

The History of the First Catalan *Ulysses*, by J. F. Vidal Jové

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Abstract

Three complete Spanish translations and a Catalan version of Joyce's *Ulysses* are available today in libraries and bookshops in Spain. When Joaquim Mallafrè's Catalan version appeared in 1981, it was received enthusiastically by critics and reviewers, who saw it as a sign of the undeniable cultural value of the Catalan language, which had been strongly repressed under the Franco regime. However, an earlier complete Catalan translation of *Ulysses* was made in Spain in 1966 by J. F. Vidal Jové, and this translation, which has never seen the light of day, rests in a box kept on the shelves of the Archivo General de la Administración in Alcalá de Henares, Madrid. It is a manuscript in four typewritten volumes, authorized by Franco's censorship office, and to be published in Barcelona by Editorial AHR in its series "Renaixença." The aim of this article is to trace the history of this significant and mysterious first complete translation of *Ulysses* in Spain in order to provide an account of the circumstances surrounding its writing, the people involved in the translation process, the response of the Spanish censors and the possible reasons why the text was consigned to oblivion.¹

The reception of James Joyce's *Ulysses* in Spain has been rich and varied, but not without its share of controversies, complexities and mysteries. One of the early references to Leopold Bloom's story can be found in the well-known article by Antonio Marichalar, "Joyce en su laberinto" (Joyce in his Labyrinth), which appeared in

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the prestigious monthly publication from Madrid *Revista de Occidente* in 1924, two years after *Ulysses* first came out. Together with a discussion of Joyce's literary career, Marichalar included the translation into Spanish of a number of excerpts from *Ulysses* as a way of illustrating Joyce's novelties. This opened the road for other translations that came shortly thereafter. In 1926, a supporter of the Celtic revival in Galicia, Otero Pedrayo, gave a Galician translation of several passages from the "Ithaca" and "Cyclops" episodes in the nationalist monthly review *Nós*.² Similarly, five fragments of the novel were translated into Catalan and published in the avant-garde publication *Hélix* in 1930. The author signed his translation "M. R.," which stands for "Manuel Railways," a witty pen name of Manuel Trens ("railways" is the English equivalent of the Catalan word "tren"). It is interesting to note that Manuel Trens was a priest and a specialist in sacred art and, as Teresa Iribarren reports, he "used to read the novel in the original to his colleagues," focusing his attention on the biblical foundation of the book.³ One cannot miss the paradox and irony of having a priest introducing *Ulysses* to Catalan readers at a time when the text was being accused of obscenity and banned in the United States, Great Britain and Ireland.⁴

It does not come as a surprise, however, that the first complete Spanish translation of *Ulysses*, by José Salas Subirat, was published in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 1945. At that time Buenos Aires had a thriving publishing industry with distinguished firms, such as Editorial Sur, Emecé Editores, Librería Hachette and Santiago Rueda. Books by Virginia Woolf, George Moore, Oscar Wilde and Joseph Conrad attracted the attention of these publishers and were distributed throughout the Spanish-speaking world. On the other hand, Spain was suffering from the consequences of a terrible civil war. The economic depression, the strict censorship laws, as well as the political and cultural isolation the country had to endure in the early years of the Franco regime, did not facilitate access to the work of Joyce or other foreign writers. In fact, the first complete translation of *Ulysses* that was published in Spain did not see the light of day until 1976, a year after Franco's death. Today, three Spanish translations of Joyce's masterpiece coexist, since a third one, by Francisco García Tortosa and María Luisa Venegas, appeared in 1999. To this rich and diverse Spanish Joycean heritage, we have to add the Catalan version of *Ulysses* by Joaquim Mallfrè, published in 1981. Awarded the Prize of the Generalitat and the Serra d'Or Prize,

this translation was a most significant event in Catalan intellectual circles. As a reviewer in the newspaper *La Vanguardia* put it, the translation helped to “give prestige to the undeniable cultural value of the Catalan language.”⁵ Teresa Iribarren also stated that “It symbolized a considerable accomplishment for a language, a literature and a culture that had suffered from a ban on translations,”⁶ in reference to Franco’s restrictive policy towards Catalonia.

However, another complete translation of *Ulysses* was made in Spain and very little is known about its existence and characteristics. It is an earlier Catalan version by J. F. Vidal Jové in 1966, that is to say, during Franco’s repressive regime, ten years before Valverde’s Spanish translation and fifteen years before the other Catalan text by Mallafrè. That also makes it the first complete *Ulysses* in Spain. Unfortunately, no information about it can be found in specialized bibliographies, library catalogues or any other Joycean database, since it has never been published. It rests in a box kept on the shelves of the General Spanish Archive (Archivo General de la Administración) in Alcalá de Henares, Madrid.⁷ I found the manuscript – four typewritten volumes totalling 1,082 pages – while I was doing research on Joyce’s Spanish censorship files, and it has intrigued me ever since. The inside cover page reveals that J. F. Vidal Jové had translated *Ulysses* in 1966 for the Barcelona publishing house Editorial AHR, and that the text had been revised by two other people: a professor from Newcastle University called G. J. G. Cheyne and a doctor called A. F. Cheyne. The aim of this article is to trace the history of this significant and mysterious translation in order to provide an account of the circumstances surrounding its writing, the people involved in the translation process, the response of the Spanish censors and the possible reasons why the text was consigned to oblivion, not only for the general public but also for experts in Joyce’s work.⁸ The results of this research have been made possible by the invaluable help of the translator’s daughter, Dr Assumpció Vidal Cheyne, who has provided me with useful information and letters from her personal archive.

