

NETLITERATURE AS AN OBJECT OF CONCEPTUALIZATION OF RUSSIAN AND BELARUSIAN RESEARCHERS

Netliterature is a new cultural phenomenon which arose in the 1980th as a result of appearance of the World Wide Web and spreading of the system of the Internet-connected personal computers. It is based on the synthesis of literature and computer technology. In the literature studies this term is applied to a certain type of literary works created with the application of Internet electronic devices and aimed at functioning in the Net. In Russia and Belarus netliterature appears along with Runet and Belnet and has been developing for the last ten years. Traditional literature studies turned to its theoretical scientific research, with quite a delay, mainly in the XXI century, firstly, with no expectation to discover in this so uncommonly transformed branch of literature anything of aesthetic worth; secondly, possessing of no necessary means for its research and estimation; thirdly, having insufficient amount of information and poorly finding its bearings in the Internet labyrinth. The initial descriptors and theorists of the netliterature were its creators, or at least those of them who possessed appropriate inclinations and abilities. The works of Aleksej Andreev «Netliterature. Literature without Paper», «CETERature as It Is NE/OT: From Hathian Aesthetics to Cellular Atom – and Back», and «Cetera. Manifesto of Net Literature, or Personal Experience of Poetic Independence». It was Aleksej Andreev who set forth the definition of netliterature which is referred to by all the subsequent Russian researchers; he also displayed a whole series of its characteristics.

In the «Manifesto» Aleksej Andreev explains the reasons why Russian authors leave for Internet and turn to netliterature. Under the circumstances when book-publishing lies mainly in the field of business, the inexperienced and sometimes even mature writers find it quite difficult to publish their works. For instance, publishing the poetic works especially of young writers is unprofitable. Not everyone can afford publishing their works at their own expense. «The Net, writes Aleksej Andreev, ‘is a) a possibility for free publishing being independent of various non-literary aspects of the material world... Moreover, the author can keep full anonymity which allows to reveal those features of his talent which are often suppressed in real life (psychologically, autonomously) by “frames” and “roles” of the material world; b) a possibility for readers to estimate “pure text” irrespective of the author’s name and other of his non-literary attributes (age, gender, nationality, social status)» [1]. Comments and reviews can be instantaneous, quite various and more honest than media reviewing which in many respects has also changed into the form of business catering for «elite». If something really interesting is published, there appears «feedback» (mostly by means of guestbook, where all comers can leave their comments) which contributes to the restoration of the almost lost communicative function of literature as a form of unobtrusive interaction. What is more, this communication acquires quite often international scale which expands author’s horizons. In the Net, as shows the author of «Manifesto», different contests aimed at selecting the best have gained popularity. Gradually there also appeared specialized sites and Web-magazines. Aleksej Andreev refers to the first Russian literary Web-magazine «De Lit. Zyne», «Magazine. Ru» which has section «Literature», «New Helicon» with Web-dabbler – Aleksandr Zhitinsky – pages, and also to the site of palindrome collector Vadim Guschin. Aleksej Andreev underlines that in some of them the fundamental nature of the approach is by no means inferior to the one of solid Russian editions. «The combination of Web and paper, according to A. Andreev, has quite a potential» [1], the best of the Web material being published in paper variant. Thus the Web has substituted for the underground press and created an independent, fairly auspicious environment for survival and development of literature under the conditions of market economy. The main thing however lies in the fact that this is «an open, dynamic system with its “free generation of new solutions”» [1] which stimulates the creation of new kind of literature.

In the article «CETERature as It Is NE/OT» Aleksej Andreev points out three main characteristics, which distinguish this kind of literature: hypertextuality, possibility of collective creative work (hyperauthorship) and dynamics.

