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JOYCE STUDIES IN ITALY

20

**JAMES JOYCE
THE JOYS OF EXILE**

*Edited by
Franca Ruggieri*

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Address: James Joyce Italian Foundation
Dipartimento di Lingue, Culture e Letterature Straniere
Via Valco di San Paolo, 19
00146 Roma
joyce_found@os.uniroma3.it
franca.ruggieri@uniroma3.it

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1.

**JAMES JOYCE
THE JOYS OF EXILE**

CANON IN EXILE:
JAMES JOYCE AND SERBIAN LITERATURE¹

The aim of this paper is to present and problematize the flow of modernization in 20th-century Serbian literature from the perspective of the creative reception² of James Joyce's works. The main hypothesis of this research raises the question of whether examples of modernity in Serbian prose of the 20th century bear an essential affinity with the definition of prose modernization, which in the theoretical texts of European and world literature scholars is supported with examples from works by James Joyce. This hypothesis further touches on the need of Serbian literature for an active dialogue with Joyce's works, which inevitably leads to original responses in the implicit and the explicit poetics of the 20th-century writers, especially Rastko Petrović (1898–1949) and Danilo Kiš (1935–1989), who are reckoned to be two key figures

¹ The present text was written as part of the research project "Change of Poetic Paradigms in Serbian Literature of the 20th Century: National and European Context" (178016), conducted by the Institute for Literature and Art in Belgrade. This project is funded by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia.

² Creative reception includes not only an interpretation of the pure influence of one writer in another literature or simply tracking the critical and translatorial reception of a work in a foreign culture. It is a complex process that is followed by the interpretation of the poetic characteristics of a new work in the target national context, made after the creative reception of the piece of world literature. Such a process is contextualized by a discussion of changes when compared to the creatively received work and the authentic, original response of writers in the target culture. This deepens various aspects of the canons in national and world literature, affects the flow of modernization in literature and highlights innovative poetic paradigms (Ђурић 2017: 12–31).

involved in a creative dialogue with Joyce's works. In this paper I also discuss the flow of modernization of 20th-century Serbian prose in relation to the creative reception of James Joyce's literary works as a kind of "poetic exile" from the previous canonical tendencies in Serbian literature. The continuity of poetic changes in Serbian literature, from the modernization of the novel in the works of Petrović to the postmodern approach in the prose of Kiš, describes the 20th-century canon constituted after the creative reception of Joyce's works. It is a canon which is closely connected with the allotropic definition of exile, especially when the creative reception of Joyce in Serbian literature relates to the voluntarily chosen life or literary exile of certain authors, and when authentic responses provided in their texts motivate a "poetic exile" from the expected influences or familiar theoretical paradigms in complex historical and socio-cultural contexts. This paper also highlights the poetic importance of the "exilic" South Slavic heritage in Joyce's works, and the changes in Joyce's creative reception of South Slavic material as examples of processes of modernization in Joyce's prose.

Creative reception of Joyce's work in Serbian literature as "poetic exile" in the modernist paradigm

In 1930 Rastko Petrović worked as a diplomat in Rome. On 16th January 1930, in a letter to the poet Milan Rakić, Petrović wrote: "Mr. Counselor bought Joyce's *Ulysses* [...]. Now, with excitement, I'm looking at the book on his desk, waiting discreetly [...] for my turn to read it after him" (Петровић 2003: 198).³ After surrealist writer Marko Ristić's

³ This is not Petrović's only note from Rome which presents the city as a place of literary exile: "There is a travelogue from Rome, for instance, in which he writes about a dinner party during which Marcel Proust had been discussed. What else could one write home about from Rome? Those who might have read his travelogue from Rome, published in a Belgrade literary magazine had already seen Rome. Petrović wrote for a cosmopolitan generation which had its own memories of Toledo or Cordoba, whose members studied at European universities, served as diplomats in European capitals, reported from Europe as journalists, or simply travelled in Europe for the sake of their own pleasure. But not everybody might have heard of Proust, who in the twenties was not widely read even in Paris: this was something worth writing about from Rome" (Milutinović 2011: 181–182).

readings of parts of *Ulysses* in the French translation and Ristić's text on James Joyce, published in 1924 (Ристић 1924: 178–179), Petrović's introduction to *Ulysses* in Rome was extremely important in the process of the creative reception and modernization of 20th-century Serbian prose. The ideological circumstances in South-Eastern Europe in this period dictated the usual dogmatic interpretation of Joyce's work: this was particularly true around the time of the Soviet Writers' Congress in 1934 and Radek's polemic on Joyce (Radek 1935: 150–162). The negative remarks on the bourgeois tones in Joyce's novel and Lukács's criticism of the “formalism, subjectivism and irrationalism” of Joyce's work (Wicht 2004: 74) did not encourage a creative dialogue with Joyce's texts in South Slavic countries.⁴ This is why Petrović reading Joyce in Italy in 1930, as a alternative poetic figure in exile, is so important for the modernization of the canon in Serbian literature.

