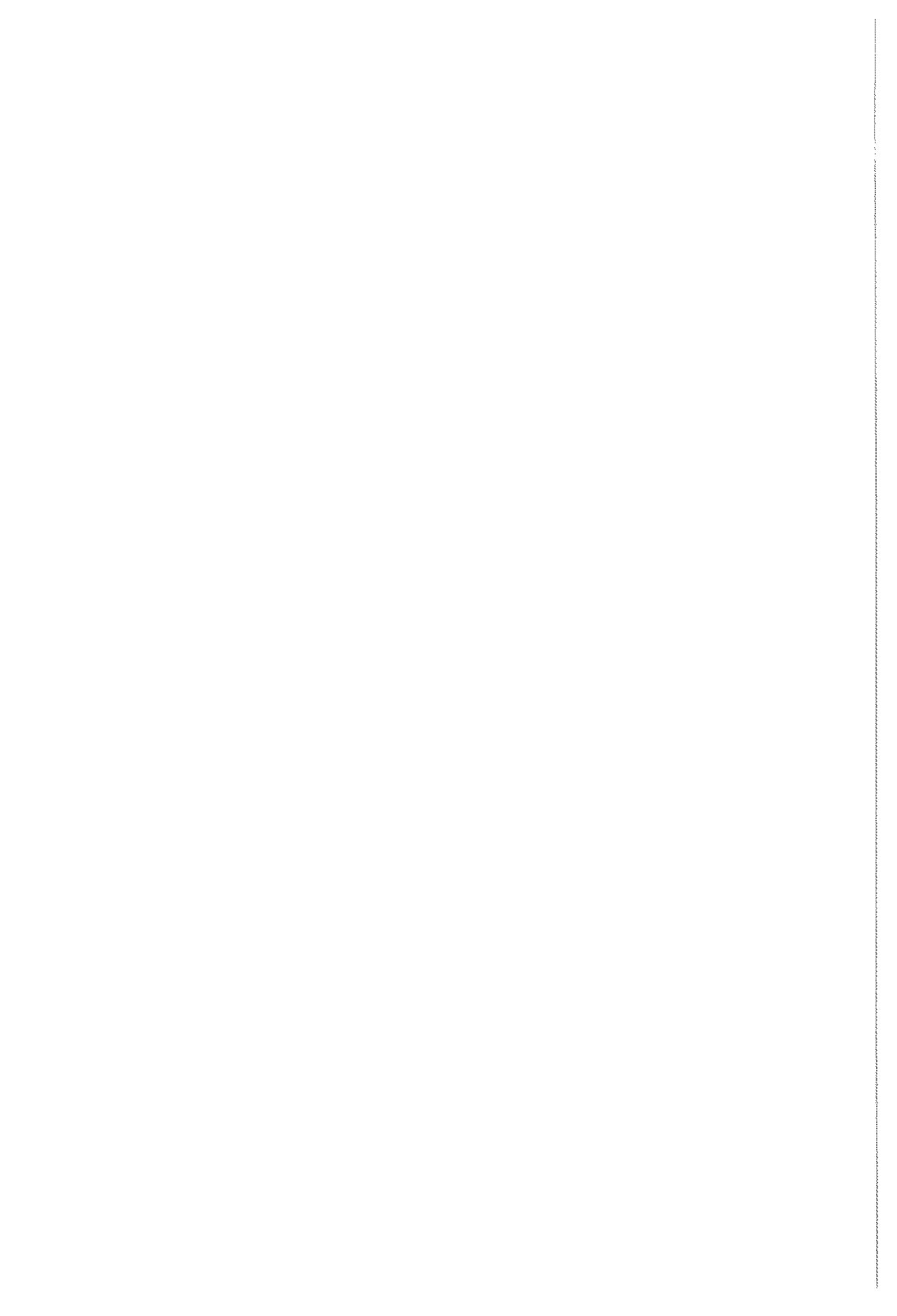


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**THREE SPANISH TRANSLATIONS OF
T. S. ELIOT'S
FOUR QUARTETS: Little Gidding II,ii**

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1. Introduction

It has now become fairly commonplace to hear that poetic translation is not possible, that—as Robert Frost said—poetry is what is lost when translating. And we agree with that to certain extent: in fact, anyone reading an excellent piece of poetry (in his/her own language) and trying to help foreigners to enjoy its excellencies, is likely to conclude with comments such as “this is just impossible to translate” [especially when (s)he has arrived to fully apprehend the indivisible conjunction of content and form in it]. But a poetic translation is obviously preferable to “nothing”; at least for people that do not know the source language; and, therefore, a translation of *Four Quartets* (or of *Lyrical Ballads*) is better than no Eliot (or no Wordsworth) at all¹. Be that as it may, translating creative literature certainly involves a great deal of problems; and analysing the merits and defects of a poetic translation could, the-

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1. In response to those who insist that translation is impossible, one can only say that from time to time it is very tempting to take such a position seriously. One must, of course, recognize the incommensurability of languages in the absolute sense. This means that absolute communication is impossible, but that is true not only between languages but also within a language. Rather than being impressed by the impossibilities of translation, anyone who is involved in the realities of translation in a broad range of languages is impressed that effective interlingual communication is always possible, despite seemingly enormous differences in linguistic structures and cultural features. These impressions as to the relative adequacy of interlingual communication are based on two fundamental factors: (1) semantic similarities between languages, due no doubt in large measure to the common core of human experience; and (2) fundamental similarities in the syntactic structures of languages, especially at the so-called kernel, or core, level. (Nida 1989: 81).

refore, be very “problematic”. The thing is that several poetic translations are in the market; an the reader will obviously look for “the best translation” that he may find. As a rule he will try to choose a translation done by another poet or an academic who (after apprehending the essence of the *source text*) will perhaps be better equipped to make recourse to new type of metaphors, new associations, different rhythms, accuracy in the selection of words, etc. in the *target language*.

