

WHERE POSTMODERN PROVOCATION MEETS SOCIAL STRATEGY: “DEEP INTO RUSSIA”

Ellen Rutten

If 1990s Russia was not short of spicy artistic experiments, then within the literary sphere Vladimir Sorokin stood out as one of its most drastic *provocateurs*. As a rule, Sorokin’s porn- and violence-ridden oeuvre is regarded by literary criticism and theory as the product of a radically postmodern world view and a sternly aesthetic vision on literature and culture. This is hardly surprising for a writer who claimed more than once that he puts “mere letters on a piece of paper” without having any social or moral intentions (see, for instance, Sorokin 1992: 121). Yet this strictly literary-intrinsic explanation does not suffice to explain a transition that can be witnessed in Sorokin’s writing career in the early 1990s. A close view of the context in which his work – and more particularly, the project *Deep Into Russia* (*V glub’ Rossii*, 1994), for which he cooperated with artist Oleg Kulik – arose, shows that from that period onwards, Sorokin’s provocations are liable to have been tinged by more than purely postmodern-literary considerations.

It doesn’t take hours of scrupulous reading to see that literary theorists are inclined to focus in the first place on the world *within* Sorokin’s texts. The title of what can be considered the leading academic book publication on him so far is *Poetik der Metadiskursivität* (Burkhardt 1999); and the titles of the articles in that collection are mostly construed according to the scheme “theme X in the oeuvre of (or work Y by) Sorokin”. The same goes for literary handbooks, as well as articles on Sorokin in renowned literary-theoretical journals. “Poetics”,

“works”, “texts” – these terms unmistakably show that the intraliterary world is a first concern in “Sorokinology”.

While meticulous study of the texts themselves is naturally vital to an understanding of Sorokin’s work, their interpretation can be enriched by a sociologically inspired glance at the social or economic setting in which they were conceived. Of particular interest to such a perspective is the period right after the collapse of the Soviet Union, when Sorokin and his colleagues were confronted with the replacement of Soviet communism by a free market. Studies of contemporary Russian literature have repeatedly stressed the consequences of this economic-political transition for the Russian literary field (see, among others, Lavynina / Dewhirst 2001; Berg 2000; Shneidman 1995; Shneidman 2002; Wachtel 2006). “Remaining relevant after communism”, to quote the title of Andrew Wachtel’s study on contemporary Eastern-European writers, required inventive strategies on the part of the author. Wachtel asserts that, “[w]hile it would be difficult to prove that a given writer chose to produce one or another kind of literary work in a conscious effort to retain relevance and/or prestige in the conditions of postcommunism”, “significant numbers of writers in a variety of countries” follow “similar strategies” in their effort to cope with post-socialist political reality (Wachtel 2006: 6).

To adopt a coping strategy was certainly important in early-1990s literary Russia, where the new political and economic situation forced authors to adjust to a radically new social environment. If the perestrojka had seemed an exclusively positive development at first, now it gradually became clear that “the new realities posed enormous difficulties for serious writers” both from official and non-official circles (*idem*). These difficulties included the termination of state subsidies; decreasing consumer demand because of the tight economic situation; the need to compete with new contenders on the book market, such as previously forbidden books and pulp fiction; and a loss of interest for Russian books in the West now that they failed the lustre of being written in “exotic” Soviet society (Wachtel 2006: 6, 47, 67, 218). If state subsidy was no factor to reckon with for Sorokin, whose texts had until then either circulated underground or were published in small editions abroad, then the

competition with other formerly “illegal” texts and the declining interest in non-official Russian authors outside Russia could prove problematic for someone who was about to break through on an international literary scale.¹ It was in this insecure period, on a hot July day in 1993, that Sorokin and Oleg Kulik set out on the trip to the countryside around Moscow that would ultimately result in *Deep Into Russia*: an album with photographs depicting Kulik and accompanying texts by Sorokin, and an ensuing art installation. What the original trip was like is probably best explained by Kulik himself, who extensively describes the trip in an interview:

Решили [Кулик и Сорokin – ER] просто поехать, может быть, что-нибудь и придумается, сложится. Без всякой особенной цели. Но, на всякий случай, я захватил двух фотографов, с энтузиазмом поехал милейший Иосиф Бакштейн... [...] Мы поехали на двух машинах - в Тверскую область [...]. Путешествие оказалось интересным. Верховья Волги, берёзы, берега... [...] Общение с местной публикой - пьянki-вышиванки, разговоры, фотографирование - всё это дало нам гигантское количество материалов. (Bavil'skij 2002)

(We [Kulik and Sorokin – ER] simply decided to go, perhaps we would come up with something, things would work out. We had no concrete goal. But just in case I took two photographers with me, and sweet Joseph Backstein [appointed in 1991 as director of Moscow's Institute of Contemporary Art – ER] enthusiastically consorted us [...]. We went with two cars to the Tver region [...]. The trip proved very interesting. The Volga riverhead, birches, the embankments... [...]. The talks with the local population, the drinking bouts, the talking, taking pictures – all that provided us with an enormous amount of material.)