The author interprets hypertext as «possibility for integration of electronic texts by means of hyperlinks (also by means of graphics, colour, or sound)» [3]. Hypertext is «“the text of texts”». In all the diversity of separate fragments their unity should have some common binding basis...» [2], this arrangement having a nonlinear character which can be conveyed through different degrees of deviation from linearity. Aleksej Andreev names «Patch-work Quilt» by Dmitrij Sokolov and his own hyperpoem-labyrinth «Liquid Glass» as typical examples of the netliterature. Creation of such texts can be either individual or multiauthoring. Quite often such pieces of work are perceived as a game. The matter concerns interactive game which generates interactive literature. As one of the manifestations of creative work-game one could refer to the producing virtual personalities one author acting as several ones or several people performing as a single virtual individual. «Virtual personality is more like a part in the theatre. The Net in this case acts as a stage, and the script is written by virtual personality author (authors) right in the course of the performance» [2]. The most famous are the virtual personalities of Maj Ivanovich Mukhin, Katya Detkina, Marry Shelley. In the virtual personality's creative work dynamics as one of the characteristics of netliterature is revealed. Such variants of games as performances are quite popular. Among the games and creative environments Aleksej Andreev classes NOVEL, HOKKU GARDEN, NONSENSE, RENGURU, GRAPHORRHEA, BOUTS-RIMES, and SONNET BOOK.

At the same time Aleksej Andreev observes, «Being “hyper” by no means guarantees being real literature (in the sense of art)» [3]. That is where talent, taste, and the sense of harmony are also needed.

Evgenij Kozlovsky was the first among the creators of «computer books» to appear on the pages of non-net press, in a prestigious edition «Samizdat of the Century» (1997) with an article «From GULAG to Internet». It contains much useful information such as for instance author's digest of netliterature works rated publishing on Internet Favorite page N.Zh.M.D. introduced by Artemij Lebedev. The author underlines that the main choice criterion is «originality of contents, novelty of ideas, and singularity» [8:1031]. Here one can find «Novel» (by Roman Leibov & Co) characterized as «a real hypertext novel», to which readers can add their own chapters «giving the creator great literary satisfaction» [8:1031], and Dmitrij (Mitya) Manin's «Bouts-rimes» — a project devoted to classical game in which allcomers can take part by writing their own poems continuing those already placed in Internet. These texts in time have become of significant nature for Russian netliterature.

In 1999 the phenomenon of net literature was the subject of the section “Literary Guide: Book and/or Computer” in the magazine “Inostrannaya Literatura” №10 where the articles by A.Genis, V.Vizel, S.Kuznetsov, D.Kuzmin were publication relating to the Runet was [the article by S.Kuznetsov “Birth of Game, Death of the Author, and Virtual Writing]. In many aspects Sergej Kuznetsov has much in common with Aleksej Andreev, specifying and concretizing certain ideas and theses of the forerunner. Thus he particularly distinguishes the Russian Internet, «In such a literature-centric country as Russia Internet appeared to become quite corresponding...» [10:178]. First it played the role of samizdat, computer library, computer archive. But «in 1994 first net projects started to appear. The most successful was Dmitrij Manin's «Bouts-rimes» [10:178] – a computer modification of a well-known poetic game. «In 1995 Manin made «Sonnet Book» where the sonnets are written collectively line by line; — everyone can add a line or correct the preceding one following the rhyme scheme and without coming off the meter» [10:179]. The number of similar projects was increasing («Blimnaya» and «Limericks Bakery» by Elia Ratner, «Novel» by Roman Leibov & Co, «The Garden of Diverging Hokku» by Dmitrij Manin, «Renguru» by Aleksej Andreev, etc.). Sergej Kuznetsov notices, «All the described projects have something in common apart from literature-game orientation, computer medium and net way of existence. It is principle absence of the author in a

classical sense. For instance, «the author» of «NOVEL» is a) Leibov, who devised and edited everything; b) Leonid Delitsyn, who contributed to the accomplishment of «NOVEL» in the most readable form; c) the authors of more than three hundred chapters» [10:179]. Referring to John Percy Barloy, the founder of E-Borders Fund and one of the most famous ideologists of Cyberspace, Sergej Kuznetsov asserts the idea of global transition of human thought through Internet free of charge, stressing non-censorial and free character of Internet and virtual literature and periodicals. As the basic feature of the latter he names not hypertextuality but interactivity that draws the author and the readers together, reducing the existing distance, which however can be as well referred to the netliterature.

The publications which can be of doubtless interest are the articles by M. Vizel “Hypertext on This and The Other Side of Screen” and «Late Novels of Italo Calvino as Examples of Hypertext» which contain accurate theoretical theses relating to hypertext. Michail Vizel grounds upon the theses displayed in the site «E-Maze» and reproduces the definition of hypertext which he considers universal. He marks out its three main characteristics as follows:

«**Structure dispersiveness.** The information is presented in the form of small fragments-cells, and the structure is accessed through any unit.

