"Real Padonki:" A Cultural Model Performed Through Language.

A Case Study of an Online Discourse Community of Creative Writers.

by

Olena Oliynyk

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Graduate Supervisory Committee:

Maureen Daly Goggin, Chair
James Gee
Eric Margolis

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

This longitudinal exploratory research study examines a Russian language online community of creative writers who refer to themselves as Real Padonki. Grounded theory was used as the method of data collection and analysis. Based on analysis of the texts published on udaff.com and interactions between the members of this community several conclusions were made. It is proposed that udaff.com should be viewed as an online resource for writers who have created a new form of literature: post-Soviet Russian literature. This new of form literature is characterized by several features that distinguish it from previous forms. This new form of literature is based on the cultural model of a Real Padonak - a new kind of person that embodies both the writer and the hero (a new archetype) created by this writer. In the same way as dissident writers made criminal argot a part of Russian literature, the writers of udaff.com rely on the use of Albanskij, a linguistic innovation, a variation of the Russian language that they have created. Finally, this new literature uses the Internet as its main medium of publication. As a new archetype, Real Padonak represents a continuum of characters (real life people as well as invented literary characters) created by udaff.com writers. From the perspective of Discourse analysis, the cultural model of Real Padonak is shown as multiglossia of Discourses that represent beliefs, attitudes, values, and practices that exist in contemporary Russian society.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Interest and Standpoint

This dissertation presents the results of an exploratory research study of a Russian language online community of creative writers who 'meet' at udaff.com – a website often called *Udav's resource.* This name came from the nickname of *Udav* - the founder and administrator of the website. Members of this community refer to themselves as *'Padonki'* - a Russian word best translated into the English language as *scum bags* implying people who live at the bottom of society. Over the years, this community developed and introduced a specific style of creative writing which is sometimes referred to as "alter lit" – alternative literature. This community is also famous for practicing a special kind of Discourse – the Discourse of *Real Padonki.* Both practices are based on *Albanskij* – a linguistic innovation most commonly referred to by the community itself as *'padonkavskiy jargon'* and the cultural model of a *Real Padonak.*

Figure 1 below presents the screen shot of the front page of the website. It features the opening statement of udaff.com that describes this website as a resource created for a "special kind of people." This statement reads: "This resource is created for real padonki. Those who don't like the words DICK and CUNT can fuck off. The rest are having fun!" (Udav 2000). Figure 1 also shows the logo of *Real Padonki*: right hand with four fingers gather in a fist and a middle finger sticking out and holding a piece of red stripe with white words "UDAFF.COM."

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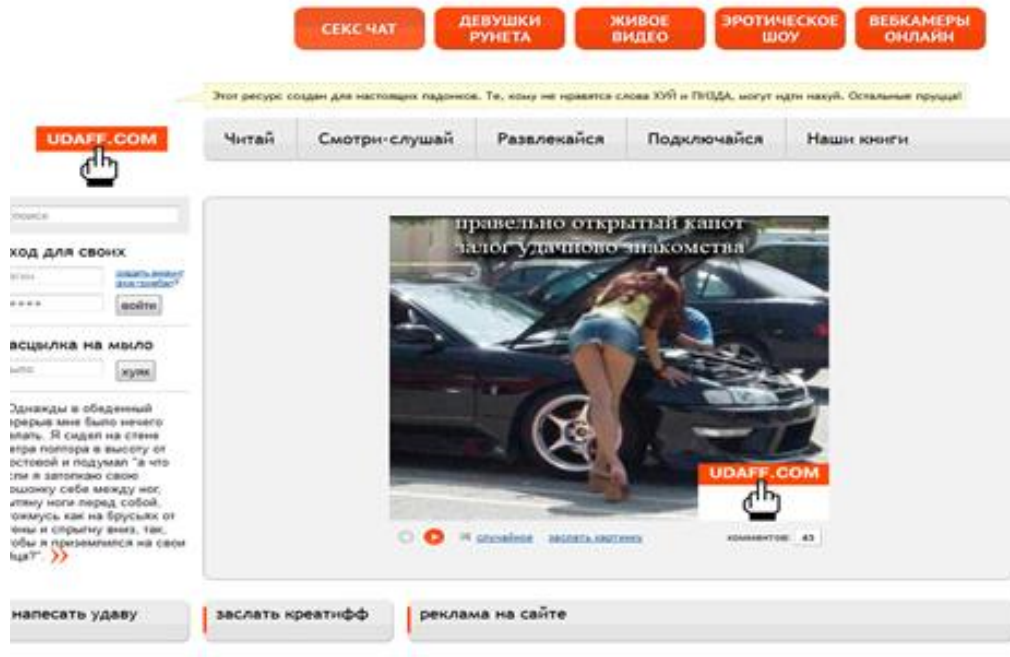
Figure 1. Front page of udaff.com

An online guide to the world of Russian language Internet describes the phenomenon of *Padonki* in the following way:

[This is] Russian language internet sub culture [that] positions itself as an alternative culture, and a culture of protest; [it] belongs to Russian Trash Culture [and] is based on creative provocation [that] uses a lot of stigmatized vocabulary, intended incorrect spelling and specific word choice.[1] (Padonki, 2006)

The oldest Russian ethnographic dictionary I consulted (Dal', 1863 – 66) defines the word *podonki*[2] as "impurities present in a liquid that filtered down to the very bottom

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[1] This definition came from a Russian language version of Urban Dictionary. It was retrieved in 2006 from the website with the following URL www.wnav.ru/Entertainment/Other/60360.htm. However, in 2015 this website did not function any longer.

[2] ПОДОНКИ

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of a glass or bottle.[3]" Later the meaning of the word changed and came to mean people who existed at the very bottom of society, were considered worthless and treated with scorn. A contemporary online Russian-English dictionary translates *podonki* as scum, dregs, refuse, off-scouring, bottom, lees, and etc. (Google, Russian-English Dictionary, 2015). The word *podonok* or *padonok* does not have a feminine form. Women are called *pelotki* or *pilotki,* which is also a *Padonki* term for female genitals. *Padonki women* - another term commonly used for women – simply attributes women to male members of the community of Padonki.

I first discovered Udav's resource in 2004. A graduate student with a strong interest in linguistics, I saw a group of people communicating online in a variation of the Russian language that seemed to violate every single rule of grammar and spelling. Yet, it was not gibberish; the writing published on udaff.com was comprehensible and meaningful. I read one text and found it interesting. I continued reading texts published on the website and soon realized that something else was going on in this community that presented significant interest and called for deeper analysis. I discovered the capital D Discourse of *Real Padonki* – a fascinating mix of systems of values, beliefs, attitudes, and ways being that were presented through the cultural model of a *Real Padonak* – a special kind of person who also "spoke" (wrote) in a special kind of language - *Albanskij*. Thus, while I initially entered the world of padonki from the standpoint of a linguist, it soon changed to that of a beginner Discourse analyst who is trying to see past linguistic form and into the higher level of meaning.

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[3]"муж., мн. осадок, гуща, осед, отсед, что опало на дно, село, выделившись из мутной жидкости" (Даль, 1863-66, p. 12)

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I was fascinated by the creative and provocative experimentation with language embodied in *Albanskij* (or *Padonki Jargon)*, but it was also clear that the phenomenon of *Real Padonki* is going way beyond language only. Around the same time I encountered the view of capital D Discourse presented by Gee(2005).[4]

> Discourses are ways of being "people like us." They are "ways of being in the
> world"; they are "forms of life"; they are socially situated identities. They are,
> thus, … products of social histories (2008, p.3).

Gee's description of capital D Discourses as "ways of being," "socially situated identities," and "products of social histories" seemed to be pointing directly at Udav's resource turning it into a Discourse community. The definition cited also suggested the analogy with dissident writers. This analogy, in its turn, opened the view of udaff.com as a literary resource.

Although I was not aware of it at the time, I was reading udaff.com as a text and a narrative. I discovered a new layer of literature – Post Soviet Internet based literature. As a person who shares cultural and linguistic background with the people who contribute to udaff.com,[5] I was able to connect with the community which I was studying. Although I never deviated from the method of non-participant observation and thus never participated in the activities of the resource, on a certain level (as was later pointed out by James Paul Gee) I did identify with the community of udaff.com. As

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[4] In this dissertation I primarily cite later editions of Gee's books: 2005, 2007, and 2008. However, initially I got introduced to his earlier publications published in 1990-1999.

[5] Udaff.com writers and I are Russian speakers who share the experience of being born in former USSR and later living through the collapse of the old system.

suggested by Rosenblatt (1978) and Esenwein (1919) shared cultural background inevitably influenced my interpretation, my reading of the world of *padonki*.

Eventually, however, my standpoint changed one more time. As the protests on Majdan Square in Kiev in 2014 turned in a revolution that later resulted in a military conflict with Russia, I was forced to take a political stance. In a way, I was required to establish my identity. Thus, a new standpoint was added, that of an American-Ukrainian. This standpoint brought me to a new view of the community which I was studying: I did not feel as "one of them" any more. On the contrary, the attitudes and opinions expressed by the members of udaff.com put people like me into the position of "the other" and sometimes almost dehumanized "other." At this point I had to "disown" *Real Padonki*.

The exploratory nature of this dissertation does not allow to limit it to any one specific discipline. As an interdisciplinary research project my study of udaff.com crosses the borders of several disciplines. It started in linguistics because initially my research interest was limited to *Albanskij* as a linguistic phenomenon; later I realized that this "language" or jargon was tied to the cultural model of a *Real Padonak,* so naturally the study moved into the field of discourse analysis, which also helped me to see udaff.com as a community that practices a special kind of discourse – capital D Discourse of *Real Padonki*. The fact that udaff.com is an online community: all main practices of this community as well as interactions between its members happen online, predetermined the component of Internet Ethnography. Finally, when I realized that the main practice of the community has two equally important components: being *Real Padonki* and being good padonki *writers*, the last discipline – literature study was added.

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Adding this last discipline also brought about the view of udaff.com as a new layer, a new cycle in the development of Russian literature.

I started writing the dissertation with a very broad question in my mind, that could be best formulated as "There is something going on here (on udaff.com), and I want to know what." Translated into scientific terms, this question sounds as "I want to understand the true nature of the phenomenon I am observing and explain the relationships between its components." This question eventually was divided into three questions each presenting a task that needed to be accomplished.

The first question was formulated as *"What is Udaff.com?"* This question called for the analysis of purposes, functions, and organization of the resource itself. The second question was formulated as "*What is happening on Udaff.com?"* It required me to examine the activities and practices happening on udaff.com. Answers to these two questions are given in the chapter two that gives a twofold representation of Udav's resource: as a literary resource for writers who call themselves *Real Padonki* and a as community of practice that practices capital D Discourse of *Real Padonki*. The third question asked the obvious: "*If this resource is created for "Real Padonki," then who (or what) are "Real Padonki?"* This question is answered in chapters three and four. Chapter three looks at *Real Padonki* as *real life people* behind their udaff.com profiles, and chapter four examines *Real Padonki* as literary characters. The final chapter touches on the problem of the connection between *Real Padonki* and *counter-culture* and proposes the solution to this problem through the view of Real Padonki as *writers* who are creating a new kind of literature. The final chapter also explains the significance of this study, points out its limitations, and suggests directions for future research.

Methodology and Challenges

This research project began with a discovery: I discovered udaff.com. It also began with a problem: my research question was too broad, and my understanding of the data with which I was working did not allow to "narrow it down." At the same time, my study did not carry a hypothesis that could be tested; neither did it fit into any one theory or discipline. Both issues pointed at the fact that my research was exploratory. According to Patricia Shield (2013), it meant that the problem I was trying to solve did not have a clear definition. It also meant I had to invent the design of my study, develop my own system of data collection, classification, and codes in the course of the study itself.

The challenges of formulating my research questions, choosing the right kind of methodology as well as the difficulties I experienced collecting and coding my data were to a big degree pre-determined by the kind of data I was working with. Stebbins (2010) believes that "Internet data are best suited for exploratory research. … [because] they are almost always descriptive and, therefore, helpful in sketching an *ethnographic*[6] portrait of the activities in question" (p. 472). He also points out the ability of the Internet sources to provide "ever greater variety of material ... [searching through which] is akin to reading books, magazines, newsletters, newspapers, and the like" (Stebbins, 2010, p. 470-472). Both features were present in the data I was working with. From the early stages of data collection I was impressed with the amount and variety of the material I had discovered: countless samples of interpersonal exchanges; pieces of creative writing in

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[6] Emphasis added

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multiple genres in both prose and poetry; transcripts of interviews; video recordings of interviews; finally there were photos and edited images. The amount of data I had to my disposal was unbelievable.

In traditional studies, a researcher observes a site (e.g. a classroom, a meeting of people during a dinner time or at a club) for a fixed amount of time, records conversations and interactions happening at that site, codes the data and conducts analysis. The researcher then is left with a finite amount of data: certain number of audio or video recordings, and certain number of transcripts, notes made during observations, etc. The data are "fixed" and will not change. The sites like udaff.com can be best compared to a river: for as long as the site functions, it will be changing. Udav's resource is a live community that lives and changes in response to changes in the situation around them.

According to Groot (2014), my initial question "there is something going on here, tell me what is it?" is a natural starting point of a research project guided by the logic of "material-exploration." In these kinds of studies a researcher approaches his or her data saying "this is interesting material; let us see what we can find" and works through this material looking for patterns and associations that are "promising something[7]" (pp.188-189). In a "material-exploration" kind of study researcher's main goal is to allow "the material speak"; to "extract from the material what is in it" (p. 190).

The last quotation brings exploratory research is close proximity with Grounded Theory, a qualitative research method developed by Glaser and Strauss in late 60s (Kelle,

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[7] In de Groot's article "promise something" (p. 190)

2005). Khan (2014) describes Grounded theory as an approach that is aimed at "theory building" rather than "empirical testing of the theory" (224). Khan quotes Punch (1998) who described grounded theory in the following words:

> Grounded theory is not a theory at all. It is a method, and approach, as strategy. In my opinion, grounded theory is best defined as a research strategy whose purpose is to generate theory from data. "Grounded" means that the theory will be generated on the basis of data; the theory therefore will be grounded in data. "Theory" means that the objective of collecting and analyzing the research data is to generate theory. The essential in grounded theory is that theory will be developed inductively from data. (qtd. in Khan, 2014, p 227)

This approach explains the view of udaff.com as a new cycle of literature as well the views of the *Real Padonak* as an archetype continuum and multiglossia of Discourses that I propose in this dissertation. Both views came as a result of data analysis; they were suggested by my data. While allowing for a significant freedom of discovery, grounded theory also poses a significant challenge of coding. Khan (2014) suggests that grounded theory is best suited for "studying a process, action or interaction involving many individuals"; he also lists "open coding, axial coding, and selective coding" as main strategies for data analysis (p.226). Gordon Medlock (2015) in his account of using grounded theory for a study of artistic process operates with two "core variables" and several "distinct phases."

My process of data collection and analysis lasted for almost ten years. The data was collected through non-participant observations of the community, its practices, and interactions between the members of udaff.com. The major challenges I encountered

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stemmed from the fact that udaff.com, as most functioning, regularly updated websites, is a fluid resource that changes regularly. Udav's resource in many ways functions as an archive of all texts (and comments) that were published there since December 2000.[8] While the core content on udaff.com generally stays the same, new material (texts, commentaries, images, links to videos, and etc.) is constantly added. The organization of the website changed several times over the course of the last ten years: new rubrics were added, texts got moved around. Finally, there were also several conflicts within the community itself that resulted in deletion of a few profiles.[9] The amount of data available on udaff.com created another significant challenge. Udav's resource was created in 2000. As of March 2015 it contained almost to 130,000 pieces of data. Closely connected to these challenges is the fact, that the number of members of udaff.com has increased significantly (currently the website has close to four thousand author profiles). While new members joined in, a lot of old-time writers dropped out (I discuss the issue of "people rotation in more detail in chapter three).

In the beginning I collected my data based on two main criteria: *representation* (the most vivid, bright examples of the strongest trends observed on udaff.com) and *controversy* (examples that reflected unresolved conflicts and paradigmatic shifts within the *'Padonki'* community). During this stage of data collection several very distinct themes started to emerge in the *representation section* and three big thematic groups were

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[8] Udav (nick name), the founder and administrator of the resource, many times stated that his intention is to "keep everything."

[9] Recently I tried to locate some texts I had found during my early data collection stage (years of 2005-2007) but could not find them anymore.

formed. The first groups contained samples of texts that addressed the resource itself: its organization, purposes, mission, functions, and so on. The second group was dedicated to the texts that addressed the cultural model of a *Real Padonak*, and the last group carried most interesting samples of *Albanskij*. I soon divided the second group into subgroups based on topics presented in these texts. These groups were given titles based on the key themes I was noticing: *Padonki men*; *Padonki women*; *men and women; nineties*; *loss of USSR*, *politics*, *homo*, *alcohol*, *counter-culture,* and *other interesting stuff*. Soon two tendencies became obvious in my data collection practices: for one, the groups tended to merge, as in many cases the same text would fit into more than one category; also more subcategories emerged in the process of coding depending on which features were most prominent. In the best traditions of exploratory research I approached each sample with an internal question: "What can this piece of data tell me about udaff.com and *Real Padonki*?" and then looked for patters and associations that could suggest a conclusion or would contradict the paradigm I was developing.

This system provided me with specific examples which I am using in this dissertation to support my claims and illustrate the concepts I discuss. At the same time, the 2000 pieces of text I had collected by 2008 did not reflect the changes that happened after I finished collecting those samples. When I started writing the chapters that presented my data, I had to go beyond my database, not to mention that during the initial stages of data collection I often omitted such information as author's name, the exact date of publication, and the like. On the other hand, it turned out that a significant amount of data collection and classification had been already done for me. Udav's archive of padonki writing proved to be systematic and very well organized. All materials ever

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submitted to udaff.com are grouped into five major rubrics, and each rubric is also divided into several sub-rubrics (see the figure 2 below). All texts, visual, video and audio material within these sub-rubrics are published in chronological order and accompanied by authors' names, as well as ratings, and commentaries offered by the community.
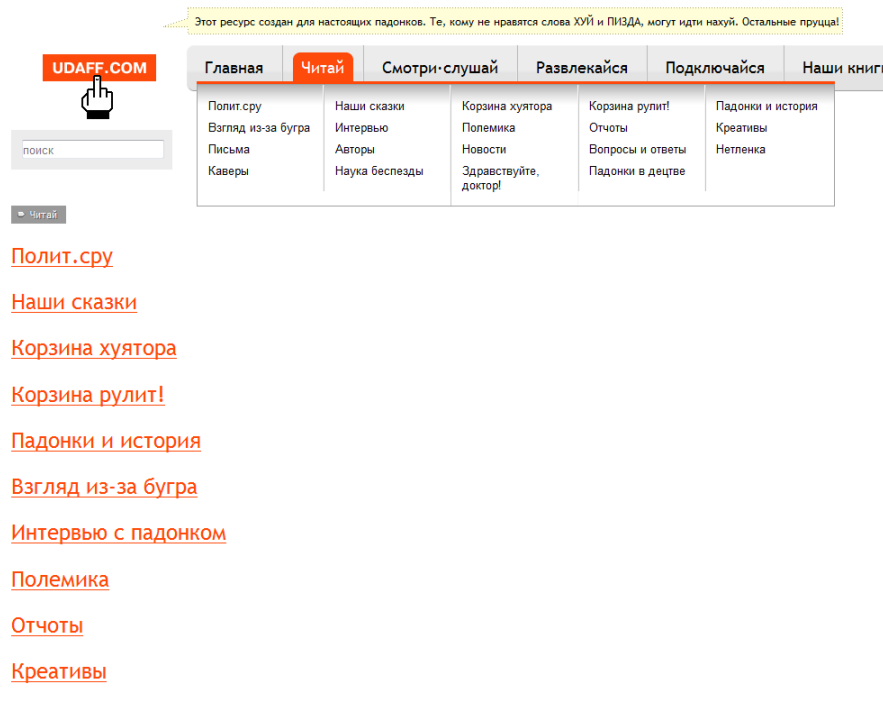
Figure 2. Udaff.com, rubrics menu

This decision had another advantage. I have already mentioned above that on a certain level I approached udaff.com as a text, almost as a never ending narrative. I read texts that felt interesting, intriguing, and provocative. Consequently, my choices of the texts which I collected as data samples were very subjective. Udav's system of archiving and coding allowed me to take "time cuts" – gather random samples of texts published in the years 2000-2003, then 2008-2010; and 2013-2015. This way I could compensate for possible omissions in the data I had collected on my own.

Grounded theory is often connected with different kinds of ethnographic research across disciplines. Pettigrew (2000) in his discussion of compatibility of grounded theory and ethnographic research in sociology jokingly describes the connection between these two methods as a "happy marriage," while Aldiabat and Le Navenec (2011) warn against the "blurred boundaries" between them. A component of ethnographic research which aims to describe and interpret a "real life" culture was present in my study of udaff.com from the beginning. From early on I viewed the *padonki* resource primarily as a community of people united by a common practice and the identity of *Real Padonki*. This community, however, was special in the way that it existed in virtual space.

Unlike traditional ethnography which is rather well established, Internet ethnography is relatively new. Depending on which medium is used for data collection or sharing the results of the research, ethnography that studies online communities can have different names. Wikipedia refers to it as "cyber-ethnography;" Underberg and Zorn (2013) describe their ethnographic project as "digital ethnography," and Christina Hine calls ethnographic research that collects data online "virtual ethnography." Researches also seem to have rather diverse view of the objects of their research as well as their final products. Underberg and Zorn (2013), for example, point out that ethnography is "both product and process," while a researcher is both a "story teller" and a scientist. Although Underberg and Zorn (2013) used cyber space only as a "story-telling medium" (not as a data collection site), their approach to ethnography is very close to what I initially felt was my job as a researcher: to *tell* about *Padonki*, to describe and *explain*, almost to *narrate* their culture.

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Christin Hine (2000), on the other hand, describes the object of her study as a "topic," a "media event." Although her study is a perfect example of Internet ethnography (she collected her data online), the focus of her study - "exploring some of the meanings of the Internet at the time" (n.p.) seems far removed from my research interests. Hine also describes the Internet as both "culture" and "cultural artifact" and points out that some social behaviors when observed in virtual "field sites" (for example flaming) as a part of "natural" human interaction might offer an interpretation different from that obtained through experimental research[10]. Gunkel (2011) in his chapter about the use of Internet in social research points out such problems connected to virtual spaces as "the truth" and "physical reality." I encountered this issue while collecting my data on udaff.com. In chapter three I mention "projects" – fake profiles purposefully created by people on udaff.com. At the same time, Hine (2000) points out that Internet environment allows people to form "separate and often stable identities" (n.p.). This observation holds true as well. While "projects" are a popular kind of a game that people play on udaff.com, the majority of profiles on udaff.com belongs to real life people and carries strong personal characteristics.

Murthy (2011) lists at least ten sociological studies that involved data collected from online sources and mentions such weaknesses of Internet ethnography as virtually unlimited amounts of data, easiness of collection process, and challenges of creating working system of codes. While working my way through the analysis and invention

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[10] During my oral defense I had a disagreement with James Paul Gee when I suggested that the use of the word "*pizda*" ("cunt") in the mission statement of udaff.com is not a chauvinistic put down towards women, but a "*symbol*" word that is supposed to represent the overall communicative style practiced by this community.

process I had to deal with all three of these issues. Thus, it can be concluded that from the methodological point of view this study draws from all three methods described above: exploratory research, grounded theory, and Internet ethnography. The exploratory component provided a broad open-ended question that could only be answered through analysis of the data. This question also asked for description of the community and its practices which is an ethnographic approach. Finally, the study relies on data analysis as the source of the answers, and all conclusions proposed in this dissertation are *grounded* in the data collected on udaff.com.

A few words need to be said about the challenges related to the language problem. Udaff.com is a Russian language community, so naturally, texts published there are written in the Russian language. However, this community also uses a non-standard variety of the Russian language which they call *Albanskij*[11]. *Albanskij* is an "illiterate, uneducated" form of written Russian. Two problems had to be resolved: I had to come up with a way that would allow me to make my data (the examples I am using in this dissertation) understandable to the English language audience. I also needed to be able to demonstrate how *Albanskij* would be different from the so called "literate"[12] (meaning standard) Russian.

Transliteration accompanied with translations and explanations provided as footnotes came as an obvious solution for names and short terms. For this purpose I used

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[11] Although udaff.com members often fame themselves with the invention of *Albanskij*, the true origin of this variety most likely lies in the chat-rooms of the early days of Russian Internet.

[12] In the Russian language itself there is a term "literaturnyj" as in "Russkij literaturnyj yazyk" which literally means a "language used in professional literature," meaning grammatically correct, "cultured" written language.

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IPA symbols as used by Boyanus (as represented by Dumbreck (1964)), with slight modifications. Following the Boyanus' pattern of using symbols [yo] for stressed soft /ё/ and [yu] for stressed soft /ю/, I used [ya] to represent Russian stressed soft /я/; symbol [ye] was used for soft stressed Russian /e/ which is close to English vowel sound as in word bed ['bed] and symbol ['e] is used whenever the sound was firmer and seemed to resemble more (but not completely) of English vowel [æ] as in word mat ['mæt]. Sometimes symbol [ə] is used represent unstressed /e/, which in Russian colloquial speech is often pronounced as unstressed /и/ [i]. I used the symbol [ɘ] to represent the sound э. The rest of vowels are represented as follows:

Aa	stressed - a	, unstressed – [ə] or [ɘ]
Oo	stressed - o	, unstressed - [ə] or [ɘ]
Ии	stressed - i	, unstressed - [ə] or [ɘ]
Уy - u , and		Ыы - [ɘ]

I used Boyanus' system to represent consonantal sounds almost without any changes. Regular IPA symbols are used to represent hard consonantal sounds, and ['] is used after consonants to represent 'softened' or palatalized consonants. Symbols [tz], [sh], [zh], [zhzh], [ch], and [sch] are used to represent Russian letters (and sounds they represent) /ц/, /ш/, /ж/, /жж/, /ч/, /щ/; symbol /j/ is used to render the sound represented by the Russian letter /й/ and to represent the first element of 'firm' diphthong /я/ [ja], /ю/ [ju], and /e/ [je].

Udaff.com texts which are given as examples of *Real Padonki* writing had to be translated in the way that would allow me to keep their meaning and style maximally close to the original. However, emphasized use of obscenities is one of the key features of padonki Discourse. This problem required frequent use of the English curse words.

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One of the ways to solve this issue was to 'soften' the actual, original language used on Udav's resource while trying to keep the meaning. This strategy, however, came in conflict with my attempts to preserve the integrity of the Discourse as a whole, where language choices made by padonki writers reflect beliefs and values practiced by the community. For this reason, in some cases I preserved the mode of expression chosen by padonki writers and translated their words staying maximally 'true to the word' and preserving the richness of connotations and implied meanings of Padonki Discourse. Thus, excerpts of texts produced by *Real Padonki* are quoted extensively throughout the dissertation and original Russian language texts and commentaries are given as footnotes.

Literature Review

Pettigrew (2000) points at a slightly different role of literature review in grounded theory research. Literature in grounded theory studies is often treated as "another informant" (p.2), while analysis of the data is given such high priority that it is sometimes advised that literature review should happen only after the analysis is completed. In my case selection and reading of relevant literature continued throughout the course of the study. Much reading was done at the very early stages, while a few rather important sources were discovered almost at the very end. However, just as suggested by Pettigrew (2000), the reviewed literature was never viewed as a "dominant contributor of emerging interpretations" (p. 2); the emphasis has always been on the data analysis.

The nature of the data which I have been examining significantly influenced the choice of literature reviewed for this study. I was looking for sources that would help me better understand the phenomenon I was studying. Theories and sources referenced in this dissertation were used as lenses through which the community of udaff.com, its practices,

and the Discourse practiced by this community has been examined. Literature that makes up the bibliography can be divided into several layers.

The first layer is made of "background readings" – books and articles that address different aspects of linguistics. As was explained earlier, I was initially attracted mainly by *Albanskij* – the linguistic innovation used by udaff.com members. Consequently, I needed literature that would help me better understand the internal mechanisms of this phenomenon. I relied on Callary (1998) and Roach (2000) for the basics of the sound description as well as IPA conventions. Works of Avanesov (1964) and Boyanus (1955) helped me to correlate sound descriptions used in the English language phonetics with the main phonetic principles of the Russian language.

Works by Francis (1998) and Jackson and Amvela (2000) were instrumental in understanding word formation principles employed by padonki. These authors also provided me with the vocabulary I needed to describe word formation processes used in such padonki words as *huyator* (writer), *pelotka* (woman), *ftykatel'* (a member of udaff.com who only reads writing produced by other people but never contributes), and the like. Works by Haugen (1950), McMahon (1994) and Aitchison (2001) shed some light on borrowings as one of the key mechanisms of language change. This knowledge was instrumental when I was dealing with words like *kreativ* (a padonki word for a "piece of creative writing," obviously borrowed from the English language as an adjective "creative" and transformed into a form that filled in existing "semantic gap"). I also consulted Comrie, Stone, and Polinsky (1996) for their view of changes in the Russian language in the last hundred years.

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Besides violation of spelling rules, *Albanskij* shows some interesting experimentation with the rules of negation, thus I looked into works of Radford (2004), Croft (1991), and van Gelderen (2007) in search of the explanation of the processes I have been observing. Combined together, the readings mentioned above allowed me to transfer the subconscious 'intuitive' understanding of the Russian language that I have as a native speaker into the knowledge of a linguist who is able to name and explain the mechanisms at work behind interesting semantic or syntactic forms.

On the level of sociolinguistics several works helped me better understand the role of obscenities and 'face threats' in interpersonal communication (here I am specifically referring to interactions between people in commentaries) on udaff.com. Labow (1970) suggests that we tend to assign certain value judgements to people based on how they talk. For example, a guy who uses a lot of stigmatized forms is not seen as a successful candidate for a 'white-collar' job, but is viewed as somebody who is more likely to win a fist fight. Is becomes natural then, that in masculinity driven world of *Padonki* intentional excessive use of stigmatized forms will be a very popular way to establish authority.

Brown and Levinson (1987) describe two possible 'face-wants' that lie behind most of our actions: the desire to be approved of (*positive face*) and the desire to be independent and unimpeded in one's freedom of actions (*negative face*). *Real Padonki* seem to be striving to maintain negative face at all costs. They work hard to create and project an image of a *Padonak* – a rough guy who acts and talks tough. This communicative style applies to both, literary criticisms padonki give each other as writers as well as personal conversations that happen in "commentaries" and often transform into

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vicious verbal fights filled with obscenities, threats, and insults. While these fights might seem as senseless putdowns, Hornsby (2001) believes that derogatory words play a significant role in our communication, and in fact make an important part of our lexicon. This idea is supported by Hacking (1986) and Gee et al. (2001) who suggest that language is often used by people in order to "fashion" themselves as a 'certain kind of people.' Hacking (1986) also mentions multiple personalities syndrome that seems to be a rather common phenomenon in the virtual world. In chapter three I give examples of testimonies by *padonki* who claim that their udaff.com identities are "breaking through" into the 'normal' lives.

The layer of "background readings" was later supplemented with works by Goodman (1996) and Smith (1983) that served as a bridge between the view of *Albanskij* as a language variation and its functions as a register. On this level *Albanskij* can be viewed as "a language form that develops within recurring social-cultural situations to meet the constraints of the speech acts or literacy events that commonly occur in those contexts" (Goodman, 1996, p. 21). The "situation" here is that each text is published on udaff.com – the resource that was created for the *Real Padonki*, and the "constraints" are represented by the requirement that texts submitted to udaff.com should be the 'right kind of texts' – texts written by *Real Padonki* for *Real Padonki* in the way that *Real Padonki* write. Goodman (1996) further suggests that each genre has "common aspects" that contain "the circumstances and settings, the participants and their relationships, and the language constraints imposed by the situations" (p.21).

Frank Smith (1983) talks about language as a register. He defines *register* as "the greatest and most complex set of conventions in any language" (p. 97). Registers are the

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"appropriate way[s] of talking (or writing) on particular occasions depending upon who is talking, to whom, when, and about what" (p 97). While using different terminology, Smith (1983) expresses an idea very similar to that of Goodman (1996). Smith (1983) puts more emphasis on conventions which he describes as "arbitrary but mutually accepted and expected ways of doing and expressing particular things" (p. 96). These two approaches to language (*registers* and *conventions* of Smith (1983) and *form*, *functions*, and *genre* of Goodman (1996)) pointed at the freedom and power of expression which *Albanskij* gives to its users. On several occasions suggestions were made by padonki writers that *Albanskij* needs to be standardized and a textbook of Albanskij grammar should be written.

The next layer is made of literature that presents different approaches to Discourse analysis. Books by Cameron (2003), Johnstone (2005), Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001), and Schiffrin (1994) were a useful general introduction to the field. For the most part, these authors gave examples of analysis of events that were separated in space and time, while the nature of sites like udaff.com is better understood by Hine (2000) who describes them as "ongoing discussion" (n.p.).

Hine (2000) also considers virtual environment "socially rich" and, cites studies (e.g. Baum (1995), McLaughlin et al. (1995)) that used methods of discourse analysis to examine interaction in online settings. It is not surprising than that *Classroom Discourse*, by Courtney Cazden (2001) proved to be helpful despite an obvious difference in settings. Cazden (2001) discusses the process of invention (and subsequent transmission) of rituals created by her K-2 students for the sharing time activities. Her discussion helped me better understand such 'rituals' practiced by udaff.com members as "*nahing*" – a game-like competition between members to be the first to leave a comment under a newly published

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text. The game also includes marking 'special' numbers. For example, the person who gets to leave a comment numbered 44 would call this number "chairs," and a comment number 111 will be titled as "fence" and so on. Both cases show the process of formation and maintenance of a ritual under the conditions of a stable environment where interaction is not uninterrupted.

