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Joyce and the South Slavs*

Among the books belonging to the personal library of James Joyce, as recorded by Thomas E. Connolly,¹ there was a collection of essays entitled *Aspects of Modernism, From Wilde to Pirandello*,² by Janko Lavrin, a Slovene who had early settled in England. Joyce's copy was cut only at the pages covering the chapters on d'Annunzio, on Pirandello, and the first part of a chapter bearing the heading "The Conscience of a Small Nation — on Ivan Cankar".

On the pages that, we can assume, Joyce read, the Slovene author developed a subject very familiar to the Irishman:

Things are.... difficult when a nation has dwindled to a size which does not secure it either sufficient means for the present, or a guarantee for the future. On the other hand, it is all the more remarkable when such a nation can show cultural achievements quite out of proportion with its size.

If ever an author had forged the uncreated conscience of his race it was Ivan Cankar, but Joyce was not tempted to continue beyond the point at which Lavrin declared that Cankar "cleared the air and forced the younger generation to open their eyes to the conditions around them". On a preceding page, however, he had encountered the following passage which could have hardly failed to evoke bitter analogies:

The smallness of the national body itself seems to be a drag upon its courage and vitality. It saps the will, and demoralizes sooner or later even potentially strong men, who are compelled

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¹ Thomas E. Connolly, *The Personal Library of James Joyce, A Descriptive Bibliography*; from *The University of Buffalo Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 1, April 1955, p. 24.

² London, 1935. Janko Lavrin is Professor Emeritus of Russian Literature in the University of Nottingham, and lives in London.

to witness the farcical party struggles on the one hand, and rancorous servility, backbiting, envy and intrigue on the other.

It is unnecessary to evoke Stephen Dedalus's indictments of his own country; let us merely recall Joyce's letter to Nora inviting her to depart with him — though, admittedly, his quarrel with his environment seems to be turning around a personal issue:

(Last night) ... It seemed to me that I was fighting a battle with every religious and social force in Ireland for you and that I had nothing to rely on but myself. There is no life here — no naturalness or honesty. People live together in the same houses all their lives and at the end they are as far apart as ever.³

It is odd that his first stop of some permanence was to be a remote point on the opposite margin of Europe, for the location of which Joyce cannot think of a more precise description than "on the Adriatic coast down towards Turkey"⁴. The difficulties of orientation in this area are symbolically illustrated by the anecdote of the young couple's mistake on the train from Zürich to Trieste. According to Gorman's biography, they got off seven hours too early, only to discover that they were in Ljubljana,⁵ while Gianni Pinguentini, recounting and embroidering the same event at some length, asserts, without quoting his sources, that they had overslept and that they left the station in — Verona.⁶

The new-fledged language teacher was not too accurate in describing the linguistic situation in Pola: "They speak ... Italian, German (the official language) and Slav".⁷ He could have said just as well: "Romance, Teutonic, and Slav", since a language called Slav does not exist. What Joyce heard spoken around him was actually Croatian.

The majority of Pola's middle class population was Italian, and the local administration did not, at the time, allow the use of Croatian in offices or schools, or indeed on graveyard monuments.⁸ But the language spoken in the surrounding villages, and in the houses of a high percentage of the workingmen of Pola itself, was Croatian. Among the skilled workers in the shipyard about one half consisted of Croats and Slovenes.^{8a}

3. *Letters of James Joyce*, Vol. II, ed. by Richard Ellmann, London, 1966, p. 53.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

⁵ Herbert Gorman, *James Joyce*, a Definitive Biography, London, 1943³, p. 131.

⁶ Gianni Pinguentini, *James Joyce in Italia*, Verona, 1963, p. 22.

⁷ *Letters II*, p. 69.

⁸ Mate Balota, *Puna je Pula*, Zagreb, 1960², p. 77.

^{8a} *Ibid.*, p. 71.

Under these circumstances, the Croatian newspaper *Naša sloga* was entirely engaged in a narrowly political battle for elementary national rights. However, the announcements of the newly established Berlitz School of Languages appearing in the *Giornaletto di Pola* from the 7th September 1904 were read by potential students irrespectively of their origin, including the officers of the Austro-Hungarian navy in this principal naval base and huge arsenal of the Imperial and Royal Fleet at the tip of the Istrian peninsula. The School was first to open on October 1, but eventually, judging by the announcements in the *Giornaletto*, the courses did not start before the 7th November. Of all the foreign teachers only James A. Joyce B. A. was honoured by a special announcement that he had arrived in Pola.

