

GOETHEAN RHYMES AND RHYTHMS IN VERSE TRANSLATIONS OF *FAUST* INTO SPANISH¹

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Abstract

The few translators who have attempted a Spanish verse translation of Goethe's *Faust* for the most part fail to do justice to the metrical diversity of Goethe's play and therefore either altogether give up the idea of rendering Goethe's play in poetry, e.g. Pedro Gálvez in 1984, or they create a traditionalist Spanish *Faust* poem with excessive liberties regarding its content, e.g., in 1882, Teodoro Llorente. Others have tried to fit Goethe's verse in the Procrustean bed of unrhymed *endecasílabos*, which has forced them to abridge the original text in numerous passages (Valverde 1962). Moreover, some translators, such as Valverde and Silveti Paz (1970), translate some passages of Goethe's magnum opus into Spanish verses resembling unrhymed iambic pentameter, a rather unusual approach in Spanish poetry, but nevertheless surprisingly effective. The translation which clearly stands out is the one by Augusto Bunge (1926, 1949), who carefully studied and analyzed the metrical structure of *Faust* and created a Spanish version which imitates Goethe's complex rhythms and rhyme patterns while remaining largely faithful to the German original.

Abstract

Die Handvoll Autoren spanischsprachiger Versübersetzungen von Goethes *Faust* scheitert mehrheitlich daran, dass die Übersetzer der metrischen Vielfalt des Ausgangstexts nicht gerecht werden und deswegen entweder die Idee einer poetischen Wiedergabe ganz aufgeben (so etwa Gálvez 1984) oder ein spanisch-traditionalistisches *Faust*-Gedicht schaffen und sich dabei inhaltlich die allergrößten Freiheiten erlauben, zum Beispiel Teodoro Llorente 1882. Andere Übersetzer, allen voran José María Valverde (1963), versuchen die komplexe Metrik Goethes in das Prokrustesbett des ungereimten *endecasílabo* zu pressen, was regelmäßig zu inhaltlichen Auslassungen führt. Autoren wie Valverde und Silveti Paz (1970) erzielen für spanische Lyrik ungewöhnliche, aber überraschend wirkungsvolle Effekte, indem sie *endecasílabos* verwenden, die rhythmisch dem Blankvers verwandt sind. Die *Faust*-Übersetzung Augustos Bunes (1926, 1949) besticht dadurch, dass sie auf einer genauen Analyse der Metrik des Originals fußt und sich deshalb Goethes komplexen rhythmischen Strukturen und Reimen annähert, wobei sie dem Original inhaltlich an vielen Stellen treu bleibt.

Key words: Goethe. *Faust*. Metrical versions in Spanish. Translation.

Stichwörter: Goethe. *Faust*. Versübersetzungen Spanisch. Übersetzung.

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According to the Catalan physician and theosopher José Roviralta Borrell (1920:7), whose prose translation is reputed to be the most faithful one to this day, translating Goethe's *Faust* is a task “worthy of titans”. For future translators, especially those attempting to create a Spanish *Faust* in verse, it is therefore helpful to study the existing versions, as they provide a guideline as to which approaches may be adopted and which are best avoided. This study is part of my attempts to help prepare new and improved verse translations of Goethe's *Faust* into Spanish.

Over the past one hundred and fifty years, a large number of translations into Spanish of Goethe's magnum opus have been published. Initially, they often reflected certain cultural misunderstandings and stereotypes, for example, the Faust character in those early versions in Spanish often appears to be an unscrupulous seducer, whose sole aim it is to obtain love and knowledge by means of magic. The author of this seeming German Don Juan, “the most questionable” of our classics according to José Ortega y Gasset (1932: 46), appeared to be equally inhuman until well into the 20th century. Even a learned *homme de lettres* like Rafael Cansinos Assens (1957: 1: 252) arrives at the disturbing conclusion about Goethe that

he sacrificed everything for his proper ego: loves, friends, everything. He was a good administrator both of his wealth and his adrenaline. His triumphant path is scattered with bloodless victims. His law is the law of the strongest; those who cannot resist him have to die.

The cultural misunderstandings involved in the reception Goethe met with in Spain in the 19th and early 20th centuries were thoroughly studied by Udo Rukser (1958) and Robert Pageard (1958).

