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HARLEM NOVELS IN SPANISH (1975-1981)

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The Black, U.S. writer Chester Himes (Jefferson City, Missouri, 1909-Moraira, Alicante 1984) created the Harlem series of detective novels featuring the New York Police Department crimesolvers Coffin Ed Johnson and Gravedigger Jones in 1957 while self-exiled in Paris, France. The translation of these novels into French and other languages such as Spanish provides rich material for Translation Studies scholars, especially since many were translated into French before the English source texts were published. The earliest Spanish translations, which appeared in Spain in 1967, are particularly interesting because they were published immediately after a major overhaul in the state censorship apparatus which became less stringent though it remained forceful. Shortly afterwards, especially after the dismantling of official book censorship around the time of the transition to democracy and the ratification of Spain's current constitution in 1978, Chester Himes's Harlem detective novels became popular in Spain and the positive critical reception of these novels also emerged. In this study, I will examine the last of these novels submitted to censors for "voluntary consultation," namely *El jeque de Harlem* (Barral Editores, 1975), a translation of *The Real Cool Killers* (1959), and the four translations published in rapid succession by Editorial Bruguera (1977, 1978, 1980, and 1981).

In a previous article, I examined the role of Barral Editores (Barcelona) and editor Carlos Barral (1928-1989) as a champion of Raymond Chandler's hard-boiled novels during the waning years of Francisco Franco's autocratic government and a precursor for the post-dictatorial publishing boom of Chandler novels led by Editorial Bruguera (Barcelona) (Linder, 2011a). In this article, I want to shift the focus to the extremely interesting figure of Chester Himes, who was arguably the first major Black author of hard-boiled fiction.⁽¹⁾ His Harlem series often overshadows the frequently autobiographical "protest novels" he published before 1957, including *If He Hollers Let Him Go* (1945), *Yesterday Will Make You Cry* (1952) and *The End of the Primitive* (1954). The discrimination he endured at the hands of his U.S. publishers eventually drove him to migrate to Paris, where a small group of expatriate Black writers and artists welcomed him. As an example of the unfair treatment Himes received, both *Yesterday* and *Primitive* ⁽²⁾ were drastically altered and retitled in the 1950s but were published in their original state and with their original titles in the 1990s. The Édition Gallimard Série Noire editor Marcel Duhamel, who had co-translated *Holler* in 1948, convinced Himes to apply his gritty style to a detective novel series, and Himes met the challenge successfully. His first Coffin Ed and Gravedigger novel, *For Love of Imabelle* (1957), won the Grand Prix de Littérature Policière, and *Cotton Comes to Harlem* (1964) and *The Heat's On*

(1966) were adapted for films in 1970 and 1972, respectively. In 1969, Himes published the last Harlem series novel, *Blind Man with a Pistol*, and moved from Paris to Moraira, in the Marina alta in Alicante. In Spain, he completed his two-volume autobiography, *The Quality of Hurt* (1971) and *My Life of Absurdity* (1972), which serve as first-hand resources for this study.

The first translations into Spanish of both “protest” and Harlem detective novels appeared in 1967, published by Barcelona-based Editorial Grijalbo and Plaza & Janés/G.P., respectively. Where this study picks up the story of Chester Himes’s Spanish translations is in 1975, with the Barral Editores publication of *Jeque*, and in 1977, with the first of the Editorial Bruguera translations, namely *All Shot Up/Todos Muertos*. The Harlem series novels begin to take off and then soar to popularity by the time the last Bruguera translation, *The Big Gold Dream/El gran sueño de oro*, appears in 1981.

After focusing on the censorship and publication history of *Jeque* (1975), I will focus on the censorship-free and commercially successful Editorial Bruguera translations *Todos muertos* (1977), *Ciego con una pistola* (1978) and *El gran sueño dorado* (1981), neglecting *Por amor a Imabelle* (1980) because I have already discussed this translation elsewhere (Linder, 2014). I will also discuss and provide examples from the first retranslation of a work by Himes, entitled *Empieza el calor* (1981). Examples which stress salient features of Chester Himes’s style will be chosen; these include passages containing sex or swearing, graphic depictions of violence and gore, humorous descriptions of Harlem and its inhabitants, slang usages and dialogues containing informal and substandard language.

During the short timespan when Editorial Bruguera launched its four translations and the first retranslation of the Harlem detective novels, the first critical comments on Chester Himes and this series began to appear in Spain. In the final section of this article, I will survey the critical acclaim he received in Spain from prominent figures such as Javier Coma (1980) and Salvador Vázquez de Parga (1981).

Barral Editores, 1975: A New Translation Under the Waning Franco Dictatorship

As we have already seen, the first two Harlem detective novels published appeared in Spain in 1967. As I believe is typical in the publication of serials, the sequence of the original novels was not followed in Spanish because *Cotton* and *Heat* were the sixth and seventh installments in the Coffin Ed Jones and Gravedigger Jones saga. *Killers* (1959) was the second, though in Spanish it was published before the first, *Por amor a Imabelle* (1980). It is likely that Carlos Barral chose to translate *Killers* because of its perceived literary value, as this is one of the most highly acclaimed and anthologized of the Harlem novels. The Library of America included this novel in the volume *Crime Novels: American Noir of the 1950s* (1980) along with Jim Thompson’s *The Killer Inside Me* and Patricia Highsmith’s *The Talented Mr. Ripley*. The source text examples from *Killers* are extracted from this definitive version which used Himes’s revisions rather than the in-house revisions by an Avon Publications editor prior to publication in the U.S. in 1959 (Polito, 1997: 886–87). As Jean-Marc Gouanvic has shown in the case of *Imabelle*, the U.S. paperback versions, typically published after the French translations, did not simply reprint the source text used in France but used edited versions of the English manuscripts (Gouanvic, 2011).

Killers is the story of a white man gunned down in a Harlem barfight, a crime after which a gang of young black teenagers called the Moslems help the suspected murderer escape. After the two NYPD detective protagonists discover that the murder weapon is a fake gun that only shoots blanks, they must remain on the case until it is solved.

Barral Editores filed for authorization for publication of this novel twice, on January 10, 1973 and again on July 28, 1975. In the first application, the publisher

presented a copy of the Berkley Medallion source text in English, providing a provisional, literal translation of the title (*Los fríos asesinos*) and on January 30 were asked to provide a copy of the translation prior to authorization. In 1973, censor 66 issued this comment in which the novel's denouement is revealed:

DETECTIVE NOVEL. The investigation of a crime in which the victim is a drug addict leads to the discovery that one of the young girls with whom he was involved is the daughter of one of the policemen.

It contains scenes of violence and its language is that of the Harlem underworld so it should be softened in the translation.

Otherwise, the work is perfectly publishable. It is not of special interest in any aspect.

Request translated text. (AGA, SC, box no. 73/02707, file no. 325, my translation) (3)

When they presented the Spanish translation two and a half years later, in 1975, under the definitive title of *El jeque de Harlem*, Barral Editores was told just two days later that, although the novel had low literary value, contained references of seedy crime, depicted violence very graphically and pictured police officers using improper language, the novel presented no reasons for not authorizing it. Censor number 9 issued the following report:

[This is] a crime novel whose setting is the famous black neighborhood of Harlem in New York and its protagonists [are] tough black policemen, who use all kinds of violence and means of persuasion to combat crime in that area.

The theme is the rampant crime of this neighborhood, but apart from the murder, where drugs, sadism, prostitution and several more crimes all converge, the scenes are described with excessively colorful blood and violence and with a prose that, although in slums may be normal, in a novel is excessively crude and foul as it has abundant "swearing" and puts language on the lips of the black police officers [which is] uncommon. In short, it is a bad novel, full of blood, violence and sadism, aimed at readers of low intellect, which leaves the police in a somewhat dubious place in terms of its effectiveness and fairness.