Nonlinearity of hypertext. The reader is henceforth free (forced) to determine his own way of reading thus creating his own text. <...>

Heterogeneity and multimedia character, i.e. application to the consumer-reader all the levers which are allowed by technical characteristics of the given system (this is meant by the words «expanded works») – starting from purely literary (the choice of narrative strategy and style) through publishing (font, makeup, illustrations) up to the most complex computer (sound, animation, reference to other nonfiction sources)» [4]. Michail Vizel displays the commonality of these characteristics with theoretical theses formulated by Ihab Hassan. According to the author of the article, this is the evidence of the fact that «hypertext is not just a “computer game” but indispensable and natural part of the ongoing epoch» [4]. The properties of the computer hypertext in their basic parameters coincide with the pre-computer ones which were first (in the 1960th) formulated by Teodor Nelson and in 1981 specified in his book «Literary Machine». Teodor Nelson uses the term «hypertext» to define «non-sequenzial writing – a text that ramifies and allows the reader to choose. <...> To put it plain, it is a series of text chunks linked to suggesting the reader different ways [of reading]» (cited [4]). Michail Vizel states the likeness of this definition with the definition of poststructuralistic *text-writing* by Rolan Barthes. The author establishes the fact that «personal computer itself didn’t create nonlinearity, hypertextuality, and multimedia character. The elements of hypertextuality are abundantly scattered throughout the world literature. But only in the second half of the XX century they got condensed, demanded, and could get to a qualitatively new level» [4:3]. Due to the occurred (or occurring) «change in cultural paradigm» the reality has experienced a radical change – either around or inside us. «Destroying the determinancy and unambiguity of the message, hypertext happened to be an instrument which is extremely «accordant» to the oncoming epoch (of postmodern. – I.S.) and most adequately describing new relationship with reality. It is this very instrument that can unify «spiritual activity» of the oncoming autocommunicative civilization with classical «message» (contact) civilization» [4]. In another article – «The Garden of Diverging Texts» published in 2000 in the magazine «Home Computer» №6, Michail Visel applies the stated theses to the Russian authors’ netliterature. He briefly characterizes the texts placed on the site «Interactive Fantasy», verse texts written in «Russian Roman letters» and presented on the site of A. Lebedev, «NOVEL» by Roman Leibov & Co, and also his game «Guess the author» on the site «Termless Exile», the projects of Dmitrij Manin «Sonnet Book» and «Bouts-rimes». Without overestimating the aesthetic value of the considered writings the author approves of their appearing as experimental works, which realize new ideas and induce to perfect the writing techniques.

Sergej Kornev, the author of the article «“Net Literature” and the End of Postmodern», is interested in netliterature as a herald of new epoch in the human history. Its appearance,

according to Sergej Kornev, testifies the end of printing-press monopoly and the death of the distance as new and significant time symptoms. All the rest, in the researcher's opinion, which had already been present in literature the bud form (hypertext, various literature games, collective projects, etc.), got a possibility of realization in a new habitat, so all the genres that got to Internet experience net liberation. «In the face of new technical opportunities the whole literature, and not its segment is transformed. Internet is a more natural habitat for a text than a printed book which is tied fast with archaic-repressive system of book publishing» [9], claims Sergej Kornev. «Even today a considerable sector of Internet has assigned itself to act as a twenty-four-hour global literary salon» (Sergej Kornev refers to Dmitrij Manin) and becomes a ground for the inexperienced authors. The netliterature of the young authors is usually shut off the professional book literature and closed on itself which leads to the flourishing of dilettantism: the intersection and interaction of parallel literary worlds is quite vital. The «big literature» in Russia is also fragmented, and the net in its turn can help to resume the «lost» reader, believes Sergej Kornev. Promising appears to the critic the total transference of the literature to Internet, an opportunity to «make it open and transparent, create there real centers of attraction..., where life could really zip along» [9]. This is the way Sergej Kornev sees the prospects of literature functioning. In the Net the literary life will be able to gain the real integrity which will finally solve the problem «metropolis – provinces». Small genres, according to Sergej Kornev, are more organic in the Net, and even many marginal genres are being actualized today renewing in accordance with computer-electronic possibilities. The author himself is turned into some kind of a genre as he has to accustom the reader to himself as well as to the new literature.

