

Good-for-Nothing, Idler or Vagabond? The Spanish Fortunes of *Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts* by Joseph von Eichendorff

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Abstract

Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts [From the life of a good-for-nothing] by Joseph von Eichendorff belongs to the canon of classic literature in Germany and is compulsory reading in schools. The mere mention of the word *Taugenichts* [good-for-nothing] is enough to identify the novel. In Spain, the work does not enjoy classic status because, on the one hand, the Romantic author Eichendorff is best known for his lyric poetry, and on the other, because the hugely disparate titles borne by the various Spanish versions may have helped to obscure the actual identity of the work. This study of the reception of *Taugenichts* in the Spanish literary system through its translations and retranslations over a period of a hundred years focuses on the titles given to it and examines their intertextual and intertitular relationship with the original work and how they interrelate within the corpus of Spanish translations.

Keywords

Eichendorff – *Taugenichts* – retranslation – reception – literary titles

1 Introduction

Joseph Karl Benedikt Freiherr von Eichendorff is considered one of the greatest exponents of late Romanticism. Born in 1788 in Lubowitz Castle, into a noble Catholic family from Upper Silesia, he began to work on *Taugenichts* in 1817, publishing it in Berlin in 1826, together with another novel, *Das Marmorbild* [The marble statue], and an appendix with poems. Eichendorff became enthused about folk poetry and was closely acquainted with the genesis of the *Wunderhorn* [The magic horn] collection through Arnim and Brentano. His

lyricism and musicality cannot be understood without folk poetry, and his passion for nature and its mysteries makes itself felt in all his work.

The novel *Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts* is Eichendorff's most popular prose work. The *Taugenichts*, literally someone who is good for nothing, refers back to classic *Bildungsroman* works such as *Wilhelm Meister* by Goethe or *Franz Sternbald's Wanderings* by Wilhelm Tieck. It lies somewhere between fairy tale, picaresque novel, literary idyll and *Biedermeier* portrait. It was constantly reissued in Germany, and in its narrative development the author interweaves prose, poems and songs that form part of the most deeply rooted German cultural heritage. The evocative power of Eichendorff's poems led artists of the stature of Schumann and Brahms to set many of them to music.

The story's first scene provides the initial keys to understanding the main character. His father, a miller by trade, leans out of the door of his mill and scolds his son when he catches him having a lie-down in the sun. He berates him for spending his days loafing when the family finances cannot support such a lifestyle. He calls him useless, good-for-nothing, and orders him to go out into the world and find a way of making a living. The young man, instead of being depressed by such a paternal verdict, accepts the label without rancour and decides to set off alone with his violin for company.

The youth sings of the wonders of nature and marvels at everything he encounters on his journey with natural innocence and simplicity. As a person he is simple of heart ("*Einfalt des Herzens*", ter Haar 1977: 28), as opposed to simple in understanding or reason ("*Einfalt des Verstandes*"). The simple of heart live guided by intuition, trusting that nothing bad will happen to them and putting their faith in divine providence, as is expressed above all in the songs the protagonist sings: "*Wem Gott will rechte Gunst erweisen, den schickt er in die weite Welt ...*" [Whom God wishes to reward with his gifts, he sends out into the world ...] (Garrido 2008: 68). The epithet *Taugenichts*, which the father, representing the material and utilitarian world, delivers at the beginning of the tale, does not do justice to the boy, for as the narrative unfolds, he proves himself both capable of taking on tasks and useful to social harmony. The *Taugenichts* label is therefore contradicted by the plot and does not match the reality it expresses, though Eichendorff still decided to use it for his title. In spite of the apparent simplicity of the tale, we know that the author took a long time to finalise both the novel and the title. The first title he had thought of was *Der neue Troubadour* [The new troubadour], highlighting another important aspect of the work related to the author's championing of folk poetry, with the word *Taugenichts* to feature in the sub-title (ter Haar 1977: 32). However, he finally decided on this more *drastic* title based on the name the protagonist is given by his father.

2 Eichendorff and *Taugenichts* in Spain

2.1 *First Evidence of Eichendorff's Reception in Spain*

Alfonsina Janés laments in her article '*Eichendorff in Spanien*' [Eichendorff in Spain], published in 1987 in the journal *Aurora*, the house magazine of the now defunct Eichendorff Society in Germany, that Eichendorff did not make much of a stir in Spain and that he was not mentioned in any nineteenth-century anthology. In Janés' view, the poem set to music by Schumann, *Die Tiroler Nachtwache* [The tyrolean night watch], and translated to Catalan by Joan Maragall for the Orfeò Català to sing (Janés 1987: 20), could be considered the first translation of Eichendorff in Spain. However, the first published Spanish version of a text by Eichendorff dates from 1910, a cycle of 22 poems by the author included in the *Antología universal de los mayores genios literarios* [Universal anthology of the greatest literary geniuses], published in Herder (Freiburg im Breisgau) by the Chilean German, Guillermo Jünemann (1856–1938), who was also responsible for the translation. We have no indication of this publication being cited in studies of Eichendorff's reception in Spain before appearing in Nuria Gasó's study on the reception of Hölderlin's work in Spain (2019).