The history of the verse translations into Spanish of Goethe's *Faust* is even more surprising, due to the fact that the secrets of Goethe's versification are not easily revealed. In general, the principles of verse composition in Spanish and German go by different standards. In Hispanic meters, the main criterion is the number of syllables per verse, whereas the distribution of stressed syllables can be used to vary the rhythm of this ever same number of syllables, e.g. an *endecasílabo* can have a trochaic or a dactylic rhythm, but they are not always expected to form regular patterns. In the century in which Goethe was born, German metrics had come to focus less on the overall number of syllables per verse and more on the number of stressed syllables, thus imitating the rules of versification common in antiquity. Consequently, the rules for writing pentameters are not quite the same as for *endecasílabos*.

Among the twenty-six meters employed in the first part of *Faust*, the most characteristic one is the *Knittelvers*, a type of pentameter rhymed in couplets with certain irregularities, which became famous through the carnival plays of Hans Sachs in the 16th century. Two centuries later, Goethe employed the then ill-reputed *Knittel* verse in a provocative manner creating a somewhat comic, doggerel-type effect (cf. Ciupke 1994: 38). However, more than half the 4612 verses of *Faust I* are written in *Madrigalvers*, a meter rhymed either in couplets, alternately or enclosing, in which verses of four, five or six iambic feet are alternated. Goethe also used the *Stanzensrophe (ottava rima)* for his *Faust*, a stanza consisting of eight iambic pentameters rhyming *abababcc*. The rhythms of Goethe's poem are so varied that not even the most elaborate prose could do them justice, e.g. the melodic chant of the archangels or the dreamy stammer of the protagonist when he explains his creed to his ingenuous lover Margaret.

The other crucial aspect of the unmistakable metrical form of *Faust* are its rhymes. How are translators to approach passages in which rhyme is turned into the topic of conversation of rhymed dialogue, e.g. when it is claimed in “Walpurgis Night's Dream” that the German noun

Teufel only rhymes with *Zweifel* (a rhyme actually used by the protagonist in his initial soliloquy) or the poetic encounter between Faust and Helen, in the course of which rhyme is turned into a melodic metaphor of love, thus embodying the convergence of antiquity and the modern age (vv. 9367f.)? Goethe's irreverent mastery of rhyme expressed in such passages creates such a clarity and thought-provokingness of expression that many lines from this play of epic dimensions have become proverbial in German. Nevertheless, for the translators, the rhymes can become an insurmountable obstacle. Thus we notice that they are forced to invert the natural sentence structure far more often than Goethe. Be that as it may, in the case of Goethe's *Faust*, the commandment of fidelity should not be understood solely with respect to the content of the text, but also concerning its versification.

No doubt a prose *Faust* would evoke ideas altogether different from the original, since Goethe's verses contribute vitally to the effect the text has had on readers and audiences. In the second half of the 20th century, the exceedingly complex metrical composition of *Faust* was studied by Trunz (1949) and, more in detail, by Ciupke (1994). They show to what extent Goethe's rhythms and rhymes give life to his characters and their emotions. For example, the frequent metrical changes in Faust's verses give us an idea of how this character's mind and mood fluctuate. What is more, according to Ciupke (1994: 20), the use of a great variety of irregular meters symbolizes the radical individualism of Goethe's protagonist:

He alone among all the characters has mastered all the verse forms [...]. However, above all, his discourse is characterized by free rhythms and free verse, the meters of the immediate expression of the individual.

Likewise, the *Madrigalvers* employed by the winsome devil Mephistopheles illustrates the seductive elegance of that character. Mephistopheles tends to imitate the meters used by other characters and adapt to their diction, which is yet another strategy to manipulate everyone (cf. Ciupke 1994: 20).

On May 5, 1798, in a letter to his colleague Friedrich Schiller, councillor Goethe enthusiastically wrote that the newly achieved metrical version of certain scenes in the final manuscript of *Faust I* dampened the enormous ideas of the play like a “gauze”. The much-admired poet from Weimar had dictated the first scenes of his play when he was only twenty-two or twenty-three. He was looking for more immediate and more authentic forms of literary expression than those used by many of his contemporaries, which led him to the popular genres and themes of 16th century Germany. In the second stage of the creation of *Faust*, during the last decade of the 18th century, i.e. in his neoclassicist phase, Goethe versified almost all the remaining prose scenes of his original *Sturm und Drang* manuscript, because they seemed “unbearable” to him, as he confided to Schiller in the same letter.

