

MARGARET WALKER'S *JUBILEO*: THE FIRST NEO-SLAVE NARRATIVE TRANSLATED INTO SPANISH
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1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to study *Jubilee's* Spanish translation by Mercedes A. Carrera, which was published in 1968 by Plaza y Janés. The source novel was written by Margaret Walker and it belongs to the genre of African American neo-slave narratives, since it depicts the traumatic experiences of slavery endured by several generations of Blacks, as will be further explained below.

This work is ascribed to the principles of Descriptive Translation Studies, since it does not prescribe how Carrera should have translated *Jubileo* into Spanish. On the contrary, this paper compares "coupled pairs of translational problems and their corresponding translational solutions" (Toury, 1985: 25) in tables 1 to 5 to examine how otherness, specifically blackness,⁽¹⁾ is portrayed in *Jubilee* and *Jubileo*. Pursuing this aim, section 2 chronicles the evolution of African American slave narratives, from nineteenth-century ex-slaves' autobiographies to an emerging genre of historical novels published in the 1960s. Section 3 describes the context of *Jubilee's* publication in 1966 in the United States, and its place within the tradition of neo-slave narratives. To contextualize its Spanish translation, the paratexts that go along with *Jubileo* will be observed in section 4. Defined as "those elements in a published work that accompany the text" (Braga Riera, 2018: 249), paratexts display linguistic and visual elements to draw the readers' attention, explicit the book's content, and to the guide the reading, so they provide readers "the possibility of either stepping inside or turning back" and not reading the text (Genette, 1997: 2). There are two types of paratexts, peritext and epitext. Peritext alludes to "footnotes and endnotes, prefaces and forewords, introductions, epilogues or afterwords, postscripts, dedications, acknowledgements, index, titles and subtitles, chapter synopsis and headings" (Braga Riera, 2018: 249), together with visual features like covers, dust jacket designs, and illustrations. The epitext is "any paratext not materially appended to the text" (Genette, 1997: 344), such as press reviews, interviews with the writer, signings at book fairs, and, in the case of a novel translated in Spain in the 1960s, censorship reports. Both peritext and epitext can condition the reception of a translated book in the target context. For example, censorship reports may account for the predominance of certain translation strategies, covers can hint at certain elements of blackness that target readers will find in the book's pages, and reviews help build a public opinion and have the capacity to "explain, contextualize, and justify a product" (Braga Riera, 2018: 254).

After reflecting on how the source and target texts were reviewed and what paratexts conditioned their reception, section 5 studies how Carrera has rendered into Spanish three features that characterize neo-slave narratives: the lexicon of slavery, slaves' meaningful names, and the literary dialect spoken by the protagonists. By contrasting these elements in different excerpts from *Jubilee* and *Jubileo*, it could be discussed whether the alterity —or blackness— introduced in Walker's novel is reflected or suppressed from Carrera's version. When pondering the depiction of the dispossessed slaves, their lexicon, names, and linguistic variety, section 6 will consider the concept of the narrative Us vs. the Otherness explored by *Jubilee* and other neo-slave narratives. In Baker's terms (2006: 3), a socio-cultural narrative means "the everyday stories we live by [...] that change in subtle or radical ways as people experience and become exposed to new stories". In other words, narratives are the stories that people tell themselves and other members of their socio-cultural communities about their place and history in their world, in an attempt to make sense of their lives. An example of the narrative Us vs. the Other can be found in *Jubilee*'s pages, since white characters take the positions of power, like John Dutton, and subjugate the Black slaves they own, like Vyry.

2. Neo-Slave Narratives and *Jubilee*

Margaret Walker's *Jubilee* consists of three parts, "Sis Hetta's child", "Mine eyes have seen the Glory", and "Forty years in the wilderness", which encompass, respectively, different time periods in the Southern United States: the antebellum years, the Civil War, and the Reconstruction. The book revolves around Vyry, a female slave at John Dutton's plantation in Georgia, and provides "an unprecedentedly complex and comprehensive portrait of the everyday lives, experiences, culture, and communities of enslaved Americans" (Ryan, 2008: 104).

The first part opens with Vyry's birth in the 1830s. She is the daughter of Hetta, an African slave, and her white master. Her mother dies in the first chapters after giving birth to over fifteen slave children. Vyry is not acknowledged as kin by John Dutton and is raised by other Black women in the plantation, like Mammy Sukey, Aunt Sally, and Caline. She grows up playing with Miss Lillian, the master's white daughter, and endures physical punishments by Big Missy, who hates Vyry for being the result of her husband's miscegenation. As a teenager, the protagonist meets Randall Ware, a free Black man who is involved in the abolitionist movement. They fall in love, yet John Dutton forbids their marriage. Vyry and Randall have two children who are born out of wedlock. One night, the protagonist tries to run away with them, but she is captured by slave catchers and whipped violently.

Part two centers on the devastating effects that the Civil War has on the Dutton plantation, as Randall leaves to fight for the Union, Big Missy's children die in the battlefield, and a group of Northern soldiers raid the plantation and rape Miss Lillian. Vyry is saved by Innis Brown, a kind Black man who arrives just in time. Once the war is over, the third part begins, the protagonist decides to marry Innis and moves to Alabama to make a living. However, Vyry and Innis endure a series of misfortunes, such as a flooding, blackmail by white landowners, the death of their new child, and having their house burned down by the Ku Klux Klan. Eventually, Vyry and Innis settle in South Carolina, where they face racism, and she works as a midwife for their white neighbors. Randall returns in 1870, after ten years of absence, and tries to win Vyry back. She chooses to stay with Innis, as she is pregnant with his child and thinks Randall is too radical in his political views. They both agree on Randall taking their eldest son, Jim, to school in a nearby city.