2.2 *The Spanish Translations of Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts*

Generating an inventory of the translations and retranslations of the novel *Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts* in Spain has involved making use of the collections of the *Biblioteca Nacional de España* [National Library of Spain], accessing the ISBN database of books published in Spain and consulting the relevant entries in the *Diccionario histórico de la traducción en España* [Historical dictionary of translation in Spain] (Lafarga and Pegenaute 2009). Also useful were the registers of the *Index Translationum*, a cumulative database (created in 1932) of published translations in a hundred UNESCO member states between 1979 and 2009. The reasons for retranslations appearing are varied – commercial criteria set by publishers, developments in the historical, cultural or social environment of the target culture, etc. (see Cadera and Walsh 2017) – and one of them may stem from a desire to repair the possible mutilations foreign works that arrived in Spain in the Franco era suffered through compulsory or voluntary censorship. That is why it also made sense to consult the archives of the *Archivo General de la Administración* (AGA) [The General Archive of the Administration] in Alcalá de Henares near Madrid, which holds the censorship files for that time, to view those related to Eichendorff and the work in question. For the years 1920–2020, nine Spanish translations of this work were identified: six published in Spain (one of them reissued in Argentina), one

TABLE 13.1 Spanish translations of *Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts*

Year	Translator	Title	Place	Publisher	Collection
No date ¿1920?	Luis López Ballesteros	<i>Escenas de la vida de un inútil</i>	Madrid	Revista de Educación Familiar. Librería y Casa Editorial Hernando	Nueva colección de novelas bilingües. Serie hispano-alemana
1942	Manuel de Montoliu	<i>Historia del inútil para todo</i>	?	Ediciones del Zodíaco (no publicado)	?
1943 (1949) (1971)	Alfredo Gallart	<i>Episodios de una vida tunante</i> (<i>Episodios de la vida de un perezoso</i>)	Barcelona	Montaner y Simón	Biblioteca Selección
1969	Hugo Montes	<i>De la vida de un ocioso</i>	Santiago de Chile	Zig-Zag	–
1974	J. M. Mínguez Sender	<i>Vida de un vagabundo aventurero</i>	Barcelona	Bruguera	Libro clásico
2008	Garrido, Germán	<i>De la vida de un tunante</i>	Madrid	Cátedra	Letras universales
2008	Ariza López, Rocío del Mar	<i>De la vida de un tunante</i>	Sevilla	Bienza	Textos Literarios Bilingües
2010	Ursula Toberer	<i>De la vida de un inútil</i>	Madrid	Rey Lear	–
2020	Comité de traducción Taugenit Editorial	<i>Andanzas de un inútil</i>	Madrid	Taugenit	–

published in Chile and one unpublished translation, the only record of which is in the AGA censorship files on Eichendorff.

Having compiled this inventory of translations, let us now approach the textual corpus thus established in order to look further at the different renderings of the work's title. This would seem to be a crucial aspect for assessing the reception of Eichendorff's work in Spain.

3 The Title of the Work

3.1 *The Study of Titles and Their Communicative Functions*

The titles of literary (and non-literary) works have been studied from philological and semiotic angles by authors such as Levin (1977), Genette (1988), Hoek (1981) or Taha (2009). However, there are not many academics today studying the relationship between the titles of literary works and their versions in other languages. There is also little mention of the (re)translations of the same work to a single language and the textual renderings of the different titles in such language. In this study tracing the Spanish trajectory of *Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts* by Joseph von Eichendorff, the title is the first distinguishing feature of each translation, associating them with the original work and its author, and allowing them all to be grouped together to form a textual corpus. It may be true that the title cannot be studied in isolation, or its value appreciated, without taking into account the circumstances and context of the translations, and that it is moreover not always the translator who chooses the form of the title. But this study starts from the premise that all titles form part of the literary system and have a function within it.

In order to carry out a preliminary study of the existing titles in Spanish, it seems particularly useful to adopt an approach based on the communicative functions fulfilled by titles and their textual realisation in translations, as advocated by authors such as Nord (1994) and Viezzi (2013). There are authors who argue that a title is a textual genre in its own right (Levin 1977, Nord 1994), and even if that is not the case, all agree that it serves above all to identify a work, to act as a name, and that it is usually mentioned in conjunction with the author, thus establishing a connection between the original work and its translations. Nord, in an empirical study based on a total of 12,500 titles (literary and academic) in German, English, French and Spanish, adopts the hypothesis that titles are textual units *sui generis* and that they constitute a genre or textual type (1994: 85). She reflects on the specific ways of verbalising functions in titles according to structural conventions typical of the genre. Nord distinguishes between basic and additional functions, the basic being those fulfilled

by any title and the additional those that differ according to the nature of the work and other textual or linguistic circumstances. The *basic* functions of a title are as follows:

- Distinguishing function (*naming* in Viezzi 2013): enables one text to be distinguished from another and identifies the literary work with a given title. Every title fulfils this function.
- Phatic function: the title always establishes the first contact with the reader.
- Metatextual function (*informative* in Viezzi 2013): every title advertises the existence of a text.

That is to say, according to Nord, every title is “a metatext which identifies the accompanying text, establishing first contact with the target readership” (1994: 95).

However, a text can have other functions that Nord designates as *additional*, which are not always found in all literary titles, though they are in many.

- Descriptive or referential function (*descriptive* in Viezzi 2013): the title describes the text or one of its extra- or intratextual aspects.
- Expressive function (*poetic* in Viezzi 2013): includes the emotive and evaluative (sub)function. The expressiveness of a title can refer to the textual referent, to some of the factors of the communicative situation the text inhabits or else to the text itself.
- Operative function (*seductive* in Viezzi 2013): this function is addressed directly to the intended reader of the text and encourages them either to read the book (persuasive function) or else guides them towards a certain way of reading it, of interpreting it in accordance with the author’s intention (directive function).

3.2 *The Original Title: Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts*

Applying Nord’s model of analysis to the title under discussion establishes that *Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts* fulfils the three basic functions mentioned, since as a metatext it advertises the existence of the novel, distinguishes Eichendorff’s text from others by him or different authors, and identifies it as a literary work by the author with this specific label. It also, of course, establishes the first contact with the reader, who is able to find the book by its title in the bookshops.