According to the testimony of Petrović's friend, the surrealist poet Milan Dedinac, Petrović also translated some of Joyce's poems (Дединац 2014: 657). In 1931, in a series of (auto)poetic essays on diverse topics (“The Reality in Foreign and Our Literature”, written on the problems of “Contemporary English Novel and Complex of Personality” and “Scientific-Philosophical Experiment and Great Contemporary Novel, Joyce, Proust, Huxley”), Petrović described the new prose techniques as changes influenced by various elements of Joyce's poetics (Петровић 1974: 270, 281–283). In his essay “Scientific-Philosophical Experiment and Great Contemporary Novel, Joyce, Proust, Huxley”, Petrović emphasizes “the evolution of the novel with a direct psychological reconstruction from Joyce's *Ulysses* to the unknown book of the future”, and defines Joyce's novelistic focus from “the psychological complex to its action” without any mediation of psychological analyses as “discovery” (Петровић 1974: 283, 281). The poetic changes described are clearly noticeable from a comparison of the first and second parts of Petrović's novel *The Sixth Day*.⁵ The first part of this novel

⁴ Cf. Меснóбер 2013: 21–22.

⁵ Cf. Мићић 2007: 191–211.

was written after Petrović had read *Ulysses*; its plot follows the main protagonist Stevan Papa-Katić and many other characters through 1915, during the First World War. Although the first part of the novel was finished in 1934, censorship and negative comments on the naturalistic descriptions of those disgraced in wartime,⁶ meant that the first part of Petrović's novel was only published posthumously, with some corrections, in 1961. The same year also saw the publication of the second part of the novel. The second part is set in 1938 and describes the tranquil life of Stevan, who has made a career as a famous palaeontologist in America. After the negative censorship of the 1930's, Petrović relinquished the narrative experiments that he had adopted in the first part of *The Sixth Day* after the creative reception of Joyce's *Ulysses*, and in the second part of his novel organizes the narrative closer to traditional paradigms. The following examples both describe moments of a walk taken by Stevan, and they illustrate the poetic shifts that have been made between the first and second parts of Petrović's novel. The first part of *The Sixth Day*, the section entitled "Stevan's 'Thought in the Storm' When It Reached Its Sense and Its Shape", was written after the creative reception of Joyce's work:

Everything was brought to a halt. By one single question: How many layers of thought were there in me? How many? There were two, three, four of them ... In this attempt to repeat the whole complex work of the brain. But words only come out of it luminously: How many layers of thought in me? How many layers? Oh, am I thinking about hate and stupidity at the same time now, to think about one thing or another that this man is saying? Am I thinking anything else? There, this is yet another thought. A thought that seeks to determine the other layers of thought. The sense of anger, of discomfort! Of having to walk, having to think, to think each thought separately. But I cannot determine anything else. All those thoughts may still be there, and here I am in their midst, perfectly confused. Come on, think, ever so slowly! And lo! at the same time you are changing

⁶ Cf. Петровић 2013: 171.

with your eye the whole vision of the world. Now that's a thought!"
(Петровић 2014: 177; italics in the original).

The second excerpt, from the second part of the novel and written after the censorship, reads:

Stevan walked on ahead of the others. For the first ten paces he felt brave, and then he became frightened that he might not be able to find the bridge and that he might fall over the cliff in the darkness. He tried to see what there was in front of him, but he couldn't make out a thing. The roaring of the water sounded as if it were directly beneath him. Stevan walked cautiously, one step at a time, waving his arms in the air and shouting to those behind him. There was a flash of lightning. Through the pouring rain he could see the purple mountains. He was on the edge of the road; a few steps farther on was the bridge, and a little beyond that, the mill. It was all much nearer than he had expected. He crawled forward now with greater determination. The mud under his hands was mixed with stones and acorns, and his clothes were soaked with mud and rain.”⁷

The creative reception of some of Joyce's strategies in the first part of Petrović's novel *The Sixth Day* influenced changes in various aspects of modernization in Serbian literature. Those changes combine many modernist techniques, including the encyclopedic spirit,⁸ linguistic innovation, destabilization of narrative instances, and considering the novel as an experiment. The important question is whether the stream of consciousness technique is also completely realized in the creative reception of Joyce in Petrović's novel. It seems that as a form

⁷ Petrović, Rastko. “*The Sixth Day*, Fragment of the novel”, translated by Albert Lord, <https://www.rastko.rs/knjizevnost/umetnicka/rpetrovic/proza/rpetrovic-sixth-day.html>.