The first author of a verse translation of Goethe's play into Spanish, the Valencian poet Teodoro Llorente (1882: 31), dreamed of “granting citizenship to the great creation of Goethe in our native literature [...]: we have to adapt its expressions to the peculiar nature of our poetics, we have to give it a truly Castilian tang.” Llorente probably did not understand German very well and was not at all interested in literary criticism on *Faust* (cf. Beyer 2012: 35-38). Throughout the 20th century, in reviews of Llorente's *Fausto*, a certain mockery of his “solemn, archaic and somewhat declamatory style” (Pageard 1958: 150) can be felt, which I, however, think unjustified. Nonetheless, despite the poetic artistry of many passages, it would be more appropriate to call Llorente's version not a translation, but a work inspired by Goethe.

One reason is that Llorente employs predominantly *octosílabos* and perfect rhyme, which causes his version to deviate from the source text concerning its form and content. For instance, on Easter Sunday, Faust and his aide Wagner take a walk admiring the first signs of spring. In his large description, Faust also mentions the river scattered with “merry dinghies” (*Faust*, vv. 931-932):

Wie der Fluß, in Breit' und Länge,
So manchen lustigen Nachen bewegt [...]

The meters employed by Faust in German reflect the approaching spring and the cheerfulness of the placid country folk. They are not unlike the *Knittelverse* with which he introduces himself to the audience at the beginning of the “tragedy,” only they are not rhymed in couplets and they lack the irregularities which hint at the exasperation of the protagonist in that first “Night” scene (cf. Ciupke 1994: 49). Llorente's (1882: 90) attempt at rendering this scene in *octosílabos* fails, because this unnecessarily severe formal constraint compels him to omit important expressions. Moreover, the rhythm is altered considerably; in Llorente's version it is much more cumbersome:

¡Cuántos lleva el ancho río
esquifes empavesados!

There is another example, which illustrates to what extent Llorente's version becomes unreliable due to his choice of meters and his frequent use of perfect rhyme. In one of the final scenes of the first part of the play, Faust, with the help of Mephistopheles's magic tricks, wounds Margaret's soldierly brother Valentine in a duel. After Faust and Mephistopheles have fled, Valentine, dying, reviles his sister calling her a “whore”. Aghast, Margaret cries “God!”, whereupon he admonishes her, urging her to keep God out of the matter (*Faust*, v. 3733):

Lass' unsern Herr Gott aus dem Spaß.

Valentine literally tells his sister to keep God out of the “joke,” but what he means in fact, in an ironic way, is the ‘issue’ of his lost life and her lost virginity, which becomes obvious in the article “spasz” of Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm's dictionary, where said verse 3733 from *Faust* is quoted as an example and explained in the following manner: *im weitesten sinne wie sache, angelegenheit überhaupt, scherzhaft oder ironisch* (“in the broadest sense meaning matter, issue at hand, jokingly or ironically”). Furthermore, the preceding verse 3732 of *Faust*, spoken by Margaret, ends in the pronoun *das*, therefore it is likely that Goethe used the unusual noun *Spaß* because the two words rhyme. Surprisingly, the Spanish version by Teodoro Llorente (1882: 292) is neither literal nor did he make use of a paraphrase, but he arbitrarily introduced the idiom *tener ni arte ni parte* (‘have nothing whatsoever to do with’):

Dios no tiene arte ni parte
en esto: déjale aparte [...]