With this overview of the novel's plot, the reasons to classify *Jubilee* as a neo-slave narrative may be clearer. The label "neo-slave narrative" was coined by Bell to refer to the "modern narratives of escape from bondage to freedom" (1987: 289) that began to be published in the 1960s in the United States. These novels are based on the first African American slave narratives that came out at the end of the

eighteenth century and combined features from genres such as “spiritual autobiographies, conversion narratives, sea adventure stories, and picaresque novels” (Gould, 2007: 12). In the 1830s and 1840s, the abolitionist movement sponsored the publication of the autobiographies written by former slaves, like Frederick Douglass and William Wells Brown, to expose the horrendous abuses that were taking place in Southern plantations. These testimonies detailed the slaves’ routines of toil, the physical punishments they suffered, their search for identity, and acts of resistance—for instance, Douglass’s fight with the overseer Mr. Covey and his escape to the North. It is in the first half of the nineteenth century when “many of the narrative and thematic conventions which were apparent yet not fully developed in eighteenth-century works take shape” (Gould, 2007: 19). For example, some tropes that evolve in this period are the graphic scenes of whipping, the consideration of the slaves as chattel, the depiction of cruel Southern masters, and the stories of rebellious slaves who run away and make it to the Northern states and Canada, like Henry Box Brown. **(2)**

In the 1960s, and partly as a consequence of the Civil Rights Movement and Black Power, African American slave narratives evolved into a literary subgenre that delves into the representation of slavery in fiction under post-modern perspectives. Black writers contended that the reconstruction of the nineteenth-century texts that articulated African American subjectivity—in other words, slave narratives— may help “discuss the issues concerning contemporary racial identities” (Dubey, 2010: 333). The novels that emerged during this period are the already mentioned neo-slave narratives, which have been studied by Rushdy and classified as “contemporary novels that assume the form, adopt the conventions, and take on the first-person voice of the antebellum slave narrative” (1999: 2). In addition, this scholar explains that the social and cultural changes of the 1960s paved the way for the evolution of neo-slave narratives in the next decades, as a series of connections could be established between the antebellum United States and the social unrest of the sixties, a decade when “race occupied the center stage of American politics in a manner unprecedented since the Civil War” (1999: 7). Dubey agrees with this point, comments that “slavery erupted onto the national scene as a matter of tense public interest and debate” (2010: 333) thanks to the Civil Rights Movement, and she hints at how Black writers adopted the voices of run-away slaves and revisited their narratives as a way of tackling contemporary issues of racial identities.

When pondering how neo-slave narratives address the notion of historical memory and bring to the fore the hidden history of African Americans, Rushdy divides these novels into the following four categories (1992: 375-376): narratives of slavery in the South before and during the Civil War featuring slaves, like Margaret Walker’s *Jubilee* (1966) and Toni Morrison’s *Beloved* (1987); novels that chronicle a Black family’s history from their enslaved ancestors to the present and explore the trauma of slavery carried down from one generation to the next one, such as Alex Haley’s *Roots* (1976); books that introduce innovations from other genres and are set in the present, featuring Black protagonists who try to come to terms with the traumatic memories of their enslaved ancestors, as in Octavia E. Butler’s *Kindred* (1979); and postmodern rewritings that play with the conventions of nineteenth-century slave narratives and resort to anachronism and humor to underline the absurdity of the institution of slavery, for instance, Ishmael Reed’s *Flight to Canada* (1976).

Walker’s novel retells her great-grandmother’s experiences of life in bondage and underlines the importance of the “black oral tradition” (Dubey, 2010: 334), as will be further explained in Section 3 below. *Jubilee* inaugurates the tradition of neo-slave narratives that retell historical events from the slaves’ point of view and cast some light on an often-omitted side of the United States’ traumatic past, in contrast with previous canonical texts that dismissed Black slaves’ experiences, for example, Margaret Mitchell’s *Gone with the Wind*—whose film adaptation is still controversial in 2021. **(3)** Taking *Jubilee* as a starting point, African American neo-slave narratives have continued to be published, expanding into “an extraordinary genre of retrospective literature about slavery that exploded in the last decades of the twentieth century and shows no signs of abating” (Smith, 2007: 168). In the first decades of the twenty-first century, awarded novels like James McBride’s *The Good*

Lord Bird (2013) and Colson Whitehead's *The Underground Railroad* (2016) have approached the historical conditions of life in bondage and helped explore contemporary issues of racial tensions in the United States.

3. Walker's *Jubilee*: Source Reception

Jubilee was published by Houghton Mifflin in 1966 and is the result of Walker's PhD dissertation at the University of Iowa's writing program (Bell, 1987: 285-287). As the author explains in the "Dedication" (Walker, 1999: i), the novel's protagonist, Elvira "Vvry" Dutton, is her maternal great-grandmother, whose real name was Margaret Duggans Ware Brown. She married Randal Ware, like in *Jubilee*, and their tale of life under slavery in Georgia "was passed on to Walker in enthralling bedtime stories told by her grandmother", Elvira Ware Dozier (Bell, 1987: 286). When *Jubilee* came out in the United States, it became a fairly successful novel, because "in three years, from September 1966 to October 1969, [it] went into eleven printings" (Klotman, 1977: 139) and it sold over a million copies in a decade.



Figure 1. Covers of *Jubilee*'s editions (1966 and 1984)

As an early text in the incipient genre of neo-slave narratives, *Jubilee* stands out as a "magisterial historical novel which draws on Walker's meticulous research to extend the reach of her [great-]grandmother's stories of her life in slavery and freedom" (Smith, 2007: 170). By writing a novel about her great-grandparents' lives, as told to her by her grandmother, Walker manages to provide a detailed description of slavery's violent abuses and, through the omniscient narrator's perspective, she shows readers scenes of everyday life at a Southern plantation "from the viewpoint of the slaves who suffered and also fomented insurrection, fled plantation, and created vibrant cultural and religious traditions" (Rushdy, 2004: 90). Due to *Jubilee*'s status as a starting text in the tradition of neo-slave narratives, this scholar even claims that the novel "set the standard for the third-person historical novel of slavery that took as its subject the personal and political transition from slavery to freedom" (Rushdy, 2016: 91), an issue that would be further explored in critically acclaimed titles like Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987) and Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing* (2016). On the genesis of the novel, Walker (quoted in Depardieu, 2016: 123-148) explains that she had promised her grandmother to write down the stories of her ancestors, to which she had listened eagerly, so she drew on her

family's history and carried out some research in libraries and archives, checking "historical accounts of slavery, primary documents, and newspapers from the Civil War era" (Goodman, 2014: 232-233). Walker managed to offer a realistic portrayal of slavery, the Black slaves' routines, and the silenced side of Black history, trying to tackle the issue of how much of the brutality of Black people's history readers can confront in a work of fiction.

