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## **Rizal's "tagalische Verskunst" Essay: A Case of Self-Translation and Pseudotranslation**

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## COMMENTARY

### Rizal's "tagalische Verskunst" Essay: A Case of Self-Translation and Pseudotranslation

Ramon Guillermo

*José Rizal's "tagalische Verskunst" essay is considered to be a high point in his intellectual life in Europe and deemed an important and pioneering contribution to the study of the principles of Tagalog poetry. This study points out some discrepancies between the original German text and the Spanish translations that have followed it. It concludes by speculating that Mariano Ponce may have altered the text substantially without being detected and that these alterations have been accepted uncritically for decades.*

*KEYWORDS: José Rizal, Mariano Ponce, translation studies, pseudotranslation, Tagalog poetry*

#### **The Significance of Rizal's *tagalische Verskunst***

Many students and scholars of José Rizal have heard of his reference to Germany as his *intellektuelle Heimat* (intellectual homeland). Perhaps, some have also heard of the occasion when, as a newly inducted member of the "Berlin Anthropological Society," he read a paper on the "Tagalog Art of Poetry." To them this incident represented Rizal's most significant success among the most distinguished intellectuals of Europe. According to Austin Coates (1968, 104):

The Berlin Anthropological Society was Europe's foremost institution devoted to a relatively new science having its origins mainly in Germany, and which was attracting worldwide attention in the fields of science, history and psychology. To anyone connected with the sciences, let alone a 26-year-old Asian doctor who had so far made no contribution to science, to be invited to be a member of the Society was a considerable honor. In Rizal's case it can only be described as a remarkable personal tribute, in the light of those times a unique moment in the relations between two continents.

The last learned address he had delivered was at his passing-out at the Universidad Central de Madrid, when he had chosen as his subject the biblical text *Glory be to God in the highest, and on earth peace to all men of goodwill*, and the fact that this, then the official Roman Catholic version, was a mistranslation from the Hebrew. The Anthropological Society of Berlin was not, he decided, the place for any such intellectual gymnastics. Speaking in such company, the subject must concern his home, have a bearing on anthropology, and be something which would open the imagination to a deeper understanding of the Philippines. The subject he chose was the closest possible to his personal life—a scientific analysis of the metres used in Tagalog verse [sic]. He wrote and delivered it in German at the meeting of the Society held shortly after his election in February 1887.

This short work written in German would first see publication in 1887 as part of the report on the proceedings of the Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte, or the Berlin Society for Anthropology, Ethnology and Prehistory (Virchow 1887; see fig. 1). Subsequently, a mangled and almost unreadable transcription of the handwritten manuscript of Rizal, which can be found in the National Museum, was published in the volume entitled *Escritos Varios* published in 1961 by the Comisión Nacional de Centenario de Rizal. Recently, in 1996, the essay's Spanish translation that Rizal himself wrote, along with a translation into Filipino undertaken by the José Rizal Centennial Commission, was published under the editorship of Virgilio S. Almario. In his introduction to the volume of essays on Tagalog poetics, Almario (1996, xviii) observed that

Ito ang unang paglahok ng isang Filipino tungo sa paggagap ng poetikang Tagalog. Sa loob ng napakaikling panayam, na ayon na sa kanya'y hindi niya napalawig dahil sa kanyang limitadong kaalaman sa wikang Aleman, maraming nadagdag na obserbasyon si Rizal bukod sa kanyang nasusugan ang mga depekto ng paliwanag ng mga kritikong misyonero.

[This is the first time (Rizal's attempt) that a Filipino involved himself in grasping Tagalog poetics. Within the space of a very short speech, which according to him he could not deepen because of his limited knowledge of German, Rizal added many new observations aside from pointing to the defects in the explanations of the missionary critics.]

Almario also emphasized vigorously the tendency of Rizal's essay in asserting the particularity and uniqueness of Tagalog poetics as opposed to Spanish and European aesthetic and poetic conceptions. In his view, Rizal's striving to bring out this particular aspect of the literary art of Filipinos could be situated within the context of his broader nationalist project (*ibid.*, xix).