It all began early in 1966, when Editorial AHR decided to produce a Catalan version of *Ulysses* to be included in the series “Renaixença” (Renaissance). The acronym AHR stands for the name of the director and founder of the publishing house, Alfredo Herrero Romero. Located in Barcelona, AHR had begun its publishing activities a few years earlier, in the 1950s,⁹ printing a wide variety of

books. Its first collections included contemporary fiction, both canonical, like “Colección Grandes Novelistas” (Great Novelists Series), and popular, like “Colección Fantasía” (Fantasy Series) for young readers or “Colección Medianoche” (Midnight Series), which consisted of detective novels. Although AHR also published some technical texts, law manuals and even tourist guides, what seemed more important at the time was the historical and biographical series on major twentieth-century figures. The series called “La Epopeya y sus Héroes” (The Epic and its Heroes), for instance, focuses on notable personages of the Spanish Civil War, such as José Calvo Sotelo, General Moscardó, General Mola and José Antonio Primo de Rivera. Books on these historical figures and other volumes, like Franco’s biography entitled *Centinela de occidente* (Sentry of the West) or *Los mártires de la Iglesia* (The Martyrs of the Church), lead us to think that this publishing house felt an ideological affinity with Franco’s regime. This might have given Alfredo Herrero some confidence in his eventual confrontation with the Spanish censors when publishing *Ulysses* in the series “Renaixença,” dedicated to literary texts in Catalan. Two years earlier, in 1964, AHR had successfully published in this same series an anonymous Catalan translation of Boccaccio’s *Decameron*, taken from a 1429 manuscript.

With Joyce’s *Ulysses* in his mind, Alfredo Herrero went to Madrid in January 1966 and proposed to one of his freelance translators, J. F. Vidal Jové, that he carry out the gigantic task. Vidal Jové accepted the challenge. He was a Catalan intellectual who, after some difficult experiences before and after the Spanish Civil War, had settled in Madrid and earned his living by writing for various publications and translating books. A few biographical details might help at this point. Joan Francesc Vidal Jové was born in Manresa on 13th July 1899. From an early age he began to contribute articles to local newspapers and wrote a story in Catalan entitled *Per les donzelles de color de rosa* (For the Pink Damsels), published in the Barcelona periodical *La Novel·la Nova* in 1919. In the 1930s, during the Second Republic, he also tried his hand at drama. His comedy in three acts *La senyoreta Oest* (Miss West) was premiered at the Poliorama Theatre in Barcelona in 1934 and was shortlisted for the Premio Ignasi Iglésies, a prestigious prize awarded by the Catalan government for theatre plays in Catalan.¹⁰ However, his literary career was cut short when he had to emigrate to France in October

1936, his life having been threatened by the anarchist association FAI (Federación Anarquista Ibérica). For several years Vidal Jové had held an important post in the Public Order Department of the Catalan government and, in a period of social unrest, political tensions and numerous strikes, he had got involved in disputes with the anarchists and other libertarian organisations. In 1941, when German troops had already invaded France, Vidal Jové returned to Spain and settled down in Madrid, trying to survive in a climate of post-war austerity and repression. Those early years of the Franco regime must have been difficult times for someone who had collaborated with the Catalan republican government. In fact, he was brought to trial in 1947, accused of being a freemason and, although he got the support of those he had helped in the turbulent 1930s, including Aureli Maria Escarre, Abbot of Montserrat, Vidal Jové was stripped of his civil rights and could only support himself with odd jobs. In the 1950s and 1960s he resumed his previous literary labours and contributed extensively to a large number of journals, wrote prefaces and introductions to different works, and translated a wide variety of texts, usually from Catalan or French into Spanish. Of special interest are his 1969 translation of the famous medieval chivalric romance *Tirant lo blanc* into contemporary Spanish,¹¹ published by Alianza Editorial with a prologue by Mario Vargas Llosa, and his translations of texts by Arthur Rimbaud, Honoré de Balzac, Émile Zola and François Rabelais, to mention just a few names. To this list, the name of James Joyce was to be added when Vidal Jové decided to translate *Ulysses* for AHR.