In this paper we'll try to analyse three translations of a small passage from Eliot's *Four Quartets* (1943) into Spanish: *Little Gidding II ii* (the meeting with a ‘familiar compound ghost’). The passage is strongly influenced by Dante's *Divina Commedia* (Eliot 1965: 129); it has the lineaments of one of Dante's encounters in the underworld and Eliot's choice of metre seems an attempt to find an equivalent for English of the effect of Dante's *terza rima*.(Scofield 1988: 75-76).

The three Spanish translations of *Four Quartets* we are going to analyse and assess are the following: the first was published by the poet Vicente Gaos², in 1951. The second, by José M. Valverde³, appeared in 1978. And the third, by E. Pujals-Gesalí⁴ was published in 1987.

We will try to assess the value of the three translations analysing how some prosodic and grammatical devices of the original text have been rendered in Spanish, making explicit the different strategies and aims followed by the translators, as well as the semantic accuracy and/or difficulties in some passages. In doing so, we assume that both Spanish and English have the same basic set of prosodic devices: metre, caesura, enjambment, rhyme, alliterations, etc., and also the same linguistic means of expressing extralinguistic contents, images, fantasies, etc.

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2. V. GAOS is one of the well-kown Spanish poets of the so-called *Generación de 1927*. He was contemporary with Eliot, and he died only some 20 years ago.
 3. J M VALVERDE was Professor of *Æsthetics* at the University of Barcelona; he was also a poet and a well-known translator [he has translated into Spanish all of W. Shakespeare's works, J. Joyce's *Ulysses* and other works of English literature]. He died in 1995.
 4. PUJALS-GESALÍ is a young Associate Professor of English Literature at the University of Madrid and also a poet.

2. The source text: T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets, Little Gidding II,ii* [and its scansion]

<i>line</i>	<i>hemistic 1</i>	<i>hemistic 2</i>	<i>feet</i>	<i>syllb</i>	<i>Endng</i>
1	In thè uncèrtain hóur	befóre the mórning	5	11	Fem.
2	Nèar the énding	of intériminàble níght	5	10	Mas.
3	At thè recòrrent énd	of thè unénding	5	11	Fem.
4	Àfter the dárk dóve	with the flickering tóngue	5	11	Mas.
5	Had pássed belów the horízon	òf his hóming	5	12	Fem.
6	While the déad léaves	still ráttled òn like tìn	6	10	Mas.
7	Òver the áspphalt	whère nó óther sòund was	6	11	Fem.
8	Between three dístrícts	whènce the smóke aróse	5	10	Mas.
9	I mét one wálking,	lóitering and hòrried	5	11	Fem.
10	As if blówn towárds me	like the métal léaves	5	11	Mas.
11	Befóre the òrban dáwn wínd	unresísting.	5	11	Fem.
12	And às I fixéd	upòn the dówn-turned fáce	5	11	Mas.
13	That póinted scròtíny	with whích we chállenge	5	11	Fem.
14	The first-met stránger	ín the wáning dòsk	5	10	Mas.
15	I cáught the sòdden lóok	of sòme déad máster	6	11	Fem.
16	Whom I had knówn,	forgóttén, hálf recálléd	5	10	Mas.
17	Bóth one and màny;	ín the brówn báked féatures	6	11	Fem.
18	The éyes of à familiár	còmpound ghóst	5	10	Mas.
19	Bóth íntímáte	and ònidèntífiable.	6	11	Fem.
20	So I assòmed	a dóuble párt and críed	5	10	Mas.
21	And héárd anóther's vóice cry:	'Whát! are yóu here?'	6	11	Fem.
22	Althóugh we wère nó.	I was stíll the sáme,	5	10	Mas.
23	Knówing myself	yét béing sòmeone óther	6	11	Fem.
24	And hé a fáce stíll fórmíng;	yét the wórd's sufficed	6	12	Mas.
25	To compél the rècognítion	thèy précéded.	5	12	Fem.
26	And só, complíant	to the còmmón wínd,	5	10	Mas.
27	Tóo stránge to each óther	fòr misúnderstánding,	6	11	Fem.
28	In còncord	àt this íntersèctíon tíme	5	10	Mas.
29	Of méetíng nówhèrè,	nó befóre and áfter,	5	11	Fem.
30	We tród the pávément	ín a déad patról.	5	10	Mas.
31	I sáid: 'The wónder	thát I féel is éasy,	5	10	Fem.
32	Yet éase is cáuse of wónder.	Thérefóre spéak:	5	10	Mas.
33	I may nó còmprehénd,	may nó remémber.'	5	11	Fem.
34	And hé: 'I am nó	éager to rehéarse	5	10	Mas.
35	My thóughts and théory	whích yóu hàve forgóttén.	5	11	Fem.
36	These thíngs	hàve sérvéd their pòrpose: lét them bé.	5	10	Mas.