The four months spent there laid an important pattern for Joyce's future life. His letters home are frequent and lengthy enough to suggest that he wrote on what really occupied his mind. We find practically no mention of Joyce's teaching practice and of his pupils — civilians or soldiers, men or women — no noticeable awareness of the rather striking and well-preserved monuments of classical antiquity, characteristic for the Pola scene even today. Nor are there traces of any attempt to get to know or understand the people who he notices as part of a screen that surrounds him: "Pola is a back-of-God-speed place — a naval Siberia — 37 men o'war in the harbour, swarming with faded uniforms. Istria is a long boring place wedged into the Adriatic peopled by ignorant Slavs who wear little red caps and colossal breeches".⁹ It is hardly surprising that he does not distinguish the native rural costume from the headwear of immigrant workers from Dalmatia, when one considers his complete indifference to the human and historical issues shaping his new environment, beyond a rather conventional and abstract condemnation of its political framework:

I hate this Catholic country with its hundred races and thousand languages, governed by a parliament which can transact no business and sits for a week at the most and by the most physically corrupt royal house in Europe.¹⁰

What really concerns Joyce in Pola is *himself* as the creator and subject of a manifold seething aesthetic activity. His notes on the apprehension of Beauty, his chapters for a novel on his own immediate past, his immense reading of European and Irish fiction, his persistent concern for details

⁹ *Letters of James Joyce*, edited by Stuart Gilbert, London, 1957, p. 57.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

from the Dublin literary scene — these make up the real life of Joyce in Pola, as they will, later, and embodied on stylistically different levels, form the content of his existence in Trieste, Zürich, and Paris.

Another, and powerful, concern, is of course Nora's position in what she finds a "queer old place",¹¹ the chill she feels in their first lodgings without a stove, the anguish and wonder of mutual adaptation of two young sensitive creatures in their new union. Years later he will remind her of "a certain word"¹² which she used in the sexual exultation of their first night in Pola. But his "worse than solitude of the intellect"¹³ is probably the main mark of his life in Via Giulia 2. Six years before, in a building on the other side of the street, roughly opposite Joyce's, his Slovene counterpart, Ivan Cankar, who had come to the same city in search of a job, was cursing the boredom of that "deserted Pola, forgotten by God and men"¹⁴ in terms similar to Joyce's. The series of letters from Joyce's new dwelling in Via Medolino 7 end with his recognizing his condition as that of a "voluntary exile".¹⁵

Here we should perhaps try to correct a misapprehension about the location of Joyce's second lodgings in Pola. It is said that Via Medolino 7 is nowadays no. 1 in the same street, and in Volume Two of Joyce's letters there is a photo¹⁶ of the southern end of that longish building in the foreground taken before the extreme part of it (consisting of a groundfloor with a terrace over it) had been pulled down. The present occupants of this end show it with amused pride to Joycean pilgrims. If one examines the urban map of pre-1914 Pola and the books in the land-registry one finds that what is now (in Italian) Via Medolino 1 used to have three numbers (Via Medolino 5, 7, and 9). Consequently, Joyce's dwelling must have been not in the southern, but in the middle part of the building. That part has two staircases, but so far it has not been possible to ascertain on which of them the Joyces lived. Theoretically it should still be possible to find this out, unless one's sense for relevance prevents one from trying. Those rare octogenarians who, with luck, one encounters in the streets of Pola, and who maintain they still remember the stiff-looking »Englishman« with a handsome young woman with auburn hair at his side, are willing to volunteer details. Persuasively

¹¹ *Letters* II, p. 78.

¹² *Letters* II, p.243.

¹³ *Letters* II, p. 80.

¹⁴ Quoted by Tatjana Arambašin in "Najljepša ljubavna pisma iz te 'Od Boga i ljudi zaboravljene Pule'", *Istarski mozaik*, Pula, No. 6, 1967. p. 337.

¹⁵ *Letters* II, p. 54.