Masisilip sa mga inihanay kong obserbasyon ang pakikitunggali ng teksto ni Rizal laban sa mga naunang misyonero. Bawat punto niya'y waring nagdidiin sa katangian ng tugmang Tagalog kaya't hindi dapat hanapan ng karakter na Espanyol o Europeo. Nang banggitin niyang laging isahan ng tugmang Tagalog ay hindi niya napigil ang komentaryong: "En vano los españoles han procurado introducir construccion de sus versos."

[One can see from the observations which I have listed the oppositional character of Rizal's text in relation to the first missionaries. His every point seemed to emphasize the uniqueness of the Tagalog rhyme which should therefore not be imputed any Spanish or European character. When he mentioned the monoriming character of the Tagalog rhyme, he could not resist commenting: "The Spaniards have tried in vain to introduce the construction of their verses."]

The significance of this short essay could be judged, therefore, both from the biographical point of view, as in Coates' description of this epi-

sode in Rizal's life as "fulfillment in Berlin," or from the point of view of literary scholarship in the Philippines, in which it is adjudged as a pioneering and indispensable, even if incomplete and tentative, work. However, according to the published proceedings, the famous scientist and social reformer who was also the main sponsor of Rizal in the Berliner Gesellschaft, Rudolf Virchow (1821–1902), had only the following short and somewhat disconcerting comment at the conclusion of Rizal's lecture:

H. Virchow bemerkt, dass die Sammlung der Volksmelodien der wilden Völker eine sehr fühlbare Lücke in der ethnologischen Literatur bilde und daher Beiträge ähnlicher Art höchst erwünscht sein würden.

[H. Virchow remarked, that the collection of melodies of the savage peoples (e.g. the Tagalogs – R.G.) constitutes a gap in the ethnological literature so that contributions in this same direction are much desired.]

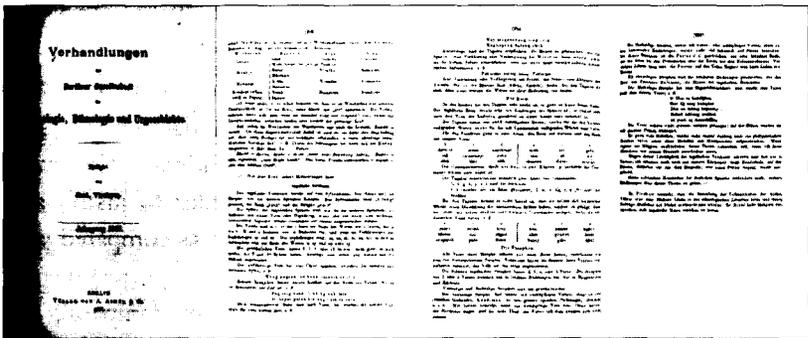


Figure 1. The “tagalische Verskunst” in the Proceedings of the Berlin Gesellschaft (1887)

### Comparing the Versions

Rizal's apology in the conclusion of his essay—that he could not fully elaborate upon his explanations on Tagalog poetry because of his inadequate grasp of German—makes one speculate about what else he could have written about this topic had it not been for the language difficul-

ties. What if, for example, he had written this essay in a language of which he had a supreme command, such as Spanish? The fact that he himself had translated the “tagalische Verskunst” into Spanish poses the interesting question of whether he had used this opportunity to expand upon his original essay. Differences between the original and the translated version would then show the points where Rizal felt his essay needed revisions, emendations, and elaborations.

It is well known that “self-translation” follows different principles from the more conventional situation where the author is different from the translator. See, for example, the following explanation from Werner Koller (2001, 112):

A translation analysis is also entrusted with the task of identifying the justification and the background of any revisions in the content of the text and to determine where and to what degree the autonomy of the text to be translated is trespassed upon and the desire of the reader of the translation to read an “unedited text” is frustrated. It should always be clarified if the changes can be traced to the translator—and not to the author (or to the author and translator).

The author who translates her/his own work is said to be more independent of the restrictions with regard to substantial rewriting and revision to which a regular translator must normally adhere. The translator/author can claim her/his own authority in order to justify and legitimize radical modifications in the translated version as compared with the original.

Various modifications can be detected preliminarily by comparing the original German text of the “tagalische Verskunst” and the Spanish translation, entitled “Arte metrica del Tagalog.” I have classified these modifications into the three simple categories of “omission” (when something in the original is no longer present in the translation), “revision” (when a more or less significant change in the sense or style of the original text occurs in the translation), and “addition” (when something that was not present in the original surfaces in the translation). These three categories can be seen in table 1. Both the original and the translation consist of three main sections: Introduction, Rhyme (der Reim/La rima), and Strophe (Die Strophen/Las estrofas).