37	Sò with your ówn, and práy they bé forgíven	5	11	Fem.
38	By òthers, às I práy yóu to forgíve	5	10	Mas.
39	Both bád and góod. Last séason's fròit is éaten	5	11	Fem.
40	And the fòlled béast shall kíck the émpy páil.	5	10	Mas.
41	For lást year's wórds belóng to last yéar's lánguage	5	11	Fem.
42	And néxt year's wórds awáit anóther vóice.	5	10	Mas.
43	Bùt, as the pássage nów présénts no híndrance	5	11	Fem.
44	tò the spírít ùnappéased and péregríne	6	11	Mas.
45	betwéen two wórlds becóme mòch like each óther,	5	11	Fem.
46	So I fínd wórds I néver thóught to spéak	5	10	Mas.
47	In stréets I néver thóught I shòuld revísit	5	11	Fem.
48	Whèn I léft my bódý on a dístant shóre.	5	10	Mas.
49	Since òur concérn was spéech and spéech impélléd us	5	11	Fem.
50	To pòrify the díalect òf the tríbe	5	10	Mas.
51	And òrge the mínd to áftersight and fóresight,	5	11	Fem.
52	Lèt me díscloé the gífts resérved for áge	5	10	Mas.
53	To sét a crówn upòn your lífetime's éffort.	5	11	Fem.
54	First, the còld fríctíon òf expíríng sènsé	6	10	Mas.
55	Withòut enchántment, ófferíng nò prómíse	5	11	Fem.
56	But bítter tástelessnèss of shádw fròit	5	10	Mas.
57	As bódý and sóul begín to fáll asònder.	5	11	Fem.
58	Sécond, the còncíscíous ímpotènce of ráge	5	10	Mas.
59	At hòman fóllý, ànd the làcerátíon	5	11	Fem.
60	Of láughtér àt what céases tò amòse.	5	10	Mas.
61	And lást, the réndíng páín of rè-enáctment	5	11	Fem.
62	Of àll that yóu have dóne, and béen; the sháme	5	10	Mas.
63	Of mótives láte revéaled, and thè awáreñess	5	11	Fem.
64	Of thíngs íll dóne and dóne tò óthers' hárm	5	10	Mas.
65	Whích ónce you tóok for éxercíse of vírtue.	5	11	Fem.
66	Then fóol's appróval stíngs, and hónor stáíns.	5	10	Mas.
67	From wróng to wróng the exàspéráte spírít	5	11	Fem.
68	Procéeds, unlèss restóred by thát refíníng fíre	6	12	Mas.
69	Where yòu must móve in méasure, líke a dâncer.'	5	11	Fem.
70	The dáy was bréaking. Ìn the dísfígured stréet	5	10	Mas.
71	He léft me wíth a kínd of valedíctíon,	5	11	Fem.
72	And fáded òn the blówíng òf the hòrn.	5	10	Mas.

3.The three Spanish translations

3.1 Gaos' translation

lin	<i>Hemistic 1</i>	<i>hemistic 2</i>	<i>(hemistic 3)</i>	ft	sybl
1	En la hora incierta	antes de la mañana		6	11
2	cerca del final	de la noche interminable		7	13
3	En el fin recurrente	de lo sin fin		5	12
4	Después de que el oscuro palomo	de lengua llameante		7	17
5	Hubo pasado bajo el horizonte	de su mensajera		8	17
6	Mientras las hojas muertas	tintineaban aún como estaño		7	18
7	Sobre el asfalto	donde ningún otro sonido había		7	16
8	Entre los tres distritos	de donde subía el humo		6	15
9	Encontré a alguien que andaba,	haraganeando y apresurado		9	19
10	Como empujado hacia mí	lo mismo que las hojas metálicas		7	17
11	Que no ofrecen resistencia_al	viento urbano de la aurora		8	16
12	Y así que escruté	aquel rostro cabizbajo		6	12
13	Con esa aguda ojeada	con la que desafiamos		7	16
14	Al extraño recién conocido-en	la penumbra vespertina		8	18
14	Capté la súbita mirada	de algún maestro muerto		7	16
16	A quien yo hubiese conocido,	olvidado, recordado a medias		9	18
17	Como a uno y muchos a la vez;	en los bronceados rasgos		9	18
18	Los ojos de un espectro	familiar y complejo		6	14
19	A la vez íntimo	e inidentificable		7	14
20	Asumí pues un doble papel	y exclamé		6	13
21	Y oí la exclamación de otra voz:	"¡Cómo!, ¿estás tú aquí?"		8	15
22	Aunque no estábamos.	Yo todavía era el mismo,		5	15
23	Y sin embargo	me reconocía como algún otro-		7	16
24	Y a él como un rostro	en formación aún; no obstante las palabras bastaron		9	21
25	Para obligar al reconocimiento	al que habían precedido.		9	18
26	Y así,	obedientes al viento común,		5	12
27	Demasiado extraños el uno al otro	para dejar de entendernos.		8	19
28	Concordes, en esta hora	de intersección,		5	13
29	En encontrarnos en ninguna parte,	ni antes ni después,		8	18
30	Anduvimos en ronda muerta	por el pavimento,		7	15
31	Yo dije: "La extrañeza que experimento es sencilla,			6	15
32	Aunque la sencillez es causa de extrañeza. Habla por tanto:			8	18
33	Puede que yo no entienda,	puede que no recuerde."		6	14
34	Y él: "No tengo_el	menor deseo de repetir		6	15
35	La idea y teoría mías	que has olvidado.		6	16

36	Estas cosas llenaron su propósito: déjalas estar.	8	18
37	Haz lo propio con las tuyas, y ruega porque las perdonen	8	17
38	Otros, igual que yo te ruego a ti que perdones	7	14
39	A los malos como a los buenos./		
	El fruto de la pasada estación/ya ha sido comido	11	25
40	Y la bestia ahita ha de cocear el cubo vacío.	8	17
41	Pues las palabras del pasado año		
	pertenecen al lenguaje del pasado año	11	25
42	Y las palabras del próximo año esperan otra voz.	7	17
43	Pero, así como el paso no presenta ahora obstáculo	7	15
44	Al espíritu inaplacado y peregrino	6	13
45	Entre dos mundos que han llegado a parecerse mucho,	7	15
46	Así yo encuentro palabras que no pensé decir nunca	7	16
47	En calles que jamás pensé que visitara de nuevo	7	16
48	Cuando abandoné mi cuerpo en una orilla remota	7	15
49	Puesto que lo que nos concernía/era el lenguaje/ y el lenguaje nos impulsaba	11	23
50	A purificar el dialecto de la tribu	7	14
51	Y a apremiar la pre-visión y post-visión de la mente,	8	15
52	Déjame descubrir los dones reservados a la vejez	8	18
53	Para poner una corona sobre el esfuerzo de tu vida entera.	9	20
54	Primero, la helada facción del sentido que expira	6	15
55	Sin encanto, no ofreciendo promesa	5	11
56	Sino una insipidez amarga de fruto umbrío	6	14
57	Así que alma y cuerpo empiezan a separarse	6	14
58	Segundo, la impotente consciencia de la rabia	6	14
59	Ante la locura humana, y la laceración	7	14
60	de la risa ante lo que deja de divertirnos.	6	14
61	Y por último, la pena desgarradora de recrear	8	17
62	Todo cuanto habéis hecho y sido; la vergüenza	6	13
63	De motivos tarde revelados, y el tener conciencia	8	16
64	De cosas mal hechas y hechas en perjuicio ajeno	6	15
65	Que antaño tomasteis por virtuoso ejercicio.	5	14
66	Pues la aprobación de los necios incita, y el honor se mancilla	8	19
67	De error en error el espíritu exasperado	6	14
68	Prosigue, de no ser restaurado por ese fuego purificador	9	21
69	Donde debéis moveros con medida, como un bailarín".	7	17
70	Amanecía. En la calle desfigurada	6	14
71	Me dejó, con una especie de despedida,	6	13
72	Esfumándose al sonido de una trompeta.	6	13