The views of capital D Discourses presented by James Paul Gee (1999, 2004, 2005, and 2007) were also crucial in my understanding of processes that were happening on udaff.com beyond the language. The complexity of the phenomenon of *Padonki* called for an approach that would allow incorporating linguistic as well as socio-cultural and ideological aspects of *Real Padonki* capital D Discourse. For this reason Gee's works created the primary lens for my analysis. Gee (1999) resolved the issue of linguists dealing with extra-linguistic discourse features by differentiating between a *lower case discourse* (generally defined as language above sentence) and *capital D Discourse*, the latter becoming a 'refuge term' for socio-linguistic and pragmatic factors which are connected to language but cannot be said to belong to any of the three major fields of linguistics (Phonetics, Semantics, or Syntax). Gee's description of *capital D Discourse* quoted below proved very helpful.

> Discourse with a big "D" is always more than just language. Discourses are ways of being in the world, or forms of life which integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes, social identities, as well as gestures, glances, body positions, and clothes. … A Discourse is a sort of 'identity kit' which comes complete with the appropriate costumes and instructions on how to act, talk, and often write, so as to take on a particular social role that others will recognize. …it is not individuals

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who speak and act, but rather that historically and socially defined Discourses speak to each other through individuals. … Yet another way to look Discourses is as 'clubs' with (tacit) rules about who is a member and who is not, and (tacit) rules about how members ought to behave (if they wish to continue being accepted as members. … All discourses are products of history… [and] the individual is simply the meeting point of many sometimes conflicting socially and historically defined Discourses. (Gee, 1991 pp 142 – 145.)

While observing "life" and practices of Udaff.com I got a unique chance to see how 'big' D Discourses emerge, develop, how they change and transform each other. Initially attracted by intentional 'incorrectness' of *Albanskij,* I soon realized that this variation of the Russian language did not exist on its own. A whole web of human experiences and values, as well as "ways of being," thinking, acting, and believing came along with, was reflected in, and expressed through the ways *Real Padonki* were using language and writing to prove themselves "real padonki."

Using the definition given by Gee (1999), udaff.com in itself from a very abstract point of view can and should be viewed as

… A 'dance' that exists in the abstract as a coordinated pattern of words, deeds, values, beliefs, symbols, tools, objects, times, and places and in the here and now as a performance that is recognizable as just such a coordination – a nice metaphorical imagery. (p 19.)

This definition connects directly to the proposed view of the *Real Padonki* as a capital D Discourse community that mirrors contemporary Russian society either as its direct reflection or as its satirical, exaggerated representation.

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My analysis of the cultural model of the *Real Padonak* is based on Gee's discussion of "real Indians" (2005) and his examination of a personal experience functioning as Bead-Bead, an imaginary half-elf in a magic world of Arcanum (2007). The discussion of the four identities that make up the model of a *Real Padonak* emerged in the strong reliance on and as a comparison with the three identities presented by Gee.

Several essays of Bakhtin, namely the sixth edition of *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays* (1996) and *The Dialogic Imagination* (1994) provided the view of Udaff.com as an example of "dialogic speech" and allowed to see overemphasized use of obscenities practiced by udaff.com members as a continuation of an old literary tradition.[13]

In the first two sentences of his essay *The Problem of Speech Genres* Bakhtin seems to have summarized the major challenges I faced while analyzing my data: the vastness of uses of language and diversity of its forms. "All the diverse areas of human activity involve the use of language. Quite understandably, the nature and forms of its use are just as diverse as are the areas of human activity" (1996, p 60). This introduction, while very abstract, provides a very simple explanation as to why padonki Discourse came to be: it emerged as a response to the changes in people's lives and their need to tell about those changes. Bakhtin's views of *hybridization* and *dialogism* (1994) helped me to see past the surface level of provocation and dare on udaff.com and into the processes of development of Discourses in the virtual space of the Internet.

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[13] Specifically his discussion of Rabelais (1994).

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Udaff.com. as well as many other websites, is organized in the form of an ongoing dialogue, which Bakhtin considers to be a "classic form of speech communication" (1996, p. 72). Bakhtin views *utterances* as 'links' that lock onto each other and thus create the chain of 'dialogic communication.' But who sets a limit as to how long an *utterance* can be? When a text is published on udaff.com, it becomes an utterance no matter how long it is. Then readers' responses follow. Responses most commonly come in the form of posting comments, although sometimes a reader can simply give the story a rating on a six star scale. In Bakhtin's words all of these interactions can be viewed as a chain of "rejoinders" where "each rejoinder, regardless of how brief and abrupt, has a specific quality of completion that expresses a particular position of the speaker to which one may respond or may assume, with respect to it, a responsive position" (Bakhtin, 1996, p. 72).

The act of dialogic communication between readers and writers happens even when there is no direct act of evaluation. Subsequent postings often times 'respond' to previously posted stories by developing the topic, sharing events and situations that support the position of the previous author or debating with them. On udaff.com, such 'extended dialogues' often continue for several years. Bakhtin explains this process by pointing out that "our thought itself – philosophical, scientific, and artistic – is born and shaped in the process of interaction and struggle with others' thought, and this cannot but be reflected in the forms that verbally express our thought as well" (Bakhtin, 1996, p. 92).

In the glossary that concludes the collection of Bakhtin's essays titled *The Dialogic Imagination*, dialogism is defined as "the characteristic epistemological mode of a world dominated by heteroglossia" (1994, p. 426). It is further explained that "everything means,

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is understood, as a part of a greater whole – there is a constant interaction between meanings, all of which have the potential of conditioning others" (1994, p. 426).

This last definition creates the foundation for the proposed view of the model of a *Real Padonak* as a composite of individual claims made by the members of Udav's resource. The opening statement published on the front page of udaff.com requires each new member to claim themselves as the "right kind of person." Every time a new person joins the community and submits a text for publication or posts a comment under a text published by somebody else, their "utterance" carries "linguistics significance" as well as it's "actual meaning" (Bakhtin, 1994); it also carries a function of a claim. The writer claims themselves as a *Real Padonak* kind of person and through this claim enters the "constant interaction between meanings" created by preceding claims and influencing claims that have not been made yet. Each text posted to udaff.com is a part of a discussion extended in time and space; a discussion which consists of multiple dialogues that often cross-reference each other; a discussion in which each new "utterance" - be it a ten pages long "*creativ*" or a one sentence long comment, – is a response to a previous "utterance." All of these "utterances" are united by the common theme: the cultural model of a *Real Padonak* and the common purpose: practicing "being-or-becoming" a *Real Padonak* (Gee, 1999).

The idea of "claims" presented above also suggests the view of the cultural model of a *Real Padonak* as collaborative invention, where the process of invention has become a "*social act*" – the term used by LeFevre (1987). LeFerve's view of invention as a social act suggests that an individual who is at the same time a social being interacts in a distinctive way with society and culture to create something (1987). Udaff.com in this

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case becomes also a place where rhetorical invention - an act that may involve speaking and writing done by more than one person – is happening. This act is "initiated by writer and completed by readers, extending over times through a series of transactions and texts" (p. 1, 1987). Combined with Yameng Liu's (2002) suggestion that *invention, creation, and discovery* can be fused into one highly complex abstract phenomenon that consists of multiple aspects, LeFerve's view of invention turns Udav's resource into a community of collaborative inventors.

Battersby (1989) does not address the issue of invention per se; by examining how the concept of *genius* developed through centuries, she attempts to answers to the questions of *how* and *why* women have been denied the right to invent for so long. The view of genius through the lenses of gender proposed by Battersby (1989) made me pay closer attention to the ways women writers are treated on udaff.com. A simple numerical analysis showed that this is a very male dominated resource. There are rubrics on this website that are attended almost exclusively by men. While Padonki never make statements that women cannot or should not write, women writers make less than twenty percent of active contributors on udaff.com.

Articles by Bauman (2004) and Becker and Yegovyan (1979) offered interesting examples of intertextuality which is another distinctive feature of *Real Padonki* literature. Intertextuality is generally understood as a set of relationships connecting a text with other texts that are related to but at the same time distanced from the given text (Bauman, 2004, Becker and Yegovyan, 1979). Through their analysis of medieval Irish poetry (Bauman, 2004) and Javanese shadow theater (Becker & Yegovyan) these authors trace

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the interconnections of words and meanings which remain present even after such key features as times, places, cultures, speakers, and audiences change completely.

The next layer initially was made of literature dedicated to humor. Popularity of extreme kinds of humor (obscenity based, daring and repulsive ("eat my vomit"), dark sarcasm, and the like) on udaff.com made me look at the works that discuss and explain humor. Weijia Ni, Stephen Craint, and Donald Shankweile's (1994-1995) discussion of ambiguity and humor encyclopedias by Nilsen and Nilsen (2000) and Raskin (2008) helped me better understand such genres of padonki writing as "*kavery*" and "*projects.*" Stories written in these genres usually carry an imbedded *Garden Path* – a "fake" message that disguises the true meaning.

One the other hand, it also seems that *Padonki Discourse* has strong cultural roots in the Russian (Soviet) tradition of oral joke telling. Abram Tertz (1978) (a.k.a. Andrey Sinyavskij), considers this genre to be a kind of restricted code that unites people who - while diverse ethnically - all belong to the Soviet Russian speaking culture. Cynicism, sarcasm, strong preference for dark humor and irony are very prominent features of 'Padonki' discourse. Many of the texts posted on udaff.com do not fit into conventional understanding of humor as something "funny." By contrast, many of autobiographical stories published by *padonki* writers narrate about rather tragic events experienced by the writers themselves or by close friends and relatives. Then why *humor* theories?

The editors of Encyclopedia of 20th-Century American Humor believe that "humor means different things to different people …. [and] circumstantial and individual experiences and differences […] influence the way individuals respond to various kinds of humor" (Nilsen & Nilsen 2000, preface vii). It is also important to remember that humor

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is a very strong coping strategy. Elena Markova in her heart breaking memoir about twenty years in Stalin's camps dedicates a chapter to humorous stories produced by prisoners. The majority of those stories are structured in the form of a Question-Answer dyad, where the question asks how or why "did so-and-so end up in Vorkuta," and the answer gives a chain of unimaginable events. For example:

Question: Why was the student Vodolazkin sent to Vorkuta?

Answer: here it is. In 1934, the entire country was shocked by the news about the murder of Kirov.[14] One day the student of Novosibirsk Engineering Institute Misha Vodolazki broke into his dorm room screaming "Those mother fuckers killed Kirov!" Immediately somebody wrote a report on him, claiming the Misha was screaming "They killed that motherfucker Kirov." The rest of his life Misha spent in Vorkuta.[15] (Sakharov-center, n.d.)

The story told above is far from being "funny;" it is tragic, unfortunate at the very least. However, positioning events and experiences (even those that originally felt dramatic and painful) as something to be laughed at, allows narrators to acquire certain distance between themselves and events they write about. This perspective connects to the proposed view of the writing produced by "Real Padonki" as a therapeutic tool, a tool that allows writes to reevaluate traumatic events in their lives and discover themselves as a new

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[14] One of the leaders of communist party at the time.

[15] За что попал на Воркуту студент Водолазкин? А вот за что. В 1934 г. по всей стране пронеслась весть об убийстве Кирова. Студент Новосибирского строительного института Миша Водолазкин вбежал в общежитие и в волнении воскликнул: «Убили гады, Кирова!» На него кто-то тут же настрочил донос, в котором роковая для Миши фраза претерпела небольшое изменение. Он якобы воскликнул: «Убили гада Кирова!» За это на всю оставшуюся жизнь студент Водолазкин попал на Воркуту.

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kind of people. This angle turns the cultural model of a *Real Padonak* into a mirror, a representation of the new kind of person, a person who lives and functions in post-Soviet Russia.

The discovery *Sintaksis[16]*, a Russian language literary journal published in Paris in 1978-2001 led me to the next layer of literature: the dissident literature. Articles by A. Tertz (1978) and George Niva (1978) created the foundation for the view of a *Real Padonak* as a dissident: a person who lived through a succession of political, economic, and socio-cultural changes that affected the entire society. This transformation resulted in the creation of a new capital D Discourse. Shalamov (2012), Solzhenitsyn (1990), and many other dissident writers who spent years in Stalin's labor camps later used criminal argot to write about their experiences of imprisonment. Similarly, the "real-world" padonki, the people who lived through the transformation of 1980s through 2000s had to invent a new language, a new Discourse, a new form of literature that on one hand would symbolically represent those experiences, and on the other will make it possible to *write* about them. A new cultural model was also needed to represent a person who has gone through the death of the "old" times and emergence of a "new" life. As such, a *Real Padonak* serves as the "the meeting point of many sometimes conflicting socially and historically defined Discourses" that "talk through" the texts written by padonki authors (Gee, 1991, pp 142 – 145.). This new form of literature also required a new medium of publication which would allow to lift the limitations imposed by the convention of grammar and spelling – the Internet.

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[16] The transliteration of the journals' Russian language title as offered by Wikipedia.

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Support to the view of udaff.com as a "home base" of a new form of literature came for an unexpected source. In summer 2014 I spent several weeks manually going through hundreds of literary journals looking for dissident prose. All of a sudden, I was struck by the similarity in topics raised in polemic essays published in old traditional literary journals *Novyj Mir* and *Neva* and the topics discussed by *Real Padonki* on udaff.com. A lot of similarities existed on the level of fiction as well. Themes, places, characters, and plots in short stories and novels published in late eighties – early nineties in traditional hard copy literary journals *Novyj Mir* and *Neva*[17] seemed strikingly similar to the writing produced by *padonki*. Comparative analysis of the contents of those two journals and *padonki* writing published on udaff.com suggested that the Udav's resource in fact is a form of a literary journal that functions outside of standard conventions of aesthetics and grammar and uses the Internet as the medium of publication.

Quite a few articles published in the journals *Neva* and *Novyj Mir* in late 1980's and early 1990's discuss issues concerning the state of contemporary Russian literature, quality of writing, genres (including humor and 'dirty,' 'dark humor' of jokes), language use and the role of obscenities in contemporary Russian language. Many of these discussions are connected to the idea of "new prose" which was first introduced by Shalamov in 1989 and was later generalized to "New Literature" (Bakhtin, 1990, Hramov, 1991, Zorin, 1989, Potapov, 1989, Galkovskij, 1992, Hodasevich, 1990). These issues are also closely connected to the discussion about the role of Russian intelligentsia in the society (Lihachov, 1993); Russian national awareness (Hodasevich, 1990), and attempts to

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[17] In the Russian language, a literary journal is often called *an almanac*.

compare and contrast Russian culture and values to those of western countries (Berg, 1991, Galkovskij, 1992).

If we change conventional spelling used in those journals to the phonetic based *Albanskij* and replace some of the words used by traditional writers with their equivalent *padonki* forms (e.g. *counter-culture* instead of 'Russian culture'; *padonki* instead of 'intelligentsia'; *huyatory* instead of 'writers'; *kreativy* instead of 'literary fiction'; *ftykateli* instead of 'general public,' and so on) the articles will sound much like polemic essays published on udaff.com.

Themes and topics developed in fiction are also similar. Many of *padonki* authors write about their experience in the military or in a jail: *Kirzach* (a book about army), *sphinx*[18] (army and jail), *Vincent A. Killpastor* (two cycles about jail), *sqwer* (army) - to name a few. These stories are mirrored by publications in traditional literary journals: Kledin (a novel about army published in 1989), Fedorov (a novel about jail, published in 1990), Gabyshev (a novel about juvenile prison, published in 1989), not to mention overwhelming amount of dissident literature – personal accounts of people who went through Stalin's camps (Solzhenitsyn, 1990-92; Ivanovskij, 1990; Fedorov, 1990; Shalamov, 1989, and many others).

Neva and *Novyj Mir* also published a lot of reflective essays written about literature produced by dissidents: Dzhymbinov (1990), Shrejder (1991), Shturman (1993), Anninskij (1990), and etc. Many of these essays suggest that Russian language and culture will be

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[18] Сфинкс

saved by the "truthfulness" inherent in non-standard forms of grammar (bringing oral regional varieties of the Russian language into literature) and verbal obscenities (specifically the use of *mat* [mɑːt] – the Russian language of cursing). Naturally, I connected these themes to the discussions about *counter-culture* and *padonki* writing as a 'special kind of writing' held on udaff.com. A conclusion became obvious: padonki writing should be viewed as a new form of literature (this idea is further developed in chapter two).

This layer would be incomplete without mentioning, books by Rosenblatt (1979) and Esenwein and Stockard (1919) which helped me better understand my own role as a researcher, but also as a reader (Rosenblatt), and an interpreter and a "story-teller" (Esenwein and Stockard). Underberg and Zorn (2013) call the final result of their research project a "narrative" and describe their role in sharing results of their research as "story-telling." I completely share their stance because in many ways this dissertation is "my story" about padonki. In Esenwein and Stockard's words this is my attempt to interpret the life "embodied" in *padonki* stories and make in understandable for my audience. This role, however, came with a warning, "whatever a man loves, he *is*[19] – potentially, and often actually" (Esenwein and Stockard, 1919, p. 24). To me this warning means that I had to distance myself from udaff.com, I had to stop reading padonki, stop being "one of *them*" in order to be able to produce an *analysis*. I am also aware that, in Rosenblatt's words, this dissertation is primarily my "reflection on [udaff.com as] the literary experience," and as

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[19] Emphasis added

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such it is a "re-experiencing, [and] reenacting of the work-as-evoked, and an ordering and elaborating of [my] responses" to *padonki* writing (1979, p. 134).

The last layer is made of literature which addresses the influence of the Internet on human behavior (both linguistic and social). In 1998 Clark et al. in the sixth edition of the anthology *Language Readings in Langue and Culture* published several short articles that talked about different aspects of human behavior on the Internet. Kantrovitz (1998) discussed differences in online behavior of men and women; Nilsen and Nilsen (1998) examined the use of literary metaphors in computer language. Both readings, although short, helped me better understand my data. Their book *Multimodal Discourse* by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) made me aware of the changes in the 'modes and media of contemporary communication. These changes will most definitely influence (and actually already have influenced) how we use language (oral and written), opening whole new field for research. As was observed by Christina Hine (2000), such practices of online communication as "quoting sections of the previous messages" as well as the possibility of posting multiple replies to the same message allow to create an "ongoing discussion" (n.p.). Some discussions can last for years. On udaff.com I have observed discussions that lasted for several years.

Although a lot has been written about Internet communities, most researchers focus their attention on social media or gaming. Steinfield et al. (2012), for example, studied the connection between the concept of social capital and the Internet, while Cheng et al. did a serious quantitative study that measured the effect of community feedback on behavior of its members, and Young looked at Sims 3 website as an affinity space. While these studies

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most definitely contributed significantly to our understanding human behavior online, I did not find them particular helpful or relevant. At the same time, the book *The Social Life of Information* by Brown and Duguid (2000) that addresses the changes in our information sharing practices suggested the view of udaff.com as an information sharing tool. Finally Tapscott and Williams' (2006) examination of practices of mass collaboration online strengthened the view of the cultural model of Real Padonak as a collaborative invention. It is true that unlike articles on wiki webpages, the texts published on udaff.com cannot be changed. However, if we approach the cultural model of a *Real Padonak* as a text, as the object of collaborative creation, we will see that this model experiences changes (we can even say "editing") every time a new text or even a short comment is contributed.

The last layer of literature could be made of articles published about Padonki. Although Udav keeps and regularly updates the special sub-rubric *Mass media About Us*, I never thought about using the materials gather there as data. My analysis focused on texts and comments produced by padonki themselves.

Wikipedia has a rather interesting article dedicated to the *Albanskij* language. This article examines the language itself and traces its origin to websites which existed in the early days of Russian language Internet such as *fuck.ru* and *fido.net*. This article lists twelve sources, four links, and seventeen articles from popular press. All sources can be divided into three groups: articles that examine the origins of the phenomenon of *padonki;* articles that discuss the influence of *Albanskij* on the standard Russian language and literacy, and miscellaneous – articles that connect the phenomena of *padonki* and *Albanskij* to various socio cultural events. Several books have been written about the linguistic and cultural processes in Post-Soviet Russia: *From poets to padonki: Linguistic authority and*

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norm negotiation in modern Russian culture by Ingunn Lunde and Martin Paulsen[20] (2009); *After Newspeak: Language culture and politics…* by Michael (2014), and *Digital Russia: The language, culture and politics of new media communication* by Michael Gorham, Ingunn Lunde, and Martin Paulsen (2014). While these books seem to carry a connection to the object of my study, they address a much wider issue of socio-cultural and political changes in Russia in general, and for this reason I do not list them as sources in my literature review.

While this literature review gap can be treated as a serious omission, at this point I suggest that detailed examination of literature about *padonki* as a wider socio-cultural phenomenon should be preserved for future study. This phenomenon is rather widespread, so focusing on *padonki* in general would require examination of multiple webpages. The concept of *padonki* is also closely connected to the phenomenon of *counter-culture* which is linked to many other Internet sites some of which are still functioning while others have long disappeared and turned into a legend. This dissertation, however, focuses on the practices and activities of one specific Internet community, the community of people who publish their writing on udaff.com; it also approaches udaff.com primarily as a literary website and views padonki writing as a new form of literature.

The next chapter examines organization, goals, and purposes of udaff.com. It presents the view of udaff.com as a literary resource that has created a new layer of literature: Post-Soviet Internet based literature.

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[20] I could not find this book; published in 2009 by the University of Bergen, 2009 it is not available neither in hard nor in electronic copy.

CHAPTER 2

STRUCTURE AND PURPOSE OF UDAFF.COM

This chapter focuses on organization, goals, and purposes of udaff.com. I propose
to view udaff.com as a new layer of literature: Post-Soviet Internet based literature that
emerged as a response to the socio-political, economic, and cultural transformation that
Russian society has been undergoing since the collapse of the Soviet system. This new
kind of literature is based on linguistic innovation known as *Albanskij* (a variation of the
Russian language invented by Internet users), relies on the Internet as the main medium
of publication, and is linked to the invention of a new archetype, the cultural model of a
Real Padonak. These three features also allow to view udaff.com as a community of
practice that practices capital D Discourse of *Real Padonki.*

The front page of the resource greets its visitors with a logo (see figure 3 below):
a hand with four fingers curled under and the middle finger straightened holding down a
red colored board with 'UDAFF.COM' written on it in big white letters. The main
slogan of the site is located just above the logo. It pronounces: "This recourse was
created for the true padonki. Those who don't like the words *DICK* and *CUNT* can go
and fuck themselves. The rest are having fun!" (Udav, 2000).[21]

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[21] "Этот ресурс создан для настоящих падонков. Те, кому не нравятся слова ХУЙ и ПИЗДА, могут
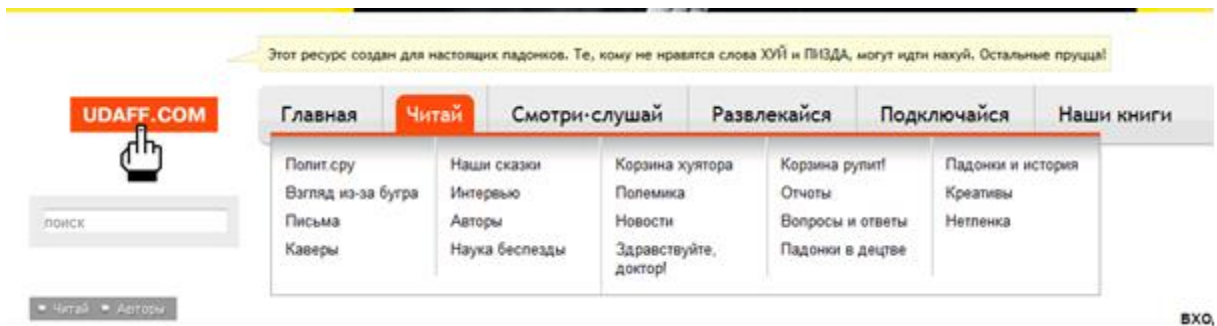идти нахуй. Остальные прутца! (Udav, 2000)

Figure 3. Udaff.com, mission statement

The creator and the man in charge of all operations of the resource (the main gatekeeper) calls himself *Udav* (the nick name). A variation of his name (*udaff*) is used in the name of the domain and in its URL. The entire website is often referred to as "Udav's resource." It was started by Udav, a.k.a. Dmitrij Sokolovskij as his personal web page around 2000. By 2015, Udav's website has turned into a literary Internet resource with close to 4000 registered authors (active or inactive) and almost 130,000 pieces of text published and archived there.

According to Udav, the primary purpose of udaff.com is to allow people share their creative writing. This mission is established in the first three question-answer exchanges from the *FAQ*[22] section of the site. *FAQ* is structured in a form of a dialogue between an experienced *Real Padonak*, (in this case Udav himself) and a novice *ftykatel'*

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[22] The acronym FAQ *(Frequently Asked Question)* itself was borrowed from the English language, transliterated into the Cyrillic alphabet, and spelled phonetically as "Ф. А. К." When pronounced in Russian, the acronym sounds as [ˈfʌk] and preserves the initial meaning of the acronym while adding a connotation of profanity to the meaning. When pronounced, the original sound sequence that imitates the foreign origin (see Haugen, 1950 for discussion about borrowings), but acquires an added connation. Websites that prefer more traditional and formal registers of the Russian language use the technique of direct translation which renders the full phrase as long and heavy "*Часто Задаваемые Вопросы*," but allowed for an adaptation of its acronym into *ЧаВо [cha'vo]* - a colloquial 'uneducated' pronunciation of question words *что [chto]* or *чего [chevo]*. Interestingly, Udav ("Boa-Constrictor") - the nick name of the owner of the recourse keeps original "Q" for *question* and "A" for *answer* throughout the exchange.

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– a newcomer who just discovered the resource and got "plugged in" - started reading the contents.

   Q. What the heck is going on here?

   A. This recourse was created for the true padonki. Those who don't like the words "*DICK"* and "*CUNT"* can go and fuck themselves. The rest are having fun!

   Q. Could you explain it better?

   A. It's all very simple, fuck it. *Huyatory* write their *kreativy* and send their writing to the site. Udav posts their texts on the main page for everybody to read. *Ftykateli* read the stories, have fun and *shit* in comments.

   Q. I am a fucken talented *huyator*, how can I send you my fucken genius story?

   A. *Just click here.* (Udav, 2001).[23]

   Through his choice of strong, obviously obscene language ('true padonki; '*DICK* and *CUNT,'* 'go and fuck themselves'), Udav introduces the capital D Discourse of *Real Padonki* as *the* Discourse of his community; the Discourse which includes communicative style as well as values and beliefs practiced by the users of the site. He presents the cultural model of a 'true padonok' and establishes freedom of expression as the fundamental value of the padonki community. His forceful and straight forward offensive "[those who don't like this style] can go and fuck themselves" ("Ф. А. К.")

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[23] Q:Что тут вообще такое? – A: Этот ресурс создан для настоящих падонков. Те, кому не нравятся слова ХУЙ и ПИЗДА, могут идти нахуй. Остальные пруцца! - Q: А поподробнее? Ну хуле, все просто. Хуяторы пишут креативы и засылают их на сайт. Удав выкладывает их на всеобщее обозрение. Фтыкатели читают, радуюцца, и срут в каментах. – Q: Я - неибацца талантливый хуятор, как мне заслать свое беспезды гениальное произведение? – A: Очень просто - тебе сюда. ("Ф. А. К.")

comes very close to the definition of democracy given by Flemming Rose, the cultural editor of Jylland Rosten in response to the scandal around Danish cartoons "the only right you don't have in a democracy is the right not to be offended. You cannot insist on not being offended" (*Forbidden Reading,* 2009*).*

During my oral defense James Paul Gee suggested that Udav's usage of the word *pizda* (a curse term for women's genital organ) represents derogatory treatment of women. While most definitely an obscenity, the noun *pizda*[24] ("cunt") in the Russian language does not carry the derogatory meaning that speakers of the American English associate with the word "cunt." The noun itself is rather neutral and can be used for both purposes: denigration and appreciation: E.g. an expression *tupaya pizda*[25] ("stupid cunt") will be very demeaning; however, an adjective *pizdato* derived from this noun expresses the highest degree of approval.

The second question-answer exchange establishes the purpose of the resource (publishing of authentic pieces of creative writing), clarifies the procedure ("you send it here, and we put it out on the front page"), and outlines the key practices, the "who does what" on udaff.com. '*Huyatory*,' produce '*kreativy*;' Udav 'publishes' texts submitted to him, and '*ftykateli*' read the stories and '*shit*' (exchange their opinions) in 'commentaries' (open 'discussion boards' that follow after each post[26]).

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[24] Пизда

[25] Тупая пизда

[26] Commentaries are kept intact and active, so years later new '*ftykateli'* have access to the opinions left when the text was still published and respond to those early opinions.

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The terms need to be explained. '*Hyator*' is a noun derived from an old Russian colloquial word for male sexual organ "*huj*." Most likely this term was produced as a reference to a popular profane word play describing excessive unnecessary production, or any kind of pointless labor activity taken to the extreme: "*na huya do huya nahuyarili? Rashuyarivajte nahuj.* [27]" Thus, '*huyator*' is a writer who '*huyarit*' – produces endless '*kreativy*' (pieces of creative writing), and publishes them on Udaff.com.

"*Kreativ*" (singular, *Kreativy* - plural) [krəʌ'tiv], - is a noun, which most likely was produced by converting an English language adjective *creative* as in the phrase *creative writing*.[28] Who and when borrowed English adjective *creative,* transliterated and converted it into a noun *kreativ* [krəʌ'tiv] will most likely never be discovered. Bloomfield (1961) suggests that it is almost impossible to detect the moment when the borrowed word is first introduced into the host language or trace its introduction to one specific person. On udaff.com this term is used to refer to any text (independently of its genre) submitted to Udav for publication. The emergence and active use of the term '*kreativ*' also indirectly points at bilingualism of its borrowers.

Besides reading stories posted on the main page, *ftykateli* also '*shit in comments*[29]' – engage in discussions with other users *("Ф. А. К.")*. Udav refers to these discussions as acts of defecation. Self-irony is striking. While every single member of

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[27] "На хуя до хуя нахуярили? Расхуяривайте, на хуй!"

[28] This expression can be translated into the Russian language as 'hudozhestvennoje tvorchestvo,' meaning "creative fiction writing." This direct translation, however, would not fit with the overall discourse style of the resource.

[29] "срут в каментах"

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udaff.com has an undeniable right of self-expression, *padonki* term for expressing your opinion is '*vysrat'sya*' (literally "take a shit"). This term automatically assigns the value of waste to all thoughts, opinions, disagreements, feelings of offence and etc.

As was already mentioned, udaff.com is organized as a set of rubrics. Each rubric carries a number of sub-rubrics. New submissions selected by Udav for publication get posted to the *Main Page*.[30] Based on genre of each text and its quality, all published texts are then assigned categories that determine under which rubric those texts will be preserved on Udaff.com.

There are five major rubrics: *Read*, *Watch-Listen*, *Have Fun*, *Plug-in*, *Our Books*, and finally, the *Main Page* (see the figure 4 above). Each of these 'big' rubrics consists of several sub-rubrics. Contents of each sub-rubric are regularly updated. *"Read"* is the biggest and 'richest' in its content rubric of the site. It includes fourteen sub-rubrics that contain approximately eighty percent of all texts published on Udaff.com. *Kreativy*[31] and *Korzina*[32] are its largest sub-rubrics; they contain prose as well as poetry. Texts deemed by Udav as "good" go into the rubric *Kreativy*, and "bad" writing is sent to *Korzina* – the "trash basket of Udaff.com. In 2004 Udav stated that he receives around forty texts a day, of which approximately 60-70% he considers "trash" and sends into *Korzina* and 30-40% of submissions get published on the *Main Page*. Texts that do not fit into the

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[30] Glavnaya

[31] Креативы – means [pieces of] *creative writing*

[32] All three rubrics were discussed earlier in this chapter.

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'creative writing' category are stored under such rubrics as *Polemics*, *Politsru, Questions,*
News, and etc.

The sub-rubric *Kreativy* technically is a huge archive, a database that contains *all*
pieces of creative writing deemed by Udav as "worthy." The very first text was added to
this sub-rubric in December 2000. In 2005 Udav reported that *Creativy* contained 16 000
pieces of text. In January 2015, the rubric consisted of 1066 "pages," each page
containing anywhere between forty (the very first page has forty seven texts) and seventy
(the last page had sixty six posts) texts. The last text published in the rubric *Kreativy* on
March 20, 2015 in its URL address line carries the number 127865.[33] Most likely, this
number indicates how many texts are currently stored on Udaff.com server and thus
shows the amount of data that has been accumulated on udaff.com since 2000.

As was mentioned above, udaff.com was initially established as Udav's personal
webpage, "a hobby" (Udav, 2004, 2005). Later Udav merged the resource with a bigger
domain, and the hobby of running the website for *Real Padonki* became his main job (as
the administrator of the resource) (Udav, 2004, 2005, 2007). Although, any user of the
resource can e-mail Udav with suggestions, complaints, questions, and etc., all real
decision making power is accumulated in Udav's hands. (Udav, 2004, 2005, 2006,
2007). If personal conflicts erupt between active contributing members of Udaff.com,
Udav himself decides who needs to be banned, or if any changes need to be made to the
team of moderators.[34] Once implemented, these decisions are announced publicly for

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[33] http://Udaff.com/read/creo/127425/

[34] In 2010 Udav publicly announced a change in moderators of *PolitSru* – the political debate rubric –
which was made after multiple requests and complaints from Udaff.com members.