The Argentine physician and social reformer Augusto Bunge (1926: 11) claims he learned from Llorente what is best avoided in a verse translation of Goethe's *Faust*, “concerning both its metrical structures and its diction.” Bunge's *Faust* was published in 1926 in Buenos Aires, apparently following one year of arduous work. In 1949, another edition came out posthumously, edited by Juan C. Probst, which contains various revisions made by the late Bunge, without any doubt evidence that the translator had kept improving his version during the decades after the first publication. Bunge's approach to metrics is radically opposed to the one of Llorente. In fact, he is the first translator of *Faust* who worried at an adequate metrical form. Bunge's (1926: 13) aim was to recreate in Spanish what he called the “modernist” forms employed by Goethe, i.e. the irreverent use the Weimar poet had made of the traditional forms laid down by the manuals of his day. At the same time, Bunge wanted to achieve a faithful translation, which for him implied “breaking with our stereotypical metrical formulas”. Bunge was against “uniform” verses, which seemed like a “Procrustean bed” to him, and preferred irregular meters – just like Goethe. Furthermore, he tried to reproduce “the style and tone corresponding to every character and every situation” (Bunge 1926: 13).

During the above-mentioned walk on Easter Sunday, Wagner, Faust's assistant, admits that he too has had hours of melancholy, but he does not understand Faust's impulse towards the heavens. (*Faust*, vv. 1100-1101):

Ich hatte selbst oft grillenhafte Stunden,

Doch solchen Trieb hab' ich noch nie empfunden.

Wagner speaks in *Madrigalverse* with a markedly regular rhythm, to the point of sounding tedious. In Bunge's (1926: 70) version, a similar effect is created merely through rhyming couplets:

También yo tuve algún momento extravagante,
Mas nunca sentí impulso semejante.

Augusto Bunge recreates the great variety of the rhymes and rhythms of Goethe's *Madrigalvers* through a skilful array of metrical forms, which becomes obvious in the second scene at Faust's study, where Mephistopheles appears for the first time, dressed up as a travelling student. Goethe employs verses of five and six iambic feet (*Faust*, vv. 1349-1352):

Ich bin ein Teil des Teils, der Anfangs alles war,
Ein Teil der Finsternis, die sich das Licht gebär,
Das stolze Licht, das nun der Mutter Nacht
Den alten Rang, den Raum ihr streitig macht [...]

Bunge (1926: 81) makes use of alexandrines, *heptasílabos* and *endecasílabos* with varied rhyme schemes and in part he imitates the iambic rhythm of the *Madrigalvers*.

Soy parte de la parte que al principio fue todo,
Parte de las tinieblas que a la luz dieron vida;
La luz dominadora,
La que a la Madre Noche, sin respeto,
El rango y sitio le disputa ahora.

Bunge's subtlety in imitating Goethe's rhythms can be seen in a somewhat obscure passage later on in the same scene, after the hero has fallen asleep (*Faust*, vv. 1457-1460). According to Hans Arens (1982: 165), the chant of the spirits in those lines describes cloud formations:

Himmlicher Söhne
Geistige Schöne,
Schwankende Beugung
Schwebet vorüber.

The dactylic rhythm of these verses is recreated very neatly by Augusto Bunge (1926: 85), if in two long lines instead of the four short ones of the source text:

De hijos celestes ideal belleza
Grácil se inclina; leve se esfuma [...]

The moment when Faust stammers out his pantheistic creed to his ingenuous lover is one of the most irregular passages metrically speaking. Even the rhyme, which Goethe thought so important for softening the effect of his play, has disappeared in this vital scene. Very much like his convictions, which diverge from the dogmas of the main churches, Faust also uses a rather individualistic language: he expresses himself in short, irregular verses, in a "hymnic" tone (Ciupke 1994: 77). Not only does Bunge (1926: 191) imitate these irregular rhythms by means of the *silva*, he also abandons his frequent use of perfect rhyme and employs imperfect rhyme:

¡No me comprendas mal, mi niña bella!
¿Quién puede osar nombrarle? ¿Quién osara
Decir: yo creo en él? ¿Y quién pudiera
Sentir y osar decirlo: en él no creo?
El que todo lo alienta,
El que todo lo abarca,

¿No está en ti, no está en mí, y todo lo llena?
Allá arriba su cúpula alza el cielo [...]

José María Valverde's verse translation of *Faust* appeared in 1963. Valverde's approach is different from both Bunge's and Llorente's, since he uses mainly unrhymed *endecasílabo* verses (with an occasional *silva* strewn in, e.g. in the above-mentioned scene where Faust talks about religion), in other words, a concept opposed to the metrical variety and originality of Goethe. Although Valverde achieves higher fidelity than Llorente, mainly because he follows the learned prose translation of Rafael Cansinos Assens (1944), he brushes aside the frequent metrical modulations of the source text, which play such an important part in the effect of the play and its characters on readers and audiences. What is more, Valverde's uniform meters form a "Procrustean bed," as Bunge put it, in which the idea of Goethe's verses is repeatedly mutilated. Moreover, he dispenses with the characteristic effects of the rhymes in Goethe's *Faust*.