3.2 Valverde's translation

<i>line</i>	<i>text</i>	<i>syll</i>
1	En la hora incierta de antes de la mañana	14
2	cerca del fin de la noche interminable	12
3	al repetido final de lo inacabable	13
4	después que la oscura paloma con la lengua chispeante	17
5	hubo pasado bajo el horizonte de su regreso	16
6	mientras las hojas muertas seguían traqueteando como estaño	19
7	sobre el asfalto donde no había otro sonido	14
8	entre tres distritos de donde se elevaba el humo	15
9	encontré a uno que andaba, ocioso y apresurado	15
10	como llevado por el viento hacia mí igual que las hojas metálicas	20
11	sin resistencia ante el viento urbano del amanecer	16
12	Y al fijar en su cara agachada	10
13	el estricto escrutinio con que desafiamos	13
14	al primer desconocido en la sombra que se desvanece	17
15	capté el repentino aspecto de algún maestro muerto	15
16	a quien había conocido, olvidado, medio evoqué	17
17	a la vez a uno y a muchos: en los grises rasgos conocidos	19
18	los ojos de un conocido espectro compuesto	13
19	a la vez íntimo e inidentificable.	13
20	Así, asumí un doble papel, y grité	12
21	Y oí la voz de otro gritar: "¡Cómo! ¿estás aquí tú?"	16
22	aunque no éramos. Yo seguía siendo el mismo,	14
23	conociéndome a mí mismo y sin embargo siendo algún otro	17
24	y él una cara aún formándose; pero las palabras fueron bastante	21
25	para obligar al reconocimiento a que precedían.	16
26	Y así, sometiéndonos al viento común,	13
27	demasiado extraños el uno al otro para malentendidos,	18
28	en concordia en ese momento de intersección	14
29	de reunirnos en ningún lugar, sin antes ni después,	17
30	pisamos la acera en muerto patrullar.	12
31	Dije: "El asombro que siento es fácil,	10
32	pero la facilidad es causa de asombro. Por tanto habla:	18
33	quizá no comprenda, quizá no recuerde"	12
34	Y él: "No tengo empeño en repasar	11
35	mis pensamientos y teoría que has olvidado.	16
36	Esas cosas han servido para su propósito: dejémosla estar.	23
37	Igual con las tuyas, y ruega que sean perdonadas	16
38	por los demás, como te ruego que perdones	13

39	tanto lo malo como lo bueno. El último fruto de la estación está comido	25
40	y el animal saciado dará una coz al cubo vacío.	17
41	Pues las palabras del año pasado pertenecen al lenguaje del año pasado	25
42	y las palabras del año que viene aguardan otra voz.	17
43	Pero, como el paso ahora no presenta obstáculo	15
44	al espíritu insatisfecho y peregrino	13
45	entre dos mundos que han llegado a ser muy parecidos,	15
46	así encuentro palabras que nunca pensé decir	15
47	en calles que nunca pensé que volvería a ver	15
48	cuando dejé mi cuerpo en una lejana orilla.	14
49	Puesto que nuestro interés era el lenguaje, y el lenguaje nos impulsaba	21
50	a purificar el dialecto de la tribu	14
51	y a apremiar a la mente a mirar atrás y prever,	15
52	déjame revelar los dones reservados a la vejez	18
53	para poner una corona en tu esfuerzo de toda una vida.	18
54	Primero, la fría fricción del sentido que expira	15
55	sin encanto, sin ofrecer promesa	10
56	sino amarga insipidez de fruto fantasmal	14
57	cuando cuerpo y alma empiezan a separarse.	13
58	Segundo, la consciente impotencia de la cólera	14
59	ante la locura humana, y el desgarró	12
60	de la risa ante lo que deja de divertir.	14
61	Y finalmente el desgarrador dolor de volver a hacer	17
62	todo lo que has hecho y sido; la vergüenza	12
63	de motivos revelados tarde y la consciencia	14
64	de cosas mal hechas y hechas para daño de los demás	17
65	que en otro tiempo tomaste por ejercicio de virtud.	17
66	Entonces duele la aprobación de los tontos, y mancha el honor.	19
67	De agravio en agravio avanza el exasperado	13
68	espíritu, a no ser que lo restaure ese fuego refinador	19
69	donde hay que moverse según medida, como un bailarín”.	18
70	Rompía el día. En la desfigurada calle	13
71	me dejó él, con una especie de despedida,	14
72	y se desvaneció al sonar la sirena.	12