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discussion and possible appeals. If Udav makes a mistake, and somebody suffers without true fault (e.g. a conflict between two respected members ShGB[35] and LNT), Udav publicly admits his shortcomings and publishes his apologies on the front page, for the community to see (Udav, 2006).[36]

If we try to approach this resource as an "affinity space" (Gee, 2004; Gee, 2005; Gee & Hayes, 2009), Udav's role can be best described as that of an administrator, but a special kind of an administrator. While udaff.com is open to the public, this website is still Udav's private property, his job, and, to some degree, his life. Udav has stated many times that he does not see his life without the resource (Udav, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007). On one occasion Udav established two million dollars as his hypothetical asking price if somebody wanted to buy udaff.com. However, when asked if he would ever sell his resource to a "*pidar*" - a highly derogatory term for *homosexual*,[37] Udav responded that if anybody wanted to buy udaff.com, they would most likely want him, Udav, to continue serving as the administrator of the site.

Q: Would you sell the resource to fucken fags (naturally having to change its format and style) for a really good price?

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[35] ШБГ - Шесть Грустых Букв / Shest' Grustnyh Bukv. This Nick name is best translated as *Six Letters of Sadness*.

[36] In 2006 Udav publicly apologized to the community for his decision to ban an old-time member. Udav honestly admitted that he made the decision while drunk on beer and unprepared to handle the situation properly.

[37] In this context, the term was most likely is used to refer to a "different kind of person" – somebody who is NOT and CANNOT be a *Real Padonok*

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A: Of course, not. If somebody would want to change the format and style, it would make more sense to start over [and create a new resource]. Besides, if, hypothetically somebody makes me an offer to sell the resource, I suspect that the buyer would want to see me as the administrator [of the resource] because otherwise there is no sense [in buying the resource].[38] (Udav, 2007)

An old tradition (or rather game) called "*pervonahing*" or simply "*nahing*" also needs to be addressed here. The essence of this game is very simple: when a new "*Kreative*" is published on the front page, the very first person to respond to the text posts a comment that says something like "*Fucken first* [to comment]!" or even simply puts 1. *"Fucken first"* or *"Pervyj NaHuj!*[39]" soon turned into "*pervonah,*[40]" and the whole tradition received the name of "*nahing.*[41]" Development of this tradition is strikingly similar to the development of "sharing-time innovations" described by Cazden (2001) in her study of classroom discourses. While the process of introducing an innovation is virtually identica, there is one significant difference. Cazden's classroom most likely only functioned as a set community for one year, and then her students moved on to other classrooms and other communities. Thus, it is not possible to see if those traditions were passed on or abandoned.

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[38] Продал бы ресурс голимым пидарам (естественно со сменой его формата) за приемлимую для тебя цену? - Нет, конечно. Другое дело, что если менять формат, то не проще ли делать ресурс с нуля. И вообще, если теоретически мне поступит предложение о продаже ресурса, то подозреваю, что покупатель все равно захочет видеть меня администратором на нем, иначе нет смысла. (Udav, 2007).

[39] Первый на хуй!

[40] первонах

[41] нахинг

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On udaff.com, however, the flow or "rotation" (the term used by Udav himself to describe the never ending process of old-timers leaving and new people joining the resource) has never been interrupted, so the tradition carried on despite Udav's attempts to halt it. Here, once again, it might be good to look at udaff.com as an "affinity space" – an informal place (often Internet based) where people gather in self-organized communities and share their knowledge (Gee, 2004; Gee, 2005; Gee & Hayes, 2009). In this case, longevity might be one of the strongest features of such spaces. For as long as the space exists, a tradition (no matter how stupid or destructive) will be transmitted to new members. The tradition of "*nahing*" was established in the early days of udaff.com and continues to this day.

Three last comments need to be made to complete the description of udaff.com: Udav's resource is not a porn site; it is not commercial, and finally, udaff.com does not have a political agenda.

Besides the famous logo and mission statement discussed above, a visitor of udaff.com is also greeted with obviously offensive pornographic ads placed in the most visible parts of the main page. The problem with the ads is that while they have nothing to do with the real goals and activities of udaff.com, they help create a false impression about the true nature of the website. Much like the word *pizda* ("cunt") which is placed in the "mission statement," these ads are not used as a tool of objectifying or denigrating women. Rather, I propose that both, the ads and the words *pizda* and *huj* ("cunt" and "dick") as well as the rest of offensive content should be viewed as a "gatekeeping tool"

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used to keep away people who would not fit into the community that practices the Discourse of *Real Padonki.[42]*

On the other hand, Udav does not charge money for publishing people's writing on udaff.com, but administering the website has already become his job; he has a family, and he needs to make a living. Over the course of the existence of Udaff.com, several attempts were made in the direction of money making. So far, several books have been published (see below); Udav tried to publish a hard copy literary journal (three issues were published); finally there were talks about turning the idea of *counter-culture,* (and consequently *Udaff.com'* and *padonki movement*) into "something commercial." Apparently, none of these projects had much financial success. After 2010 I have not seen a single discussion, suggestion, proposal that would touch on making money off of Udaff.com. Apparently, while highly attractive, the cultural model of *Real Padonak* (as well as the concept of *counter-culture*) cannot be used for money making purposes.

In 2005 Udav was asked to remove animated links to obviously pornographic chat sites.[43] Udav's response was very clear: "[if] you pay me monthly for the space those banners take or find somebody who will pay for this space, then I will remove them [the banners of porn chat sites]. I need money to live, right?" (Udav, 2005). [44] Two years

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[42] A similar strategy is used by Ole Nydahl, a Buddhist lama of Danish origin. During his lectures Lama Ole often says things that many people would consider sexists or politically offensive. Ole explains that he does it to let people who would not be able to handle his style get up and leave and look for other teachers.

[43] The request was made by a person working for an international company

[44] "Давай ты мне будешь оплачивать ежемесячно стоимость размещения этого баннера, или найдешь других, более «смотрибельных» рекламодателей, и тогда я его сниму. Жить-то мне на что-то надо ведь" (Udav, 2005)

later, in one of the last issues of Q & A with Udav, he was directly asked about how much he was willing to put up with for "advertising money:"

> [Q:] Do you follow any kind of criteria [when selling space on the resource to advertising] – meaning, is there anything that you will never advertise, no matter how much money?
>
> [Udav:] anything [goes] except for fags, child pornography, and political advertising.[45] (Udav, 2007)

Here Udav puts on the same level (as something equally unacceptable) homosexuality, child pornography, and political ads. Thus, Udaff.com cannot be considered a political movement either. Over the last ten years I have not seen a single post that I would consider an example of political advertising. A post of this kind would most likely be rejected by the community.[46] There is a rubric called *"Polit.sru[47]"* where padonki enjoy heated debates about current or historical political issues in Russia and the rest of the world. Texts published in *Polit.sru* are often followed by fiery disputes (sometimes real fights) in "commentaries." These texts however, do not read as propaganda, rather, they reflect political views and attitudes that prevail among *Real Padonki*.

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[45] "[Q:] Есть ли какие-то критерии - что будешь рекламировать, а от чего скорее всего откажешься несмотря на сумму. [Udav:]- Все, кроме пидарасов, наркотиков, детской порнографии и политической рекламы" (Udav, 2007).

[46] During 2014, the sub-rubric titled "*Hi Doctor*, *How are You?*" got flooded with posts that read as advertising of porn, gaming and prostitution. By the end of December 2014 there were total of twenty nine texts published. None of the texts received a rating or was discussed in commentaries. Apparently, Udav accepted those texts for publication, but the community refused to recognize them as "true" practice of being-and-becoming a *Real Padonak*.

[47] *"Полит.сру,"*

So, if udaff.com has neither commercial nor political agenda, then what kind of website is it? In a Q and A issue published in 2007 Udav refers to his website as an "online club":

> *Idiot*: Udav, how do you like everything that is happening here [on Udaff.com]? In your view, what are the goals of this resource? What was the initial idea, and what came out of that?
>
> [Udav:] I like it. In my opinion, the goals are the following: to give people an opportunity to meet, get to know each other, hang out and have fun on this [web]site. Something like an online club, but a very big club. And initially, long time ago, it was my personal home page, gy-gy-gy.[48][49] (Udav, 2007)

It follows then, that udaff.com is a place where people with shared interest meet to write, publish, read, argue about current events, and discuss and critique each other's writing. However, is this all there is to udaff.com?

Our Books is one of the five major rubrics of Udaff.com. It carries titles and images of hard cover books published by Udaff.com writers (see figure 4 below).

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[48] *gy-gy-gy* ("гыгыгы") – a formulaic phrase that in Padonki language stands for Laugh Out Loud, or *ha-ha-ha.*

[49] Идиот: Удав, а как ты относишся ко всему происходящему здесь? Каковы по твоему цели данного, ресурса. Как все задумывалось и к чему в итоге пришло? [Udav]: - К относящемуся отношусь очень положительно. Цели, на мой взгляд, такие: дать возможность людям познакомиться, отдохнуть и потусоваться на этом сайте. Что-то вроде онлайнового клуба, хоть и очень большого. А задумывалось давным – давно это сначала как моя домашняя станичка, гыгыгы.
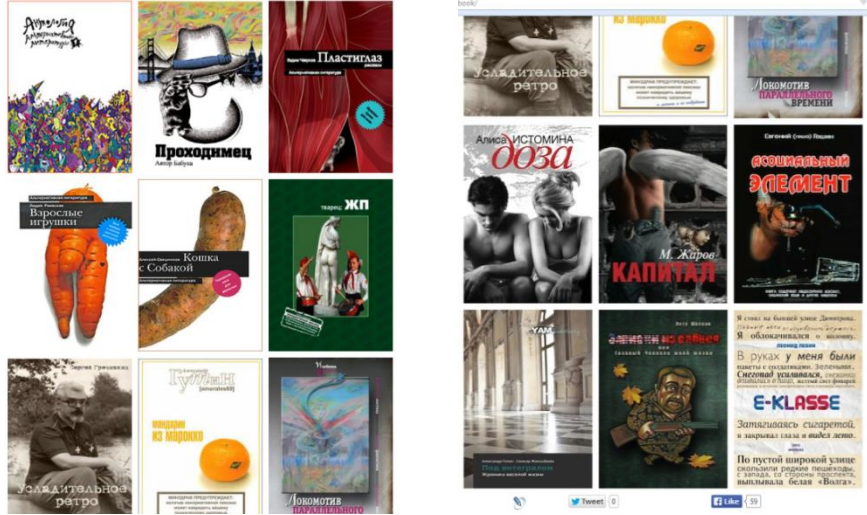
Figure 4. Books published by udaff.com, image of hardcovers

The images above show eighteen books covers. These books were initially published on Udaff.com in the form as separate chapters. Under these images seven titles are listed (figure 5), and each title also serves as a "live link" to an Internet book store where these books can be purchased.

Сергей Гречишкин (Василий Пригодич) "Усладительное Ретро"

Друзья, я издал книгу писем отца. Ее можно заказать на Амазоне (ссылка ниже) или можно прислать мне Ваш почтовый адрес на емэйл sergey@hotmail.com и я ее отправлю.
С уважением,
Сергей Гречишкин-младший.
— Сергей Гречишкин-младший, 28.04.2011

Вадян Рондоноид и тварец "ЖП"

Алексей Свешников "Кошка с Собакой"   комментов: 3

Лидия Раевская «Взрослые игрушки»   комментов: 3

Вадим Чекунов "Пластиглаз"   комментов: 2

Бабука "Проходимец"

Антология Альтернативной литературы №1

Figure 5. Books published by udaff.com, list of titles

The very last title in the list reads *Anthology of Alternative Literature #1*. The word "alternative" in this title is rather significant. It is synonymous to such words as "different," "unusual," "unconventional." In this case, udaff.com should also be viewed

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as a resource for the development of a new form of literature, a form of literature that is different from other more conventional forms. This perspective makes Udav's website look like an online form of a peer reviewed literary journal written in *Padonki Discourse*.

In the literature review section of the chapter one I discuss similarities I discovered between texts published in *Novyj Mir* and *Neva* (conventional literary journals published in former Soviet Union) in the late 80s and early 90s and texts published by *padonki* writers on udaff.com. The view of udaff.com as an online literary journal (or a resource) is supported by the fact that in 2008 Udav actually published (conventionally) three hard cover issues of a literary journal which he named "Almanac"[50] (see figure 6). As we can see in the figure below, the title page of the journal carries udaff.com logo and the title: "@Альманах." Only three issues of the journal were published in 2008. Later the project most likely died without financial support.

Figure 6. Udav with the second issue of the journal

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[50] In Russian the word *almanac* is synonymous to the word *journal*

Most definitely a literary resource, udaff.com also needs to be viewed as a community of practice and a capital D Discourse community. Members of udaff.com do not simply write fiction; through their writing they also practice the Discourse of *Real Padonki*. These two practices: writing for and publishing on udaff.com and being *Real Padonki* cannot be separated from each other. As a whole, this combination of obviously literary activity and the capital D Discourse of *Real Padonki* has produced a new kind of literature - Post Soviet Internet based literature.

This new kind (or a new layer) of literature has several distinct features. It emerged in early 2000s - the years that followed after the collapse of Soviet system and chaotic period of transformation. It uses the Internet as the main medium of publication. It is made out of stories written by new kind of people (*Real Padonki* as real life people) who describe people (*Real Padonki* as literary characters) and situations that did not exist before. This literature has its own 'favorite' genres and utilizes a linguistic innovation, a new register (or language) called *Albanskij*.

Albanskij (Olbanskij, Albantzkej and other variations are also possible) is a variation of the Russian language developed by Russian speaking Internet users in late 90-s and early 2000s. It is often referred to as "padonki jargon" and sometimes even called "padonki language." This variation is based on violations of rules of the standard Russian grammar and spelling. Intentionally incorrect phonetic spelling being its key feature, *Albanskij* also contains violation of rules of negation[51] as well as "improper" word creation (e.g. merging two separate words into one), intentional misuse of

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[51] These violations deserve be examined from the point of view of negation cycles discussed by Van Gelderen (2008, 2011)

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grammatical gender, and misspelling of inflections. Described as "creative provocation" and sometimes even referred to as **orthoart,** (from the word "orthography"), *Albanskij* is designed to imitate the language (oral or written) of an uneducated person, a "low life."

The 'special' status given to written language in modern literate societies has been discovered and discussed by many linguists (Harris, 2006; Johnston, 2005; Street, 2006). Johnston (2005), for example, states that writing is more 'authoritative than speaking' and is seen as a 'sign of prestige and authoritativeness.' Those privileges, however, are given only to standardized, so called "correct," grammatical writing. Incorrect writing, on the contrary, is interpreted as a sign of illiteracy and low socio-economic status of the writer. In this case, the intentional violation of rules of grammar become a challenge of status quo, and attack on establishment. This feature is crucial in understanding the true meaning behind other components of *Padonki Discourse* such as cynicism, obscenities, face threats, offensive content, put downs (to name a few). All of them are used to challenge values and norms adopted by the mainstream society and provoke negative reaction in much the same way a torero teases a bull.

From this standpoint the 'mission statement' of udaff.com stated on the *Main Page* is easy to interpret. It means: Udaff.com is a place where mainstream norms do not apply. It is created for people who are not afraid to violate moral or grammatical conventions followed by the rest of the society.

Andrey Arhangel'skij, a contemporary Russian newspaper critic, connects "incorrect language" with the freedom of thought. He writes:

Independent thinking – as Sinyavskij taught – is first and foremost independent speech. … the most important thing is – think and write in your own special way.

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The more incorrect and inappropriate is your language, sentence, style – from the conventional point of view – the sooner you will spill out beyond the borders of mainstream mediocrity. (2008)[52]

On Udaff.com use of *Albanskij* also carries strong ties to styles and genres of writing, to people's identities, moral and cultural norms, values and belief systems. Through violation of mainstream conventions, a new system of values, norms and beliefs is established. On the level of language this new system is expressed through *Albanskij*. On the level beyond language it forms a capital D discourse discussed by Gee (2005). Udaff.com, then, becomes a capital D Discourse community that practices the Discourse of *Real Padonki*. This Discourse can be viewed as a discourse of protest against mainstream culture, but it can also be viewed as a satire on this culture. As such, Udaff.com exaggerates the problematic areas of social life in contemporary Russia and makes them look even more repulsive.

In 2007 *Zhe Le*[53] published a text titled *To the Problem of Benefit and Harm of Olbantzkij*[54] which he dedicated exclusively to the problem of language use on udaff.com. In his essay, written in an extreme version of *Albanskij, ZheLe* comments on an announcement he saw at a restaurant which was written with grammatical mistakes. Lamenting the problem of illiteracy among general population, *Zhe Le* concludes his post with the following remark:

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[52] "Инакомыслие – учил Синявский – это в первую очередь инакоговорение, инакоязык. Главное – думай и пиши по-своему. Чем неправильнее твой язык, слог, речь – с общей точки зрения, – тем скорее ты вывалишься за борт общепринятого."
[53] ЖеЛе

[54] "О пользе и вреде олбанцково..."

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In one word, the more I learn olbanskej, the harder it is for me to observe overwhelming illiteracy around me. The more shit-writing I read in karzina – the more my soul is craving for something pure. There I face "internal moral conflict."[55] (2007)

The view of *Real Padonki* capital D Discourse as a satirical parody on contemporary Russian society is supported by texts or comments which stress "overwhelming illiteracy" or "overwhelming degradation of human of values" spread in mainstream society. *Zhe Le* concludes his post rhetorically: "what the heck am I complaining about? Everybody knows that cooks don't need to be literate in the Russian language" (2007).[56]

In his comment to a different text, *Phallos on (with) wings[57]* directly states that Udaff.com and olbanskij for him have become a 'lifesaver':

I've been a part of this resource for so long… I think like udaff.com… I write in albanzkij… […] Fuck it. But I like it; it saves me from idiotism of that "normal" life. You can't handle seeing the "normal" one without booze. (2007)[58]

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[55] дословно: "Вопщем, чем больше я пастегаю олбанскей, тем тижылее мне видеть вакрук вапеющюю бесграматнась. Чем больше четаю гавна в карзине – тем больше хочеццо празнека души. Наступает «нравственная, бля, дилемма»(с)…" ZheLe (2007).

[56] дословно: "Хотя што это я развазмущялсо? Поварьошкам и никчему знанея рускава изыка." ZheLe (2007).

[57] Фаллос на крыльях

[58] дословно: "Действительно...уже столько сежу на этом рисурсе...и мыслю по удафкомофски...и пишу по албанцки...и слова воспринимаю только в однозначном значении. Пиздец. Но мне это нравицо, отвлекает от долбаебской "нармальной" жизни. На ту, "нармальную", без бухла не взглянешь" (Фаллос на крыльях, 2007)

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Besides serving as a tool of provocation, invention of *Padonki Discourse* has also given udaff.com writers new ways of self-expression. Using a metaphor of a pianist, it can be said that *padonki writers* received a second key-board. Language wise, udaff.com writers can make three choices: They can choose to write in the Standard Russian language (and produce a nice harmonious melody), or they can choose to write in *Albanskij* (and produce disharmonious, threatening, cacophony like tunes), or they can mix both registers and code switch. All three choices carry certain implications.

When a writer chooses to write in *Albanskij*, he or she seems to make a statement that says: "I am a *Real Padonak*, and I write the way *Real Padonki* writers write." Men tend to choose *Albanskij only* register more often than women.[59] However, women also sometimes make this choice. Choice to write in *Albanskij* comes with a challenge. Through creative violation of rules of grammar and spelling, writers have to demonstrate their proficiency in the standard Russian language. Writers are severely ridiculed for texts that contain multiple unintended grammatical errors

The majority of texts published on Udaff.com are written in "mixed register" with varying degree of how much grammatical Russian is mixed in with *Albanskij*. This "mixed register" seems to be the most common choice of people who write for udaff.com. Writing in standard Russian is a tough choice because it requires refraining from "code switching" to *Albanskij* as well as avoiding taboo language. Still, quite a few Padonki writers choose to write in standard, conventional Russian with zero (or very little) *Albanskij* mixed in. Out of 212 texts published in *Netlenka*[60] (the collection of 'the

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[59] most texts in *Korzina* and texts chosen for *Korzina* reviews are signed my male nicknames; of them, 80 to 90 percent of texts in *Korzina* are written in 'Albanskij only'

[60] "Нетленка" - a derivative of the adjective *netlennyj*, which means 'imperishable'

best of the best' texts ever submitted to udaff.com), more than 200 are written in conventional grammatical Russian with minimal use of *Albanskij* register; five texts are written in the "mixed register' with high percentage of Albanskij (50% to 100%), and seven texts carry less than 50% but more than 10% of *Albanskij*.

So, what does it mean if an author makes a choice to write in conventional literary Russian? For one, the writer is more likely to earn recognition of Udav himself and the rest of the resource members. For two, it seems that when a writer chooses to write in 'good' grammatical Russian, he or she is making the following statement to the community: "I am not fooling around! Listen, I have something important to say." Texts written in conventional Russian language usually receive higher ratings, and the majority of acclaimed authors of udaff.com (*~DIS~,*[61] *Mandala,*[62] *Kirzach*[63] (and many others)) write primarily in "normal" Russian with occasional use of curse words.

Other features that distinguish writing published on udaff.com and allow to categorize it as a new kind of literature include authenticity (Udav does not accept texts that were published on any other website); richness (padonki writers are not limited to any one specific genre or a theme); creative experimentation with genres, styles, and registers, and finally the *Padonki Style* of writing (it is often referred to as "format"), which means writing the way *Real Padonki* write.

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[61] years on Udaff.com – 2001-2004; published twenty texts, half of which are dedicated to the problem of drug use

[62] years on Udaff.com: 2005 – 2010

[63] Кирзач

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The variety of genres present on udaff.com is impressive. Members of udaff.com write autobiographical stories, fiction, science fiction, fantasy, political and polemic essays, reviews, fables, news stories, scientific articles, biographies of famous people, interviews, folk tales, fables, parodies – this list can be continued. Most of texts are contained in the sub-rubric *Kreativy,* but some are assigned their own rubrics. The latter ones are texts written in genres that were developed by udaff.com writers and carry very strong features of *Padonki Style*. These include *kavery*, *fables*, *folk tales*, *news stories*, and texts sent by Udav to *Korzina huyatora*. Most of these texts are written as parodies.

Kavery are creative provocative parodies of texts published on udaff.com or acclaimed pieces of classical literature (prose or poetry). Texts written as *Kavery* usually preserve some features of the original story (basic plot line and main characters) while skewing other parts beyond recognition: adding new characters, altering the main idea or morale of the story. In some cases writers of *kavery* announce titles and authors of the original texts, but usually the readers have to guess which piece of writing is being "covered."

Fables and *Folk Tales*[64] are sarcastic parodies of traditional Russian (or international) folk stories. Most of these texts carry offensive sexual (*The story about little red whole* – a reference to Red riding hood), political, or ethnic (*Fat* – a story about a Jew who loved eating bacon) content. Finally, *News Stories* present sarcastic retelling of real world news (domestic or international). Texts written in these genres carry several main features of *Padonki Style* and in a way exemplify, demonstrate to everybody

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[64] "Наши сказки"

how *Real Padonki* write. These features include: sarcastic, dark, and often cynical humor; heavy use of *Albanskij*; exaggerated use of verbal obscenities and obscene themes; intentionally offensive (based on "face threats") political or sexual content, and sometimes open put downs of opponents (real or imaginary). All of these features carry one purpose: creative provocation.

While texts written as *kavery*, *folk tales,* or *fables* exemplify, key features of *Padonki Style* of writing, *Kreativy* contained in the sub-rubric *Korzina huyatora* take those features to the extreme degrees. Although these texts are not united by any kind of common theme (or genre), they all carry several similar qualitative characteristics. *Korzina huyatora* translates into English as *Huyator's[65] Trash Basket*.

Two questions emerge. If *Huyator's Trash Basket* is a 'collection of low quality writing,' what kind of writing is considered 'low quality' on Udaff.com? Also, who decides which texts deserve to be thrown into "trash"? The second question is easy to answer. All decisions regarding which texts get published and under what rubric are made by Udav, the administrator of Udaff.com. On several occasions different people submitted "who makes the decisions?" kind of questions to Udav, and every time Udav's answer was "I do" (Udav, Q and A, 2005-13).[66]

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[65] *'huyator'* is udaff.com used to refer to any writer who writes for Udaff.com. A term *'zachotnyj huyator'* (*'zachotnyj'* means 'accredited' or 'acknowledged') is used to refer to Udaff.com members who have earned respect either by high quality of their writing or by number of texts they have produced.

[66] Udav has also been asked about the criteria he uses to evaluate the 'creativy' submitted for publication. In 2004, a user named *Robut Jebobut* inquired if Udav primarily looked for literary merit of texts, or if he considered creativity to be more important. Udav's response was brief: both. In the same issue of Q and A, a member named *VeGe* asked if Udav's made his decisions regarding quality of writing based on "like-dislike" principle, and once again, Udav accepted and validated the proposed principle with a brief

Huyator's Trash Basket is one of the 'oldest' rubrics on udaff.com. The very first text published under this rubric dates back to 2001. In March 2015, *Huyator's Trash Basket* contained two hundred and twenty two pages. Each page carries thirty to thirty five texts which include both prose and poetry. Poems published in "the basket" resemble parody written in such styles as: rap, 'love songs,' 'criminal romance,' and the like. Rather unsophisticated in content, these poems also carry very simple rhythm and equally simplistic imagery and rhyme. Many of the poems carry two basic cliché *padonki* themes: "life is shit" and "love is a bitch."

Texts written in prose are usually short stories that focus on "the dark side of life." In 2002 *Unitaz*[67] (*Toilet*) wrote a story which he titled *One Incomplete Day of a Homeless Bum.*[68] In this story the protagonist leaves the refuge of a *podval* (a storage area located in the basement of apartment buildings) and begins his day. In the translation below I maximally preserve the style, word, grammar, and punctuation choices made by the author.

> As I was leaving the *podval*, my dirty, unwashed eyes were painfully hit by the sun light and automatically closed. Right there I slipped on a pile of fresh shit and landed on my skeletal ass. When I got back up, my eye balls were already fully adapted to life (after the sunlight punch), and so I noticed a cigarette butt lying right near the pile of shit I had just slipped on, its filter covered in lipstick,

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"exactly." He also established the wait period from the moment a "creative" is submitted until it's published: twenty four hours (Udav, 2004).

[67] УНИТАЗ

[68] ОДИН НЕПОЛНЫЙ ДЕНЬ ИЗ ЖИЗНИ БОМЖА

so I reached for the fag and immediately (so what that I haven't eaten?) lit up. I have been smoking for forty three years, but the first hit punched my brain just as bad; my grey rusty façade stretched in ecstatic grimace. But that's when my critical thinking kicked in. It must be some bitch that shat here!!! Was it that old bag? Na, an old bitch would not take her shit out, on a street... then who shat here? Who shat? What the fuck do I care who shat here?!!! (Unitaz, 2002)

Having finished his cigarette, the *bomzh*[69] decides to go and check out the local dumpster. On the way to the dumpster, he collects empty bottles, gets hit with a rock and finds another half-smoked fag. Having finally made it to the goal of his journey, the man faces an obstacle of a "fat-ass old bitch" that brought her "fucking garbage bucket to the dumpster." He decides to wait and let her leave, but this time good luck leaves his side.

Suddenly, a dirty stinky truck pulled out from behind the corner; the trash collector was moving towards the dumpster. I heard the fat-ass bitch yelling at the driver that 'those drunk-heads' can't even make it on time to remove trash and stuff. The driver parked his truck, got out of his cabin, peed on top of his right front wheel, told the fat-ass to 'go and fuck herself' and started messing with the buttons on the side of his truck. Suddenly, a huge hand emerged from behind the truck. It started moving towards the trash container. Aa-a-a-a-h, late… Suddenly, drops of water ran out of my eyes, the eyes that had seen so much in this life… for some reason those drops tasted of bitterness and salt. (Unitaz, 2002)

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[69] *Unitaz* did not provide his character with a name and "БОМЖ" is a Russian acronym that literally means [a person] with no residence

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Unitaz finishes his story rather abruptly. His protagonist is looking as the trash container is taken away from him and suddenly begins to cry. The whole story is written almost entirely in *Albansky* register and feels devoid of any kind of event, action, or even emotion. It is written in the first person, so the choice of language made by *Unitaz* produces certain 'authenticity' effect: it sounds like a monologue of somebody who lives 'at the very bottom of society.'

This is a very interesting moment. By sending this story to Udav, *Unitaz* claims himself to be a *Real Padonak,* and he also claims his protagonist (a homeless bum) to be is a *Real Padonak* kind of person as well. Udav accepted the story for publication thus granting *Unitaz* the right to consider himself one of the "*Real Padonki*" writers. Although accepted, the story was sent to *Korzina* and received a very low rating from other members. Thus, the second claim of *Unitaz*: my protagonist is a *Real Padonak* kind of person was rejected by both: Udav and the rest of community.

The next short story titled *Unfaithfulness* was published by *Legasy Nation* in March 2013. This writer chose the style of a newspaper reporter. *Legasy Nation* does not identify with his character. The story reads rather as a cold-hearted report about an event observed 'from aside.' The main character named *Serjozha* returns from a business trip. Exhausted and suffering from a hungover, *Serjozha* finally makes it home and walks into the kitchen. Just as he stretches his hand to grab a bottle of mineral water from the fridge, he becomes aware of his surroundings. All of a sudden, instead of a quiet and peaceful kitchen *Serjozha* finds himself submersed in a sexual orgy.

> Suddenly he understood that the kitchen is filled not with the cemetery like
> quietness of a Sunday-morning, but 'aa-a-ahs…' and 'o-o-o-hs…' and sounds of

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bodies slapping against each other… unbearable stink of anal gases, passionately lustful blow-jobs, and so on and so on…(Legasy Nation, 2013).

Shocked and disoriented, *Serjozha* runs out but finds the same kind of scene in his living room. At the verge of losing his mind, *Serjozha* looks for refuge in the bedroom where he sees his wife ("his sweet little girl") having sex with five men at the same time.

Legasy Nation's text carries several key features of "Padonki" discourse style: it is written in a heavy version of Albanskij; it is filled with obscenities, and offers a cynical, pornographic view of sexual relationships. In fact, *Legasy Nation* literally puts his main character inside a scene from a cheap pornographic movie (Serjozha returns home after a long business trip and finds his apartment filled with unknown people in different stages of intoxication having sex with multiple partners). It seems that the story is written in the *Real Padonki* style. However, *Legasy Nation's* implied claim "this is how we as *Real Padonki* write about love" gets rejected and his text ends up in "trash" and receives a rating of one out six stars.

In 2002 *Korzina* received a partner rubric titled *Trash Basket Rules*[70] which among other things contained reviews of texts published in *Korzina*. The title of this rubric actually translates as *Korzina Has Real Power!*[71] Since 2002 at least fifteen people

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[70] "Корзина рулит!"

[71] In Russian, the title of the rubric reads as "Корзина рулит!": "Korzina (a noun, meaning [trash] basket) Rulit." "Rulit" – a verb, derived from a noun 'rul'," which (the noun) literally means a 'steering wheel'. Famous encyclopedic dictionary of "the Great Russian Language" created by Valadimir Dal' in late eighteen hundreds (the online version of this dictionary was created in 1999-2006 on the basis of the 1998 reprint of the send (1880-1882) edition) gives the following meaning to the word "rul'"/ "руль": "Rul'" is a part of any water vessel, attached to its front part […] used to steer the vessel to one or the other side, […], and to handle (or manage) the vessel. A noun "rulevoj" and a verb "rulit'" are derived from the "stem-noun" "Rul'." Dal' (1880, 2006) offers the following definitions "Rulevoj is [the person] attributed to the "rul'." A noun, masculine, [the one] who stands at the "rul'," [who] steers (or manages) the "rul'." "Rulit'," it its turn, is defined as to "run the "rul'," […by] manipulating the scull [in order to] move the boat forward.

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took the responsibility of reading and reviewing texts from *Korzina*. The reviews contain brief summaries of *Korzina* texts as well critical comments left by reviewers.

The very first review was published in June 2002 by *A. Rysakov,*[72] who posted total of fifteen reviews. After *A. Rysakov* left the resource, fourteen other users took turns reviewing *Korzina* texts. The very last review was published in December 2008[73] by *Doctor Mengele.*[74] In June 2002, in his very first issue of *Korzina* review, *A. Rysakov* explained the main functions of the sub-rubric *Korzina*:

> *Huyator's Basket* is the area on Udav's Resource where the main *huyator* - (Udav himself) carelessly sends the texts that he did not like. … It needs to be noted that in most cases his [Udav's] decisions are totally justified, as people sometimes send total ***shit-pieces*** [emphasis added] of writing. However, in some cases I ***fucken*** [emphasis added] deeply disagree with Udav's evaluations of some texts. It is true that content of some of those texts may not meet the ***format*** [emphasis added] of the resource, which in no way belittles their qualities and ***uniqueness of genre*** [emphasis added] of some of those texts. (*2002)*[75]

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[72] А. Рысаков, an author who contributed to Udaff.com from March 2002 till August 2005

[73]Since 2009 this rubric has primarily been used for greetings and announcements. The most recent post in this rubric was published on May 11th, 2013 by the user named *ПТУ 2006/Vocational School 2006* who posted a birthday greeting for Udav.