¹⁶ Opposite p. 81.

enough, one of them, Nino Giorgiesi, recalls trying vainly, with other boys, to engage the new teacher of English in conversation near his dwelling, into which he more frequently entered from the Via Campomarzo side (today Lenin's Street), than from the parallel Via Medolino.

Of the few people with whom Joyce kept company in Pola, Professor Ellmann's informants for his biography were A. Francini Bruni and Amalija Globočnik. Before her death a few years ago, in Yugoslavia there was more than one interview with Miss Globočnik, a Slovene woman who was secretary in the Berlitz school and who taught Croatian there. One of her pupils, to whom she gave lessons in his home,¹⁷ was Commander Miklos Horthy, the future admiral and later regent of inter-war Hungary. Joyce nowhere speaks about Horthy, nor does Horthy mention him in his autobiography, and there is no evidence for the story that Joyce knew and taught Horthy in Pola.

Apart from what Professor Ellmann has recorded, Miss Globočnik says that Joyce liked the company of navy officers who he met at the school — perhaps he felt like a secret sharer in their Ulyssean fortune? — and she mentions his visits to the Croatian National Hall where he enjoyed watching the navy officers dancing, and occasionally singing with them, but Miss Globočnik never saw him dance himself.¹⁸ Many of the officers in Pola were Croats, Czechs, Serbs, etc. — Slavs from different parts of the Empire. In a letter to Stanislaus, Joyce wrote of a pleasant trip to the island of Brioni with Nora, Miss Globočnik and the second English teacher Eyers, and his statement that "every little feast is a holiday in this country"¹⁹ should be adopted by the advertising agents for the tourist trade in Istria. Even though the present international fame of Brioni is not connected with the goat cheese which Joyce enjoyed there! The "little Fräulein",²⁰ as Joyce wrote to his aunt Josephine, was the only woman with whom Nora associated in Pola, though her interest in the young couple, also on the evidence of her own delicate interpretation of half a century

¹⁷ Interview with Miss Globočnik's daughter Dragica, November 1970.

¹⁸ From the manuscript by Mr. Vladimir Mirković, who talked several times to Miss Globočnik and published parts of their conversation in *Novine mladih*, Zagreb, 23. I 1954 (XIII, 3), p. 7; *Nedeljne informativne novine*, Beograd, 28. II 1954 (IV, 165); *Globus*, Zagreb, No. 28, 1960, p. 43. E. Opasi in »Džems Džojcs u Puli«, *Arena*, Zagreb, No. 102, 7. XII 1962, p. 6, quotes interviews with several old people in Pola, among which Mato Božac talks of Joyce sitting at the piano and singing in the National Hall.

¹⁹ *Letters* II, p. 79.

²⁰ *Letters* (ed. Gilbert), p. 57.

later, seems to have been mainly provoked by Joyce. "She is a melancholy little Androgyne and very sentimental with me",²¹ wrote Jim to Stannie, adding, typically for his age of 22 and the Joycean self-assured complacency: "I daresay there is something in me which interests women". Miss Globočnik continued to see the Joyces in Trieste, where she worked in a Czech bank, but not for very long.

Much of his leisure time in Pola Joyce seems to have spent in a café. Unfortunately, the Miramare, his daily haunt, is today a rather dilapidated building, facing the sea opposite the new shipyards, no trace of the *Gemütlichkeit* of Austrian-type cafés left, and housing instead offices of some commercial firms and shipping agencies.

From one of Joyce's letters we learn of a visit to the bioscope. From November to January the *Giornaleto* carried detailed announcements of performances in the Bioscopio Elettrico, subtitled "Teatro di rappresentazioni sensazionali al vivo, della piu perfetta illusione. Ultima creazione del rinomato inventore Th. Alvar (sic) Edison".²² The eleven programs included comical and exotic items as well as recent scenes from the Russo-Japanese war. Even this must have provided Joyce with higher stimulus than the arrival in Pola of "Il Polo Nord e i suoi abitanti",²³ to be displayed on the Piazza Verdi, behind the market — that is to say, a stone's throw from the window of Joyce's later lodgings, under which he could daily see furrow-faced fishermen unload their catch, assisted by women in black dresses.