The book that Sorokin and he intended to make, thus Kulik, was the result of “many conversations” that they had at the time, “about Russia and about the fate of all of humanity. About the crisis of human culture. About metaphysics” (Bavil'skij 2002).

So far the description of the project echoes stereotypes from pastoral idyls and from the classical Russian novel: if one would replace the cars with carriages, the photographers with painters and perhaps omit the drinking bouts, one could easily imagine one of Turgenev's heroes saying the above.

But *Deep Into Russia* is not the innocent ode to Russian nature and the Russian countryside that the quotes mentioned suggest. The book that resulted from the Tver journey is an album in which photographs of idyllic country vistas alternate with unequivocally zoophilic pictures in which Kulik is depicted having – vaginal and anal as well as oral – sexual intercourse with a variety of (mostly domestic) animals. If Ekaterina Dëgot’ describes these as “scenes of *imitated zoophilism*” (Dëgot’ in Burkhardt 1999: 225; my italics – ER), then Kulik himself uses much detail to convince the reader that they feature actual sexual actions which satisfied carnal feelings of both artist and animal (Bavil’skij 2002). The photographs are accompanied by short text fragments in which Sorokin re-enacts Russian literary and linguistic styles from Turgenevian writing to *mat* and from Village Prose to porn. Apart from these strictly textual contributions, Sorokin also participates in the visual part of the album: on its last spread, his text is juxtaposed to a picture of Sorokin himself, posing in a wooden barn with a stick in his hands and a neutral-friendly expression on his face. After the publication of this “photo album”, *Deep Into Russia* was repeatedly staged under the same title as an art installation where visitors could stick their heads into the rear end of an enormous papier-mâché cow. In cinematographic form, they were confronted with a similar alternation of picturesque rural settings and zoophilic actions as in the book.

The above will leave little doubt that *Deep Into Russia* was a highly provocative enterprise that evoked many offended reactions. Literary theory and art criticism defied this reaction and instead explained the album’s obscene character in artistic or philosophical terms, as an “initiation to the primordial natural element realized in the act of coition with ‘children of *nature*’” (Misiano 2001), or, in Kulik’s own words, as the “clos[ing of] the theme of reality [...]”. Just as Malevich closed the theme of painting with his Black Square. Inside the cow I realised that there is no reality, and that means that reality is still to be discovered” (Kulik 2005). Sorokin-authorities tend to interpret the project within the larger frame of the latter’s oeuvre, as yet another provocative postmodern play with literary and cultural stereotypes – in this case, with “‘rural’ and ‘bodily’ plots” (Dëgot’ in Burkhardt 1999: 224-225).

Sorokin and Kulik indeed embarked on *Deep Into Russia* not as plain *provocateurs* (a role that they consistently deny in all comments on their work)² and not without an artistic mission. The project is one of many artistic expressions of Kulik's preoccupation with the relation man – animal and of his critique of anthropocentrism, which he developed in the theoretical program *Zoophrenia* in the same period together with his wife Mila Bredichina and which until today is a major issue in his art installations and performances (see, among others, Misiano 2001); and Sorokin's texts, in which contrasting styles and linguistic layers meet, concur with his 1980s' writings departing from postmodern and Moscow-conceptualist premises.

Yet it makes sense to study the influence of additional – non-artistic, non-metaphysical and non-literary – factors on the outlines of the project. That the final product was affected by more than purely artistic considerations becomes clear particularly upon taking a closer look at its public presentation.

Sorokin and Kulik meticulously portray their journey to the countryside and the ensuing book and art work as a chaotic friends-among-themselves project: in the quote mentioned, Kulik depicts the trip to the Tver' region as a spontaneous act; the book appeared in a limited edition of 500 copies whose first pages were all personally numbered and signed by the authors, often with informal-humorous comments; the book itself was badly bound, "as if glued by old ladies" (Tiškov 1998); and the printed invitation to its presentation contains handwritten corrections of mistakes in the address.³ This deliberately unofficial presentation recalls the *samizdat* publication tradition among underground intellectuals in Soviet Russia, whose necessarily shoddy-looking handmade appearance gradually became fashionable as a symbol of the intellectual independence of unofficial literature.