[74] *Доктор Менгеле*

[75] "Корзина хуятора - раздел Ресурса Удава, куда главный хуятор (Удав сопственной персоной) имеет наглость отправлять непонравившиеся ему по каким-либо причинам тексты писателей. Сразу стоит отметить, что в большинстве случаев такой поступок с его стороны более чем оправдан - ну реальное гавно порой присылают. Однако лично я в отношении отдельных креативов с ним нихуя не согласен. Да, содержание может быть и не совсем в формате ресурса, но это никак не умаляет достоинств и жанрового своеобразия ряда произведений." (A. Rysakov, 2002)

Several things strike in this paragraph: for one, the reviewer has chosen to write primarily in standard, grammatically correct Russian language (in the body of the review, *A. Rysakov* several times "code switches" into *Albanskij*). For two, *A. Rysakov* uses only two obviously insulting, curse based forms. Through the intentional use of the standard Russian language and *Olbansky* or *Albanskiy*, *A. Rysakov* (as many other writers from udaff.com) demonstrates his proficiency in both registers.

It seems that language wise *A. Rysakov* makes the right choice. This kind of intentional and creative use of both registers is highly appreciated by the members of udaff.com community. For a text to be successful, a writer has to prove that their adherence to or violation of standards and conventions of the grammatical Russian language as well as their use of obscenities is based on an informed decision. The writer has to demonstrate that they know the rules they are violating. Their choice of register (Standard Russian, *Albanskij* or "mixed") should also be context and genre appropriate: They have to be using the right kind of register for the right kind of situation. The last requirement can be violated; however, it has to be violated in a creative, humorous, provocative, and consequently, genre-appropriate manner.

Only if these conditions are met does the writer "get it right" and wins approval of the community. This argument is supported by the fact that 80-90% of texts published in *Korzina* are written with obvious overuse of *Albanskij* register and *Padonki style*. At the same time, a minimum of 60-75% of texts published in *Netlenka*[76] are written in standard Russian with occasional use of Albansky register and overall *Padonki style*.

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[76] Collection of the best writing onUdaff.com

Ken Goodman (1996) expressed similar idea in his discussion of the connections between *form*, *functions* and *genre* of a language. He writes: "The form language takes depends on the functions it serves and the situations in which it occurs" (p. 21). As was already stated above, the main function of *Albanskij* is to provoke, to dare. It is supposed to solicit negative response from those who are not *Real Padonki*. This is the same *function* as the one pointed out by Abram Tertz (1978) in his discussion of "dark" and "dirty" humor. Tertz (1978) considers these kinds of jokes a rich literary genre and suggests that they carry an important mission. "…[when] retelling these unfortunate fabulae, I understand that I say things that cannot [should not] be said, that listening to me is unpleasant, that it makes one sick" (p.79).[77] This is the *function*: to provoke, to dare, to violate all possible socially acceptable norm (Tertz, 1978).[78] This is exactly what udaff.com writers do: they violate norms and conventions of mainstream culture.

George Niva (1978), also, suggests that it is 'appropriate' to use non-standard, stigmatized, obscene language for a proper *"function."* He describes how a dissident writer[79] has to painfully search through the internal silence of experience to find that "inner, correct word[80]" (p 101), the "intonation that liberated [the experience][81]" (p.102)

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[77] "Пересказывая эти несчастные фабулы, я поимаю, что говорю недопустимое, что выслушивать меня неприятно и тошнотворно" (A. Tertz, 1978, p. 79).

[78] У Синявского, дословно: "переход границы дозволенного" (A. Tertz, 1978, p. 79).

[79] Here Niva (1978) directly references Solzhenitsyn and his famous short story Odin Den' Ivana Denisovitcha (1990)

[80] дословно: "потаённо ищет своё верное слово в самом себе" (George Niva, 1978, p 101)

[81] [another way to translate this phrase would be "that liberating intonation"[81]]дословно: "интонацию, которая его освобождала" (George Niva, 1978, p 101)

and eventually arrives at the daringly direct use of criminal argot because it suits the *function* of his narrative best.

A. Rysakov in his very first review of *Korzina* texts expresses a similar idea. He describes "*Korzina Style*"[82] – a new genre, a new kind of writing. *A. Rysakov* made this discovery unintentionally. A friend sent him a link to one of K*orzina* texts. *A. Rysakov* read the text, found it to be ridiculously funny, and continue browsing through other texts in *Korzina*. Eventually, he discovered that "there were quite a few fucken cool things which all shared something in common that (I swear with my dick) cannot be described with simple shitty words. […] all these things carried strong feeling of *style* and *atmosphere*" (2002).[83]

In the following paragraphs *A. Rysakov* develops a discussion about literature, language, and genre of *Korzina style* writing that echoes Bakhtin (1996) and Abram Tertz (1978). He makes it clear, however, that not *all* of the texts published in *korzina* are equally good and belong to the *korzina-style:*

> For the most part, *Korzina* gets meaningless descriptions of drunkenness, sex, or unrelated philosophical forests of words that no dick can fuck through. Most of these texts are written with a strong ambition for something authentic and intelligent, plus all kinds of show offs and fuck offs. (2002)[84]

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[82] "Корзина-стайл."

[83] Дословно: "Как-то раз МУБЫЩЪ закинул мне сцылку на креатив из корзины. Йопти, я заснуть потом не мог. Как вспомню, начинаю гоготать и всё тут. Вскоре я и сам стал тыкать наугад в эти креативы и обнаружил, что есть среди них действительно пиздатые вещицы, в которых присутствовало нечто общее, на словах даже вот хуй опишешь какое. Одним словом, в них угадывался единый стиль и атмосфера повествования в целом."

[84] "Корзина-стайл вовсе не означает все креативы в корзине хуятора. Там тоже хватает абсолютно левого гавна. Чаще всего это неказистые описания пьянок, ёблей или просто в хуй никому не

A lot of texts published on udaff.com meet this description. Texts that focus on "meaningless descriptions of drunkenness, [and] sex" seem to be almost a staple on Udav's resource. A most recent example would be the text titled "My Biolagi Titcher"[85] published by *Nizhnegorodskij Bear*[86] in May 2014. The author depicts himself as a sexually over accomplished ("I've-fucked-them-all"[87]) kind of high school senior who goes to a school dance and gets hit on by his female Biology teacher whom he calls a "retiree" ("she was fucken 24 years old"[88]) and a "grandmother."

Obviously, these kinds of stories *are* a part of udaff.com style. Apparently, people believe that these texts *are* the *right* kinds of texts: the kinds of texts that *Real Padonki* write. However, in most cases these texts receive low ratings (3.5 out of 6 stars and lower) and get sent to the "trash basket." *A. Rysakov* in 2002 commented: "*This* [emphasis added] is no fucken way korzina-style. This is no style at all, but a waste of nerves if one reads shit like this."[89]

Articles published by Niva and Sinyavskij (a.k.a. A. Tertz) in the late 70s in Paris offer an interesting perspective on the problem of *Korzina Style*. Niva (1978) makes a reference to the theater adaptation of *The Ten Days That Shook the World* done by

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впивавшиеся размышления. Как я заметил, все они написаны с претензией на нечто умное, плюс понты и выебоны."

[85] "Биалагичка"

[86] Медведь Нижегородский

[87] "сваи уже выебаны вдоль и паперек"

[88] "24года, хуле"

[89] дословно: "Это блять совсем не корзина-стайл. Это вопще никакой не стайл, а расстройство, если читать подобную хуету."

Lyubimov[90] in Taganka (a famous Soviet theater). He describes the play as a brilliant invention made to serve a text "which is fake and devoid of meaning" (p. 100).[91] Niva considers this "fakeness" to be the "return of external aesthetic freedom into the language of literature" (1978, p 100).[92] His statement can almost be interpreted as "this *is not* art, but this is why *it is* art."

The article "The Art and the Reality"[93] published by Tertz in the second issue of literary journal *Sintaksis[94]* in 1978 sounds almost as if he was predicting the emergence of *Padonki* literature. Tertz (1978) describes a dystopian world that exists on the ruins of Art. "Imagine that art has died. It has been exterminated, burned down" (p.112). This dystopia can very well be used to describe the period of transformation which Russian culture entered with the collapse of former Soviet Union. Many of udaff.com members saw in this transformation the death of true, real, classic Russian culture and its substitution with fake, 'disposable,' and cheap Western culture. In this case offensive, "into-your-face" features of *Real Padonki* become signs of protest against this substitution. The *Real Padonki* culture, in this case, becomes a kind of *counter-culture*: the culture created by people who position themselves against the norms and values shared by the mainstream society.

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[90] a Soviet and Russian stage actor and director associated with the internationally-renowned Taganka Theatre which he founded in 1964 ("Yuri Lyubimov")

[91] дословно: "выдумка эта поставлена на службу тексту, практически не существующему, фальшивой и грубой подделке, за которой нет глубокого смысла" (Niva, 1978)

[92] дословно: "Это возвращение внешней эстетической свободы в язык литературы, театра и кино" (Niva, 1978)

[93] дословно: "Искусство и действительность"

[94] дословно: Синтаксис

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In *A. Rysakov's* view, true *Korzina-style* means "texts of high aesthetic value and with distinct features of genre, which [both the aesthetic value and genre] authors themselves never considered while working on these texts (this last point is crucially important)"[95] (2002, para 4). In other words, *Korzina-style* authors create masterpieces of a distinct specific genre without even knowing, without even thinking about it. A. Tertz continues his article with a sudden switch to an utopic view of the "exterminated, burned down art" which "suddenly begins to revive itself, comes through the ruins and continues growing on the seemingly least suitable soil" (1978, p. 112).

A. *Rysakov* gives a similar view of this "self-reviving art." He describes *Korzina-style* texts as "true art," art which is totally devoid of "pride and pretentiousness."

[There is no] that fucken writer's pride and pretentiousness or [in the text itself "nor"] any kind of ambition for aesthetics of form or depth of meaning. These texts claim fucken nothing of this kind. (2002, para 4)[96]

Tertz (1978) traces the origin of this "new art" all the way back to folklore and predicts that following this revival, the old, "exterminated, burnt down" art will return: "and right next to it [the 'new art'] authors, books and traditions which had gone extinct or almost unknown to the new generations [will be] resurrected" (p.112).[97]

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[95] "**Корзина-стайл** - это высокохудожественные произведения, с совершенно чётким жанровым своеобразием, при написании которых автор об этом даже не подозревал (прошу воткнуца в это определение, особенно в его последнюю часть)."

[96] дословно: "В них нет этих ёбаных понтов и бахвальства, нет претензии на изящность формы или глубинный смысл, они вообще нихуя ни на что не претендуют. Претендую только я. На то, что они достойны большего, чем банально утонуть в информационном океане."

[97] дословно: "А рядом воскресают авторы, книги и традиции, сгинувшие бесследно или почти не известные новому поколению"

Bakhtin (1994) gives significant attention to the form and functions of "defecation series," "sexual series" and other "openly indecent expressions and jokes [that] are sprinkled throughout the whole of Rabelais' novel" (p190). The genre of short indecent stories was used by Boccaccio (and many other famous writers) and discussed extensively by literary critics and philosophers of language. Niva (1978) adds Venedict Yerofeyev's "hymn to drunkenness" (famous short story "Moscow to the End of the Line") to the list of works he (Niva) calls "the literature of meaning," and a literature of liberation. In Yerofeyev's story, Niva (1978) sees the violation and denouncing of "all slogans," that brings about "alcohol based liberation [which] receives its stylistic value in liberation through obscenity and low humor, through degradation of all history of the world culture into senseless mumble and a puke of a drunkard" (p. 107).[98] It turns out then, that Padonki writers actually follow in the steps of classics of world literature.

However, is Tertz (1978) correct when he predicts the resurrection of the "old art"? Quite possibly so. Intertextuality is one of the key features of *Padonki style*. Many texts published on udaff.com carry explicit (source and author are directly named in the text) or implicit (indirect, intuitive) references to classics of Russian and World literature and art. For example, *Johansenbabaj[99]* (2014) in his review of a screen version of Strugatskije's book *It is Difficult to Be a God* demonstrates an extensive knowledge of the filmography of the director who made the movie as well as extensive knowledge of

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[98] дословно: "Все лозунгипоруганы и осквернены, и алкогольное освобождение получает своё стилистическое соответствие через непритойности и зубосальство, через деградаию всей истории мировой культур в речь и блевотину пьяницы" (стр. 107).

[99] Йохнасенбабай

other Strugatskije's works. He also makes references to Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Hemingway, and Okudzhava (a famous Soviet singer-song writer) and a famous provocation by *Piero Manzoni's* named "Merda d'artista" (*Artist's Shit*[100]*)*.

A. *Rysakov* points out such characteristic of *Korzina style* as: "infantilism," which he views as "sincerity," and "ambitiousness." He concludes by stating that, in some ways, *Korzina style* writing is simply "total bullshit," but then, "even this bull shit is a very special kind of bullshit" (2002, para 5).[101]

Zhe Le who for several years was the main reviewer of *Korzina* also considers *Korzina* texts worthy of attention. In a comment written in heavy *Albanskij Zhe Le* recommends: "u shud nesesary reed this – u won't regret… you absolutely want to read these texts, you won't waste your time"[102] (2007).

It seems that *A. Rysakov* (2002), Tertz (1978), Niva (1978), and Bakhtin (1981)[103] describe the same thing: a new genre, a new kind of literature. However, can *this* be called *literature*? Can people who refer to themselves as "dregs of the society" be considered writers? Tertz (1978) describes analogous attitudes of soviet government towards dissident writers: "What kind of writers are they?! They are no writers! They are

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[100] The work consists of 90 tin cans, filled with feces, each 30 grams and measuring 4.8x6.5cm, with a label in Italian, English, French, and German stating: Artist's Shit. Contents 30 gr net. Freshly preserved. Produced and tinned. in May 1961. ("Artists' Shit," 2014)

[101]"Корзина-стайл - это может быть даже в чём-то инфантильность, хотя больше подходит слово непосредственность, в чём-то амбициозность, в чём-то полнейшая поебень. Однако эта поебень тоже в свою очередь специфическая."
[102] "Абизатильна зачтите – нипажылеити " (*Zhe Le*, 2007).

[103] the edition I am referring to here here was reprinted in 1996

criminals!" (p. 114).[104] For Tertz this kind of *reaction* to this *kind of art* proves its

authenticity because if art is considered a crime, it (the art) must be good.

> Who would doubt! Art is considered a crime. Not even a political crime, a
>
> criminal crime, a felony. Art is viewed as equal to theft, to first degree murder. It
>
> means - it [the art] is worth something! It means - it [the art] is true and real!"
>
> (1978, p. 114)[105]

Tertz finishes the passage with a few powerful rhetorical questions: "it might be

possible then, that, really, - art, any kind of art, - is a crime? A crime against

[mainstream] society. Against life itself… Then, what is art? What are its virtues or its

evils?" (1978, p. 114).[106]

Tertz (1978) wrote specifically about dissident writers who brought criminal argot

into the Russian literary language and developed a new Discourse – the Discourse of

dissidents. They also composed a new layer of literature – literature dedicated to the

horrors of Stalin's concentration camps. Tertz (1978) emphasizes the value of art - "the

lowest and most useless of all things" - for its own sake because it [the art] "encompasses

in itself the salt and the essence of everything that exists and everything that happens" (p.

118).[107] Tertz (1978) specifies that he is talking about the special kind of art, the low art:

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[104] дословно: "Да какие же это писатели! это же не писатели, а - уголовники!" (стр. 114).

[105] дословно: "Еще бы! Искусство приравнивается к преступлению. И дажа не к политическому, а к уголовному преступлению. Искусство приравнивается к воровству и к убийству. Значит, оно что-то стоит! Оно - реальность " (стр. 114).

[106] дословно: "И, может быть, на самом деле - искусство, всякое искусство - это преступление? Преступлеие перед обществом. Перед самой жизнью... Так сто же оно такое - искусство, И в чем его зло или добро?.." (стр. 114).

[107] дословно: "То есть, искусство - это самое ичтожное и ненужное чтоесть на свете. И вместе с тем оно, искусство, заключает в себе и соль и смысл всего, что существует, и всего, что происходит" (стр. 118).

"I mean the art, which sometimes goes down to the very bottom of life and has more to tell about it [life], than it [life] knows about itself" (p. 115).[108]

From this angle, writing produced by *Real Padonki* can be viewed as a new form of art, and a new layer of literature. Just like Dissident literature, *Padonki* writing is based in personal experiences of people who are creating this literature. Padonki literature also came as a response to powerful transformative experiences and relies on alternative medium of publication – the Internet. While ideas and values expressed by Dissidents conflicted with those of the Soviet system, offensiveness of *Padonki* art is based on provocation and intended violation of rules and conventions of mainstream culture. Creating this art, being a *Real Padonak,* then becomes a sign of conflict with and protest against the mainstream way of life, against commercialized culture and monetary values.

Maks aka kondrat (2007) considers the very existence of Udav's resource to be "the protest against false values" imposed by commercialized mainstream style of life. He says: "Contemporary society imposes false ideals. The world is following standards superimposed by mass [produced] culture. Friendship, patriotism, and other eternal values have been substituted with commerce and purely pragmatic goals"[109] (n.p.).

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[108] дословно: "... я имею в виду искусство, которое порой опускается до самых низин жизни и говорит о ней больше, чем та сма о себе знает" (стр. 115).

[109] Удафф.ком - это протест против ложных ценностей. Современное общество навязывает какие-то убогие идеалы. Мир следует стандартам, навязаным массовой культурой. Дружбу, патриотизм и другие вечные ценности заменила коммерция и чисто прагматичные цели.

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Overuse of offensive topics, experimentation with language, and excessive use of verbal obscenities *Maks aka kondrat* interprets as freedom and a protest against popular culture: "*popsa* [colloquial for 'pop culture'] has replaced true art. udaff.com negates *popsa*. It is very good because as a literary site, Udav's Resource protects our literature from *popsa*" (2007)[110]. This statement repeats Tertz and Niva's views of the role of dissidents in the Russian culture. It also sounds as a simplified version of Bakhtin's discourse on "assimilating real historical time and space in literature" (1994, p. 84). *Maks aka kondrat* (2007) views udaff.com as a crucial component of contemporary Russian culture which "reflects the contemporary culture as it is" (n.p.) and at the same time protects the "true culture" from" *popsa*. Udaff.com also carries an important mission: "many years later, texts accumulated in the archives of the Resource will be preserved as a national fund of culture. They [these texts] will be studied in universities and probably even schools" (n.p.).[111]

Maks aka kondrat suggests that literature produced on udaff.com will be eventually studied in schools and universities. Despite obvious presence of "mindless sex" and "drunkenness" themes on udaff.com, a closer look at commentaries that follow each text will show that in reality padonki writers value writing that is authentic, carries deep message, and is based on creativity, good style, and knowledge of subject matter.

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[110] На смену истинному искусству пришла попса. Удафф.ком отрицает попсу.
 Это очень хорошо, потому что, являясь литературным сайтом, Ресурс Удава защищает нашу литературу от попсы.
[111] "Поэтому можно совершенно правильно сказать, что удафф.ком - часть нашей культуры. Он отражает современную культуру, такой как она есть. Через многие десятилетия тексты в архиве Ресурса станут национальным достоянием. По ним будут изучать жизнь в начале 21века. Их будут изучать в университетах, а может даже в школах" (Maks aka kondrat, 2007).

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Many of padonki writers view "learning to write well" and producing texts that will "make people think" to be the main purpose of udaff.com.

I write folk tales for adults, and I am learning to write in a way that INTERESTS [people]… […] and makes them think... think for THEMSELVES, not just repeat old thoughts installed into them by all kinds of medieval jerks.[112] (n.n., n.d.)

Most texts published on udaff.com receive serious criticism. Writers get scolded for the lack of knowledge of conventions of grammar and spelling; for excessive pathos and pretentiousness; for lack of authenticity, depth, and style. A writer who fails to deliver a thoughtful message and demonstrates lack of knowledge of the subject matter is never forgiven. Creativity (combined with provocation) is valued just as much as ability to honestly show things "as they really are."

In the exchange quoted below four members of udaff.com share their views on strengths and weaknesses of a text submitted by a new *hyator.[113]* All four critics mix standard literary Russian with *Albanskij* and fill their comments with obscenities. However, their commentaries focus primarily on the author's use of such literary techniques as "creation of an interesting, dynamic hero;" "effective use of personal life experience;" "a strong character line of the hero (how he experiences the world);" "openness of the hero to the reader;" "authors voice and overall rhythm of the text," and finally "language of the text: writer's meter and simplicity of a phrase."

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[112] я пишу сказки для взрослых и учусь писать исключитешьно шоп было ИНТЕРЕСНО... шоп развлекало и появлялись свои мысли... СВОИ а не вдолбаные средневековыми и прочими абдолбышами (n.n., n.d.).
[113] Udaff.com term for 'writer'

This exchange is chosen to demonstrate that despite all surface level offensiveness of *Padonki Discourse*, the main focus of udaff.com is on "doing good literature," producing good writing, developing strong writer-reader relationships, and learning about responsibilities of a writer. Obscenities seem to carry the function of a 'trademark.' By every curse word used in the exchange, the commenters seem to be saying: "We are on udaff.com. This is what people do here: write and discuss each other's writing. And this is *how* people talk about writing here:"

> *Prince Bolt of the Stallion:*[114] … the author's imagination does not go past fucking old ladies; … however, the task of creating a truly interesting hero – dynamic and fucken truly complex – requires the author to have significant life experience… which in this text is obviously lacking… [writers of this kind] have nothing to offer […] to the reader …[115] (2008)

Kirzach (2008) disagrees with the previous comment and establishes his view of "good writing:"

> *Kirzach*: I am OK with autobiography … I don't mind looking inside an ordinary person's life. I don't really care much for dynamic movement of events; [what I care about] is the internal philosophy of the hero. His feelings, his understanding

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[114] Князь БолтКонский. *Bolt* in Russian is another slang term for penis, while literally it means a screw bolt. Thus the nickname can be interpreted as Prince Stallion's Penis.

[115] "…у автора - фантазия только в теме ебли старух работает...а для того чтобы создать интересного героя - динамичного и захуеверченного - нужно как минимум иметь жизненный опыт..которого собственного говоря негусто.. … ..ну кроме своей никому не интересной жизни - они не могут ничего никому показать....вот в чем главная проблема...а все остальное - это уже следствия - остается только зевать" (*Prince Bolt of the Stallion, 2008*)

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of things. And of course, the language is also important.[116] … Autobiography is worth attention if it is really unusual and interesting… (2008)

Bender, on his part, points out such characteristics of "good writing" as being "live," "interesting," and "dynamic:"

Bender[117]:… I don' give a flying fuck about deep internal experiences and other symptoms of graphomaniacs. *Hren*'s writing is live; it's fast, interesting and dynamic… It reads like a screenplay for a Guy Ritchie's movie[118] (2008).

Finally, *Modestus* closes the debate by praising the "atmosphere" and clarity of depiction on the main character: "Listan here, shit-experts, literary critics. Donnow 'bout the plot line – too early, but – hear me, suckers – the meter and the simplicity of a phrase - those are the signs of class" (2008).[119]

In 2013 *Kirzach* published a text (a chapter from his latest book) which described cruel murder of a whole village by *oprichniki* - Ivan the Terrible's 'special police' force. The text received 5.5 stars out of 6 possible. In commentaries that followed Kirzach was primarily criticized for the lack of 'historic truth' (comments implied that he invented the horrible incident) and lack of patriotism.

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[116] да автобиографичность не так страшна... иной раз, и наоборот... я ничего против не имею, в том числе и биографию маленького человека изучить. Мне не событийность важна, а мироощушение героя. Чувства его, понимание вещей. Ну и язык произведения, конечно, немаловажен (Kirzach, 2008).

[117] This nick name is most likely a reference to a famous comedic literary character *Ostap Bender* – an unlucky scam artist.

[118] уважаемый, да мне в хуй не сдались душевно-психологические переживания и графоманские обороты. А Хренъ пишет живо и интересно. Быстро что ли... Как будто сценарий к фильмам ГайРичи (Bender, 2008)

[119] Кароче. Прочитал все четыре главы. Слухайте сюда, пицыализды-критеке. Чо там нащщет сюжета - х/з, рано, но - слышыте уебки - слог и простота фраз - это признак класса. (Modestus, 2008).

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This is the worst shit when our own Russian people, write talented lies and all kinds of shit about our own history. In this way, unknowingly they become voluntary helpers of the most hateful enemies of their own people and country.[120] (*mtitya,*[121] 2013).

Kirzach responds to the criticism by citing official documents: chronicles, tsar's orders and etc. Interestingly, *Kirzach* almost never uses *Albanskij* in his writing or in conversations on udaff.com. Even when he responds to comments written in heavy *Albanskij* register, *Kirzach* refuses to 'code switch' and maintains good standard Russian. Already a reputable old time member of udaff.com and an acclaimed author,[122] *Kirzach* feels no need to use *Albanskij* to establish himself as a *Real Padonak*.

As if supporting the statement of *Maks aka kondrat* that udaff.com reflects contemporary Russian culture, *mtitya*'s criticism shows how real life attitudes that exist in contemporary Russian society are reflected in *Real Padonki* Discourse. In the comment quoted above, *mtitya* compares Kirzach to "hateful enemies" of Russia who enjoy "tales about blood hungry Russians" (2013, n.p.).

This quality of udaff.com to serve as a reflection of the culture which created it is best seen through the phenomenon of topic rotation. I noticed this phenomenon while examining contents of the sub-rubric *Polemics*. First introduced in 2003, this sub-rubric is dedicated to short opinion based essays that address what I would call "issues of

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[120] Самое западло когда свои вроде люди,русские,причем талантливо,пишут враки и дурь про свою историю.Тем самым они становятся добровольными помощниками самых злобных врагов своего народа и своей страны … (mtutya, 2013)

[121] мтитя

[122] Kirzach had already published at least seven hard cover books

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importance." The rotation of topics is striking. Out of fifty posts published on the very first page of the rubric *Polemics* in 2003, at least seventy percent focused on 'internal' issues, such as the nature and purpose of the resource itself, quality of texts published on udaff.com, practices associated with Udaff.com, definitions of counter culture and its connection to Udav's resource, and personal relationships of members of the resource. In 2010 *padonki* were already focusing more on domestic issues in Russia, and by 2014 attention of the community has shifted almost exclusively to the international events. Out of eighty four texts published in the rubric *Polemics* in January – September 2014, forty nine carried the words Ukraine or Majdan[123] in their titles and abstracts, while another ten were dedicated to the Israeli-Arab conflict. At least three texts addressed political situation in the Ukraine indirectly, by drawing parallels with Germany and Hitler[124]. Very few texts focused on the issues of Russian domestic politics, and not a single text was directly dedicated to the problems of udaff.com as a counter-culture website, or the identity of a *Real Padonak*.

This rotation of topics supports the view of Udaff.com as a reflection of processes happening in contemporary Russian society. While seemingly disconnected from the view of udaff.com as a literary resource, it highlights another function of udaff.com – a discussion club: a place where people meet to express their thoughts an the issues they deem important.

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[123] Majdan Nezalezhnosti, the Independence Square in Kiev, Ukraine – one of the main battle fields of the most recent political unrests in the country. Eventually became a 'marked', term, heavy with added political meaning.
[124] Russian Mass Media generally presented events in Kiev as a pro-fascist revolt.

While all "bad" writing submitted to Udav gets published in *Korzina*, there is also a special sub-rubric that houses all texts (both prose and poetry) considered by Udav (and other members of the community) to be masterpieces of *padonki writing*. This sub-rubric is called *Netlenka*[125] (this word can be translated as "*For Ever Best of…*"). Created in 2001, this is one of the oldest rubrics of the resource. The front page of *Netlenka* greets the reader with a short personal message from Udav where he explains what kind of texts are contained in the rubric: "[here] we have collected *creativy*[126] dat been and always will be stimulating ya mind and generely: nat onli ya mind, but mind and feeeelings of any artistic being[127]" (n.p., n.d.). Udav also describes how each ordinary *ftykatel'* can take part in the work of the rubric*:*

> So, if ya tink, far example,[128] dat *creatiff*[129] written by padonak *Dristch Sukhodrischev*[130] is worth highest regognition – write about it. It's possible that thanks to your vote it [the text] will make it into *Netlenka*. If something that is

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[125] *Netlenka* can be literally translated as "that which will never perish"

[126] *Creativ* – a piece of creative writing, a story, a text

[127] All misspellings in this passage are a conscious attempt to "translate" Udav's use of *Albanskij* register (an intentionally "incorrect" phonetic spelling of Russian words).

[128] Although Udav, intentionally misspells Russian words, his automatic use of standard punctuation, betrays Udav's full literacy in the language he intentionally "corrupts."

[129] A variation of spelling of the word creativ – Albansky term for a piece of creative writing.

[130] *Dristch Sukhodrischev* – this nickname can be translated as *Diarrhea Echo Fart*

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already published in *Netlenka* in your opinion is a piece of shit – write [about it].

All suggestions should be sent ta <u>netlenka@Udaff.com.</u>" [131] (Udav, n.d.)[132]

Through this introduction Udav accomplishes several things: he introduces the overall style of Udaff.com; he also explains the purpose of the rubric and establishes his decision-making power; at the same time, Udav encourages other members of Udaff.com to contribute their opinions and suggestions. Throughout the introduction, Udav several times switches registers. He uses intentionally ungrammatical phonetic spelling and swearwords, but he also (most likely automatically), follows standard rules of sentence structure (word order, subject verb agreement, and etc.) and punctuation. By mixing standard Russian and *Albanskij* Udav demonstrate his proficiency in both languages.

The first text was published in Netlenka rubric in January 2001; the last – in March 2015. Overall, the rubric contains two hundred and fifteen texts. Quite a few writers have more than one text published in *Netlenka*. Of them, Udav himself (as well as *XZ,*[133] *~Dis~,*[134] and *Stroybatych*[135]*)* has five texts; *10meters* - six; *ShBG* and *Ivan*

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[131]"Нетленка – место, где собраны креативы, которые будоражыли, будоражют и будут долго будоражыть твой ум и ваапще: не только ум и не только твой, а ум и чуфства любой творческой натуры. […] Кароче, если ты щитаешь, к примеру, что креатифф падонка Дрища Суходрищенкова достоен быть увековеченным - пиши об этом. Возможно, благодаря тваему голосу он попадёт в нетленку. Если что-то, уже размещенное в нетленке, по-твоему – хуйна галимая – пиши. Предлажения слать сюды: <u>netlenka@Udaff.com</u>" (Udav, 2001)

[132] This introduction by Udav does not have a date. Thus, while the rubric itself was created in 2001, it is very possible that the introduction was added later.

[133] If pronounced, this acronym in Russian will sound as a clipped form of a swearword based formulaic expression "*fuck knows.*" The full form is socially unacceptable, but the acronym, does not sound offensive, and serves as euphemism, as a *hint* on the full meaning, which makes it a more accepted colloquialism.

[134] Original spelling

[135] *Stroybatych* is an interesting nickname. Although clearly a non-standard form, it is a derivative of *stroybat* – a fusion of two clipped nouns, which literally means *construction troops.* While this nickname is absolutely devoid of a slightest hint on obscenity, it is very masculine. In Russia, traditionally only men served in the army, and only men could be sent to *construction troops.*

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both have ten texts in this rubric; finally, *Kirzach*, the absolute leader, has twenty one texts – chapters of his book "Kirza" that was later published as a conventional hard cover edition. Other writers range anywhere between one and four *Netlenka* texts.

Of more than two hundred texts contained in *Netlenka* only ten are written with a strong mix of *Albanskij*. The rest of the texts use standard Russian language with an occasional use of a curse word or a brief code-switching to *Albanskij*.

There are no special topic or genre requirements for *Netlenka* texts: those can be fiction stories (the majority or texts); autobiographical short stories (all three of *Madala's* texts, *Kirzach's* cycle about his experiences in the Soviet army); science fiction (very interesting short stories written by *Vadyan Rondoniod* that later were also published as a hard cover book), as well as parodies and absurd humorous essays. Many texts focus on love and relationships (usually with a dramatic ending). Quite a few stories are dedicated to addictions (drugs and alcohol) as well as crimes and tragedies connected to those problems (*Six Melancholic Letters*, *~Dis*, *Medved' Shatun* and many other writers).

Comparative analysis of the two sub-rubrics that contain "the best" and "the worst" writing on udaff.com confirms the suggestion that udaff.com is primarily a literary website. As a *community of practice*, this is a community of creative writers who, despite their love for offensive language, value literacy and "good writing." The main practice here is *writing the way Real Padonki write*, and this writing has to be thoughtful, creative, and provocative.

The fact that *Netlenka* has very few texts written in adherence to the Discourse of *Real Padonki* suggests that this style is actually rather difficult to use. The fact that all books published by udaff.com are composed of *Netlenka* texts indirectly proves that a

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writer who wants to be read and understood by the bigger audience cannot adhere to the discourse of rebellion and defiance of mainstream culture.

In this chapter I present my view of Udaff.com as a community that practices (creative) writing based on violation of grammatical conventions of the Russian language as well morals and norms of the mainstream society. This practice is positioned by the community as a practice of complete freedom of thought and expression. I also propose to view the writing published on udaff.com as a new form of art, specifically, a new form of literature.[136] The community itself refers to the form of writing they practice as the "alternative literature" or "alterlit" and often connects it to the concept of *counter-culture*.