⁸ For the encyclopedic aspect of Petrović's prose and its relation to Joyce's poetics, see Петровић 2013: 150–151, 163–260.

of “exile” from that technique and a re-consideration of Joyce’s narrative strategies, perhaps a more correct name for this type of inner speech in Petrović’s works is a fluctuation of ideas. Rather than the simultaneous interactive effect of observation, opinion, speech or unconsciousness in the stream of consciousness,⁹ the prime concern with the fluctuation of ideas is in the presentation of constant multiple changes of more or less coherent thoughts, as can be seen in the example from the first part of Petrović’s novel. The fluctuation of ideas does not represent simultaneity between observation and the process of consciousness, but rather observation condensed in order to constitute an idea within a flow of thoughts, as is suggested by very title of the section, “Stevan’s ‘Thought in the Storm’ When It Reached Its Sense and Its Shape”.¹⁰ In the fluctuation of ideas the privilege of experiences is established by a linguistic, pictorial, conceptual or symbolic conditionality that is concretized as the eventuality of thoughts.¹¹ It also determines the fact that the fluctuation of ideas is often more poetically knowing than the stream of consciousness, as also seen in the example from the first part of Petrović’s novel: “*Oh, am I thinking about hate and stupidity at the same time now, to think about one thing or another that this man is saying? Am I thinking anything else? There, this is yet another thought. A thought that seeks to determine the other layers of thought. The sense of anger, of discomfort! Of having to walk, having to think, to think each thought separately*”.¹²

Besides Petrović’s dialogue with avant-garde concepts regarding renewed language, Bergson’s philosophy of vitalism and Freud’s views on personality and liberation,¹³ the paradigms of modernity that he perceived, refracted through a creative dialogue with Joyce,

⁹ Cf. Joyce in Barnes 1922: 65.

¹⁰ Cf. Вучковић 2005: 224.

¹¹ Cf. Petrović 1964: 405–406.

¹² Petrović, Rastko. “*The Sixth Day*, Fragment of the novel”, translated by Albert Lord, <https://www.rastko.rs/knjizevnost/umetnicka/rpetrovic/proza/rpetrovic-sixth-day.html>.

¹³ Cf. Јовић 2005: 288–301, 304–309, 365–371.

constitute the key turning point in the canon and in the flow of modernization. Above all, this affected issues of language, narrative technique and new novelistic forms, which represent “poetic exile” from the traditional canonical examples in Serbian literature, which are largely rooted in a narrative heritage of realism, and on biological and sociological aspects including many elements of folklore. The high point of Petrović’s creative response to Joyce’s work can be found in the first part of *The Sixth Day* in a multilingual passage, a polyglossia of (non-)existent languages:

‘Ukeb uni emak frakaru brand ertlak klers bit pakra fre dus či šabe lundi katr e turb. Madr it lušme čak ši saled kan teli rublje fandī. Lulus por eti la made dema re. Lu drači sen tažiš kulfen či, či, či. Isazet di, fale šazet di, mut, ras boledi ču. Kos lalo de ajranadu va is te neporo i upra laj krun potovi parago. Krata jetoda tel mostakra ce (firi ki de), lo redidu krel rola. Ve so di vako lero. Riz de rodi. Ovo le ropep. Si’ (Петровић 2014: 186–187; transliterated; italics in the original).

This part of Petrović’s novel is about the dehumanized world at war, where every word of every language, or pure words from just one perspective, are damaged; the opportunity for a new world can only be created through an unknown hybrid language, but one that is possibly comprehensible to everyone. It comprises multilingual etymological combinations, and is embodied in the utopian idea of the interpretation and understanding of literature, especially for a plurality of readers, with polyglossia as an ideal hermeneutic-communicative form. This is also an important characteristic of Joyce’s texts.

The relative proportion of Joyce’s creation of a literary work (especially *Ulysses*), the process of its creative reception in the sense of “poetic exile” (in 1930, during Petrović’s stay in Rome) and new poetic solutions after this creative dialogue as “exile” from the previous paradigms (the awareness of “the evolution of the novel” with “a

psychological complex”, yet devoid of “the psychological analyses”,¹⁴ examples of fluctuation of ideas or the function of multilingualism in the first part of Petrović’s novel *The Sixth Day*) when seen in the process of literary modernization, is typologically an extremely complex “hermeneutical situation”.¹⁵ The creative reception of Joyce’s work and the original responses provided in Petrović’s novel had a significant role in modernist poetics, which also introduced innovations into the canon based on “exile” from the older techniques,¹⁶ forced changes in stylistic forms, and a marked modernization as the implicit result of the whole process.

Creative reception of Joyce’s work in Serbian literature as “poetic exile” into the postmodern paradigm

From the beginning of the 20th century to the aftermath of the Second World War typological similarities in realism/modernism saw the creative reception of the similar material (for example, works by Anton

¹⁴ Cf. Петровић 1974: 283, 281.

¹⁵ For the term “hermeneutical situation”, see Gadamer 2006: 301.