Table 1. Examples of three types of modifications of Rizal's "tagalische Verskunst"

Omission	Revision		Addition
	Spanish	German	
Das Sylbenmaass wird „bilang” genannt, der Reim „tula” und die Strophe „ait.” (Virchow 1887, 293)	En el uso común en puntos donde el tagalog no se habla con mucha puridad, pueden presentarse la e y la o aún en medio de palabra. (Almario 1996, 48)	E und o kommen nur in Dialecten vor, und zwar als Verkürzungen der Diphthongen ai und au. Die Diphthongen sind: ai, au, ia, ua, ui; ai und ui verwandeln sich am Ende des Wortes in ay und uy oder oy. (Virchow 1887, 293)	en la rima estas variaciones son indiferentes (Almario 1996, 48)
(systole, diástole) (Virchow 1887, 294) [in the Spanish rhyming scheme]	aunque son muy raros, usándose casi exclusivamente en las adivinanzas o enigmas (bugtungan), y en este caso suelen ir pareados. (Almario 1996, 48)	Derartige sind selten und werden nur für Räthsel angewendet. (Virchow 1887, 293)	Ejemplos: Pasán nang pasán Dina nahirápan. Tinagá ko sa gúbat Sa bahay nagiyak. May magasawang sing fbig Maghapong walang imik Pakánin pa’y nagagalit; May naawa gang nagsubò Luha’y sinahod sa pasò

Table 1 continued

Omission	Revision		Addition
	Spanish	German	
			Nang mailaga't mailutò Naging dalisay na gintò. (Almario 1996, 48)
« ng » (Virchow 1887, 294) [as one of the so-called « schwer » or heavy consonants]	El verso dodecasílabo, que es el más usado, sobre todo para poesías serias, tiene una cesura entre la sexta y la séptima sílaba. (Almario 1996, 48)	Der zwölfsyblige Vers hat eine Cäsur inmitten, zwischen der sechsten und siebenten Sylbe. (Virchow 1887, 293)	desdoblando un diptongo o suprimiendo una breve, la n final para hacer la elisión con la partícula sustantiva ay a la conjunción at, respectivamente. (Almario 1996, 50)
O Dios sa kalangitan Hari ng sang kalupáan Dios na ualang kapantay Mabait lubhang maálam At punú ng karunúngan. (Virchow 1887, 295)	La sílaba final acentuado no influye por lo común en la medida del verso, a diferencia de lo que acontece en muchos idiomas europeos. (Almario 1996, 50)	Betonte Endsylben haben keinen Einfluss auf das Maass des Verses, wie es im Spanischen der Fall ist. (Virchow 1887, 293)	En donde Pakinigan está por Pakingan, y Ang kaluluwa ko'y kusang lumiligaw, (Almario 1996, 50)

Table 1 continued

Omission	Revision		Addition
	Spanish	German	
	<p>En cambio no se les permite la transposición del acento, como lo hacían los poetas españoles de los pasados siglos, y aún en los principios del actual, pues además de que esta licencia es innecesaria, trastornaría mucho el significado de las palabras, si se sirviesen de ellas. (Almario 1996, 50)</p>	<p>Eine Verkürzung oder Verlängerung der Sylben, das Setzen oder Absetzen des Accents, wie es die Spanier thun (systole, diástole), finden bei den Tagalog nie statt, denn sonst würden die Wörter an ihrer Bedeutung viel leiden. (Virchow 1887, 293)</p>	<p>Le existencia de tres vocales fundamentales hace que nada grupo sólo haya tres clases se rima. (Almario 1996, 52)</p>
	<p>Las palabras riman en tagalog de un modo muy particular y distinto de los otros idiomas. (Almario 1996, 50)</p>	<p>Der tagalische Reim weicht sehr von demjenigen der Spanier ab. (Virchow 1887, 294)</p>	<p>Para que la rima sea, a la vez que musical, ligera y agradable, es menester que el consonante final, así como el acento, varíen; pues sería monótona o pesada una estrofa cuyos versos terminasen todos en sílaba aguda, esdrújula o grave, o idéntica combinación de una misma vocal con la misma consonante. (Almario 1996, 52)</p>