The cultural model of a *Real Padonok* and *Albanskij* – the language that represent how *Real Padonak* talks and writes, are the two corner stones of udaff.com as a community of practice. Texts submitted to Udaff.com have to represent the *Real Padonki* kind of people. A *Real Padonak,* then, is both: the protagonist, the main hero of writing and the writer; the invention and the inventor. Made of beliefs, customs, values, thoughts, feelings, and life experiences of udaff.com writers, the cultural model of a *Real Padonak* reflects lives and identities of the real life people who created it. Adding beliefs, values, and experiences ingrained in and represented by a *Real Padonak* turns udaff.com into a capital D Discourse community that practices the Discourse of *Real Padonki*. This Discourse is created and expressed through the forms of writing produced by the members of udaff.com. As a capital D Discourse community, udaff.com can also

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[136] If looked at from a very wide angle, following Bakhtin (1994, 1996) Udaff.com can be viewed as a novel written about "Real Padonak."

be seen as a reflection (possibly as a satirical reflection) of the contemporary Russian society.

Practicing the Discourse of *Real Padonki* becomes for udaff.com members a game of collective invention, a never ending cycle of being-as-becoming (Gee, 2005). This practice is inseparable from the practice of writing and publishing on udaff.com. Thus, two kinds of people are merged together inside the model of a Real Padonak: the real life people who write and publish on udaff.com and the characters they create. The next two chapters address this problem by closely examining *Real Padonki* as real life people and as literary characters.

CHAPTER 3

"REAL PADONKI" AS REAL LIFE PEOPLE

In the previous chapter I propose that Udaff.com should be viewed as a community of practice where the cultural model of a *Real Padonak* serves as a kind of 'glue' that holds the community together and separates it from other Internet literature sites. This chapter looks at *padonki* as real life people who have created the cultural model of a *Real Padonak:* the people who practice being *Real Padonki* by participating in the activities and practices of udaff.com. Here I also discuss the process of "rotation of people" as a mechanism that allows to both preserve the 'old' values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that constitute the capital D Discourse of *Real Padonki* by transmitting them to the 'new generations' of udaff.com writers and to add new features to this Discourse and thus keep it alive and fresh.

Here, a parallel can be made with Gee's example of a "real Indian"; if we substitute words "real Indian" with the words "Real Padonak," the definition of a cultural model given by Gee will read as follows: "being a ["Real Padonak"] is not something one can simply be. Rather, it is something that one becomes in and through the doing of it, that is, in carrying out the actual performance itself" (Gee, 2005, p.24). *Real Padonak*, just like Gee's "real Indian," should "act, think, value and interact" in the right way, which, when put together and expressed through conscious language use, renders him – the Real Padonak – understandable and recognizable as such to other people (2005).

Gee (2005) suggests that

… doing being-as-becoming-a-["Real Padonak"] is not something that one can do all by oneself. It requires the participation of others. One cannot be a ["Real

Padonak"] unless one appropriately recognizes other ["Real Padonki"] and gets recognized by others as a "Real Padonak" in the practices of doing being-and-becoming-a – ["Real Padonak"] (p.24).

In this chapter I also give examples of people (long gone historical figures, famous writers, political and military leaders, and the like) who never participated in the activities of udaff.com, yet they were recognized by active udaff.com members as *Real Padonki*.

Throughout this chapter I will be relying on Gee's analysis of the three identities he discovered through his experience playing online as a female elf Bead-Bead. For this chapter I will focus on the identity of a real life person behind an on-line character: *James Paul Gee* as Bead Bead (Gee, 2007). In this identity "the stress is on the real-world character James Paul Gee playing *Arcanum* as a game in real time [and] Bead Bead is the tool through which I [James Paul Gee] operate the game" (Gee, 2007, p. 50).

If we look at *Real Padonak* through the lens of this identity, "real-world" people will become visible behind their *Real Padonki* virtual identities. Gee describes this identity in the following way:

> Of course, in a real world I have a good many different non-virtual identities. I am a professor, a linguist, an Anglo American, a middle-age male baby boomer, a parent, an avid reader, a middle class person initially raised outside of middle class, a former devout Catholic, a lover of movies and so on through a great many other identities… (p. 50).

Most of the "real-world" identities disclosed by Gee (2007) in the quotation above are present in the "real-world" padonki as well.

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Interviews[137] is one the most interesting sub-rubrics on Udav's resource. Texts contained in this rubric are written as interviews (real or imagined) with a person who is considered to be a *Real Padonak*. Many of the interviewed *padonki* are people from udaff.com who have been contributing to the resource for several years and are thus recognized by the community as *Real Padonki*. Although in most cases interviewee and interviewer pose under their udaff.com nick names, the interviews themselves focus on real world people behind the names. *French Moonshine Maker* and *Kirzach* both begin by offering brief synopsis of their lives.

> *French Moonshine Maker:* To begin with… I am very fortunate – my parents are still alive. There must be something very special about their generation. ... I have posted a few things about my family here, but am planning to write a real novel. (*Male Nurse Fedya,*[138] 2010)[139]

Kirzach also takes "I am just like you" kind of stance: "…I am just an ordinary guy. Was born, grew up and am (still) alive. I am a *Moskovite,*[140] but don't really like Moscow" (*Kirzach*, 2010).[141]

Neither *Kirzach*, nor *Moonshine Maker* pretend to be some 'special kind of people.' On the contrary, both men position themselves as normal people who speak

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[137] "Интервью"

[138] Санитар Федя

[139] Начнем… Мне повезло – родители живы. Это, наверное, поколение такое. ... Немножко я писал о семье, а мечтаю о целой семейной саге" (French Moonshine Maker, Санитар Федя, 2010)

[140] A colloquial term for a person who was born and lives in Moscow.

[141] "Я парень как парень. Родился, вырос и живу (пока). Москвич, но Москву не очень люблю" (Kirzach, 2010)

about normal things that everybody can relate to: parents, cities they were born in, life experiences, successes and failures. Both interviews (as well as all interviews with Udav) are written in the standard, grammatically correct (minus unintended typos) Russian language with a very limited use of non-standard grammar or spelling[142] and project the feeling of "normal people are talking to normal people in the normal language" kind of conversation.

Although udaff.com is often linked to the concept of *counter-culture* movement,[143] the "main padonak" *Udav*, a.k.a. Dmitrij Sokolovskiy (see figure 7 below) does not pretend to be any kind of an "underground figure"; on the contrary, he regularly gives interviews to the users of his site, newspapers, radio, and TV channels. All of his interviews and archived and stored on udaff.com in such-rubrics as *Interviews* and *Mass Media About Us*.

Wikipedia has an article dedicated to him, and the information from this article was used in an interview with Udav posted on udaff.com in 2009: "Dmitrij Victorovich Sokolovskij (Udav) - the founder and creator of the project Udaff.com, was born on May 11th 1970 in Saint Petersburg (at the time Leningrad). [He] has a college degree in Electrical Engineering" *(*qtd in *A Kind Monster, Interview with Udav,* 2009).[144]

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[142] Out of more than 50 interviews done by "real world people" with "real world people" selected in the process of data collection, I could not find a single one where the person (given that they were a 'real' person, and not a 'project') being interviewed would seriously present themselves as a "padonok" and behave and talk according to the 'rules' of this cultural model.

[143] Most likely this link was first made by early members of Udaff.com. The debate about if daff.com is or not counter-culture lasted for several years and is documented in the texts published in the section "Polemics."

[144] Добрый монстр. Интервью с Удавом

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Figure 7. Udav, the "Main Padonak"

In 2008 Udav was interviewed by an Internet newspaper about the book *Kirza*[145] which was recently published by one of udaff.com writers as a hard cover book. In the exchanges quoted below Udav points at the "strong personal connection" he feels with the writer and the main character of the book and gives a clear definition of *Real Padonki* as real life people.

[Q:]Who of the main characters of this book do you like the most?

[Udav:] Given that the book is autobiographical in its nature, I feel a strong personal connection to the position of Vadim[146] himself, and, most definitely, *Kirza* reminds me a lot of my own experiences in the army.

[Q:] How did [the book] *Kirza* fit into the overall format [style] of [your] website?

[Udav:] First of all, this is the book about men who served in the army, and who now are in their 30-s. Many of member of our website belong to this category.

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[145]"Кирза" – the title of the book that was initially published on Udaff.com and then came out in a conventional, hard copy print form. The book written by *Кирзач/ Kirzach* describes the authors experiences in the Soviet army. Its title *Kirza* references the material of which army boots were made in Soviet times.

[146] Vadim, the first name (real name) of Udaff.com writer known on the resource as Kirzach

Also, the book is written in a live, real language [that real life people use] with a good deal of obscenities.[147] (Udav, 2008).

In this interview Udav established the target audience of his resource: men over thirty, who have served in the army, can talk about life in "real language" and are not afraid of obscenities (Udav, 2008). Udav's description points at a very broad audience: thirty, forty, and possibly fifty something men who were born and raised in former Soviet Union and who served in (former) Soviet Army. Those men then lived through the breakdown of the "Great Empire" (as former Soviet Union is often referred to) and the transformations that followed.

In the second chapter I propose to view Udaff.com as a community of practice where the practice of writing is also the practice of "being-or-becoming-a *Real Padonak*" (Gee, 2005). Following this logic, a real world *Real Padonak* first and for most is a person (a man or a woman) who writes and publishes on udaff.com. To be accepted as one of udaff.com writers, a person has to write a text and send it to Udav. If Udav likes the text and considers it to be "udaff.com material," he will publish it on the *Main Page*. The community then can evaluate the text and engage in criticisms and verbal battles in commentaries (see figure 8).

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[147] – И кто из героев вам больше всего нравится? – Так как книга полностью автобиографическая, то мне очень близка позиция самого Вадима, и, безусловно, «Кирза» напоминает мне мою армию.
- Насколько удачно «Кирза» вписалась в формат сайта Udaff.com? – Во-первых, это книга о мужчинах, служивших в армии, которым сейчас за 30. Их у нас на сайте очень много. Во-вторых, она написана живым народным языком и в ней присутствует ненормативная лексика. Поэтому она на 100 процентов соответствует формату нашего контркультурного сайта. (Udav, 2008).
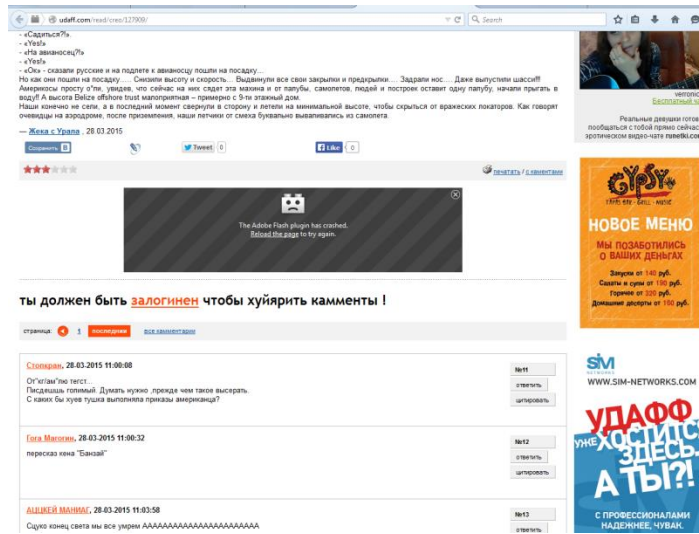
Figure 8. Udaff.com, comments

While it is not enough to publish only one text (a true *Real Padonak* has to continue publishing on udaff.com), certain respect and recognition can also be won through participation in *comments*. In fact, both skills are required of a real world *Real Padonak*: he or she has to be able to produce pieces of writing that demonstrate talent and authenticity, and they also have to be able to "handle shit" in comments.[148]

Interestingly, Udav himself has not written much fiction (neither does he engage in *srach*[149] in commentaries). In 2001 Udav published a rather long story (written in co-authorship with *Voolcan*) "Black and White Love*"* followed by a few more texts and stopped writing fiction altogether. Udav has been asked a few times to produce "another good *kreativ,*" to which he honestly replied, that most likely "never again" (Udav, 2004,

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[148] One of the latest texts collected the comments like "has [the author] run away from a mental asylum?" (с психушки автор съёб?) Or "[this text is] unreadable. The author is either a psycho, or a mentally retarder psycho" (Я прочитал этот бред. Афтар или шизик, или шизик из гимназии длеа долбойбов) (Lama, 2015)

[149] Срач – literally, *a shit-fight,* a verbal battle of insults in comments.

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2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009). Having left fiction writing, Udav primarily publishes

editorials and brief polemic essays. He also regularly posts his interviews in newspapers

and on TV as well as video and photo reports of his personal life events and travel.

A good question to ask would be how many *Real Padonki* are there? The rubric

Authors[150] carriers an alphabetized list of profiles of all authors who are currently

contributing or have ever contributed to the resource (see figure 9 below).

Figure 9. List of authors

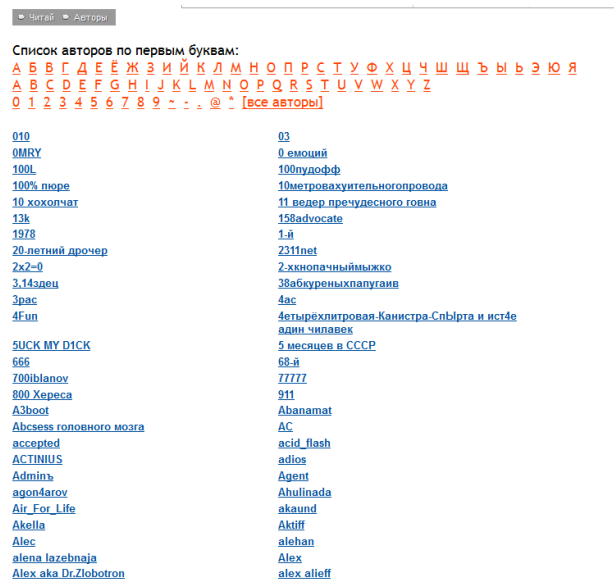The names also serve as hyperlinks that provide access to the profiles or accounts

created by the authors. These accounts serve as personal domains where all texts ever

posted by each author are preserved. Texts in each account are posted in chronological

order. Each time a new person publishes a text on Udaff.com, a new account is created,

and a new name gets added to the list.

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[150] Авторы

As of March 2015, there were 3842 authors registered on Udaff.com. This list of names includes several kinds of authors: contributing (functioning) writers; members who registered a profile but only contribute commentaries; writers who have already left udaff.com, and writers who died. This list also includes profiles that are called "projects" – profiles created by two or more writers who unite under a new nick-name and write together for some time.[151] Another kind of "projects" is made of "fake" profiles created by already registered writers for the purposes of creative provocation.[152]

There is no special marking that would show who of the registered authors are still active; who has left the resource, or which profiles were created as "projects." Each profile carries all texts published by this writer on Udaff.com. The texts are organized in chronological order, and each text carries the exact date when it was published on udaff.com (see figure 10 below). This feature allows readers to track publishing history of each writer.

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[151] Such names of ten carry names of both writers

[152] The discussion about "projects" as well as more detailed analysis of genres of writing practiced by Udaff.com writers would make a great independent study project.

udaff.com/users/midriattic/ ▽ C Search

UDAFF.COM | Главная | Читай | Смотри·слушай | Развлекайся | Подключайся | Наши книги

поиск

Информация о пользователе: Нефёд
ICQ: 431851403
Камментарии пользователя

Креативы пользователя:

Война и мир
Нетленка (поэзия)

Я грузинский солдат Амурадзе,
Я родился вблизи Телави.
Никогда я не слып камикаде
На дорогах грузинских в пыли.
— 14.08.2008   комментов: 131

Обратная сторона Валентина
Креативы

Тишину зимнего московского дворика с качелями и песочницей нарушила невесть откуда взявшаяся ураганная воронка из мяса, изрыгающая кровь,
зловонный ветер, дым пищевые отходы, пустые бутылки и гнилые фрукты, на песок и на снег.
— 15.02.2008   комментов: 41

Арт-Хаус
Креативы

На полу гостиной трое молодых людей окружили, стоя на коленях, молодую обнаженную девушку с рыжими волосами. Девушка была без сознания.
Владимир - один из юношей, держал в руках чайную ложку с гречневой кашей, пытался накормить спящую.
— 08.02.2008   комментов: 58
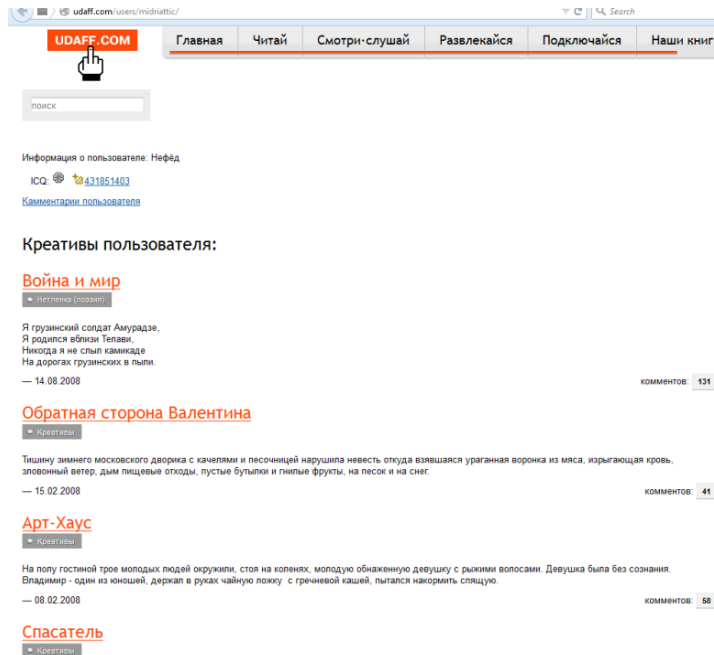
Спасатель
Креативы

Figure 10. An author's profile

On several occasions Udav clearly indicated his intent to preserve the archive as history of the development of *Padonki movement* (Udav, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009). While it true that the majority of the content stays intact, the archive of *padonki writing* is not one hundred percent permanent. As any fluid Internet resource, udaff.com is created through voluntary contributions of many different people,[153] so its contents are updated regularly. Interface and organization of the website also change periodically.

In 2015 texts published as early as 2000 can still be located. The folder of Nefjod,[154] a very interesting writer who died between 2008 and 2009, is still present, and all of his writing is accessible. However, Udav's announcement of *Nefjod's* death is not on his (Udav's) account any longer. That was probably the very first time *padonki*

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[153] see Don Tapscott (2006), for discussion about fluid collaborative sources

[154] Нефёд

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encountered death of one of their members, so Udav's post announcing the death of a *comrade*[155] sounded very personal.

Around 2002, a female contributor joined the resource under the nickname *Nadyanya.*[156] She posted a few texts but ended up in a bitter disagreement with the majority of male population. Her strategy of establishing herself as a 'Padonki-kind-of-girl' solicited very negative response. *Nadyanya's* story is rather similar to the experience of Janis Cortese, a female devotee of *Star Trek* discussed by Barbara Kantrowitz (1998). Just like Janis, who attempted (unsuccessfully) to join a discussion group on the Internet, Nadyanya ended up "chased off the net," and her account was deleted (assumingly upon her personal request). Currently there is no account under the nick name *Nadyanya*, although the scandal is still remembered by the old timers who every once in a while refer to it in commentaries.

If we take a look at the dates each writer contributed to uadaff.com, a tendency becomes visible: udaff.com writers come and go. Among the writers whom I followed over the last ten years, *Nefjod*[157] contributed from 2006 until his death in 2008; a female writer *Mandala* was very active on Udaff.com from 2005 till 2010; *~DIS~* - 2001-2004; *Tjotya Faya*[158] - 2007 – 2010; *Viking* – 2006 - 2012; *MEANMACHINE* – 2008-2009;[159]

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[155] A respectful, friendly way in which male padonki address each other

[156] "НАДЯНЯ" - a Russian affectionate derivative from the name Nadezhda

[157] Нефёд

[158] Тётя Фая – another rather successful female writer on Udaff.com

[159] Even these writers look more like a second generation of "Real Padonki."

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sqwer -2005-2009; *Borsch&Pampushka*[160] - 2006-2007 and so on. So far, Udav is probably the only one of the first round of *Real Padonki* who is still involved with udaff.com. This process of 'rotation of people' becomes especially visible if we examine the sub-rubric *Polemics*. Out of thirty six different nicknames featured on the very first page of the *Polemics* rubric in 2003, only one: that of *Udav* himself was featured again in the pages created in 2010. Out of forty-one nicknames featured in *Polemics* pages created in 2010, only two (those of *Udav* and *Dobryj sanitar iz psihushki)* were still present on the pages created in 2014.

The process of rotation of authors is important because it allows to view the cultural model of a *Real Padonak* as a never ending cycle of *invention*, where *invention* is *a social act* (LeFevre, 1987) created through participation of *all* udaff.com writers no matter how insignificant their contributions might seem. Every time a new member registers an account on udaff.com, they claim themselves as a *Real Padonak* kind of person. This is when the process of invention begins. Each new member of udaff.com has to *invent* their own model of a *Real Padonak* (in many ways it means that they have to *invent* themselves as a *Real Padonak*); next, their *invention* has to be recognized by Udav and others member of the community.

As predicted by Gee (2005) each invention contributes to the overall Discourse of the community and thus changes and transforms the Discourse of *Real Padonki*. Udaff.com, then, turns into multiglossia, a conversation of various Discourses that are "talking through" the individuals who bring these Discourses to udaff.com. Even if an

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[160] Борщ & пампушка

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author leaves the resource, their contribution to the invention of a *Real Padonak* stays. Every time a new member reads one of the 'old' texts from the sub-rubric *Netlenka,* they get the transmission of the understanding, the view of what it means to be a *Real Padonak* left by an "old-timer." In this way the cultural model of a *Real Padonak* carries the imprints of *padonki* Discourse created by those who used to write for udaff.com. [161]

In the interview quoted above Udav states that *Real Padonki* are guys like him: "men who served in the army, and who now are in their 30-s" (Udav, 2008) and (it could be added) who share Udav's views on politics and homosexuality.[162] It follows than, that udaff.com is actually a "boy's club" – a resource created by men for men[163]. Examination of the contents of the *Main Page*, *Korzina Rulit* and *Netlenka* confirm this conclusion. Of sixty texts posted on the *Main Page* on June 4th, 2014 only two texts were signed by obviously female nicknames, and six authors had nick names that could belong

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[161] A question can be asked why people leave the resource. There is probably no one easy answer. People leave Udaff.com because of personal conflicts; people leave Udaff.com because they die (*Nefjod*, *Vladimir Vluperdyajev*) or go to jail. Sometimes people 'abandon' their old profiles and re-register under new names, which in virtual world gives an easy chance for a "new life." On several occasions it seemed as if a person would leave the resource (usually with a scandal), but then a new nick would be registered and a few texts would be published. In such cases, one of the community members would respond with a "wait, aren't you former Such-and-Such?" half-questioning, half-guessing comment, and for some time the entire Udaff.com community would be involved in this detective story-like guessing game. For example, in 2010 issue of Polemics, *Borodatyj Pisjun* (in English – *Bearded Penis*) questioned the identity behind the nickname of *Xrjundel'* and connects the person behind this nick name to *Nadyanya* (a former member, who seemed to have abandoned Udaff.com after a scandal), indirectly suggesting a possibility of double identity. Finally, it is very possible that people discover Udaff.com, feel that they have something to say, but then at some point lose interest and move on with their lives.

[162]Issues of homosexuality have always been acute on Udaff.com. There have been multiple very emotional discussions developed around possibility of Udaff.com turning into a "fag's community" (e.g. Udav himself and others bring up these issues in rather emotional ways in Question-Answer sessions in 2004 and 2005).

[163] The word '*Padonok*' carries male grammatical gender. There is no feminine form of this word. Women are called *pelotki* (this term, in fact, could be translated as "pussy").

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to either sex (e.g. *XXX*, *muistje*, *soba4ki*, *Twilight Zone*, and the like); all other texts were signed by obviously male names.[164]

Out of fifty four reviews published in *Korzina Rulit* sub-rubric not a single review is signed by an obviously feminine name. Of the seventy six texts reviewed in the five issues of *Korzina Review* which I examined only seven were written by women (less than ten percent). Finally, out of two hundred and twelve texts published in the sub-rubric *Netlenka* (the collection of "the very best" writings) only five texts are written by women. Of these five texts three belong to the same writer with nickname *Mandala*.[165] There are total of ninety six writers published in *Netlenka*; of them only three are women.

It is obvious that the number of women who publish on udaff.com is disproportionately small;[166] the idea that Udaff.com is a predominantly male resource proves true. Women, in this case, either are not attracted (rather scared away) by the Padonki Discourse, or they are discriminated against.

The suggestion, that women are not attracted by Padonki Discourse, is most likely true. While *Padonki* never make statements that women cannot or should not write, women writers make a fraction of active contributors of udaff.com. It can be concluded, then, that such features of *Padonki Discourse* as intentional use of stigmatized forms

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[164] There is always a possibility of male authors writing under female names and female authors writing under male names. While this issue would make a great topic for investigation, for the purposes of this research I will assume (unless there is direct citable evidence - e.g. author's personal discloser, direct autobiographic sign, and the like) that male nicknames belong to male authors and female – to women.

[165] The word *Mandala* has a lot of meanings. In Tibetan Buddhism, Mandala represents a universe; it is also used to refer to the power field of a yidam – a Buddha form of energy and light; it also is a term for vagina.

[166] This apparent gender inequality makes it even more interesting to examine closely the very few women who "made it" and earned the recognition of Udav and other padonki. I would love to return to this issue at a later time.

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(emphasized 'illiterate' phonetic spelling), intended overuse of obscenities; "repulsive humor" based on sex and excretion themes appeal to men but discourage women from joining udaff.com.

However, can it be said that those women who do dare to join the resource are discriminated against? The answer to this question depends on what kind of behavior is considered 'discriminating.' It is true that texts published under obviously feminine nicknames receive 'special treatment.' For example, male authors of *Korzina* reviews often make special comments about texts written by women. *ZheLe* refers to women's writing as *babokreativ*[167] (2007). Here, *ZheLe* merges two words: '*baba'* - a derogatory archaic colloquial term for "woman" and the new 'adjusted' borrowing '*kreativ'* (a piece of writing). However, introducing another text written by a woman, *ZheLe* points out the writer's status on udaff.com ("everybody knows *Dirty Bitch*") and paraphrases the writer's own words in a rather respectful fashion: "Besides, the *afftarsha*[168] herself commented on her role in the history of the resource [Udaff.com]…"[169] (2007). *A.Rysakov* (2002) in one of his *Korzina* reviews also comments rather favorably on the fact that one of the texts he reviewed is written by a woman: "*MMore* [is] a female author, for which reason, this text is twice deserving of attention.[170]" Finally, *Gladiator*

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[167] "Следующий креатив (поправлюсь – бабокриатиф)" (ZheLe, 2007)

[168] a non-standard form meaning 'female author'

[169] "К тамужы и сама афтарша так сказала а свайом криативе и о сваей роли в истории рисурса…" (Zhele, 2007)

[170] "MMоре - автор женского полу, поэтому креатив считаю вдвойне заслуживающим внимания" (A Rysakov, 2002).

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in 2004 published a special issue of *Korzina* review dedicated exclusively to texts written by female writers.

It is also true that female writers often receive harsh derogatory responses. *ZheLe*, for example describes a woman writer as "[yet another] girl blowing her nose out loud, as if she had something to say…."[171] (2007). However, responses of this kind are a norm for udaff.com community. Beginning writers, male and female alike, often receive negative and rude responses. Comments often say things like "*Afftar,*[172] get on the time machine, travel back in time and bring some condoms for your parents to use, for fuck's sake"[173] (qtd in Korzina review by *ZheLe*, 2007); or " [author's] overall level [is that of a] high school dropout"[174] (*ZheLe*, 2007). Other popular (to the degree of cliché) responses are: "author, go and take some poison," or "cut off your fingers," or "this *kreativ* is a piece of shit," or "author, hit your head against a wall and kill yourself." These responses are rather similar to humorous, teasing put downs common in African-American discourse.

Finally, is it possible that Udav "filters out" texts signed by feminine nicknames: does not read those texts or never publishes them on his site? Such possibility exists. However, I have never encountered any kind of indication that behavior like this exists. Rather, the overall impression is that while authoritarian in his decision making, Udav

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[171] "сопли девичьи с претензией на мысли." (ZheLe 2007).

[172] male author

[173] « *Афтырь, слетай на машине времени и вовремя купи родителям гандоны, блядь*». (qtd in Korzina review by ZheLe, 2007).

[174] "Уровень – неоконченная (напалавину, гыгыгы) средняя школа" (Zhele, 2007).

honestly follows "the rules" of the game. It means that if a text is sent to him, Udav will read it. If Udav likes the text, he will publish it on Udaff.com. If the text is bad but still belongs to udaff.com, it will go to *Korzina*.

Most definitely, women on Udaff.com are treated differently, and at times harshly. Women also receive a lot of comments that emphasize their gender, and the majority of male-to-female exchanges in commentaries are based on a sex theme, while male-to-male exchanges are mostly based on themes of excretion, physical force (fight), and homosexuality.[175] If approached from the perspective of *Real Padonki* Discourse as a reflection of contemporary Russian society, the treatment women receive on udaff.com can be viewed as a representation of the relationship between genders in Russia today.

So far it has been demonstrated that the majority of people who write for udaff.com and refer to themselves as *Real Padonki* are men. However, what kind of people are they? This question is important because real life *Real Padonki* are in fact very different from such extreme portrayals of a *Real Padonak* as a vagrant or a homeless drunken bum which are rather popular on udaff.com. A closer look at the people who call themselves *padonki* reveals that the majority of udaff.com members have college degrees, jobs, and families and live productive and rather successful lives, [176] although some (e.g. a *Veri Old Little Foxie* (2010), *Pomojechnik* (2015)) do boast about truly marginal life styles. In 2010 a questionnaire was published on udaff.com that asked users

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[175] deep examination and comparison of topics, themes and strategies used in male-to-male vs male-to-female, vs female-to-female exchanges in commentaries would make a great study in its own right, and at this moment is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

[176] *Mandala*'s profile features her photo at her desk as a newspaper editor; a male user, named *Babik* on several occasion offered professional advice as a criminal law expert; *HerasukaPizdayabasi* in his texts on multiple occasion confessed hate to his job as a business law expert, and etc.

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to report their level of education. Out of five hundred and forty respondents, thirty five percent reported more than one college degree;[177] twenty five percent reported some college,[178] and another thirteen percent reported vocational school diploma[179] (Udav 2010).

In-Kognito (2003) describes a real life *Real Padonak* as an "adequate, normal" person who lives a "normal life," is able to express his thoughts in writing and is familiar with Russian and world literature. Another indirect proof of rather high levels of education and intellectual development of real world *Real Padonki* people comes from the texts contained in the sub-rubric *No-Shit Science.*[180] Texts published here can be best described as personal reflective essays about popular science. This sub-rubric is interesting for several reasons: it presents an attempt to apply the Discourse of *Real Padonki* to science; it shows true level of education of some udaff.com writers, and finally it contains several claims of who could be considered a *Real Padonki*.

Topics covered in this rubric range anywhere from critique of Einstein's relativity theory,[181] to the discussion of Newtonian physics and mathematics[182] and classical

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[177] "у меня 2 высших образования, докторская степень, и мне еще мало" (Udav 2010).

[178] "Любил до остервенения, но выгнали из ВУЗа за долбоебизм" (Udav 2010).

[179] "мне хватило ПТУ и типерь я зачетный сварщик" (Udav 2010).

[180] Наука беспезды

[181] Чернышевский/Chernyshevsky (2013)

[182] tar729 (2008)

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logic,[183] to nihilistic claims about non-existence of art,[184] and proposals to view the Universe as a "huge vagina.[185]" Discussions developed around these topics often include references to works of Hegel, Einstein, Pythagoras and many other acclaimed scientists.

The conclusion is obvious: real life *Real Padonki* people are very well educated. *Chernyshevsky*[186] (2011) begins his post by disclosing his professional affiliation: "As a professional astrophysicist, I am often asked about the most recent discoveries made by the experts from the European Organization for Nuclear Research" (n.p.). It would be legitimate to ask: is this person a "real" person or can his text be an example of a "project," a 'creative provocation' in which a 'fake' non-exiting expert-astrophysicist 'reflects' on non-existent 'fake' discoveries? Such possibility most definitely exists. Padonki enjoy daring, provocative humor. So, creating a 'fake expert' and taking readers along a Garden Path until somebody 'gets the joke' (see for example Weijia Ni, et al. 1994-95 for the discussion on the resolution of ambiguity employed in garden paths) by Padonki standards would most definitely be 'the right thing to do.' However, how far can 'fakeness' be taken?

Chernyshevsky's text received a very high rating: five and a half out of six possible stars. Aside from usual Padonki style 'verbal fights' and unrelated themes, comments posted in response to the text contained links to scientific articles; comparative critique of Einstein's theories with references to Poincare's views on principles of

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[183] mr. Selfdestruct (2008)

[184] Игорь СУДАК/Ihor Sudak (2009)

[185] CustO (2011)

[186] Чернышевский

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relativity and Hibbs' theory of thermodynamics and legacy of Amar Bose. The overall tone of the discussion suggested that *Chernyshevsky's* text was taken seriously and appreciated for the content as well as language and humor. Can then, *Chernyshevsky*, a highly educated expert, be considered a 'real' Padonak? According to the rating he received, the answer is positive. In this case, what is it that makes a professional astrophysicist a *Real Padonak*? The answer lies in his choice of discourse: it is **how** *Chernyshevsky* writes about the latest discoveries in astrophysics.