¹⁶ One of the possible examples of changing the traditional canon in Serbian literature is how the Homer versus Joyce template is received in the modernized conditions of Serbian literature, especially in poetry. The typologically related experience of the world after the First World War, the negation of the epic, warlike figure and the embodiment of a sad returnee are characteristics typologically similar to those of *Lyrics of Ithaca* (1919), a collection of poems by Miloš Crnjanski (1893–1977), and to Joyce’s novel. The avant-garde templates of the myth in the collection of poems *Ulysses* (1938), written by Rade Drainac (1899–1943) after reading Joyce’s novel, have problematized the homecoming to Ithaca, presenting an impossible return. In post-Second World War modernism, in *The Diary about Ulysses* (1954), written by Jovan Hristić (1933–2002), the absence of an ideal Ithaca can be noted, as well as the continuity of Ulysses in urban spaces as the impossible double in the discourse of subjectivity. In Serbian literature after 1970, literary exile is also part of the metapoetic perspective, not only as a one-sided return to the figure of Odysseus, but as a return to the potential of individual episodes and figures in *Odyssey* and *Ulysses*, usually through Joycean readings of Homer (Elpenor, Alcinoos, Nausicaa, Penelope). Bearing this in mind, it can also be concluded that there was an evidently changed Homeric canon of themes following the creative reception of Joyce’s work in Serbian literature. About “Homer influenced by Joyce”, see Senn in Mihálycsa, Wawrzycka, Senn 2012: 209.

Chekhov, Leo Tolstoy, Gustave Flaubert, Benedetto Croce etc.) in the texts of James Joyce and writers of Serbian literature. The continuity of dramatized action in the works of Chekhov, the technique of interior monologue in the works of Tolstoy, the distancing of the dominant omniscient perspective in the works of Flaubert, and the dedogmatized view of art in the works of Benedetto Croce – all creatively received by Joyce – had had a crucial impact in the processes of modernizing prose at the beginning of the 20th century. The creative reception of similar material after the Second World War in the works of Serbian literature constitutes a modernist deviation from the non-literary oriented attitudes of social realism¹⁷ and provides an opportunity to discuss the topic of post-war societies on the basis of poetic choices. This is an example of how materials and methods in a kind of literary exile “take on a new form as” they “travel abroad, showing new facets and features that are brought into view in its new surroundings” (Damrosch 2009: 513).

In 20th-century Serbian literature the dialectic arc is formed from the Joycean paradigm of the creative reception of modernist procedures in the works of Petrović, through the re-creation of modernism and modernist revitalizations in a Joycean manner after the Second World War, to the ambivalent response of anti-Joycean and/or meta-Joycean paradigms touching on postmodern Serbian literature, especially in the works of Danilo Kiš.¹⁸ After the negative tones of the bourgeois readings of Joycean prose, followed by Marxist-oriented criticism,¹⁹ the milestone of modernism after the Second World War

¹⁷ Cf. Josipović 2011: 93–104.

¹⁸ In this context, the modernist Joycean, postmodern anti-Joycean, and/or meta-Joycean paradigms in the creative reception of Joyce’s work in Serbian literature could also be described in terms of “interpretive communities” in the processes of creative reception and flows of modernization – “made up of those who share interpretive strategies not for reading (in the conventional sense) but for writing texts, for constituting their properties and assigning their intentions” (Fish 1980: 171).

¹⁹ See also Bloom’s observation about the problems of exiled aesthetics in the complex socio-cultural situations: “[...] all of us may be tempted to lose as we face the onslaught of instant masterpieces that threatens us at this moment when cultural justice is at work, enforcing the exile of aesthetic considerations” (Bloom 1994: 105).

attracted renewed scholarship, and theoretical and translating interest, which confirmed a new poetic view of Joyce's oeuvre. The syllabus of the Department of General Literature and Literary Theory at the University of Belgrade – re-established in 1954 – whose first graduate student was Danilo Kiš, also contained a text by James Joyce (Thompson 2013: 33). A rich syllabus of world literature was of great importance to Kiš's ideas, and it influenced his cosmopolitan interpretation of the European literary canon, which “would make room for Europe's smaller languages and their literatures” (Thompson 2013: 242–244). As early as 1959, Kiš presented in his short story “Mr Poppy Enjoys Himself” a creative autopoetic reading and metatextual interpretation of Joyce's work as an example of “poetic exile” of the world literature hypercanon²⁰ in another culture:

What does *Ulysses* have too much of?

Too much form.

What else?

Too much language. Too much subconscious, stream of consciousness, which can all be condensed into an effort of consciousness.

What else is there too much of?

Too much subtext. [...] Too much text. Too many tests... [...]

A parody of everything. Of the novel (without a novel), of Ulysses, of life, death, art, philosophy, metempsychosis, the process of writing, Daedalus, Dublin, Aryans, Jews, Irishmen, Englishmen, Consciousness, the Unconscious, [...] polyglottism, the Tower of Babel, earth, sea, mankind, womankind, the Church, me, you, him, us, them, a parody of Everything and Nothing. And then a parody of parodies. That's the whole point” (Kiš, in Thompson 2013: 34).