Table 1 continued

Omission	Revision		Addition
	Spanish	German	
<p>Las seis rimas vocales se subdividen en tres con vocal ordinaria y otras tres con vocal pesada. (Almario 1996, 50)</p>	<p>Für den Vocalreim gibt es zwei Arten: den Reim mit kurzem und den Reim mit langem Vocal. (Virchow 1887, 294)</p>	<p>Todos los versos de una estrofa deben tener una sólo rima; la siguiente debe tener otra distinta; pues de lo contrario, la repetición del mismo sonido causaría un efecto monótono y cansado.</p> <p>Las estrofas más usadas constan de dos, tres, cuatro y cinco versos; las de dos y tres se usan en la poesía ligera, como en las enigmas y en los proverbios y sentencias (sabi, sávikain) : Las más usuales son las de cuatro y las de cinco.</p> <p>El cuarteto o la estrofa de cuatro versos, dodecasílabos por la común, se usa en las poesías líricas, canciones, poemás y también a veces en la poesía dramática. Como ya lo hicimos observar, el verso de doce sílabas tiene una cesura al final de la sexta; debemos añadir que, en obsequio a la armonía, la primera parte del verso debe no rimar con la segunda, ni con la rimerá</p>	

Table 1 continued

Omission	Revision		Addition
	Spanish	German	
			<p>del verso siguiente, sino terminar siempre en otros sonidos distintos entre sí. En esta clase de estrofas está escrito el pensamiento de Francisco Baltazar, obra de la lengua tagala en toda su apogeo y magnificencia.</p> <p>El quinteto o la estrofa de cinco versos, generalmente de siete u ocho sílabas, se usa para largas narraciones que no necesitan, ni mucho adorno poético, ni mucha imaginación. En quintetos está escrita La pasión, poema religioso cristiano de los filipinos, escrito en tagalog enérgico y claro, aunque a veces duro y algo rústico, Encierra trozos bellísimos que no consigne eclipsar el diccionario de insultos y dicerios que contra los judíos lanza. No leyéndose los versos tagalos sino cantándolos concierto melodía libre y arbitraria, el quinteto ofrece una particularidad: se observa una pausa al final del tercer verso prolongado el canto y después se continúa. (Almario 1996, 52)</p>
		<p>[Also, numerous revisions of the rhyming examples] (Virchow 1887, 294)</p>	

An individual discussion of all these textual differences would go beyond the present scope of this short essay. But the preliminary observation can be made that Rizal had made an effort to clarify his explanations and had also tried to include more examples while also making many revisions of those that he had already presented in Berlin. Of much relevance to Almario's point regarding Rizal's emphasis on the particularity of Tagalog poetry are the following changes (with words of particular importance italicized):

A. Betonte Endsylben haben keinen Einfluss auf das Maass des Verses, *wie es im Spanischen der Fall ist*. (Virchow 1887, 293)

[Accented final syllables have no influence on the measure of the verses, as it is the case in Spanish.]

La sílaba final acentuado no influye por lo común en la medida del verso, *a diferencia de lo que acontece en muchos idiomas europeos*. (Almario 1996, 50)

[The final accented syllable does not typically influence the measure of the verse in contradistinction to what happens in many European languages.]

B. Der tagalische Reim weicht sehr *von demjenigen der Spanier* ab. (Virchow 1887, 294)

[The Tagalog rhyme completely departs from that of the Spanish.]

Las palabras riman en tagalog de un modo *muy particular y distinto de los otros idiomas*. (Almario 1996, 50)

[The words rhyme in Tagalog in a way that is very particular and distinct in relation to other languages.]

The changes in examples A and B above seem to point to a tendency toward contrasting Philippine poetics not only to that of Spain, as in the earlier version where only *Spanisch* (Spanish) and *Spanier* (Spaniard) are mentioned, but also to those of the other languages of Europe—thus, the former is replaced by the phrase “muchos idiomas europeos” (many European languages) and the latter by “los otros idiomas” (the other languages).

Other specific changes may also be explained in various ways, but the most puzzling aspect of this translation is the appearance of a relatively large bulk of text in the Spanish translation, which constitutes one-fifth of

the whole text (288 words of the added paragraphs out of 1,397 total words). It becomes all the more striking when we look at the graphical representation of the changes between the original and the translation (fig. 2).

