

## ALL THAT JOYCE

(ур. Зоран Пауновић, *Трајовима Уликса: огјеци сиваралаишйва Џејмса Џојса у српској књижевности*, Српска академија наука и уметности, огранак САНУ у Новом Саду, 2023, 128 стр.)\*

[edited by Zoran Paunović, *Trails of Ulysses: Echoes of James Joyce's Work in Serbian Literature*, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Branch of SASA in Novi Sad, 2023, 128 pages]

Among the literary anniversaries in 2022, the centenary of Joyce's *Ulysses* stands out in particular. On February 2<sup>nd</sup> of that year, a full century passed since the publication of the first complete edition of one of the most influential novels of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This significant literary anniversary in the Serbian cultural context was marked by a series of events: "Bloomsday" celebrations at the Faculty of Philology at the University of Belgrade, literary evenings, and television programs dedicated to *Ulysses*, as well as the publication of Novica Milić's book *100 Odiseja (i noć više)*. The most relevant academic contribution to the celebration of this anniversary was the roundtable "Trails of Ulysses: Echoes of James Joyce's Work in Serbian Literature", held on "Bloomsday" in the ceremonial hall of the SASA Branch in Novi Sad.

A collected volume emerged from these presentations, edited by Zoran Paunović, Corresponding Member of SASA and professor at the University of Novi Sad. Paunović was the first to translate *Ulysses* into Serbian<sup>1</sup>. The first translation in the Serbo-Croatian cultural context, by Zlatko Gorjan in 1957, was published in a pocket edition format, representing a distinctive interpretation of Joyce's novel. At present, Paunović's translation, which also incorporates Joyce's subsequent corrections to the text, is the most widely available among Serbian readers, and its value can be compared to the existing Croatian translations.

The first text in the volume, titled "The Topography of Mentality and Encyclopedic Narration in *Oda manjem zlu* by Voja Čolanović: A Possible Joyce in Belgrade 2002" was written by Vladislava Gordić Petković. The author questions which aspects of Serbian literature reflect the nature of Joyce's text, assimilate his artistic intentions,

---

\* The article was written as part of the research work of the scientific organization under Agreement No. 451-03-136/2025-03, concluded with the Ministry of Science, Technological Development, and Innovation of the Republic of Serbia on January 27, 2025.

1 The inaugural edition of the translation dates back to 2001.

and replicate his narrative maneuvers. She lists numerous authors whose works echo *Ulysses* and Joyce's life, while focusing her analysis on Voja Čolanović's last novel, *Oda manjem zlu* (2011). Čolanović is viewed as a "follower and practitioner of Joyce's narrative maneuvers". It is emphasized that, in his final work, he discreetly paid tribute to Joyce. The authors recognized encyclopedism as one of the key features of Čolanović's work, that is interpreted through a postmodern lens. Parallels between *Ulysses* and *Oda manjem zlu* are noticed in their narrative strategies, both employing auto(ironic) endeavors to portray the totality of the world and human knowledge, particularly concerning linguistic possibilities, as well as in the Belgrade chronotope, corporeal motifs, resemblances to Joyce's characters, and other key aspects. The primary contribution of the text lies in emphasizing the possibility of Joyce's influence on the secondary currents of contemporary Serbian prose.

Zoran Paunović's essay, "Joyce and Kiš: The Inevitability of Autobiography", begins by proposing that every text, to some degree, carries an autobiographical dimension. Paunović emphasizes the significance of autobiographical material in the works of both the Serbian and Irish writer, identifying the main poetic links between Kiš and Joyce in their "constant reckoning with their own biographies": in the ironic treatment of sentimentality, the ambivalent attitude toward their homeland, and the perception of the writer as an apatriote. The comparison of the biographies and poetics of the two authors begins with an analysis of their formative years: Kiš's upbringing in Cetinje (Montenegro) and Joyce's in Dublin. Paunović draws attention to family circumstances and formal education as important factors in their maturation. In the case of Kiš, autobiographical elements are explored in *Family Circus*, particularly in *The Street of Wild Chestnuts* from *Early Sorrows* (1970). An analogous approach is adopted in the study of Joyce's work, analyzing the transformation of life experience in *Chamber Music* (1907), as well as in the short stories "An Encounter" and "Ivy Day in the Committee Room" from *Dubliners* (1914), *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), and *Ulysses*. Paunović thus reveals the profound connections between the biographies and poetics of both authors. This text offers a comprehensive introduction to the relationship between the poetics of Danilo Kiš and James Joyce, a subject that has been more extensively examined in the works of Paunović and other scholars.

Parallels between the works of James Joyce and Danilo Kiš are also examined in the paper "The Sand Odysseus" by Novica Milić. Milić begins his passionate presentation with the so-called *filioque* question, which concerns the fundamental doctrines of Christianity and the schism between Western and Eastern Christianity. This theological concept is analyzed through the sixth chapter of *Ulysses*, which centers around a discussion of Shakespeare and Hamlet, set in the National Library in Dublin. Milić views the question of the Spirit and the Son in a broad context, including religion, culture, psychoanalysis, history, aesthetics, etc. In the second part of the essay, he discusses the comparative relationships between Joyce's and Kiš's works, particularly focusing on the catechism technique in *Ulysses*, which the author recognizes as an influence in Kiš's *Hourglass* (1972). Novica Milić's text lacks a coherent scholarly framework; however, it undeniably presents thought-provoking insights into the comparative relationships established. The insights would hold greater significance if they were more fully

developed, particularly if they engaged more comprehensively with the existing, especially international, reception of Joyce's work.

