time.	Non voglio che tu lo sappia da me.	Voglio tenerti all’oscuro di tutto.	Voglio tenerti all’oscuro di tutto.

In the English text there is the alliteration of the sound “d” which is not conveyed and transmitted in either translation. However, all the translations express the idea of somebody not wanting to express what he knows about a certain topic.

The English text uses the metaphor of darkness, to keep someone in darkness. The second and third translations find the right equivalent, expressing the metaphor of darkness even in the target text, while the first translation does not express this idea of darkness, even though it is able to convey the meaning.

Therefore, all the translations convey the right meaning, but just the second and third translations use the theme of darkness as in the source language text.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Shucks!	Che scemenza!	Balle!	Balle!

It is not the first time the reader finds this exclamation in the English text, and it is interesting to see how translators have approached it. Since, the African American culture

has a significant oral structure, the translators have to acknowledge this aspect trying to convey it in the target texts.

The second and third translations are more coherent since the translation of the term is always “balle” independently of the context it is found in; while the first translator adopts different terms depending on the context in which the term is found.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Tain't nothin' no million years old!	Non c'è nessuno che abbia in milione d'anni.	Non esiste niente che abbia un milione di anni!	Non esiste niente che abbia un milione di anni!

Here there is an example on how negatives are used in Black English. In this simple sentence, there are three negative forms “ain't,” “nothin'” and “no.” It is significant to underline that all the translators wanted to show to the Italian readers the existence of this construction in Black English; in fact, all the translations use a double negative “non” and “nessuno” for the first translation, and “niente” for the second and third translations.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Dime	Soldo	Dieci centesimi	Dieci centesimi

The story mentions the “dime,” a ten-cent coin used in the United States. Nevertheless to say, the first translation uses a general translation without specify about how much money the text is talking about, even though the word “soldo” makes the reader think about a very small quantity of money, the second and third translations are more precise since they identify the right equivalent for the target language.

CHAPTER 7

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
You de one started talkin' under people's clothes.	Sei tu che hai incominciato certi discorsi.	Sei tu che hai incominciato a nominare quello che c'è sotto i vestiti.	Sei tu che hai incominciato a nominare quello che c'è sotto i vestiti.

The English text uses an expression to make the reader understands the way in which Joe was talking, in an inappropriate way. The first translation gives the target reader the idea of Joe talking about something not appropriate in a general way; the other translations are more literal and mention the talking under people's clothes. The problem is that the Italian reader might not grasp what the source text wanted to express with this saying.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Great God from Zion! Y'all really playin' de dozens tuhnight	Grande Iddio d'Israele! Ma voi stasera date proprio spettacolo!	Grande Dio di Sion! Nessun colpo è troppo basso, stasera.	Grandio di Sion! Nessun colpo è troppo basso, stasera.

The first part mentions God and it is translated in three different ways, even though all the three of them result as a right equivalent for the English term. However, the difference is in the translation of "Zion": the second and third translations use the term "Sion;" while the first translation uses a more general term "Israele" which is not wrong, but the translator opted for a general term instead of the specific one.

“Playing the dozens” is a major concept of the African American culture and it indicates a verbal game in which young men exchange humorous insult, typically with an audience. It is a concept embraced within culture, and so it is particularly challenging for the translators. All of them, decide to opt for translations which make the target readers think about a talkative exchange among people. However, in the Italian translations there is the absence of the cultural concept present in the source text since there is not a right equivalent for this term as there is not something in the Italian culture similar or that can be associated with the English term. It has to be recognized to the translators that they tried to convey, at least, the public sphere of this cultural concept.

CHAPTER 8

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Still-bait	Qualcosa si preparava contro di me.	Qualcosa bolle in pentola.	Qualcosa bolle in pentola.

It is interesting to notice the translation of this concept which evocates a threat for Janie. The first translation conveys this idea of something against Janie, even though the metaphor of threat is lost. The second and third translations prefer to translate with a word pun as “qualcosa bolle in pentola;” the problem with this translation is that the word pun is general, it can refer to a positive or negative outcome, while the English author is expressing something negative. Hence, this translation gives the target audience hope of something good is going to happen, however the English text does not give this hope to its readers.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Sorrow dogged by sorrow is in mah heart.	Par che per me ci sia sempre in serbo un nuovo dolore più grande.	Un dolore dopo l'altro, il mio cuore è pieno.	Un dolore dopo l'altro, il mio cuore è pieno.

In this passage there are two main concepts: “sorrow” which is repeated twice to emphasize both the concept and the orality of the African American culture; and “heart.” Starting from the word “sorrow” repeated, neither of the translations were able to transfer it into the Italian version. However, the second and third translations opt for a literal translation leaving aside the repetition, but totally conveying its meaning. The first translation, indeed, understood the aim of the English text and it conveys it into the target text, even though it does not really respect the source text. In fact, it does not convey the concept of sorrow repeated, and also it does not mention the heart, something that the second and third translations do.