After their meeting in Madrid, Vidal Jové and the publisher agreed to the terms on which the translation was to be done. Firstly, Vidal Jové committed himself to submit two copies of the Catalan translation to Alfredo Herrero within seven months. Given the colossal dimensions of the task he was about to undertake, not only as regards the length of the text, but also and above all concerning the complexity of its content, seven months seemed quite an optimistic estimate. Nevertheless, Vidal Jové kept his word and finished his work in September 1966. It took Joyce seven years to write *Ulysses*, and Vidal Jové needed seven months to translate it. It strikes one as surprising that such a difficult text could be translated in so little time, even if Vidal Jové dropped everything during those seven months. Secondly, the publisher agreed to pay thirty-three pesetas for each typed page, which he did. That means that Vidal Jové received a total of 35,706 pesetas for his Herculean task. He

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was paid in four instalments, one for each volume he finished and submitted. It does not seem to be a huge amount of money. Although it is difficult to establish the real value of that money at that time (in terms of purchasing power), in order to have a rough estimate, it might be interesting to know that the guaranteed minimum wage, that is to say, the minimum wage below which no employee could be remunerated, was fixed by the Spanish government in September 1966 at 2,520 pesetas a month. Nowadays, in 2009, the guaranteed minimum wage in Spain is €624 a month. If Vidal Jové had been paid monthly, he would have received less than twice the guaranteed minimum wage for his *Ulisses*. A third important detail of the translation agreement was that the publisher would send Vidal Jové a copy of the French version of Joyce's novel, from which the Catalan translation was to be made.

Information gathered through conversations with Assumpció Vidal Cheyne and her father's letters reveal valuable details about the translation process. As agreed, Vidal Jové used Auguste Morel's French version of *Ulysses*, published by "La Maison des Amis de Livres" in 1929. Having lived in France for several years and translated many books from French, it is only natural that Vidal Jové should have turned to Morel's text to prepare his translation. Moreover, the quality of this first French edition has been recognized for many years. It was made with the assistance of Stuart Gilbert and, as can be read on the title page, it was reviewed by the famous French critic and novelist Valery Larbaud, in collaboration with the author himself. It is widely known that Joyce, who was living in Paris at that time and was totally fluent in French, was often involved in discussions on details of the translation. That is why it became the so-called "authorized" version, which was sometimes used by editors or translators into other languages when they had problems with the English text.¹² Therefore, Vidal Jové was using a reliable source. Furthermore, in an attempt to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the translation, he regularly sent his work to England to be revised by his daughter Assumpció and his son-in-law, George James Gordon Cheyne. These are the names that appear on the inside cover of the manuscript as Doctora A. F. Cheyne and G. J. G. Cheyne. At that time, Assumpció worked as a psychiatric specialist in England and collaborated in some of her husband's academic endeavours.¹³ George Cheyne (1916-1990), a Hispanist at Newcastle University, was then writing a doctoral dissertation on the Spanish economist

and reformer Joaquín Costa, published in 1972 under the title *A Bibliographical Study of the Writings of Joaquín Costa, 1846-1911*.¹⁴ During the revision process, as Assumpció confirms, they compared the Catalan text with the English version and, to solve some translation problems, they turned to Stuart Gilbert's *James Joyce's Ulysses: A Study* (1930).

Therefore, it seems that appropriate conditions were in place for this translation team to produce a good version of *Ulysses*. On the one hand, Vidal Jové was himself a creative writer and a critic, who also had extensive experience in translating a wide variety of books from both French and Catalan. On the other hand, the text was revised by an English professor, specialized in Spanish language and literature, and fluent in Catalan, with the collaboration of his wife, who had an excellent knowledge of English, and whose mother tongue was Catalan. In addition, they relied on the assistance of Stuart Gilbert's study, one of the first books on Joyce that most helped readers to understand *Ulysses*. It is not my intention to assess the merits of Vidal Jové's translation, but I would simply like to draw attention to the way he tackled one of the many puns in the novel, Lenehan's famous Rose of Castille riddle in the "Aeolus" episode:

- But my riddle! he said. What opera is like a railway line?
- Opera? Mr O'Madden Burke's sphinx face reriddled.
- Lenehan announced gladly:
- *The Rose of Castille*. See the wheeze? Rows of cast steel. Gee! (*U* 135)¹⁵

Here Joyce uses clever wordplay based on the similarity between the title of the opera by the Irish composer Michael William Balfe, *The Rose of Castille* (1857), and its homophone "rows of cast steel," which is reminiscent of a railway line. This riddle, one of the many harmonic variations that Joyce introduces in *Ulysses*, will appear again in episodes 14 and 15. In the "Circe" episode it is Leopold Bloom who adapts it, adding a reference to his wife's birthplace: "What railway opera is like a tramline in Gibraltar? The Rows of Casteel" (*U* 463). There are also several allusions to a rose of Castile in episodes 11 and 12, which can be associated to the Spanish origin of Molly Bloom. Morel's French translation of Lenehan's riddle keeps the wordplay, although he sacrifices the reference to the rose. Lenehan asks: "Quel est l'opéra qui ressemble à une filature?"

