

Roland Orcsik

THE POETIC REFLECTION OF THE *GASTARBEITER* LANGUAGE (IVAN SLAMNIG AND ISTVÁN DOMONKOS)

The 'linguistic turn'

Let us start with a commonplace.

The question of language in the lyric discourses of the second half of the twentieth century admittedly belongs to the dominant characteristics of these discourses. During the period, it is often language, to be more exact, its mode of usage that reflects the world view of the poet. Following Wittgenstein, we can state that the frontiers of language have become the frontiers of the poem, or rather of the world of the poem.

In Croatian and Hungarian poetry, we can rank Ivan Slamnig and István Domonkos amongst the pioneers of 'linguistic poetry'. Both of them evolved their poetic oeuvres from being inspired by the intellectual currents of modernity, more precisely, by existentialism and by different avant-garde isms. They were the authors of the most important Ex-Yugoslavian literary organs after World War II: the *Krugovi* (1952–1958) in Zagreb and the *Új Symposion* (1965–1992) in Novi Sad. Resisting the socialist realist literature of the post-war era and thinking farther the experiments of modernity, they reached the quality of the neo-avantgarde and pre-postmodern linguistic literature. Cvjetko Milanja asserts the following about Slamnig:

What is in fact at issue here is the 'entrance' to 'linguistic' poetry, which I would rather call the poetry of the grammatological turn or the poetry of the semiotic modelative matrix.¹

Goran Rem, interpreting the modernity-post-modernity constructs, attributes two strategies to Slamnig:

¹ "Riječ je o 'ulazu' u 'jezičke' pjesnike, koju ja radije imenujem pjesništvo gramatološkog obrata, ili pjesništvo semiotičke modelativne matrice." Cvjetko Milanja, "Slamnig – Model književnosti," in Goran Rem ed., *OS slamnigu. Zbornik radova s međunarodnog znanstvenog skupa* (Osijek: Pedagoški fakultet, 2003), 22.

[...] on the one hand, a strategy which, after Ivšić, Pavlović, Stošić, prepares the turn of modernity into the post condition; on the other, a strategy which, with the above mentioned authors, but also with Mrkonjić, Vladović, Rogić, and Stojević, achieves the opening towards the post condition of modernity by itself.²

According to János Bányai, similar conclusions can be drawn concerning the activity of the authors of *Új Symposion*:

The understanding of the avant-garde tradition is at once a stepping out from the frames of this tradition because it indicates that the poetic (generic) norms and canons emerged in the historical avant-garde failed, as a consequence of which—as a consequence of this ‘understanding’—the beginning of a new tendency can be announced, which can be referred to as new ‘neo-avantgarde’ or (if not too early) as post-modernism.³

The main purpose of the present work is to explore how the problems of the ‘linguistic turn’ gain reflection in those poems of the two authors mentioned in the title which evoke the language of guest workers.

The traces of identity

It is clear from the above that both authors, from a certain perspective, started processes of separation from the modernity-paradigms of literature. This way, they have created a poetic language which appears to be unique in the discussed period. Actually, this language is oppositionist-natured; it gives the critique of a fossil, canonized literary conception. Slamnig, in one of his essays from 1958, defines contemporary poetry in a broad sense:

² “[...] one koja nakon Ivšića, Pavlovića, Stošića – priprema obrat modernizma u post stanje, i one koja opet zajedno s tim autorima, ali i Mrkonjićem, Vladovićem, Mraovićem, Rogićem i Stojevićem – izvodi sam ulazak u post stanje moderniteta.” Goran Rem, “Kvadrati tuge ili ekranizacija teksta,” in idem. ed., 79.

³ “Az avantgárd tradíció megértése egyben kilépés is e tradíció keretéből, mert jelzi, hogy a történeti avantgárdban kialakult poétikai – műfaji – normák és kánonok kimerültek, minek következtében – e »megértés« következtében – bejelenthető egy új – »neoavantgárddnak«, vagy (ha nem túl korai) posztmodernnek nevezhető irányzat.” János Bányai, “1965: A (poszt)modern fordulat éve?” in idem., *Hagyománytörés* (Újvidék: Forum, 1998), 92.