Hence, all the translations make the target readers understand what Janie is going through. However, the first translation does not really consider the words used in the source text, while the second and third translations are more accurate in considering the source text.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Dat's lie dat trashy nigger dat calls hisself uh two- headed doctor. Last summer dat multiplied	È una menzogna che ha messo in giro quel maledetto negro che si fa chiamare dottore. (...)	È una storia che gli ha messo in testa del bastardo di un negro che si fa chiamare “dottore	È una storia che gli ha messo in testa del bastardo di un negro che si fa chiamare “dottore

cockroach wuz round heah tryin' tuh sell gophers!	L'estate scorsa quel corvacchione matricolato andava in giro vendendo carte moschicide.	dei due padroni". (...) L'estate scorsa quel figlio di scarafaggi girava da queste parti cercando di vendere salamandre.	dei due padroni". (...) L'estate scorsa quel figlio di scarafaggi girava da queste parti cercando di vendere salamandre.
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In this passage Janie is referring to Joe who is sick and he is about to die. The first part is quite similar among the translations; all of them refer to the Black person with negative and pejorative adjectives, mentioning that he is a liar. The only massive difference in this first part is when they refer to the Black person as “dottore.” The first translation leaves “dottore,” while the second and the third one are more precise and use “dottore dei miei due padroni” as it is expressed in the source language text.

The second part is different between the translations. The first translation opts for “corvacchione,” a term that is not much used anymore, while the other two translations opt for “figlio di scarafaggi,” which is again a term not used, but that makes the target readers see what the text is talking about. Then in the translation of “gophers,” the first translation opts for “carte moschicide,” while the other translations go for “salamandre.” Hence, even using various terms and concepts, all the three translations convey the meaning and effect of the source text being faithful to it.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Big voice	Voce di comando	Voce	Voce

Here comes one of the main themes of the novel, the voice. The author is talking about Joe who has fought for his voice for all his life. Of course, the voice is not just seen as a tool to communicate, but as a metaphor of power. In fact, this can also be linked to the

history of Black Americans who did not have any power, and so they did not own their own voice.

The first translator is aware of this aspect, and in fact, she does not translate “big voice,” but it explicitly gives the target readers the opportunity to reflect upon voice as a metaphor of power. In fact, big is translated as “di comando” to explain the relationship between voice and power. The other translator does not do that, in fact she translated “big voice” just as “voce.” The problem with this translation is that the target readers might not be aware of what the author really wanted to say, the readers might not acknowledge that the voice is indeed a metaphor of power, and so here the target readers will lose something important of the source text.

CHAPTER 9

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Ole pee-de-bed	Vecchio bacucco	Vecchio piscialetto	Vecchio piscialetto

Here the source text uses a term which is colloquial and not used in English as a sort of insult toward the person it is referring to. Even tough, all the translations give an idea of negativity, only the second and third translations are accurate towards the source text. In fact, they translate it literally, creating a new word in Italian which is comprehensible and faithful to the source text.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Jaw-breaker Sen-sen Pullet-size girls	Croccanti Mentine Ragazzette alte	Croccante Sen-sen	Croccante Sen-sen

		Ragazzine in boccio	Ragazzine in boccio
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Here it is interesting to see the translation of these terms. The first is translated equally in all the translations, even though the first one uses the plural, and the others the singular. The second term is translated as “mentine” in the first translation and left as “sen-sen” in the other translations. This can lead to some problems: on the one hand, the first translation might not really convey the meaning of what “sen-sen” really are, but it gives the target readers to opportunity to understand what the text is talking about; on the other hand, the English term without a gloss might leave the readers without a complete understanding of what the source text is referring to. Hence, a translation that resolve these problems would have been the English term “sen-sen” with a translator’s gloss who explicit what sen-sen are.

The last concept expresses the idea of girls growing. The first translation opts for “ragazze alte” which does not give the target readers the idea of young woman growing, but it limits the understanding to “tall girls” which is not right. The other two translations better convey the idea of girls growing comparing them to flowers, while the source text compare them to chickens.

CHAPTER 10

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Dixie Highway	Via maestra del Sud	Dixie Highway	Dixie Highway

The source text mentions the Dixie Highway which was an auto trail to connect the Midwest to the South of the United States. The first translation opts for translating the term as “via maestra del sud” which makes the target readers understand what the text is referring to. The other translations prefer to leave the term in English, in this way the

reader might feel the foreignness of the source text and will have the opportunity to discover something new about the American culture.

Hence, the first translation opts for an adaptation strategy which accommodate the readers without making them feel the foreignness of the source text. The second and third translations opt for a foreignization strategy, leaving the English term in the target text and making the target readers recognize the foreignness of the source culture.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Dis is de last day for dat excuse	D'ora innanzi non potete più dirlo	Oggi è l'ultimo giorno che vale questa scusa	Oggi è l'ultimo giorno che vale questa scusa

In this sentence the source text uses the alliteration of the letter “d,” a phenomenon quite frequent in an oral culture. It is a case in which the translators have to choose what it is more appropriate to maintain into the target text, as the translators choose if it is better to transfer to alliteration of the letter “d” or to translate the meaning. All the translations opt for translating the meaning, leaving aside the alliteration of the letter “d.”