As far as additional functions go, *Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts* performs the following:

In the first place, the phrase “*aus dem Leben*” suggests that the work contains episodes that typify the character and does not describe his whole life, thus performing a descriptive function as regards intratextual aspects – in this case,

the narrative content. In addition, “*aus dem Leben*” can be understood as an intertextual reference, as it triggers associations with Goethe’s autobiography *Dichtung und Wahrheit* [Poetry and truth], which was also published under the title *Aus meinem Leben* [From my life] (ter Haar 1977: 38).

Likewise, the title fulfils another important referential function, because the word *Taugenichts* ties in with the beginning of the novel, when the father brands the son good-for-nothing and sends him out into the world. It is the only place where the text mentions this word, establishing a clear link between the title and this passage:

Du *Taugenichts*! Da sonnst Du Dich schon wieder und dehnst und reckst Dir die Knochen müde, und läßt mich alle Arbeit allein thun. Ich kann Dich hier nicht länger füttern. Der Frühling ist vor der Thüre, geh auch einmal hinaus in die Welt und erwirb Dir selber dein Brodt.

– „Nun,“ sagte ich, „wenn ich ein *Taugenichts* bin, so ist’s gut, so will ich in die Welt gehen und mein Glück machen.“ (Eichendorff 2014: 7)

[You *good-for-nothing*! Here you are, basking in the sun again, stretching your limbs until they ache and leaving me to do all the work by myself. I don’t see why I should keep you here any longer. Spring is just round the corner, so out you go into the world and earn your own living for a change!

So I’m a *good-for-nothing*, eh?” I retorted. “All right, then, I’ll go off and seek my fortune.”] (Translation by Ronald Taylor 2008: 13) (Emphasis added)

The title also takes on an expressive function, as the epithet *Taugenichts* evokes emotions; it is not a neutral term and implies a certain character’s evaluation. Also, what Nord notes regarding the operative function that it might fulfil in the case of this particular work is especially interesting in terms of its directive sub-function:

La función directiva, que se da sobre todo en los títulos literarios, se realiza, entre otras cosas, mediante la inclusión de metáforas, [...] alusiones y citas [...] o frases tópicas [...] el título o utilizando nombres descriptivos para los personajes mencionados (p.ej., *Cándido*, *Doña Perfecta*, *El amigo Manso*). (94–95)

[The directive function, which occurs above all in literary titles, is achieved, among other things, by including metaphors, [...] allusions and quotations [...] or stock phrases [...] in the title or by using descriptive names for the characters mentioned (e.g. *Candide*, *Doña Perfecta*, *The Meek Friend*).]

The word *Taugenichts* is effectively the (descriptive) name assigned to the young protagonist, whose real name we do not know and whom we can only identify by this nickname.

The functionality of the original title should be matched in the translated title, though always within the conventions of the target culture (Nord 1994: 88–89) – for example, performing the distinguishing function relative to other existing titles in the target culture, conforming to the reigning genre conventions of the target culture, etc.

3.3 *The Titles of the Spanish Versions*

At first sight, what is striking when tracking the course of Eichendorff's *Taugenichts* in Spanish (see table in 2.2.) is that, except in two cases, there are different versions of the title in the list of editions published between the first one in 1920 and the most recent in 2020. All the changes revolve around the word *Taugenichts*, so emblematic for the German reader, as the novel forms part of their cultural heritage and they often refer to it using just that expression for short. It is worth reflecting on the term and its identificatory significance for the work, so as then to draw possible conclusions about its textual rendering in the Spanish versions.

3.3.1 1920 (?) – José Luis López Ballesteros: *Escenas de la vida de un inútil* [Scenes from the Life of a Useless One/Man]

In the collection *Novelas Bilingües Hispano-Alemanas* [Bilingual spanish-german novels] published by the publishing house *Librería y Casa Editorial Hernando* and the *Revista de Educación Familiar* [Family education journal] in Madrid, the Eichendorff text that is the object of this study was published for the first time. It was an abbreviated version of *Taugenichts*, under the title *Escenas de la vida de un inútil* [Scenes from the life of a useless one], which did not include poems and ended after the second chapter.

The translator was José Luis López Ballesteros, a language teacher at the *Escuela Central de Idiomas* [Central Language School] in Madrid. He belonged to the intellectual circles of the time, had a good knowledge of German and was the first direct translator of the German edition of the complete works of Sigmund Freud. The aim of the translation was to support the learning of German, so the edition included recommendations for didactic use.

The first Spanish translation of this work to be published, albeit in truncated form, decided on a title that fulfilled the functions of the original. To start with, it covered the basic ones because it advertised the existence of the novel, distinguished Eichendorff's text from others existing in Spain and

identified it as a specific literary work by the author. And of course, it established that first contact with the reader who might come across the book in Spanish bookshops.

As for being informative and expressive, the title was consistent with the value system prevailing in the receiving culture. Use of the phrase *escenas de la vida* [scenes from the life] in the translation expressed the illustrative and fragmentary nature of the story and thus fulfilled the descriptive function of explaining intratextual aspects. This translator opted for the word *inútil* [useless] to describe the young protagonist. It is a pejorative term that evokes strongly negative connotations in Spanish, but that is exactly what Eichendorff intended with his very conscious use of the German term. Therefore, it also fulfils the expressive function intended by the author.

In this Spanish version, the referential function is also fulfilled, because it reproduces the intratextual reference by having the father use the same epithet in the Spanish story as in the title:

¡Inútil! Ya estás ahí otra vez tomando el sol; te alargas y te estiras hasta cansarte los huesos y me dejas hacer sólo todo el trabajo. Yo no puedo echarte de comer aquí por más tiempo. La primavera está a la puerta; anda ya de una vez a correr mundo y gánate tú mismo tu pan. Bueno, me dije: puesto que soy un *inútil*, está bien; me iré por el mundo y haré mi suerte. (López Ballesteros 1920(?): 3)

[You *useless one*! There you are again basking in the sun; you lengthen and stretch till you tire out your bones, and leave me to do all the work on my own. I can't feed you here any longer. Spring is at the door; off you go now out into the world and earn your own bread. Well, I said to myself, since I am *useless*, that's fine; I will go out into the world and make my luck.] (Emphasis added).