Jubilee's detailed description of Black women's lives in nineteenth-century Georgia may be read as a response, over a hundred years later, to Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, a novel on slavery that was "written by a privileged nineteenth-century white woman to an audience of privileged white women like herself" (Goodman, 2014: 232). Walker's book abides by the conventional linear structure of the nineteenth-century slave narratives mentioned in section 2. In this case, the story does not end with the slave's escape, but with emancipation; and its three-part chronological framework mirrors the structure of slave narratives, usually divided in consonance with the protagonist's movement from bondage, to escape, and to eventual freedom (Klotman, 1977: 142). Moreover, *Jubilee* has been compared with a ubiquitous American legend concerning slavery and life in the rural South around the time of the Civil War: Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind* (1936). Both novels recount a family saga over a long period of time, yet *Jubilee* "reverses the emphasis and the moral hierarchies of *Gone with the Wind*, rendering slaveholding whites secondary" (Ryan, 2008: 73). It focuses on the experiences of a Black slave woman (Vyry), instead of having the plantation belle (Scarlett O'Hara) as the protagonist. Thus, Walker's novel brings together two traditions of slavery fiction: slave narratives by former slaves, and Civil War melodramas, responding to the "long shadow cast by *Gone with the Wind* on popular memories of slavery, the antebellum South, and the Civil War era" (Donaldson, 2008: 268). The nostalgic picture of plantations with kind white masters and happily obedient slaves that was popularized by Mitchell's book and Victor Fleming's 1939 film adaptation was put into question during the Civil Rights movement, since the recovered nineteenth-century slave narratives had reported "experiences of fragmentation and displacement originating in the oppression of slavery" (Donaldson, 2008: 271). This is the context in which *Jubilee* was published, and it is no coincidence that it was hailed as the Black *Gone with the Wind*, since, as Condé explains (1996: 212), "they are both set in Georgia during and after the Civil War, they both combine the fictional and the documentary, and both are based on stories told to their authors during their childhoods". The two protagonists (Scarlett O'Hara and Vyry) are forced by their tragic circumstances to take control of the plantation, fight off pillaging Union soldiers, and they endure poverty in the aftermath of the war. Nonetheless, Vyry, a tall and thin mulatto, is "visually the reverse of the Mammy stereotype" (Condé, 1996: 212) that serves Scarlett in Mitchell's novel and is played by Hattie McDaniel in the film adaptation. **(4)** It can be argued that Walker's novel recreates the story of a community of Black women who were "virtually invisible" (Goodman, 2014: 239) in previous texts by white writers, such as Stowe's and Mitchell's.

Vyry is not the embodiment of a nostalgic stereotype, but the center of the novel's main plot, which chronicles her longing for freedom as she evolves as "a heroic symbol of the black woman whose Christian faith, humanism, courage, resourcefulness, and music are the bedrock of her survival and the survival of her people" (Bell, 1987: 288). The first part of the novel describes her childhood and learning process at the plantation, the second one has her witnessing the decay of the Dutton family during the Civil War, and part three portrays Vyry enduring racism and several abuses in the Reconstruction. It ends with a free, mature, and pregnant protagonist who is happy in her farm, once she has decided to stay with her second husband and raise her family instead of reuniting with Randall Ware, thus confining her to the domestic and familial (Bell, 1987: 288). This point is also underlined by having Vyry work as a midwife for the white community where she settles in the last chapters. In them, she is celebrated as a mother and speaks up her mind increasingly, in contrast with having been silenced by her masters in the first half of the novel. For this reason, *Jubilee* could also be read as "a celebration of the silenced voice" (Condé, 1996: 213). The third part of Walker's novel depicts, too, the hardships endured by Vyry and her family in settling down and keeping a home

where they can live safely, because they face poverty, racism, and even natural catastrophes, some of the challenges that Black people experienced during the Reconstruction. Incidents such as being blackmailed by their white landowners, having their house burned down by the Ku Klux Klan, or Vvry being unable to find a job due to her skin color demonstrate that “the violence surrounding African Americans’ mobility and capacity to establish a homeplace of refuge and resistance merely changed forms after slavery, but certainly did not disappear” (Davis, 2005: 35).

As advanced above, the publication of *Jubilee* in 1966 “seemed to engage directly with the concerns of the Civil Rights Movement” (Carby, 1989: 129), not only by responding to nostalgic depictions of slavery in fiction (for example, Mitchell’s novel), but also by reclaiming African Americans’ oral history and folk culture. As Bell explains, *Jubilee* is rooted in Black folk culture and each chapter in the novel starts with a particular peritext, which is “a title and headnote, usually taken from a spiritual, a folksong, or a folk saying which corresponds to the increasingly jubilant mood of the plot” (1987: 287). The title itself is borrowed from a “Traditional Negro Spiritual” (Walker, 1999: iii), there are several chapters opened by religious hymns, and chapter 24 starts with a few lines from “Dixie”, a nineteenth-century song that was popularized by Confederate soldiers and that describes an idealized South. By including this sort of paratexts, *Jubilee* delves into how the Black oral tradition is passed on from generation to generation —just like Walker’s grandmother passed on Vvry’s story to her— and sprinkles a literary text with “female lore about menstruation, cautionary tales about sexual matters, information about pregnancy and childbirth, folk sayings, songs, and passages from the Old Testament” (Goodman, 2014: 238).

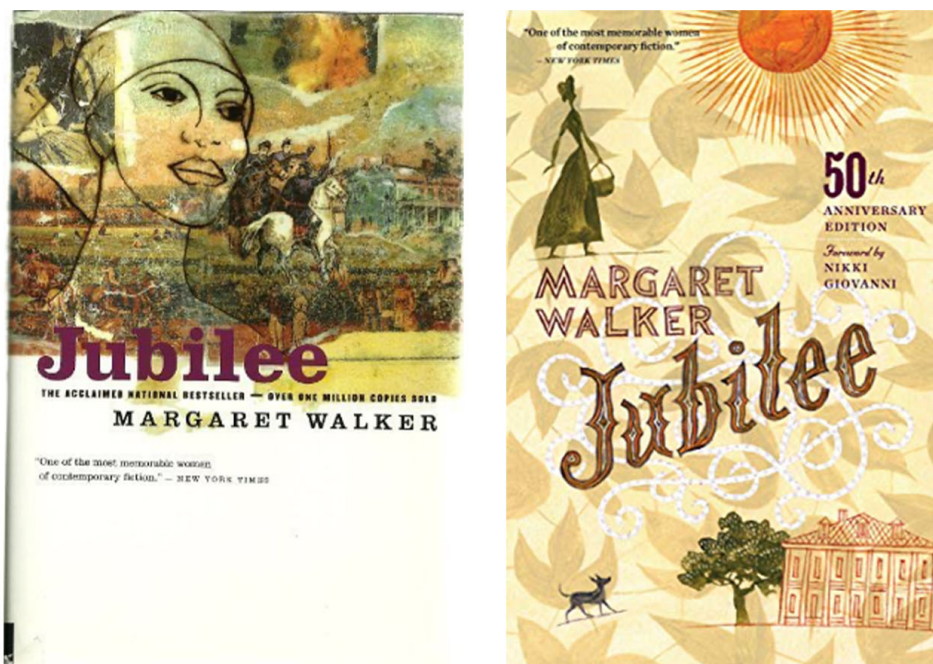


Figure 2. Covers of *Jubilee*'s editions (1999 and 2016)