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
It's all right tuh come teach me, but don't come tuh cheat me	Sta bene, venite pure a insegnarmi, ma non a ingannarmi	Va bene insegnami, ma non venire qui a barare	Va bene, torna pure a insegnarmi, ma non venire qui a barare

Once again, in this passage there is again a feature of a language embraced in the oral culture that is repetition and words as “teach” and “cheat” which sound similar. The first

and second translations aim at transferring the meaning embraced into the source language text, leaving aside both repetitions and words that sound the same. The third translation is the more complete, since the translator found a balance between meaning and sound, using the same structure of the sentence.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Tea Cake Knuckle puddin’	Tea Cake Libbra di pugni	Tea Cake Libbra di pugni	Tea Cake Libbra di pugni

The name Tea Cake is left in English in all the translations; however, the first translation used a gloss to explain the reason of the same; in fact, Cake is used to indicate a person willing to flirt. The other translations leave the name as it is, without giving the target reader explanation on the name’s choice.

The same is for the second term. All the translations transfer the meaning in the same way, but just the first one gives the target reader an explicative gloss to understand deeply its meaning.

CHAPTER 11

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
He sung middle C	Cantatina in sordina	Intonò un do di mezzo	Intonò un do di mezzo

The source text mentions the note Middle C which is approached it in different ways. The first translation opts for “cantatina in sordina” which completely changes the approach towards the source text; in fact, while the source text refers to a musical note, the target text resolves it mentioning a song. The second and third translation are more appropriate

since the translator transfers the English note into the Italian notes system, mentioning a “do di mezzo.”

Hence, the second and third translation use an adaptation strategy, adapting the English note into the Italian system; while the first translation does not consider the meaning of the source text, and translate with a term connected with the musical word, even though it is not appropriate.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Ah ain't never heard nobody say he stole nothin' Dey don't say he ever cut nobody or shot nobody neither	Non ho mai sentito dire che abbia rubato niente Nessuno dice che abbia mai accoltellato o sparato qualcuno	Non ho mai sentito dire che ruba Nessuno dice che ha mai sparato o accoltellato qualcuno	Non ho mai sentito dire che ruba Nessuno dice che ha mai sparato o accoltellato qualcuno

This is an example of how the negative forms are used in Black English. The first sentence contains four negatives.

The first translation tries to maintain the structure of the sentence and uses three negatives as “non,” “mai,” “niente;” in this way the translation was able to convey both the meaning and the structure of the source text. The second and third translations use two negatives “non” and “mai” conveying the meaning of the source text but leaving aside the sentence structure of the source text.

The second part includes four negatives while all the translations contain just two of them. It is a case in which the translators choose to give more importance to the meaning of the source text rather than the structure of the sentence.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
'Course he always keep hisself in changing clothes. Dat long-legged Tea Cake ain't got doodly-sqaut	Si capisce che sfarfalla di qua e di là. Non è mica un tipo di cui fidarsi questo perticone di un Tea Cake	Certo al vestire ci tiene, quel gambalunga, ma non ha il becco di un quattrino	Certo al vestire ci tiene, quel gambalunga, ma non ha il becco di un quattrino

This passage is referring to Tea Cake, describing him with negative and pejorative adjectives. The first translation is not faithful in terms of vocabulary to the source text, even though it makes the target readers understand the negative aspects of this person. The second and third translations are more faithful in terms of vocabulary and aim at conveying the meaning and effect of the source text.

In the first part, there is a reference to clothes, and this is transfer only in the second and third translations, while the first translation completely forgets these words. Moreover, the first translation refers to trust and mentions how it is not possible to trust a person like that. However, the source text and the other translations are more general and refer to Tea Cake as someone who has not got a lot of money.

Hence, the translations make the target readers understand the negativity of this character through different choices: the first one goes deeply into the text analysing the character as a person the reader cannot trust; the other translations are more general and refer to the poverty of this man. However, all translations refer to Tea Cake's physical appearance even though at different stages of the narration.

CHAPTER 12

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Tea Cake and Janie gone hunting. Tea Cake and Janie gone fishing. Tea Cake and Janie gone to Orlando to the movies. Tea Cake and Janie gone to a dance.	Tea Cake e Janie andavano a caccia. Tea Cake e Janie andavano a pescare. Tea Cake e Janie andavano a Orlando al cinematografo. Tea Cake e Janie andavano a ballare	Tea Cake e Janie sono andati a caccia. Tea Cake e Janie sono andati a pescare. Tea Cake e Janie sono andati al cinema. A ballare.	Tea Cake e Janie sono andati a caccia. Tea Cake e Janie sono andati a pescare. Tea Cake e Janie sono andati al cinema. A ballare.

In this passage the readers notice the repetition of the same word “gone,” and the same structure of a sentence repeated four times. The first translation respects both the meaning and the structure of the sentences, repeating the same words for four times, while the other translations respect the structure leaving aside the last sentence which does not reproduce the structure of the source text.

Moreover, the first translation adopts a literal translation of the source text, while the others prefer to highlight the meaning and leaving aside the structure and some information as the fact that the cinema is in Orlando.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Tea Cake and Janie playing checkers; playing coon-can;	Tea Cake e Janie che giocavano a dama; giocavano a scacchi; giocavano	Tea Cake e Janie che giocano a dama, che giocano gin-rummy, che	Tea Cake e Janie che giocano a dama, che giocano gin-rummy, che

playing Florida flip on the store porch	a tric-trac sulla veranda della bottega	giocano a testa o croce nel portico dell'emporio	giocano a testa o croce nel portico dell'emporio
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This passage is similar to the previous one in which there is the repetition of the same word “playing” and the same structure of the sentence repeated for three times. The difference starts from the second sentence: the first translation is “Scacchi,” the second “gin-rummy.” In this case the first translation results to be not appropriate, since the coon-can is a type of rummy style card game as it is explicated in the other two translations. Finally, the last term “Florida flip” is a game involving players making risky bets using slang and card slapping often performed in social situations. The first translation opts for “tric trac” which is a game performed with dice; the other translations opt for “testa o croce.” Neither of the translations were able to translate the term properly since it is a game used in the United States and does not exist in the Italian culture.