However, there are not enough reasons to recommend denunciation, so it can be considered NOT DENOUNCIABLE. (AGA, SC, box no.73/04949, file no. 8381, my translation)

The target text published by Barral Editores was translated by Mario Albarcín, who did not work from the French translation, published in 1958 as *Il pleut de coups durs* (Paris: Gallimard Série Noire), but from the Avon/Berkley paperback edition attached to the censorship file. This is the point where I would ordinarily provide some bio-bibliographical information about the translator, especially indicating if he was a professional with a number of published translations to his name. However, searches for references to this translator (with and without the accented "í") in the Spanish National Library (BNE), the Argentinian National Library (BIBNAL), the Index Translationum (UNESCO), the Library of Congress (USA) and the second-hand bookseller Iberlibro yield only the reference to this translation. Abio Villarig, in his massively important doctoral dissertation about censored into-Spanish translations published between 1931 and 1975, was also unable to provide any bibliographical information about this translator. Based on previous research related to Barral Editores translations, there exists the possibility that this name is a one-off pseudonym for a real person from Spain who was an author or translator and who had a very good command of English (Linder, 2011a, 2011b). The variety of Spanish used throughout is European and there is no record in any of the sources cited above of a previous publication of this novel in another Spanish-speaking country. The lengthy period which transpired between the first authorization request and presentation of the translation are perhaps indicative that the person chosen was not a professional translator but a writer who took longer than expected; as we shall see in the examples below, the translation is good quality. In the case of the

Spanish version of *Imabelle*, which was translated in 1975 but published in 1980, the translator was Josep Elias i Cornet, a poet from Barcelona who editor Carlos Barral described as an “external and neutral collaborator” who had helped him shortlist works for the prestigious Premio Biblioteca Breve prize at Editorial Seix Barral (Barcelona) until the editor's departure in 1969 (Barral 2017, 688). After being ousted from Seix Barral (see below), Barral poached several of “his most belligerent” former collaborators and may have asked one of those who were “most worried about an uncertain future” to translate this novel under a pseudonym (Barral, 2017: 763).

The following examples from chapter 1 contain swearing, sex-related language, graphic violence with humor, and substandard, informal language. The opening scene to the novel is typically chaotic, as Himes describes a small, very drunk Black man who is enraged by White men coming to Harlem in order to have sex with underaged girls (*diddle my little gals*). The speech of the aggressor is laden with substandard, informal pronunciation and grammar (*Ah finds, gonna*) and with swearing, though this is toned down through euphemism (*mother-raper*). He threatens a White customer with a knife, then gruesomely cuts the bartender, Big Smiley, who defends the White patron. The graphic description of the knife-torn flesh is exaggerated (*like a burst balloon*) and graphic (*opened like the Red Sea*). When the “little knifeman” lunges at Big Smiley, the bartender cuts his arm in half with a meat cleaver, after which Himes introduces humor: the man is looking for his severed arm in order to get the knife back and continue using it.

Table 1. EN>ES translations of three extracts from Chester Himes’s *The Real Cool Killers* (1959) / *El jeque de Harlem* (1975, trans. Mario Albarcín)

| <i>Killers</i> (1959) | <i>Jeque</i> (1975) (trans. Mario Albarcín) |
|--|--|
| The little knifeman stopped two paces in front of him and said, "Efn' Ah finds me some white mother-raper up here on my side of town trying to diddle my little gals Ah'm gonna cut his throat." (Himes, 1997: 734). | El hombrecillo de la navaja se paró a dos pasos de él y dijo: —Si encuentro a un hijo puta blanco en mi lado de la ciudad tratando de tirarse a mis niñas, le rajo la garganta. (Himes, 1975: 9) |
| The knifeman twisted in his grip and slashed [Big Smiley] across the arm. The white fabric of his jacket sleeve parted like a burst balloon and his black-skinned muscles opened like the Red Sea . Blood spurted. (Himes, 1997: 735) | El hombrecillo logró girarse a pesar de su posición y le dio un navajazo en el brazo. El tejido blanco de la manga se abrió como un globo reventado y sus negros músculos se abrieron como el Mar Rojo. Brotó la sangre. (Himes, 1975: 10) |
| [The knifeman] saw that the lower part of his arm had been chopped off; he saw Big Smiley drawing back the redhandled axe. He thought Big Smiley was going to chop at him again. "Wait a minute, you big mother-raper , 'til Ah finds my arm!" he | Por fin se dio cuenta de que su antebrazo había desaparecido. Vio a Big Smiley blandir de nuevo el hacha de mango rojo. Pensó que iba a atacarle de nuevo. —¡Espera un poco, gran hijo puta , que encuentre mi brazo! —gritó. ¡Tengo la navaja en esa mano! (Himes, 1975: 11) |

| |
|---|
| yelled. "It got my knife in his hand." (Himes, 1997: 737) |
|---|

In Albarcín's translation, the swearing and the graphic descriptions of violence are complete and effective, though none of the features of the knifeman's colloquial and informal pronunciation and grammar are transmitted. The translated swearing is particularly effective as the expression "hijo puta" (son of a bitch) reflects a commonly shortened way of saying the highly offensive insult "hijo de puta". This is a unique target-language feature that, in my opinion, intensifies "mother-raper" because the Spanish expression is an actual insult, rather than an invented one (English native speakers recognize this as "mother-fucker" but would never say the euphemized form in real life), and because the use of the expression without the preposition is very culturally attuned to the target text audience. However, the expression "gran hijo de puta" rather than "hijo de la gran puta" sounds forced and artificial. As we have already seen, at this late stage in the Franco regime, the censors found nothing wrong with this, despite the fact that Spanish censors tended to focus on offenses to moral decency and religion. For further information about translation in the final days of the Franco regime, see Gómez Castro (2016; 2013).

Though the two retranslations of this novel are beyond the scope of this article, a detailed examination of the publishing contexts and a comparison across all three texts would yield interesting results. *La banda de los musulmanes*, translated by Rafael Aguilar Maldonado for Ediciones Forum (Barcelona) in 1983 is an illustrated edition with 15 captioned illustrations by Fernando Enríquez. When the knifeman makes his first threat, he says "Cuando encuentro a un blanco hijo de perra en este lado de la ciudad, tratando de seducir a mis chiquitas, siempre estoy dispuesto a rebanarle el pescuezo" [When I find a white son of a bitch on this side of the city, trying to seduce my little girls, I am always ready to slice open his throat] (Himes, 1983: 4, my translation). In 2010, a third translator, Alex Alonso Valle, produced another retranslation for Ediciones Akal (Tres Cantos, Madrid) using the same title. In an attempt to capture the uniqueness of the Harlem speech patterns, the translator omitted some final consonants and agglutinated words using the apostrophe: "Si pillo a'lгүйн blanco hijoputa aquí'n mi lao de la ciudá intentando jugá con mis nenitas voy a rajarle'l cuello" [If I find sum white sum'bitch here'n my side of the city tryin'a play with my babes I'm gonna slit 'is throat] (Himes, 2010: 21, my translation).