3.3.2 1942 (Unpublished) – Manuel de Montoliu: *Historia del inútil para todo* [Story of the Useless for Everything]

As recorded in the relevant AGA file, in 1942, Carlos F. Maristany, director of the Barcelona publishing house *Ediciones del Zodíaco*, presented a translated copy of Eichendorff's work bearing the title *Historia del inútil para todo* [Story of the useless for everything] so that its censorship file (number 684, signature 21/06792) could be processed prior to publication. This was a compulsory administrative procedure under Francoism until the Press and Printing Law of 1966.

This first complete Spanish translation of Eichendorff's work, which records show unfortunately never came to be published, has a different title from the previous version. It fulfils some of the basic functions in the target culture

because it advertises the existence of the novel, distinguishing Eichendorff's from other texts existing in Spain and identifying it; however, the use of a different title means it appears as a new work by this author. It is most likely that Montoliu, a prestigious translator from German to Catalan and Spanish, had no knowledge of the version by José Luis López Ballesteros.

The phrase *historia del* [story of the] does not convey the illustrative and fragmentary nature of the tale and thus fails to fulfil the descriptive function for one aspect of its content, by implying that it is a full account of the life of the main character. This translator chooses the term *inútil para todo* [useless for everything] to describe the young protagonist. It is a somewhat redundant and little-used expression in Spanish, which means it does not fulfil the expressive function according to the Spanish conventions.

Given that the translated text is not available, and that despite passing the censor it was not actually published – probably due to the lack of means in Spain just after the civil war –, it is not possible to check whether it maintains the intratextual reference and thus fulfils the referential function of the title.

3.3.3 1943 – Alfredo Gallart: *Episodios de una vida tunante* [Episodes from a Roguish Life]

In 1943, the first unabridged Spanish version of this work known in Spain appeared under the imprint of Montaner y Simón in Barcelona, who also published several reissues in Spain and Argentina.

It is curious to note that the publishing project presented to the censor was titled *Episodios de la vida de un perezoso* [Episodes from the life of a lazy one] and was authorised as such.¹ However, the book was eventually published under the title *Episodios de una vida tunante* [Episodes from a roguish life]. It has not proved possible to find clues as to the reason for this change, and nor does the translator mention it in his prologue.

This edition, presented to the censor just one year after Montoliu's, also has a different title. It fulfils some of the basic functions of the title in the target culture, advertising the existence of the work, distinguishing Eichendorff's text from others existing in Spain and identifying it; however, it also appears as a new work by this author in spite of another version of it already existing in Spain (albeit fragmentary and with a different purpose).

¹ *Libro romántico, de aventuras a través de Austria e Italia de un violinista vagabundo que al final se casa con una dama que conoce al principio de su viaje. Nada censurable.* (File 2981, register number 15444).

[Romantic book of adventures through Austria and Italy of a wandering violinist who ends up marrying a lady he meets at the beginning of his travels. Nothing worthy of censorship].

The use of the phrase *episodios de una vida* [episodes from a life] expresses the illustrative and fragmentary nature of the tale and thus fulfils the descriptive function of revealing a part of the narrative content. To describe the young protagonist, this title employs the adjective *tunante* [roguish] as an equivalent of the German word *Taugenichts*. The translator, therefore, does not altogether fulfil the expressive function and deprives the epithet of some of its force, which he justifies on an interpretive basis, as we will see below.

In contrast to López Ballesteros' (fragmentary) version, in this unabridged Spanish version the referential function of the title is not fulfilled, because the intratextual reference of the father reprimanding his son is not reproduced in it. However, in the corresponding passage in the body of the text, he does use the more "aggressive" epithet:

¡Eres un *inútil*! Hete otra vez aquí tomando el sol; te desperezas y estiras hasta rompésete los huesos, y en cambio, permites que yo solo haga todo el trabajo. No puedo continuar teniéndote aquí para engordarte. ¡Ha llegado la primavera; márchate de casa, el mundo es grande; gánate el pan que comas!

A fe mía – me dije – puesto que soy un *inútil* ... está perfectamente: quieroirme por el mundo a encontrar fortuna. (Gallart 1943: 4)

[You are so *useless*! Here you are again basking in the sun; you stretch and reach out till your bones break, whereas you let me do all the work on my own. I can't go on keeping you here to fatten yourself up; spring has come; leave home, it's a big world; earn the bread you eat!

By my faith, I said to myself, since I am a *useless* one ... it's perfectly fine: I want to go out into the world to find fortune.] (Emphasis added).

Despite having translated *Taugenichts* at the beginning of the story as *inútil* [useless], the translator does not want to use the same term in the title, as this seems excessive to him in view of the boy's innocent nature. He justifies it thus in his prologue:

Y ahora, expuesto ya el carácter de esta obra, [...], precisa una aclaración: en alemán, esta obra lleva el título de "Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts", que podría traducirse por "De la vida de uno que no sirve para nada", y también "De la vida de un bribón, perezoso, holgazán, pillo, etc.". Pero el temperamento y el carácter del protagonista no creemos que se ajuste a lo que realmente da a entender, ni aun en sentido figurado, el "no servir para nada" ni los demás sinónimos adaptables, y, por tal motivo, nos hemos decidido por EPISODIOS DE UNA VIDA TUNANTE." (Gallart 1943: XIV–XV).