Concerning peritexts, Figures 1 and 2 above show the different American covers of *Jubilee*, edited by Houghton Mifflin. In Figure 1, the cover on the left corresponds to the 1966 edition and it does not seem to emphasize blackness much, because it shows a generic Black woman’s face —presumably Vvry— encircled by a flying bird and a fragment from a spiritual, which may be allusions to the protagonist’s will to be free. In contrast, the new cover to the 1984 edition shown on the right in Figure 1 is more explicit. It includes a blurb that says *Jubilee* is “the 1,000,000 copy bestseller with all the sweep and grandeur of *Gone with the Wind*”. On the one hand, it emphasizes Walker’s novel’s commercial success and, on the other, it connects it to a canonical book about the South and the Civil War —Mitchell’s novel,

as mentioned at the beginning of this section. The 1984 cover underlines blackness, since Vyry is depicted wearing the slaves' traditional headwrap and she is surrounded by Confederate soldiers, a male house slave, and the face of a white master, who could be her biological father, John Dutton. These pictures are similar to those shown on the cover to the 1999 edition, which was published by Mariner Books, one of Houghton Mifflin's imprints. As can be appreciated in the image on the left reproduced in Figure 2, this underscores blackness and African American slavery by portraying Vyry's silhouette —once again, wearing a headwrap— against a background that includes pictures of a Southern plantation with Black slaves handpicking cotton and a group of Union soldiers on horseback. This cover adds an analogous blurb stating that *Jubilee* is "the acclaimed national bestseller —over one million copies sold", together with a quotation from *The New York Times* that labels Margaret Walker as "one of the most memorable women of contemporary fiction". As the image on the right shows in Figure 2, this quotation is reproduced as well in the cover to *Jubilee's* fiftieth anniversary edition. Still, blackness is no longer emphasized in it. There are a black silhouette, a dog, what appears to be cotton leaves, and a house that may be the Dutton plantation, but nothing as straightforward as an African American woman wearing a headwrap or Union and Confederate soldiers. It has been over fifty years since this best-selling novel was first published, so source readers may already know it is a slave narrative. In this cover, there is a new paratext that could hint at blackness: it says this edition includes an introduction by Nikki Giovanni, who is a multi-awarded African American poet.

4. Carrera's *Jubileo*: Paratexts and Editions

The economic success of *Jubilee* led to the translation and publication of *Jubileo* in Spain in 1968 by Plaza y Janés, which was one of the publishing companies (5) that emerged from the wasteland of the Spanish book industry in the post-war years (Vega, 2004: 357).

When analyzing a Spanish translation from this period, the impact of Francoist censorship should be considered. In the 1960s, Fraga Iribarne's Ministry of Information and Tourism issued a new law for censorship, "Ley 14/1966 de Prensa de Imprenta, de 18 de marzo" (Gutiérrez Lanza *et al.*, 2021: 97). This law was supposed to be more permissive than the previous one from 1938, and it established that publishing companies needed to be enrolled in a public registry before releasing any books and that, before publication, they had to willingly submit a copy of their books to the Ministry. The state censors reviewed them and, depending on their content, decided whether the works were ready for publication or, on the contrary, the publishers deserved a penalty for violating the dictatorship's dogma. Such penalties ranged from fines to kidnapping and confiscating books that were already available to readers (Gutiérrez Lanza *et al.*, 2021: 97-98). Although state censorship tried to control every form of cultural expression and to influence Spaniards' intellectual formation, literary translation also served as a way of introducing cultural innovations that contrasted with the dominant ideology (Gómez Castro 2006: 37-38). In other words, Francoist censorship acted as a key element in patronage that selected which texts were imported and, simultaneously, translated texts were introducing American ideologies that began to influence the Spanish literary polysystem. As Gómez Castro points out (2006: 40-41), American best-selling books began to dominate the Spanish publishing industry and literary translation acted as an innovative element, in the sense that it allowed Spanish culture to glimpse beyond its imposed borders and import a series of literary models that were to be mimicked by the target writers.

Since Walker's novel was translated and published in the late sixties, state censorship was considered before contrasting the source text with the target version to check if there were any alterations resulting from this element of patronage. A visit to the State's General Administration in Alcalá de Henares gave this researcher

access to the censorship reports of books published in Spain in the period under study. The reports state that, in 1968, *Jubileo's* first edition printed three thousand copies and was submitted to the Spanish Ministry of Information and Tourism for their approval. The censorship report issued by this institution claimed that *Jubileo* is a combination of the themes explored in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Gone with the Wind*, yet the book could have been "much better, as it is not very evocative and many details are predictable in comparison with the two novels just mentioned" (6) (Dirección General de Información, 1968). Despite this minor objection, its printing was authorized with no changes at all, so the Spanish version follows Walker's plot and structure closely and does not seem to omit any fragments.

Jubileo came out as a hardcover edition that was part of the collection "Novelistas del Día", which Plaza y Janés dedicated to contemporary fiction writers. Walker's book was translated by Mercedes A. Carrera, a translator of French, Italian, and English who worked for this company during the 1960s and 1970s. The novel was reprinted in 1972 and, in 1976, *Jubileo* was published as a paperback edition in the collection "El Arca de Papel", which Plaza y Janés initiated in 1973 with cover illustrations by Muntañola and C. Sanroma (Sánchez Vigil, 2018: 189). Interestingly, "El Arca de Papel" was not an isolated effort, but an example of the numerous collections of paperback books that began to be published in the late sixties in Spain, trying to make novels accessible for a wider readership and leading to the consolidation of the "best-seller" marketing phenomenon in the following decades (Vega, 2004: 552). In any case, the 1976 edition of *Jubileo* was an economical pocket-book that reprinted Carrera's translation and corrected a few typos and printing errors present in the two previous versions. Lastly, it may be interesting to indicate that *Jubileo* has not been published again in Spain. The latest edition is the one from 1976, in contrast with the four American versions seen in the preceding section, including the 2016 edition celebrating the novel's fiftieth anniversary.