I describe Barral Editores as a precursor, or frontrunner, of Editorial Bruguera because immediately after the short-lived publishing firm slowed the pace of its publications in the late 1970s and ceased publication in 1982 (Bonet Mójica and Suárez Toledano, 2019: 1), Bruguera began reissuing the translations previously published in Barral's Serie Negra Policial, as was the case with four novels by Raymond Chandler (Linder, 2011b), at the same time that it commissioned new translations and several retranslations, as we shall see was the case with Chester Himes. Barral Editores, S.A. was founded in the fall of 1969 and immediately had to begin developing a catalogue entirely of its own, with no association with Seix Barral. Carlos Barral established several new collections, among which was the Serie Negra Policial, and established a new literary prize, the Premio Barral, which was devised to rival with Seix Barral's Premio Biblioteca Breve, which Carlos had so painstakingly forged into the premier prize for vanguard authors from Spain and Latin America. During the early years, the new publishing house moved out of Barral's apartment eventually to its premises in the Calle Balmes, in Barcelona, and attempted to reconstruct an innovative catalogue despite the pressure from government censors and from his economic backers (Suárez Toledano, 2021: 1). During these first years, Barral was supported by committed "collaborators" and by a distribution network, Distribuciones Enlace, forged by a number of smaller publishers. The Serie Negra policial had successive numbering and the series was also integrated into Enlace's Ediciones de Bolsillo (Pocket Books) collection, so each book had double numbering (*Jeque* (1975) is SN number 59 and EB number 429). Suárez Toledano points to Chester Himes as one of the "most significant" authors

published by Barral Editores during its existence (2021, 1). However, as Barral himself laments about the last days of Barral Editores, "The disoriented whale that was Editorial Labor would swiftly end up swallowing and burying the catalogue and programs of the smaller and wiser young company" (Barral, 2016: 836, my translation). All of Barral Editores' rights passed to Editorial Labor (Barcelona), which had been part owner since 1974.

Although *Jeque* (trans. Mario Albarcín) was never reissued nor retranslated by Bruguera, there are several strong links between the pioneering efforts of Barral Editores in publishing Spanish translations of the Harlem novels by Chester Himes and the immediately subsequent initiatives by Editorial Bruguera which became extremely popular. The first of these strong links is the previously mentioned publication of *Por amor a Imabelle* (Bruguera, 1980), studied by Linder (2014). In his translator's prologue, called "Sobre la traducción" [Regarding the Translation], the translator and Barral collaborator Josep Elias says "This translation [was] made five years ago and not published [until now] for reasons beyond my control" (1980: 9, my translation). What he is certainly referring to are the waning years of Barral Editores, when, according to Carlos Barral, "The panorama, after all, was not conducive for creativity and everyone began walking around with their tails between their legs. The board meetings began to seem like funerals and practically all new business had been suspended" (2017: 831–32, my translation).

We know that it was Barral Editores who first applied for authorization of *For Love of Imabelle* (using the title *Harlem en furia*) to the government censors on April 16, 1973. On May 5, Barral was told that the novel was "AUTORIZABLE" but that it was "advisable to present the translated text which will be used to make any recommendations that may be necessary". In her report, censor M. Dolores Molera [or Molesa] summarizes the plot and issues the following verdict: "Both the surroundings where the novel takes place and the language used are extremely vulgar and gawdy, the novel as a whole is quite realistic both in terms of the description of places and in the depiction of the depraved characters" (AGA, SC, box no. 73/03032, file no. 4752, my translation). As we have seen above, Barral presented the translation in 1975 and obtained official authorization. In 1973, Barral Editores also filed for authorization of *All Shot Up* and *The Big Gold Dream* and was given the same verdict as for *Imabelle/Furia*, namely "authorizable" and "publishable," respectively, though the censors demanded the into-Spanish translations prior to final authorization. Despite Barral's many requests for authorization, only *Jeque* (1975) was ever published. Only two years later, after the death of Francisco Franco, Bruguera presented to the censors the translations of *El gran sueño de oro* in 1977 and of *Ciego con una pistola* in 1981 (see below) and certainly benefitted from the precedent-setting favorable rulings that Barral had received. The censorship system during those post-Franco, transition-to-democracy years (1975–1978) was much less fearful than in the early 1970s, and after 1981 there is no other record of Bruguera depositing any other Himes novels with the censors. In the following section, we will analyze these translations and the Editorial Bruguera series in which they appeared, the "Serie Novela Negra".

The Bruguera Boom (1977–1981): New Translations

In his autobiography, Chester Himes regretted to say that in 1967 he could find none of his books in the stores in Spain, where he was planning to settle after living for over a decade in Paris (1976: 363–64). However, beginning in 1977 and carrying on into the 1980s his books were everywhere. Apart from *Imabelle* (1975), which we have discussed above, Bruguera produced three other new translations and one retranslation, all of which circulated widely. Himes's poor health after suffering a stroke and his death in 1984 prevented him from enjoying this popularity during his final years spent in Moraira, Alicante. In this section, we will look at how Bruguera's Serie Novela Negra was formed, how Himes's Harlem series novels were among the first and finest contributors to the series and how these novels were translated into Spanish. The role of Argentinean translators, exiled in Spain after the Videla-led

dictatorship began in 1976, and their use of standard, peninsular Spanish rather than their own Latin American variety will be discussed.

Let's start with the large influx of Argentinian writers, intellectuals, artists into Barcelona mostly starting in 1976. In the 2011 issue of *1611: A Journal of Translation History*, fellow researcher Alejandrina Falcón discussed the arrival of exiles from Argentina into Editorial Bruguera as one of the driving forces behind the publishing boom that popularized significant authors of hard-boiled fiction in Spanish translation, including Chester Himes. As we shall see below, only Argentinian translators created new translations and retranslations of Himes's works during the "Bruguera boom" from 1977 to 1981, and all of them were engaged by Juan Carlos Martini, founder and director of the Serie novela negra policiaca collection, and Ricardo Rodrigo, General Director of Editorial Bruguera, both Argentinians. According to Falcón, "the novela negra 'boom' in Spain can productively be mapped against the influx of Latin Americans into the cultural circles and the publishing houses in Catalonia at the end of the 1970s; this phenomenon is also closely linked with the crisis of the Argentinian publishing industry and the exodus of a large number of writers, translators, journalists and editors, both before and during the dictatorship [in Argentina]" (Falcón, 2011, my translation). In this section, we will focus in on the bio-bibliographies of four translators (Ana Goldar, Ana Becciu, Carlos Peralta and Marcelo Cohen) and analyze samples of their translations of Chester Himes's Harlem detective series.

In 2018, Falcón published a complete study of the translations/translators for Bruguera's Serie Novela Negra, some relevant results of which I would like to share now. Although the two-prong pattern of re-issuing translations previously published in Argentina and commissioning new translations in Spain had been detected by Linder (2011b) and Abio (2013), Falcón provides a wide range of new data and resources, including a complete list of the collection's titles with an indication of the provenance of the translation (either re-issued from Argentina or new translation in Spain), several individual translator profiles, and observations about the Castillian variety which these translators were made to use instead of their native Argentinian variety. The list shows that between 1977 and 1983, 35 out of 84 (42%) translations were re-issued editions of works previously published in Argentina; there was a particularly high concentration of re-editions between 1978 and 1981, with imports numbering 27 out of 51 (53%). The majority of these re-issues had appeared in hard-boiled and literary collections such as Séptimo Círculo (Emecé), Los libros del Mirasol (Fábril Editora), Serie Negra (Tiempo Contemporáneo), and Club del Misterio (Jacobo Muchnik), all located in Buenos Aires. Juan Carlos Martini wrote prologues for the first fifty books in the Serie Novela Negra collection (the remaining novels have no prologue), but none of them mention that any of the Bruguera editions were imports from Argentina nor that they were new translations by Argentinians in Catalonia (Falcón, 2018: 125). A total of 12 out of 84 new translations were produced by Argentinian expatriates, with a particular concentration in the first two years, 1977-1978, with 10 out of 25 (40%), and few after 1980. All in all, 47 out of 84 translations (56%) were either reedited translations previously published in Argentina or new translations produced by Argentinians who had emigrated to Barcelona. The Spanish translation of *All Shot up*, by Ana Goldar (*Todos Muertos*, 1977), and *Blind Man with a Pistol*, by Ana María Becciu (*Un ciego con una pistola*, 1978), were produced during the first two intense years and were number 8 and 17 in the series, whereas the translations of *The Big Gold Dream*, by Carlos Peralta (*El gran sueño de oro*, 1981), and the retranslation of *The Heat's On*, by Marcelo Cohen (*Empieza el calor*, 1981), were produced during the last three years and were number 53 and 60, respectively. None of these four Spanish translations had been published previously in Argentina or elsewhere. The translators were braving the choppy waters of Himes' complex Harlem setting and personages for the very first time. Despite the undeniable large presence of Argentinian translations/translators in the Bruguera Serie Novela Negra collection, the contributions by Catalan and Spanish translations/translators was also very significant (44%).