At the beginning of the "Prologue in Heaven" (*Faust* vv. 243-246), the archangels praise Creation in three stanzas of eight tetrameters each, rhymed alternately with male and female rhymes:

Die Sonne tönt nach alter Weise
In Brudersphären Wettgesang
Und ihre vorgeschriebene Reise
Vollendet sie mit Donnergang.

It is a stanza form from the 17th century, which was commonly sung in Lutheran churches to praise God (cf. Ciupke 1994: 35). Valverde's version in unrhymed *endecasílabos* is faithful, also because it consists of more syllables than the original, but by no means does it evoke the ceremonious tone of the 17th century religious song:

Con la antigua armonía el sol resuena
entre el canto fraterno y a porfía
de las esferas; y anda, como un trueno,
hasta el final de la prescrita senda.

By contrast, Bunge's (1949: 11) translation of the same verses, in *endecasílabos* rhymed in couplets, faithfully imitates the form of the original.

El sol canta la vieja melodía
Entre esferas hermanas a porfía.
Y cierra el viaje que le fue prescrito
Como trueno a través del infinito.

The idea is slightly altered in this version, e.g. the spheres have become "sisters" instead of brothers and the sound of the thunder is heard "throughout infinity", but these concessions Bunge made to his rhyme and meter are in accordance with Goethe's Pythagorean imagery.

When we compare José María Valverde's verse translation of *Faust* with the prose version of Rafael Cansinos Assens, it is obvious to what extent the exclusive use of *endecasílabos* compelled Valverde to leave out words when versifying passages from the Spanish prose *Faust* of his predecessor. For example, in the source text, Faust, during his first encounter with Wagner in the play, employs the bizarre metaphor *der Menschheit Schnitzel kräuseln*, in order to illustrate how empty the rhetoric of his assistant sounds to him. *Schnitzel* does not refer to the well-known Viennese dish here, but means slips of paper that are curled with scissors for decorative purposes. Most likely, the metaphor alludes to baroque wigs (cf. Gerhard Sauder in the 1987 Munich edition of the works of Goethe, vol. 1.2: 753). Thus Faust uses a daring and hardly comprehensible literary image here to express his tedium at Wagner's old-fashioned figurative language, literally 'curl up shreds / slips of paper for humanity' or 'curl up humanity's shreds / slips of paper.' In Cansinos's (1957: 1: 365) version, the noun *Schnitzel* is translated as *virutas* ('wood shavings'): "[...] en las que rizáis virutas a la Humanidad," to which the concept

of 'curling' is added by means of the verb *rizáis*. *Rizar* technically describes the same activity as *kräuseln*, but after all, *rizar virutas* does not correspond to *Schnitzel kräuseln* in German, because an idea of carpentry is evoked, not one of paper slips curled to make baroque wigs. Cansinos (1957: 1: 365) possibly noticed the incongruity and decided to explain the “obscure metaphor” in a large footnote. José María Valverde (1963: 20) obviously used Cansinos's translation as a model, but he condensed the idea to the point of incomprehensibility in order to reduce the number of syllables for his *endecasílabo* verse:

en que a la Humanidad sacas virutas [...]

José María Valverde uses *endecasílabos* even for passages for which Goethe employs rather short verses, for example in the song of the Earth Spirit. In the first “Night” scene, the *Erdgeist* reveals to Faust that his activity consists in giving rise to the cycle of life and all activity on earth. The Earth Spirit sings in trochees and iambs, which create a very agitated rhythm evoking the movements of the Spirit, first in crossed rhyme and then in couplets (*Faust*, vv. 501-503).

In Lebensfluten, im Tatensturm
Wall' ich auf und ab,
Wehe hin und her!

As Valverde (1963: 19) does not recreate the playful rhythms of the Earth Spirit's verses, the Spanish version does not evoke the *Erdgeist's* activity metrically. What is more, the enjambement used by Valverde further levels out the original rhythm of the passage.