And the answer is: “*L’Étoile du Nord*. Vous y êtes? Les Toiles du Nord.”¹⁶ In this way, the riddle works, since the railway line has been replaced by the spinning mills, “les toiles du nord,” and Balfe’s opera becomes Giacomo Meyerbeer’s *L’Étoile du Nord* (1854). When dealing with the other variations of the riddle in the novel, Morel is quite careful and continues to use the reference to Meyerbeer’s opera. However, the other echoes of the rose of Castile are translated simply as “rose de Castille,” thus losing their connection with Lenehan’s – now different – riddle. Vidal Jové provides a similar solution, that is to say, he maintains the playful effect of the riddle by changing the question and the title of the opera: “Quina és la òpera que s’assembla amb un tramvia? [...] *La Dama de les Camèlies*, perquè un tram via té i la *Dama de les Camèlies*, Tram via ta” (193).¹⁷ This time the pun works through the similarity of Giuseppe Verdi’s opera *La Traviata* and the novel it was based on, Alexandre Dumas’s *La Dame aux camélias*. It is a witty option, which is even closer to the English version because of the allusion to the railway line and the reference to a flower, the camellia. Of course, the same riddle also appears in episodes 14 and 15, and the allusions to the rose of Castile are translated simply as “rosa de Castella.”

If we look at the translations of this passage in the other versions to which the Spanish reader has traditionally had access, we can see that Vidal Jové’s option is among the finest. Whilst José María Valvede decides to translate the riddle literally and leave the two terms of the pun in English, José Salas Subirat removes all reference to the opera and creates a new riddle that is based on the word “hotel”: “¿Cuál es el país que tiene más hoteles? [...] Suiza: ¿No se dan cuenta? La patria de Guillermo-hotel.” The most recent translation by Francisco García Tortosa and M^a Luisa Venegas is perhaps the one that best preserves all the connotations of the harmonic: “¿Qué ópera es como un árbol florido? [...] *La rosa de Castilla*. ¿Ven el truco? Rosa de castilia.” They prefer to keep the opera title used by Joyce and link it with two words that, though somewhat rare in everyday language, keep the homophonic texture: “cas,” a tree from Costa Rica, and “tilia” (also called “tilo”), another tree with white scented flowers.¹⁸ Joaquim Mallafrè’s Catalan translation also seems adequate: “Quina òpera rega de més lluny? [...] *La rosa de Castella*. Hi veieu la gràcia? L’arrosa de Castella.” The reference to the opera is included in the riddle, and the question

about which one has a longer range, when watering plants, allows an answer similar to the one in the English text, bearing all the connotations associated with the words “flower” and “Castile.”

After Vidal Jové sent the last section of his translation to the publisher in September 1966, the text had to go through another formality before going to the printing press – a very important formality indeed. At that time the Franco regime compelled all publishers and booksellers to submit an application for approval to the censorship office. Since the establishment of press laws in 1938, a strict censorship system determined what was morally or politically correct in Spain.¹⁹ Consequently, on 7 March 1967, an agent from AHR, José L. Hermosa Ridruejo, applied for permission to publish Vidal Jové’s Catalan translation in the series “Renaixença.”²⁰ For every book, the censorship office opened a file which generally contained the application form, a copy of the text (usually the galley proof of the book or the original version of the text that was to be translated), and one or several reports written by the censors, in which they justified their decision whether the text might be printed, was banned or could be published with some “alterations.” Fortunately, the file on Vidal Jové’s translation preserves these three interesting components.

The application form submitted by AHR provides some useful information. Together with the name of the author, title, and language in which the book was to be published, publishers also had to fill in details relating to the edition. We learn that Joyce’s Catalan *Ulysses* would have a print run of 1,000 copies, which was not a large amount for the time. It seems that Alfredo Romero did not expect to sell many copies of the book. “Renaixença” was planned as a deluxe edition, with pages in a larger format (20x24 cm) than those of a regular edition, and bound in leather for its fine appearance.²¹ What is more, the publisher states in the application form that each book will be sold at a price of 400 pesetas. Again, it is difficult to know exactly the purchasing power of money in Spain at the end of the 1960s, but it seems that 400 pesetas must have been quite a lot of money. If we compare it with the prices of other books at the time, the difference is considerable. The table below shows some information found in other censorship files in which contemporary prices of books range from the 50 pesetas for Well’s *Kipps* to 150 pesetas for Lessing’s *The Grass is Singing*.

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Book	Publisher	Year	Print Run	Price
Well's <i>Kipps</i>	Plaza & Janés	1968	3,000	50 pts.
Lawrence's <i>The Captain's Doll</i> and <i>A Modern Lover</i>	Plaza & Janés	1969	3,000	50 pts.
Stoker's <i>Dracula</i>	Ferma	1968	4,000	60 pts.
Woolf's <i>A Room of One's Own</i>	Seix Barral	1967	4,000	125 pts.
Lessing's <i>The Grass is Singing</i>	Seix Barral	1968	4,000	150 pts.