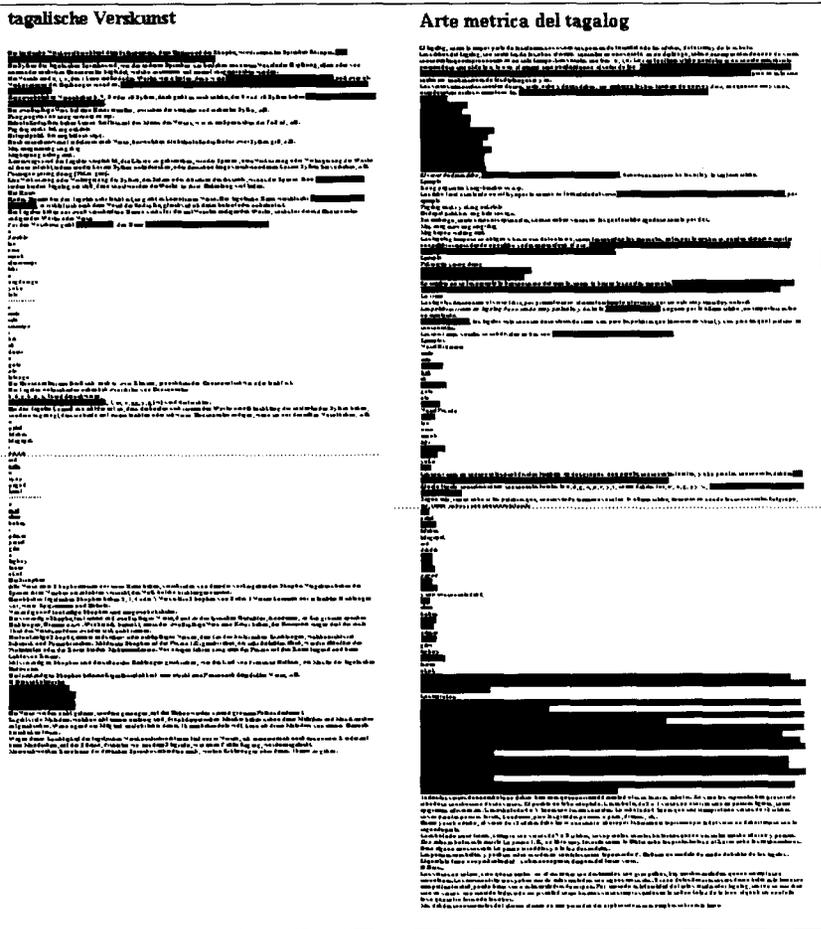


Figure 2. Graphical representation of the differences between the German (left column) and Spanish (right column) versions

This long section, which cannot be found either in the printed version of the speech or in the version transcribed from Rizal's handwritten draft, could be assumed to be one of the numerous emendations that he himself had added to the Spanish version. However, the relationship of

these additional paragraphs on “strophes,” which are not present in the original text, bears a rather puzzling relationship to the part immediately following it, which can be found in the original German text. It seems to be a sentence-by-sentence mirroring, amplification, and elaboration of the original text rather than a set of well-integrated emendations to the newer Spanish version. This “mirroring” relation comes out in greater relief in table 2. Indeed, these changes even follow the sequence of sentences, except for one sentence that has been shifted to another location. (cf. “Addition g” in table 2.) This puzzling aspect of the translation cannot be explained as being a mere reflection of the repetitive and floral style of writing that is said to be characteristic of the period. The whole section rather seems to have been forcibly appended to the text.

Table 2. “Mirroring” relation of first and second part of the section “on strophes” in the Spanish translation

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a)	Todos los versos de una estrofa no deben traer más que una rima diferente de las anteriores estrofas.	All the lines of a strophe must have another rhyming scheme from the previous strophes.
Addition	Todos los versos de una estrofa deben tener una sólo rima; la siguiente debe tener otra distinta; pues de lo contrario, la repetición del mismo sonido causaría un efecto monótono y cansado.	All the lines of a strophe may have a single rhyme; the following must have another distinct one; since in the opposite case, the repetition of the same sound causes a monotonous and tiring effect.
b)	Las estrofas de 2 o 3 versos no ocurren sino en poesías ligeras, como epigramas adivinanzas. Las estrofa de 4 o 5 líneas son las más usuales.	The strophes with 2 or 3 verses occur only in light verses, such as epigrams and riddles. The most common strophes are the ones with 4 or 5 lines.
Addition	Las estrofas más usadas constan de dos, tres, cuatro y cinco versos; las de dos y tres se usan en la poesía	The most commonly used strophes consist of two, three, four and five lines: the