[And now, having explained the nature of this work [...], a clarification is necessary: in German, this work bears the title *Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichtts*, which could be translated as From the life of a good-for-nothing, and also From the life of a rascal, lazybones, idle scamp, etc.. But I do not believe the temperament and character of the protagonist fit with what is really meant, even figuratively, by “good-for-nothing” or the other compatible synonyms, and for that reason I have decided on EPISODIOS DE UNA VIDA TUNANTE (Episodes from a roguish life)]

3.3.4 1969 – Hugo Montes: *De la vida de un ocioso* [From the Life of an Idler]

In 1969, *Taugenichtts* was published in Chile under the Zig-Zag imprint, translated by Hugo Montes, Professor of Spanish and Chilean Literature, and bearing the title *De la vida de un ocioso* [From the life of an idler]. The Chilean philologist decided to use a variant of the title for this version, too. It fulfils the basic functions of the title in the receiving culture, although being different from others used in Spanish might imply that it is again a different work by Eichendorff. The phrase *de la vida de* [from the life of] fulfils the function of describing the content. On the other hand, the word *ocioso* [idler] chosen as the protagonist’s cognomen could be interpreted as a semantic reduction that dilutes the meaning of the German word *Taugenichtts*, so it would not wholly fulfil the title’s expressive function. In reproducing the same cognomen at the beginning of the story, the title’s referential function is fulfilled, as the intratextual reference intended by the author is established:

¡Ocioso, vuelves a asolearte y te estiras y desperezas, y me dejas todo el trabajo a mí solo! ¡No puedo alimentarte por más tiempo! La primavera está a la puerta, sal de una vez al mundo y gánate tú mismo tu pan. Bien –dije yo–, si soy un ocioso, me iré por el mundo y probaré suerte. (Montes 1969: xx)

[*Idler*, you’re sunning yourself again as you reach out and stretch, and leave all the work to me on my own! I can’t feed you for any longer! Spring is at the door, go out at once into the world and earn your bread yourself. Good, I said, if I am an *idler*, I will go out into the world and try my luck.] (Emphasis added.)

It is striking that the translator cuts the text and leaves untranslated the protagonist’s thought expressing his agreement with his father’s verdict, *wenn ich ein Taugenichtts bin, so ist’s gut*,..., which in this translation might have been rendered thus: ‘... *si soy un ocioso, está bien, me iré ...*’ [... if I’m an *idler*, that’s fine, I’ll be off ...].

In his prologue, the translator reflects on the term *ocio* [idleness, leisure] and relates it to other possible equivalents in Spanish for the term *Taugenichts*:

¿Es un *ocioso* este joven, casi un niño, que deja el molino de su casa y sale a correr mundo? ¿Es un vago, un vagabundo? [...]

Romántico por temperamento, Eichendorff enriquece el romanticismo con sus poemas de tono menor, [...], con el relato fresco e ingenuo del *Taugenichts* es decir de quien no hace nada y alcanza precisamente en su *ocio* cabal plenitud de vida. (Montes 1969: 7–9)

[Is he an *idler*, this young man, almost a boy, who leaves the mill that is his home and sets off around the world? Is he a vagrant, a vagabond? [...]]

Romantic by temperament, Eichendorff enriches Romanticism with his minor key poems, [...], with the fresh and naïve story of the *Taugenichts*, which is to say of one who does nothing and who achieves precisely in his *idleness* complete fullness of life.] (Emphasis added.)

3.3.5 1974 – José Miguel Mínguez Sender: *Vida de un vagabundo aventurero* [Life of an Adventurous Vagabond]

In 1974, the work was translated again and would also go through several reprints. The translation and preliminary historical-literary study were the work of José Miguel Mínguez Sender, a Doctor of modern philology. In his study, Mínguez informs the reader about the German Romantic movement and the figure of Eichendorff.

This translation also bears a different title, potentially offering the Spanish reader a new work by Eichendorff. The word *vida* [life], which the title begins with, does not exactly correspond to the fragmentary content of the work and thus fails to fulfil the descriptive function. The epithet used for the protagonist in this version is also different from the other translations, as it uses the phrase *vagabundo aventurero* [adventurous vagabond] as an equivalent of the word *Taugenichts*. It draws on an aspect which is in fact expressed in the text, that of travelling the world, but does not, however, match up with the semantics of the German term. Being also somewhat redundant, it does not totally fulfil the expressive function according to Spanish conventions. It does, though, maintain the intratextual coherence between the title and the start of the story with the referential function of that title:

–¡Eres un *vagabundo*! Otra vez te veo tomando el sol y estirándote y repantingándote hasta que sientes cosquilleos en los huesos. Y yo, entretanto, tengo que hacer todo el trabajo solo. No te puedo seguir cebando por más tiempo y,

como la primavera se acerca, será mejor que salgas a ver mundo y a ganarte el pan por tu propio esfuerzo.

–Bueno –dije yo– si es verdad que soy un *vagabundo*, no está mal, voy a salir a ver mundo y buscar en él *aventura*. (Mínguez Sender 1974: 51).

[You're a *vagabond*! Again I see you basking in the sun and stretching and sprawling until you feel some tickling in your bones. And I, meanwhile, have to do all the work on my own. I can't keep fattening you up any longer and, as spring approaches, it would be better for you to go out to see the world and earn your bread by your own efforts.]

Well, I said, if it is true that I am a *vagabond*, that's not bad, I'm going to go off to see the world and search for *adventure*.] (Emphasis added.)

By using the word *aventura* [adventure] and omitting to translate *Glück* as *suerte* [luck], the translator refers to the extra adjective used in the title.

3.3.6 2008 – Rocío del Mar Ariza López: *De la vida de un tunante* [From the Life of a Rogue]

This translation is part of the publisher Bienza's series *Textos Literarios Bilingües* [Bilingual literary texts]. The prologue by the German teacher at the Official School of Languages in Granada and various features of the edition suggest that its purpose is different from that of other translations, that it is possibly aimed at students of German and therefore designed for teaching.