On February 28th Joyce informed Stanislaus that he had been transferred to Trieste and was leaving on Sunday. He gives no reasons for this removal. On the information of Francini Bruni Ellmann suggests that "the Austrians having discovered an espionage ring . . . decided to expel all aliens from the city".²⁴ This information does not appear to be correct. Trying to find proof for it, in the Kriegsarchiv in Vienna I came across an indirect refutation of the assertion that such a general expulsion had taken place. In a letter of the 13th April 1905 the Ministry of Interior informs the Marine Section of the Ministry of War that two Italian citizens, the journalist Piva and his mistress Oda Montanari, responsible for anti-Austrian and social-democratic agitation, are under surveillance, and that they will be expelled should they renew their activity.²⁵ Joyce himself,

²¹ *Letters II*, p. 75.

²² E. g. *Il Giornaleto di Pola*, of 6th January 1905.

²³ *Ibid.*, of 19th December 1904.

²⁴ Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce*, New York, 1959, p. 201.

²⁵ K. A. Wien, K. M. M. S. P. K. 1905 XV-3/14. I wish to thank Dr. Walter Wagner for his kind help.

earlier, in one of his first letters from Pola (10th November) refers to the disturbance in Pola after the Innsbruck riots²⁶ (directed against students of Italian nationality), which took place in Pola a few days after his arrival and, as we know from sources in the Kriegsarchiv, involving the above mentioned couple. It therefore seems impossible that a general expulsion of aliens had been ordered, for it is curious to think that Italian citizens guilty of disturbance should have been allowed to stay in Pola, and a person like Joyce obliged to leave. If he really associated with naval officers, as Miss Globočnik says, it is possible that the Navy, in Austro-Hungary's chief war basis, was particularly sensitive towards this British subject. Perhaps an individual expulsion from the city took place (involving also his colleague and boss Francini Bruni) — discretely, without much fuss on either side?

There are certainly no indications that the Berlitz school required the transfer of an English teacher from Pola, as one might infer from Joyce's letter of February 28th and from Gorman's statement that "early in March 1905, Joyce was recalled to Trieste where a position similar to the one he held in Pola awaited him...".²⁷ Five times in the month before and eight times in the month after Joyce's departure, the Berlitz school in Pola advertised new courses in all languages, indicating that it could now take 160 pupils (as against the planned 62 in earlier advertisements, later increased to 80).

To live in Trieste did not meet Joyce's earlier wish to go to Italy and leave the hated Empire,²⁸ but it was a livelier place than Pola. Over the years it allowed him, among other things, to come in touch with a variety of persons from all social strata and a range of nationalities. The expansion of the Trieste harbour in Austria-Hungary caused the city to absorb many suburbs populated mostly by Slovenes; and many individuals from more distant Slav areas, including Montenegrins and Serbs, as well as Croats from Dalmatia and from the neighbouring Istria, contributed to its development. In Joyce's time there were over 200 cultural and economic unions and clubs of Slovenes and Croats in Trieste,²⁹ and Slav capital in banking, shipbuilding, wholesale and property was considerable.³⁰ The

²⁶ *Letters* II, p. 69.

²⁷ Gorman, o. c., p. 142.

²⁸ *Letters* (ed. Gilbert), p. 57.

²⁹ Ivo Mihovilović, *Trst, Etnografski i ekonomski prikaz*, Zagreb, 1946, pp. 29—35; cf. Virginio Gayda: *L'Italia d'oltre confine*, 1914, pp. 83—88.

³⁰ Vladimir Murko, "Vloga posameznih narodnosti v gospodarski zgodovini Trsta", *Ekonomska revija*, Ljubljana, 1953, No. 5—6. pp. 267—278.

city authorities did not permit Slavs to have their own official schools, so many Slovenes attended German schools, and private Slovene and Croatian organizations, often religious ones, established a number of educational institutions.

In talking about Joyce's connections with the Slavs in Trieste one must, however, distinguish those that had been, sometimes for generations, culturally assimilated to the Italian tradition and language, from those who had kept and were sometimes actively committed to maintaining their national identity. Count Tripcovich and Joyce's pupil and friend, the lawyer Nicoló Vidacovich, with whom he translated the first version of Yeats's *Princess Cathleen*, belonged to the first group. Nevertheless, Professor Ellmann points out not only that the four small businessmen with whom Joyce launched his bizzare project of trying to establish a cinematographic chain in Ireland were Slovenes, but also that that was the reason why Joyce got Vidacovich, "of the same racial origin",³¹ to organize a meeting with them. As we remember, Vidacovich also drew up the contract between the four and Joyce.