The Argentinian translators were in demand because they knew a much wider range of languages than the local Spanish translators and they produced high quality work (Falcón, 2018: 198–99). However, Latin Americanisms were not allowed: “Translation and post-translation style revision were mostly focused on eradicating from both the re-editions and ad hoc translations all traces of Argentinianisms, Latin Americanisms and Catalanisms” (Falcón, 2018: 121–22, my translation). Their translations were style-revised, though there were several who could write in Castilian Spanish and did not need to be revised. Ana María Becciu, for example, collected a higher fee per translation because her work needed no revision, but she refused to accept the task of “Castilianizing Argentinian translations” delivered by others (Falcón, 2018: 199, 209, my translation). Typical Argentinian lexis needed to be avoided (anteojos negros/gafas de sol=sunglasses; auto/coche=car; saco/abrigo=coat...) and the use of the typical second-person singular pronoun “vos” and the plural pronoun “Ustedes” both needed to be omitted in favor of the Castilian “tú” and “vosotros”. Even though this process of style revision was carried out during this entire period, it was less systematic than it could have been because “all translations were adapted to Castilian Spanish, or a close imitation of it, or to what the revisors, in many cases Argentinians or Catalan native speakers, imagined was ‘Castilian Spanish’” (Falcón, 2018: 121, my translation).

In the following four sections, we are going to present two examples from each of these novels containing the use of the word “nigger”, sexually explicit language referring to the female body, the swear words “shit” and “fuck” as well as the euphemism “mother-raper”, slang terms related to prostitution and cocaine and heroin use, and an expressive, literary passage, and the into-Castilian translations by the Argentinian translators will be analyzed.

Even after the death of Franco in 1975, the censorship system continued to chug along during the transition to democracy (1975-1977) and beyond the ratification of the Constitution in 1978. Rather than disappear suddenly, this invasive system of ideological control’s power of influence gradually faded away. Even after the ratification of the Constitution, which guaranteed freedom of expression, publishers continued to use the system and the censors continued to respond. All of the Bruguera translations (1977-1981) were “deposited” with the censors, a modality established in the 1966 Press Law that allowed publishers simply to provide the authorities with a number of copies of the commercially available print editions. As we have seen above, in 1973, Barral Editores had requested the other available option, i. e. “voluntary consultation,” and these novels obtained tentative authorization, though Barral was asked to provide the into-Spanish translations. Starting just four years later, in 1977, Bruguera deposited their translations of *Shot* and *Gold* as well as those of *Blind* and *Heat* without “voluntary consultation”. All of the Bruguera translations were approved in a maximum of three or four days, a very swift turnover compared to 20-30 days for the Barral requests, and all of them received positive reports. Because the censors did not recommend any suppressions nor modifications, no mention of their reports will be included below. When detected, however, we will mention and discuss potential cases of self-censorship in the examples selected.

Finally, I hope to provide some visibility to the work performed by this group of translators, even though they are misrepresented by a variety that was imposed on them. The expatriot Argentinian translators' voices will come through clearly, though they are inevitably mediated by their adopted Castilian variety of Spanish rather than their native variety.

I also want to offer the fullest possible version of Chester Himes's voice to shine through by choosing a range of examples which exemplify the literary style he used in the Harlem detective series. In each subsection below, a brief plot summary and a presentation of the examples chosen will precede each table, followed by a brief bio-bliographical note on each translator and an analysis of their conditioned translation choices.

All Shot Up (1959) / Todos muertos (trans. Ana Goldar, 1977)

Harlem political boss Casper Holmes is robbed of a briefcase with 50,000 dollars in a vicious attack. During Gravedigger Jones & Coffin Ed Johnson's investigation of the "Casper caper," a bodyguard is stabbed through the head from temple to temple with a massive knife but gruesomely keeps walking zombie-like down the street. In the end, Holmes had arranged the robbery with a gang of two Black perpetrators and a racist White thug, then he double-crossed the robbers. The two Harlem detectives recover the stolen money and donate it to charity.

In the first example below, the unnamed White man from Mississippi who Holmes hired to steal the money from his political party telephones Holmes's wife, Leila, and threatens her using the derogatory word "nigger". Trying to show her resilience, she uses the similarly derogatory word "peckerwood", a term similar to *cracker* or *redneck*. In the second example, the same man uses the same denigrating term to question the two Black members of his gang, and they turn against him, taking sides with the captive Leila rather than with the White leader of the gang who had used the term to insult them and their race.

Table 2. EN>ES translations of two extracts from Chester Himes's *All Shot up* (1959) / *Todos muertos* (trans. Ana Goldar, 1977)

| <i>Shot</i> (1959) | <i>Muertos</i> (1977) (trans. Ana Goldar) |
|---|---|
| <p>'He is in a coma,' she contended.</p> <p>'If he wants any of his fifty G's back, he better come out of it,' the voice said. 'And nigger-quick.'</p> <p>The use of the epithet steadied her fear and scalded her with rage.</p> <p>'Who are you, you mother-raping peckerwood,' she flared.</p> <p>An evil chuckle came over the wire. 'I'm the man who can help him get his money back — for a split,' the voice said. (Himes, 1978a: 127)</p> | <p>—Aún está en coma —insistió.</p> <p>—Si él quiere recuperar una parte de los cincuenta mil, siquiera, será mejor que se mueva de allí — advirtió la voz—. Y más de prisa que un negro sucio.</p> <p>Esa expresión paralizó el temor de Leila Homes y lo cambió por un arrebató de ira.</p> <p>—¿Quién eres tú, bastardo idiota? —gritó casi.</p> <p>Un chasquido maligno le llegó a través del auricular.</p> <p>—Soy el hombre que puede ayudarle a recuperar su dinero... a cambio de una parte — explicó la voz. (Himes, 1977: 167)</p> |
| <p>The white man halted but kept staring at Leila without turning around. 'What's the matter with you niggers?' he said. 'The bitch has got to be silenced; and we ain't got all night to fool around.'</p> <p>The word nigger estranged him. Where before they were divided by a woman, now they were separated by race. Neither of the colored men moved or spoke (Himes, 1978a: 155).</p> | <p>El blanco se detuvo, pero no se volvió y mantuvo los ojos fijos en Leila.</p> <p>—¿Qué hay con vosotros, negros? —dijo—. La bruja tiene que callar para siempre y no tenemos toda la noche para hacer tonterías.</p> <p>La palabra negro le hizo perder terreno. Antes estaban divididos por una mujer. Ahora los separaba</p> |

la raza. Ninguno de los hombres de color se movió ni dijo una palabra (Himes, 1977: 201)

In the prologue for the eighth novel published in the Serie Novela Negra, Juan Carlos Martini remarks on the realism of Himes's portrayal of Harlem and on the diverse points of view from which the narrative voice describes the borough and the two main detective characters. "The streets of Harlem are full of dead cats and rats, frozen by the cold; of garbage and junk; of homosexuals, thieves, prostitutes and grifters. [...] Apparently, life [there] makes no sense. No one is shocked by the sight of a man walking blindly down the street with a knife pierced through his head. Horror, in Harlem, is so overwhelming that it can seem grotesque" (Martini, 1977: 6, my translation).

The translator, Ana Goldar, who later signed her translations under the name Ana Poljak, was a profesor of Latin and a profesional translator of Horatio, Virgil and Petronius in Argentina. Since her exile in Spain in 1975, she translated widely, including authors such as Eric Ambler, Leonardo Sciascia, Henry Miller, Isaac Asimov, Ursula Le Guin, and Joseph Conrad (Falcón, 2018: 204–5). In the Bruguera Serie Novela Negra, she also translated Dashiell Hammett (the first novel in the series was her translation of *Red Harvest*, called *Dinero sangriento*) and Horace McCoy. Of the first nine translations in the series, four were authored by her.