> So, now, supposedly I punch you in the *'jebalo'* (*snout),* and my fist is moving 60 nanoseconds faster than the speed of light. What will happen? You experience the impact of my hand, but you cannot see the source. You are looking at me with indignation, but I am just standing there as if I haven't done a *flying fuck* to you. You are losing your *fucken* mind! For the whole 60 seconds. Then you can see my hand hitting your snout, but you don't experience any impact. Finally you hear my words *"Fuck you!"* (*Chernyshevsky*, 2011)[187]

> While *Chernyshevsky* offers true scientific knowledge, he talks about it the way *Real Padonki* talk. His text carries two of the main features of Padonki discourse: use of stigmatized 'dirty' vocabulary and a situation that involves physical violence – fighting ("So, now supposedly I hit you in *'jebalo'*"). Both features point at 'strong' masculinity and achieve the response similar to the one described by Labow (1970) who discovered that men appreciated other men who used 'non-standard' street language. In Labow's

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[187]дословно: "А теперь допустим, что я бью в ваше ебало на 60 нанасекунд быстрее, чем скорость света. Что же получается? Вы ощущаете удар в свое рыло, но изображение кулака еще не пришло. Вы возмущенно смотрите на меня, но я стою, как будто ни хуя не делал. Вы в ахуе! И так целых 60 нанасекунд. Потом вы видите, как я бью вам кулаком в лицо, но удара не чувствуете. А затем до вас долетают слова: 'На хуй!'"

study, male participants who used 'non-standard' language were associated with such male characteristics as a 'good friend' and 'likely to come on top in a fight' (1970).

Chernyshevsky uses both features of *Real Padonki* Discourse consciously. His text is written in the standard, grammatically correct Russian language. He switches into Padonky discourse only four times: he twice uses stigmatized words for 'face' (*jebalo* and *snout*), and he inserts two curses (one describing the reaction of a hypothetical bystander, and '*Fuck you!*' – the exclamation that accompanies the punch-in-the-face action). In all four cases his use of stigmatized forms is appropriate. In this way *Chernyshevsky* demonstrates his mastery of the field (he is able to explain a complex scientific theory by using an example that any uneducated 'guy of a street' can relate to), and he also demonstrates his mastery of both registers: 'educated' grammatically correct Russian language and Padonki discourse.

Chernyshevsky's example can be contrasted with a relatively recent post by *Mindcontroljebatslepuktli*.[188] *Mindcontrol* posted a much longer text in which he suggests that methods of Neuro-Linguistic Programming can be used successfully by *Padonki* in order to coerce women into anal sex (2012). Like *Chernyshevsky*, *Mindcontrol* also utilizes several features of Padonki discourse. He writes predominantly in *Albanskiy,* uses the theme of anal sex, and establishes strong homophobia. However, unlike *Chernyshevsky*, *Mindcontrol* seems to take his use of *Padonki* Discourse too far. He receives a very low rating (one star out six) and rather critical *Padonki* style

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[188] Майндконролебатцлепуктли

comments to the text: "author, go and fuck yourself and your science[189]" (*Insureme,[190]*
2012); "[the text] was written on a broken keyboard by an ass of a drunken monkey…[191]"
(*Herasuka Pizdayabasi,* 2012); "[It] broke my *fucken* brain. … Burn it[192]" (*donkey crap,*
2012).

Texts posted by *tar729* in 2008 can be placed somewhere in between
Chernyshevsky's success and *Mindcontrol's* failure to 'talk science Padonki style.' As an
author, *tar729* makes a few interesting choices. He actually makes an attempt to write an
alternative, '*counter culture'* textbook for 'college drop-outs.' Just like *Chernyshevsky*,
tar729 mixes literary, grammatical Russian language with *Albanskiy,* and, like
Mindcontrol, he generously saturates his texts with obscenities. *tar729's* effort, however,
receives only three and a half stars. While *tar729's* texts are 'to-the-point' and focus on
"real science," he fails to fully utilize padonki Discourse. *tar729'*s writing resembles
academic lectures *translated* into *Albanskij.* His explanations, while intermingled with
curse words, lack brilliant simplicity and humor of a prototypical 'off-the-streets'
situation ("So, I punch you in the face") described by *Chernyshevsky*. Although *tar*
succeeds in translating science into *Padonki language*, he cannot make his science
express the *Discourse* of *Real Padonki*.

One more category of real life *Real Padonki* needs to be described in this chapter:
real life people who never participated in the activities and practices of udaff.com but got

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[189] "Ну, что я хачу сказать.... -Автар, иди ты кхуямЪ со свойей наукой" (2012)

[190] Застрахуй

[191] "честно попытался прочитать первые 2 обзаца. Пришел к выводу, что это написано жопой пьяной лоботомированной обезьяны на неисправной клавиатуре" (Херасука Пиздаябаси, 2012)

[192] Сломал моск к ебеням. Изворотливо. Фтопку" (асёл, йоптэ, 2012)

recognized as *Real Padonki* by active members of Udav's resource. *tar729* (2008), for example, refers to Pythagoras as a "great Padonak." He grants membership in the community of *Real Padonki* to a historic figure that lived and died long before the Internet and udaff.com were invented. In one of Q and A issues Udav claims his own grandfather to be a "true padonak": "I myself had a grandfather … [who] had gone to war and was a POW in a concentration camp. … He was a *true padonok* in the best, the deepest meaning of this word" (Udav, Q&A, 2005). [193]

The idea of recognizing other real life people who are not non-udaff.com members as *Real Padonki* caught on and got further developed in texts published under sub-rubrics *Interviews* and *Padonki and History*[194].

In January 2011 *xz-zx* posted an "Interview with a Porn Atar. [195]" While *xz-zx* does not make a direct statement that would say "this twenty year girl old who is a porn star is a *Real Padonak*," his interview received a rather high rating from the rest of udaff.com community, which always signifies approval.

An interview with *Boris Strugatskij* posted by *Sliff_ne_zoSSchitan* less than a year before Strugatskij's death is also interesting. *Sliff_ne_zoSSchitan* sent Strugatskij a letter with two questions and later posted his questions and the answers given by the writer accompanied by personal reflection on the results of the interview. In this interview a *Real Padonak* (*Sliff_ne_zoSSchitan)* and an acclaimed Russian-Soviet SiFi writer discuss

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[193] "У меня у самого дед (царство ему небесное) воевал, и сидел в концлагере, он был падонок в самом хорошем смысле этого слова" (Udav, Q&A, 2005).

[194] Падонки и история

[195] This is one of the very few interviews where a person interviewed was a woman. Despite the use of quite a few pornographic images, even most 'touchy' topics (e.g. the question about physical pain and discomfort experienced by porn actresses) are discussed in this interview without a single hint on profanity.

counter-culture and the problem of choice between freedom and [personal] safety as philosophical problems.

> Question: How much of your [personal] freedom are you willing to give up to be sure that your wife will not be mugged in the [dark] courtyard and your children will not be assaulted by pedophiles on their way back from school.[196]
> (Sliff_ne_zoSSchitan, 2011)

To the author's disappointment, Strugatskij responded with a view which strongly deviated towards 'enlightened absolutism' and stated that a 'Firm Hand' – a Russian metonymy for government – can do whatever is necessary for as long as it "does only beneficial things and does not interfere with the issues of philosophy, freedom of speech, law enforcement, and does not hold by the throat those who are in peaceful disagreement with its ideology[197]" (Sliff_ne_zoSSchitan, Strugatskij, 2011).

The second question asked about Strugatskij's view of counter-culture. In the text of his question Sliff_ne_zoSSchitan, reawakens the discussion about the true meaning of counter-culture. According to Sliff_ne_zoSSchitan, counter-culture initially was based on the ideas of writing about things as 'they are' without euphemisms, taboo, 'untouchable authorities,' hypocritical tolerance, and disdain for homosexuality.[198]

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[196] "Сколько свободы не жалко отдать за то, чтобы с бабы твоей – гарантировано! – не стянули шубку в подворотне, а дети ходили в школу, не расталкивая по дороге плечами педофилов?" (Sliff_ne_zoSSchitan, 2011)

[197] "занималась исключительно полезными делами, не лезла бы в проблемы мировоззрения, свободы слова, процессы отправления правосудия и не хватала бы за горло мирных инакомыслящих" (Sliff_ne_zoSSchitan, Strugatskij, 2011)

[198] Homophobia is a very strong feature of Padonki Discourse.

High ratings received by both interviews suggest that the community has accepted Nastya Rivas and Strugatskij as "*our kind of people*." A new understanding of the cultural model of a *Real Padonak* emerges from the discussion developed above. Here the model of a *Real Padonak* in its classical format of a 'bad guy' and a 'social outcast' is moved into the background, and real life people come through in their true identities as normal, educated people who are trying to make sense of the world in which they live.

Padonki and History is another sub-rubric that presents stories of real life people (mostly historic figures) who are recognized as *Real Padonki* by the members of udaff.com. In 2006, *Jesuit Bat'kovitch* published a text in which he describes the sub-rubric *Padonki and History* as primarily an "educational project" about what it means to be a *Real Padonak*.

> [This rubric] is for the folks to remember "who the heck we are," and "what really matters" …. In other words, [some people, gangsta brothers and university professors alike] might find it useful to read about some comrades dash[199] historic (capital F) Figures, who had much fun during their life time. … That could work as an educational project, as another step [an attempt] toward self-identification of the [padonki] movement.[200] (*Jesuit Bat'kovitch,* 2006)

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[199] Original punctuation.

[200] "Речь пойдет о такой почившей в бозе рубрике как «Падонки в истории». Для начала поясню нахуй оно вообще надо. Ну, типа, чтоб народ «не забывал свои корни, помнил, есть вещи на порядок выше» (с) Каста (земляки, не мог не упомянуть). То есть почитать о неких товарищах тире исторических Личностях (с большой понимаешь буквы «Л»), которые при жизни аццки отжигали было бы нелишним и вполне интересным занятием. Причем как для ПТУ («приколись, Бивис, раньше чуваки тоже жгли!»), так и для более взыскательной публики («определенно эти «падонокфские» ценности и этот историко-культурный психотип импонирует моему уникальному по своей глубине и богатому, как царь Крез, внутреннему миру, и нехуй!»). Это была бы и

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Naturally, many of these texts carry discussions about "what it means to be" or "what kind of person should be considered a *Real Padonak*." The possibilities are endless. *koshateg,*[201] for example, wrote a story about Oskar Kallaps, a general of Latvian army who in 1919 was killed by friendly fire but despite obvious lack of heroism in his death was awarded the "highest Latvian military award" (*koshateg*, 2010). *koshateg* (2010) obviously finds humor in the fact that the highest award was given and a huge expensive memorial was constructed to honor a national 'hero' who was killed by friendly fire before he even got to the battle field – this is something fellow *padonki* can laugh at. *Odnodvoretz* (2010), however, writes about a Russian officer who refused to accept communist revolution and had to immigrate to Paris without any chance to ever see his family again. The text quotes the main character's letter to his family expressing the feelings of loss and grief over recent death of their mother:

> … I know I have never been a good son. Some internal stubbornness, stupid skepticism, or maybe deep internal shyness. But still more often dry awkwardness of the heart kept away all those words of love that were trying to leak through from the depth. …. One only gets to say [those words] once, or… never. [Never,] that is what happened to me. It added something inexpressibly [painfully] bitter to my lonesome destiny.[202] (Odnodvoretz, 2010)

просветительская работа, и лишняя ступенька в самоидентификации движения и наконец просто прикольное стебно-доступное изложение любопытных биографий" (*Jezuit Bat'kovitch,* 2006).

[201] *koshateg* can be best translated as pussy cat (without any sexual connotation).

[202] "А сыном…я знаю – я не был очень хорошим сыном. Какое-то упорство, невеликодушный скептицизм, может быть, иногда излишнее целомудрие. А чаще сухость и неповоротливость сердца упрямо удерживали от тех ласковых слов, которые просились из глубины. Но которые можно сказать только раз…или не сказать вовсе. Со мной сталось последнее. В моей бобыльей доле в этом есть что-то неизъяснимо горькое" (Odnodvoretz, 2010).

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Odnodvoretz (2010) seems to be 'breaking the rules' of "Padonki Style." He does not try to make fun of his character's grief. On the contrary, *Odnodvoretz*, compares his *Stranger's Letter* to a sound that leads a lost traveler out of the deep forest back home – back to safe, familiar, loving surrounding[203] (2010). Here, *Odnodvoretz* steps into the realm of fundamental human values. Deep grieving of a man who realized that he had never cared enough to tell his mother how much he loved her strikes a chord with the rest of the community.

> *Hugh Morzhoui*[204]: This *kreativ* brings inside of many [of us] feelings of wanting to become a better person. ... [I] would like to point out that in the past people were more open and natural. As of today, we are too fucked up in our neurosis of suppression. We are constantly suppressing ourselves.[205] (2010)

Some writers begin their stories by discussing what it means to be a *Real Padonak*. For example, *Molot*[206] (2009) considers Hernán Cortés (a Spanish Conquistador) one of the few real "padonki in world history.[207]" *Molot* lists Hernan's ".... wild character and untamable temper;[208]" his successful conquest of Mexico,

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[203] "Вот и простое это письмо показалось мне таким же ясным, чистым, точно выводящим из леса звуком/ in the same way, this simple letter came to me as a clear, pure sound that leads one out of the woods" (Odnodvoretz, 2010).

[204] Хью Моржоуи (*Hugh Morzhoyi)* can be translated as *Hugh the Sea Lion*, or, through word play based in phonological similarity, it may also be interpreted as *Sea Lion's Dick*.

[205] "Креатив вызывает во многих желание стать лучше ... Хочу отметить, однако, что в прошлом люди были естественнее и рассуждали по существу. Нас же заебал множественный невроз навязчивости, мы постоянно сами себе что-то навязываем...." (Hju Morzhoui, 2010).
[206] Молот (Hammer)

[207] "небольшой опус о падонках в мировой истории" (Molot, 2009)

[208] "Гомара описывал Кортеса как надменного юнца, отличавшегося беспокойным нравом и буйным темпераментом" (Molot 2009).

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adventurousness and innumerable love stories among main features that qualify Hernan as a *Real Padonak*. Following *Molot*'s example, *BotzmanKatzman*[209] (2010) claims *Prince Alexzander Chernyshev*[210] - a great "court person, warrior, and experienced trouble maker, a great money waster, a drunk and womanizer, but at the same time a highly intelligent person, and a true statesman[211]" as *the* model of a *Real Padonak* kind of person (*BotzmanKatzman,* 2010). In the same text *BotzmanKatzman* (2010) also makes an anti-claim: he points out who *cannot* be considered a *Real Padonak*: "people keep trying to sell all kinds of hard workers, martyrs, and even, pardon my French, heroes as padonki.[212]" According to *BotzmanKatzman,* there is no way those kinds of people (although they deserve much respect and recognition for their sacrifice) can be recognized as *Real Padonki*. The *Real Padonak*, as viewed by *BotzmanKatzman,* is not a saint: he drinks (a lot); sleeps with women, and can even die from syphilis or too much drinking; he gets involved in all kinds of adventures (often times rather dangerous); but he always wins leaving the honor of death to his enemies. This view is echoed by the definition of a *Real Padonak* given by *Jesuit Bat'kovitch*:

> "Padonok" – means a fornicator ("bonk, booze, weed") + Lover of Life ("think
>
> positive, fuck it! Laugh Out Loud") + cynical Criticizer of mainstream idiocy

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[209] Боцман Кацман

[210] Князь Чернышов А. И.

[211] "царедворец, кавалерист и матерый интриган, мот и бонвиван, кутила и обольститель и вместе с тем умница и подлинно государственный человек" (*BotzmanKatzman,* 2010).

[212] "По моему скромному имху, тенденция в данной рубрике господствует в корне неверная. Под видом падонков,нам все время пытаются подсунуть каких-то тружеников, подвижников и даже, пардон, героев. Описываемые персонажи не ели не спали, блюли народные интересы, получая за это периодически по яйцам и помирали, как правило от любви к отчизне, надорвавшись при попытке поднять ту или иную отрасль народного хозяйства" (*BotzmanKatzman,* 2010).

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(words like "fecal-matter-stream," "office plankton" and other put downs of philistinism and causality) = "the Wild Male," the one who is [made of] "balls, tobacco, fume, and bristle![213]" (2006)

BotzmanKatzman, also points out that Real Padonak is also somebody who "creates history." This last characteristic is rather significant. Overwhelming majority of people claimed in these texts as *Real Padonki* are significant cultural icons or political and military leaders from the past. *Jesuit Bat'kovitch* also claims that "one could fill a sea with historic figures who meet these criteria. Not even a sea, an ocean[214]" (2006). Most of the famous people who are recognized as *Real Padonki* are men. Some people get nominated more than once. Stalin is claimed twice as well as Rasputin (for his sexual abilities and influence over royal family); Pushkin, Barkov,[215] and Yerofeev[216] are also recognized as *Real Padonki* by more than one person.

Among *Real Padonki* from other cultures there are such people as Che Guevara, Yasser Arafat, Omar Khayyam, Caligula, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Otto Skorzeny, Vlad Dracula, Ozzy Osborn, Cesare Borgia da Valentino, Chinggis Khan, and Marcus Antonius. It is obvious that there is no one specific quality or a criterion that makes a

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[213]"Как я понимаю (чисто мое мнение, мнение пришлого чуждого человека, по сути надо поинтересоваться у все тех же столпов) «падонак» - это нечто такое, что не сводится к албанской грамматике и ненависти к пидорам. Хотя и то и то очень важно, но это не определяющие вещи. «Падонок» - это значит Развратник («йобля, бухло, шишки») + Жизнелюб («Пазитиф, бля! Ржал как конь») + циничный Критик общественных дебилизмов (такие слова как «говномасса», «офисный планктон») и прочее пренебрежение к мещанству и казуальности) = Дикий Мужчина, тот самый который «Яйца табак перегар и щетина!» (c)" (*Jezuit Bat'kovitch,* 2006).

[214]"Кандидатур из истории, в эту рубрику, отвечающих вышеозначенным требованиям, море. Даже не море, а целый океан" (*Jezuit Bat'kovitch,* 2006).
[215] Russian poet famous for sexually obscene themes in his writing

[216] An alcoholic writer, a more dramatic version of Charles Bukowski

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certain historic figure more qualified for the 'title' of a *Real Padonak*. *Jesuit Bat'kovitch* (2006) also lists *Diogenes* of Sinope, Donatien Alphonse François *de* Sade, *Casanova*, and Bob Marley. Each of these people exhibits at least one of the "required" characteristics of a *Real Padonak*.

Mixing the cultural model of *Real Padonak* with the concept of counter-culture, *Jesuit Bat'kovitch* (2006) calls *Diogenes* of Sinope "the main padonak of Hellenic world and hellish counter-culture activist … [whose entire life] was one big act of counter-culture"[217] (n.p.).

> *[Diogenes* of Sinope] would [often] jerk off in front of public in the streets, lived in a huge barrel, and enjoyed picking at anybody who was "well-educated, well-positioned, and well-connected" from Aristotle to Alexander Macedonian. Was not he, just like François *de* Sade, a "Real Padonak?"[218] (*Jesuit Bat'kovitch,* 2006)

Rasputin was a *Real Padonak* because he "was a stud of rare kind, who had his dick inside every single state affair of tsar Russia" (*Jesuit Bat'kovitch,* 2006). Casanova was the "embodiment of sex;" Bob Marley - the "embodiment of weed," and Venedict Yerofeev[219] – the "embodiment of booze[220]" (*Jesuit Bat'kovitch,* 2006).

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[217] "В данном случае речь у нас пойдет о главном эллинском падонке и аццком контркультурщике Диогене… прмя даже и не жизнь а один сплошной КК-акт какой-то (*Jezuit Bat'kovitch,* 2006).

[218]"прилюдно дрочил на улицах, жил в огромной бочке, обожал подъебывать всех «приличных и правильных, сильных и умных» мира сего, начиная от Аристотеля заканчивая Сашкой Македонским. Чем не падонак?" (*Jezuit Bat'kovitch,* 2006).
[219] An alcoholic writer.

[220]"Распутин, редкой пылкости ебарь, долгое время вертевший на хую всю государственную верхушку Царской России тоже интересный экземпляр. Как и Донасьен Альфонс Франсуа он же маркиз де Сад. Казанова (воплощенная йобля), Боб Марли (воплощенные шишки) и Венедикт Ерофеев (воплощенное бухло) даже вроде и сомнений не вызывают" (*Jezuit Bat'kovitch,* 2006).

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It seems that *Real Padonki* know no racial or ethnic discrimination. Pushkin, a

great grandson of a black African slave, "has to be listed among "Real Padonki" by

default, [because of his] amazing obscene poetry, frequent confrontations with the tsar,[221]

… a solid number of cunts he fucked, and a lack of care for career"[222] (*Jesuit

Bat'kovitch,* 2006).

The list of other proposed members to the community of *Real Padonki* includes

Gargantua and Pantagruel, Irvine Welsh and Thompson Hunter, Big Lebowski, Goethe,

Salvador Dalí, François Villon, Omar Khayyám, Abū Nuwās, Jim Morrison, Kurt Cobain

- from the West; Dovlatov, Vysotskij, Mayakovskij, Hlebnikov, and Edichka Limonov –

from Russia. The last fifteen names were suggested in the discussion that followed

Jesuit's text.

Although not a single text in this sub-rubric is written by a woman, seven women

are recognized as *Real Padonki*.[223] Even *Jesuit Bat'kovitch* (2006) who considers a

"woman-"padonok"" to be an "illogical absurdity" lists Mata Hari, Cleopatra, and "crazy

and wild Empress Anna Ioanovna[224]" among those few who do deserve this title. Other

proposed padonki women include: Princess Olga (early Russian history), Faina

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[221] literally: told the tsar to fuck off

[222] "Pushkin (святое, блять, наше все) несомненно можно и нужно причислять к «падонкам», хоть сам Александр Сергеевич этого и не знал. Тут тебе и чудесные матерные столбики-вирши, и открытое посылание нахуй царя (потом правда сдуля Саша чуток, но начинал бодренько), и нехилое количество обработанных пелоток, и забивание болт на стандартную «говномасную» карьеру" (*Jesuit Bat'kovitch,* 2006).

[223] Of them, three women have 'personal' stories written; three women were named in a list as "padonki-women" worthy to write about; and one woman was mentioned as one of key players in Kennedy assassination.

[224]"Хочецца «падонкоф»-женщин (искренне считаю женщину-«падонка» нелогичной несуразностью, милые дамы ресурса н/л)? Ну нате вам Мату Хари, Клеопатру или угарно-безумную императрицу Анну Иоанновну" (*Jezuit Bat'kovitch,* 2006).

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Ranevskaya (a famous Russian comedy actress), a Russian spy-girl how allegedly was involved in the assassination of J. F. Kennedy, and Elizabeth Batory.[225]

Even a Buddhist monk can be recognized as a *Real Padonak*. *Shadow* (2003) claims that Bodhidharma is a *Real Padonak* because "his zen-buddhism,[226] … is one of the biggest jokes in the history of this world, - right next to computers, love for money, democracy and religion[227]" (*Shadow,* 2003, n.p.).

There is only one category of people who can never be considered Real Padonki: male homosexuals. For this reason Edgar Rice Burroughs or Jean-Paul Sartre can never be among *Real Padonki* despite their "wild," "non-conventional," or "counterculture-like" life styles "because both are fags" (*Jesuit Bat'kovitch,* 2006). Similar concerns were expressed regarding François *de* Sade and Abū Nuwās. Sexual orientation seems to be *the only* criterion that raised *any* kind of debate. Even Edichka Limonov (a Russian populist writer) was accepted as a *Real Padonok* for his style of writing but got suspected and eventually "taken off the list" as a suspected homosexual (real or 'political') (*Jesuit Bat'kovitch,* comments, *2006*).

I have already mentioned in this chapter that openly homophobic content is one of the strongest features of udaff.com. *Jesuit Bat'kovitch* (2006) even considers "hatred towards fags" one of the key characteristics of any *Real Padonak* along with the proper

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[225] "Bloody Lizzy" by *BES_KOTA* (2003)

[226]Author's capitalization

[227]"Но за что я больше всего уважаю Бодхидхарму, так это за его дзен-буддизм - по-моему, это один из самых больших приколов в истории человечества - наряду с компьютерами, любовью за деньги, демократией и религией" <u>*Shadow*</u> (2003).

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use of *Albansky* grammar.[228] On several occasions it was debated on udaff.com if a

woman can be considered a "*fag*." A special *Padonki* term used in this case is "*babo-

pidar*," which literally means a "*fag-woman*." No consensus so far has been reached on

the issue if a "*babo-pidar*" can still be considered a *woman* or a just a *fag*. However,

overall attitude of male padonki towards homosexuality among women seems ironic

rather than negative. At the same time, homosexuality in men deserves full ostracism.

The discourse of *ahtung* (padonki term for male homosexuality) on udaff.com is based on

the counter-positioning the cultural models of "true masculinity" and homosexuality. A

Real Padonak, is first and for most a "real man," not a *fag*. A *fag*, a *pidar*, then, becomes

an opposite of a *Real Padonak*.

Quite a few texts published in the sub-rubric *Polemics* directly address the

problem of who should be considered a true '*pidar.*'[229] Besides sexual orientation, the

word '*pidar*' carries another meaning. It might also mean a heterosexual man who by

personal qualities (weak, a liar, a traitor, etc.) *cannot* be considered a 'real man.' *Kal'yan*

and *Anivey* both advocate for rather open view of male sexuality and scrutinize such

absurd taboo acts as looking at and enjoying the view of (another) man's well-built body

("if one man likes another man's body, is that *ahtung*?[230]" (*Anivey*, 2003)); or washing

and consequently touching one's own anus ("guys, when your wash yourselves, don't

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[228] On a few occasions it was proposed that a textbook of standardized Albanskij grammar should be written and published

[229] ПИДАР – Russian derogatory term for *gay* man

[230] "Вот, например, если мужыку нравицца мужская фигура - это ахтунг?" (Анивэй, 2003).

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you touch your asshole?[231]" (*Kal'yan*, 2003).[232] Both authors offer definitions of what

(or who) counts as a "*true ahtung*[233]" that include both direct, literal meaning: '*ahtung'*

or '*pidar'* as a homosexual man interested in a sexual act with another man, and indirect,

figurative view of '*ahtung'* or '*pidar'* as a man who engages in practices which (while

not connected to sexuality) denigrate his manhood. *Anivey* (2003) pronounces:

> Thus, may I be allowed to repeat myself and propose the following definition:
>
> PIDARY[234] ARE THOSE [men] WHO HAVE ANAL AND ORAL SEX … [with
>
> other men], OR THOSE HO WUNT TA HAV ANAL AND ORAL SEX [with
>
> other men] AND CUNSTANTLY TINK ABOUT DAT AND FOR DIS
>
> REASON SEE AHTUNG [male homosexuality] EVERYWHERE AROUND
>
> HIMSELEVES.[235] (*Anivey*, 2003, n.p.)

In this passage *Anivey* implements an elaborate code switching from standard

Russian into *Albanskij*. He opens the paragraph by writing in a sophisticated formal

Russian ("may I be allowed to repeat myself and propose the following definition"), then

he abruptly switches into *CAPSLOCK* (universally used on the Internet as an alternative

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[231] "пацаны, если ты свою жопу моешь, значит ты дотрагиваешься до очка" (Кальян. 2003).

[232] These rules seem very similar to often senseless but absurdly severe taboo rules that exist in correctional institutions for adolescent males in Russia (for examples of taboos and other practices common among incarcerated adolescent males see prose by Leonid Gabyshev published in Novyj Mir in 1989).

[233] If translated from Albanskij, *true ahtung* would mean "a real gay" man.

[234] A very strong derogatory term for '*homosexual man'* which is used exclusively to reference gay men and does not have feminine form.

[235] Посему, повторюсь, предлагаю такую формулировку: ПИДАРЫ ТЕ, КОТОРЫЕ ЕБУЦЦА В ЖОПУ И РОТ (ну и другие части тела, кому куда воспитание позволяет, гы), ЛИБО ХОТЯТ ЭТИМ ЗАНЯЦЦА И ПАСТАЯННА АБ ЭТОМ ДУМАЮТ И ВЕЗДЕ ВИДЯТ АХТУНГ (Анивэй, 2003).

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for screaming), and just three lines down *Anivey* makes another switch, this time into '*illiterate' Albanskij*. In the last line *Anivey* uses mixed register staying primarily within the limits of the literary Russian with occasional uses of *Albanskij*. In my opinion, his code switching should be interpreted as a value marker: it communicates the author's attitude, his denigration of *fags* of all kinds.[236]

Kal'yan's final stance generally goes along the same lines as that of *Anivey*: "The true problem is that the one who screams the most that a [certain] author is '*pidor*' (a rather widespread phenomenon) – himself actually is [the true] *pidor*"[237] (*Kal'yan*, 2003). Just as *Anivey*, *Kal'yan* uses obscene terminology and mixes together direct (physiological homosexuality) and indirect (moral corruption) meanings of the term '*pidar*.' *Kal'yan*, however, makes stronger emphasis on moral corruption and unmanly behavior. Language wise, he also sticks to the conventions of literary Russian even in the spelling of the term itself: *Kal'yan* spells the taboo put down as '*pidor*.'

The examples given above reflect one of the key elements of the *Real Padonki* Discourse: homophobia. This discourse merges with such discourses as a *Real Padonak* as a *tough guy;* army discourse; support for Putin, and disdain for the USA and West Europe (which on udaff.com is often referred to as *Geyropa - Fagrope*).

In the remainder of this chapter I will also touch on stories dedicated to childhood experiences of *Real Padonki*. Padonki "toy stories" are interesting because they show

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[236] A similar phenomenon is described by Comrie et al (1996) who observed extensive palatization (in oral speech) added to old Moscow pronunciation of such words as *communism* and *Darwinism* and explained this phenomenon by political motivation.

[237] Только вот проблема в том, что тот, кто больше всего кричит что автор пидор(распространённое явление) - тот и есть пидор.

aspects of personalities of real life people and point to the multiple Discourses that in Gee's (2007) words "are talking" through these people.

The sub-rubric *When Padonki Were Children* has only eighteen texts all of which are published under masculine nick-names. Twelve of these texts focus on toys that little *padonki* used to play with. Other six describe indoor and outdoor games, movies, and lemonade that existed "back then." All stories are written from the perspective of a man thinking back to the days when he was a boy – once again, a man, not a woman. Four out of ten "toy-stories" are dedicated to toy soldiers and other military toys.

These stories describe childhood days of real people who write for udaff.com – people who have been creating the cultural model of a *Real Padonak*. From this perspective, every toy and game mentioned turn into a historic and cultural root of the cultural model of a *Real Padonak*. These toys can also be interpreted as "props" involved in the Discourse of "happy Soviet childhood." As such, these texts describe early psycho-sociological and cultural conditioning that lies deep in the foundation of the current cultural model. This Discourse of "our happy Soviet childhood" flows into the bigger Discourse of "the loss of the Great Empire" – the collapse of former Soviet Union, as well as the Discourse of the "Renaissance of Great Russia." All three of these Discourses are embedded in the cultural model of a *Real Padonak*. These Discourses are also connected to the Discourse of "the lawless nineties" (the hardest years of political, social, and economical transformation experienced by former Soviet states) and the Discourses of "Padonki against *kakly* (a derogatory term for Ukrainians)" and "Padonki against *Pendosy* (or *pindosy*, a derogatory term for Americans)."

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The last two Discourses are best presented in such sub-rubrics as *News*, *Polit.sru* and *Polemics*. In can be proposed then, that real world *Real Padonki* (at least those who "inhabited" udaff.com in its early years) are "[predominantly] men past their 30" (Udav, 2008) who were born and raised in former Soviet Union (and thus internalized the Discourse that came with its ideology), served in Soviet (or Russian) army, and later were thrown into the transformation that broke all the "old" (Soviet) values and models and replaced them with new, capitalistic, western, commercial, alien systems of values and cultural models. In this case, it can be argued that the Discourse of *Real Padonki* emerged as result of the conflict between the Discourses of Old Soviet Time and the [bad] New Capitalist Time.

Quite a few udaff.com writers address this conflict in their writing. *Kuz'ma Ivanovich Krysak*[238] (2007) tells a story of a young doctor's attempt to save life of a twelve year old boy who crawled into an electric box trying to steal (and sell) cables and got hit by electricity. The boy survives but loses his right arm. *Kuz'ma Ivanovich* finishes his story by calling the new ways of "democracy" and free "market" the Satan's Ball. In response, a user named *king-kong* calls "them democrats" fags ("*pidarasy*"[239]) and praises Putin for establishing 'order in the country' ("[but now] VVP[240] has kicked their asses" (*king-kong*, 2007). *Vafa from Sredne Fontanskaya (Street)* (2007) refers to those[241] who "were born in the 80's…. [who are] the children of perestroika, sons of

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[238] Кузьма Иванович Крысак

[239] Derogatory slang term for *homosexuals*

[240] Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin

[241] "тех, кто появился на белый свет в 80х годах прошлого века. Дети перестройки, сыновья путчей и госпереворотов, дочери пустых прилавков…" (*Vafa from Sredne Fontanskaya(Street),* 2007).