It is significant to say that the translators give the target readers an idea of what the characters are playing with, but the cultural obstacle is relevant and so it was impossible to make the target readers grasp what the source text is saying.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Ah jus lak uh chicken. Chicken drink water, but he don't pee-pee	Oh, io non sono come quelle che non sanno tenersi niente in corpo	E io sono come un pollo. I polli bevono acqua, ma non fanno pipì	E io sono come un pollo. I polli bevono acqua, ma non fanno pipì

The first translation goes beyond words and translate what the source text wanted to say while the other translations use a literal translation. In this case, the first translation does not leave the target readers in ambiguities because it makes clear what the author wanted to say; while the other two translations translate the source text literally, leaving the same ambiguities of the source text into the target one.

CHAPTER 13

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
You got mo'nerve than uh brass monkey	Hai una bella faccia di bronzo!	Certo che hai più fegato di una scimmia di bronzo	Certo che hai più fegato di una scimmia di bronzo

This is a passage in which the source text uses a metaphor to express a meaning. The first translation opts for a word pun to express a similar meaning of the source language text; indeed, the first translator changes the words and the literal meaning of word to convey the actual meaning of the sentence and its effect.

Instead, the other translations opt for a literal translation which, however, does not make the target reader understand what the author wanted to say. It is a case of linguist faithfulness that leads to a *tradimento* in reference to meaning and effect. Hence, literal translation is not always the right choice to make.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
boogerboo	babau	Morto di fame	Morto di fame

The author is referring to a Black person as “boogerboo” which is a term used to indicate a negative person. The first translation opts for “babau,” a term previously used to refer to the Black person in a negative and a pejorative way. As for the first translation, also the others go for a negative term used in the previous chapters.

It is a term that leads to different translations, and all of them are able to convey the meaning and effect of the source text.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Both of them spit and gagged and wiped their mouths with the back of their hands	Entrambi sputarono con degli orrendi versacci e si pulirono la bocca col dorso della mano	I due avevano continuato a sputacchiare e a tossire e a sfregarsi la bocca con il dorso della mano	I due avevano continuato a sputacchiare e a tossire e a sfregarsi la bocca con il dorso della mano

This passage is interesting in terms of structure of the sentences which are connected by the conjunction “and.” In the Italian structure of the sentence, the repetition of “and” might sound incorrect, and, in fact, the first translation eliminates this aspect and does not repeat the conjunction. It is a case in which the translator wanted to privilege the target language rather than the source one.

The opposite are the other translations which underline the connective “and” and repeat it even in the Italian text. In this case, the translator makes visible the sentence structure of Black English, being aware that this structure leads to the idea of foreignness in the target audience.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Mucky mucks	Pezzi grossi	Persone fini	Persone fini

It is interesting to see the difference in translation of this term. The English term “mucky mucks” is used to indicate an arrogant person who thinks to be better than everybody else. The first translation is a literal translation for the term, while the second uses the negation of something positive to translate the term.

The particular aspect of this term is the similarity between the two words, which look and sound similar. Of course, this aspect was not transfer into the Italian translations which are faithful to the meaning of the term, but do not reproduce the same sound.

It is a case in which the translators had to choose what it was more important for the text: the meaning or the sound. In this case, all the translators choose to privilege the meaning rather than the sound of the words.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Double Ugly	Bruttone	Double Ugly	Double Ugly

As the readers notice, the first translations translate the name, while the others do not. It happened also in previous chapters when the first translation uses the Italian correspondence, while the others leave the English term as it is.

This highlights a changing approach in translation; until the XX century, the rule was to translate the names into the target language; however, this changed overtime and today the rule is to leave the names as they appear in the source language.

CHAPTER 14

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Big Lake Okechobee, big beans, big cane, big weeds, big everything	Grande era il lago Okechobee, grandi i fagioli, grande la canna da zucchero, grandi le erbe, tutto grande	Grande il lago Okechobee, grandi i fagioli, la canna da zucchero, le erbacce, tutto	Grande il lago Okechobee, grandi i fagioli, la canna da zucchero, le erbacce, tutto

Once again in this passage there is the word “big” repeated for five times in few lines. Of course, this repetition might result abundant in the Italian text. However, the first translator decided to welcome the source structure into the target one and use the repetition of “grande” five times as in the source text. The choice of the second translation is different since the translator eliminates the repetition and uses “grande” just twice rather than five as in the source text. This decision leads to a fluent Italian text where the structure of the source text is eliminated, and the target readers are facilitated in the process of reading the novel.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Bushels	Staia	Barili	Barili

The term “bushels” refers to a unit of measure used in the United States which corresponds to 35,2 litres and it is used to measure cereals. The Italian translations are different: the first one uses the term “staia” which is appropriate since it is used to measure cereals; the other translations use “barili” which results to be not appropriate since it is used to measure crude oil.