As mentioned above, the censorship file also includes the four typed volumes of the Catalan *Ulysses*, with a short prologue about Joyce, which the censor examined. It is one of the two copies of the manuscript Vidal Jové sent to AHR the previous year. No marks or crossings-out in red pen can be seen on the pages. The file also includes the censor's report, which is positive and grants the permission necessary for the publication of the book. To justify his decision, the censor refers to a previous favourable file from 1962, which authorized a Spanish edition of *Ulysses* requested by Editorial Planeta.²² That earlier censor had written the following report:

With truly incomprehensible fragments, James Joyce's *Ulysses* has pages regarded as already classic by literary critics, within the new lines of expression characteristic of our century. It is true that in some passages, as in Mrs. Bloom's final monologue, there are very crude descriptions; but they are not written out of any pornographic urge, and neither are the irreverent religious comments of some characters proselytising in tone. All things considered, we have here a work published nearly half a century ago, which, if in its time was shocking, is now considered a literary curiosity rather than a source of scandal, of interest only to a minority because it is difficult to read. Therefore I consider that IT MAY BE PUBLISHED.²³

Taking into account this antecedent, the censorship office gave the green light and sent the good news to AHR on 15 March 1967, just a week after the application had arrived. Some literary critics and intellectuals in general who have stressed Franco's repressive policy

towards Catalan culture and language might be surprised to learn that Vidal Jové's was not banned for being written in Catalan. In fact, neither the publisher, nor the translator, nor the censor brought up the subject at all. It seems that, contrary to widespread belief, writing and publishing books in Catalan was not an issue in Franco's Spain of the 1960s. There is no doubt that the publisher, Alfredo Herrero, was very aware of that, since the other volume of his "Renaixença" series – the Catalan translation of Boccaccio's *Decameron* – had also been authorised by the censorship board four years earlier, in 1963. On that occasion, although the censor's report once more alluded to the immorality and anticlericalism that pervades most of Boccaccio's tales, the permission was granted because it is "a work that belongs to world literature, it has already been authorized in Castilian and it is a classic Catalan version."²⁴ Vidal Jové's *Ulisses* was not a classic Catalan version, but it also went through the filter of Spanish censorship, as did many other Catalan translations of English novels at that time, such as Orwell's *Animal Farm* (in 1964) and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (in 1965), as well Joyce's *Retrat de l'artista adolescent*, published by Vergara in 1967.

Perhaps more surprising than allowing a Catalan *Ulysses* is the fact that Franco's censors did not remove the allegedly immoral passages (adulterous affairs, overt references to fornication and masturbation, etc.), the severe attacks on members of the Catholic Church or the bawdy language, as well as the terms related to anatomy or to bodily functions. In a regime that supported the political right and the traditional values of the Catholic Church, the Spanish censors were considered the guardians of the morals of society, and usually suppressed or changed any publication that was thought to be subversive or included "improper" comments about morality, the Church, or the principles of the regime. We understand the explanation given by the censor in 1962, as regards Joyce's glowing reputation, lack of pornographic intention or proselytism, but it would be logical to expect at least some cuts from the text or alterations, as censors had done that very same year and the year after with Joyce's *Portrait*, when some remarks about the Catholic religion were to be removed, even though "they are not particularly defended or held as a guiding principle."²⁵ However, no cuts or alterations were suggested by the censor who examined Vidal Jové's translation of *Ulysses*. One might wonder whether the Catalan translation of those "crude descriptions" and "irreverent religious

comments” had been smoothed out. That is to say, is this a case of self-censorship?

A look at Vidal Jové’s rendering of the “Penelope” episode, most notorious for Molly’s coarse language and sexual frankness, reveals that the translation of the possible controversial passages has been made with precision and as close to the original as possible; omissions, even of single words, are infrequent. All Molly’s thoughts, memories and fantasies about sexual encounters, be it with Blazes Boylan, Lieutenant Mulvey, Stephen Dedalus or her own husband, are rendered accurately. To illustrate the truth of this, we might consider, for example, how Vidal Jové translates the lines in which Molly recalls her orgasmic moments with Boylan:

[...] ai Senyor tinc ganes d’estirar-me m’agradaria que ell fos aquí o qualsevol altre per deixar-me anar i vinga somhi altre cop que sento com un foc que em crema per dintre si almenys pogués somiar-ho com quan ell em féu passar la segona vegada fent-me pessigolles per darrera amb el dit que vaig estar gairebé cinc minuts gaudint rodejant-lo amb les cames i després el vaig tenir d’apretar ai Senyor tenia ganes de cridar i dir tota mena de coses fot o merda o qualsevol cosa [...] (1043)