This 2008 bilingual version again opts for a different title from those previously existing on the market. The translator reflects on her choice and is the first one to mention the previous translations, thus initiating an explicit inter-titular relationship:

Discrepamos de la traducción que del título original en alemán: "Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts" realiza José Miguel Mínguez Sender en la versión publicada en Barcelona: Bruguera, 1974, ya que lo traduce por "Vida de un vagabundo aventurero", con lo cual se pierde el valor original de la preposición alemana "aus" (+dat), así como se produce una redundancia al atribuir el adjetivo aventurero a vagabundo, [...]. Así mismo, Alfredo Gallart (José de Eichendorff: *Episodios de una vida tunante*, Buenos Aires: Espasa-Calpe, 1949) ha traducido el título original por un genérico *Episodios* sin tener en cuenta los vínculos gramaticales del texto en la LO. (Ariza López 2008: 13)

[We disagree with José Miguel Mínguez Sender's translation of the original German title, *Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts* in the Bruguera version published

in Barcelona in 1974, as he translates it as “*Vida de un vagabundo aventurero*”, losing the original value of the German preposition *aus* (+dative), as well as creating a redundancy by attributing the adjective *aventurero* [adventurous] to *vagabundo* [vagabond], [...]. Similarly, Alfredo Gallart (José de Eichendorff: *Episodios de una vida tunante* [Episodes of a roguish life], Buenos Aires: Espasa-Calpe, 1949) translated the original title with a generic *episodios* [episodes] without taking into account the grammatical links in the source language.]

Her title expresses the illustrative and fragmentary nature of the tale, as indicated in the footnote cited above, by means of the phrase *de la vida de* [from the life of], thereby also paying tribute to the original. It thus fulfils the descriptive function.

Whereas Gallart used *tunante* as an adjective (roguish), Ariza López uses it as a noun (rogue) to correspond to the German *Taugenichts* and the figure of the protagonist. However, she does not fulfil the referential function of the title, as the beginning of the story does not use the same term as in the title and nor is there any repetition in the second place it appears at the beginning of the German text, in contrast to all the other translators:

¡tú, *holgazán*! (3), aquí estás de nuevo tomando el sol y estirándote y desperezándote fatigosamente los huesos y me dejas que yo haga solo todo el trabajo. No te puedo alimentar por más tiempo. La primavera está ante nuestra puerta, vete de una vez fuera al mundo y gánate tú mismo el pan”; “... qué bueno, –dije yo– si soy un *vagabundo*, así me voy a recorrer mundo y a probar mi suerte!”. (Ariza López 2008: 15)

[You *layabout*! (3) Here you are again basking in the sun and extending yourself and wearily stretching your bones, leaving me to do all the work on my own. I cannot feed you any longer. Spring is at our door, go at once out into the world and earn your own crust; ... how nice, said I, if I am a *vagabond*, then I am going to travel the world and try my luck!] (Emphasis added).

In the footnote on page 3, the translator justifies her choice in this passage of text, but not in the title:

(3) En el texto en alemán se utiliza *Taugenichts*, que literalmente habría de ser traducido como “el que no sirve para nada”. Hemos optado, no obstante, por simplificar la expresión traduciendo dicho término con denominaciones tales como “bribón”, “holgazán” o “tunante”, con las que se intenta trasladar de algún modo el significado implícito en el término utilizado en el texto original en alemán.

[(3) The German text uses *Taugenichts*, which literally translates as “he who is good for nothing”. I have opted, nonetheless, to simplify the expression by translating the term with epithets such as “loafer”, “layabout” or “rogue”, seeking to convey in some way the implicit sense of the term used in the original German text.]

The prologue to this bilingual version is written by Miguel Witte, German teacher at the Official School of Languages in Granada, who comments specifically on the name given to the protagonist:

Fulminante es el comienzo de esta obra literaria. Sin rodeos y a bocajarro el padre del protagonista de esta novela corta, molinero de profesión, le dice a su hijo que ya está bien de pasarse la vida holgazaneando, [...], otorgando él mismo a su propio hijo el nombre de ‘*Vagabundo*’.

Este, en vez de sentirse deprimido por semejante veredicto paternal se identifica plenamente con este calificativo como si fuese su bautismo. Así se llamará de ahora en adelante a lo largo de la narración y el lector no sabrá jamás cuál es su nombre verdadero. *El Vagabundo* acepta también de lleno la invitación de dejar la casa paternal para buscarse la vida en otro lugar del mundo [...] (Ariza López 2008: 7)

[The opening of this literary work is explosive. The father of this short novel’s protagonist, a miller by trade, tells his son, without beating about the bush or mincing his words, that he has had enough of him loafing his life away, [...], bestowing on his own son the name ‘*Vagabond*’.

The latter, instead of feeling depressed by such a paternal verdict, fully identifies with the label as though it were his baptism. That is what he will be called from now on throughout the story and the reader will never know what his real name is. *The Vagabond* also fully accepts the invitation to leave the parental home to seek a living elsewhere in the world [...]] (Emphasis added).

Regardless of the fact that the father’s appellation for his son is not mentioned in the rest of the story, and nor is there further interpretative mention of the protagonist’s character (he is the first-person narrator), using this term in the prologue (which is strange to see written with a capital letter) means there is no consistency between the epithets used by Ariza López in the title (*tunante* or rogue) and in the first mention (*holgazán* or layabout).

3.3.7 2008 – Germán Garrido: *De la vida de un tunante* [From the Life of a Rogue]

Also in 2008, just a few months later, the German philology teacher Germán Garrido provided, along with a new translation, an extensive preliminary study

of Eichendorff's novel in which he dealt primarily with simplicity as the work's central theme and with the figure of the simple man, his world and his contact with nature. He offered in addition an extensive bibliography and information on previous translations of the work.

His translation bears the same title as Ariza López's version. In functional terms, this creates a problem, since the Spanish version of Eichendorff's work is not unequivocally identifiable and it will always be necessary to cite either the name of the translator or the publisher to distinguish the two editions published in that same year.