If we can at all talk about some kind of special difference between cotemporary poetry and the poetry of other periods, it means a tendency that gives voice to poetic elements which are considered to be subsidiary and left out from the everyday practice of speech.⁴

One of the young authors of contemporary Croatian poetry, Tvrtko Vuković pronounces critical views on the subject:

Slamnig was not able to carry out the project of demitologizing high, canonized poetry because his discourse was fundamentally determined by the borderline of the same, so called high literature.⁵

At the same time, it is questionable to what extent Slamnig intended to exceed the frames of high literature. If we take into consideration the extreme plentitude of his canonized verse forms and the consciously applied, dialogical intertextuality of his poems, we can come to the conclusion that he did not have such an intention. This is well supported by Slamnig's concept on the autonomy of literature and those who create it:

I believe that literature is something separate, that it, similarly to politics, works with language and texts, so with statements, either oral or written ones. However, there is one essential distinction; literary works own that difference and peculiarity for which, I think, it is necessary to make a stand.⁶

On the basis of all this, we can conclude that for Slamnig, the literary work means an autonomous linguistic work and, in this way, the formation of an

⁴ "A ako bi se moglo govoriti o nekoj posebnoj razlici između suvremene poezije i poezije drugih razdoblja, onda je to tendencija da u njoj dođu do izražaja oni zanemareni i usputni poetski elementi iz svakidašnje govorne prakse, ili iz djela, koja nisu službeno priznata poezijom." Ivan Slamnig, "Pristupanje suvremenoj poeziji," in idem., *Disciplina mašte* (Zagreb: Matica Hrvatska, 1965), 190.

⁵ "Projekt demitologizacije visoke kanonizirane književnosti Slamnig nije mogao do kraja realizirati, jer je njegov diskurz bitno određen granicama polja te iste, tzv. visoke književnosti." Tvrtko Vuković, "Kulturalna vrijednost Slamnigove poezije," in Goran Rem ed., 29.

⁶ "Smatram da je književnost nešto posebno, da barata jezikom i tekstovima, dakle izjavama, bilo usmenima, bilo pisanima, slično kao politika, ali postoji jedna bitna razlika, postoji odjelitost i posebnost književnog rada na kojoj, ja mislim, treba inzistirati." Željko Ivanjek et al., "Ivan Slamnig o sebi i drugima," in Branimir Donat ed., *Književna kritika o Ivanu Slamnigu* (Zagreb: Dora Krupićeva, 2004), 191.

autonomous language at once. On the other hand, we will see that the aim of this autonomy is not to bring about novelty, but to work out its own distance, autonomy opposed to the familiar, canonized literary use of language by the employment of the well-known elements, inaccuracies, mistakes.

One of these creations, 'Slamnigisms' is the usage of the *Gastarbeiter* [guest-worker] language in the poetic discourse. The method is most palpably employed in his sixth volume, entitled *Dronta* (1981). Before this volume, his similar experiments got manifested in forms of collages. Krešimir Bagić refers to this earlier and to that later phenomena as the poetic policy of the 'babilonization of the text', by which he understands the following:

[This is a] powerful authorial gesture which—mixed into different linguistic fragmentaries and speech-idioms—collects the identical and contradictory civilizational meanings, and thus, it appears as a particular supplement, interpreter, or as the generator of new meanings.⁷

In his classification, he ranks the '*Gastarbeiter* poems' ("Mein Faterlant", "Der geschmurfte Kater", "Süssmunde von der Münze", "Ich weiss nicht was soll es bedeuten") amongst the so called 'macaronic experiments'. Jasmina Lukić conceives the *Gastarbeiter* texts as the following:

Slamnig bases his own phrases on the linguistic fragmentaries of the most manifold origin together with the new words, concepts created by himself, which he represents as a divergence formed in a new way as opposed to the accepted.⁸