This extract from Kiš's short story “Mr Poppy Enjoys Himself” (1959) is organized as a metatextual investigation process, based on the structure of Joyce's “Ithaca”. The process was later incorporated in the

²⁰ See Damrosch 2009: 511.

novel *Hourglass* (1972). Examples from the novel also show how the structure of investigation is creatively received from Joyce's "Ithaca"²¹ and poetically changed in the work of Kiš.²²

Did E.S. postdate his letter?

After the name of his village he wrote the next day's date. His justification was that, according to his Longines watch, only sixteen minutes were left of the day, and consequently not only the anticipated end but even the beginning of the letter would fall on the following day. And it's true that this whole letter, begun at the end of one day, related to the next day, the following dawn, the daybreak to come.

Had he ever postdated a document before?

During the school year 1905–6, he postdated a doctor's certificate, thus extending his vacation by approximately a week; in 1912, he postdated a free second-class ticket on the Kameral Moravice-Zagreb express, extending its validity by almost four months; in 1924, he repeated this exploit, having (apparently) learned no lesson from his previous fine (of 1912), which he had apparently forgotten, and again postdated a train ticket, on this occasion first-class, reduced-fare ticket no. 755363, with a view to traveling free of charge on the Vrbovsko–Novi Sad and Novi Sad–Budapest (via Subotica) line, prolonging its validity by ten days in all, that is, from the first to the eleventh of November; in 1932, he once again postdated a document, medical certificate no. 2249, declaring him provisionally capable of taking care of himself, on condition that he submit every six months to a thorough medical examination – this document was postdated by a whole year (from 1932 to 1933); in 1934, he postdated several documents relating to the Subotica Brush Factory, of which he was part owner and a stockholder, etc. (Kiš 1997: 32–33).

Meta-Joycean and anti-Joycean paradigms of the investigation process in Kiš's short story "Mr Poppy Enjoys Himself" (1959) and in

²¹ Regarding relations between Joyce's "Ithaca" and the "Witness Interrogated" and "Criminal Investigation" chapters in Kiš's novel *Hourglass*, see Milivojević 2010: 153–164.

²² Cf. Bošković 2004: 45–131.

the novel *Hourglass* (1972) create important occasions in which certain characteristics of Joyce's prose have become inevitable points of reference for the (post)modern aspects of Kiš's poetics. At the same time, through the metanarrative and intertextual perspectives relating to Joyce's work, they demonstrate "poetic exile" from expected narrative structures. As can be seen in the example from the novel, the type of composition in *Hourglass*, based on the investigation process, was changed through the demythologization of the status of the investigation and the divinization of the investigative procedure, to the form of an investigation without investigating in the manner of postmodern discourse.

Some poetical changes following the creative reception of Joyce's work in Kiš's work represent literary exile from traditional genres, for example exile from the *Bildungsroman* and *Künstlerroman*.²³ The poetical contradictions of *Bildungsroman* in Serbian literature very often transform this genre into a novel about the development of the artist.²⁴ For that reason, on the metapoetic level of the genre, the creative reception of James Joyce's novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* in Serbian literature was analysed with reference to elements of novels of aesthetic theory, which, in the case of other novels about the artist, can be described as explicit or implicit novel-theories. Thus, creative answers to *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* in Serbian literature are also instances of "poetic exile" from the *Künstlerroman*, especially when a novel about the artist becomes a novel about the diegesis of an aesthetic theory or a "*Bildungsroman* of a literary biography" (Киш 2001: 7), a novel about the theory of genre revaluation (a possible example being Kiš's short novel *The Garret: A Satirical Poem*) or a novel about the genesis of the poetic conflict between modernism and postmodernism (from *The Attic* to *Hourglass* in the works of Kiš, especially in the parts of Kiš's *Family Circus* – from *Early Sorrows* to *Garden, Ashes* and *Hourglass*). This indicates a modernization of literature through poetic changes in literary and theoretic paradigms, "exile"

²³ For Joyce's creative revisions of some elements of those genres, see Wawrzycka 2017: 233-247.

²⁴ See Stević 2004: 51–52.

from traditional paradigms (narrative structures, genre concepts), as the result of the voluntarily literary exiles of authors including, among others, Petrović and Kiš, and their creative receptions of Joyce's prose.