3.3 Pujals' translation

<i>line</i>	<i>text</i>	<i>syllbl</i>
1	A la hora incierta que precede al alba,	11
2	cercano el fin de la noche sin fin,	11
3	al acabar repetido de lo inacabable,	14
4	cuando la paloma oscura de lengua encendida	14
5	rumbo al hogar cruzaba el horizonte,	11
6	cuando aún sonaban como latas las hojas muertas	14
7	sobre el asfalto en donde no había otro sonido,	14
8	entre los tres distritos que humeaban	11
9	me encontré con quien, apremiado y ocioso, andaba	14
10	como disparado contra mí cual las metálicas	14
11	hojas, sin resistirse al aire urbano	11
12	de la mañana. Y fijando en el cabizbajo	14
13	rostro la atención afilada que uno dirige	14
14	al primer extraño con quien se cruza	11
15	al alba, sorprendí en él la mirada de algún	14
16	maestro muerto, conocido, olvidado, a medias	11
17	recordado, uno y muchos a un tiempo;	14
18	en los rasgos curtidos los ojos de un espectro	14
19	familiar y compuesto, íntimo y a la vez	11
20	inidentificable. De manera	14
21	que asumí un doble papel y grité y oí a otro	14
22	gritar: "¡Cómo! ¿Tú estás aquí?", aunque ninguno estábamos.	11
23	Yo era aún el mismo, me reconocía	14
24	y era a la vez otro; y él todavía era un rostro	14
25	sin fraguar; mas bastó esta frase para forzar	12
26	el reconocimiento al que precedía.	14
27	Así, obedientes al viento común, extraños	14
28	en exceso para un malentendido, acordes	11
29	en aquel momento de intersección,	14
30	de encuentro en ningún lado, sin antes ni después,	14
31	caminamos como ronda muerta por la acera.	11
32	Dije: "¿Me es agradable esta extrañeza,	14
33	pero lo agradable extraña. Habla, pues: tal vez	14
34	yo no entienda, no recuerde". Y él: "no quiero ahora	11
35	repetir ni ideas ni teorías	14
36	mías que tú has olvidado. Ya su fin cumplieron	14
37	estas cosas. Déjalas en paz. Y haz con las tuyas	11

38	lo mismo y ruega porque las perdonen	14
39	otros como te ruego yo que lo malo y bueno	14
40	me perdones. El fruto de la estación pasada	11
41	ha sido comido ya y el ahíto	14
42	animal cocea el cubo vacío. Al año	14
43	pasado pertenecen las palabras de año	11
44	pasado y las del próximo su nueva	14
45	voz esperan. Pero igual que no halla ahora	14
46	trabas el andar del alma inquieta y peregrina	11
47	entre dos mundos que muy parecidos	13
48	se han vuelto, me vienen palabras que nunca	14
49	quise pronunciar en calles que jamás pensé	11
50	volvería a recorrer al dejar	14
51	mi cuerpo en una lejana orilla. Siendo nuestra	14
52	preocupación el habla y puesto que nos hacía	11
53	el habla purificar el dialecto	14
54	de la tribu, y forzar la mente a la previsión	14
55	y al recuerdo, déjame revelarte los dones	10
56	que se reservan a la vejez	14
57	y que coronarán los esfuerzos de tu vida.	14
58	En primer lugar la fricción fría del sentido	11
59	que sin atractivo expira, sin otra	14
60	promesa que la amarga insipidez de la sombra,	14
61	de un fruto a medida que se alejan alma y cuerpo.	11
62	En segundo término la impotencia,	14
63	consciente, de la rabia ante el desatino humano	14
64	y la risa lacerante de lo que ha dejado	11
65	de divertirnos. Y al fin el tormento	11
66	de repetir cuanto uno ha hecho y sido;	14
67	la vergüenza de comprender los móviles tarde,	11
68	la conciencia de haber obrado mal	14
69	y en perjuicio ajeno creyendo ejercer	14
70	la virtud. Duele entonces el elogio del necio	11
71	y el honor nos mancha. Avanza el alma	14
72	exasperada de error en error, a menos	14
73	que la restablezca ese fuego de purgación	11
74	en el que uno debe moverse al ritmo,	11
75	como un bailarín". Amanecía. Me dejó	14
76	en la calle desfigurada con una especie	14
77	de despedida y desapareció	11
78	al tiempo que se oía el sonar de la sirena.	14

4. Formal and semantic analysis of the three translations

According to K. Reiss (1989: 109-10), "if the SL (source language) text was written because the author wished to transmit an artistically shaped content, then the translation should transmit this content artistically shaped in a similar way in the TL (target language) [...] transmitting a direct impression of the artistic form of the conceptual content".

The problem is how to explicit this "directness of impression" and how to assess it. In my opinion, a discussion of merits and defects of this kind of translations has to pay attention to both *form* and *content*.

4.1 The form: poetic features in the translations

The most important of these conventions are metre, rhyme/rhythm, enjambment and caesura (Levin 1971: 117-18).

4.1.1 Metre

A quick look at Eliot's poem allows us to realise that it consists basically of ten-syllable lines⁵. Only four out of the 72 lines of the poem have 12 syllables.

Spanish translations by Valverde and Gaos, on the contrary, exhibit great irregularity in the length of lines (ranging from 10/11 to 25 syllables), though only a small percentage (36%) have more than 16 syllables⁶. In Pujals' translation lines vary from 10 to 14 syllables, achieving in some lines a rhythmic pattern that reproduces the effect of the original; but in doing so he has resorted many times to enjambment's, glides and hiatus that are not natural to the rhythm of the Spanish line and, besides, he has needed six extra lines.

4.1.2 Rhyme

The poem makes little use of rhyme. Eliot himself explains why⁷: But his poem shows a careful stress design, combining "fixity and flux, this

-
5. As it is known, the extra-syllable in lines with **feminine endings** (see *Annex*) does not count metrically.
 6. Lines of **more than 16 syllables** are considered "non-classical" in Spanish (López-Estrada 1974: 189-217).
 7. My first problem was to find an approximation to the *terza rima* without rhyming. English is less copiously provided with rhyming words than Italian; and those rhymes we have are in a way more emphatic. The rhyming words call too much attention to themselves. [...] I therefore adopted, for my purpose, a simple alternation of unrhymed masculine and feminine terminations, as the nearest way of giving the light effect of the rhyme in Italian. (Eliot 1965:129).

unperceived evasion of monotony, which is the very life of verse" (Eliot 1965: 185). The lines, in fact, are carefully organised in iambic (◡ –) pentameters which "is the bedrock of English versification" [though occasionally distorted by ordinary speech rhythms (Shapiro 1965: 562; Fry 1963: 37)] and alternating masculine and feminine endings.