And indeed, if we read Slamnig's guest-worker poems bearing these instructions in mind, we can recognize that due to the grammatic mistakes, a non-literary and unexpected language has actually come into existence here: "Der Fater reist nicht drüben, / möcht gern toch naskisch essen. / Die Sarma unt die Riebitze – / dass gibts nischit hier in Hessen."⁹ (*Mein Faterlant*). Thus, the

⁷ "[...] nadmoćnu autorsku gestu koja – umještanjem krhotina različitih jezika i govornih idioma – prikuplja podudaranje i proturječne civilizacijske smislove, nudeći se pritom kao njihov osobiti nadomjestak, interpretatnt ili, pak, kao generator novih smislova." Krešimir Bagić, *Živi jezici* (Zagreb: Naklada MD, 1994), 41.

⁸ "Upravo na jezičkim krhotinama najraznorodnijeg porekla i uz pomoć novih reči i pojmova koje stvara on sam, Slamnig gradi svoje iskaze kao uvek na nov način ostvarene otklone od očekivanog." Jasmina Lukić, "Slamnigovski homo ludens," in Branimir Donat ed., 138.

⁹ Ivan Slamnig, *Dronta* (Zagreb: Znanje, 1981), 47.

dimension of mistake, opposed to the canonized laws, generates a poetic world view. The above quoted poem is also significant because it casts a different light on the concept of mother tongue as homeland:

Ich habe eine Heimat
unt die muss sehr schön sein,
mein Fater der sagt immer:
'Da arbeitet gaar kein'

Die Sprache ist wohl klingent,
die Mutti liept die sehr,
nicht wie die Sizilianerin
die schpircht Alienisch nischt mehr.¹⁰

The above lines prove how this poem reflects on its own substance, on its own world: on language. All the same, this language is not the home or residence of the authentic existence understood in the Heideggerian sense. This language is not a Hölderlinian poetic instrument even if it might propose the notion, suspicion of lack of existence. This language reflects the oblivion of identity through the oblivion of the mother tongue; it displays the instability of the "theatralized, lyric subject"¹¹ in a humorous, ironic way. The following mistake also refers to this alienated condition: Italianisch – Alienisch. In the word 'Alienisch', we can observe an English word as well: 'alien'. It bears the succeeding connotations: stranger, extra-terrestrial. So, on the one hand, there is humour, a ludist poetic game with language, languages; on the other hand, alienation is also there. Cvijetko Milanja perceives this as black humour:

[...] it seems to be humour for the reader, but a sort of black humour is a more precise phrasing since the author's anxiety about the debasement of the cultural and civilizational level is distinctly tangible.¹²

¹⁰ ibid.

¹¹ "teatraliziranog lirskog subjekta" Bagić, 33.

¹² "On nudi tom čitatelju humornost, ali bi bilo točnije reći neku vrstu crnog humora. Naime jasno je uočiti autorovu zabrinutost sniženošću kulturnoga i civilizacijskog nivoa, indeksirana makaronštinom." Cvjetko Milanja, "Slamnigovo kasno pjesništvo," in Goran Rem ed., 73.

, We can notice similar attitudes in the other *Gastarbeiter* poems of the author. Thus, for example, in the poem entitled “Ich weiss nicht was soll es bedeuten”, identity gets negated, problematized:

Ja se rodih uz napor
gdje se lako rodio Heine.
Sivi vinorodni lapor
moji su bregi kraj Rajne.
[...]
Mein Schiff ist keine Sagina
mein Schiff ist eine Kogge,
und ich bin kein Dalmatiner
ehnti tschatschine Rogge.¹³

On the one hand, we encounter a Heineian intertextual subject here, who declares ‘I’ with confidence; on the other, we realize that this subject does not have its own language, instead, he speaks two languages full of mistakes; he is neither German nor Dalmatian and has no idea about what all this means. Slamnig’s influential fellow-poet, Zvonimir Mrkonjić calls this *Gastarbeiter* language as the “language in-between”,¹⁴ and the condition of being in-between is true for the identity of the lyric subject as well:

The dislocation of language and being dislocated from language,
the escape of identity and escaping from identity create the
Slamnigian verse more successfully than the quest of all these
[...].¹⁵

A comparable technique can be discerned at the Vojvodinian Hungarian poet, István Domonkos. Domonkos, being the co-operator of more journals published in Novi Sad—translator and member of the editorial staff at the literature section of the weekly *Ifjúság*, and at the supplement of the journal *Symposion* (1961–1963), and finally at *Új Symposion*—knew well the

¹³ Slamnig, *Dronta*, 50. On this poem cf. also Branko Kuna, “Pučki jezični slojevi Slamnigove poezije – između ludizma i estetizma,” in Goran Rem ed., 141.

¹⁴ “međujezikom” Zvonimir Mrkonjić, “Uvod u fundamentalnu drontologiju,” in Branimir Donat ed., 130.

¹⁵ “Iščašćenost (iz) jezika, bijeg (iz) identiteta uspješnije tvori Slamigovu pjesmu nego potraga za njim [...]” Mrkonjić, 129.

contemporary Yugoslavian literatures, and therefore the works of the 'Krugovi' generations (or to use Slamnig's term, the 'cold-war' generations), too.¹⁶

Domonkos's *Gastarbeiter* poem bears the title "Kormányeltörésben" and may be his most frequently cited work as well. He consequently employs the infinitive here, establishing the "agrammatical linguistic model",¹⁷ the diction of the *Gastarbeiter* lyric subject. Nevertheless, his text had been written earlier than Slamnig's similar verses. The Vojvodinian author wrote "Kormányeltörésben" in Swiss emigration; he sent it to his poet-friend, Ottó Tolnai, who published it in the *Új symposion* in 1971 and later the same year, in the second volume of Domonkos, the *Áthúzott versek* edited by him. The South Slavic authors affronted this poem first in 1973, in the translation of Judita Šalgo.¹⁸

Despite the fact that Domonkos knew the contemporary Croatian poetry of the time well, we cannot state that he automatically adopted or imitated Slamnig's experiments, or vica versa. We can rather talk about a kind of synchronicity; both poets 'smelled' something in the air of the 'cold war'. So, my intention is not to demonstrate who influenced who, or who was the first and the second because I would not like to report about a poetic horse-race here. My chief concern is how Slamnig and Domonkos represent the *Gastarbeiter* linguistic word.

Irony and the irony of irony

If we take a look at the reception of Slamnig's *Gastarbeiter* poems, we can note that he most frequently emphasizes the irony stemming from the incorrect usage of language. Among others, Vlasta Markasović also talks about the author's ludist, ironic game:

¹⁶ István Lukács observes it correctly that "the Croatian 'Krugovian' turn remains unnoticeable in Hungary for a long time" ["hrvatski 'krugovaški' prevrat u Mađarskoj dugo neće biti zamijećen"]. István Lukács, "Hrvatska postmoderna književnost u Mađarskoj," in Goran Rem ed., 360. However, we must add that yet, in the literature of the Vojvodinian Hungarians, or rather in the *Symposionists*, the inspiration and ample reception of the 'Krugovians' could be felt. This is what is precisely testified, among others, by the works of István Domonkos, but unfortunately, the political situation in Hungary at that time did not allow for the recognition of this fact, and Hungary is still in debt for the discussion of the matter. (On *Új Symposion* and the South Slavic literary and artistic relations cf. Zoltán Virág, "A margó vándorai. Az *Új Symposion*ról," *Híd* 6 (2005): 41–62.

¹⁷ Magdolna Danyi, "Az agrammatikus nyelvi modell," *EX Symposion* 10–12 (1994): 9.

¹⁸ István Domonkos, *Ja biti*, Judita Šalgo trans. (Novi Sad: Matica Srpska, 1973), 49–61.