[...] O Lord I must stretch myself I wished he was here or somebody to let myself go with and come again like that I feel all fire inside me or if I could dream it when he made me spend the 2nd time tickling me behind with his finger I was coming for about 5 minutes with my legs round him I had to hug him after O Lord I wanted to shout out all sorts of things fuck or shit or anything at all [...] (U 675)

The Catalan text does not hide or dissimulate Molly’s adulterous pleasure, which is expressed in a most direct manner. Less sexually charged passages in novels by H. G. Wells, D. H. Lawrence, George Orwell or Doris Lessing, to mention just a few authors, had often made Spanish censors frown and cross out words. Similarly, they often reacted when they found critical comments about the Church or religious beliefs, but they did not mark Molly’s sacrilegious memories of a confession she once made to a priest in her youth. She challenges Father Corrigan’s authority and wonders why she must confess to a priest when she had “already confessed it to God.”

Molly also mocks the behaviour of the priest, who asks for details about her sexual conduct. She even fantasizes about having a sexual encounter with him, implying that priests often have sexual relationships with married women, when clerical celibacy is a requirement in the Catholic Church. Once again, Vidal Jové reflects all these details very clearly:

no m'agrada confessar-me'n quan anava amb el Pare Corrigan ell em va tocar pare què hi ha de mal si ell ho féu on i li vaig dir com una bajaneta a la vora del Canal però en quin lloc de la seva persona filla meva més amunt de la cama per darrera amunt si més aviat més enlaire allí on t'asseus sí oh Senyor perquè no deia al cul directament i acabar d'una vegada això què tenia que veure amb la qüestió i ho feres no recordo en la forma que digué no pare i sempre penso en el pare de veres i perquè volia saber-ho si jo ja ho havia confessat a Déu [...] m'agradaria que un m'abracés amb les seves vestimentes i l'olor d'encens que els hi surt com el papa a més amb un capellà no hi ha perill si una és casada ell té d'anar ben alerta per ell mateix després fa una donació a S.S. el papa com a penitència [...] (1012-13)

[...] I hate that confession when I used to go to Father Corrigan he touched me father and what harm if he did where and I said on the canal bank like a fool but whereabouts on your person my child on the leg behind high up was it yes rather high up was it where you sit down yes O Lord couldnt he say bottom right out and have done with it what has that got to do with it and did you whatever way he put it I forget no father and I always think of the real father what did he want to know for when I already confessed it to God [...] Id like to be embraced by one in his vestments and the smell of incense off him like the pope besides theres no danger with a priest if youre married hes too careful about himself then give something to H H the pope for a penance [...] (U 662)

It is true that Vidal Jové sometimes modulates the intensity of Molly's curse words and crude language. At the beginning of the monologue, Molly refers to the woman Leopold might have picked up somewhere as a "bitch," whereas Vidal Jové prefers to use the word "mala bestieta" (bad person).²⁶ A few lines later, Mary Driscoll

is called a “slut,” which Vidal Jové translates as “bruta” (dirty). Likewise, words like “spunk” and “piss” become “esperma” (sperm) and “orinar” (urinate), whilst the sexual term “come” is softened down to some euphemisms, such as “gosar” (enjoy), “ell està llest” (he’s finished), “ho deu haver fet” (he must have done it), “deixar-me anar” (let me go), etc. However, at other times Vidal Jové does not shy away from bawdy language and makes use of less agreeable expressions, such as “puta bruta” (dirty bitch), “pet” (fart), “merda” (shit), “tetes” (titties) and “xiulet” (cock). All in all, it seems that a faithful version of Joyce’s *Ulysses* was authorised by the Spanish censorship office.

Turning back to the history, we observe that in 1968 Vidal Jové began to worry about the fate of his work when he did not see his *Ulysses* in the bookshops and had no news from the publisher. The novel had been authorised by the censorship board in March 1967, but over a year later there was no sign of its publication. In October 1968 he wrote to his friend Tomàs Garcés i Marivet, a poet and a lawyer who lived in Barcelona, to ask him for some helpful advice about how to proceed in this case. Vidal Jové wanted to recover his manuscript from AHR and see it printed. In his reply dated 28 October 1968, Tomàs Garcés suggested finding a new publishing house that might be interested in the Catalan translation of *Ulysses* and willing to pay the sum of money Vidal Jové had received for his work, so that he could return the money to AHR and convince Alfredo Herrero to give him back the manuscript. Vidal Jové tried his luck with the publishing house Alianza Editorial, for whom he was translating the chivalric romance *Tirant lo blanc*, but they would only be interested in a Spanish translation of Joyce’s novel, not a Catalan version. Eventually, despite other attempts, no publisher was found, and Vidal Jové’s outstanding work never saw the light.

