

Creative Autobiography Construction in the Ego- documents of a Russian Émigré Poet

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Abstract

The oeuvre of the Russian émigré poet Igor Chinnov (1909 - 1996) can be attributed to the so-called “returned literature”, since readers and researchers in Russia discovered it in the 1990s. These years witnessed the peak of interest in Russian émigré literature of the 20th century. The interest was expressed in a large volume of publications of emigrants’ works of different kinds – literary texts and especially ego-documents (memoirs, letters, diaries), as well as in the subsequent boom of literary studies of this material. Chinnov’s case is interesting not only for the study of the poetics of his artistic world, which ultimately has gone beyond the boundaries of the émigré cultural paradigm, but also for its pragmatic aspect – emphasizing some elements of his creative heritage and not mentioning or reframing others, Chinnov produces a stable model of his own creative biography (the origins, traditions and interpretation of his poetic creativity), which has a noticeable impact on the perception of his work displayed in the research literature. This happens because of two factors: on the one hand – the lack of factual information and objective research interest (despite numerous publications of some parts of his creative heritage there is still no any academic biography of Chinnov); on the other hand – the author’s attention to literary reputation as such and a large amount of self-reflection in his ego-documents and personal conversations (in the 1990s, Chinnov visited Russia several times).

Keywords: deconstruction; ego-literature; I. Chinnov; literary reputation