In his essay "Two Encounters with Joyce in Contemporary Serbian Prose", Marko Avramović accentuates the influence of Anglo-phone culture, including popular culture, on Serbian literature in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, particularly on the authors of the so-called young Serbian prose. He pays special attention to the "cultural-historical-mythical landscape" in Velikić's novel *Via Pula* (1988), in which James Joyce occupies an important place. Avramović also analyzes Velikić's novel *Severni zid* (1995), in which the figure of Joyce brings up the theme of emigration, notably relevant in the context of Yugoslav reality during the 1990s. The second part of the text focuses on the novels *Merilin čita Uliksa* (1988) and *Očevina* (2013) by Milenko Pajić. The former is inspired by photographs of Marilyn Monroe by Eve Arnold, representing examples of creative reception of Joyce's work, while in the novel *Očevina*, Joyce is present through the structure of a one-day narrative and numerous parallels with the figure of Odysseus. Avramović interprets these works of Serbian authors as forms of interpretation of *Ulysses* and Joyce's life, also pointing out the ways in which the Adriatic coast influenced Joyce's work. He concludes that, much like in various other cultures, Joyce has emerged as a prominent figure in both our literary tradition and the broader cultural and popular discourse. The text is an ambitious contribution that examines the comparative relationships within a broad literary and cultural-historical context.

Vladan Bajčeta contributed to the volume with his text "Is There an End to Stream of Consciousness and Where Are the Boundaries of Metanarrativity? The Dialogue with Joyce, Breton, and the Postmodern Legacy in *Pisac izdaleka* by Vladan Matijević". The paper mentions the genesis of the stream of consciousness concept, which gained widespread recognition in Western European literature during the 1920s. The author places significant value on the literary accomplishments of Matijević's novel, critically engaging with previous interpretations and highlighting intertextual connections to the literary legacy. Special emphasis is placed on the potential connection with Joyce and Breton, as well as on aspects of metanarrativity in the novel. Bajčeta asserts that the "conversation with Joyce"—particularly regarding the Chapter 18 of *Ulysses*—is embedded in Matijević's novel, "whether intentionally or entirely inadvertently". He stresses that Matijević distances himself from experimental literature, steering prose back toward a more traditional path—a shift that situates *Pisac izdaleka* within the poetic transformations of Serbian literature in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In the text "Can Ulysses be Tamed, or How Did Rastko Petrović Read Joyce's Novel?", Predrag Petrović deepens his observations on Joyce's influence on Rastko Petrović, showing that *The Sixth Day* is "one of the few works that can be discussed in the context of the most significant achievements of high modernism—Joyce's linguistic and narrative experiment". The main contribution of the text lies in elaborating the ways in which Rastko Petrović, in his works, aligns with the spirit of European literary currents of his time. Petrović highlights the typological parallels between *Ulysses* and *Revelation* (1922), examines the impact of Joyce's novel on the Serbian-Croatian cultural space shortly after its publication, explores Rastko's lucid essayistic insights into contemporary literature, emphasizing that his reading of *Ulysses* marked a turning point in his writing.

The paper addresses poetic similarities between *Ljudi govore* and Joyce's legacy, while also analyzing Rastko Petrović's most significant novel in the context of Joyce's influences, with a focus on mythical elements as well as motifs of the body and birth.

The final contribution in the volume is the study "How Does Contemporary Serbian and World Literature Read Joyce Today?", written by Mina Đurić, who has devoted her doctoral dissertation (2017) and other researches to the reception of Joyce's writing in Serbian and (South) Slavic literature. This paper explores the impact of Joyce's work on 21st-century Serbian, (South) Slavic, global literature, and contemporary theoretical thought. It poses several questions about Joyce's status and legacy in contemporary culture, examining his influence on Nobel laureates of the new millennium and his creative reception in Irish literature. The author highlights Joyce's influence on authors such as Jhumpa Lahiri, Hasan Blasim, and, particularly, Serbian and (South) Slavic writers like David Albahari, Dragan Velikić, Dubravka Ugrešić, Vesna Goldsworthy, Vladimir Tabašević, Lana Bastašić, Antun Šoljan, Boris Senker, Novica Milić, Dragan Stojanović, Radomir Konstantinović, Drago Jančar, etc. The study, which resembles a sketch of a monographic work, provides insights on the interdisciplinary reception of Joyce's work as well.

Alongside the existentialist and absurdist currents, the Joyce paradigm stands as one of the most significant influences on 20th-century Western literature. While these two movements differ considerably, they share common spiritual and historical roots, collectively shaping the emergence of postmodernism. The importance of James Joyce's literary legacy for subsequent generations is emphatically underscored throughout the volume *Trails of Ulysses: Echoes of James Joyce's Work in Serbian Literature*, edited by Professor Zoran Paunović. This volume offers a significant comparative contribution, challenging the long-held perception of Joyce's works as hermetic. His writings reveal profound connections with many authors of the latter half of the 20th century, and the far-reaching impact of his encyclopedic view of language continues to resonate throughout the 21st century. The papers in this volume raise new questions about the depth and breadth of Joyce's influence. To sum up, they affirm the words of the most celebrated Irishman: Joyce infused his work with poetic enigmas and riddles, ensuring that his writing will remain a subject of scholarly inquiry and interpretation for decades and centuries to come.

Magda G. MILIKIĆ\*

---

\* Institute of Serbian Culture Priština – Leposavić, ORCID 0000-0002-5571-0937, magdamilic95@gmail.com