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*Table 2 continued*

	ligera, como en las enigmas y en los proverbios y sentencias (sabi, sáwikain) : Las más usuales son las de cuatro y las de cinco.	ones with two and the three are used in light poetry, for instance, puzzles and for proverbs and sayings : the most common are the ones with four and with five lines.
c)	La estrofa de 4 líneas que casi siempre tiene versos de 12 sílabas sirven para las poesías líricas, kundiman, para los grandes poemas épicas, dramas, etc.	The strophe with 4 lines which almost always have 12 syllables are used for lyric poetry, kundiman, for long poems, epics, dramas, etc.
Addition	El cuarteto o la estrofa de cuatro versos, dodecasílabos por la común, se usa en las poesías líricas, canciones, poemás y también a veces en la poesía dramática.	The quartet or the strophe with four lines, commonly dodecasyllabic, are used in lyric poetry, songs, long poems and and also sometimes in dramatic poetry.
d)	Como ya se ha dicho, el verso de 12 sílabas debe tener una cesura: ahora por la armonía la primera parte del verso no debe rimarse con la segunda parte.	As had already been said, the verses with 12 syllables have a caesura: because the first part of the verse must not rhyme with the second part.
Addition	Como ya lo hicimos observar, el verso de doce sílabas tiene una cesura al final de la sexta; debemos añadir que, en obsequio a la armonía, la primera parte del verso debe no rimar con la segunda, ni con la rímera del verso siguiente, sino terminar siempre en otros sonidos distintos entre sí.	As had already been observed, the verses with 12 syllables have a final caesura at the end of the sixth; we are obliged to add here that in obedience to harmony, the first part of the verse must not rhyme with the second, nor with the rhyme of the following lines, rather ending always with another distinct sound among themselves.

*Table 2 continued*

e)	La estrofa de cinco líneas, siempre con versos de 7 u 8 sílabas, sirve para los cuentos históricos que no necesitan mucho adorno y poesías.	The strophes with 5 lines, always with lines of 7 or 8 syllables, are used for historical tales which do not require much adornment or metaphor.
Addition	El quinteto o la estrofa de cinco versos generalmente de siete u ocho sílabas, se usa para largas narraciones que no necesitan, ni mucho adorno poético, ni mucha imaginación	The quintet or strophe with 5 lines, generally with seven or eight syllables, are used for long narratives which do not require, neither a lot of poetic adornment, nor much imagination.
f)	Con estas estrofas está escrita La pasión J.C., un libro muy favorito como la Biblia entre los protestantes o el Koran entre los mahometanos. Hace alguno años se cantó La pasión arrodillos y a la luz de candelas.	The Passion of Jesus written with these strophes, a much loved book which is like the Bible among the Protestants or the Koran among the Muslims. The Passion was sung kneeling by the light of candles in the recent past.
Addition	En quintetos está escrita La pasión, poema religioso cristiano de los filipinos, escrito en tagalog enérgico y claro, aunque a veces duro y algo rústico. Encierra trozos bellísimos que no consigne eclipsar el diccionario de insultos y dicerios que contra los judíos lanza.	The Passion, the Christian religious poem of the Filipinos, is written in quintets in an energetic and clear Tagalog, although at times rough and rustic. Enclosed in it are beautiful parts which are not eclipsed by the insults and insults which are directed against the Jews.
g)	Las poesías más bellas y poéticas estan escritas en cuartetos como la poesía de F. Baltazar un modelo de modo de hablar de los tagalos.	The most beautiful and poetic poems are written in quartets such as the poetry of F. Baltazar, a model of the way of speaking of the Tagalogs.