Garrido reflects in his lengthy introduction on the figure of the protagonist and the epithet that has caused so much head-scratching among translators:

El protagonista, cuyo nombre permanece en el anonimato, es el hijo de un molinero que deja pasar el tiempo sin dedicación ni esfuerzo. Cuando a la llegada de la primavera su padre le acusa de ser un tunante y le conmina a buscarse el sustento, él acepta sin desagrado tanto el apelativo como la invitación. El protagonista pasa a ser a partir de entonces el *Taugenichts* (a pesar de que el término ya no vuelve a repetirse en el texto), denominación que posee un valor connotativo que ninguna traducción consigue rescatar. *Taugenichts* significa literalmente el que nada hace y en nada rinde, el ocioso. Aunque el término encierra una cierta carga negativa, no puede en modo alguno equipararse al de "inútil" o al de "holgazán". El *Taugenichts* es quien ni encaja ni desea encajar en ninguna ocupación, el superfluo, y el término que más se le aproxima es el de tunante, como supo ver con acierto Alfonso [sic] Gallart en la primera traducción del texto al español. (Garrido 2008: 25)

[The protagonist, who remains unnamed, is a miller's son who lets time pass without dedication or effort. When, with the arrival of spring, his father accuses him of being a rogue and orders him to seek a living, he accepts both the epithet and the invitation without displeasure. From then on, the protagonist becomes the *Taugenichts* (although the term is not repeated in the text), an epithet which has a connotative value that no translation succeeds in capturing. *Taugenichts* literally means one who does nothing and produces nothing, a slacker. Although the term carries a certain negative charge, it can in no way be equated with *inútil* [useless] or *holgazán* [layabout]. A *Taugenichts* is one who neither fits nor wishes to fit into any occupation, a superfluous man, and the term that comes closest to it is *tunante* [rogue], as Alfonso [sic] Gallart rightly saw in the first translation of the text into Spanish.]

Garrido likewise establishes an intertextual/intertitular relationship by referring to Gallart's version (1949), which he adopts and vindicates for also

choosing *tunante* [roguish or rogue]. By contrast, this version does fulfil the referential function and reprises the epithet at the beginning of the story, thus maintaining the intratextual reference:

Ah, *tunante*, me dijo, así que ahí estás, otra vez tumbado al sol, desperezando los huesos mientras me dejas a mí todo el trabajo. No puedo seguir manteniéndote por más tiempo. La primavera está próxima, sal a recorrer mundo y búscate el sustento. Bien, pensé, puesto que soy un *tunante* actuaré como tal, saldré a ver mundo y buscaré fortuna. (Garrido 2008: 67)

[Ah, you *rogue*, he said to me, so there you are, lying out in the sun again, stretching out your bones while you leave all the work to me. I can't carry on supporting you any longer. Spring is at hand, go out and travel the world and seek a living. Well, I thought, since I am a *rogue*, I'll act like one, go out and see the world and seek my fortune.] (Emphasis added).

3.3.8 2009 – Ursula Toberer: *De la vida de un inútil* [From the Life of a Useless]

One year after the Ariza López and Garrido versions, in 2009 another Spanish edition of the same work was published. Ursula Toberer is the translator of the narrative text, with Luis Alberto de Cuenca y Prado responsible for the poems and songs. On this occasion, the text has a radically different title from its immediate predecessors.

With the phrase *de la vida de* [from the life of], it fulfils the function of describing the content, signalling that it comprises fragmentary episodes. The translator opts squarely for the epithet *inútil* [useless] to match the German term. She thus fulfils the title's expressive function, as this term means the same as the German *Taugenichts*, which, as we have seen, carries the pejorative connotations intended by the author.

–¿Tú, *inútil*! Ya estás tomando el sol otra vez y estirándote los huesos hasta cansarte mientras yo trabajo por los dos. Ha llegado el momento. No puedo mantenerte más tiempo. La primavera acaba de empezar, coge tus cosas, sal a ver mundo y gánate la vida tú solito.

Pues bien –dije–, si me consideras un *inútil* me iré a ver mundo y a hacer fortuna. (Toberer 2009: 11)

[You *useless one*! You're out in the sun again and stretching your bones till you're tired while I work for the two of us. The time has come. I can't support you any longer. Spring has just started, grab your things, go out and see the world and earn a living just you on your own.

Well then, I said, if you think I'm a *useless one*, I'll go and see the world and make my fortune.] (Emphasis added.)

It is a slightly freer version than the previous ones, as it inserts a sentence that is not in the original, *ha llegado el momento* [the time has come] and is written to recreate a style with a more contemporary register, probably so as to broaden its readership and bring in younger readers: *gánate la vida tú solito* [earn your living by yourself].

The translation attracted favourable comments praising the well-judged choice of title, as illustrated by the review published in 2010 in the *ABC* newspaper supplement *Cultural*. The reviewer referred to the earlier translations and titles by Gallart (1943), Montes (1969), Mínguez Sender (1974) and Garrido (2008), expressing the view:

Esta nueva y magnífica edición de *Rey Lear*, traducida al español por Ursula Toberer, ha optado por traducir *Taugenichts* como “inútil”, lo que me parece muy acertado, pues *taugen* significa “servir”, “ser útil” y “*nichts*” equivale a “nada”, con lo que *Taugenichts* puede traducirse perfectamente por “inútil”, que es aquella persona que no sirve para nada.

[This magnificent new *Rey Lear* edition, translated into Spanish by Ursula Toberer, has chosen to translate *Taugenichts* as *inútil* [useless], which strikes me as very well judged, since *taugen* means ‘to serve’ or ‘be useful’ and *nichts* means ‘nothing’, so *Taugenichts* can be translated perfectly as *inútil*, being someone who serves no purpose, has no use or is good for nothing.]