Deep Into Russia thus emphatically evokes an informal impression. This impression does not comply entirely with reality: in truth, the project does not date from the Soviet years; it is no product of non-official dissident culture; and neither was it a mere spontaneous initiative of a group of informal friends. By the time that Kulik and Sorokin undertook their Tver' trip, Sorokin, as said, was already on the brink of an international career. In addition, he had been known

by a relatively broad Russian public since 1992, when his novel *The Queue* (*Očered'*) appeared in the journal *Iskusstvo kino* and a collection of his stories, published by Russlit, was shortlisted for the Russian Booker Prize.⁴ Kulik was no longer an underground figure in the Russian art scene either: by 1993 he had had a number of solo exhibitions and participated in group exhibitions in Russia as well as Finland, Poland and Italy; in 1990, he was granted a fund from the New York-based Pollock-Krasner foundation, and between 1990 and 1993 he was the director of the Regina Gallery in Moscow.⁵ The “sweet Joseph Backstein” who accompanied the two artists on their excursion is in fact a world-renowned curator who had by then cooperated repeatedly with American museums and had in 1991 been appointed as director of the newly-founded Institute of Contemporary Art in Moscow (a function that he fulfills until today).⁶ The opening page of *Deep Into Russia* states that the book was “published with support from” the same Institute of Contemporary Art (see Sorokin / Kulik 1994), which was also the place where the project was presented in public in March 1995. Although that presentation was, again, consciously displayed to guests as an underground incrowd affair, in reality it formed a grand artistic event that was attended by an international audience and representatives of several mainstream media.⁷

To conclude, the bad binding of the book is not the inevitable result of material shortcomings and official repression, but an intentional reference to underground culture and an extension of the play with cultural clichés within the book, as Kulik himself eagerly discloses in an interview:

Сделать её согласился энтузиаст, Игорь Пронин, который ночью, с каким-то типографом, всё это печатал. Мы решили выдержать эстетику самиздата, “деревенской книги” до конца и нашли переплётчика, который на очень хреновых машинах, пьяными руками, делал “французский переплёт” – с кожаными уголками и золотым тиснением. Но херово...

The book was produced by an enthusiast, Igor' Pronin, who printed all of it at night with some typographer. We decided to stick to the aesthetics of *samizdat*, of the ‘village book’, to the very end, and we found a binder who made a ‘French binding’

on very shitty machines, with drunk hands, completely with leather-made corners and golden imprint. Only dingy... (Bavil'skij 2002)

The dowdy sphere that surrounds the project is thus the result of a conscious presentation by artists who were comparatively well at home in the international literary and art world by the time of its making. Therefore it is hardly surprising that the album's succes did not halt at the initial limited edition: the text was translated into German and published in the internationally renowned *Lettre International* a mere year after its Russian publication (Sorokin 1995). Yet another year later excerpts from "In die Tiefe Russlands" were presented (as underground art, in the *Moskauer Bücher aus dem Samizdat* series) in another German edition published in Bremen (Sorokin 1990).

The history of the accompanying art installation was even more of a formal success story than that of the book. *Deep Into Russia* was first staged as an exhibition at the Venice Biennale in 1997, where it was allegedly admired by "curious crowds" wanting to see "the Biennale's most perverse spectacle" (Vetrocq 1997: 13). In 2001 it was shown in the S.M.A.K. museum in Gent, which purchased one papier-mâché cow as part of the permanent collection. By today, the installation has been shown at the Museum of Modern Art in Moscow (2005), at the Ludwig Muzeum in Budapest (2005), and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Antwerp (2005), among other places. In other words, *Deep Into Russia* proved a crucial factor in Kulik's international break-through, and neither was it an unfavourable career step for Sorokin, whose accompanying texts were not only translated in the German editions mentioned, but shown at some of the exhibitions as well.