*Table 2 continued*


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Addition	En esta clase de estrofas está escrito el pensamiento de Francisco Baltazar, obra de la lengua tagala en toda su apogeo y magnificencia. (moved)	Written in this class of strophes are the thoughts of Francisco Baltazar, a work in the Tagalog language at its height and in all its magnificence.
h)	Los versos no se leen, sino que se cantan: en el escenario son declamados con gran pathos, hay muchas melodías que no siempre son monótonas.	These lines are not read but rather sung: on the stage these are declaimed with a great pathos which do not always sound monotonous.
Addition	No leyéndose los versos tagalos sino cantándolos concierto melodía libre y arbitraria, el quinteto ofrece una particularidad: se observa una pausa al final del tercer verso prolongado el canto y después se continúa.	The Tagalog lines are not read but rather sung to a free and arbitrary melody, the quintet offers a unique characteristic: a pause is observed the end of the third line which prolongs the song and afterwards is continued.

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The answer to this "mirroring" puzzle lies perhaps in the explanatory note appended by the José Rizal Centennial Commission to their Tagalog translation of Rizal's text. The text of this note is as follows (Almario 1996, 48):

Esto es copia del manuscrito original en la Biblioteca Nacional, en que aparecen los siguientes datos: "Es un borrador con tachaduras y enmienda, escrito en 5 páginas, papel comercial. Al pie de la primera página hay esta nota: 'Este trabajo fué leído ante la sociedad Etnográfica de Berlín el Abril de 1887 y publicado por la misma en el mismo año.' Va acompañada de una traducción Castellana por Ponce (Mariano Ponce) de la parte que trata de las 'Estrofas' en el Arte métrica del tagalog, escrita en lápiz en dos hojas de papel con

membrete 'Philippine Delegation, Japan' y en otra hoja una nota del mismo Ponce diciendo que Rizal dejó sin traducir algunos párrafos finales del original alemán.

[This is a copy of the original manuscript in the National Library, in which appears the following information: "This is a draft with deletions and additions, written on 5 pages of commercial paper. At the bottom of the first page is this note: 'This work was read before the Ethnographic Society of Berlin in April 1887 and published by them in the same year.' It was accompanied by a Spanish translation by Ponce (Mariano Ponce) of the part on 'strophes' in the Tagalog Art of Poetry, written with a pencil on two sheets of paper with the letterhead 'Philippine delegation, Japan' and on another sheet a note by Ponce himself saying that Rizal had left some final paragraphs untranslated from the original German.]

Puzzlingly, this long explanation is only translated as follows in Filipino in the Almarino anthology:

Ito'y salin sa Espanyol buhat sa wikang Aleman na binasa ni Rizal sa "Sociedad Etnografica" sa Berlin nang Abril, 1887, at inilathala ng naturang samahan nang taon ding iyon. Si Rizal ang nagsalin sa Espanyol.

[This is a translation into Spanish from the German language which Rizal read to the "Sociedad Etnografica" in Berlin in April 1887, and published by the aforementioned society in the same year. Rizal was the one who translated it into Spanish.]

The "untranslated portions" that Mariano Ponce (1863–1918) refers to do not actually appear in the version published in the *Verhandlungen der Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte* (Virchow 1887) as well as in Rizal's handwritten manuscript of the "tagalische Verkunst" poorly transcribed by the Rizal National Centennial Commission (Rizal 1961).

Furthermore, Ponce was perhaps not as well-versed in German as he claimed to be, as can be surmised from his custodianship of another text by Rizal, this time one written in Tagalog. Rizal entrusted his Tagalog translation of Friedrich Schiller's (1759–1805) "Wilhelm Tell" (1804) to

his friend and copropagandist Mariano Ponce. The latter, in fact, wrote in his preface to the first published edition of Rizal's translation (1908) that Rizal had authorized him to "look over the Tagalog rendition which had been done on the run, given lack of time" (patakbo ang kaniyang pagkagawa, sa kakulangan ng panahon), because he was, at that time, putting the finishing touches on the *Noli me tângere* just before sending it to the printer in Berlin. Ponce ended up becoming the keeper of the manuscript until many years after Rizal's execution. However, the "Guillermo Tell" translation would not at all be mentioned in the surviving correspondence of Ponce and Rizal. The latter initiated their friendship by writing to Ponce from London on 5 June 1888. The closeness of their collaboration could be gauged from the fact that, of his surviving correspondence with his fellow propagandists, 73 letters out of 338 were from Rizal to Ponce and vice versa.