After *controversial* discussions about postmodern methods applied in the book *A Tomb for Boris Davidovich* (1976) and accusations of epigonic treatment of his predecessors and of plagiarism, in an interview given in 1986, "after many a year frequenting various émigré circles in Paris" (Zorić 2005: 364), Kiš wrote that his position was that of a "voluntarily chosen", a "Joycean exile" (Kiš 2012: 162). From the first sentence in the short story "The Apatride" – "He arrived in Paris on 28 of May 1938" to the statement – "Paris ist eine endlich Chance ... Ja, ja. Endlich ..." in the same story, written in 26 fragments, about a "gentleman without a fatherland, an apatride, a cosmopolitan", Kiš developed an idea of language as the only fatherland (Kiš 1995: 203–219). Paris as a literary city and a conceptual metaphor had an important role in Petrović's and Kiš's work and underlined the fact that some key places for Serbian literature over the centuries had been Trieste, Budapest, Leipzig, Vienna, Halle, London, Rome and Paris, (in)voluntary chosen places for life and literary exile.²⁵ The fragment "The Land of Eternity" in Kiš's story "The Sow That Eats Her Farrow"²⁶ from the collection of short stories *A Tomb for Boris Davidovich*, with the creative reception of text *Joyce par lui-même* written by Jean Paris in France,²⁷ shows "a mode of circulation" of literary work through the constitutive relationships of "shadow canon, countercanon, and hypercanon", as David Damrosch defines them, wherein "the counter-canon is composed of the subaltern and contestatory voices of writers in less-commonly-taught languages and in minor literatures within great-power languages" (Damrosch 2009: 511):

²⁵ Cf. Jerkov 2012: 16–17.

²⁶ For allusions of the title of this short story to Joyce's novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and for some further possible connections relating to the name of the main character in this story, see Mecsóber 2013: 37–38.

²⁷ For the intertextual presence of Paris and other authors in Kiš's story, see Бошковић 2008: 113–122.

The first act of the tragedy, or comedy (in the scholastic sense of the word), whose main character is a certain Gould Verschoyle, begins as all earthly tragedies do: with birth. The rejected positivist formula of milieu and race can be applied to human beings to the same degree as to Flemish art. Thus the first act of the tragedy begins in Ireland, ‘the ultima Thule, the land on the other side of knowledge,’ as one of Dedalus’s doubles calls it; in Ireland, ‘the land of sadness, hunger, despair, and violence,’ according to another explorer, who is less inclined to myth and more to laborious earthy prose. However, in him too a certain lyrical quality is not in harmony with the cruelty of the region: ‘The ultimate step of the sunset, Ireland is the last land to see the fading of the day. Night has already fallen on Europe while the slanting rays of the sun still purple the fjords and wastelands in the West. But let the dark clouds form, let a star fall, and suddenly the island again becomes as in a legend, that distant place covered with fog and darkness, which for so long marked the boundary of the known world to navigators. And on the other side is a break: the dark sea in which the dead once found their land of eternity. Their black ships on shores with strange names testify to a time when travel had something metaphysical about it: they summon up dreams without shores, without return’ (Kiš 2008: 17–18).

This part of Kiš’s short story, “The Sow That Eats Her Farrow”, is a postmodern collection of Joycean texts. It is also an important example of “delineating the concept of world literature” (Damrosch 2009: 496) and the opportunity of its metatextual interpretation through the creative reception of James Joyce and texts regarding his oeuvre among other written works in foreign cultures. In Kiš’s works Joyce and Joycean texts clearly motivate “poetic exiles” in relation to the cultural and traditional canon in processes regarding the (post)modernization of prose. This raises an important question: can the power of “poetic exile” after the creative reception of one author mediate the canon or establish the canonization of works of national or world literature? Being in the literary exile of the creative reception of Joyce’s literary works, the aforementioned texts by Petrović and Kiš influenced the canon of Serbian literature through a modernization process seen as “poetic exile”

from the expected canon and from familiar theoretical paradigms. If the creative responses of Petrović and Kiš are original in showing something different in the process of modernization in Serbian literature following the creative reception of James Joyce's literary works, especially in improving "illuminating analyses of creative conjunctions of distant works" (Damrosch 2009: 513), their texts should probably be required reading in the growing comparative study of Joycean poetics. Future projects on the comparative study of poetic changes in literary paradigms after the creative reception of a great author of world literature in one national context should also be a means to investigate ways of mediating the canon, both in national and world literature. In this context, an analysis of the creative reception of Joyce's works in Serbian literature could be used as a stimulus for re-reading canons and creative responses after the reception of Joyce's works in other literatures. The creative response of one literature, like the examples in the works of Petrović and Kiš after the process of creative reception of Joyce's works, might influence the constitution of a typology of creative receptions of Joyce's works in world literature. Furthermore, if these responses are original and authentic, it might also contribute to the expansion and redefinition of the canonizing works of world literature in the (re)formation of the (post)modernist corpus.