What it is seen here is a translation problem, since the second translator was not able to find the right equivalent corresponding to the English term, while the first one was able to find the right equivalent.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Because she loved to hear it, and the men loved to hear themselves, they	Siccome le piaceva, e piaceva anche agli uomini, c’era, durante le partite,	Siccome a Janie piaceva sentir parlare gli uomini, e agli uomini piaceva	Siccome a Janie piaceva sentir parlare gli uomini, e agli uomini piaceva

would “woof” and “boogerboo” around the games to the limit	una vera orgia di frizzi e di trovate	ascoltare la propria voce, tutti si divertivano	ascoltare la propria voce, tutti si divertivano
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This passage is embraced within culture, it represents the conviviality of the Black community describing how people met on the porch telling stories, also insulting each other just for fun. The first translation underlines how characters like talking, and telling stories, also giving a shade of sexual meaning behind it. The other translations focus on storytelling and voice, leaving aside the sexual element of the story.

The source text uses terms as “woof” and “boogerboo,” but neither the translations were able to translate the terms literally; however, all of them tried to make the target readers perceive the culture embraced in the source text. As it has been discussed in the previous chapters, translating the culture embraced in literature is one of the hardest challenges a translator faces and is not always possible to find right equivalents for cultural concepts.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Ah’ll break up dat settin’ uh eggs Root de peg	Te le romperò io le uova nel paniero Segno un punto	Te la faccio fare io la frittata Sputa il rospo	Te la faccio fare io la frittata Sputa il rospo

Here there are two word puns. The first one is translated similarly in all the three translations; they all maintain the metaphor of the eggs even if coined in different ways. The second one is translated differently; the first translation breaks the word pun simplifying it; while, the other translations maintain the word pun and the structure of the source text, conveying the English word pun into an Italian one to convey the source text’s meaning and effect.

CHAPTER 16

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Saws	Saws	Musica suonata su bidoni e seghe	Musica suonata su bidoni e seghe

At the beginning of this chapter, there is a reference to music. The first translator decides to leave the foreign element in the target language adding a gloss through which it explains that it is a term to indicate the Indians of Bahama; while the other translations completely break the cultural element and accommodate the target readers in the process of comprehension. It is a choice that leads to the creation of a fluent Italian text that lacks the culture embraced into the source language.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Always laughin'! Dey laughs too much and dey laughs too loud. Always singin' ol' nigger songs! If it wuzn't for so many black folks it wouldn't be no race problem.	Tutto quel ridere che fanno! Ridono troppo e ridono troppo forte. E tutte quelle canzoni negre! (..) Se non ci fossero tanti neri non esisterebbe il problema di razza.	Sempre a ridere! Ridono troppo e troppo forte. Sempre a cantare canzoni da schiavi. (...) Se non fosse che i neri negri sono così tanti, non ci sarebbe nessun problema razziale.	Sempre a ridere! Ridono troppo e troppo forte. Sempre a cantare canzoni da schiavi. (...) Se non fosse che i neri sono così tanti, non ci sarebbe nessun problema razziale.

This passage is relevant because it briefly explains the African American culture; it gives the readers an idea of what the African American culture is. The paragraph mainly refers to oral aspects of the Black culture as laughing and singing. In fact, the songs were particularly relevant at the time of slavery since they could not write, and singing was a way of communicating and surviving.

The second part gives light to a significant theme in the African American history which is the “race problem,” a concept merely invented by whites who wanted to detain the power and who made Black people think that they were inferior just because of the colour of their skin. It is interesting to notice a detail in the second translation that is “neri negri.”

From the history of Black Americans, it is known that people had different “level of darkness”; there were people who were lightened, and people who were darker, even though for the white, if a person was related to a Black person, he or she was considered to be Black regardless how dark this person’s skin was.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Ah ain't got no flat nose and liver lipd. Ah'm uh featured woman. Ah got white folks' features in mah face.	Io non ho il naso schiacciato, e neanche le labbra grosse. Ho dei lineamenti regolari, una faccia come quella dei bianchi	Io non ho né il naso schiacciato né le labbra a salsiccia. Io ho una faccia vera. Coi lineamenti dei bianchi	Io non ho né il naso schiacciato né le labbra a salsiccia. Io ho una faccia vera. Coi lineamenti dei bianchi

In one of the previous tables, the passage was about the culture of African Americans; here it refers to physical appearance, since Black people are stereotypically considered to have a small nose and a big mouth. The first translation is gentle in the vocabulary adopted, it talks about “naso schiacciato,” “labra grosse,” “lineamenti regolari;” the target readers might not grasp the negativity in which the character is pronouncing these things.

The other translations are more faithful in terms of conveying not just the meaning, but also the mood of the character; in fact, they talk about “naso schiacciato,” “labra a salsiccia,” “faccia vera.”