The three Spanish translations are also organised mainly in trochaic (– ◡) and dactylic (– ◡ ◡) feet; but their lines vary from 5 to 11 feet and the hemistics are not always symmetrically arranged⁸. Gaos and Valverde have not translated the rhythmic alternation of masculine and feminine endings; Pujals tries to maintain Eliot's alternation of endings by means of the alternation of 11 and 14 syllable lines.

4.1.3 Enjambment

The poem exhibits both *syntactic* enjambment's (in descriptive passages: the first 11 lines, for example) and *rhythmical* enjambment's (in *discursive* passages: lines 58 to 64, for instance). The latter are produced between two elements which depend on each other to form a tighter syntactical and semantic unit, creating a strong necessity of passing on the second element in the other line without making a pause; in the former, the line is part of a larger syntactic unit, but each line can be thought of as semantically autonomous and a pause between two lines may contribute to retain the plasticity of a series of images.

Gaos' translation maintains the enjambment's of the original and Valverde's follows closely Gaos in this respect. They try to translate in one line all the cognitive meaning and the words found in the original line. Pujals' translation, however, makes a persistent and excessive use of enjambment's: in lines 41 to 45, for example, we find enjambment's in all lines (all of them between adjectives and nouns forming a phrase), thus producing an effect of hardness that is not found in the original poem and tiring the reader, to whom enjambment has lost the contrast that it produces when faced up to "standard" lines; the overall impression is that he is reading a piece of poetic prose divided in metrical patterns and visually arranged like a poem. [At the beginning, nevertheless, we find some lines that come near the effect of the original: a description where each line behaves as a syntactic unit].

8. The "ideal" 14-syllable line in Spanish is divided into two hemistics (or half-lines) of seven syllables each, the first having a trochaic rhythm and the second a dactylic one (López-Estrada 1974: 189-217).

4.1.4 Cæsura

Elite's pentameters are usually divided into two hemistichs separated by a pause or *cæsura*. The pause occurs: (a) before prepositional phrases [as in lines 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 13, 14, 15, 26, 27, 28, 30, 48, 50, 51, 53, 54, 56, 60, 68]; (b) before defining relative clauses [as in lines 7, 8, 25, 46, 47]; (c) between two elements joined by a copulative conjunction [lines 19, 20, 37, 49, 62, 64, 66], an adversative conjunction [line 23], a comparative particle [lines 10, 69] or by mere juxtaposition [lines 33, 55]; and (d) at times between the subject and the predicate (lines 6, 40, 41, 42, 43, 57).

All three Spanish translations make use of the *cæsura* as well, separating half-lines at more or less the same circumstances mentioned above. But the resulting hemistichs do *not show a regular pattern*, as far as length or number of syllables is concerned; thus in Gaos' translation we find hemistichs of 11 and 6 syllables (line 5), of 5 and 11 syllables (line 7), of 9 and 11 (line 9), of 8 and 8 (lines 11, 13, 51), of 10 and 4 (line 20); and we can even find two pauses also: of 7, 7 and 5 syllables (line 32), of 9, 10 and 6 (line 39), of 10, 5 and 9 (line 49), etc. Valverde's translation follows Gaos' closely, while Pujals' hemistichs seem more regular in length [though rarely forming two symmetric 7 syllable half-lines, which is the classical metrical disposition for the 14-syllable lines in Spanish] (cf López-Estrada 1974: 189-217).

Summarising we could say that Gaos' and Valverde's translations try to be close to the original (in the number of lines, the number of enjambment's, the syntactical structures, etc.), while Pujals' tries a different approach to the metrical subject (though his efforts push his translation away from nuclear elements of the original poem). We can say that his translation is a communicative one in intention, but that the effect-translation principle when applied to prosodic devices is not very satisfactory.

4.2 The content: some syntactic and semantic features

Following Newmark's characterisation of both *communicative* and *semantic* translations (1989: 118-37), we will try to offer now a couple of examples of features in the semantic and the syntactic levels which may show how the different translators have tackled difficult lines in the poem. [E will stand for Eliot, G for Gaos, V for Valverde, and P for Pujals].

4.2.1 Difficulties in interpretation

Here are some lines where the three translators have proposed different interpretations:

a) Line 5 (different understanding of a grammatical category):

- | | |
|---|--|
| E | Had passed below the horizon <i>of his homing</i> |
| G | Hubo pasado bajo el horizonte de su <i>mensajera</i> |
| V | hubo pasado bajo el horizonte <i>de su regreso</i> |
| P | <i>rumbo al hogar</i> cruzaba el horizonte |

Gaos interprets 'homing' as an adjective. And he may be right; actually the OED's definition is: "*adj.* 1. That goes home; especially applied to pigeons that are trained to fly home from a distance" (vol.V).

But, in this syntactical context, it seems more sensible to think of 'homing' as a noun: "*sb.* 2. The action of going home; return home; the faculty possessed by animals of returning home from a distance. Also attrib. esp. in reference to pigeons".

And '*de su mensajera*' (without the noun '*paloma*') sounds odd in this context to the Spanish reader. Valverde follows Gaos closely, though he has understood 'homing' as a noun. Both translate the line semantically, because they attempt to render, as closely as the syntactic structure of Spanish allows, the exact meaning of the original within its syntactic structure, its thought-process.

Pujals' translation, on the other hand, seems more communicative since it expresses the intention by means of a syntactic structure and a semantic content which are more natural to the Spanish reader. The verb Pujals uses, besides, seems to me more adequate. In fact, Gaos' and Valverde's "hubo pasado bajo el horizonte" implies in Spanish 'going through or under the horizon' [as in expressions like 'pasar bajo el mar/la montaña/el suelo', while the original line implies, to our understanding, passing above the horizon line and then disappearing behind it by going 'down'. The verb "cruzar" is, then, the adequate to express the perceptual sense of this line.