In the Internet the author can be represented with the whole corps of his works and under the exact cover he considers it appropriate – with necessary comments, introduction and preface, and even possibility to answer readers' questions on-the-fly. In the Internet the whole author's creative work is transformed into one big book... This has its pluses as well as its minuses as the text taken separately loses its former oneness of being the only mediator between the author and the reader which can hardly do it any good [9]. Authoring site virtually substitutes for writer's museum. Sergej Kornev predicts «the coming virtualization of the authorship, turning the virtual personality into art phenomenon. The author's status should change. The relationship between author and reader will become closer; author's inaccessibility is already becoming a thing of the past. Netliterature generally «shifts the attention from the product to the process of creative work, and prospectively can lead to the birth of fundamentally new figure – “active reader”» [9:2]. This, as states Sergej Kornev, stimulates the development of interactive genres as well as various forms of literary game and collective creative work. At times they are shaped in a refined way, at other times it can be a group vocal performance taking the form of «virtual theatre». The main thing here is the game process itself and the pleasure it brings.

Internet denies printed and pre-printed book. «The farrago of hyperlinks destroys the aura of classical text which appeals to integrity, semantic unity and notional coherence... Hypertext in its completed form displays itself as self deconstructing text. <...>Within the hypertextual reality we deal not only with the text itself, but with the whole of alternative texts which are preset by the combinations of its segments. Thus the semantic shaping function is no more present in the text but is set by the configuration of the hyperconnections» [9]. All that, says Sergej Kornev, creates an impression that it is in the Internet where all the points of postmodern manifesto are carried out, though the critic disclosed certain differences. As it turns out Sergej Kornev has quite a superficial knowledge on the postmodern theory itself which shows itself in the number of mistakes he makes. According to him postmodernism is the final stage of modern. This can't be agreed with. Ihab Hassan showed the fundamental difference between postmodernism and modernism which impels to perceive postmodernism as absolutely new aesthetic system which is the first stage in the development of culture – culture of the postmodern. The netliterature is claimed by the critic to be logocentric, phonocentric, phallogocentric which are disputed by postmodernism. This statement is refuted by the hypertextual qualities of netliterature destroying the very principles of any centrism which puts it together with postmodernism. The game and

interactive characteristics of netliterature should deny the imputed by Sergej Kornev voluntarism to Internet. The Sergej Kornev's conception of "one-sided destructive" character of postmodernism could be considered as ignorant. The critic is probably not familiar to its positive statute. Other arguments provided by the author and aimed at proving that Internet is the completion and overcoming of postmodern have little force. On the contrary, Internet is postmodernism brainchild, and if the subject of netliterature is brought up, it is a computer analogue of exactly postmodernist literature: the differences between them are more of technological than of conceptual character.

In 2002 during the International Scientific Conference «Postmodernism and the Fates of Fiction Literature on the Verge of Millenniums» held in Tyumen a report «Hypertext and Netliterature in the Context of Postmodernism» was delivered by M.Karymova. She avoids the errors made by Sergej Kornev, gives a brief summarizing of what has been done by the creators of netliterature and its theorists, and draws parallels with foreign netliterature. High emphasis is placed by M.Karymova upon a new character of relationship between the reader and netliterary text. She points, «Netliterature is a complex and interesting category which obliges the reader to take part in the construction of what the text that has become fractal, which makes the process indispensably interactive. The whole text consists of the units which are particularly intertwined. The text may not have either any definite beginning or ending, or any strictly determined by the author reading order. Even the titles of the work can be numerous. The reader is offered to construct the text on his own following very free rules, established by the author who in one way or another controls all the text components» [6:64,65]. The misunderstanding of the specific character of netliterature works, the attempt to estimate them according to classical standards can cause inadequacy in their assessment. M.Karymova stresses the novel potential of netliterature. Here is her characteristic of the work called «Point»: The Register of Dzujkhitsu by Denis Yacutko». The design of «Point» is such that it is not necessary to read it in order. One can leaf it through as one does with the Bible. Yacutko's prophesy is a cookery book of a socially degraded postmodernist. It is necessary to say that "Point» is a tragic text (about intellect detachment in the mass world), still it is rather funny [6:66]. Other characteristics given by M.Karymova bear the resemblance to annotations revealing the very essentials. Her conclusions are quite encouraging, «Internet is a fertile field for all sorts of experiments and pursuits. <...> Only Internet provides a possibility for real fulfillment many of the postmodernist principles. The boundless opportunities for cultural differentiation, polyphony, schizoid character of Internet, the absence of hierarchy, "the death of the author", text deconstruction in the hypertext environment – these are the points of the postmodernism statute which are realized in netliterature» [6:67-68].