Goldar's translation appeared in six subsequent editions, including the first volume of an anthology of Himes's "complete works" along with Marcelo Cohen's translation of *Heat* (*Empieza el calor*, 1981, see below), the most recent of which was published in 2005. As we have already mentioned, this translation was not previously published in Argentina nor anywhere else, so this is the first Spanish translation of this novel. No retranslation of this novel into Spanish has ever been made, so it is the version used even today.

As far as Goldar's translations of "nigger" are concerned, in the first instance she manages to capture some of the derogatory nature of this term by adding a negative adjective ("quicker than a dirty black," my translation), however in the second instance there is no similar adjective modifying the noun so as to make it seem a grave insult to the two black sidekicks ("What's wrong with you blacks?" my translation). The insult had to be so serious that the two subordinates decided to stand together against their racist leader. However, the Spanish translation of "estranged" is "lose ground," which in my view denotes a more relative, negotiable relation rather than the absolute, non-negotiable break up that would lead to a shoot-out immediately afterwards. Had Goldar repeated the negative adjective "sucio," I believe that she could have created a co-textual connection and also added gravity to the insult ("¿Qué hay con vosotros, negros sucios?" / "What's wrong with you dirty blacks?" my translation), although this dialogue turn does not sound very natural.

An examination of the also derogatory term "peckerwood," which is "a derogatory nickname for a Caucasian" (Spears, 1982: 304), especially "a poor, Southern white" (Chapman, 1986: 318), derived from "the red woodpecker, symbol of Whites, rather than the black crow, symbol of Blacks" (Green, 2002: 901) allows us to observe again the treatment Goldar uses for denigrating racial terms and also a comparison between Goldar and Albarcín's solutions for "mother-raping". No English>Spanish standard dictionaries (Collins, Simon and Schuster, Cambridge, Oxford) nor bilingual dictionaries of slang (Amaltea, Ediciones del Serbal) offer any help. Goldar's use of "bastardo" omits entirely the racial connotations of the insult and is uncommon in Spain, especially when collocated with "idiota." Comparatively, Albarcín's translation of "mother-raping" as "hijo puta" is indeed natural and common, particularly since he omitted the preposition "de" from the less intense expression "hijo de puta".

Blind Man with a Pistol (1969) / Un ciego con una pistola (trans. Ana María Becciu, 1977)

In the final installment of Chester Himes's Harlem detective series, Coffin Ed Johnson and Grave Digger Jones aim to solve the crime of a White man who was killed inside a secret basement room in a shabby apartment complex. During the course of a few swelteringly hot summer days, the detectives are hindered by a riot that occurred when the marches organized by three conflicting groups, i.e. the Brotherhood, Black Jesus Baby, and Black Power, converge at a major intersection and lead to social unrest and looting that lasted for days. They locate the murderer, a Black homosexual who did not like the White man coming up to Harlem for sexual perversion with underage boys, but they cannot locate the instigator of the riots. The novel ends with an incident in which a Black blind man in the New York subway begins shooting a pistol randomly, causing an irrational, cataclismic scene.

The examples here contain an example of swearing, with the use of "shit," "fuck," and "mother-raper" as well as a sexually explicit description of a woman's pubic hair. In this final installment, Himes makes more frequent use of "shit" (36 tokens, including one emphatically enhanced "shittt") and "fuck" (5 tokens). It is important to note that *Blind* was one of the first published in translation but was one of the last published in English, so the frequency of swearing is much higher and more intense. In *Heat* (1966), Himes used "shit" 10 times (including *bullshit* and *chickenshit*) and "fuck" once (*fucked-up*); in *Cotton* (1965), he used "shit" 10 times and "fuck" only once. No Harlem novel before 1965 uses either of these swear words even once. The euphemism "mother-raper" is used relatively consistently from the earlier novels, with an average of 10.2 tokens per novel, but *Blind* has a clearly heightened total of 41 occurrences. In the second example in the table below, this expression is used twice in close proximity.

Himes's use of sex-related language seems to have been heightened in this last hurrah novel as well. Not only are the specific mentions of the female genital area frequent, but the use of sexually loaded language primes the reader for graphic visualizations of the female body and sexual intercourse. Here is an example of the way Himes uses a word, "ejaculation," that can have more than one meaning (*blurt out, spurt semen*):

He looked directly at her [...], his bright red eyes stripping off her clothes and looking directly between her thighs.
"Yeh!" He might have said, "Yeh, man!"
The ejaculation made her start guiltily. She closed her legs and blushed (Himes, 1986: 42).

Himes intentionally primes the reader to interpret the sexual meaning, and he does the same thing with frequent uses of the word "crotch" (nine times), which can have the descriptive meaning of "the area below where the legs join the torso" versus the sexualized meaning of the human reproductive organ in the same location. Here is an example:

With one deft motion the sweating brown woman took off her black lace panties, triumphantly waving them in the air. Tight black curls ran down to her crotch, forming a patch the size of a fielder's glove against the lighter tint of her belly skin (Himes 1986, 148–49).

In the first example below, Himes gives the reader a risqué descriptive glimpse of a semi-nude female prostitute's body. In the second example, we can see two instances of "mother-raper," which will again allow comparison with previous translators' efforts to tackle this euphemism.

Table 3. EN>ES translations of two extracts from Chester Himes's *The Big Gold dream* (1968 [1960]) / *El gran sueño de oro* (trans. Carlos Peralta, 1981)

| <i>Blind</i> (1986 [1969]) | <i>Ciego</i> (1975) (trans. Ana María Becciu) |
|---|---|
| <p>"You? Barbara! Somebody with you?" his voice came out in a whisper.</p> <p>"Shit, naw, do you think I'd bring 'em here?" she said in a softly modulated voice which jarred shockingly with the words.</p> <p>"Well, what the fuck are you doing here?" he said in a loud coarse voice that made him sound like another man altogether. "I sent you to work the cocktail party at the Americana."</p> <p>She came into the room with the waft of woman smell. Her voluptuous brown body was covered loosely by a pink silk robe which showed a line of brown belly and a black growth of pubic hair (Himes, 1986: 57).</p> | <p>—¿Tú? ¡Bárbara! ¿Hay alguien contigo? —casi susurró la pregunta.</p> <p>—Mierda! ¡No! ¿Crees que les traigo aquí? —dijo con voz suavemente modulada que vibró al pronunciar estas palabras.</p> <p>—Bueno, ¿qué diablos haces aquí? —preguntó en voz alta y basta, que le convirtió en otro hombre—. Te envié a trabajar en el cocktail del Americana.</p> <p>Entró en la habitación dejando en el aire un olor a mujer. Su cuerpo voluptuoso apenas cubierto por una bata de seda rosa dejaba ver la línea de su vientre y el nacimiento del pubis (Himes, 1978b: 67).</p> |
| <p>The barbecue man [...] he noticed some of his ribs were missing. He reached underneath his pit and took out a long iron poker.</p> <p>"What one of you mother-rapers stole my ribs?" he asked, looking mean and dangerous.</p> <p>No one replied.</p> <p>"If I catch a mother-raper stealing my ribs, I'll knock out his brains," he threatened (Himes, 1986: 79).</p> | <p>El hombre de la barbacoa [...] se dio cuenta que faltaba una costilla. Buscó debajo de la barbacoa y sacó un hurgón de hierro.</p> <p>—Quién de vosotros, hijos de puta, me robó una costilla? —preguntó, con expresión mezquina y peligrosa.</p> <p>Nadie contestó.</p> <p>—Si le cojo robando mis costillas, le machacaré los sesos —amenazó (Himes, 1978b: 92).</p> |

In his prologue, Juan Carlos Martini stresses how Himes had opened up a space for non-White hard-boiled narratives and narrators, a space "outside" of the world of white detective fiction, where the lives, customs and language depicted were uniquely Black. He had impressed this novel with the superimposed plurality of black voices, conflicting ideologies and means of resistance that made Harlem "another" world "without conventional solutions" (Martini 1978, 6, my translation). He assures the readers of the series that in Himes's novel they "will find a different language, that of a world and a culture whose intimate details we knew nothing about. There, in Harlem, also a symbol of another kind of madness, there are no solutions" (Martini, 1978: 7, my translation).