CHAPTER 17

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Ziggaboos	Pagliacci	Morti di fame	Morti di fame

The English term is coined to refer to a Black person in a disparaging way. The translations reveal the negative mode through which people referred to a Black person; however, in all the translations the connotation of Black is eliminated. Hence, there is not a literal translation able to convey the meaning and effect into the target language; so, each translator has to find a way of expressing what the source text wanted to say knowing that the target text will lose some shades of meaning.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Coon-dick Loud-talking	Acquavite Gente che parlava forte/parlando forte	Acqua di negro Uomini vocianti/fare la voce grossa	Acqua di negro Uomini vocianti/ fare la voce grossa

The first term indicates an illegal alcohol used in the United States by African Americans. The first translation uses “acquavite” which is not the right equivalent since it refers to alcohol but leaves aside the cultural connotations embraced in this concept. The other two translations use “acqua di negro” which is an interesting translation since it gives the target readers the idea that it was something alcoholic used by Black people. Hence, while

the first translation is able to convey just a part of meaning; the other two translations are able to express both the alcoholic substance and the Black connotation.

The second term indicates a cultural concept of Black Americans consisting of talking loudly. As we saw in the previous chapter, the orality is the centre of the Black community; talking and communicating is the core of the Black community. The first translation opts for a literal translation that results to be appropriate since it conveys the meaning of the English term. The other translations refer to voice which is one of the main themes of the novel.

Hence, also the second and third translations result to be appropriate because they convey the meaning of the source text. Moreover, the second and third translations add significance since they recall the theme of voice, a theme present throughout the all novel.

CHAPTER 18

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Yo' mama don't wear no Draws Ah seen her when she took 'em Off She soaked 'em in alcohol She sold sold 'em tuh de Santy Claus He told her 'twas against de Law To wear dem dirty Draws	La tua nonnina non porta pantalon C'ero a vedere quando li levò Li mise dentro a un grosso pentolon E dopo li vendette a Nicolò Il quale disse: via dal padellon Son troppo sporchi questi pantalon	Tua mamma è senza le mutande, L'ho vista che se le toglieva. Poi che nel whisky le metteva. Le ha vendute a Santa Claus, che le ha detto: "Sporcacciona metter quelle mutandone".	Tua mamma è senza le mutande, L'ho vista che se le toglieva. Poi che nel whisky le metteva. Le ha vendute a Santa Claus, che le ha detto: "Sporcacciona metter quelle mutandone".

This is a song sung in the novel and, as any other songs, it has rhythm. It is a case in which the rhythm and style of the song are more important than the meaning itself. The first translator decided to privilege rhythm rather than meaning, and in fact, it uses rhymes to give the poem rhythm and style, even though the source text does not. Moreover, it uses similar words at the end of each line to recreate a sense of continuity throughout the text. It is noticeable that the source text uses the same word at the end of the first line and at the end of the last one; and the first translation respects and convey also this aspect.

The second and third translations prefer to transfer the meaning into the target text; in fact, there is the absence of rhymes, and words repeated. Indeed, even the words at the end of the first line and at the end of the last one are different. The translator does not give the target readers an idea of continuity and rhythm, but the actual meaning of the song.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Their eyes were watching God	I loro occhi guardavano Dio	I loro occhi guardavano Dio	I loro occhi guardavano Dio

This sentence is the one that gives the title to the novel. The translation is the same for all the three translations. However, the second translation has for title a different sentence as “con gli occhi rivolti al cielo.” Since, this sentence gives the title to the novel, the second translator should have been coherent and opt for one of the two sentences and maintain it.

Moreover, the title gives emphases on people actively watching and looking for God, while the second translator is more general and talks about eyes simply looking at the sky without the idea of watching or searching for something in particular.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Rolling the dikes, rolling the houses, rolling the people in the houses	Travolgendo le dighe, travolgendo le case, travolgendo le persone nelle case	Trascinando con sé le dighe e le case e la gente nelle case	Trascinando con sé le dighe e le case e la gente nelle case

This passage involves repetition of the word “rolling;” as it happened in previous cases, the first translation maintains the repetition, while the others do not. Particularly, the first translation preserves the structure of the sentences repeating the same words for three times as in the source language text, while the other translations privilege the target language not using repetitions. In fact, in the Italian language, repetitions are not used and, indeed, the second and third translations respect this aspect of the target language.

However, the first translator decided to translate the passage literally, respecting the source language’s structure and repetitions giving the target readers an idea of what Black language sounded like.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
De lake is comin! De lake! (...) de lake! De lake is comin’! (...) De lake is comin’! (...) ah’m comin’	Il lago! Il lago! (...)Il lago! Viene il lago! (...) Viene il lago! (...) Si, vengo!	Arriva il lago! Il lago, il lago! Arriva il lago! (...)Arriva il lago! (.) si, stiamo arrivando!	Arriva il lago! Il lago, il lago! Arriva il lago, Arriva il lago! (...)Arriva il lago! (...)si, stiamo arrivando!

Once again, the readers see how in few lines there are a lot of repetitions. The translators had no other options rather than using the repetitions also in the target language. In this way, the target readers perceive the oral structure of African American language and are able to appreciate it.

CHAPTER 19

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Jim Crow law	Legge d'emancipazione dei negri	Legge di Jim Crow	Legge di Jim Crow

The term expresses a historical and cultural term which indicates the laws adopted after the abolishment of slavery to regulate the segregation of African Americans. The first translation tries to transfer the term into Italian and uses “legge di emancipazione dei negri.” However, this translation is problematic since it gives the target readers the idea that these laws were adopted in favour of the Black folks, even though they were not. The other translations leave the foreign term as it is, but this decision might result problematic since the target readers might not be aware of what these laws are, and so they might feel the foreignness of the novel.