It's necessary to say that reverse influence – the one of internet on the book literature – is completely passed over in silence by the researchers. However it does exist and shows itself in different forms. After publishing his racket book «Endless Deadlock» Dmitrij Galkovsky exposed it in Internet that enabled the novel (hypernovel) to reveal its hypertextual nature in the full and facilitated the reading work. Michail Berg prepared the net variant of his unique novel «Momemoirs» by introducing the nonlinear references with the indication of the prototypes of the novel characters thus suggesting two possible ways of reading, and two variants of books per se. Aleksandr Zhitinsky places his works on the site «Zhitinsky Pier» «with dense cross links thus creating hypertext» [4].

Though the Internet cyberspace on the subject concerned has been insufficiently researched, still it is possible to draw the following conclusion: the theoretical and methodological groundwork for netliterature research have been laid in Russia giving the clue to its comprehension and mastering. The part «Netliterature» has been introduced to the tutorial on Russian literature which was published in 2005 in Moscow and addressed to philology students.

The pioneer role of Russia in the conception of the netliterature phenomenon among the Slavonic countries is confirmed by active application of its experience in other Slavonic countries, in Belarus in particular.

Belarusian netliterature in the true sense of the word (i.e. the literature which is hypertextual, multimedia, and dynamic) is still being generated which can be explained by the general stagnation experienced by modern Belarusian literature, where the new tendencies of development are suppressed by the power of tradition, and also by official ideological directives. Still the attempts for the conception of the very phenomenon of netliterature aimed at promoting its creating are made in Belnet.

The most active part in netliterature popularization and interpretation is taken by Cyberkuvshinky (Cyberwaterlilies) – a collective virtual personality appearing in the site of the same name (Cyberkuvshinki@tut.by). Cyberkuvshinky are quite tidy in handling the concerned question, still they confess that yet there are no Belarusian netliterature theorists, and «some cultural-literary philosophy can be squeezed out of discourse word contrivances of the editing authors of the almanac www.klinamen.com» [7], and that's it. They themselves get familiar with the theoretical aspects of netliterature using mainly the Russian sources, referring in particular to the book by Viacheslav Kuritsyn «Russian Literary Postmodernism» and the materials of the project Net Literature of «Russian Magazine», providing all the interested with its Internet address www.litera.ru/slova/teoriya; they particularly distinguish the articles «Chat As Drama» by Artem Kushnir, «Virtual Mystery Play» by Leonid Tiraspolsky and Vladimir Novikov (in the latter virtual conference as a genre of netliterature is considered). The knowledge gained by Cyberkuvshinky is applied to Belarusian material which is still quite modest in number. Moreover they announce the appearance of a new trend – cyberkuvshinism (cyberwaterlilism) aimed at a) appearance in the Net of Belarusian «new journalism» which aim is – in the course of ideas of Toma Wolf and gonzo-journalism of Hantera S.Thompson – to reveal the printed and virtual means of mass consciousness manipulation; b) creation of full value fiction in the interactive contact with the readers (though this contact, feedback, cooperation in Belarusian Internet unlike in the Russian one is hardly noticeable). Cyberkuvshinky run some kind of workshops, among which an essay «We Learn to Write a Hyperstory» should be marked out. The virtuals explain, «In the netliterature everything is possible. Especially welcomed are all sorts of “inter” or “hyper” (Internet, intertextuality, interaction, hyperboles, hyperreality, hypertextuality, hyperauthorship, hypersexuality)» [7]. This enumeration shows the condensed summary made by Cyberkuvshinky in the field of netliterature studies. In rather an eccentric form they direct the potential creative authors towards introducing their virtual personality or personalities who will be engaged in the Internet projects. They are quite ironic in saying, «Those inclined towards schizophrenia are especially good at creating such works. Autism will also do. If you've ever noticed any signs of splitting or multiplication of your personality (Herman Hesse “Steppe Wolf”), then try to squeeze out of yourself, as a slave, each of your hypostases», and then earnestly explain, «Net writers usually disintegrate their personality where each component becomes a character. The author doesn't even write as himself but takes turns to write on behalf of each character. If your personality is not split, try to write as if you were your friends» [7]. From the definition of the peculiarities of the net personality Cyberkuvshinky move to the demands made to a hyperstory. Polyphony is defined as one of its characteristics, it is stated that the most peculiar of the hyperstories are the collective works, or their imitation carried out by single author who makes an impression of multiauthorship. Hypertextuality – nonlinearity, fractality, the appearance of referential links — being an indispensable feature of a netliterature work is cleared up, «Hyperstory could be an apt piece of an ICQ conversation or some verbalized in the Forum fits» [7]. The possibility of multimedia composing is also underlined, «The emotional experiences, impressions, feelings could, as commixes, be put together of the drawings and photographs commentaries, or even of the links to other texts. The acme of the intellectuality could be a link-list of the link-lists. <...> the imaginary time could be easily mixed with the individual and actual ones (e.g. breaking through the gist of the text by the song lyrics which are now being broadcast, or by the contents of the phone conversations, interrupting the process of creating)» [7]. In other words a full degree of creative figment and maximum freedom given by the technical mediums is accentuated.