Ana María Becciu was a poet who had translated occasionally in Argentina then became of professional translator between 1970 and 1980 (Falcón 2018, 207–8). She also translated Wade Miller for Bruguera and worked for a number of other publishers in Spain. Becciu's translation appeared in nine subsequent editions, the most recent of which was published in 2017. Since 2008, five of these editions were

published by RBA (Barcelona), which is curious because of the person behind RBA up until today: Ricardo Rodrigo, former Argentinian managing director of Bruguera. This is the only Spanish translation of this novel to ever have been produced and it is still used today. As we have already mentioned, Becciu's Castillian Spanish did not need to be revised, though as we will point out below, a pattern of attenuation and omission can be detected in all cases.

In the case of the swear words, "mierda" and "qué diablos" are less intense, i.e. attenuated. The first is not nearly as strong as the English source text, as it belongs to the range of weak curse words like "shoot" or "crap," and the latter, meaning "What the devil!" is also a low intensity swear word in the range of "hell" or "damn."

The phrase "a line of brown belly and a black growth of pubic hair" is two words shorter than "la línea de su vientre y el nacimiento del pubis" [the line of her belly and the beginning of her pubic mound], and glaringly missing from this description are the colors "brown" and "black," very important in the description of the Black prostitute character who goes on to try to seduce her pimp. "Nacimiento" (the birth, or the beginning) adequately paints a picture of what lies below her belly, though there is no reference to her hair at all, which is likely more enticing for the character she is speaking to than her pubis, or pubic mound.

The pattern of attenuation and omission continues in the second example, where "hijos de puta" is less intense than "hijo puta" (see *Jeque*, table 1). In addition, the second instance of "mother-raper" is entirely missing.

The Big Gold Dream (1960)/El gran sueño de oro (trans. Carlos Peralta, 1981)

A woman who won 36,000 dollars in a numbers game is drugged while being baptized during a revival meeting led by Sweet Prophet, a charismatic con man, but reappears alive and well short a time afterwards without her money. Coffin Ed Johnson and Gravedigger Jones decide to track down anyone with "a big roll of fresh money" at the same time as other Harlem characters such as 'Dummy,' a mute pimp with two "chippies," and Sugar Stonewall, the victim's husband, are also hunting for the missing money. As it turned out, the woman had given her "roll" to the preacher, who was going to keep a percentage then return it to her.

The examples chosen are of criminal slang terms which are defined within the example itself and an exaggerated, humorous description of a snoring man whose sleep is disturbed by a fly. Himes's use of the slang terms "to Georgia someone" (v) and "to send someone to Georgia" in *Gold* are the very first examples listed for the entry in Lighter's *Historical Dictionary of American Slang, Vol. 1 (A-G)*. Though Lighter does not specifically credit Himes with the invention of the term, he does seem to derive the definition from the first recorded usage in *Gold*: "to swindle (esp. a prostitute)" (Lighter, 1994: 880). What is surprising about Dummy as a pimp is that he must either write everything he says or speak through a sign language interpreter, using communication skills which seem incongruent for a go-between.

In the second example, the description of Sugar Stonewall's snoring is humorously exaggerated and compared to the sound of buffaloes drinking and the volume of an electric circular saw (>80dB). Not only is the description humorous because of the noise he makes snoring but also because of his obliviousness to the pesky fly and also to a dangerous, armed man who shoos the fly away and searches his pockets without waking him. His open mouth is described as a crater and the fly as a sort of fearful diver about to leap into the cavity of his mouth.

Table 4. EN>ES translations of two extracts from Chester Himes's *The Big Gold dream* (1968 [1960]) / *El gran sueño de oro* (trans. Carlos Peralta, 1981)

| <i>Gold</i> (1976 [1960]) | <i>Dorado</i> (1981) |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
|---------------------------|----------------------|

| | (trans. Carlos Peralta) |
|---|---|
| <p>She was a thin girl, with small breasts, and her thin black face was wet with tears and ugly from crying. [...]</p> <p>He Georgiaed me," the girl told Dummy hysterically. "He sent me to Georgia."</p> <p>Sugar couldn't help but hear her. He knew she meant that a man she had taken to her room had shown her some money, but afterwards had refused to pay her. He was surprised to learn that Dummy was trying to pimp (Himes, 1968: 56).</p> | <p>Era una chica delgada y de pechos pequeños, y su carita negra estaba afeada por el llanto y cubierta de lágrimas. [...]</p> <p>—Me mandó a Georgia! —le dijo la chica a Dummy, históricamente. ¡Me mandó a Georgia!</p> <p>Sugar no podía hacer otra cosa que escuchar. Sabía qué quería decir: el hombre que había llevado a su habitación le había mostrado dinero, pero después se había negado a pagar. Le extrañó que Dummy se hubiese iniciado como chulo (Himes, 1981a: 85).</p> |
| <p>Twenty minutes later he was snoring loud and steadily. When he exhaled, his snores sounded like a herd of buffalos drinking water; when he inhaled they sounded like a round saw cutting through a fat pine knot. His mouth was open, and a bottle fly was crawling about the crater as though trying to get up the nerve to take the plunge (Himes, 1968: 108).</p> | <p>Veinte minutos más tarde roncaba fuerte y regularmente. Cuando exhalaba aire, producía el ruido de un rebaño de búfalos abrevando; cuando inspiraba, el de una sierra circular que da contra un grueso nudo de pino. Tenía la boca abierta, y una mosca recorría el verde borde del cráter como si estuviera reuniendo valor para zambullirse (Himes, 1981a: 168).</p> |

Carlos Peralta's translation was number 53 in the Serie Novela Negra collection and had no prologue. Peralta was a writer-translator who had started his career in the 1970s in Argentina, where several of his works had been published, and he then became particularly successful as a translator of science fiction for a number of publishing houses in Spain (Falcón, 2011). His version of *Gold* was first published in 1981, then re-issued by Orbis (Barcelona) in volume 37 of its "Grandes maestros del crimen y misterio" (The Great Masters of Crime and Mystery) along with *Calor* (trans. Marcelo Cohen, see below) and two other translated Himes novels.

Peralta chooses to use the exact same literally translated slang term "me mandó a Georgia" twice rather than attempt to mimic the variation of the source text (*to Georgia someone/to send someone to Georgia*). Because Himes had provided the definition in his source text, the meaning of the slang term in Spanish is clear. Peralta writes that "[Sugar] was surprised that Dummy had started pimping," which seems to omit the reference to how much of a challenge it was for Dummy, i.e. he was "trying to" pimp. The narrative voice in English seems to suggest that Dummy was less than successful and had not yet established himself in that vocation because of his inability to speak, whereas the Spanish narrator states that he had already started this illegal activity.

In the case of the humorous description in example 2, the translator is effective in transmitting the image of buffalos at a watering hole and of the fly as a diver who lacks the courage to jump into the void ("as if it was gathering up the courage to dive in," my translation). Peralta adds the descriptive adjective "green" to describe the crater of Sugar Stonewall's mouth.