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military *putsches*[242] and daughters of empty markets" as a "*shit-generation*"[243]. Mister Vihljun[244] (2007)[245] directly addresses this feeling of the "loss of the great country." He writes:

> I have long ago added myself to the "lost generation," … [those] who suddenly lost the epoch in which we were born; [and] it was replaced with a new one which we were forced to accept against our will. To this day I am struggling to accept the reality [and am still] carrying on my shoulders huge luggage of heavy nostalgia for [my/our] Soviet no-shit-happy childhood. (*mister Vihljun*, 2007)[246]

In this case, the cultural model of a *Real Padonak* can be viewed as the paradigm shift from the preceding cultural model of *Soviet Intelligentsia*. The *Real Padonak*, then, is a new kind of person, a person that emerged following the fall of the USSR as a result of the transformation that Russian society has been undergoing since 1980s. As a cultural model, *Real Padonak* was created as a response to this transformation, as an attempt of udaff.com writers to answer the question "What kind of people have we become?" This

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[242] coup d'état

[243] "ГОВНОПОКОЛЕНИЕ"

[244] мистер Вихлюн

[245] An interesting example of "data attrition." During the stage of data collection I selected one of mister Vihljun's texts and placed it under the category "the 90-s." While working on this chapter, I tried to look up this very text on udaff.com to clarify the exact day when the text was published. While the writer's profile was intact and contained close to thirty submissions, the text I was looking for could not be located.

[246]"Себя я давно уже причислил к так называемому «потерянному поколению», (об этом я писал раньше), у которого неожиданно исчезла эпоха в которой мы родились и тут же появилась новая которую мы против своей воли вынуждены были принять. Поэтому сейчас, я до сих пор стараюсь соответствовать своему настоящему времени, таская при этом за плечами огромный багаж тяжёлой ностальгии по советцкому и Б/П щастливому децтву." (*mister Vihljun*, 2007).

cultural model also inadvertently entered the new literature, the Internet based literature written by post-Soviet Russian people about their lives and about their experiences. If approached from this angel, the *Real Padonok* becomes a myth, an anti-hero created by those who lived through the fall of USSR and the transformation of the country. He is a '*Real Dissident*' thrown out of the country he was born into and, in a way, betrayed by his own country. This view of a *Real Padonak* as a literary character and a new archetype as well as the relationship between *Real Padonki* as real life people and the cultural model they have created is addressed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

"REAL PADONAK" AS A LITERARY CHARACTER

In the second chapter of this dissertation I propose to view writing done on udaff.com as a new form of art: as post-Soviet Internet based literature that is based on the cultural model of a *Real Padonak.* – a new hero, a new archetype. This chapter focuses on a *Real Padonak* as new literary hero and a new archetype, a new "kind of person" who lives and acts in texts published on udaff.com. Here I propose to view a *Real Padonak* as an archetype continuum - a range of invented literary characters that share such characteristics as social roles, behaviors, values, life experiences, and etc.

In the third chapter, using the analogy of Gee's metacognitive analysis of his experience playing an online game, I focused on Real Padonki as *real life people* (by analogy with the one of the three identities presented by Gee (2007): *James Paul Gee* as Bead Bead). In this chapter, the emphasis is placed on the other two identities: James Paul Gee as *Bead Bead* (here I will discuss a *Real Padonak* as the main character of stories published on udaff.com) and James Paul Gee *as* Bead Bead – the identity which reveals the relationship between udaff.com writers and the cultural model they have invented. Finally, I propose to view the cultural model of a *Real Padonok* as a complex multi-faceted model that is made of multiple Discourses, as a product of social histories of its creators (Gee 2005, 2008). As such, the cultural model of a *Real Padonak* becomes an example of multiglossia: a mixture of contradictory discourses that merge, divide, influence and transform each other.

In earlier chapters I have proposed to view the cultural model of a *Real Padonok* as a never ending process of collective invention. This cycle begins anew as soon as a

new person joins the community and submits their first text to Udav. Every new text sent to Udav carries a proposal (direct or implied) that claims "this is how a *Real Padonak* kind of writer writes"; or "this is what kind of person a 'Real Padonak' is"; or "this is HOW a *Real Padonak* lives/acts/feels/loves, and etc." Each newly published text gets scrutinized by the bigger community of udaff.com users who offer their rating and in this way decide whether the writer and character he or she has created will be recognized (see Gee (2005)) as "our kind of people."

A *Real Padonak* as a literary character can be presented in several ways. First of all, he (or she) can be invented, as a fiction character who functions in an invented world; or he (she) can be created as a reflection of a real life person - the writer him or herself. Finally, a *Real Padonak* as a literary character can be presented as an abstract concept, as a hypothetical character and a topic of polemic essay dedicated to the problem of a *Real Padonak*. All of these representations fit the description given by Gee (2007) to his identity as *Bead Bead*, a female elf in an online game. This is the "virtual identity: one's identity as a virtual character in the virtual word of [Real Padonki]" (p. 49). This description holds true for autobiographical stories as well because even in this case, the writer still presents him or herself as a literary character. The real world writer who claims him(her)self as a *Real Padonak* and the *Real Padonak* as an invented character are both present in this identity. In Gee's words this is "James Paul Gee as *Bead Bead*," where Bead Bead is italicized to indicate that, in this identity, the stress is on the virtual character …. acting in the virtual world… (though I am "playing/developing" her) … [this is] me in my virtual identity [as Bead Bead]" (p. 49).

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Gee's power of creation is constrained by: "the limitations of her [Bead Bead's] capacities ... within the resources the game designer has given me" (2007, p.50). Bead Bead comes with a pre-set list of characteristics (race, "unique degrees of strength, constitution, dexterity, beauty, intelligence, willpower, perception, and charisma" (Gee 2007, p.46)) and a pre-existing story line. Unlike *Arcanum*, members of udaff.com do not have to deal with limitations imposed by "game designers." On the contrary, the moment a new member registers his or her profile on udaff.com, they have to begin inventing their virtual identity of a *Real Padonak* and creating their own story, their own world in which this new *Real Padonak* operates from scratch. Any kind of story and any kind of world can be created. Udav may like or dislike a text sent to him and consequently accept or rejects this new text. He, however, will never tell a new writer how to write and how *not* to write. Each story and each character can also be accepted or rejected by the community; however, even if a text receives low rating and comments that say "this is not the right format for our kind of website," still, for as long as the text is published on udaff.com it is a part of padonki literature.

What kind of character comes out as a result of this invention, and what kind of world this character will bring into the universe of *Real Padonki* depends on who the writer is, and what Discourses he or she brings with them to the resource. This freedom of invention turns the cultural model of a *Real Padonak* into a continuous cycle of paradigm shifts. If we attempt to describe this cultural model as something homogeneous, as "one" kind of person, we will discover that it is full of conflicts that cannot be resolved. However, if the model is seen as a composite, as a web of

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interconnected and often contradictory Discourses, the need to resolve these conflicts disappears.

When a new player joins an online game of *Arcanum*, he (or she) is greeted with a prompt: "Your adventure in Arcanum starts with a catastrophe. You character is a passenger on Zephyr, a large blimp" (Gee 2007, p. 48). Using this analogy, it can be said that the cultural model of a *Real Padonak* was also born as a result of a "catastrophe." At the end of chapter three I suggest that the capital D Discourse of *Real Padonki* emerged as a response to (and most likely as a protest against) the political, economic, and socio-cultural changes that followed after the collapse of former Soviet Union. From this perspective a *Real Padonok* is a person who has lived through the transformation of socio-economic system and cultural values that followed after the fall of the old system (the Great Soviet State) – a rather traumatic change. A *Real Padonak* has also lived through the death of the old cultural model of the "True Soviet Russian Person.[247]"

The *Real Padonok,* then, is a myth because he is a collective invention based on experiences of many people who carry this conflict of systems and Discourses inside themselves. A *Real Padonak* is also a *product* of this conflict. He is also an anti-hero because he witnessed the fall of a great country, the best, the most powerful country in the world[248]. This perspective also connects to the view of a narrator as an interpreter of the world and life around him (or her) presented by Esenwein and Stockard (1919). A

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[247] Derogatory term for a "Soviet kind of person" is *sovok*.

[248] In May 2014 I attended a small party for Russian ex-patriots living in Phoenix. I overheard two Russian men discussing the most recent events in Ukraine. One of them asked the other: "What country did you give your military oath to?" "I gave it to the Soviet Union" – was the answer, "and I am upholding it."

Real Padonak as a literary character created by udaff.com writers becomes a tool that enables this interpretation. As such, a *Real Padonok* as a literary character becomes a therapeutic tool which allows people to rethink the transformative experiences they have lived through and to re-invent, to reposition themselves in the "new world."

Just as Solzhenitzyn's Ivan Denisovitch[249] (Solzhenitsyn, 1990) has become the embodiment, the cultural model of an innocent person sent by Stalin's system to a labor camp, people who lived through the 90s had to invent that mythical anti-hero *Real Padonok*, a low-life, an uneducated person with perverted values because only such kind of a person, a "true bastard" could have *survived* the 90s and entered the new millennium.

Earlier I propose that the capital D Discourse of *Real Padonki* is based on the conflict between two systems of values: the old socialist, which is perceived as the right one and new capitalist, which is viewed as false and alien. The *Real Padonak* as a literary character then becomes the carrier of this conflict. He is a protester, a counter prototype to the cultural model of a "New Russian" – an uneducated half criminal nouveau riche. *Real Padonak* expresses this protest first of all through his "uneducated," "illiterate" *Albanskij* – a mock language, a satire to the lack of education among mainstream society.

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[249] A connection can also be made to cultural model of "Unrequested Men" (in Russian – "Lishnije Ljudi") – highly educated, rich aristocrats of late 1800s, who were unable to find their place in the society. This cultural model was created by Soviet literary critics in reference to Pushkin's character Onegin and Lermontov's Pechorin. Just like the "Real Padonok," the "Unrequested Man" survives the dangers of his time. He lives without any serious problems, but also without any aim.

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In 2006, a Russian language version of an Urban Dictionary[250] described Padonki as an '*alternative culture*' and a '*culture of protest* [that is] based on creative provocation [and] belongs to Russian Trash Culture' ("Padonki"). An embodiment of this culture, a *Real Padonak* as an archetype is characterized by heavy use of 'stigmatized vocabulary' and intentionally ungrammatical "corrupt" language; strong preference for dark, cynical humor, obscene behaviors, face threats, stressed 'negative' masculinity, as well intended violation of mainstream moral and cultural norms.

While obviously offensive, the Discourse of *Real Padonki* can also be viewed as an important linguistic and literary innovation. George Niva (1978) considers this kind of 'daresay' and provocation as a necessary condition of successful 'break through the silence' of deception by minority unwilling to play the game imposed on them by the bigger society. This breakthrough is impossible without a violation of linguistic norms accepted and practiced by the majority. For this provocation to be successful, it also has to be based on a violation of esthetic norms of the establishment. Thirty years later, this view point is shared by Arhangel'skij[251] (2008) who considers language to be the very cause that predestines the conflict with "the rest of the world" and at the same time brings about true liberation. He writes:

> It is, however, that same language, or rather unique style of speech, writing
>
> (which exactly is the very subject of stylistics), that brings about disagreements,
>
> neurosis, and suffering and interferes with life in general, - that very language is

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[250] I found this definition in 2006 on the website with URL:
http://www.wnav.ru/Entertainment/Other/60360.htm ; however, in 2014 the link did not function any more.
[251] A columnist for a Russian language Internet news paper

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the shortest way to freedom, to independence from authorities, from the mob; a step beyond senselessness. (2008)[252]

Many texts produced by udaff.com writers (*Maks aka kondrat* (2007), *Flow* (2008), *Sliff_ne_zoSSchitan* (2011), *Barybino* (2012), *Svetozar* (2012), and many others) focus on the conflict between a *Real Padonak* as the carrier of *Real Padonki* Discourse and the discourses of mainstream society. In these stories the *Real Padonak* is often presented as the last carrier of such fundamental values as freedom of though and self-expression and is positioned either outside of the mainstream society or in deep disagreement with the majority. These texts present the Discourse of *Real Padonki* as the discourse of protest, of rebellion against ways of being imposed by the outside world, and the main character is shown as a fighter against fake, money based values of the capitalistic culture. [253] The conflict between a *Real Padonak* and "the rest of the world" is often resolved through the death of the *Last Real Padonak*.

In a dystopia titled "The Last Padonagg[254]" (*Barybino,*[255] 2012) all *Real Padonki* but one have died out. This *last padonagg* gets sentenced to death by a street trial organized by mob. *Barybino*'s story is full of metaphorical parallels and cross references. The last padonagg is tried and sentences to death for "corruption" of the

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[252] Но тот же язык, а точнее, неповторимый стиль речи, письма (что и является предметом стилистики), который порождает разногласия, неврозы, страдания и вообще мешает жить, – он же является и самым простым способом выйти на свободу: стать независимым от власти, толпы, выйти за пределы бессмыслия.

[253] This Discourse of deep internal conflict with and rebellion against the discourses of mainstream culture are often understood as *counter-culture.* I address this issue in more detail in the final chapter.

[254] ПАСЛЕДНЕ ПАДОНАГГ

[255] Барыбино

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language and youth[256]. In the course of the trial he is offered an opportunity to confess his sins and denounce the use of *albanskij* which is called the 'official' language of counter-culture. The last padonagg refuses to betray his ideals and is burnt to death on the piles of "cheap books," "computer mouse devices," pencils, and other paraphernalia associated with writing. A true "last padonagg," he speaks in *albanskij* until the last moment in his life. When the fire is started, a young girl wearing a school uniform throws into the fire a big orthographic dictionary of the Russian language.[257] The trial over the *last padonagg* is accomplished by three judges, which was a common format for the trials over innocent people during the times of Stalin's terror (Sakharov-center, n.d.). Once sentenced to death, the last padonagg experiences triple execution: first he is given poison; then an executor cuts off his fingers;[258] finally the last padonagg is crucified (his hands are nailed to a log with pins that say "the Golden pen of Alternative Literature[259]") and burnt to death. The crowd cheers his death and throws into the fire "cheap books that nobody reads any longer[260]" (Barybino, 2012).

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[256] Intertextuality is one of the main features of Padonki writing. The conviction and death sentence to the last padonagg might be an indirect reference to the story of Socrates who was convicted based on similar accusations.

[257] A possible reference to a historical anecdote about the burning of Giordano Bruno who refused to denounce his beliefs and was burned to death. During his execution an old lady threw a bunch of fire wood into the fire.

[258] both tortures are obvious references to 'cliché' responses to pieces of poor writing popular on Udaff.com. One of these responses suggests that the author should commit suicide by drinking poison: *afftar, hav some poison* ("аффтар, выпей йаду")*;* and the other tells the author to "cut off his fingers."

[259] золотое перо альтерлита

[260] This scene invites connections to book burning in Hitler's Germany and fatwas (death sentences) issued to Salman Rushdi for the book *The Satanic Verses* (1988) and Jyllands-Posten who in 2005 drew and published cartoons that ridiculed Prophet Mohammad.

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The irony is striking. A harmless person is cruelly tortured and burnt to death by a street mob. People in this crowd apparently do not read books but their hate is strong enough to burn a person for 'corrupting' the language. While never directly stated, two connections can be made linking "The Last Padonagg" to two of the most famous martyrs of our civilization:

A. Just like Giordano Bruno, the *Last Padonagg* is accused of 'heresy' – beliefs that go against the norms of mainstream society. He is tried, by an unjust court and is sentenced to death; he is tortured and burnt to death, but he never rejects his beliefs.

B. Just like Socrates, the *Last Padonagg* is accused of corrupting the values of the society. Just like Socrates, he never denounces his belief and accepts the death sentence.

In another dystopia (published by *Goga Vluperdischev*[261] in 2011) the protagonist (a former member of *Real Padonki*) after years of unconsciousness wakes up in 'not-so-distant' future and discovers that a strange device was inserted inside his anus. At times this device gives him only mild discomfort, but other times this 'discomfort' turns into true pain. From a doctor he learns that this is a thought control device designed by Steve Jobs. The device called *Ithink* can read all thoughts of its owner. Thoughts that are harmful for "the system" are discouraged by physical pain while useless thoughts cause a mild itch.

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[261] Гога Влупердищев

In this way, the device allows the system to easily control all of those "marginal people" who could think against the system before thoughts even form clearly in people's minds. […] Before, you would call them opposition. Now, we call them "ass scratchers." They are all under strict control. So, [imagine] they come out to a square, all forty or fifty of them, and just stand their silently scratching their asses, staring at each other. Then one of them opens up their mouth and immediately falls on the ground screaming in pain, hands on his ass. (*Goga Vluperdischev*, 2011)[262]

The story titled "I think, Steve, Still Think" is concluded with a prediction that "in the nearest future, all those who dare to think will be considered mentally ill" (*Goga Vluperdischev*, 2011). The first impression is that the story reflects a conflict between *any* free thinking individual and *any* kind of system. But Goga's irony goes further. At some point the protagonist inquires if Udav received a thought controlling device into his anus as well. To his big surprise, the answer is no. It turns out that Udav actually has become a part of "the system."

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[262] Раньше их называли несогласные а теперь жопочесные. Они все у нас на жестком контроле. Так вот выходят они на площадь какую-нибудь, человек сорок, может пятьдесят, молча стоят, глазками затравленно постреливают и жопы почесывают. Потом кто-нибудь из них рот откроет и тут же падает на землю, держась в руках за свою пятую точку и вопя от боли истошно. (Goga Vluperdischev, 2011).

You see, Dmitrij[263] is a part of the system. Neither he, nor I (or anybody who works together with the system) received the device. We are a part of the system, and, consequently, we are above it. (Goga Vluperdischev, 2011)[264]

This motive of a *Real Padonak* being the last protector of the freedom of thought is very common in polemic essays dedicated to the problem of definition of a *Real Padonok*. *Maks aka Kondrat* describes a "Universal Padonok" whom he compares to a "Universal Human" of the Renaissance. In *Maks'* view, the "Universal Padonak" is first of all a "person who thinks freely, strives for spiritual development and does not follow the instincts of a crowd.[265]" These qualities make the "Universal Padonok" capable to resist such internal fears as the fear to "bring about anger of his boss;" or the fear to "lose a comfortable job." By resisting these fears, the "Universal Padonok" is able to prevent bigger dangers that are threatening the society[266] (*Maks aka Kondrat*, 2008).

It is obvious that the *Real Padonak* of *Maks aka Kondrat* is not a marginalized vagrant. On the contrary the "Universal Padonok" is a person who by the virtue of his internal freedom is *above* the majority. Unaffected by likes and dislikes of the society, he is not afraid to disagree with it (or rather he is, but he is able to overcome his fear) and is capable of seeing further into the future and deeper into the true nature of things. This

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[263] The real life first name of Udav

[264] Дело в том, что Дмитрий часть системы. Ни мне, ни ему, вообще никому, кто взаимодействует с системой ничего не внедряли. Мы часть системы и как бы над ней. (Goga Vluperdischev, 2011)
[265] 'Универсальный падонак - это прежде всего свободномыслящий человек, который стремится к духовному развитию, не следует стадным инстинктам…" (Maks aka Kondrat 2008).

[266] Maks does not explain what kind of "bigger dangers" are threatening the bigger society leaving it up to the reader's interpretation.

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freedom enables the "Universal Padonok" to accomplish things for the benefit of that very bigger society ("the crowd") against which he rebels (*Maks a.k.a. kondrat* 2008).

Flud Dal'nevostochnyj[267] in his interpretation of what the words *Real Padonak* mean puts an emphasis on intellectualism as the main trait. He supports this claim by providing an old meaning of the word "marginal:" "marginal, (same as "padonak") – first of all is an INTELLECTUAL who knows how to balance on the verge of mainstream concepts" (2006). *Flud* does not try to separate the concept of a *Real Padonak* from the concept of marginality. On the contrary, he strengthens this connection by bringing back the old, original meaning of the word: "By the way, "marginality" translates from old Latin as an "abstract border"[268] (2006).

The view of a *Real Padonak* as a "free thinking intellectual who refuses to succumb to the values and norms of the mainstream society" is contrasted with another kind of a *Real Padonak* – an anti-social vagrant, a "dirty drunken homeless bum." While this kind of a *Real Padonak* does not appear in polemic or philosophical essays dedicated to the ideas of *Padonki Movement* or *counter-culture*, he is a popular protagonist of many short stories published on udaff.com.

Tough guy is also a popular character. He is often portrayed as a physically strong man involved in some kind of criminal activity. He has little or no formal education, is cynical and disillusioned by the life experience he has had (had gone to war,

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[267] Флуд Восточносибирский

[268] Маргинал (он же «падонак») — это прежде всего ИНТЕЛЕКТУАЛ, который умеет балансировать на грани общепринятых моральных понятий. Маргинальность, кстати и переводится со старой латыни как «абстрактная граница».

been to jail). He drinks a lot to numb the pain of memories about his lost friends or family (or simply because he does not care about anything).

Developing the analogy with dissidents presented above, it can be said that this kind of a *Real Padonok* is a dissident of the country which he has lost. He has lived through a complete change of values and beliefs. He is an anti-hero because the values and beliefs that were instilled in him in his childhood disappeared together with the country in which he was born, and he was thrown into the world that runs on totally different principles. He survived the lawlessness of 90-s: the years which killed all the 'true heroes,' and quite possibly even became successful in the new society[269]. He 'made it' but has lost his innocence, his old self, he has become a *real padonak* because he exchanged his ideals, his moral code for financial success. A *Real Padonok* is an anti-hero because he is not a child anymore; all the idealism and innocence of his childhood and youth peeled off of him revealing rough and often twisted nature.

Padonki characters who are educated and intelligent are not successful and usually lose to street smart rough guys. They are called *botan*[270] or *drocher.*[271] These guys often get beat up by tough guys, cheated out of money, or are taken advantage of in some other way.

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[269]In real life, many of udaff.com writers are educated successful professionals (*Kirzach*, *Mandala*, *Babik*, *Udav* himself, *sqwer*, and many others).

[270]A put down derived from the word Botany. The implication here is that Botany is for sissies, not for real men.

[271] Literally "masturbator" – a man who cannot find a woman to have sex with and has to satisfy himself.

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Other relatively common types of male characters include a "farm boy" and a "disgusting monster." The latter usually comes from gross, disgusting stories that show the darkest sides of human nature. These stories are written predominantly in *Albanskij* and are filled with stigmatized language and obscene topics. The characters in such stories often go beyond all limits of morality. They are disgusting to the extent of losing their humanity. Udav in his very first *creativ* portrays himself (he is the protagonist and the narrator at the same time) as a man who seduces a girl, hooks her on drugs, and then sells her as a prostitute (Udav, 2001). In another story the author assumes the voice of an executor who is transmitting his trade to a disciple. The entire story is built as a monologue of the "master" explaining how each torture should be done to cause the maximum amount of damage.

In the text by *Makumba* and *VALENOK* (2009) titled *Interview with a Padonok,* authors present a report of an imagined interview with an invented character who (as it follows from the title) *embodies* the values and behaviors associated with the cultural model of a *Real Padonak*. Their text, written in a mixture of standard Russian and *Albanskij,* is saturated with elements of *creative provocation* - a relatively recent term used to describe daring, dark, or disgusting (you make me want to vomit) kind of humor. It is set up as a conversation between the two friends (*Makumba* and *VALENOK*) and a member of udaff.com who lived through a transformation of physically turning into a penis.[272]

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[272] The interviewee's name is [*The one who] Slowly Turned Into Dick.* An account under this nick name actually exists. It was officially registered on udaff.com in 2004, and the person who created this nick name contributed to various rubrics of the resource from 2004 until 2009. The account information still lists his udaff.com based e-mail as contact information.

The interview begins with the question "So, how does it feel to turn into a penis?" and goes on to explore different sides of life of the *comrade*[273] named *[The One Who] Slowly Turned Into a Dick* and his experiences in the process of transformation. The interview finishes with a rather homophobic account of a 'socially awkward moment' when one of the interviewers stretches out his hand to thank the interviewee for hospitality but then realizes that he will be touching a male sexual organ and immediately drops the hand[274] (*Makumba* and *VALENOK*, 2009).[275] It is possible that the authors of *The Interview* intend to demonstrate the final stage of *becoming a real padonak* - a complete physical transformation of a human being into a sexual male organ.

In another text written in the same genre, the author (*Skatavod*,[276] 2008) "interviews" an old time member of udaff.com called *Vaha*[277] who is well known for his 'extreme' Padonki style posts. Although a person with this name exists in real life, in the story he is presented as an archetype, a model of a *Real Padonak*. The first few question-answer exchanges sound "normal" and plausible: *Vaha* answers questions about his attitudes to other members of udaff.com, his opinion of the quality of texts published on the resource, his personal literary preferences, and the like. However, the ending of the text deviates strongly into the 'fantasy land' of Padonki style. On the way out of the

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[273] a respectful form of address to male members on udaff.com

[274] For one, as it is not socially accepted in Russia for a guy to give a handshake to another guy's male organ; for two, Udaff.com is a rather homophobic community

[275] It could also be suggested that this piece carries intertextual connections to such classics as "The Fly" (1986) and even Kafka's Metamorphosis (1996) which depict transformation of a human being into something that is not fully human.

[276] Скатавод, translates as *Rancher*

[277] Full nick name is *Vaha from Sredefontanskoj* [street] - *Ваха со Среднефонтанской*. This nickname points at a person who lives in Odessa a legendary city famous for its dialect and a subculture of very special kind of humorous Discourse created by a unique mix of ethnicities and cultures.

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restaurant where the meeting took place *Vaha* utters something like "Now you'll see what a true counter-culture is," spits a mouthful of snot at two dark skinned men (who turn out to be Peruvians), and hits one of them on the chest. Nothing happens, and *Vaha* and *Rancher* handshake goodbye. This last scene might be interpreted as an indication of racism among *padonki*. Such feature is definitely present as many udaff.com stories carry strong negative sentiments towards *chornozhopyje* (literally "black asses") – a derogatory word for people with dark skin. However, *Vaha's* story it turns out that the assaulted men were Peruvians, and this fact makes *Vaha's* attack look like an awkward miss: he assaulted the wrong guys. Padonki racism is usually aimed at illegal immigrants from "stans" - Asian republics of former Soviet Union. Uneducated and often hostile toward Russian culture, these people have flooded Russian cities in search of jobs.

Both of these interviews present a *Real Padonok* as an archetype – an invented literary character who talks and acts the way *Real Padonki* do demonstrating the true values and beliefs ingrained in the cultural model of a *Real Padonak*. However, both texts earned low ratings, and their authors were criticized for the lack of creativity ("no real laughs. [The authors] got stuck in the nick name and failed to move beyond"[278] (*GAGAR*, 2009)) and overall "senselessness" of their text ("[the text is] BS, to be honest"[279] (Win99n, 2009)).

In fiction stories *Real Padonki* often use drugs or alcohol as a way to escape or even resolve difficult life situation. Main characters get numb drunk and venture into the

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[278]"невесело получилось, уперлись в ник мпвх, а дальше – никак" (ГАГАР, 2009)

[279] "хуета хует есле чесна" (Win99n, 2009).

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unknown where they find friends and enemies, have sex with women (prostitutes or lifelong lovers), pick up fight with cops or strangers, and look for trouble in every possible way. This glamorous description of a *Real Padonak* who is cool because he is drunk or high is contrasted with "true" (mostly autobiographic) stories that reveal tragedies caused by addictions without the flair of padonki legend.

Attitudes to women shown in padonki fiction are rather interesting. On one hand there are hundreds of stories dedicated to idealized, romantic, perfect love relationships that end with tragic death of one of the partners. At the same time, in many padonki stories women are objects of violence (physical or sexual) and verbal putdowns. Physical abuse is often depicted as a proper way of resolving family issues even by writers who portray themselves as "normal" people ("so I smacked her on the face, and our divorce was finalized[280]"). Oral and anal sex is often used as means of putting women down and establishing control over them.

As was shown in chapter three, women writers do not get harassed on udaff.com any more than men do. Harsh, derogatory comments on Udav's resource are a norm that applies to *any* writer (even Udav himself). However, as fiction characters, women are almost never put into the position of power, unless the story is written by a female author. Most commonly a woman is depicted as a drunken bitch or a whore - uneducated, stupid, promiscuous, woman who eventually leads her man into trouble. Another popular

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[280]This line came from a story by *100metersoffuckengreatwire*, an udaff.com writer who published several books. As a main character (the books are written as autobiographical stories) the author presents himself as a "normal" guy – an educated person who lives "normal" life and cares for two very special animals – a cat and a dog who can talk like humans. It was appalling for me that this kind of person wrote about "smacking" a woman on her face as something "normal" and acceptable.

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archetype is "a stupid cunt" – a beautiful but highly materialistic woman, usually with blond hair, who is only interested in money and social status.

If we approach the cultural model of a *Real Padonak* as a reflection (and possibly a satirical reflection) of the contemporary Russian society, then the types of *Real Padonki* described above become depictions of real life men and women who live in contemporary Russia. In this case, the attitudes to drugs and alcohol as well as views of sex and relationships between genders presented in this chapter become more than "just" literature; they become the representations of attitudes and behaviors present in the modern Russian society. In other words, they reflect the discourses that exist in this society.

It was already proposed in chapters two and three that *Padonki Discourse* can be viewed as satire to the mainstream culture. Ironically, even extreme padonki stories might turn out to be not satirical, but rather accurate representations of the realities of life in Russia. After all, this is what *Real Padonki* claim they value the most: speaking openly about things as they really are. *Ivan Tvarin*[281] (2003) presents a manifesto of a *Real Padonak*. His *No Bullshit Address to Uncultured Swines from the Defender of [True] Culture of Russia*[282] is filled with obscene themes (e.g. "when I am taking my shit

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[281] Иван Тварин.

[282]Нехуёвое воззвание к бескультурным мразям от поборника Культуры Русской

in [your] elevator, be sure I am wearing a tie…[283]") and vocabulary ("You, "padonki,"
fuck you motherfuckers, have fucked the culture dead![284]") (*Ivan Tvarin*, 2003).

He reproaches padonki for writing too much about sex ("regarding screwing –
you should not write about that"[285]) because sexual relationship with a woman is too
delicate of a subject ("heifer[286] - it's, fuck it, a romantic subject…"[287]) (*Ivan Tvarin*,
2003). *Ivan Tvarin*'s text is brief. It is built on creative mix of "cultured" and obscene
themes, and, despite disproportional use of obscenities, is perfectly grammatical. It
follows all standard rules of spelling and punctuation of the Russian language. In the end
the author tells other padonki writers that their texts make him puke although he, the
author, is a truly 'cultured person' ("I am intelligentsia! I am cultured! I am not a
thug!"[288]) and has been reading these padonki written texts for many years (*Ivan Tvarin*,
2003).

Ivan Tvarin's character reflects the 'two-in-one' aspect of the model of a *Real
Padonak*. He is a perfectly literate and apparently cultured person who purposefully fills
his text with grotesque amount of obscenities (both in themes and vocabulary) and
descriptions of such socially unacceptable behaviors as 'shitting in an elevator,' 'binge
drinking,' 'dirty, 'uneducated' talk,' 'leaving boot prints on people's faces' and 'sniffing

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[283] Когда я какаю в лифте, я при галстуке (Иван Тварин, 2003).

[284] Вы, «падонки», блять, запиздили культуру! (Иван Тварин, 2003)

[285] Кстати о ебле – о ней писать не надо (Иван Тварин, 2003).

[286] Тёлка/ tjolka, heifer (n.) – a derogatory slang turm for a (usually) young and immature woman.

[287] Тёлка – это, бля, романтический образ. (Иван Тварин, 2003)

[288] Я – интеллигент! Я – культурен! Я – не отморозок! (Иван Тварин, 2003)

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glue in the back street' (*Ivan Tvarin*, 2003). The problem is that these behaviors are not fiction; the author did not invent these behaviors, he saw people in Russia who regularly engage in behaviors like that. The word "tjolka" (female cow) is a very common real life derogatory word for young women used by men in Russia. Below I am giving a comparison between two stories: one published more than 20 years ago in one of the most established literary journals, and another – the very first creative published by Udav. Despite the time laps of twenty years, characters in both stories are similar.

In 1989 *Novyi Mir* published a short story *Ljudochka,*[289] written by Victor Astaf'jev. In the story, a young girl escapes hopelessness of life in her native village and moves to a nearby town where she finds a job at a beauty salon and a room to rent. Things seem to be working out for her when one night she gets gang raped in her courtyard. *Ljudochka* soon realizes that now she is expected to provide sexual services to anybody from the gang upon their first request. Even worse, the girl soon learns that she is pregnant. *Ljudochka* commits suicide. As a glimpse of primitive justice, *Ljudochka's* step father murders the leader of the gang.

The story is written in the genre of *chernuha* ('grim reality'), which was very popular at the end of the Soviet era. While padonki writers never use this word and do not have a rubric dedicated to stories of this kind, it is very possible that the Discourse of *chernuha* was internalized and absorbed into the Discourse of *Real Padonki*. In 2001 Udav

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[289] Name of the main character and the title of the story

published his first piece of creative writing titled *Cherno-Belaya L'jubov'*[290] (*Black and White Love*), where he tells the story of a young girl who enters life with innocence and excitement but ends up sold as a prostitute by her first lover. Udav generally follows the same story line as *Astaf'jev* and sticks to the same genre of "*chernuha.*"

> … all of a sudden [her entire life] went in front of her eyes… her mother's funeral...
> Binge drinking… Heroin withdrawals… Horrific pain of abortions…. Endless
> rows of basements, wall-ways, and building entrances where she offers sex for a
> bottle of vodka… Her, passing out and being raped by a bunch of homeless bums…
> Razor in her hand…[291] (Udav, 2001)

However, at the end of the story Udav 'shifts' from the reality bound genre of post-Soviet *chernuha* into a more *Padonki* like style of "double reality," a story within a story kind of plot. Originally Udav introduces his own (the narrator-as-a-participant) character as the main villain, but later turns himself into an "omnipotent magician" – the story-teller who has the power to change destinies with a few movements of a pen. The quote below shows the dialogue between Udav and his friend, also an Udaff.com writer and co-writer of the text.