Among Joyce's pupils in the Berlitz school there were Slovenes who were later engaged in issues of national significance. One of them was Dr. Josip Wilfan,³² a lawyer and leading political figure among the Trieste Slovenes and after the war one of Trieste's M. P.'s in the Italian Parliament in Rome. Working in his office was another young lawyer, Dr. Boris Furlan, whose intellectual conversations with Joyce are illustrated in the Ellmann biography.³³ It is a pity that their relationship was interrupted by the war, as a contact with this man might have conceivably affected Joyce's philosophical curiosity. Furlan's main interest was philosophy, and he later published studies of Kant, Croce and Massaryk. He was intending to accept a position in the University of Bologna,³⁴ but because of his nationalist activities he had to flee from the Fascists and escaped to Yugoslavia. There, at Ljubljana, he became Professor of the Philosophy and the Encyclopaedia of Law.

One of Joyce's students at the Scuola Superiore di Commercio in 1919—20, Dr Lojze Berce, who is now the agile editor of the Slovene newspaper *Gospodarstvo*, published in Trieste, wrote in 1949 a lively account of the experience of having Joyce for one's English teacher (in the Trieste Slovene

³¹ Ellman, o. c., p. 311.

³² Information from Dr. Wilfan's son, Dr. Jože Vilfan.

³³ Ellmann, pp. 352—3, see also p. 391.

³⁴ Information from Dr. Francesco Toncic.

review *Razgledi*).³⁵ He reproduced the gist of it in his conversation with Professor Ellmann (as we have it in Ellmann's book), but further observations of his ought to be used by whoever will one day write a study on the sorry (or "trieste") subject of "Joyce as a pedagogue". Anyway, Dr. Berce's colleagues Vladimir Goljevšek and Ivan Kranjc³⁶ became figures of some importance in the commercial life of Yugoslavia: why not imagine that Joyce's prodding, however gentle, contributed to their command of English, essential for efficiency in business? A university professor of Economics at Ljubljana and Maribor, Franjo Perić, remembers his classes under Joyce in 1914, for which however he never got his credits, because the schoolyear was terminated too early by a fight between Slovene and Italian students...³⁷

Some years ago, Stanko Paštrović, an official of the Yugoslav Railways Board, saw a familiar face looking at him from a picture in a newspaper. "Why, I know that man from somewhere", he said to himself. "Indeed, James Joyce, of course — my teacher of English in Trieste!". Mr. Paštrović was greatly surprised to learn from the newspaper article that Mr. Joyce had become the writer who revolutionized world literature in this century. Entirely innocent of highbrow reading, Mr. Paštrović graphically remembers Joyce's dress, his facial expression, his behaviour in class, even — if this is not a mere boast — that Joyce once praised his English pronunciation. He was not very keen on teaching, tried to appear phlegmatic, but seemed occasionally to be bursting inside, nervously walking with large steps among the benches. To the exasperation of many pupils he scrupulously adhered to the direct method and did not allow the intrusion of Italian. He was annoyed by the Triestine mispronunciation of "s" as "sh". In an early lesson he cut a cigarette open with the words "This is tobacco", which got distorted into "Žish ish te beco", sounding like the Triestine word for the children's game "Catch", or, with a slight modification, "Something's itching you!". "Te beco" was clamorously repeated by all the other youngsters — but Joyce, realizing the pun, placidly accepted it with a smile.³⁸

³⁵ Lojze Berce, "James Joyce v Trstu", *Razgledi* IV, 1949, No. 8—9, pp. 337—343 (especially 337—8).

³⁶ Interview with Dr. Berce, February 1971.

³⁷ Interview with Professor Perić, January 1971.

³⁸ Mr Paštrović's anecdote is registered in *Vjesnik*, Zagreb, 3. VII 1966, p. 20 ("Zagrepečanin — đak Jamesa Joycea", signed A. M.). I interviewed him in January 1971; he suddenly died early in March, at the age of 70. He maintained to have been Joyce's pupil in a secondary school(!) in 1914—15. It is most unlikely that Paštrović ever read Joyce or any full account of his personality, and his oral description of Joyce's behaviour was so vivid and so characteristic of Joyce, that I believe that he had really been his pupil. But in what institution?