The Tail End of the Bruguera Boom (1981): The First Retranslation of Himes

The fourth and final new translation published by Bruguera was a retranslation, i.e. a subsequent translation in the same directionality (EN>ES) as a previously published translation. In 1967, *Heat* (1959) had been published in Spanish translation by Plaza & Janés/G.P. in an anthological volume also containing *Cotton* (1965) using Spanish versions by Eduardo Mallorquí del Corral and Francisco Elías, respectively. Only fourteen years later, a retranslation of *Heat* was published. Abio points to several reasons why an earlier translation by Elías, that of Ed McBain's novel *The Mugger* (1956), had also been retranslated into Spanish only thirteen years after the first translation. A translator of bestselling authors such as Harold Robbins and Evan Hunter and hard-boiled authors such as Mickey Spillane, Francisco Elías penned more than fifty translations from English and also French. However, Abio calls his translation competence "low," describing his versión of McBain's novel, *El atracador* (Plaza & Janés, 1962) as "hilarious" since it greatly intensifies the slang, colloquializes the register, attenuates the moral and ideological contents and contains a number of serious errors (Abio Villarig, 2013: 378, my translation). Perhaps the most incongruent aspect of Elías's work is that it both "adds text everywhere", from annotations and explicitations to personal interpretations and opinions, yet it also contains omissions (Abio Villarig, 2013: 378). According to Abio, Elías "intensifies the slang to the point where he converts the TT into a mere litany of slang expressions which are impossible to understand for the majority of readers" (Abio Villarig 2013, 378, my translation). His appendix 5 contains many examples of Elías's ill-fated work; in 1975 *The Mugger* was retranslated into Spanish by Carlos Paytuví also as *El atracador* (Luis de Caralt).

In *Heat*, a gaggle of drug dealers and addicts chase after a three-million-dollar shipment of heroin that has gone missing. Before the investigation is finished, twelve people are left dead. At the beginning of the investigation, Gravedigger Jones and Coffin Ed Johnson are suspended for brutalizing a minor drug dealer, then Gravedigger Jones is taken to the hospital with a very serious gunshot wound and his death is announced on the radio, leaving Coffin Ed alone to solve the case. In the end, a giant black albino drug addict called Pinky had inadvertently thrown the shipment of "H" into an incinerator, so the deaths of all who were searching for the shipment had been in vain. Gravedigger Jones's death had been broadcast as a ruse to flush out the criminals.

In the first example, the narrator describes how Pinky prepares a "speedball," an intravenous drug injection of liquified cocaine and heroin. At the end of the example, slang terms such as "spike" (needle), "bang oneself" (inject oneself) and "C and H" (cocaine and heroin) are used in close proximity.

In the second example, Coffin Ed curses the two drug-addicted thugs ("hopped-up gunmen") who had shot his partner. In Himes's first Harlem detective novel, *For Love of Imabelle*, a conman called Hank threw acid into Coffin Ed's face, leaving it permanently disfigured in an incident that the narrator alludes to ("his slightly disfigured face"). Coffin Ed becomes determined to hunt down these two culprits and curses them under his breath for their cowardly ambush using "a derringer with a sawed-off barrel and a silencer attached" (i.e. "doctored rods"). In this passage, the slang, the swearing ("mother-raping," "sonofabitching," "snakeshit" ...) and the substandard colloquial language ("ain't") all come together to make for an extremely powerful vent of frustration and angst.

Table 5. EN>ES translations of two extracts from Chester Himes's *The Heat's On* (1959) from the first retranslation, *Empieza el calor* (trans. Marcelo Cohen, 1981)

| <i>Heat</i> (1959) | <i>Calor</i> (1981) (trans. Marcelo Cohen) |
|--|---|
| Then he emptied the white powdered cocaine and heroin | Luego derramó en la cuchara el contenido de la cápsula, una |

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>from the aluminum capsule into the sugar spoon and melted it over the flame. He drew the liquid through the needle into the syringe and, holding the spike in his right hand, banged himself in the vein of his left arm while the C & H was still warm.</p> <p>"Ahhh," he said softly as the drug went in (Himes, 1966: 41).</p> | <p>mezcla de heroína y cocaína, y lo licuó al calor del fuego. Llenó la jeringa con el líquido y, tomando la aguja con la mano derecha, la clavó en la vena de su brazo izquierdo antes de que la mezcla se enfriara.</p> <p>—Ahhh —dijo blandamente mientras la droga se abría paso (Himes, 1981a: 44).</p> |
| <p>Coffin Ed was in a crying rage, caught up in an impotent self-tormenting fury that gave to his slightly disfigured face a look of ineffable danger.</p> <p>"These miserable mother-raping crumbs," he grated through clenched teeth. "These sonofabitching rathole snakeshit hoppedup sons of syphilitic whores with their doctored rods trying to play tough by shooting an unarmed man in the back. But they ain't seen nothing yet."</p> <p>He was talking to himself. (Himes, 1966: 112)</p> | <p>Ataúd vociferaba, presa de un ataque de furia y atormentadora impotencia que otorgaba a su rostro ligeramente desfigurado un matiz de inefable peligrosidad.</p> <p>—Esos miserables carajos hijos de puta —rechinaba por entre los dientes apretados—. Esas mierdosas ratas drogadas husmeadoras de basura hijas de puta sifilíticas con sus jeringas, disparando por la espalda a un hombre desarmado. Pero aún no saben lo que les espera.</p> <p>Hablaba solo. (Himes, 1981a: 121)</p> |

As we have seen above, none of the later Bruguera Serie Novela Negra translations after number 50 contain prologues, so Marcelo Cohen's retranslation is not preceded by such a paratext. Even if it were, the series editor and prologuist, Juan Carlos Martini, would not have discussed the provenance of the translation, as he had not done that with any of the earlier volumes.

Marcelo Cohen was a profesional writer and translator. In UNESCO's Index Translationum, Cohen is listed as the autor of 120 translations from English and Catalan of a wide range of extremely prestigious figures, including Jane Austen, Harold Bloom, William S. Burroughs, Phillip K. Dick, Lawrence Durrell, T. S. Elliot, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Stephen Spender and Robert Louis Stevenson. According to Falcón, he tackled source texts in virtually all posible genres and styles as a translator, and as a writer he "often reflected on the practice of translation in the mainstream press, literary journals, independent essays and conference addresses from the 1970s onwards, both in Barcelona and in Buenos Aires" (Falcón, 2011, my translation).

His retranslation was made available in six different editions, the most recent of which was in 1995. In 1985, his version of *Heat* was included in the Orbis (Barcelona) collection called "Grandes maestros del crimen y misterio" along with *Oro* (trans. Carlos Peralta) and two other translated Himes novels. In 1995, a second retranslation, *Cuando el calor aprieta* (trans. Diana Falcón) was published by Grijalbo Mondadori (Barcelona), and in 2012, a third retranslation which uses Cohen's title, *Empieza el calor* (trans. Facundo Piperno) was published by RBA Libros (Barcelona). *Heat* is the most often translated Himes novel to date, with four different versions in Spanish.

In the translation of the first example, there is standardization of slang; in other words, the target text contains standard terms where the source text contained slang terms. This is a rather common feature of translated texts which are densely loaded with slang (Mateo Martínez-Bartolomé, 1990; Zauberga, 1994). The three slang terms (*spike*, *banged himself* and *C & H*) are standardized in two cases (*aguja* = *needle* and *la mezcla* = *the mixture*), though the expression "la clavó" is colloquialized as "he stuck it in". Despite having much less slang and several omissions ("aluminum", a "sugar" spoon is a small utensil), it is effective and contains a few strongly visual expressions in Spanish. "La clavó" captures the rough, hurried stabbing or jabbing motion and the "la droga se abría paso" means something like "the drug made its way in" or "the drug shoved its way through," much like someone in a hurry might make forceful headway down a crowded sidewalk.