Creative reception of (South) Slavic material in Joyce's works as "poetic exile" in the processes of modernization

Serbian writers have provided creative answers, introduced changes in poetic paradigms and marked a literary exile from a traditionally determined canon following the creative reception of Joyce. On the other hand, Joyce also creatively incorporated certain canonical aspects of the (South) Slavic literal and cultural context in his works including some typical words, stylistic devices and famous songs. The presence, creative reception or "poetic exile" of certain (South) Slavic elements in Joyce show that his understanding of (South) Slavic material changes and becomes poetically modernized in his works – from the deconstructing tension of the (pre)modern reality in *Stephen Hero* to achieving a constituent tension in the (post)modernist segments in *Finnegans*

Wake. It meanders from the impossibility of conceiving a border town (like Pola or Trieste)²⁸ as a comparatively safe space of discourse, where the position of the “minor” language²⁹ is represented as semi-colonized – “[...] the capable aggressions of the Magyars upon the Latin and Slav and Teutonic populations, greater than themselves in number, which are politically allied to them” (*SH* 62),³⁰ through uncertain attempts at reaching the establishment of a transnational position overcoming intolerance – ontologically – in the “Cyclops” episode: “*hoch, banzai, eljen, zivio, chinchin, polla kronia, hiphip, vive, Allah [...] ev-viva*” (*U* 12.600–601; italics in the original) to the complete “comparative safety” (*FW* 114.9) of the text of associated marks by toponyms, originating in minority languages and possibly referencing postcolonial relations: “Bulgarad” (*FW* 114.5), “Lubliner” (*FW* 339.31), “Djublian” (*FW* 340.6), “Belgradia” (*FW* 534.22).³¹ The process of “poetic exile” of (South) Slavic material from its usual, unmarked, canonical context into Joyce’s work, is constructed through a process of modernization in the literary “worldliness”³² of Joyce’s texts.

The “exilic” recontextualization of an old stylistic device, which usually contains questions and negative and positive responses, also known in some traditions as the Slavic antithesis, is in *Finnegans Wake* a transcultural aspect of the process of modernization found in Joyce’s work. Marked by this figure’s structure, the folk ballad “Hassan Aga’s Wife’s Lament” was translated into Italian by Alberto Fortis in 1774, into German by Goethe in 1778, into English by Sir Walter Scott in 1798, into French by Prosper Mérimée in 1827, and partially translated into Russian by Pushkin in 1835:

What’s so white upon yon verdant forest?

²⁸ See McCourt 2012: 305.

²⁹ See Radović 2013: 169, 262.

³⁰ For interpretation of this point, see Mecsnóber 2013: 29.

³¹ On these examples, see Skrabanek 1972: 66; Leeming 1977: 290–294; Engelhart 2002: 114, 127; McHugh 2006: 114, 339, 340, 534; Sandulescu 2012.

³² For a discussion of the concept of “worldliness”, see Bulson 2009: 139–140.

Is it snow, or is it swans assembled?
 Were it snow, it surely had been melted;
 Were it swans, long since they had departed.
 Lo! it is not swans, it is not snow there:
 'Tis the tent of Aga, Hassan Aga" (Bowring 1827: 52).

A variation of this type of structure, an "exilic" recontextualization of this stylistic device in Joyce's work, can be found at the beginning of *Finnegans Wake*:

Sir Tristram, violer d'amores, fir'over the short sea, had passencore rearrived from North Armorica on this side the scraggy isthmus of Europe Minor to wielderfight his penisolate war: **nor** had topsawyer's rocks by the stream Oconee exaggerated themselfe to Laurens County's gorgios while they went doublin their mumper all the time: **nor** avoice from afire bellowsed mishe mishe to tauftauf thuartpeatrick: **not** yet, though venissoon after, had a kidscad buttended a bland old isaac: **not** yet, though all's fair in vanessy, were sosie sesters wroth with twone nathandjoe. Rot a peck of pa's malt had Jhem or Shen brewed by arlight and rory end to the regginbrow was to be seen ringsome on the aquaface (*FW* 3.4–14; emphasis mine).

This "exilic" structural recontextualization of the figure, which is also frequently used in South Slavic epic poems, in *Finnegans Wake* evidences Joyce's interest in the literal, cultural, ethnographical, mythical, religious and anthropological peculiarities of (South) Slavic traditions, languages and writings. It demonstrates how Joyce's creative readings and receptions of the (South) Slavic material in *Finnegans Wake* often keep "world literature" from being "selectively worldly" (Spivak, in Spivak, Damrosch 2011: 478). This also gives space to a creative reception of some characteristic aspects of so-called "less-commonly-taught languages" and "minor literatures" (Damrosch 2009: 511).