Hence, a good attempt of translating the term, would have been leaving the foreign element in the Italian text, adding a translator's gloss to briefly explain what these laws are and their aims.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Old uncle Sam	zio Sam	Vecchio zio Sam	Vecchio zio Sam

The term is embraced into history and culture of the United States; in fact, “old uncle Sam” is a symbol of the country since it is a personification of it. All the translators decide to translate the term literally; however, it is a case in which translators have to eliminate one aspect of the term, since it is impossible to convey both the meaning and the history into the target text.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
Luck is uh fortune	Non tutti hanno fortuna allo stesso modo	Chi ha da aver bene, anche dormendo gli viene	Chi ha da aver bene, anche dormendo gli viene

It is interesting to see the translation of this word pun since the terms “luck” and “fortune” have the same meaning in Italian as “fortuna.” The first translation breaks the word pun and simplify its meaning to the target audience, while the other translations found an equivalent word pun to convey both the meaning and effect of the source text. Moreover, it is significant to notice that just the first translation maintains the word “fortuna,” while the other translations completely change the words.

Hence, all the translations are able to convey the meaning of the source text, even though only the second and third translations are able to also convey the effect and the structure of the source text.

THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (1938)	CON GLI OCCHI RIVOLTI AL CIELO (1998)	I LORO OCCHI GUARDAVANO DIO (2009)
No white part of the room got calmer the more serious it got, but a tongue storm struck the Negroes	La parte bianca del pubblico si fece più calma a misura che la cosa diventava più seria, ma una	Il settore bianco dell’aula si faceva più silenzioso man mano che aumentava la	Il settore bianco dell’aula si faceva più silenzioso man mano che aumentava la

like wind among palm trees. They talked all of a sudden all together like a choir and the top parts of their bodies moved on the rhythm of it.	vera tempesta di parola agitò i Negri, come vento tra le palme. Parlavano tutti insieme di colpo, come in coro, e la parte superiore dei loro colpi muoveva secondo il ritmo.	gravità delle cose, ma sui neri si abbatté, come il vento tra le palme, una bufera linguacciuta. Si misero a parlare all'improvviso, e tutti insieme, come il coro in chiesa; la parte superiore del corpo si muoveva al ritmo della voce.	gravità delle cose, ma sui neri si abbatté, come il vento tra le palme, una bufera linguacciuta. Si misero a parlare all'improvviso, e tutti insieme, come il coro in chiesa; la parte superiore del corpo si muoveva al ritmo della voce.
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This paragraph makes readers notice the difference between Black and white men. In fact, while the white men are calm, quiet, and in silence; the Black men laugh, talk, sing, and dance. Moreover, what the readers see here is the culture of African Americans who are willing to talk, sing and dance also in a serious context. The second and third translations mention the “coro della chiesa,” since even during the sermon Black people are used to communicate with the priest through songs and dances. It is a very different culture from the white who are more silent and do not have a significant oral structure in their culture.

It can be concluded that all the translators faced a challenging work considering the enormous differences between Black English and Italian. Of course, these differences are not just linguistic differences, but also cultural and historical.

Also, in the source text there are numerous paragraphs about history and culture of African Americans together with a very specific structures of Black English. The translators knew that they could not convey all these aspects in the Italian text, and, for this reason, in every paragraph each translator decided what it was more important to

convey in the Italian translations; there are paragraphs in which the culture was the main aspect, others in which language was more relevant.

Particularly, the first translation was published in 1938 by Frassinelli, just a year after the publication of the original novel, while the second translation was published years after in 1998 by Bompiani. The decision of retranslating the novel might be due to the change in the Italian society and also due to an openness toward the Other in translation studies, in this case towards the African American culture. As translators know, language and culture change overtime and, for this reason, retranslation becomes important to make new target readers discover the original text and its author.

Also, the publishing house is relevant in the process of retranslation since each publishing house might ask the translator to opt for a particular translation strategy. In this case, the translation in 1998 is more open to accept, appreciate, and convey the Other in the Italian text due to the discovery of the importance of culture in translation studies, as analysed in chapter one. However, it is to highlight that the first Italian publication in 1938 was published during a particular historical time, that is the fascist era. Since the translator Ada Prospero was an antifascist and feminist activist, she might have chosen to translate this novel as a political choice as it narrates the story of a marginalised population, the main character is a woman, and also the author is a Black woman.

The second translation published in 1998 and performed by Adriana Bottini has a different title that is “Con gli occhi rivolti al cielo”. This decision was probably made by the publishing house, as the translator opted for “I loro occhi guardavano Dio” when the title is mentioned in the novel. Also, the last publication in 2009 published by Cargo is performed by the same translator and it is almost identical to the one of 1998, with a relevant difference in the title since the translator uses “I loro occhi guardavano Dio” as the first Italian publication.

Finally, translators aimed at conveying as much as possible of the source text in the Italian translations, giving the target audience an opportunity to discover a particular language with a very specific culture and history. Of course, the Italian texts convey just part of the

meanings of the original text, but as translators know, translating means “dire quasi la stessa cosa”.³²

³² Umberto Eco, *Dire quasi la stessa cosa*, Giunti, Milano 2019, pag.10.