Interlingual quotations, the collage of the linguistic matrix, the variety of the linguistic material applied independently from its origin, all contribute to the general ironic impression of this poetry. Slamnig's lyric subject is absolutely deprived of pathetism; moreover, it finds its pleasure in a pseudo-mediocrity. In some poems, it can even be regarded as a Švejkian 'simpleton'. Slamnig's lyric subject is an outsider pushed to the margin; however, it does not play unplugged by any means because by his salient ludism, the author amplifies his instrument—his language.¹⁹

Furthermore, it is also exciting how Zvonimir Mrkonjić compares the *Gastarbeiter* subjects of Slamnig and the Austrian poet, Ernst Jandl:

Whereas Jandl advances towards the gramatically stale Casparian language, which concretizes the subconscious and its power over writing, Slamnig shapes language by the corrosion of graphy, by the automatic humour of the transcription of the 'foreign' language and of the putting down of the 'how-you-speak'.²⁰

From this aspect, we can conclude that Slamnig's irony in these poems refers, on the one hand, to the canonized literary forms of speech;²¹ on the other, by the corrosion of graphy, to the loss of the authentic, stable identity. Although Slamnig's *Gastarbeiter* language talks about a loss, it does not do so by a tragic atmosphere, but by humour and irony, by a ludist linguistic game. So, in his poetry, the literary, intellectual standpoint still gets heightened somehow, which makes it possible for the author to keep an autonomous-literary distance from the represented.

¹⁹ "Interlingvalna citatnost, kolažiranje jezičkih matrica, obilje jezičnog materijala niveliranog bez obzira na podrijetlo pridonosi općem dojmu ironičnosti ove poezije. Slamnigov je lirski subjekt totalno depatetiziran, a čak i pseudomediokritetan. U nekim pjesmama on je čak i 'bedak' šejkovskog tipa. Njegov je lirski subjekt marginalac, ali nikako ne svira unplugged, jer bujnim ludizmom autor ojačava njegov instrument – jezik." Vlasta Markasović, "Ludističke paradigme u djelima Ivana Slamniga, Vanje Raduša i Dubravka Matakovića," in Goran Rem ed., 93.

²⁰ "Dok međutim Jandl ide prema gramatički zakržljalom kasparskom jeziku koji konkretizira nesusjesno i njegovu prevagu nad pisanjem, Slamnig razrađuje jezik korozijom grafije, automatskim humorom transkripcije 'stranog' jezika i pisanja 'kao što se govori'." Mrkonjić, 130.

²¹ In Mrkonjić's view, this *Gastarbeiter* language is "an alternative language which substitutes for the 'positive' literary language [...]" ["jednog alternativnog govora koji zamjenjuje 'pozitivni' književni jezik [...]]." Mrkonjić, 131.

In Domonkos's "Kormányeltörésben", we can also discover this staleness of language and identity. However, here, the possibility of any literary, intellectual distance gets negated, which, in my interpretation, is brought forth by the irony of the metatextual irony. According to Friedrich Schlegel, this double irony is less frequent and, among others, emerges in the following cases:

[...] wenn man nicht wieder aus der Ironie herauskommen kann, wie es in diesem Versuch über die Unverständlichkeit zu sein scheint; [...] wenn die Ironie wild wird, und sich gar nicht mehr regieren läßt."²²

Schlegel points out that the irony of irony reveals that Socratic irony—which provides the aristocratic attitude of the awareness of unawareness—still gets overwritten in certain cases. At Domonkos, the irony of irony serves the evasion of aristocratic distancing, whether the Socratic mode or the Slamnigian literary reflection is at issue. That is why we can find so many contradictory statements in the above mentioned poem of Domonkos, as Beáta Thomka also perceived it: "The contradictions in which the experience of the I being on the point of departing, retreating abounds necessarily ripen out the gestures of confutation."²³ Thomka mentions this precisely in relation to the self-determination of the lyric subject, which is repeated in the poem as its refrain: "én lenni" ["I to be"]. And the negation of this "lenni" ["to be"] appears as the negation of the lyric subject constituted by the poetic speech or writing: "ez nem lenni vers / én utánozni vers"²⁴ ["this not to be poem / I to imitate poem"]. Further on, this matter of the subject and the poem continues to be ironized: "vers lenni tócsa / beleülni lenni szivacs / tönkretenni új ruha"²⁵ ["poem to be puddle / to sit in it to be sponge / to spoil new clothes"]. Then, the following also reflects ironically on the ideological burn-out of the subject:

tócsában találni
sok kövér kukac
proletariátusnak
proletariátus jövőbe veti horgát