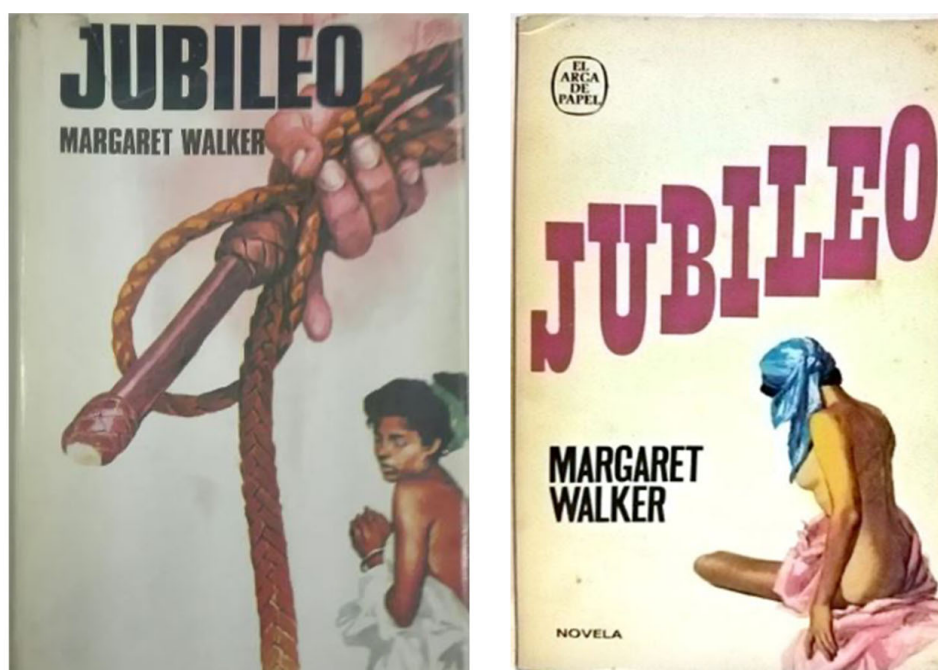


Figure 3. Covers of *Jubileo's* editions (1968 and 1976)

Regarding peritexts, it is interesting to observe that the cover of the 1968 edition (on the left side of Figure 3) shows a submissive black woman, presumably Vyry, who is about to be flogged by a white hand holding a whip, which could be an allusion to the episode that happens at the end of part one, when the protagonist runs away, is captured by slave catchers, and returns to the Dutton plantation to be punished. The cover of the 1976 paperback edition portrays significant changes in comparison with the first one. As can be seen in the picture on the right in Figure 3, a black woman is also shown with her back to readers, yet in this case her face

cannot be seen. Except for a headwrap, she is completely naked, partially showing her bottom and breasts. There is no white hand or whip that hints at slavery in the United States and the episode from the end of part one. These changes in the paperback's cover may be related to the fact that it was published in 1976, during the Spanish Transition from the dictatorship to democracy, so sexual allusions like this one were becoming more and more acceptable on books. Perhaps, this suggestive cover was aimed at engaging the readers' attention, who would be intrigued by the cover's sexual insinuations and could afford the pocket edition of a best-selling book.

5. Translating Slavery in *Jubilee*

The novels that belong to the tradition of African American neo-slave narratives described in section 2 share a series of lexical elements that refer to skin color and the plantation world. It can be tantalizing to observe these semantic fields in the Spanish translations to discuss how alterity has been rendered, i.e., how the lexicon of dispossessed slaves and their lives in bondage has been recreated in Spanish and if they have been given a voice of their own, as in Walker's source text.

Concerning the semantic field of skin color, neo-slave narratives tend to resort to the offensive word *nigger* to generally allude to Black slaves. Its translation may be rather troublesome, because this word evokes "one of the richest, nastiest, and most complex ranges of meaning in the English language [...] the slur referred to someone inferior, and even exploitable" (McWhorter, 2019: n.p.). This epithet often comes up with its variants *Negro*, *nigra*, *niggah*, and *colored*, as well as diverse adjectives that specify the degree of blackness a slave can have, for instance, *mulatto*, *quadroon*, and *high-yellow* —an adjective applied to slaves who have a very light skin color, possibly because of miscegenation, as in Vvry's case. Another offensive term that neo-slave narratives reproduce, together with *nigger*, is *pickaninny*, a word that may have stemmed from the Portuguese *pequenino* and that alludes pejoratively to black children in the South. Despite this variety of terms that belong to the semantic field of skin color in the source text, Carrera has rendered most of them as the generic *negro* (7) in Spanish, no matter the context of the adjective or what character says it, as can be observed in the following fragments in Table 1. For its part, the term *pickaninny*, derogatively referring to black children, is translated as *negritos* (literally, *little blacks*), losing its pejorative load, as happens with *nigger*.

Table 1. Translating Skin Color

Walker	Carrera
<p>Anyway it was his father who taught him it was better for a young man of quality to learn life by breaking in a young nigger wench than it was for him to spoil a pure white virgin girl.</p> <p>(1999: 8-9)</p>	<p>Todo había sido culpa de su padre. Este le enseñó que, para un muchacho de buena familia, era preferible aprender las cosas de la vida violando a una mozuela negra, que echando a perder a una muchacha blanca, pura y virgen.</p> <p>(1968: 18)</p>
<p>Most folks... A lot of people think running a farm and handling nigras is nothing, but that ain't so; it's hard work.</p>	<p>Mucha gente cree que no cuesta nada llevar una granja y dirigir el trabajo de los negros, pero no es así. Es una tarea difícil.</p>

