

Title: The Poetics of Impersonality in Arkadii Dragomoshchenko's Works: Traditions of Anglo-American Modernism

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Abstract:

“More than anything, I like impersonal sentences,” writes Arkadii Dragomoshchenko in his essay “I(s).” His proximity to poststructuralist epistemology and its linguistic outcomes have been mentioned by scholars writing about his poetry (Mikhail Iampolski, Aleksandr Skidan, and others), but his dialogue with American poets developing the poetics of impersonality deserves more attention since it is indispensable for the understanding of Dragomoshchenko’s poetics and its sources. I will focus on Dragomoshchenko’s dialogue with the most influential proponents of the depersonalization trend in American poetry, T. S. Eliot and Charles Olson. Their poetic manifestos long preceded Roland Barthes’s famous “death of the author” and were among those especially valued by the Russian poet. I will discuss Dragomoshchenko’s reception of these poets, as reflected in his essays and poems: he frequently mentions Eliot in his essays and uses his lines as an epigraph, often quotes Olson and translates his “Kingfishers” twice. Their common debunking of humanism and “the egocentric predicament,” as Olson called it, translates into the common features of their poetics. Like Eliot, Dragomoshchenko employs several devices to express subjectivity indirectly (impersonal sentences; body parts as synecdoche); like Olson, he seeks to dismantle subjectivity inherent in the logic of language itself through the rapid change of perspectives and weak or deformed subject-predicate links.