[to find in the puddle
a lot of fat worms
for the proletariat
the proletariat throws its hook off
to the future

²² "[...] wenn man nicht wieder aus der Ironie herauskommen kann, wie es in diesem Versuch über die Unverständlichkeit zu sein scheint; [...] wenn die Ironie wild wird, und sich gar nicht mehr regieren läßt." Friedrich Schlegel, *Charakteristiken und kritiken I*. (Paderborn: Verlag Ferdinand Schöningh, 1967), 369.

²³ "Az ellentmondások, melyekből oly bőven kijut a távozóban, távolodóban lévő én tapasztalataiban, szükségképpen a tagadás, cáfolás gesztusait érelik ki." Beáta Thomka, *Tolnai Ottó* (Pozsony: Kalligram, 1994), 41.

²⁴ István Domonkos, *Áthúzott versek* (Újvidék: Symposion Könyvek 31, 1971), 81.

²⁵ *ibid.*

fogni fürdőszoba
 vers lenni kérdezni:
 bírni el pici egér
 hátán egész-ház
 ha bebújni lyuk?²⁶

to catch bathroom
 poem to be to ask
 to hold little mouse
 on its back whole house
 if to get into hole?]

The title of the poem itself also refers to this loss of identity, to this emptiness of the subject. By the way, the Serbian translator of the poem, Judita Šalgo could not translate the title of the poem exactly. Moreover, she gratuitously omitted all of its paratexts, mottoes. The original title is untranslatable because, among others, it refers to an Old Hungarian literary text. The Hungarian word 'kormányeltörésben' [being with a broken steering-wheel] comes from the poem marked as number nine of the Hungarian Renaissance poet, Bálint Balassi. As we know, this word was not used at the time of Balassi that is why we presume that it is the poet's own compound. It involves the following connotations: the breaking of a steering-wheel, which symbolically refers to the aimlessness of a life deprived of love.²⁷ In other words, it refers to the loss of direction and to the meaninglessness of life. This is related to the *Gastarbeiter* language, conceived as existence in the poem. László Végel claims the following concerning the matter: "[...] Domokos, in a peculiar way, also denies this language. [...] The relieving elements of "Kormányeltörésben" are manifested by the irony of irony"²⁸ due to the fact that this freedom does not appear as completeness, but only as possibility. This is the reason why I think that Schlegel's concept of 'the irony of irony' is more relevant here since it contains all the contradiction that provides high tension for the poem of Domonkos. Accepting the contradictions, the subject becomes active and passive at the same time; it wriggles between the flux of speech and its negation.

Péter H. Nagy ascribes the following role to Domonkos's poem in the history of Hungarian literature:

[...] "Kormányeltörésben" outlines a poetic situation which makes us aware of the experience of the turn of the lyric language, but it can also be read from the expectations of the previous period.²⁹

²⁶ *ibid.*

²⁷ Balassi's concept of love has its origin in the tradition of the Petrarchian poetry.

²⁸ "[...] Domonkos ezt a nyelvet sajátos módon meg is tagadja. [...] A *Kormányeltörésben* felszabadító elemeit a tagadás tagadása jelenti." László Végel, "A metafizikától a bele nem egyezés eposzáig," in *idem.*, *A vers kihívása* (Újvidék: Forum, 1975), 123–4.

²⁹ "[...] a *Kormányeltörésben* olyan poétikai szituációt körvonalaz, amely már tudatosítja a líranyelvi fordulat tapasztalatát, de olvasható az azt megelőző periódus elvárásai felől is." Péter H. Nagy, "Identitásképző csataterék," *Alföld* 2 (2002): 53.