In his preface to the published version of the translation, Ponce (1908, 14) gave a few critical comments, saying

Ipinalapit na totoo ni Rizal sa wikang Aleman ang kanyang paglilipat sa tagalog ng mga salita at kaisipan, na kung magkaminsang nagkakailangang makaalam ng wikang aleman bago mawatasan ang tagalog na katapat. . . . Dahil dito'y inakala kong salingin ang ilang pook ng salaysay. . . . Binago ko lamang yaong inaakala kong hindi madaling mawatasan, ayon sa kasalukuyang kilos ng ating wika.

[Rizal had stayed too close to the German language in his translation into Tagalog of words and thoughts, so that sometimes one needed to know German in order to understand the Tagalog equivalent. . . . Because of this I thought I had to retouch some parts of the narrative . . . I changed only that which I thought could not easily be understood, according to the contemporary workings of our language.]

Ponce thought that the chief weakness of the translation lay in the fact that it was still too faithful to German to the point that, in order to understand some parts of the Tagalog text, you would have had to back-translate it to German. One example among dozens of cases of "translational interference" (Gerzymisch-Arbogast 1994, 107) is the very awkward translation of "Lern dieses Volk der Hirten kennen" (get to know this people of shepherds) as "pag-aralin mong kilanlin," which lit-

erally translates "kennenlernen" (to get to know) as "pag-aralin kilanlin" (learn to be acquainted) when "kilalanin" (get to know) could have served better. Ponce's claim to have changed the text minimally or just "retouched some parts of the narrative" is belied at the lexical level alone by the preliminary quantitative findings (which have been extracted using simple concordance computer programs) that Ponce's and Rizal's versions share only 61.5 percent of the total number of word-forms between them. As many as 1,260 unique word-forms in the Ponce version do not appear at all in the "original translation." Among these are the words "Inangbayan" (mother country) and "nanghihimagsik" (undertaking revolution), which were both important words during the 1896 revolution. A most interesting and distinctively theatrical device in Ponce's revision is the foreign oppressor's use of the Spanish language such as "En el nombre de emperador! Escuchad!" These revisions indicate that, whatever may be the general merits of Ponce's tinkering with Rizal's text, his version (of 1908) clearly cannot be used for making a translation analysis of the more "authentic" version based on Rizal's handwritten manuscript. It also indicates that Ponce found a great part of Rizal's translation unsatisfactory from the point of view of the "contemporary workings" of the Tagalog language, which therefore necessitated a comprehensive intervention into the text. Such translational "weaknesses" as Ponce had detected in Rizal's version (not to mention the weaknesses of his own edition) had probably adversely affected the reception of the Schiller translation for many decades. Ponce, therefore, had a reasonable enough motive to edit and improve the text even though he drastically understated the extent of his changes by referring to his intervention as just "retouching some parts of the narrative." A preliminary analysis of his revisions to the manuscript would indicate that Ponce had not made use of Friedrich Schiller's German original in making his revisions and had depended instead on existing Spanish translations of "Wilhelm Tell." And, although he also acknowledged receiving some assistance from the German linguist Otto Scheerer, he did not indicate any specific details (Ponce 1908, 20).

It is highly probable, therefore, that in the case of the additions to Rizal's "tagalische Verskunst" we are dealing with what has been called in the literature as a "pseudo-translation" (Bassnett and Lefevere 1998,

27). Bassnett [and Lefevere have often written about the strange phenomenon that arises when "some writers . . . resort to the term 'translation' to describe a text that they have created from scratch themselves." Although the examples above were clearly not invented "from scratch," Ponce, close friend and collaborator of Rizal, apparently felt that Rizal's text was inadequate in some respects and sought to remedy this by passing off some emendations of his own as Rizal's. He tried to camouflage this by attempting to "mirror" and mimic Rizal's words and sentences. But this ploy gave him away instead.

Whatever may have been Ponce's intention in misrepresenting his own additions to the "tagalische Verskunst" as translations of Rizal's own words, this fact must be immediately brought to the attention of book publishers, editors, anthologists, and Rizal scholars in order to preserve the integrity of Rizal's short essay, whatever may be its shortcomings and actual significance/insignificance as a part his oeuvre. Ponce's emendations, however light they may be, have been accepted for too long uncritically and should now be finally viewed and identified as pseudotranslations.

## Note

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