(1999: 27)	(1968: 38)
You can't let up on a niggah if you wanta be a good driver, and that's what I am, a first class A-number-one good driver.	No se puede ser benévolo con un negro si se quiere ser un buen capataz, y esto es lo que soy precisamente: un capataz de primera categoría.
(1999: 28)	(1968: 39)
She concluded that the reason for the secret meetings had something to do with later mysteries and that nobody must tell a word to the white folks on pain of death itself just because white folks were naturally mean and hateful and hated all poor colored folks who could not help themselves anyhow.	Vyry sacó como conclusión que, si aquellas reuniones eran secretas, era a causa de algunos misterios unidos a ellas y que nadie debía decir a los blancos una palabra acerca de todo aquello bajo pena de muerte, porque los blancos eran mezquinos por naturaleza, y odiaban a todos los pobres negros , incapacitándoles para remediar sus males.
(1999: 47)	(1968: 59)
a fairly well-developed plot for an uprising among the slaves of Lee County, with the assistance of free Negroes and white abolitionists, became known to the High Sheriff of the county.	el primer sheriff del Condado se enteró de una maquinación, muy bien urdida para rebelar a los esclavos del Condado de Lee, con la ayuda de negros libres y de abolicionistas blancos.
(1999: 81)	(1968: 95)
He will punish you and your children and your children's children, all your little black pickaninnies down to the third and fourth generations, but He will have mercy on them that keep His commandments and obey Him.	Os castigaré, a vosotros, a vuestros hijos y a los hijos de vuestros hijos, a todos vuestros negritos , hasta la tercera o la cuarta generación; pero se compadecerá de los que guardan sus mandamientos y le obedecen.
(1999: 123)	(1968: 137)

The second semantic field announced at the beginning of this section concerns the plantation world and the different roles that white and Black people play in it. For instance, there are a series of terms that denote the parts reserved to white people, like the *master* who owns the plantation, the *overseer* who supervises field slaves, the *slave catchers* who "engaged in locating and capturing slaves who attempted to escape a condition of servitude" (Rodríguez, 2007: 216), and the *slave patrollers* who watch over the plantations and work mostly "at night on roads, in fields, and between the farms of their neighbors, making sure that slaves went where their masters intended them to go" (Rodríguez, 2007: 410). These patrols have their own *bloodhounds*, dogs that are trained to sniff the fugitive's trails and chase them. Moreover, neo-slave narratives contain references to the slaves' own institutions, such as the Underground Railroad, the clandestine network that helped fugitive slaves escape and reach the Northern states and Canada.

In *Jubileo*, Carrera has translated consistently most terms pertaining to the semantic field of the plantation world: *master* and its spelling variants *marster* and *marse* are rendered as *amo* (Carrera, 1968: 14, 31), *overseer* as *capataz* (1968: 34), *patrollers* as *guardianes* (1968: 45), *slave traders* as *negreros* (1968: 134), *bloodhounds* as *sabuesos* (1968: 180), and *slave catchers* has been expanded as “los encargados de prender a los esclavos” (1968: 237). There are some exceptions when it comes to the term *missy*, which refers to the master’s wife (Salina) and daughter (Lillian) and has not been translated as *ama*. *Missy* is left untranslated in the target text, as in the first two fragments in Table 2 below. The reference to the Underground Railroad may have been troublesome because Carrera mistranslated it as “los túneles del ferrocarril” (1968: 142), suggesting that runaway slaves escaped through an actual subway and conveying, in the target text, a different meaning from the allusion to the clandestine abolitionist network that helped fugitive slaves escape.

Table 2. Translating the Plantation World

Walker	Carrera
<p>In young Missy Lillian’s there was a tester bed with a canopy of sprigged pink and white cotton while the Marster and young Marster had rooms with massive dark furniture with silk furnishing in dark greens and reds and blues.</p> <p>(1999: 20-21)</p>	<p>En la habitación de Miss Lillian, la cama tenía un baldaquín de algodón blanco y rosa que formaba un dibujo de ramajes. En las habitaciones del amo y del amo joven, los muebles eran oscuros y macizos, con tapicería de seda verde oscura, roja o azul.</p> <p>(1968: 30-31)</p>
<p>Marse John and Big Missy became celebrated for their fine turkeys and English fruit cakes and puddings, duffs full of sherry and brandy, excellent sillabub and eggnog.</p> <p>(1999: 141)</p>	<p>El amo John y Missy Salina tenían renombre por sus excelentes pavos, sus pasteles de frutas y sus budines, sus bizcochos lleno de jerez y de coñac, su excelente sillabub (*) y sus «caldos de la reina».</p> <p>(*) Manjar de leche con vino o sidra. <i>N. del T.</i></p> <p>(1968: 156)</p>
<p>Grimes insisted that they should also advertise in the Carolinas and Virginia and as far north as Maryland, because he believed she had gone North, aided by the abolitionists and underground railway, headed toward freedom in Canada. Every means available was considered and even the slaves knew by heart how the ad in the paper was worded:</p> <p>(1999: 128)</p>	<p>Grimes insistió para que se anunciara también el asunto en las Carolinas, en Virginia y hasta en Maryland, a pesar de hallarse este Estado mucho más hacia el Norte, porque el capataz creía que Lucy se había dirigido hacia allá con ayuda de los abolitionistas y pasando por los túneles del ferrocarril, para buscar la libertad en el Canadá. Se tuvo en cuenta cualquier medio que pudiera dar bien resultado, y hasta los esclavos sabían de memoria cómo estaba redactado el anuncio en los periódicos:</p>

Other cultural references to the plantation world have been translated and left unexplained in the Spanish target text; for instance, the tradition of *jumping the broom* to celebrate a marriage between slaves has been transferred, quite literally, as "el procedimiento que los esclavos llamaban 'saltar por encima de la escoba'" (Carrera, 1968: 157). Alternate spellings like those mentioned above (*marster*, *marse*) and the short uneducated forms used by Vyry (*'zerves* for *conserves* and *skeeters* for *mosquitos*) have been rendered as standard Spanish, with no deviations from conventional spelling. It is interesting to notice one last paratext in *Jubileo*: footnotes, which are used as a translation strategy to deal with some source cultural elements, for example units of measure, meals, coins, or a few colloquial terms referring to Black slaves that Walker retrieved from the folk tradition. When facing these hurdles, Carrera opts for keeping the English term and then adding a footnote to expand the meaning of the foreign word, as appreciated in the three examples in Table 3. This strategy may seem a bit odd for *Jubileo's* commercial editions published by Plaza y Janés, since both hardcover and paperback books were probably aimed at making best-selling contemporary novels available for the growing Spanish readers of the late sixties and early seventies, as explained in section 4.