En rebose de vida, en tempestad
de acción, yo subo y bajo en oleadas,
y me agito de un lado para otro.

On the other hand, Valverde regularly imitates Goethe's iambs through the use of *endecasílabos heroicos* (cf. T. Navarro 1959: 51), whose regular trochaic feet sound like *blank verse*. For example in the scene with the student, Mephistopheles ironically observes that when studying metaphysics one has to fathom ideas which “won't fit the human brain” (*Faust*, vv. 1951-1952):

Da seht daß ihr tiefsinnig faßt,
Was in des Menschen Hirn nicht paßt.

Not only is the translation almost literal, the regular iambic feet are rendered by José María Valverde (1963: 56) as *endecasílabos heroicos*, which have a similar rhythm as the corresponding verses in German:

Veréis cómo captáis con honda mente
lo que en cabeza humana nunca cabe.

This imitation of blank verse through *endecasílabos heroicos* can be found so often in Valverde's *Faust* that I assume it is intentional. Not only Valverde, also Norberto Silvetti Paz uses “iambic feet” in this manner in his *Faust*, and most likely he even announces it in his introduction, where he mentions using “el verso blanco” (Silvetti Paz 1970: 24). In Spanish this usually refers to unrhymed verse, however, given the recurrence of such “iambic” verses, I consider he had the German expression in mind, too. In “Walpurgis Night” I found an example of such a “blank verse”, when Faust exclaims, on seeing the multitude of witches and wizards ascending the Broken (*Faust*, v. 4115):

Heiß' ich mir das doch eine Messe!

The rhythm of Silvetti's (1970: 357) version resembles that of the original here:

Jamás he visto feria semejante!

A few moments earlier in the same scene (*Faust*, v. 4042), Mephistopheles has just lured Faust away from the main current of witches heading for the black mass, in order to show him a less agitated part of the satanic feast. This decision on the part of Goethe not to include his black mass scenes in the final version of the play has sparked prolonged controversies in German literary criticism. As a pretext, Mephistopheles pretends that he is fed up with the noise of the crowd and had rather spend some time in a quiet place:

Wir wollen hier im Stillen hausen.

In the Silvetti Paz translation (1970: 350), Mephistopheles explains the benefits of walking from fire to fire instead of taking part in the worshipping of the devil with the following *endecasílabo heroico*, rhythmically very akin:

Y aquí nos quedaremos en sosiego.

Pedro Gálvez's *Fausto* (1984) is not entirely based on a metrical concept, since its verses often lack rhythm and vary greatly in length, as can be seen in the rather abstract translation of Mephistopheles's observation on metaphysics quoted above:

procurando entender perspicazmente
aquello que no se aviene con el cerebro humano [...]

Likewise, in the argument between Faust and Mephistopheles after Faust has noticed Margaret for the first time, Gálvez's version seems poetically dead next to Goethe's language. In this scene, Mephistopheles is trying to convince Faust that it would be of no avail to seduce Margaret in a hurry, and that they had rather "accommodate themselves" to using subterfuge (*Faust*, vv. 2654-2658):

Jetzt ohne Schimpf und ohne Spaß.
Ich sag' euch, mit dem schönen Kind
Geht's ein- für allemal nicht geschwind.
Mit Sturm ist da nichts einzunehmen;
Wir müssen uns zur List bequemen.

Goethe used verses of four feet, predominantly iambic ones, rhymed in couplets. In Pedro Gálvez's (1984: 133) version of this metrically rather regular passage in German, the rhythm as well as the meter of the Spanish verses vary considerably:

Y os digo ahora, sin insulto ni chirigota:
con esa niña hermosa el apresuramiento nada os sirve,
nada conquistaréis con un asalto;
habremos de recurrir a argucias y artimañas.

Afterwards, when the bewitched scholar and his manipulative companion are arguing, the latter mocks Faust's amorous lunacy by comparing his state of mind to fireworks (*Faust*, vv. 2862-2864):

So ein verliebter Tor verpufft
Euch Sonne, Mond und alle Sterne
Zum Zeitvertreib dem Liebchen in die Luft.