In his first letter to Tomàs Garcés on 16 October 1968, Vidal Jové mentions a significant detail that deserves attention. He says that his Catalan edition of *Ulysses* would include an introduction written by Camilo José Cela, the famous Spanish novelist and Nobel Prize winner for literature in 1989. In order to verify this information, I visited the Camilo José Cela Foundation in Iria Flavia, A Coruña. They kindly gave me access to the writer’s correspondence, which includes over 70,000 letters, and with the help of the librarian, I could confirm that there was no prologue on

Joyce in their archive. On the other hand, I did find a reference to some correspondence between Alfredo Herrero and Cela. However, the documents were not there, although a note bears witness to the existence of one or several letters between the publisher and the writer. That was no significant breakthrough, since in 1968 Cela translated for AHR the book *La novela de Adán y Eva*, by Jean Effel.²⁷ Therefore, it is only natural that some letters should have been exchanged between the two. Unfortunately, I have not been able to confirm Cela's collaboration in the Catalan edition of *Ulysses*.

Despite its gaps, the data found give a good picture of the translation enterprise undertaken and carried to its conclusion by Vidal Jové. Although this first Catalan translation was not made from the original English text, but rather from Morel's French version, it seems that our anonymous translator and his collaborators, Assumpció Vidal and George Cheyne, were able to produce a fine and accurate version of *Ulysses* in just seven months. Although it is interesting to learn that Franco's repressive regime did not put up any obstacles to the publication of the novel due to its being in Catalan, it is perhaps more surprising that the Spanish censors authorised the whole text without any cut or alteration of allegedly immoral or irreverent passages. The close affinity of the publisher to the regime and the existence of a previous Spanish edition with a favourable report from the censorship office surely contributed to this positive outcome. Finally, if the censorship board did not ban it, there remains the question of why this Catalan *Ulysses* was never published. It is not easy to provide a conclusive answer. Vidal Jové and his family never discovered the reason either. Further research on the publishing house might shed some light on the mystery, but no additional information about Alfredo Herrero has been found for the time being.

Nevertheless, in the letter Tomàs Garcés wrote to Vidal Jové in October 1968, the lawyer points to the possible financial problems of AHR: "I think that to speak to Mr H. now is to waste your time, if he has no money to publish the book and you cannot offer him compensation for what he paid you."²⁸ No doubt, 1,000 copies of this deluxe edition would have cost a considerable amount of money, to which copyright fees would have been added. Alfredo Herrero perhaps had second thoughts about investing that money on a book that was considered, as the censor put it, "a literary curiosity [...] of interest only to a minority because it is difficult to read." In addition,

the volume's being in Catalan would have reduced its 1960s readership even more. Whatever the reasons, it is a pity that Vidal Jové's translation was not published. The reception of Joyce in Spain would have been very different, and Vidal Jové would have received the recognition he deserves. This article is a tribute to his work, and I hope it will contribute to the rescuing of his translation from oblivion.

Notes

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² See Antonio Raúl de Toro Santos, "Otero Pedrayo: *Ulysses* y Stephen Dedalus en Compostela," *Ensayos sobre traducción*, ed. Ramón López Ortega and José Luis Oncins Martínez (Cáceres: Universidad de Extremadura, 1993) 61-65; and Antonio Raúl de Toro Santos, "La huella de Joyce en Galicia," *Joyce en España (I)*, ed. Francisco García Tortosa and Antonio Raúl de Toro Santos (A Coruña: Universidade da Coruña, Servicio de Publicacións, 1994) 31-37.

³ See Teresa Iribarren, "The Reception of James Joyce in Catalonia" *The Reception of James Joyce in Europe*, vol. 2, ed. Geert Lernout and Wim Van Mierlo (London: Thoemmes Continuum, 2004) 448.

⁴ *Ulysses* was prohibited from entering Ireland until 1932; see Michael Adams, *Censorship: The Irish Experience* (Dublin: Scepter Books, 1968) 31. For references to the troubles over the publication of *Ulysses* in several countries, see Paul Vanderham, *James Joyce and Censorship: The Trials of Ulysses* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), and Carmelo Medina Casado, "James Joyce y el mundo de la ley," *James Joyce: límites de lo diáfano*, ed. Carmelo Medina Casado, et al. (Jaén: Universidad de Jaén, 1998) 179-97.

⁵ "prestigiar el indiscutible valor cultural de la lengua catalana"; see Robert Saladrigas, "La llegada de *Ulysses* a Catalunya," *La Vanguardia*, 16 abril de 1981, 3.

⁶ Iribarren, 453.

⁷ I am indebted to the archive staff for their unstinting help and friendly guidance on how to find my way through the complexities of these files.

⁸ In the *XVII Encuentros James Joyce*, held at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canarias in 2006, I read a paper on the finding of this translation entitled “El misterio del primer *Ulysses* catalán: la odisea de Joan Francesc Vidal Jové,” published in *Estudios joyceanos en Gran Canaria: Joyce “In his palms,”* ed. Santiago J. Henríquez and Carmen Martín Santana (Madrid: Huerca & Fierro, 2007) 159-73.

⁹ Its name appeared for the first time in the second edition of the 1953 catalogue *Libros Españoles* (Madrid: Comisión Ejecutiva para el Comercio Exterior del Libro), and the first submissions to the censorship office by AHR are dated 1952.