Certain intertextual connections with the Serbian cultural heritage can also be gleaned from a possible allusion found in the passage "Eh, selo moy" in *Finnegans Wake* (*FW* 340.16). There were various

assumptions made about the relationship of this passage to “[...] *O Sole mio*; the Hebrew *yom*, day, backwards, the title of an opera, *Salomé*, by Richard Strauss, and the Hebrew name of Solomon as a contained anagram (Shelomo, the title of a rhapsody for cello and orchestra by Ernest Bloch” (Blish 1970: 39). Following on from this, Leeming, thanks to information provided by Stella Goldgart, came to a new conclusion about its relation to a song “Tamo daleko” [“There, far away”], known from the First World War (Leeming 1977: 295). A version of these verses “Tamo daleko, | daleko od mora | Tamo je selo moje, | tamo je Srbija” [“There, far away, | far away from the sea, | there is my village, | there is my Serbia”] was sung by Serbian soldiers in exile in Greece during the First World War and there is a chance that Joyce was aware of this fact (Leeming 1977: 295). The hypothesis that the segment “Eh, selo moy” (*FW* 340.16) might really originate from a song by exiled soldiers is also strengthened by the context of its position in *Finnegans Wake*. The “Butt and Taff” episode, which includes a great number of words of Slavic origin,³³ also contains an important reference in Taff’s previous sentence: “Oh day of rath! Ah, murther of mines! Eh, selo moy” (*FW* 340.16). In the first sentence “Oh day of rath!”, the pre-Slavic origin of the word “rath” [rat]³⁴ (*FW* 340.16) can be recognized, which might provide the proof of the origin of the words in the whole passage. At the same time, this can also indicate Joyce’s interest in the aforementioned exilic song.

If the (in)voluntarily exiles of certain Serbian authors created possibilities for various receptions of world literature and poetic answers which changed traditional paradigms, then does a creative reception of some elements from the (South) Slavic context in the works of Joyce or other authors of world literature create a different self-awareness of the canon in Serbian, (South) Slavic and world literature? It seems that the terms of creative reception, “poetic exile” and modernization of the canon could be incorporated as the basis of

³³ Cf. Engelhart 1999: 138.

³⁴ The word is written in the form in which it appears in contemporary Serbian.

interdisciplinary studies of Slavic literatures and parts of “world literature”, which “can help reframe comparative studies” (Damrosch, in Spivak, Damrosch 2011: 481). As is well known, during the very period “in which he was first developing his ideas on *Weltliteratur* in his conversations with Eckermann”, Goethe “was reading a Chinese novel, in French translation, and a collection of Serbian poetry, in German translation” (Damrosch 2009: 506). The purpose of this paper has also been to incorporate 20th century Serbian literature into the discussion of comparative studies, and to interpret Serbian literature through the complexity of the issues and problems in the modernization and postmodernization of prose. Following on from Goethe, Joyce’s creative reception of (South) Slavic material in his work, in addition to his own work being creatively received in other literatures and shifting the paradigms of “poetic exile” from the expected canon, makes this possible, and not only for Serbian literature.

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CONTRIBUTORS

Mina M. Đurić is Assistant Professor at the Department of Serbian Literature, University of Belgrade. She wrote her doctoral thesis on the modernization of 20th-century Serbian prose in relation to the creative reception of James Joyce's literary works. Her research focuses on comparative literature, interdisciplinary studies of contemporary Slavic literatures in the context of world literature and literary theory. Since 2009 she has published various papers in national and international conference proceedings and journals; she is a co-author of two books for high school and the editor of books about Vuk Stefanović Karadžić in English, Russian, French and German.

Annalisa Federici holds a PhD in Comparative Literature from the University of Perugia. Her main research areas are literary Modernism, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, formal aspects in fiction, and the relationship between writing and psychological processes. She is the author of the books *Il linguaggio e la realtà. La narrativa modernista di Virginia Woolf e James Joyce* (Morlacchi 2011) and *"In a Kind of Retrospective Arrangement": Essays on James Joyce and Memory* (Morlacchi 2016), as well as of a number of critical essays on Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, Samuel Beckett, Ford Madox Ford, Nathalie Sarraute and Michel Butor.

Gabriele Frasca, born in Naples in 1957, is an eclectic writer, author of essays, novels, poetry and plays. His recent critical essays include: *Joycity. Joyce con MacLuhan e Lacan* (Naples 2013), *Lo spopolatoio. Beckett con Dante e Cantor* (Naples 2014), *La letteratura nel reticolo mediale. La lettera che muore seconda edizione* (Milan 2015), *Il rovescio d'autore. Letteratura e studi letterari al tramonto dell'età della carta* (Naples 2016) and *Dziga Vertov. Un colpo d'occhio all'ascolto del mondo* (Turin 2018). He teaches Comparative Literature and Comparative Media at the University of Salerno. He has translated numerous works by Samuel Beckett into Italian.

Laura Gibbs recently completed a Master's degree in Comparative Literature and Criticism at Goldsmiths, University of London. She received a Bachelor's in English at Goldsmiths in 2017 and for the past year has been running a *Finnegans Wake* reading group at the university. Her MA thesis focused on Joyce's use of metaphysics in the 'Night Lesson' of *Finnegans Wake*, paying specific attention to the roles of René Descartes and Giambattista Vico through the dialectic between mathematics and imagination. Aside from her focus on Joyce studies, her research

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