Another Croat, a private pupil of Joyce's, Alois Skrivanich, was one of Joyce's important sources of information about the corruptions and distortions of Slovene and Croatian words in the Triestine melting pot. One of these might have been "jojce" (egg), mentioned by Ellmann,³⁹ the origin of which Ellmann mistakenly attributes to the Czech language. It gave rise to the typical Joycean superstition of finding in it a favourite augury for his sister Eileen Joyce on her marriage — the egg standing for life and fertility. Skrivanich, a gay young man about town, as Dr. Stelio Crise kindly informs me, was killed in the Carpathians, early in the war; but Joyce, if he did not immortalize him, at least introduced his name, with a slight modification, into *Finnegans Wake*: "As often as I think of that unbloody housewarmer, Shem Skrivenitch, always cutting my phrase to please his phrase, bogorror, I declare I get the jawache!"⁴⁰ This is obviously an allusion to the scribbling of Shem, but his "housewarmer" qualities are also suggested by his improvised surname, if the reader is aware of the Slovene and Croatian meaning of "skriven" (hidden). What is more, the name of the unbloody (!?!) phrase-lover Skrivanich is also hidden here. The same linguistic context is amplified by "bogorror" — Bog being God, whatever error or intuitive guessing by Joyce may have been present in his scanty attempts at appropriating the vocabulary of the Brudo Slavs.⁴¹ I have found only one such word in the census of *Ulysses*, namely "živio", and it appears "in a medley of cries" in various languages: "hoch, banzai, eljen, zivio, chinchin, polla kronia, hiphip, vive, Allah",⁴² all meaning "cheers" or "long live". In *Finnegans Wake*, apart from the plural form "zivios", the river Sava deservedly contributes to the Anna Livia section⁴³ — but other rare fish of the same race in the Joycean stream are waiting for a more patient angler than the writer of this paper professes to be.

Joyce's use of Slav languages was indeed very small. Francini Bruni rightly denies the story that Joyce knew 17 languages.⁴⁴ There is no evidence that he even knew Russian, beyond a few expressions. His awareness of Slav cultures and history in general was slight, and the only South Slav artist who seems ever to have caught his attention was

³⁹ Ellmann, p. 396.

⁴⁰ *Finnegans Wake*, London, 1957^e, p. 423.

⁴¹ I hope that this is a forgivable adaptation from: "With Bro Cahills and Fran Czeschs and Bruda Pszths and Brat Slavos" (*Finnegans Wake*, London, 1957, pp. 423—4).

⁴² *Ulysses*, The Modern Library edition, 1946?, p. 303.

⁴³ *Finnegans Wake*, p. 205 (cf. "Save", p. 208).

⁴⁴ Alessandro Francini Bruni, "Ricordi su James Joyce", *Nuova antologia*, Anno 82, Settembre 1947, Fasc. 1761, p. 78.

Ivan Meštrović. In his 1912 lecture on Blake, Joyce stresses Blake's mysticism, but does not seem to be impressed by the artist's creation of a mythical totality in which his insights were embodied. On the other hand, he rightly stresses Michelangelo's influence upon Blake, "the importance of the pure, clean line that evokes and creates the figure on the background of the uncreated void".⁴⁵ Meštrović shares all these qualities with the Renaissance master, whose impact can be discerned in the bold energy of Meštrović's monumental compositions. And especially in the gigantic figures which, like Blake's, make part of a mythical interpretation of the moral essence of their nation's history. But the three framed photos on Joyce's wall, described by Oscar Schwarz,⁴⁶ are more representative of Meštrović's temporary aberration into some sort of belated naturalism, the near-grotesque and abstruse aspects in the style of the Secession, the Vienna school at the turn of the century which had taken the young Croatian peasant craftsman under its wing. The Secession shared the main stylistic features of *Art Nouveau* all over Europe — and *Art Nouveau*, of course, claims Blake to be one of its anticipators. It is difficult to identify the three Meštrović sculptures, but they are definitely not in the catalogue of the 1914 Venice Biennale, as Schwarz claims. The "ugly old woman naked" is very likely the famous one reproduced in the catalogue of the 1911 Rome exhibition, at present in the Ca Foscari collection in Venice. The other two are probably also in Italy where the artist had them stored on the eve of the 1914 war.⁴⁷ But Joyce's affinity to these works remains unexplained. In writing he never mentions the Croatian artist, nor is it recorded what he actually ever said about him.