¹⁰ Other plays by Vidal Jové were *Mercuri i els metges* (*Mercury and the Physicians*, 1934) and *L'oreig entre columnes* (*The Breeze among Columns*, 1936). All these plays were published in the fortnightly review *El Nostre Teatre: Publicació Quincenal d'Obres Escèniques Inèdites i d'Informació Teatral*, directed by Artur Guasch Spick.

¹¹ This epic romance, written by the Valencian Joanot Martorell and finished by Martí Joan de Galba, became famous when Cervantes referred to it in his *Quijote* as “the best book in the world,” being saved from the fire in the scene of the scrutiny of the library.

¹² See Patrick O’Neill, “French Joyce: Portrait of an Oeuvre,” *The Reception of James Joyce in Europe*, vol. 2, ed. Geert Lernout and Wim Van Mierlo (London: Thoemmes Continuum, 2004) 415.

¹³ Assumpció Vidal, for instance, translated into Spanish G. J. G. Cheyne’s *Estudio bibliográfico de la obra de Joaquín Costa (1846-1911)*, published in Zaragoza by Editorial Guara in 1981.

¹⁴ In a recent article on his work, George Cheyne has been described as a dedicated, rigorous and honest scholar: «un ejemplo de dedicación rigurosa y honesta al estudio y la difusión de la figura de Joaquín Costa»; see Carlos Bravo Suárez, “George J. G. Cheyne: el hispanista que estudió a Costa,” *Diario del Alto Aragón* 10 de agosto de 2005, 24.

¹⁵ The pagination here refers to *Ulysses* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1983).

¹⁶ James Joyce, *Ulisse*, trans. Auguste Morel and Stuart Gilbert (París: Gallimard, 1948) 132.

¹⁷ The pagination here refers to the manuscript kept in the Archivo General de la Administración.

¹⁸ See Professor García Tortosa’s comment on the Spanish translations of this passage in his essay “Las traducciones de Joyce al español,” *Joyce en España (I)*, ed. Francisco García Tortosa and Antonio

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Raúl de Toro Santos (A Coruña: Universidade da Coruña, Servicio de Publicacións, 1994) 26.

¹⁹ On censorship in post-war Spain, see Manuel L. Abellán, *Censura y creación literaria en España, 1939-1976* (Barcelona: Ediciones Península, 1980); Antonio Beneyto, *Censura y política en los escritores españoles* (Barcelona: Plaza y Janés, 1977) and Georgina Cisquella, José Luis Erviti, and José A. Sorolla *Diez años de represión cultural: la censura de los libros durante la ley de prensa (1966-76)* (Barcelona: Anagrama, 1977).

²⁰ See file 1876-67, Reference (03)50.06SIG21/17975.

²¹ The detail about the leather binding appears in the censorship file of the previous volume of the series, Boccaccio's *Decameron*; see File 5909-63, Reference, (03)050SIG21/14804.

²² Salas Subirat's version of *Ulysses* was included in the sixth volume of *Maestros ingleses* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1964)

²³ "Con fragmentos verdaderamente incomprensibles, el 'Ulises' de James Joyce tiene páginas consideradas por la crítica literaria como antológicas, dentro de las nuevas líneas de expresión propias de nuestro siglo. Es cierto que en algunos pasajes, como en el monólogo final de la Señora Bloom, existen descripciones crudísimas; pero no están hechas con afán pornográfico, como tampoco las irreverencias religiosas de algunos personajes tienen un tono proselitista. En definitiva, estamos ante una obra publicada hace casi medio siglo, que si en su tiempo escandalizó, ahora se la considera más bien como una curiosidad literaria, que como una piedra de escándalo, de interés, por su difícil lectura, solamente para una minoría. Por todo ello considero que PUEDE PUBLICARSE." See File 1219-62, Reference (03)50.06SIG21/13815. All translations from the Spanish censors' reports will be my own.

²⁴ "Colección de cuentos italianos en su mayoría inmorales en lo que intervienen frecuentemente clérigos y religiosos que por tratarse de una obra que pertenece a la literatura universal que ya ha sido aprobada en castellano y que se trata de una versión clásica catalana creo que se puede permitir su publicación." See File 5909-63, Reference, (03)050SIG21/14804.

²⁵ See File 6759-62, Reference (03)050SIG21/14309) and File 2985-63, Reference (03)050SIG21/14580.

²⁶ I am grateful to Teresa Iribarren for her help with the meanings and connotations of these Catalan words.

²⁷ This book is a collection of caricatures about the creation of the world, sketched by Jean Effel, pen name of the French illustrator François Lejeune, for which Cela translated the dialogues and comments into Spanish.

²⁸ “Parlar de seguida amb el Sr. H. em sembla perdre el temps si ell no té quartos per editar el llibre i tu no li pots oferir de rescabalar-lo del que va pagar-te.”