Table 3. Footnotes in *Jubileo*

Walker	Carrera
They consume 7 bushels of meal a week and 3 and a half midlings of meat and my wife has their provision cooked under her own eye. (1999: 65)	Consumen 7 bushels (*) de comida por semana, y 3 medidas y media de carne, y mi esposa hace que lo guisen todo ante sus propios ojos. (*). Medida de áridos que en Estados Unidos equivale a 35 litros. <i>N. del T.</i> (1968: 78)
You ain't worth a Confederate nickel! (1999: 253)	iNo vales ni un níquel (*) de la Confederación! (*). Moneda de níquel de cinco centavos de dólar. <i>N. del T.</i> (1968: 266)
King Cotton's dead and Sambo's fled... (1999: 261)	El rey Algodón ha muerto y Sambo (*) ha huido... (*). Sambo: Nombre que se da familiarmente a los negros y mulatos. <i>N. del T.</i> (1968: 274)

In some neo-slave narratives, proper nouns can be revealing if they are "used as characterizing devices in literary texts and so become a meaningful element in the texture of such works" (Manini, 1996: 161). In fiction, proper nouns may convey certain connotations and describe the features of the person to which they refer.

These are referred to as “loaded or meaningful names” (1996: 162), in contrast with the conventional ones. In *Jubilee*, the protagonists usually have conventional names like Vyry (short form for Elvira), Randall, Innis, Minna, and Jim, which remain in English in *Jubileo*. There are two women who take care of Vyry at the Dutton plantation once her mother passes away, Mammy Sukey and Aunt Sally, whose forenames have been adapted and transcribed in Spanish as “mamá Sukey” and “tía Sally”, respectively (Carrera, 1968: 21, 42). The rest of slaves’ names have been left untranslated and unexplained in English, even though some Black characters have meaningful nouns such as Sugar Baby, Witchie, Long, Dude, Doll, or Sweetie. This can be appreciated in the excerpt below, which takes place when the Civil War is over and the Union soldiers arrive at the Dutton plantation, gather the slaves in the front yard, read the Emancipation proclamation aloud, and tell them they are free.

Table 4. Translating Slaves’ Names

Walker	Carrera
<p>“My name’s Mandy. Howdy, sir!” Johnny spoke to each of them in turn; Babe, Lige, Luke, and Cindy; Sugar Baby, Custer, Bo-Griggs, Moe, Molley, Crowley, and Caesar; Cressy, Dangles, Witchie, Heziah, Socie, Long, Ressie, and Dude; Toots, Han, Roscoe, Buster, Steffer, and Wincie; Jonah, High, Hiram, and Clothie; Kallie, Buddy, Bella, Osum, Riggs, and Toddle; Rupert, Reuben, Rufus, Doll Baby, Sweetie, Comus, Dooley, Ridgeman, Cootie, and Bowlie.</p> <p>(1999: 205-206)</p>	<p>—Me llamo Mandy. ¿Cómo está, señor?</p> <p>Johnny les iba contestando, a su vez, a todos ellos. Pasaban Babe, Lige, Luke, y Cindy; Sugar Baby, Custer, Bo-Griggs, Moe, Molley, Crowley, y Caesar; Cressy, Dangles, Witchie, Heziah, Socie, Long, Ressie, y Dude; Toots, Han, Roscoe, Buster, Steffer, y Wincie; Jonah, High, Hiram, y Clothie; Kallie Buddy, Bella, Osum, Riggs, y Taddle; Rupert, Reuben, Rufus, Doll, Baby, Sweetie, Comus, Dooley, Ridgeman, Cootie, y Bowlie.</p> <p>(1968: 220)</p>

As mentioned in section 3, Walker’s novel gives voice to Vyry and other dispossessed Black slaves. It even depicts the linguistic variety they speak —African American Vernacular English, also known as Black English, which alludes to “the whole range of language varieties used by black people in the United States [...] both in cities and in rural areas, and by all age groups of both sexes” (Mufwene, 2001: 291-292). This literary dialect is portrayed in *Jubilee* thanks to eye-dialect —the use of misspellings and apostrophes to mark the speech of a racial group on the printed page— and the inclusion of some of the morpho-syntactic features that characterize this variety, such as the use of the contraction *ain’t* and double negation, the introduction of marked verb conjugation omitting the third-person singular *-s* when there is a third-person subject and adding it to other persons in present simple constructions, and the deletion of the copulative verb that joins a subject and its respective attribute (Mufwene, 2001: 299).

Carrera has chosen to standardize this literary dialect in the target text, so all characters, Black and white, speak alike in *Jubileo*, as can be appreciated in Table 5 below. There are some passages in the target text in which it seems that Carrera’s translation not only standardizes slaves’ Black English, but she also raises the register in Spanish by having Vyry and Innis Brown resort to educated forms like “el ama”. Even though they are both illiterate slaves who are deciding what to do in the aftermath of the Civil War, they are careful, in casual conversation, to place the masculine article *el* before a feminine word that begins with a stressed *a* in Spanish.

Table 5. Translating Black English

Walker	Carrera
<p>"Well, Doctor, I just don't know what to say. She looks all right and I'm sure the place on her head is well. It healed a long time ago, but she don't talk right and she don't act pert."</p> <p>"That's what I was afraid of."</p> <p>"What must I do, Doctor?"</p> <p>(1999: 299-300)</p>	<p>—Pues mire, doctor, no sabría qué decirle. Tiene buen aspecto, y estoy segura de que la herida de la cabeza está curada del todo. Curó hace ya tiempo. Pero el ama no habla a derechas, y se porta como si no estuviera en sus cabales.</p> <p>—Esto es lo que yo temía.</p> <p>—¿Qué tengo que hacer, doctor?</p> <p>(1968: 311)</p>
<p>"Who's Miss Lucy?"</p> <p>"She Miss Lillian's auntie. I reckon she'll come up here and see about her."</p> <p>"Whereabouts is she?"</p> <p>"I told him I think she in Alabamy."</p> <p>"Then that mean she might take her back with her, and what's gwine become of you and your chilluns?"</p> <p>"I reckon it ain't come to me what."</p> <p>"Well, I'm asking you now to marry me and leave here. How long you reckon you can stay here when she go? Your free man may be dead. He sure coulda been here by now."</p> <p>"Naw, he ain't dead. I knows he ain't dead. Some reason he ain't come, but I knows he ain't dead."</p> <p>(1999: 301-302)</p>	<p>—¿Quién es Miss Lucy?</p> <p>—Una tía de Miss Lillian. Creo que vendrá aquí para ocuparse de ella y atenderla.</p> <p>—¿Dónde vive?</p> <p>—Dije al médico que creía que vivía en Alabama.</p> <p>—Esto quiere decir que quizá se la lleve a vivir con ella, y entonces, ¿qué será de ti y de tus hijos?</p> <p>—No lo sé, todavía.</p> <p>—Pues mira, ahora te pido que te cases conmigo y que salgas de aquí. ¿Cuánto tiempo crees que te quedarás aún en esta casa, cuando se vaya el ama? Tu negro libre puede haber muerto. Si no hubiera muerto, no hay duda de que podría haber venido.</p> <p>—No, no ha muerto. Sé que no ha muerto. Si no ha venido, es por algún motivo, pero sé que no ha muerto.</p> <p>(1968: 313-314)</p>
<p>"Goodbye Vyry, take care of yourself."</p> <p>"Goodbye, Randall Ware. God bless you always. We sho glad you come. Good luck and God bless..." and she could say no more.</p> <p>Randall Ware shook Innis's hand and said, "Well, goodbye, I'm glad we met, Innis Brown."</p>	<p>—Adiós, Vyry, cuídate.</p> <p>—Adiós, Randall Ware. Que Dios te bendiga siempre. Nos hemos alegrado mucho de que vinieras. Buena suerte, y que Dios te ben... No pudo decir más. Randall Ware estrechó la mano a Innis, diciéndole:</p> <p>—Bien, adiós. Me alegro de haberle conocido, Inns Brown.</p>