CONCLUSION

The dissertation aimed at raising awareness about translation problems, analysing the translator's work, pointing out its importance and relevance since it is due the translator's mediation and interpretation that readers across the world are able to meet and discover one another. Furthermore, the dissertation highlights what are the main problems and challenges of a translation process, as two languages and cultures are different from one another, and in order to convey the same meaning and effect of the source text, the translator should be aware of the culture of both languages.

Particularly, the focus is on translating Black English and its challenges due to its historical and cultural background, and also for its differences with the Italian culture and language. However, it is highlighted how translators aimed at giving the Italian readers a glimpse of Black English, its culture, its history and its structure. Also, the dissertation aimed at understanding that Black English is not an inferior language just because it is different from the Standard and because it was developed in a society characterised by slavery, and then segregation, rather than a proper language with its rules and structures.

Also, the translations of "Their Eyes Were Watching God" were analysed to make the readers see, on the one hand, a book written in Black English with its oral, cultural, and linguistic structure; on the other hand, how challenging is it to transfer this type of language into a target text. In fact, during the process of translation of Black English, the translator has to choose on what to convey in the target language, and what can be lost in the translation. Of course, the decision is made considering the context, and what it is better for the text in that specific moment of the narration. In fact, there are paragraphs in which the translator opted for conveying the meaning, eliminating the sound and the rhythm; other paragraphs in which the translator opted to convey the effect and the metaphor, using different words. However, the important aspect is that the translator always aimed at conveying just a piece of the history, culture, and language embraced in the source text.

Furthermore, the novel “Their Eyes Were Watching God” will give the readers an idea about the history of Black people, since there is a narration of slavery, how Black people were treated by the white masters and their fight to be free. Then, it will give the reader an idea about the language of African Americans since the majority of the dialogs are structured in Black English as regards grammatical, syntactical, and phonological features of the language. And finally, the novel narrates something that regards the culture of African Americans since it refers to the importance of orality and communication, which is a central element for African Americans.

Moreover, the analysis of the novel, led to a conscious understanding of what Black English is and how translators can face various aspects of this language as regards music, rhythm, sounds, history, culture, and meaning. It is seen how the target text inevitably loses some elements of the source text; even tough, the translators do everything in their power to maintain and convey the author’s intentions and meanings.

Hence, the analysis gave light to a language that has always been in shadows and considered to be inferior when, actually, it is just different from the Standard; it is a language that embraces a history of segregation, and slavery which led to the development of a significant oral structure, since, particularly during slavery, people could not write and so to communicate and to survive they started to developed the Black English language at an oral level. Furthermore, the translation of Black English has always been a marginalised topic considering that books written with this language are not part of the canon, and also because Black people started to show their culture and language only during the Harlem Renaissance.

As a conclusion, the project aimed at discovering a language and culture that has always been marginalized, giving emphasis on its grammatical, syntactical, phonological features, on its culture and on its history. And not just that, but to discover how this language and culture is transferred into Italian, how difficult is it to make the Italian readers deeply understand what it is behind a book that narrates the story of a Black woman, and how many words contain so much history and culture.

Hence, the Italian translations are just a small opportunity to discover what Black English is and who Black Americans are; indeed, the translations are a key for small door that can open to the ocean of knowledge and understanding.

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ITALIAN SUMMARY

La tesi si focalizza sulla traduzione del Black English analizzando le traduzioni italiane di “Their Eyes Were Watching God” scritto da Zora Neale Hurston. Il lavoro è diviso in tre capitoli: il primo riguarda la traduzione in generale e le problematiche nel mondo della traduzione, il secondo il Black English, e l’ultimo l’analisi delle traduzioni di “Their Eyes Were Watching God” di Zora Neale Hurston.

Il primo capitolo è dedicato al mondo della traduzione, analizzando le diverse strategie utilizzate dai traduttori, il modo in cui i traduttori lavorano, l’importanza e il rispetto dell’Altro; concetti studiati nelle opere di Eco e Cavagnoli che sottolineano sia l’importanza sia le difficoltà del lavoro dei traduttori, i quali non traducono semplicemente una lingua in un’altra, ma devono considerare anche altri fattori come la cultura e la storia.

Il secondo capitolo analizza il Black English, la sua storia, come e quando si è sviluppato considerando le diverse ideologie sulla sua origine; e, nella seconda parte, esamina la grammatica, la sintassi e la fonologia sottolineando le differenze tra questa lingua e lo Standard American English studiate da Green e Rickford.

Il terzo capitolo analizza il testo “Their Eyes Were Watching God” di Zora Neale Hurston, esaminando come le traduzioni di Bottini e Prospero hanno affrontato la traduzione del Black English sia per quanto riguarda la cultura sia la lingua, e sottolineando la difficoltà nel far emergere nel testo italiano tutti gli elementi culturali, storici e linguistici presenti nell’opera analizzata.

Infine, l’obiettivo principale della tesi è quello di sottolineare a comprendere l’importanza del lavoro dei traduttori che devono tenere conto non solo della lingua, ma anche la cultura e la storia; sottolineando la complessità del lavoro nel momento in cui la traduzione riguarda una lingua come il Black English che racchiude in sé una cultura e una storia segnata da schiavitù e segregazione razziale.