Combining the two, we would suggest the following translation: 'hubo cruzado el horizonte de su vuelta al hogar', as the most adequate; because it keeps the syntactical order and the semantic content of the original terms.

b) line 14 (criteria in translating a noun modified by an adjective)

- | | |
|---|---|
| E | The first-met stranger in the <i>waning dusk</i> |
| G | Al extraño recién conocido en la <i>penumbra vespertina</i> |
| V | al primer desconocido en la <i>sombra que se desvanece</i> |
| P | al primer extraño con quien se cruza / <i>al alba, ...</i> |

“Dusk” is normally understood as twilight; but, according to the OED, it can also denote “when the darkness begins to give way in the morning”.

G understands it in the first sense, while **P** understands it in the second, *matching semantically with line 1*: ‘in the uncertain hour before the morning’. However, we think **V** is more correct here, since what the poem implies, it seems to us, is a general state of mind (*sense B. 1* in the OED: “the quality of being dusk; that which is dusk; duskiness, shade, gloom”). Gaos has aimed at a semantic translation, while the other two have offered us a communicative one.

c) line 17 (different proposals about translating English cumulative adjectivation)

- | | |
|---|---|
| E | Both one and many; in the <i>brown baked</i> features |
| G | Como uno y muchos a la vez; en los <i>bronceados</i> rasgos |
| V | a la vez a uno y a muchos; en los <i>grises</i> rasgos <i>conocidos</i> |
| P | en los rasgos <i>curtidos</i> los ojos de un espectro. |

V uses two adjectives; the second one could be a typographical error (should be *cocidos*, ‘baked’). **G** and **P** have interpreted them and found one Spanish equivalent for the two English adjectives. Both Spanish equivalents have another English equivalent in their turn—*bronceados*, ‘bonzed’; *curtidos*, ‘tanned’—and Eliot did not use any of the two. The translation we would propose is ‘en los rasgos marrón tostado’, retaining the original’s “obscurity”, rather than risking to interpret what ‘brown’ + ‘bake’ may have meant to Eliot when applied to ‘features’.

d) lines 31-32 (interpretation of a “paradox”)

- | | |
|---|--|
| E | I said: “The <i>wonder</i> that I feel is <i>easy</i> ,
Yet <i>ease</i> is cause of <i>wonder</i> . Therefore speak |
| G | Yo dije: “La <i>extrañeza</i> que experimento es <i>sencilla</i> ,
Aunque la <i>sencillez</i> es causa de <i>extrañeza</i> . Habla por tanto: |
| V | Dije: “El <i>asombro</i> que siento es <i>fácil</i> ,
pero la <i>facilidad</i> es causa de <i>asombro</i> . Por tanto habla: |
| P | [32] Dije: “Me es <i>agradable</i> esta <i>extrañeza</i> ,
pero lo <i>agradable</i> <i>extraña</i> . Habla, pues: (tal vez) |

The *wonder* is felt as *easy* by the poet. This seems to us somewhat paradoxical, since wonders are normally felt as shocking or as producers of

tension. The ease that the character is feeling seems to be precisely the cause of Eliot's wonder. **G**'s "*extrañeza sencilla*" is a bit obscure as an expression of a paradox; the terms are not as logically opposed as "un blanco negro". And the same can be said about the dubious opposition of **V**'s "*asombro ... fácil*". **P**'s "*agadable extrañeza*" seems to us closer to the original paradox, since "extrañeza" implies, as a rule, negative 'unpleasant' feelings. Another suggestion could be:

Yo dije: "El *asombro* que siento es *sosegador*,
sin embargo el *sosiego* es causa de *asombro*. Habla pues:

e) line 39 (nominalized adjectives)

- | | | |
|--|----------|--|
| | E | (as I pray you to forgive) / <i>both bad and good</i> . |
| | G | (igual que yo te ruego a ti que perdones) / <i>A los malos como a los buenos</i> . |
| | V | (como te ruego que perdones) / <i>tanto lo malo como lo bueno</i> . |
| | P | (como te ruego yo que) <i>lo malo y bueno</i> / (me perdones). |

G is perhaps thinking on classes of persons [as in *the old*, 'old people in general'], while **V** and **P** understand it in more general terms: 'anything good or bad', coming from people or from any other being (in the case of Valverde) or from myself (in the case of Pujals).

f) line 40 (literal meanings)

- | | | |
|--|----------|---|
| | E | And the fullfed beast <i>shall kick the empty pail</i> . |
| | G | Y la bestia ahíta <i>ha de cocear el cubo vacío</i> . |
| | V | y el animal saciado <i>dará una coz al cubo vacío</i> . |
| | P | [41] ... y el ahíto animal / <i>cocea ya el cubo vacío</i> . Al año |

The line seems to echo the English idiom "to kick the bucket" [inform. 'die'], as well as the passage of the *Ecclesiastes* 'everything has its time for living and its time for dying' (an allusion to so many things and situations that perish, while so many others are yet to come). The three Spanish translations seem, therefore, too literal and leave the sense of the line obscure in reference to the context. One possible translation in accordance with what has been said above could be:

| y al animal cebado *le llegará la hora*.
| y el animal cebado *estirará la pata*.

g) line 66 (different understanding of verbs).

- | | |
|---|--|
| E | Then fool's approval stings, and honour <i>stains</i> |
| G | Pues la aprobación de los necios incita, y el honor <i>se mancilla</i> . |
| V | Entonces duele la aprobación de los tontos, y <i>mancha</i> el honor. |
| P | ... duele entonces el elogio del necio / y el honor nos <i>mancha</i> . |

Gaos interprets 'stains' as a reflexive verb, while the other two consider it as a transitive one, in the case of V with an elided direct object. But Valverde's line results ambiguous in Spanish, while the original line is not: the subject of his verb is, it seems to us, '*el honor*', but it could just as well be '*la aprobación de los tontos*'.