"Goodbye sir, **we glad** you come."

(1999: 301-302)

—Adiós, señor, nos alegramos de que haya venido.

(1999: 495)

6. Concluding Remarks

As observed in the preceding section, Carrera has chosen to standardize the linguistic variety spoken by Black slaves in her Spanish translation, not making any exceptions to oppose this literary dialect to the Standard English displayed in white characters' lines. Therefore, it can be claimed that the alterity depicted in *Jubilee* by contrasting slaves' use of Black English with their white masters' Standard English has been suppressed in *Jubileo* by having them all speak standard Spanish. In Baker's terms, it may be contended that the narrative Us vs. the Other reinforced in Walker's text through the depiction of a non-standard linguistic variety has been retold —practically excluded— from Carrera's version. The clash between Black and white characters is not present in characters' speech in the target text, i.e., Vvry's and the Black community's ordeal from slavery to freedom is no longer stressed by the particular literary dialect they speak.

The translator may not be the only one responsible for this choice. The predominance of standardization as the strategy to neutralize linguistic varieties in the target text may have been endorsed by Plaza y Janés as a way of producing an accessible book in Spanish that brings a best-selling African American writer closer to potential target readers. *Jubileo* does not demand an extra effort from them by not playing with spelling or recreating literary dialects, so Spanish readers can focus on the plot and follow the protagonist's misfortunes. This publishing decision contrasts with the blackness of the novel hinted at by both target covers, in which Vvry was about to be whipped and wore a headwrap, respectively.

The predominance of standardization to delete Black English may be at odds with the series of footnotes Carrera uses for explaining a few cultural elements, such as foreign meals and units of measure, as well as with her decision to keep meaningful names in English and leave them unexplained in the Spanish editions of *Jubileo*. Consequently, the dispossessed slaves may not receive a voice of their own in the Spanish version, but their alterity is still underlined by their English names, the progression of the novel's plot, the hardships they endure along it, and the translated lexical elements alluding to the specific semantics fields of skin color and the world of Southern plantations. Apart from the mistranslation of the Underground Railroad as subway tunnels, Carrera has been consistent in her approach to these terms related to slavery in the United States, facing the pejorative load of slurs like *nigger* and *pickaninny*, and expanding some cultural references to elucidate their meaning, as in the case of *slave catchers*.

This paper has addressed the status of *Jubilee* as a cornerstone in the tradition of African American neo-slave narratives and the complex context of its publication in Spain. This study could be seen as an initial step in analyzing the first Spanish translations of neo-slave narratives. Future research could be based on this and focus on how patrons conditioned these translations, so the role played by publishing houses will be analyzed in combination with the impact that state censorship had and still has in the reprinting of neo-slave narratives that were translated in the sixties and seventies. This is the case of the Spanish versions of *The Confessions of Nat Turner* and *Roots*, whose translations were published in 1967 and 1978, respectively. The close examination of these target texts, their corresponding censorship reports, and the part performed by their publishing houses could contribute to the research on the translation of alterity and the reception of African American literature in the Spanish context.

NOTES

(1) Blackness is quite a complex concept to define. In this paper, it is used in reference to alterity and understood as the representation and articulation of the Black experience in the United States of America, in contrast with the white cultural hegemony and norms. For a deeper insight and a philosophical approach to this concept, refer to Chapter 5: "The Fact of Blackness" in Fanon, Frantz, *Black Skin, White Masks*, translated by Charles Lam Markmann, London, Pluto, 2008.

(2) Henry "Box" Brown (1816-1897) was a slave from Virginia who managed to escape. He hid in a wooden box that he mailed to Philadelphia, where the members of the Underground Railroad helped him. Brown wrote an account of his escape in *Narrative of the Life of Henry Box Brown* (1849). He became an advocate for abolitionism and performed on the stage his celebrated getaway.

(3) This film is still quite controversial in 2021, mostly for "its racist stereotypes and whitewashing the horrors of slavery" and for the "embrace of Mitchell's plantation nostalgia, with its depiction of happy, obedient slaves" (Schuessler, 2020: n. p.). This has led some streaming services and channels, like TCM, to add a "warning label" (Brody, 2021: n. p.) to this film indicating that it should be approached carefully, since it may portray degrading racial stereotypes.

(4) Interestingly, Hattie McDaniel, whose parents were freed slaves, won an Academy Award for her performance as Mammy in *Gone with the Wind*, becoming the first Black to ever win an Oscar.

(5) This company was founded by Germán Plaza and José Janés in 1959 and its aim was to spread and popularize literature in Spain. It was bought by Bertelsmann in 1984, becoming part of the multinational Penguin Random House in 2001.

(6) This translation from Spanish into English has been carried out by the writer of this paper.

(7) According to the Spanish Language Academy's Dictionary, *negro* means "a person with dark skin" and the term refers to people of a characteristic race. For more details on this Spanish term, visit <https://dle.rae.es/negro> (accessed September 2021).

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