The criteria and ways of the netliterature evaluation are also discussed in the essay, «In the Internet the consistency of any resource including the artistic one is managed by special statistics services (akavita.com) and rates (br.by). Your story must be placed in the Internet so everyone could leave their comments in the guestbook which is also a part of the work» [7].

Cyberkuvshinky urge the readers addressing right to them, «Relax your consciousness. Switch off and to drift with the current. Imagine that your subconsciousness is tender summer sea. Copy, paste, cut, enjoy “the work in duet” in order to generate a dozen of new words. Use as many electronic media as possible. It is desirable to split the story into several parts and then combine them in a web-ring. Some parts of the story could be sounds and pictures. It would be nice to place a collating of music mp3 files nearby which would accompany the reading. <...> In our Net there is nothing but the untapped field of words and virtual ideas floating in the air. Take them, copy to the clipboard and create the history of the Belarusian netliterature» [7].

Thus while in Russia the theory of the netliterature emerges as the summary and comprehension of what has been already done by the virtual authors (with the expansion to the foreign net aimed at clarifying some novelties put into practice), in Belarus the theory precedes practice (which yet engages few people) and has the form of enlightenment in order to get over the backlog. Quite characteristic is the nick used by the workshop conductors – Cyberkuvshinky. The water lilies usually grow in the swamp ponds, and the chosen nick implies on the «swamp» symbolizing the current state of affairs in Belnet.

The urge towards «to catch up» with the gone ahead, the obvious elucidating character is felt in the peculiarity of the publications on the site «Klinamen» (www.klinamen.com) — the so called lists of the recommended literature along with figured to arouse interest extracts from the works of Michel Foucault («Discourse and Truth: the Problematics of Parresia»), Peter Slauterdike («After History»), Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari («Capitalism and Schizophrenia. Anti-Oedipus»), Slavoj Žižek («Lenin, Lukács, Stalin»), Valerij Podoroga («White Wall – Black Hole»), etc. These publications pursue the double-aim: a) to get the reader acquainted with the new original ideas (mostly poststructuralist and postmodernist) which can stimulate the independent work of mind of the future netters; b) to introduce the reader to the theory of netliterature, to give an idea of its potentials and the experience of the foreign (mainly Russian) authors. The choice of the material shows the existence of a selected highly educated cyber-experts, who took up the role of the teachers of the subject which is new to the majority – interactive literature.

The most characteristic figure of the Belarusian netliterature is Lena Nosova (a.k.a. Fanatic). She is a real fanatic of the Internet and netliterature, which become the subject of her works. Lena Nosova widely uses new for the Belarusian literature vocabulary – computer-electronic terminology. Thus in the untitled story (which begins with the words «The protocol of inspection of the scene») one can run across such words as «bynet», «flame», «flame operation», «kilobyte», «IREX», «online courtesan», «runet Olympus», «net kept woman»; the Internet addresses such as <http://inter.net.ru>/<http://inter.net.ru> are given, there are references to the well-known figures of Runet – Artemij Lebedev and Michail Verbitsky as well as to Belarusian virtuals who are author's good acquaintances, people of the same circle named with their nicks – DM, DF, Diogenes, Trubach (Trumpeter), Petrov-Vodkin, Passer-by, 432, Archangel Ofigel, Iphigenia, Morin, Domashevsky, Stsapan, Januk. The author plays with her own virtual personality of Fanatic, parodying the charges brought against her by the officious. Lena Nosova also practices the word-plays – the constituting part of the Belarusian electronic address «nsys.by» is deliberately in the comic purposes indicated ignorantly «Discussion Club“HCBIC”» (thus the author shows ironic attitude towards the activity of this club); the surname “Netskaya” is derived from the second part of the word «Internet» which stresses the free, burlesque style of the narration. The whole story also has a burlesque character.