4.2.2 Syntactic differences

Gaos' flexible metrical criteria allow him to reproduce virtually all syntactic structures, and so his translation exhibits, as a rule, both the order of words and the type of phrases and clauses of the original; he actually introduces only very slight variations, such as in lines 22-23:

- | | |
|---|--|
| E | Although we were not. I was still the same
Knowing myself <i>yet being</i> someone other-- |
| G | Aunque no estábamos. Yo era todavía el mismo
y <i>sin embargo</i> me reconocía <i>como</i> algún otro-- |

V follows G closely both at the syntactic and lexical levels (certain lines are actually identical, except for a preposition or a synonym to Gaos' words). Let's see some examples:

a) Lines 1 and 2:

- | | |
|---|--|
| E | In the uncertain hour before the morning
Near the ending of interminable night |
| G | En la hora incierta antes de la mañana
Cerca del final de la noche interminable |
| V | En la hora incierta antes de la mañana
Cerca del final de la noche interminable |

b) Lines 15 & 19:

- | | |
|---|---|
| E | I caught the sudden look of some dead master
Both intimate and unidentifiable |
| G | Capté la súbita mirada de algún maestro muerto
A la vez íntimo e inidentificable |
| V | Capté la súbita mirada de algún maestro muerto
A la vez íntimo e inidentificable |

c) Lines 25 & 31:

- | | |
|---|---|
| E | To comple the recognition they preceded
I said: 'The wonder that I feel is easy |
| G | Para obligar al reconocimiento al que había precedido
Yo dije: 'la extrañeza que experimento |
| V | Para obligar al reconocimiento al que precedían
Yo dije: 'el asombro que siento ... |

d) Lines 50 & 69:

- | | |
|---|--|
| E | To purify the dialect of the tribe
Where you must move in measure, like a dancer |
| G | A purificar el dialecto de la tribu
Donde debéis moveros con medida, como un bailarín |
| V | A purific el dialect de la tribu
Donde hay que moverse según medida, como un bailarín |

Both translators try to render, as closely as the syntactic structures of Spanish allow it, the exact contextual meaning of the original; that is to say, they have achieved a semantic translation.

Pujals tries to be more creative and proposes different syntactical structures, as in.

Lines 8 & 15:

- | | |
|---|--|
| E | Between three districts <i>whence the smoke arose</i>
<i>I caught the sudden look of some dead master</i> |
| P | entre los tres distritos <i>que humeaban</i>
<i>al alba sorprendí en él la mirada de algún ...</i> |

Lines 43 & 44:

- | | |
|---|--|
| E | But, as the passage now <i>presents no hindrance</i>
<i>To the spirit unappeased and pregrine</i> |
| P | ... Pero igual que <i>no halla ahora</i>
<i>trabas el andar del alma inquieta y peregrina</i> |

Pujals was, then, more interested in translating the intention of the source text rather than its “thought-process”; his translation is more communicative and his syntax more functional and direct.

5. Conclusion (and final assessment)

As Michael Roberts said in his anthology, Eliot is ‘easier’ to translate than the poets who rely more strongly on the linguistic peculiarities of English. The difficulties in translating this passage are not phonic effects that are intricately interlinked with meanings, but the extremely conscious election of words in order to express a complex set of ideas and emotions (which demands on the translator the accuracy of a translator of philosophical texts). We must add to this the use of iambic pentameter with all its variations.

Although we cannot speak of content and form as two perfectly separable things, *the content* of this text imposes serious difficulties on the translator when he comes to translate *the form*, especially the metrics since the metrical pattern used is so fixed in the English verse tradition. In this paper—following Newmark’s distinction between a semantic and a communicative translation (Newmark 1989: 118-37)—we have considered the balance between both aspects in the three translations: the syntactic and semantic levels, on the one hand; and the prosodic level, on the other.

In Gaos’ translation we can perceive an intention of reproducing the words of the original poem and their syntactical order accurately, since he follows (as much as he can) what he finds in the semantic, syntactic and lexical levels of the original. In order to attain this he used the Spanish *free verse*, which is flexible enough to let him work at ease in those levels. As a consequence some prosodic elements—such as the alternation of masculine and feminine endings or a homogeneous number of syllables per line—are not kept. The aesthetic assessment of its poetic quality is beyond the scope of this paper; but it can certainly be said that Gaos has achieved a semantic translation.

Valverde’s translation, as we have proved, follows closely Gaos’ both in the general criteria and in particular solutions to certain passages: he used the free verse as well and it can be considered a semantic translation also; he did

not succeed in finding a Spanish solution for the English alternation of masculine and feminine endings either.

Pujals' translation, on the contrary, seems to have in mind the idea expressed by Michael Roberts' characterisation of Eliot's poetry [the relation between content and form in Eliot's poem is not so much linguistically determined as in some other poems]. In fact, Pujals declares in the prologue to his translation that he means to translate the whole poetic effect that the original text produces to the "British cultural ear", trying to attain a similar poetic effect in the Spanish reader. Most of the interpretative deficiencies in Gaos' and Valverde's translations are satisfactorily solved by Pujals, although (due to his metrical pattern of 11 and 14 syllables) he is forced to use some syntactic structures and lexical licenses that are highly disputable. As a conclusion, it can be said that Pujals' translation is then a *communicative* one.

All our three translators have achieved a considerable grade of communicability of both content and form, so that their translations must be considered as excellent, despite the considerations we have so far made. It couldn't be otherwise, since they were very special translators: a well-known Spanish poet or both poets and academics. As a general conclusion, we dare say that the real challenge for a translator, especially if he is doing a poetic translation, consists in what García-Yebra calls the golden rule for translation: "*decir todo lo que dice el original, no decir nada que el original no diga y decirlo todo con la corrección y naturalidad que permita la lengua a la que se traduce. Las dos primeras normas compendian y exigen la fidelidad absoluta al contenido; la tercera autoriza la libertad necesaria en cuanto al estilo*"⁹.

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9. 'To say everything the original (text) says, not to say anything the original does not say and to say it all with the correction and naturalness the target language allows it. The first two rules summarize and demand absolute fidelity to the content; the third stands for the necessary stylistic liberty (in the target language)'. (García-Yebra 1984: 43).

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