

Title: The Poem Found In Saragossa: The Function Of Gramatical Gender In The Poetics Of V. Sosnora

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A unique figure in contemporary Russian poetry, Viktor Sosnora is the only significant Russian poet among those with a neo-futuristic orientation in whose works the traditions of early N. Aseev (elaborate play with phonetics) and V. Khlebnikov (bold play with semantics) are interwoven with the traditions of nineteenth-century Russian romantic poetry (V. Zhukovsky, A. Marlinsky, A. Pushkin).

In this paper I talk about the attachment of masculine gender to feminine and neuter nouns in some of Sosnora's poems. Focusing on his programmatic lyrical piece "I left the last bullet to myself..." I show how this flagrant violation of Russian grammatical norms conjures up linguistic features of Polish and German (languages in which the poet claimed to be fluent as a child) and promotes Sosnora's personal myth of his Polish-Estonian genealogy which is a frequent subject in his poetry. I argue

that in this poem, through the poetic "simulation" of a multilingual atmosphere, the image of a "bullet cast in silver", and the motif of suicide, Sosnora evokes the figure of the Polish aristocrat and writer, Jan Potocki (1761-1815). The author of a gothic novel written in French, *Manuscrit trouve a Saragosse* (1815), Potocki took his own life using a pistol loaded with a silver bullet. Potocki's novel inspired Pushkin's verse excerpt "Alfons is mounting his horse..." Sosnora's poem is thus linked directly to the romantic tradition.

Extrapolating my observation of how the grammatical masculine gender functions in "I left the last bullet to myself..." to several of Sosnora's other poems, I conclude that in his poetry the purely futuristic technique of creating multi-gender grammatical clusters is pivotal for the conjunction of the futurist and romantic traditions.