Again, Goethe's verse is not in the least mirrored by Gálvez's verse translation; on the contrary, the regular *Madrigalverse* are rendered as prose (1984:144):

Un loco prendado de tal suerte os hará estallar por los aires
sol y luna y todas las estrellas,
para solaz y esparcimiento de su amada.

The main “metrical” principle Pedro Gálvez abided by when translating *Faust* seems to be the faithful distribution of the ideas expressed in each verse. For the most part, he ignored Goethe’s rhythms, rhymes and meters. In fact, in many ways, Pedro Gálvez’s *Fausto* appears to be a prose translation typographically set in verse, i.e. a line-by-line translation based on few genuinely metrical criteria.

Helena Cortés (2010) employed long verses and the occasional imperfect rhyme, a shrewd approach which enabled her to translate many passages faithfully with regard to both content and form. The imperfect rhyme employed by Cortés in “Walpurgis Night’s Dream” (*Walpurgisnachtstraum*), for example, helps to create the same impression of excessive metrical regularity as in the original, which is especially obvious in the stanza of the dancer (*Faust*, vv. 4331-4334).

Da kommt ja wohl ein neues Chor?
Ich höre ferne Trommeln.
Nur ungestört! Es sind im Rohr
Die unisonen Dommeln.

According to most critics, the stanza likens philosophers to bitterns (*botaurus stellaris*), a type of heron which has a loud call, similar to the lowing of a bull, and occasionally utters cries not unlike a tabla drum. However, in Spanish translations of *Faust*, the *botaurus stellaris* is rarely ever mentioned, as it is not very common on the Iberian peninsula, and instead replaced by the *alcaravan* ('stone-curlew') (cf. Beyer 2012: 296). Cortés (2010: 299) translates the “Dream” in stanzas of *octosílabos* rhymed alternately, an effective approach.

¿Se oye en los juncos un coro?
Siento lejanos tantanes.
Ni caso: graznan tediosos
los vanos alcaravanes.

Another passage which illustrates the strategy adopted by Helena Cortés (2010: 43) quite well is her version of the chant of the Archangels. The Goethean tetrameters are translated by means of regular *dodecasílabos*, i.e. rather long verses, which offer enough space to faithfully accommodate all the ideas expressed in the source text:

El sol entona, siguiendo antiguo uso,
su canto con las esferas en concurso,
y su viaje, ya prescrito de antemano,
conduce a su culmen con tonante paso.

The imperfect rhymes ('antemano – paso') subtly imitate Goethe’s rhymes without affecting neither faithfulness nor natural expression.

When Walter Benjamin, almost a century ago now, translated Baudelaire, it occurred to him that the source text was like a mountain forest, but one which was off-limits to the translator, and which they could only explore by shouting words into it from afar and listening to their echoes. Furthermore, the metrical forms of the original seemed tightly attached to their content to him, like an orange peel to the fruit it encloses, whereas the rhymes and rhythms of his translation covered their content more loosely, as it were, like a king’s robe, and sounded overly formal. Still, when we look at Benjamin’s rhymed version of Baudelaire’s poems, we notice a strong desire on the part of the translator to faithfully recreate their rhythms and rhymes in German, even if the message of the source text is altered. In other words, the original “shines through,” as Benjamin put it.

Of all the translators who have attempted to create a Spanish version of Goethe's *Faust* over the past one hundred and fifty years, despite their use of different metrical forms, no one has done justice to the enormous metrical diversity of the original the way Benjamin did when translating Baudelaire. To this day, the only translation which comes close to the richness of Goethean rhymes and rhythms is the one by Augusto Bunge. Curiously enough, it has never been brought out by any renowned publisher and circulates in very few yellowed copies. The great benefit of Bunge's approach is that he takes into account the irregularity of Goethe's *Knittelverse* and *Madrigalverse* (and the occasional free verse), since this disrespectful use of traditional forms on the part of the Weimar poet allows a more natural language and style than fixed forms. It would definitely be worthwhile to re-edit Bunge's version.

As to Goethe's rhymes, imperfect rhyme should be used more often in translations of *Faust* into Spanish. It offers possibilities hitherto almost unexplored in verse translations of Goethe's play and some day may make it possible to create a *Faust* in Spanish which is faithful both to content and form of the sublime source text.

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BIONOTE / NOTA BIOGRÁFICA

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