Joyce, let us draw towards a conclusion, lived for a time in South Slav territory, heard Slav languages spoken around him, personally knew and was friendly with a number of Slovenes and Croats, had more of these, of various age and intellectual potentiality, among his students, and admired an artist who tied his work with his philosophy of Yugoslav nationalism. But he never took any interest in the life and culture, and hardly at all in the language of these little nations. Why? One's tentative interpretation would take several elements into account:

⁴⁵ *The Critical Writings of James Joyce*, ed. by Ellsworth Mason and Richard Ellmann, London, 1959, p. 221.

⁴⁶ Ellmann, p. 392.

⁴⁷ My thanks are due to Dr. Duško Kečkemet and Miss Višnja Barbić for helping to identify the one figure and for providing the whole information.

Joyce was tired of the problems of a small country deprived of independent statehood, dominated by a foreign power, and pouring its most vital energies into nationalist agitation. Whether this may have been an historical inevitability, which ultimately contributed to independence, is irrelevant here. The disjunctions and moral crises within an oppressed community were particularly painful to Joyce — they are the tenor of his articles on Ireland in the Trieste *Il Piccolo della Sera*. Whatever he may have known of the Slavs must have put him off, and made him impervious rather than sympathetic. Also, though he never expresses himself about the tensions between Italians and South Slavs, the Italian side was much closer to him because of his education among the Jesuits, his literary sympathies from Dante to d'Annunzio, his love of Italian music, his knowledge of the Italian language, his closest colleagues and most striking acquaintances in Trieste, such as Silvio Benco and Ettore Schmitz. He was in touch with Slovenes and Croats at the time when these two small nations had only begun to bridge the centuries-wide gap (from the Renaissance to the present age) within their own serious cultural achievements. Living in Istria, the most northern part of what was once considered the "Illyrian" coast, he had no idea that it had been the homeland of Flacius, one of the most impressive figures of European Reformation, the staunchest follower of doctrinaire Luther, earning himself the epithet of "Illyrian Snake" by the revisionist Melanchton. And why should he? Even the palpable monuments of Roman presence in those parts never stirred his historical imagination. The vitality of one of the earliest among the Renaissance literatures of Europe, that of the Croatian coastline, would have meant little to him even if its language had not been so unfamiliar.

The limitations of his interests for things surrounding him increased his ability for creative introspection and abundant use of those elements that he was open to. Nevertheless one assumes that he would have been surprised to know that the "ignorant Slavs" of his early Pola impressions, from whom he did not bother to make even linguistic borrowings in any considerable degree, published a virtuoso Croatian translation of *Ulysses*⁴⁸ three years before the Italian translation, and that a few years later the Slovenes, a nation of hardly 17 hundred thousand people, were in possession of a Slovene translation,⁴⁹ scrupulously done with scholarly precision, and perhaps the first of all the editions of *Ulysses*

⁴⁸ By Zlatko Gorjan (*Uliks*, Rijeka, 1957).

⁴⁹ By Janez Gradišnik (*Ulikses*, Ljubljana, 1967, in two volumes).

in the world which is provided with an adequate commentary. A Serb, Dušan Popović, let us add, was the first printer of *Ulysses* — bravely sharing the risk of prosecution with Margaret Anderson and Jane Heap through the 23 installments in the *Little Review*.⁵⁰

The story of Joyce's works as a stimulus in the recent literary life of the nations of present-day Yugoslavia also deserves to be told some day. It is marked by characteristic paradoxes, bizarre details, and witty ingenuity, which would perhaps have amused Joyce himself.

⁵⁰ A. Z. S., "Joyceov *Ulysses* i njegov štampar Popović", *Globus*, Zagreb, No. 148, 11. I. 1957, p. 7 (based on information from *The Little Review Anthology*, New York, 1953). Cf. Ellmann, p. 517.