Domonkos's poem does not present a Hegelian dialectical process or a Thomas Kuhnian change of paradigm, but it precisely unveils how the different, simultaneously operating scientific, ideological paradigms eat up the individual with a viscerated identity, depriving it from the possibility of any free choice. With a little Marxist or post-structuralist echo, we can say that this poem uncovers the ideological process of identity production. The *Gastarbeiter* lyric subject denies ideologies from this aspect, but along with it, it also denies its own identity as the manifestation of the literary-poetic speech. By this and by the metatextual statements ("ez nem lenni vers") ["this not to be poem"], negation retreats to its avant-garde starting point; however, it has got disappointed from the utopicity so characteristic of avant-garde poetics and politics. All this makes it impossible for the poem to be pigeon-holed into any aesthetic paradigm without any problems, either in terms of modernity or post-modernity. This speech ominously reminds of the closed speech of the "philosophy of the dusty hole", where, according to Radomira Konstantinović's interpretation,

Language is an arbitrary link because, apart from itself, it, in fact, does not join anything; the word 'tree' will never become a tree just as the word 'justice' justice. So, if reality has invited me for speech, with its being an *outcast* from words, it is as if it only addressed me so that I can arrive at a revolt against language.³⁰

While Slamnig's irony provides an autonomous-literary distance keeping for the author, Domonkos's irony of irony negates any kind of possibility for distance. At the latter one, distance only appears as the desired possibility of freedom: "asszony lepedő ágy / clitoris / rátenni ujj / nem gondolni kollektív / nem gondolni privát"³¹ ["woman sheet bed / clitoris / to place finger on / not to think collective / not to think private"].

If we accept Branimir Bošnjak's interpretation that Slamnig is a "traveller in language",³² Domonkos's lyric subject is wandering around

³⁰ "proizvoljna veza zato što ništa stvarno ne povezuje, već povezuje samo sebe samog; reč drvo nikada neće postati drvo, kao što reč istina nikada neće postati i sama istina. Stvarnost, dakle, ako me je pozvala da govorim, ovim svojim izuzimanjem od reči, kao da me je pozivala samo zato da bih došao do pobune protiv reči" Radomira Konstantinović, *Filosofija palanke* (Beograd: Nolit, 1991), 122.

³¹ Domonkos, *Áthúzott versek*, 82.

³² "putnik u jeziku" Branimir Bošnjak, "Ivan Slamnig: Karnevalizirani pluskvamperfekt i intertekstualnost tradicija," in Goran Rem ed., 35.

deprived of his face, purpose, and language “mint vasmacska nélkül gálya az tengerben”³³ [“as a galley on sea without an anchor”].

Having compared the two *Gastarbeiter* uses of language, we can come to the conclusion that Slamnig’s method refers to a literary alternative,³⁴ whereas in case of Domonkos, things are a little bit different. For him, the *Gastarbeiter* language is not an alternative, but the only possible and, quite paradoxically, impossible language at once, which is created by the self-destroying power of the irony of irony. That is why a tragic, purposeless world view gains more emphasis in him. Although humour appears here as well, it can on no account burst out in a relieving laughter since it contains a certain amount of bitterness. The only possible alternative can exclusively be suspected in the closing lines of his poem, where identity, the subject gets a chance in non-thinking (“nem gondolni kollektív / nem gondolni privát”) [“not to think collective / not to think private”]. Of course, the question is whether this is possible at all. And if yes, in what ways can this freedom be articulated when the essentially ideological speech or language is incapable of this?

Translated by Zsuzsanna Maczák

³³ From the motto of Domonkos’s poem, where he quotes Bálint Balassi’s mentioned poem.

³⁴ Cf. Mrkonjić, 131.