In the spirit of the cyberpunk traditions (which allows the use of the unprintable word) the relations between the netters and the authorities are modulated, where the formers are treated as criminals as they can't be controlled by any of the «curator» bodies which deal with the issues

of social life. Internet in the story represents a hotbed of freedom in the society which is not free itself. This motive is characteristic for the Belarusian literature, while it is not present in the Russian one.

In spite of the complicated conditions of existence Belarusian virtual authors have their own though local Internet environment; as they are few practically no one passes unnoticed. Belnet critics and the workshop conductors not only initiate the birth of new type literature in their country but also give maximum support to its creators. They introduce to the public consciousness the notion of netliterature and Internet terminology thus expanding the field of Belarusian culture and laying the groundwork for Belarusian netliterature studies. Putting forward no new conceptual ideas Belarusian netters introduce new names, texts to the scientific use, stressing the national character of the created literature.

Undoubtedly the Belarusian critics dealing with netliterature follow lead of Russian researchers, which is however not surprising – due to its creative activity and the scale of the work done Runet holds the exceptional lead and intellectually nourishes all those willing to create independent net art. Still there is much to be done both for Russian and Belarusian literature studies in order to assimilate new area of literature and work out the adequate criteria of its evaluation. By the highest standards netliterature studies is in the very beginning of revealing its potential.

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Сетература как объект осмысления российских и белорусских исследователей

Сетература — новый феномен культуры, возникший в 80-е гг. XX в. в результате появления World Wide Web и распространения системы подключённых к ней персональных компьютеров, основанный на синтезе литературы и техники. В литературоведении данным термином принято обозначать тип литературных произведений, созданных с использованием возможностей интернетовских электронных устройств и обладающих качествами гипертекстовости, мультимедийности, динамизма, предназначенных для функционирования в Сети и интерактивной коммуникации с читателями. В России сетевая литература появляется вместе с Runet'ом и активно развивается с 1994 г. Первоописателями и теоретиками русской сетературы стали сами ее создатели — Алексей Андреев, Евгений Козловский, Роман Лейбов и др., к которым на рубеже веков подключились литературные критики Сергей Кузнецов, Сергей Корнев, Михаил Визель и др. Как самые характерные сетературные произведения (и одновременно креативные среды) выделены РОМАН, САД ХОККУ, ЧЕПУХА, РЕНГУРУ, ГРАФОМАНИЯ, БУРИМЕ, СОНЕТНИК. Сетература рассматривается как компьютерный аналог постмодернистской литературы и провозвестник новой эпохи в истории человечества — эпохи постмодерна. Выявляются её конкретные особенности, характеризуются различные сетературные проекты. Хотя киберпространство Интернета изучено в незначительном объёме, в России заложены теоретические и методологические основы для исследования сетевой литературы, дающие ключ к её пониманию. Российский опыт активно используется в других славянских странах, и прежде всего — в Беларуси.

Белорусская сетература еще только зарождается, тем не менее осмысление самого феномена сетературы с призывом её создавать в Belnet'е предпринимаются. Наиболее активно пропагандой сетературы, осмыслением и разъяснением ее особенностей занимаются Киберкувшинки — коллективная виртуальная личность, выступающая на сайте с таким же адресом. Активно апеллируют Киберкувшинки к российским источникам, но применяют свои познания к белорусскому материалу, приветствуя всяческие «интер» и «гипер», интерактивные игры.

Таким образом, в России теория сетературы возникает как обобщение уже сделанного авторами-виртуалами, в Беларуси же теория предшествует практике и носит форму просвещения с целью преодоления отставания.

Но и российской, и белорусской литературоведческой науке предстоит еще большая работа, чтобы во всём объёме освоить новую область литературы и выработать адекватные критерии ее оценки. По большому счёту, сетературоведение только начинает разворачивать свой потенциал.