Seeing as *mother-raper/ing* has usually been translated as "hijo de puta" or "hijo puta" (see tables 1 and 2 above), this passage offered an interesting challenge for Cohen, seeing as the passage also contains "sonofobitching" and "sons of whores". His solution to use "hijos/hijas de puta" is consistent with previous into-Spanish equivalents, though the total number of swear terms is reduced from three to two. His use of "hijas de puta," in the feminine grammatical gender, co-textually remits to the antecedent "ratas," i. e. "rats," as does his descriptive adjective "mierdosas," i.e. "shitty." As we have seen above, "mierda" and the words derived from it such as "mierdoso/a" are less intense swearwords than their English equivalent. A back-translation of this whole segment would be "Those shitty, hopped-up, garbage-sniffing, syphilitic sons of bitches with their needles, shooting an unarmed man in the back" (my translation). As we have seen above, there is some omission in Cohen's version ("trying to play tough," "doctored"), and in this example, there is also an error. The slang expression "with their doctored rods shooting..." means "using their modified pistols to shoot" in standard English.

Now that we have seen the four examples of Argentinian translations, it is time to look briefly at the earliest part of the post-Bruguera period then wrap up this inquiry with a summary of our findings.

Early Critical Reception of Himes (1979-1981)

As we have seen above, Juan Carlos Martini's prologues to Chester Himes's first two translations into Spanish constitute the first criticism of the Black U.S. writer in Spain/Spanish. Starting in 1979, coinciding chronologically with the Bruguera "boom," other sources of criticism begin to emerge. Antonio González Morales, in an article entitled "Chester Himes y la literatura policiaca," describes the bloodshed, extreme violence and degenerate characters of Himes's Harlem (González Morales, 1979). In a special dossier on the noir novel, "Dossier de novela negra," the literary journal *El viejo topo* contains an article entitled "El negro mundo de Chester Himes" (The Black World of Chester Himes, my translation) by Ulysses Santamaria (1980). Javier Coma's 1980 book *La novela negra: historia de la aplicación del realismo crítico a la novela policiaca norteamericana* mentions Himes on ten pages, stating on the first occurrence that Himes "started from a violent style of socio-political protest and evolved towards satire and corrosive humor" (Coma, 1980: 151). Manuel Vázquez Montalbán's journal *Gimlet. Revista policiaca y de misterio*, launched in 1981, contains articles called "Papeles sobre Chester Himes" (Papers on Chester Himes, my translation) by Ricardo Muñoz Suay in the first and second issues (1981a, 1981b). Finally, Salvador Vázquez de Parga, in his 1981 book called *Los mitos de la novela criminal*, discusses Himes's fictional world as having a "radically different latent feeling," with "a documentary, clown-like vision of people who live the way they do because of internal and external circumstances" (Vázquez de Parga, 1981: 250, my translation). These early critical portrayals, all of which appeared in a short timeframe (1979-1981), can be associated with the rise of the hard-boiled detective novel in Spain and particularly of Bruguera's Serie Novela Negra.

After Bruguera: Translations into Catalan (1987-1995)

In this section, I would like to very briefly point out that all of Himes's Harlem novels except for two were available in Barral Editores or Editorial Bruguera translations. The translation of *Cotton Comes to Harlem* (trans. Eduardo Mallorquí del Corral, 1965) published by Plaza & Janés in 1967 was re-issued by the same publisher in 1980 and 1986. *The Crazy Kill* (1959) was first translated into Spanish in 1984 by Rafael Aguilar Maldonado as *Un loco asesinato* (Barcelona: Ediciones Forum) and made available as a paperback book in a format similar to a graphic novel or lengthy comic with illustrations by Miguel Angel Pratico. The collection in which it appeared, *Círculo del crimen*, had earlier published the first retranslation of Killers, titled *La banda de los musulmanes* (trans. Rafael Aguilar Maldonado) in 1983. These illustrated editions, which contain approximately fifteen drawings and captions extracted from or adapted from the translated texts, would be interesting to study in detail.

With all pre-1981 Spanish translations of Himes's Harlem detective series emerging from Barcelona, in Catalonia, it seems odd that all Catalan translations were published outside this time frame. Although in the case of many hard-boiled authors such as Raymond Chandler and Dashiell Hammett, Catalan translations appeared in the late 1960s, especially driven by Edicions 62 (Barcelona), translations of Himes's Harlem series did not begin to until 1987, first with *Per amor a Imabelle* (trans. Joan Pujolar), then *El gran somni daurat* (trans. Carme Geronès and Carles Urritz) in 1989, followed by *Cotó a Harlem* (trans. Carme Geronès and Carles Urritz) in 1990 and *Un cec amb una pistola* (trans. Mireia Porta i Arnau) in 1995, all published in Edicions 62's *Seleccions de La cua de palla* collection. *Shot, Crazy, Killers* and *Heat* remain untranslated into Catalan at the time of this writing.

Conclusions

We have seen how the into-Spanish translation of Chester Himes's Harlem detective series novel *The Real Cool Killers* (1959), published by Barral Editores (Barcelona) in 1975, was an early precedent of the boom of translations published shortly afterwards (1977-1981) by Editorial Bruguera (Barcelona). Carlos Barral's creation of the *Serie Negra Policial* in 1972 and his pioneering efforts to seek approval from the official government censorship system for a large number of Himes novels paved the way for the post-Franco commercial and critical *novela negra* boom under Bruguera. The 1975 translation by the enigmatic Mario Albarcín, under the title *El jeque de Harlem*, met the challenge of translating the swearing and gruesome violence that characterize the Harlem detective series and Chester Himes's everything-goes style.

Very shortly afterwards, Editorial Bruguera established the *Serie Novela Negra* and harnessed many of the efforts by Carlos Barral that had not come to fruition due to the financial collapse of Barral Editores. Five new translations came out in short succession, many of which had been initiated by Barral, who had filed for authorization from the censors and commissioned the translation of *For Love of Imabelle* (1958) by his Catalan collaborator Josep Elias i Cornet five years before the publication of *Por amor a Imabelle* (1980). The *Serie Novela Negra* published 84 volumes between 1971-1983 and was extremely influential in raising the popularity of the genre in Spain and boosting the reputation of writers such as Himes amongst the Spanish readership.

Except for this translation, all other new Himes translations were produced by Argentinian expats who had settled in Barcelona following the military coup d'état in Argentina in 1976. Engaged by the series editor, Juan Carlos Martini, and by Bruguera general manager, Ricardo Rodrigo, both Argentinians, the newly arrived translators were skilled writers, budding intellectuals and career translators who knew foreign languages and could produce quality work. Some Bruguera translations are the only into-Spanish translations available today. Ana Goldar, Ana María Becció, Carlos Peralta and Marcelo Cohen tackled effectively the increasingly intense

swearing, the derogatory language towards Black characters, the increasingly explicit sex-related language and the hard-boiled criminal slang, although with frequent attenuations, omissions and standardization of sex, swearing and slang. In all cases, the Argentinian translators used a Castillian Spanish variety rather than their own Latin American variety.

The first fifty volumes in Bruguera's Serie Novela Negra contained prologues by the series editor, Juan Carlos Martini. In the wake of these critical efforts, academic and intellectual voices such as Javier Coma (1980), Ricardo Muñoz Suay (1981a, 1981b) and Salvador Vázquez de Parga (1981) began to be raised and create a following. This wave of appreciation for Chester Himes in the country which he had made home since 1969 came at the very end of his life, for he died a short time afterwards in Moraira, Alicante in 1984.

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NOTES

(1) The first African-American detective writer was Rudolph Fisher, whose second novel *The Conjure Man Dies: A Mystery Tale of Dark Harlem* (1932) features a case investigated by a Black detective in Harlem.

(2) After the first mention of the complete title of Himes's novels, a single-word reference will be used subsequently for the sake of clarity and brevity of reference to his large body of work (for example, *The Real Cool Killers* = *Killers* and *El jeque de Harlem* = *Jeque*).

(3) The censorship files are housed in the Archivo General de la Administración (AGA), in Alcalá de Henares (Madrid), where they are part of the Culture Section (Sección de cultura). The files are kept in boxes, where each file is inserted into a labeled envelope. The naming convention used here identifies the location of the files, in the AGA, the collection that they belong to, the SC, followed by the box number and the file number.

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