

F2/Berlin

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**Авторское слово? Blogging writer-columnists on snob.ru – a new authorial position.**

In continuation of my first “Future” paper on authorial self-image and reader contact on Russian writers’ websites, I will explore another example of cybercultural self-staging: writers blogging within the closed community of snob.ru, specifically Vladimir Sorokin and Mikhail Elizarov. This time my broader interest is the role of the writer in contemporary Russia, in particular to which extent and in what areas this role is still considered somehow relevant (cf Wachtel).

In contrast to the open mass community of livejournal.com, snob.ru, being a project with certain explicit values and goals, “frames” its blogging club members in a distinct way. The blogger is aware of this frame when writing, just as the reader is when entering the club and opening the posts and comments. My analysis of the two snob-writers’ self-image will therefore begin from a characterisation of the club. A major challenge will be to gauge whether the label of “snob” is conceived as serious, ironic or perhaps both, and, when it comes to the writers, whether they agree between them on this basic mode.

In the central part of the analysis I will first consider the genre question, suggesting that these writers’ blogs alternate between or mix diaristic and “interviewee” writing, the former apparently stemming from a personal epistemological drive, the latter, as it were, providing answers to implicit questions about the blogger’s opinion, experience or living rules. Next, a closer look at the themes and styles of selected posts and their comments will perhaps enable me to answer the interesting question of the writer’s image – does he primarily, or alternately, consider himself an artist, a literateur, an intellectual, a citizen – or representative of a cultural elite? I do not expect to find signs of any prophet ambition, but will look out for national, social and ethical issues, as well as for questions of language and literature, of taste and culture (культу́рность). Although these blogs are interesting to me as literary writers’ products, I realise that I may well come to the conclusion that the role of writer has little relevance to the writer-blogger.

### **Reference**

Andrew Baruch Wachtel, 2006, *Remaining Relevant after Communism: The Role of the Writer in Eastern Europe*, U of Chicago Press.