Kulik never made a secret of his satisfaction with the institutional acclaim and commercial success that this and other projects granted him. Thus, in an interview he explains his participation in an early-1990s "animalistic festival" with performances comparable to the zoophilic acts in *Deep Into Russia* as partly motivated by the simple "нужно было как-то жить [...]" ("need [...] to live somehow")¹⁰ – in other words, to earn some money (Bavil'skij 2002). He extensively discusses the strategic-commercial dimension of his art in a 2003 interview with art and literary critic Ekaterina Dëgot':

Олег Кулик На Западе я себя позиционирую как русский, но всегда очень понятный, очень ясный, очень западный по форме. Настолько понятный, что в некоторых проектах и русского-то, кроме лейбла, ничего не остается. [...] Я больше всего боюсь потерять интерес к себе. Потому что иначе все бессмысленно в современном мире. [...] Эту ситуацию я проживал в 1980-е [...]. *Екатерина Деготь* Можно сказать, что твоя стратегия как-то изменилась в тот момент, когда ты понял, что на русское есть какой-то спрос. *Олег Кулик* Стратегия не изменилась. Просто она стала более осознанной. Большого спроса на русское, кстати, нет. Но есть спрос на искренность и убедительность. И именно русская тематика дает эту искренность и убедительность. И это выглядит гораздо адекватнее, нежели когда ты работаешь с западными канонами, которые тебя слабо поддерживают, слабо питают. Ты не можешь конкурировать, например, с Дугласом Гордоном, который вырос из этой культуры. (Dëgot' / Kulik 2003)

(*Oleg Kulik*: In the West I position myself as Russian, but always very understandable, very clear, very western in form. Understandable to such an extent that in some projects nothing Russian remains expect for the label. [...] Most of all, I am afraid to lose people's interest in me. Because without that everything is pointless in today's world. [...] I experienced that situation in the 1980s. *Ekatерina Dëgot'*: One could say, that you adapted your strategy somehow when you understood that there is such a demand for anything Russian. *Oleg Kulik*: I did not adjust my strategy. It just became more conscious. By the way, there is no big demand for anything Russian. But there is a demand for sincerity and persuasiveness. And specifically the Russian issue can offer that sincerity and persuasiveness. That looks a whole lot more adequate than working with the Western canon, which hardly supports or feeds you. It is impossible to compete with Douglas Gordon, for instance, who grew up in that culture.)

In the context in which Kulik uses them here, terms such as “to position oneself”, “strategy”, “demand”, “label”, “support”, “feed” and “compete” clearly refer to the economic sphere.⁸

In the same interview, Kulik refers to *Deep Into Russia* as a project that was “very much concocted beforehand” (Dëgot' / Kulik 2003). In combination with the institutionalized framework within which the book arose and was presented, this marks it as a project that consciously aimed at “institutional consecration”, “temporal renown” and “economic resources” no less than at

“symbolic recognition” and “cultural resources”, to speak with the theoretical language that sociologist Gisèle Sapiro has applied to the French literary field (cf. Sapiro 2002: 392; 2003: 641); the project’s success shifted Kulik’s status as a writer from a “dominated” towards a “dominant position” in the international art market (idem).⁹

Analysts of Kulik’s work have repeatedly confirmed this conscious striving for economic success and a large public. Gesine Drews-Sylla, for one, compared Kulik’s *Reservoir Dog* performances (where he assumes the role of a wild dog and attacks museum visitors while crawling around naked on hands and knees) with Quentin Tarantino’s *Reservoir Dogs* as two examples of how art that is generally regarded as unofficial or alternative is integrated into large-scale commercial structures (Drews-Sylla 2004: par. 5). In Drews-Sylla’s view, the posing of Kulik as a stereotypically savage Russian – a wild dog – takes place within “Unterhaltungskultur” rather than in an unofficial-subversive sphere; to her, it is no coincidence that Kulik does not actually bite during the performances in question, and that he makes his alleged victims often laugh rather than provoking genuine shock (idem). Backstein, the same curator who was present at the *Deep Into Russia* trip, equally links Moscow Conceptualism – and thus Kulik, whom he considers its major representative – with commercial issues:

[...] [t]he [principal] topic [in Moscow Conceptualism] of [intellectual] survival gained an additional relevance in the changed circumstances of the 1990s and has done so to the present day – in so far as the theme of an artist’s survival in the context of the market economy is now the crucial question, at a time when art increasingly runs the risk of being dissolved into the structures of the culture industry [...]. (Backstein 2005: 20)

Konstantin Bochorow similarly speaks of the influence of economic shifts on Kulik’s work in the art catalogue *Davaj! Russian Art Now*. Bochorow characterises the “Moskauer Radikalen” as “ein Produkt des werdenden Kapitalismus in Russland”, and their key “Vertreter” Oleg Kulik as “pragmatisch und im internationalen Kontext äußerst gefragt” (Bochorow 2002: 104).