Bibliography

- BAGIĆ, Krešimir. *Živi jezici*. Zagreb: Naklada MD, 1994
- BÁNYAI, János. "1965: A (poszt)modern fordulat éve?" In idem. *Hagyomány-törés*. Újvidék: Forum, 1998
- BOŠNJAK, Branimir. "Ivan Slamnig: Karnevalizirani pluskvamperfekt i intertekstualnost tradicija." In Goran Rem ed. *OS lamnigu. Zbornik radova s međunarodnog znanstvenog skupa*. Osijek: Pedagoški fakultet, 2003, 31–7.
- DANYI, Magdolna. "Az agrammatikus nyelvi modell." *EX Symposion* 10–12 (1994): 9–14.
- DOMONKOS, István. *Áthízott versek*. Újvidék: Symposion Könyvek 31, 1971
- DOMONKOS, István. *Ja biti*. Judita Šalgo trans. Novi Sad: Matica Srpska, 1973.
- H. NAGY, Péter. "Identitásképző csataterék." *Alföld* 2 (2002): 49–59.
- IVANJEK, Željko et al. "Ivan Slamnig o sebi i drugima." In Branimir Donat ed. *Književna kritika o Ivanu Slamnigu*. Zagreb: Dora Krupićeva, 2004, 186–91.
- KONSTANTINOVIĆ, Radomir. *Filosofija palanke*. Beograd: Nolit, 1991
- KUNA, Branko. "Pučki jezični slojevi Slamnigove poezije – između ludizma i estetizma." In Goran Rem ed. *OS lamnigu. Zbornik radova s međunarodnog znanstvenog skupa*. Osijek: Pedagoški fakultet, 2003, 133–49.
- LUKÁCS, István. "Hrvatska postmoderna književnost u Mađarskoj." In Goran Rem ed. *OS lamnigu. Zbornik radova s međunarodnog znanstvenog skupa*. Osijek: Pedagoški fakultet, 2003, 357–65.
- LUKIĆ, Jasmina. "Slamnigovski homo ludens." In Branimir Donat ed. *Književna kritika o Ivanu Slamnigu*. Zagreb: Dora Krupićeva, 2004, 138–40.
- MARKASOVIĆ, Vlasta. "Ludističke paradigme u djelima Ivana Slamniga, Vanje Raduša i Dubravka Matakovića." In Goran Rem ed. *OS lamnigu. Zbornik radova s međunarodnog znanstvenog skupa*. Osijek: Pedagoški fakultet, 2003, 87–99.
- MILANJA, Cvjetko. "Slamnig – Model književnosti." In Goran Rem ed. *OS lamnigu. Zbornik radova s međunarodnog znanstvenog skupa*. Osijek: Pedagoški fakultet, 2003, 21–5.
- "Slamnigovo kasno pjesništvo." In Goran Rem ed. *OS lamnigu. Zbornik radova s međunarodnog znanstvenog skupa*. Osijek: Pedagoški fakultet, 2003, 71–7.
- MRKONJIĆ, Zvonimir. "Uvod u fundamentalnu drontologiju." Branimir Donat ed. *Književna kritika o Ivanu Slamnigu*. Zagreb: Dora Krupićeva, 2004, 128–33.

- REM, Goran. "Kvadrati tuge ili ekranizacija teksta." In idem. ed. *OS lamnigu. Zbornik radova s međunarodnog znanstvenog skupa*. Osijek: Pedagoški fakultet, 2003, 77–87.
- SHLEGEL, Friedrich. *Charakteristiken und kritiken I*. Paderborn: Verlag Ferdinand Schöning, 1967
- SLAMNIG, Ivan. "Pristupanje suvremenoj poeziji." In idem. *Disciplina mašte*. Zagreb: Matica Hrvatska, 1965
- Dronta*. Zagreb: Znanje, 1981
- THOMKA, Beáta. *Tolnai Ottó*. Pozsony: Kalligram, 1994
- VÉGEL, László. "A metafizikától a bele nem egyezés eposzáig." In idem. *A vers kihívása*. Újvidék: Forum, 1975, 123–4.
- VIRÁG, Zoltán. "A margó vándorai. Az Új Symposionról." *Hid* 6 (2005): 41–62.
- VUKOVIĆ, Tvrtko. "Kulturalna vrijednost Slamnigove poezije." In Goran Rem ed. *OS lamnigu. Zbornik radova s međunarodnog znanstvenog skupa*. Osijek: Pedagoški fakultet, 2003, 27–31.