3.3.9 2020 – Anonymous: *Andanzas de un inútil* [Adventures of a Good-for-Nothing']

In 2020, the most recent iteration of *Taugenichts* was published in Spain. The translation is attributed to the “Translation Committee” of the Taugenit publishing house, a new independent imprint. It is curious to note that this latest translation also opts for the more aggressive term *inútil* as an equivalent of *Taugenichts*.

The communicative functions of the title are observed with the exception of identifying the work, as in spite of also adopting the term *inútil* and being able to compare it to the previous version (*De la vida de un inútil*), it offers a title that yet again is different. The phrase *andanzas de* [adventures of] is used instead of *vida de* [life of], but this also fulfils the descriptive function in that it explains the intratextual aspect of the story's illustrative character. This translator also chooses the word *inútil* to describe the young protagonist and recreates the expressive function intended by the author.

In this Spanish version the referential function is also fulfilled, as the intra-textual reference is reproduced through maintaining in the text the epithet chosen for the title:

¡Ah, *inútil*! Otra vez tomando el sol y desperezando los huesos mientras yo hago el trabajo de los dos. Esto no puede seguir así. No voy a mantenerte más tiempo. La primavera ha llegado; coge tus cosas, ve a recorrer mundo, gánate la vida por tu cuenta.

–Bien –dije–, si soy un *inútil* me iré a ver mundo y a hacer fortuna. (Anónimo 2020: 15).

[Ah, you *useless one*! Sunning yourself again and stretching your bones while I do the work of the two of us. It can't go on like this. I am not going to support you any longer. Spring is here; grab your things, go and travel the world, earn your own living.

Well, I said, if I'm a *useless one*, I'll go and see the world and make my fortune.] (Emphasis added.)

The translation is preceded by a prologue by the woman writer Espido Freire, who thinks that above all this novel teaches a great deal about the value of looking: “[...] *de la intensidad y la voluntad de fijarse, en exclusiva, en aquello que es bello, que merece la pena, en lo que nutre el alma y devuelve la fe*” (12) – [...] the intensity and the will to focus exclusively on what is beautiful, what is worthwhile, what nourishes the soul and restores faith.] At the end of the prologue, she mentions some titles the work has been given in Spanish, *Andanzas de un inútil*, *Vida de un tunante*, *Aventuras de un mentecato* (13); however, the last one, *Aventuras de un mentecato* [Adventures of a simpleton], proved elusive and would be interesting to go through should it be found in the bibliographic collections.

4 Conclusions

To recapitulate briefly what has been developed here, it can be concluded that the communicative functions have been fulfilled to varying degrees in the nine titles studied. It is clear that the translation of the word *Taugenichts*, so inherent in the identity of the work in German, is crucial for creating this intra-title identity in the corresponding Spanish corpus. And it is very striking that the first translations chose the word *inútil* as the Spanish equivalent and that this option is repeated in the most recent versions, thus closing the circle.

Of course, this brief preliminary study does not claim to be exhaustive and it would prove very enriching to compare the solutions applied by the different translators to some of the work's most emblematic passages. But one thing is clear: the fact that each of the versions has a different title has had repercussions. In German-speaking countries, *Taugenichts* is a set text in schools and often referred to simply by that name. Having so many different versions in Spain makes it impossible to create such an identity and it is thereby diluted. Viezzi is surely right in asserting:

[...] whether across languages or within the same language, whether for a different market or for the same market, titles are changed or substituted with amazing ease with an inevitable impact on the way in which readers or viewers relate to a novel or a film and, as has been said, with an inevitable impact on the novel or the film. To some extent, a novel (or a film) with a "different" title is a "different" novel (or film). They may be unaware of it, but those who are in charge of translating a title have a serious responsibility not only towards the readers (or viewers) but also towards the authors, and their role is by no means negligible or irrelevant.

VIEZZI 2013: 382

There is, however, hope: the young independent publishing house Taugenit, which recently published the latest version of the work, has decided to give itself precisely that name, as it states on its website:

Taugenit Editorial nace para atender al presente, desde el ensayo y la publicación de ficción de clásicos, sin perder nunca el rumbo que nos ofrece el pasado, y mirando, siempre en gerundio y con el asombro del inútil romántico ("*Taugenichts*") de Joseph von Eichendorff, hacia un futuro tan inquietante como complejo que no podemos ni queremos entender sin libros ni sin su deriva combativa. [...] (Taugenit Editorial)

[*Taugenit Editorial* was born to attend to the present, with philosophical essays and the publication of classic works of fiction, without ever losing the course set by the past, and always actively looking, with the wonder of Joseph von Eichendorff's Romantic good-for-nothing (*Taugenichts*), towards a future that is both disturbing and complex – and which we neither can nor want to understand without books or their combative drift [...]]

And the publisher concludes with a quote from Eichendorff's *Taugenichts* to illuminate their *raison d'être* in the Spanish publishing world:

Bien –le dije– si soy un inútil (*wenn ich ein Taugenichts bin*), no pasa nada, pues así quiero estar en el mundo y de esta forma deseo labrar mi destino (*mein Glück machen*). (Taugenit Editorial)

[Well, I said to him, if I'm a useless one, a good-for-nothing, that's all right with me, because that's how I want to be in the world and that's how I want to carve out my destiny.]

With *Taugenichts* thus becoming a naturalised loanword, *Taugenit*, and the protagonist's emblematic statement the motto of the publishing house, it is clear that it has left its mark on those responsible for it and also, at least in this way, its imprint on the Spanish literary system. Whether he is useless, a good-for-nothing, a rogue, an idler or a vagabond, no-one is left indifferent by reading Eichendorff's *Taugenichts* – and especially when we enjoy the songs the young protagonist sings as he sets off on his journey around the world, expressing his happiness at being part of it.

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