If one is to believe the above theoreticians, then practical-strategic intentions must also have coloured the launching – as well as the eventual contents – of *Deep Into Russia*. However, whereas the possibility of such intentions is no secret as far as Kulik is concerned, it is rarely to never discussed in the context of Sorokin’s oeuvre. This notwithstanding the fact that the early 1990s formed an important phase in the latter’s transformation from an underground writer into the internationally successful author that he is today. Sorokin did mark specifically this period as one of radical change in his career when he recently claimed that strictly postmodern literary experiments stopped interesting him after the 1980s and that between that point and today “изменился и сам автор” (‘the author himself has changed’), just like authors always “меняются во времени и пишут совсем не то, что двадцать лет назад” (‘change in the course of time, and they write things that differ radically from what they wrote twenty years ago’) (Sorokin 2005a).

A theoretician who does locate a change in Sorokin’s oeuvre and self-presentation in this particular period is Ekaterina Dëgot’. Dëgot’ claims that *Deep Into Russia* marks the often-overlooked beginning of a second phase in the author’s career after a period of relative silence following the collapse of Soviet Russia (Dëgot’ 2006). If Dëgot’ does not specify in what respects this new phase differs from the preceding years, then interviews of the early 1990s suggest that what sets the “second-phase Sorokin” apart from his initial existence as an underground artist is his wish to reach a broad public. Characteristic is his assertion in a 1993 interview that

only visual genres offer any perspectives at this moment. [...] Literature has stopped being everyday speech, and its place has now been taken by television [...]. In my view, literature can only be reborn if it comes to us through film and television (Sorokin quoted in Burkhart 1999: 213).

This claim coincides with Sorokin’s actual switch from the literary to the visual or cinematographic sphere: the film for which he wrote his first scenario, *Crazy Fritz* (*Bezumnoj Fritz*, 1994), was shown on television in May 1994. Since then, Sorokin has remained an eager scenario writer, whose website includes a

“filmography” of six titles, half of which can be bought online.¹⁵ His endeavors in the cinematographic sphere immediately drew a much larger public than the author’s texts had ever done before. *Crazy Fritz*, a film touching upon stereotypical representations of German fascists, was shown on television on May 9, the day on which Russians commemorate the end of World War II and on which many Russian televisions are liable to be switched on. Sorokin’s later scenarios – including *Moscow* (*Moskva*, 2000) and *4* (2005) – featured in films that were even more successful, being shown at film festivals throughout Europe and bringing him popularity as a script-writer both inside Russia and internationally. Accordingly, if Sabine Hansgen is correct in judging Sorokin’s turn to visual media in the early 1990s as an intentional attempt to redefine his role in the “commercializing cultural system” that followed “the end of the Soviet imperium”, then this attempt has clearly been successful (Hansgen in Burkhart 1999: 213).

Between the early 1990s and today, Sorokin has thus developed into an internationally known and recognized figure in the cinematographic sphere. From approximately the year 2000 onwards he has turned into a commercial success in the literary sphere as well: in the early 2000s, the same author who claimed as recent as 1998 to “approve of elitism in art, of art not being available for everybody” (Sorokin 1998) started producing popular sci-fi page turners (*Ljod* [*Ice*, 2002], *Put’ Bro* [*Bro’s Way*, 2004], *23.000* [2006]) and entrusting them to best-seller publisher Zakharov, where they indeed managed to reach a broad public; in 2005, he wrote and published the libretto for an opera by Leonid Desjatnikov (*Deti Rožentalja* [*Rosenthal’s Children*]) commissioned by Moscow’s prestigious Bolshoi Theatre and allegedly created to “evoke sincere and exalted feelings among *normal* people” (Sorokin 2005; my italics); and from the early 2000s onwards, he offers a professional website which anno 2007 contains a biography and bibliography, numerous interviews, photographs of the author, press reviews of his work and the possibility to read and purchase much of that work online.

Thus the elitist-conceptualist Sorokin of the 1970s and 1980s has by now transformed into a public pet and writer-for-the-masses – a “new Sorokin”, as a

recent study terms it (Bogdanova 2005: 44). The steps that this “new Sorokin” takes suggest that they are at least partly motivated by economic considerations. Theoretical studies of his recent writings have indeed taken his possible economic motivations into account (Smirnov 2003: 207-09, Brouwer 2006). Ultimately, however, they view Sorokin’s popular-commercial strategy not so much as a strictly economically motivated manoeuvre, but rather as part of a highly sophisticated literary play – a play with the expectations that the “new economic criticism” bestows upon authors, insisting upon their need to make a living (*idem*). A subtle play with the reader’s and critic’s expectations is indeed implied by some of Sorokin’s recent assertions. Apart from his wish to move “normal people” to tears with his opera libretto (see above), these included his alleged anger at Wittgenstein’s everything-is-text motto:

не все люди на земле видят вместо камня только его образ. Есть такие, которые видят и просто камень. Это – дети, старики. Или просто – не очень грамотные люди, крестьяне, например (Sorokin 2005a).

(Not everyone sees the image of a stone rather than the stone itself. Some people just see a stone. Children, older people, for instance. Or simply people without much education, farmers, for instance.)

Hearing the author of *The Norm* celebrating “normal people” and echoing Soviet-like praises of “children, older people” and “farmers” is something that inevitably arouses suspicion.

It seems correct to conclude that Sorokin’s shift towards commercially profitable projects is all part of the game, i.e. of his beloved play with literary and representational stereotypes, in which he now turns his very own public image into stereotype-to-be-mocked. However, with the above I hope to have shown that – even if postmodern play is in no way absent from Sorokin’s more recent work – economic factors must have influenced his move into the popular-public sphere to at least some extent.

Deep Into Russia is crucial in this respect. It was this work with which Sorokin broke his temporary artistic silence after Soviet communism was replaced by a free market. It was this work in which he first faced the task of “remaining

relevant after communism”, to use Wachtel’s phrase. And it was this work with which he chose to set foot in the visual sphere that brought him broad national and international recognition. The role that these practical-economic factors played in the genesis of Kulik’s and Sorokin’s project cannot but affect our analysis of it: they demonstrate that the Sorokin of the early 1990s was much less of an underground figure and much more of a consciously public-oriented artist than is often acknowledged. More extensive analysis is liable to show that the same goes for many of his colleagues in the muddled years right after the perestrojka, when dissident culture swiftly became an anachronism and regaining relevance in the new politico-economic reality was a *sine qua non*. That task may exceed the boundaries of a single article, but the above analysis does imply that the “new Sorokin” was born as early as 1993, when the postmodern provocation of early works and the public-oriented strategy of his post-Soviet career first met.

Notes

¹ Starting from 1985, Sorokin’s work had been published repeatedly in France, Great Britain and Germany (for details, see www.srkn.ru/bibliography/).

² See on this, among other places, Sorokin in [Sorokin 1992: 121](#); and [Kulik in Bavi’skiĭ 2002](#).

³ Since the book appeared in a limited edition mostly for acquaintances, friends and other artists, it cannot be viewed in a regular library. I will gladly provide scans of the book and of the invitation to its presentation upon request from info@ellenrutzen.nl.

⁴ See <http://www.srkn.ru/biography/>.

⁵ For Kulik’s biography, see <http://www.artnet.com/artist/9898/oleg-kulik.html> and <http://why.botik.ru/ARTS/contemporary/362/BIOART/BKULIK.HTM>.

⁶ For a biography of Joseph Backstein, see <http://uchcom.botik.ru/ARTS/contemporary/362/BIOART/BBACKST.HTM>.

⁷ Personal communication with British art historian Rosalind Polly Blakesley, who visited the opening.

⁸ This is particularly true for the Russian original, in which the words “label”, “to position oneself” and “to compete” are literal translations from English originals (“leĭbl”, “pozicioniruju”, “konkurrirovat”), used particularly in the business language of post-perestrojka Russia.

⁹ In highly successful sociological studies of the French literary field, Sapiro contrasts “dominant writers” (i.e. those with a socially dominating or strong positions; mostly “aesthetes” or “notabilities”) to “dominated writers” (i.e., those with a socially weak position; mostly “avant-garde writers” or “journalists”). She compares them to one another “on the basis of the total volume of their capital of [global] renown”, whereby this renown can vary between “symbolic”

(i.e. non-material, for the aesthetes and avant-garde artists) and “temporal” (i.e. material, economic/political, for notabilities and journalists) renown, “depending on its degree of independence with respect to the larger public’s expectations” (Sapiro 2003: 641).

¹⁰ See www.srkn.ru/bibliography/.

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