> In horror, unable to speak, she was standing in front of those who created her. …
> "Who'll do it? You or me? Go ahead, [you] do it." Volcan pulled a pen out of

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[290] Чёрно-Белая Любовь (Udav, 2001).

[291]"как вдруг перед ней понеслись молниеносные картины, в которых она была главным героем...
Похороны матери... Запои... Героиновые ломки... Дикая боль абортов... Круговорот подъездов,
подворотен, подвалов, где она отдается за бутылку водки... Бомжи, насилующие ее в
бесознательном состоянии... Трамвай, отрезающий ноги... Бритва в руке..." (Udav, 2001).

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his pocket and started writing something on his napkin…. Once again the reality in front of her eyes turned fast and murky… once again she was young and happy, full of optimism and enthusiasm of youth….[292] (Udav, 2001)

In both texts men hold all the power. Women are weak, not very intelligent and unable to create decent lives for themselves. In both stories women suffer sexual violence (rape, forced prostitution), and their lives end up broken at a very young age. Udav, as a writer, usurps all the power of action, thought, and spirit, while the female protagonist of the story is left powerless and unable to make any kind of decision about her own life. Many other Padonki stories about relationships between men and women seem to follow Astaf'jev and Udav's style.

The analysis of a *Real Padonak* as an archetype and a literary character presented above was primarily based on Gee's analysis of his virtual identity of Bead Bead: "James Paul Gee as *Bead Bead*" with the emphasis on Real Padonak as an invented character. In the next few pages I look at the archetype of a *Real Padonak* as it comes out in autobiographical stories written by udaff.com writers. Here, the cultural model or the archetype is based on personalities of real life people. We are still dealing with a *Real Padonak* as a literary character; however, in these stories authors directly claim themselves "real life people" *Real Padonki* kinds of people. I will also address the relationship udaff.com writers as real world people have with their characters, their

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[292] Она стояла в ужасе перед своими создателями и не могла вымолвить ни слова... - Ну что, дурочка, все поняла?... - Удав, слышь… - Что? - Ты сделаешь, или я? - Какая разница… ну давай ты… Вулкан достал из кармана авторучку, и, склонившись над столом, стал что-то быстро писать на салфетке… И снова все завертелось перед глазами... быстрее... еще быстрее... она вновь была юной и свежей, полной чувств, склонившейся над дневником девочкой.

virtual identities as *Real Padonki*. This discussion is based on the last identity discussed by Gee (2007): "a real person *as a* virtual character" where the emphasis is placed on the "in-between space" – the part of human psyche involved in the interaction between the writer (player) and their invented character.

This identity seems to be the most complex. Gee describes it in the following way:

> A third identity that is at stake in playing a game like *Arcanum* is what I will call a *projective identity*, playing on two senses of the word "project," meaning both "to project one's values and desires onto the virtual character as one's own project" (Bead Bead, in this case) and seeing the virtual character as one's own project in the making, a creature whom I imbue with a certain trajectory through time defined by my aspirations for what I want the character to be and become (2007, p. 50).

Although the world of Real Padonki technically has only one main character – *the Real Padonak,* udaff.com authors create very different character. Each author can fashion their own virtual identity, and present themselves as a "new," a special kind of a *Real Padonak.* The tool kit each writer has to craft themselves as a *Real Padonak* includes language, verbal description of appearance, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors exhibited by their characters as well as kinds environments and life situations in which their characters act. Thus, every new *Real Padonak* is as unique as the author who created this character. At the same time, many of real life *Real Padonki* literary characters – those based on writers' real life identities surprisingly share features depicted through *Real Padonki* as invented characters.

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Kirzach, an acclaimed udaff.com author, presents himself as an "army guy" (though the series of stories dedicated to his days in the army) and a "Russian expatriate in China." In his stories *Kirzach* gets involved in fights (his cycle about the army); he drinks a lot; he loses his marriage; roams aimlessly in the street of Shanghai and gets involved with prostitutes. A similar character is created by *sqwer*, except his *Real Padonak* is an officer in the Russian army and shows more patriotism. *MEANMACHINE* present himself as a mercenary, a hired soldier fighting for money somewhere in the jungles.

Evgenij Staroverov's character is a "retired head of a bodyguard unit." He gets involved in physical fights (that's his job, actually), cheats on his wife; drinks regularly, sometimes to the degree of blackout, but "gets things done" and cares for his family. A "tough big-city guy," deep inside he still is a "farm boy from an obscure Russian village." *Evgenij Staroverov's* stories are filled with compassionate attitude towards women and deep love to rural Russia.

In contrast with these writers who chose masculinity as their "key feature," *Herasuka Pizdayabasi' Real Padonak* (presented through his poetry and short essays) is a depressed, emotionally unstable alcoholic suffering from impossible love. *Ochin' staryj lisjonag*[293] also chooses the identity of an alcoholic, while *~Dis~* presents himself as a functioning drug addict who knows everything about the shadow life of his city – St Petersburg. While these characters emphasize substance abuse as the main trait of their identities as Real Padonki, *Pomojechnik* goes even further. His lifestyle is reflected in

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[293] *Veri Old Babie Fox*

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the nick name: *Dumpster Bum. Pomojechnik's* texts are disgusting accounts of his trips to local dumpsters in search of food and drink accompanied with photos of his trophies before and after consumption (vomit and fecal masses). Ironically, *Pomojechnik* writes in perfectly grammatical standard Russian language.

These characters are once again contrasted by *Mzungu.* Also an expatriate, he lives in Africa, considers it home, and feels in perfect harmony with his new environment. *Mzungu* mainly presents himself as a "*big jobar*'" – a man with countless sex partners. *Mzungu's* stories are filled with accounts of unprotected sexual contacts with women "off the streets" of African cities (accompanied by colorful pictures of sexual organs of his lovers) and half mystical adventures involving drugs, magic, and esoteric practices. In one of his stories *Mzungu* spends a few weeks with an obscure tribe and is given a wife who becomes pregnant by him but dies tragically. At the end of the story *Mzungu* is sitting next to the chief of the tribe who is roasting the dead body of *Mzungu's* wife. He eats the woman's heart while the chief consumes the fetus of *Mzungu's* unborn baby.

Female writers create diverse kinds of characters as well. *Mandala,* one of the very few successful female authors of udaff.com[294] chose the "I am a Woman" kind of stance. She almost never uses *Albanskij* or curse words; her *Real Padonak* woman tells stories about life and death, ("My First Dead Person," "Mermaid," "Sulamita"), loss of a friend ("The Island of a Blonde"), and love and hate ("Inferno"). A few other women

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[294] She was very active (popular and respected) from 2005 till 2010, but then stopped writing.

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chose similar strategies: *ego_mudachka*, *Tjotya Faya*[295], *Mother Theresa,* and *Zoloto Ikov*[296] to name a few.

Unlike *Mandala*, whose character proved to be very successful (three out seven stories by women writers published in "The Very Best" rubric are written by her), *Nadyanya* chose to present herself as the "one of the boys" kind of girl. Her writing was filled with verbal obscenities and accounts of wild parties ("two bottles of moonshine is nothing! In the morning my breath could kill a crow") and anti-feminine sentiments ("I hate those damn bitches"). Interestingly, *Nadyanya's* strategy suffered a full fiasco. She was chased off of udaff.com and her account was removed.

Staraya Pelotka created another very successful character. Her *Real Padonki* woman is a "younger sister" kind of girl – she is "with the boys" meaning that she shares their beliefs and attitudes, but she is not trying to become one of them. Throughout all of her stories *Staraya Pelotka* maintains her identity as a woman, and her character wins the heart of Udav himself. Many of *Staraya Pelotka's* texts carry the sing "recommended by Udav" and two stories are published in "The Very Best" rubric. She also published one hard cover book – the collection of stories initially published on udaff.com.

A different strategy was chosen by *Mizhgona* and *Anna Arkan.* Their characters carry obvious elements of provocation. *Mizhgona's* portrays herself as a troubled young woman who drinks, takes drugs, has sex with multiple partners, and even is involved in a love affair with a "gustarbaiter" – a dark skinned immigrant from an Asian republic.

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[295] Aunt Faya

[296] Gold of the Incas

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While *Mizhgona's* stance of "I am a whore, and I know it" proved scandalous, but rather successful, *Anna Arkan* chose to tease padonki in a different way. She created a character of a "woman who keeps producing bad writing." For two years this woman kept posting obviously poorly written texts all of which received low rating and venomous criticism. At the same time, all of her texts solicited hundreds of commentaries. In her final text titled a "letter to udaff.com" *Anna Arkan* thanked the community for the material she had collected about them.

Gee (2007) considers this "in-between" identity to be simultaneously "the hardest identity to describe" and "the most important one" (p.50). He makes a very clear distinction between, "this is who *I* am, *James Paul Gee*": a man, a linguist, a writer, and now also a player. "This is *Arcanum* – the game *I* am playing," "and this is *Bead Bead* – the character through which I operate in this game." He says:

> A game like Arcanum allows me, the player, certain degrees of freedom (choices) in forming my *virtual character*[297] and developing *her* through the game. In my projective identity *I* worry about what sort of person *I* want *her* to be, what type of history *I* want *her* to have had by the time *I* am done playing the game (p. 50-51).

Every single phrase in the passage quoted above shows Gee's awareness that Bead Bead is *only* his virtual character. Pretending to be Bead Bead allows Gee to explore the life of a female elf, but *he* is not *her*. Gee (2007) admits that he wants his half-elf to "reflect [his] values," and thus has to "think reflectively and critically about

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[297] Here and further in this quotation *italics* is an added emphasis.

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them" (p. 51), but hever never loses awareness of the "in-between" space that separates him from his virtual identity. He never fully becomes Bead Bead.

The relationship between the "real world" padonki people and the identities they create on udaff.com is more complex. Some udaff.com writers also demonstrate awareness of the "in-between" identity. However, for many of padonki authors the border between "*I*" and "*my virtual character*" is fuzzy and at times non-existent. Many of udaff.com members (*Flud Vostochnosibirskij,*[298] *Maks aka Kondrat* and many others) view their *virtual identities* as essential part of their "real-world" lives and write essays reflecting on what it means *to be* a *Real Padonak* and what kinds of values, beliefs, behaviors, personal histories, and etc. are appropriate for the one who is trying to be a *Real Padonak*.

Some *padonki* writers also comment on the effect that *padonki Discourse* (especially the use of *Alabnskij* language) has on their real life identities. The link between language and identity has long been a popular topic. Gee (1999) present the relationship between language and identity as a non-stop '*who-doing-what*' process of not *being* but *becoming* someone – the 'kind of person' we want to be. *Who* in this case is "a socially situated identity, the 'kind of person' one is seeking to be and enact here and now," and *what* – "a socially situated activity that the utterance helps to constitute, an active social process implemented through language." Quite a few of Padonki writers acknowledge that the identities of *Real Padonki* which they created on udaff.com are

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[298] *Флуд Восточносибирский*, can be translated as *Flood From EastSiberia*

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"taking over" them and "breaking through" into real lives. *MGmike эМГэМайк*[299] (2009) in the following way describes his relationship with the virtual identity he has developed on udaff.com:

> I tried to be like them at first; tried to turn myself into an artistic soul, Michael, 39, a college graduate, divorced. But then *Mike* [Udaff.com identity of the author] would break through and with a single phrase in pure *Albansky* drive those ladies into a state of deep anxiety and irreversible brain damage.[300] (*MGmike эМГэМайк* 2009)

In the quote above, *MGmike эМГэМайк (*2009) presents his udaff.com identity almost as his true self. *Babik* (a successful lawyer) as well as *Udav* also admit that *Albanskij* has infiltrated their "normal world" communication. Other udaff.com members report similar experiences.

Finally, quite a few udaff.com members write about the identity of a *Real Padonak* to as their primary identity. *In-Kognito* (2003) and *cochise* (2003) in their texts dedicated to the loss of "true" meaning of *padonki culture* both choose the "I am a *Real Padonak*" stance. Addressing udaff.com community they use such phrases as "we as padonki" or "we consider ourselves Real Padonki."

From a wider perspective, udaff.com and the cultural model of a *Real Padonak* can be viewed as an invention based game. In was already established that the entire

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[299] Original spelling

[300] "Ну подыгрывал сначала, строил из себя эстэта, Михаил, 39 лет, образование высшее, разведен. Но потом вылезал Майк и одной фразой на чистейшем олbanском вводил даму в такой ступор, после которого та в ужасе бежала прочь от компа и с этого грёбанного сайта" (*MGmike эМГэМайк* 2009).

community of udaff.com is involved in the practice of being-and-becoming a *Real Padonak*, and this practice is based on invention. It was also proposed that each texts published on udaff.com becomes a contribution to this invention. In this game real life people have many choices to make. They can choose to describe their real life experiences to prove themselves as *Real Padonki,* but they can also experiment with new identities and experiences that in "real world" are beyond their reach. In much the same way James Paul Gee (2007) enjoyed the experience of having Bead Bead pickpocket because in real life he is a man and a scientist who does not engage in such activities. From this angel, *Real Padonak* as an invented character is very similar to *Bead-Bead,* a female elf avatar chosen by Gee (2007) as his identity in the world of *Arcanum.*

Another analogy is also possible. Hermann Hesse (2002) in his novel *The Glass Bead Game* describes the game that becomes a life choice for people who choose the brotherhood of players. The game becomes their life path and their identity. As was mentioned above, quite a few udaff.com members claim that their *Real Padonki* characters have become their true identities. Udav himself several times admitted that udaff.com has become his life.

It is not surprising that as a cultural model or an archetype of the *Real Padonak* is difficult to define. Be it a man or a women, a *Real Padonak* does not exist as one specific person or even as one specific literary character; his features, however, are undoubtedly present in every real life person who publishes on udaff.com as well as in every literary character portrayed in writing published on the website. As a literary character, *Real Padonak* should be viewed as an *archetype continuum*, with a *Real Padonak* as a free thinker on one end and a *Real Padonak* as a dirty drunken bum on the

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other. Both archetypes are present on udaff.com among fiction characters and real life members.

The capital D Discourse or *Real Padonki* is just as diverse and controversial as the cultural model and for this reason should be viewed as *multiglossia,* a mixture of countless lower case d discourse and capital D Discourses brought to this process of invention by udaff.com members. Gee (2005) suggest that discourses are constantly influencing and transforming each other. They merge, split, co-develop, agree or disagree with each other. From this point of view there is no contradiction in the fact that capital D Discourse of alcohol among Real Padonki includes glorification of drunkenness as well as serious warnings of the dangers of drinking. It is also "normal" that the cultural model of a *Real Padonak* as a brutal macho who forces his woman into oral sex co-exists with the model of a *Real Padonak* as a caring father.   All of these discourses and models are present in *Padonki Discourse* because they are present in the lives of people who are creating it.

The following chapter presents a brief concluding summary of my analysis of udaff.com and its practices. In this chapter I address the problem of udaff.com as a counter-culture website and propose the fourth identity: Real Padonki as *udaff.com writers* as the solution this issue. I also discuss the limitations of this study and outline a few directions for future research.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I provide a summary of my analysis of udaff.com and its practices. I also address the problem of connection between Udav's resource and the idea of counter culture and present the fourth identity: Real Padonki as *udaff.com writers* as a solution to this problem. Finally, I discuss limitation of this study and outline a few directions for future research.

In this dissertation I propose the view of udaff.com as a home base for a new layer of literature: Post-Soviet Internet based literature. This literature emerged as a result of the transformation that followed after the collapse of former Soviet Union. This change affected all key aspects of life (political system, economy, societal structure, and etc.) and brought about the new cultural models – new kinds of people. One of these cultural models - the one of a *Real Padonak,* became the foundation for practices and activities on udaff.com. In chapters two and three I show that udaff.com writing is based on the invention of a *Real Padonak* as a new archetype, a range of literary characters united by a set of common characteristics.

This new kind of literature is also based on a linguistic innovation – *Albanskij*, the language of *Real Padonki,* as well as a set of values, beliefs, practices, experiences, and behaviors (capital D Discourse) that together with *Albanskij* make up the "tool kit" of a *Real Padonak.* Finally, in the same way as dissident literature had to rely on slow and illegal *samizdat*, padonki literature utilizes the Internet as its major medium of publication.

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Besides serving as a kind of writer's workshop for the new kind of writers, udaff.com is a community of practice and a capital "D" Discourse of community. While writing is the main practice of this community, it is used as a tool of inventing the cultural model (or an archetype) of a *Real Padonak* and practicing the Discourse of *Real Padonki*. This model includes real life people who are practicing *being Real Padonki* by writing for udaff.com as well as fiction characters they create. This complexity can be better understood through the introduction of the "fourth" identity: *real life people* as Real Padonki *writers* with the emphasis on real life people in their role as writers.

Gee (2007) in his discussion of "*projective identity*" positions himself as a "player" who plays the game of *Arcanum* using Bead Bead (his virtual identity) as a tool that allows his to function in this game. Gee is given certain freedoms, but he is also conditioned (by the rules of the genre of video games) to operate within the limits of the world of *Arcanum* and the character of Bead Bead as they were created by some unknown designers. If viewed from this perspective, a *Real Padonak* is a writer (the first key practice of udaff.com) who uses their writing as a tool to practice being a *Real Padonak* (the second key practice) and produces pieces of creative writing that meet the standards of literary value established by the rest of the community.

In this sense Padonki function primarily as *writers*. This identity goes beyond the three identities (virtual, real and projective) discussed by Gee (2007) because here we step outside of the relationship between a "real life person" and their "virtual character." In Gee's terms, this identity would sound as James Paul Gee as a *player*.

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While many of "padonki" writers do show traits of awareness of this identity, not all of them fully develop it. Some traits of this awareness were demonstrated in chapter two through the examples of padonki criticisms to each other's writing.

This last identity of a Real Padonak as a *writer* who writes "the right kind of stories," uses the "right kind of language," and produces pieces of creative writing that meet standards established by the rest of the community becomes the identity that encompasses the other three identities. It becomes the foundation for the identities of Real Padonok – *virtual (literary) character*; Real Padonok – *a real person* as a virtual (literary) character, and Real Padonok – a real person *as a* virtual (literary) character discussed in the chapters three and four. This fourth identity, however, transcends the previous three identities because the emphasis is placed on the activity of *writing*, the act of "being and becoming" a *special kind of writer*, rather than the act of "being and becoming" a *Real Padonak*. Through conventional publishing activity[301] this identity also brings *Real Padonki* writers back in contact with the mainstream culture. When a writer publishes his or her book, they want this book to be read by others, to be understood and accepted by the widest possible audience. A publishing writer wants his audience to be able to relate to his characters and accept and recognize him or her as an author. More detailed examination of the fourth identity would require a study that will specifically focus on Internet based literature and its relationships with the conventional publishing practices.

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[301] Here I am referring to the list of books published by udaff.com writers through conventional publishing houses which I discussed in chapter two.

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The fourth identity proposed above is also the key to resolving the problem of the connection between *Real Padonki* and *counter-culture*. From the early days of udaff.com the activities and practices of the website have been connected to the concept of *counter-culture*. Many udaff.com members view the cultural model of a *Real Padonak* as well as *Albanskij* language *as* counter-culture. The question whether udaff.com *is* or *is not* true *counter-culture* (website) has been raised many times in *Questions and Answer* exchanges with Udav and in polemic essays published in sub-rubric *Polemics*. This question never gets fully resolved by padonki themselves; it is still hanging in the midst of rather contradictory thoughts and opinions.

The *Main Padonak* of udaff.com, Udav himself never gave a definitive answer to any of the questions about udaff.com *as* counter-culture or his views of the "true mission of the *Padonki Movement*." In his early interviews Udav leaves these kinds of questions unanswered: "As I said [many times] before – I don't even know what counter culture is. Leave me the fuck alone with this question[302]" (Udav, 2001-2005). However, in 2008, in his interview to an Internet newspaper Vzglyad[303] Udav describes udaff.com as " our counter culture website[304]" (Udav, 2008). In 2010 in another interview with one of udaff.com users Udav claims that he considers counterculture a myth rather than reality because "it is very difficult to live a truly countercultural style and stay within the limits

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[302]Еще раз повторюсь – я даже не знаю, что такое контркультура. Так что отъебитесь с этим вопросом.

[303] Взгляд, translates as "The View"

[304] Discussing the book *Kirza* recently published by one of udaff.com writers, Udav says: "… the book is written in a live, real language [that real life people use] with a good deal of obscenities. That's what makes it a perfect fit for our counter culture website" (Udav, 2008).

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of society[305]" (Udav, 2010). Below I quote an exchange from this interview. Here, the term *counter-culture* is connected to verbal obscenities, individualism, and homophobia - key features of *Real Padonki Discourse*:

> Q: So, then, what is counterculture? Even if it's a myth, then, how should it be understood? *fuckingcuntshit* or is it something else?
>
> Udav: It's counter-positioning of a personal self, the "I," to common cultural values. An open homophobia... And a lot of other fuckin shit.[306] (Udav, FS, 2010)

In the conclusion of that same interview Udav states that he does not believe in counter-culture and considers it useless and pointless for an individual to position himself against the rest of the society.

Responses of the rest of udaff.com community are just as conflicting. The dichotomy of "yes, we, as padonki and udaff.com, *are* counterculture" and "no, udaff.com is not (or used to be but is not anymore) counter-culture" is never resolved. *Maks aka kondrat* (2007), for example, states that Udaff.com is "the best counter culture website in the world,[307] … the bulwark of freedom … [where] freedom of thought and speech has become a religion"[308] (n.p.). Here, he obviously defines counter-culture

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[305] Q: КК - реальность или миф? A: Скорее всего - миф. Очень трудно жить действительно контркультурно и при этом оставаться в социуме (Udav, FC, 2010).

[306] Q: А что такое вообще КК? Пусть   даже и миф - что под этим понимают? хуйпесдаибаццо или что-то другое? – Udav: Противопоставление своего "я"   обычным культурным ценностям. Неприкрытая гомофобия. Да вообще дахуя чего" (Udav, FS, 2010).

[307] "лучший контркультурный сайт в мире"

[308] "Удафф.ком - это оплот свободы. Свобода слова и мысли стала на Ресурсе в ранг религии"

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primarily as a freedom of thought and expression. In 2008 *Maks aka Kondrat* expounds

on the meaning of counter-culture and its connection to *Padonki*. He writes:

> Counter-culture as a phenomenon has been around for many centuries. The
>
> opinion that it [counter-culture] emerged in the Internet is false. Internet is only a
>
> medium for spreading it [counter-culture]. Internet, however, is one of the key
>
> factors [that supported] fast development of counter-culture. … A clear definition
>
> of [the term] counter culture is yet to be developed, [as] even Udav admits that he
>
> does not know what counter-culture is (see Q&A 2004). […] First of all,
>
> counter-culture is a confrontation against [or "a dare of"] [your] time. Counter-
>
> culture – it's common sense. Counter-culture presupposes freedom and openness
>
> for future followers. A carrier of counter-culture (padonak) can be a mother-
>
> fucker, but at the same time he can be a deeply cultured person with strong
>
> morals. … […] counter-culture is most effective measure in strengthening the
>
> union of common sense and empty-headedness, which on the surface seems
>
> impossible.[309] (*Maks aka Kondrat* 2008)

Many *padonki* writers connect the origin of *true* counter-culture with early days

of the Internet as specifically website known as fuck.ru (e.g. *pOET* and *Bread of the*

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[309] Контркультура как явление существует уже много столетий. Мнение о том, что она появилась в интернете, ошибочно. Интернет это лишь средство для её распространения. Но также интернет является одним из факторов большого скачка КК. … Четкое определение КК еще предстоит выяснить, даже Удав признался, что не знает что такое контркультура (в ответах на вопросы за 2004г.). Но основные положения предельно ясные. Прежде всего контркультура - это вызов времени. Контркультура - это глас разума. Контркультура предполагает свободу и открытость для новых последователей. Носитель контркультуры (падонак) может быть распиздяем, но одновременно он может быть порядочным человеком с крепкими моральными принципами. Последнее понятно и так, но контркультура наиболее эффективно укрепляет союз разума и распиздяйства, который на первый взгляд невозможен" (*Maks aka Kondrat* 2008).

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Earth[310]). *Maks aka Kondrat,* however rejects this claim ("counter-culture as a phenomenon has been around for many centuries") and gives the Internet the role of not a source of counter-culture, but a medium through which counter-culture spreads. He also designates a padonak as a "carrier of counter culture" (2008).

It seems though, that throughout the entire dispute, the idea of counter-culture is inseparably connected to such concepts as "freedom of expression" and "protest (or rebellion) against the mainstream values." Both of these concepts are strongly connected to the use of *Albanskij* – the linguistic innovation based on intentional violation of conventions of grammar and spelling, and verbal obscenities. *Bread of the Earth (2003),* for example believes that verbal obscenity carries an important socio linguistic function: its shame based power to break (and expose) social taboos.

> Obscenity is just a form; if the society was ashamed of the Swahili language, [they] would be writing here in Swahili. Absence of taboos of any kind – this is what was in the foundation. The [web] site died, and it looks like counter culture died together with it [the website].[311] (2003)
>
> *Bread of the Earth* is in full agreement with Tertz (1978) and Niva (1978) (even Bakhtin (1994)) who viewed offensive art as a form of liberation and a beginning of a

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[310] Fuck.ru, a [web] site that tried to carry an impossible load. If you want to send us the photo of your wife in the moment of defecation or tell us what would be the best way to fuck the dead body of a female college freshman, you are welcome. … All dirt of society, all deeply hidden [psychological] neuroses, all deep inside [dirt] of over-moralized society was coming here [to Fuck.ru][310] (2003).

[311] Мат лишь форма, если бы общество стыдилось языка суахили, здесь бы писали на нем. Отсутствие любых запретов вот что было основой. Сайт развалился и КК похоже умерла тоже (Хлеб Земли, 2003).

'new art.' However, Strugatskij (a famous Russian-Soviet SiFi writer) in his interview with an udaff.com writer responds to the question about counter-culture with the metaphor of 'Bandar-logi' – monkeys who cannot create anything good, but can only ruin 'beautiful things' created by humans (*Sliff_ne_zoSSchitan,* 2012).

Many of udaff.com writers (*Avtogen*, *pOET, Rysakov,* and many others) directly connect the concept of counter-culture to the practices of writing and publishing texts that violate linguistic (use of *Albanskij*) and moral conventions (use of verbal obscenities, obscene themes). *Bread of the Earth,* however, states that this is *not* a true practice of counterculture. *Bread of the Earth* puts udaff.com in one row with other literary websites and says that *this* is *not* counterculture. He claims that "real" counter-culture existed only during the early days of the Internet on such websites as *fuck.ru* that propagated violation of *all* moral and aesthetic norms accepted in the society: "If you want to send us a photo of your wife taking shit or share a proper way to have sex with a dead body of a college freshman, welcome" (2003).

The answer to the problem of counter-culture mostly likely also lies in the fourth identity of a Real Padonak as a new kind of *writer*: a writer who is creating a new kind, a new layer of literature using new archetypes (the archetype continuum of a Real Padonak), a new language (*Albanskij*), and a new medium – the Internet. From this point of view, such features of padonki style of writing as intertextuality, emphasized cynicism, dark humor, "illiterate" *Albanskij* and emphasized use of obscenities make it a part of the continuum of culture, a new layer of culture, but not the denial of culture. As was pointed out in chapter two, the correct use of "illiterate" *Albanskij* requires firm knowledge of conventions of the Russian grammar and spelling. Intertextuality –

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multiple references to world literature, music, cinematography, visual art, philosophy, and sciences present in padonki writing also points at the continuity, the connectedness of padonki culture to the rest of the world culture.

This idea, in fact is expressed by quite a few padonki writers as well. *pOET* (2003), for example defines counter culture as a "vacuum that [still] needs to be filled" and claims that counterculture cannot be separated from "normal" culture (2003). The daring quality of "dark humor," is highly praised by Tertz (1978), while Bakhtin (1994) finds totally appropriate Rabelais' use of such themes as "(1) a series of the human body, in its anatomical and physiological aspects; … (4) drink and drunkenness series; (5) sexual series (copulation); (6) death series; (7) defecation series" in his (Rabelais') novels (p. 170).

Even padonki use of defecation themes is not as inappropriate as it seems. Shalamov (1989) in "New Prose" spends several pages discussing the significance of the process of defecation in the life of a GULAG prisoner and even develops an imaginary debate with Thomas More about "four basic feelings of joy" (Shalamov 1989, p 43). Other dissident writers such as Kersnovskaya (and many others) give significant attention to body based themes as well. An udaff.com writer Sliff_ne_zoSSchitan (2011) suggests that "true" counter-culture means writing about things as "they really are" and avoiding social compromises and "tolerance."

Verbal obscenities have long been considered an important component of the Russian language and literature. Galkovskij (1992) references Dostoyevskij's praise to the Russian obscene language (so called *mat* [mɑ:t]) and describes it as a "language in itself, [which is] made of two-three words and invented for drunken speech" (p. 233).

Zorin (1989) also addresses the importance of drunkenness and obscenity for Russian literature. It is quite possible that "obscene," body based themes might be unavoidable in any kind of literature due to a very simple fact that those topics are a part of human experience.

As early as in 2003 some padonki writers (for example *pOET,*[312] *In-Kognito, cochise*[313]) begin expressing concerns about the decline of udaff.com. *cochise,* for example, grieves over the 'golden days' of '*real* counter-culture' on udaff.com: the days of tough men, tough talk, and tough ways. *In-Kognito* also addresses the issue of rotation of people on udaff.com and claims that now when "all the good writers are gone" the quality of texts is going down. He even addresses Udav himself with a painful "Dima, do even fucken care??" question.

In 2011 *Sliff_ne_zoSSchitan* describes the 'early days' of counter culture as its 'golden age' when many truly talented *authors* contributed their texts[314] (2011). Once again, *Sliff_ne_zoSSchitan* connects *true* counter-culture to *authentic* literary work: the days of "talented authors" who "created interesting texts" (n.p.). *Sliff_ne_zoSSchitan* does not say when exactly the "golden age" of counter-culture was happening. Most likely he is referring to the years of *ru.net* (shortening for *Russian (Inter)net*): late 90-s – early 2000s, the years when the Internet already became more or less available to people

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[312] пOET

[313] Original spelling by the author

[314] "и творило, и писало в КК немало очень интересных авторов"

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in Russia but has not turned yet into a commercial tool. *Sliff_ne_zoSSchitan* connects wider availability of the Internet with disappearance of the *true* counter-culture. He writes:

> As time passed, counter culture became "popular" and more and more "by standers" joined in attracted by surface level attributes (such as "love of alcohol, 'illiterate' "albanskij language," never ending flow of obscenities and the like) and everything fell apart, [people started contributing] thoughtless texts, good authors got lost among them and eventually disappeared. (*Sliff_ne_zoSSchitan*, 2011)

In this paragraph *Sliff_ne_zoSSchitan* directly blames the decline of counter-culture on the fact that "it became popular" and attracted too many "by standers" – people who were attracted mainly by "surface attributes" such external "fluff" and "fake" characteristics as love of alcohol, twisted illiterate language, and obscenities. He also connects the decay of "true CC"[315] with the time when "good" writers "disappeared" from udaff.com.

In the chapter three I discuss the phenomenon of rotation of people on udaff.com. I also point out that the majority of writers who were active on Udav's resource when I first discovered it in 2004 eventually stopped contributing. Examination of writers' profiles shows that the majority of writers tend to contribute actively for three to five years (sometimes longer) but then leave the resource. Quite possibly *Sliff_ne_zoSSchitan*

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[315] Counter Culture

has a point. The very first *kreativ* was posted to udaff.com on December 21, 2000. At that time, very few people had access to the Internet. In fact, Internet access was guaranteed pretty much only through a work place. This unintended exclusiveness of access might explain relatively low number of texts published on udaff.com in earlier days as well as supposedly higher quality of those texts. In other words, in order to be a member of Udav's resource in early 2000s one *had* to be an educated professional with a stable job that provided unlimited access to the Internet. Those people most likely were the "independent thinking, cultured, literate intellectuals" presented as true *Real Padonki* in polemic essays published before 2010.

As the availability of the Internet grew, udaff.com members started bringing up the issues of "death of *true* udaff.com," "death of the *true counterculture*," and "death of a *Real Padonak*," in texts and commentaries. It is possible that wider availability of the Internet made Udav's resource more available as well. Exclusiveness of earlier times was gone. More people got attracted by the model of a *Real Padonak* and wanted to join the resource. It could be suggested that this popularization had an effect of a "buzz" word[316] – growing popularity at the price of the loss of "true meaning" behind the terms of *counter-culture* and *Real Padonak*. This popularization might have resulted in many of the "old guys," the true "gatekeepers" leaving udaff.com.

Gee (1991) in his definition of capital D Discourse says that "it is not individuals who speak and act, but rather that historically and socially defined Discourses speak to

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[316] This term was first introduced to me by Carol Edelsky who used it to describe how "true" meaning of bilingual education was lost when the concept of "bilingual education" gained popularity.

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each other through individuals" (p. 145). In case of Udav's resource that means that "people rotation" might have resulted in a significant qualitative change. New people bring to udaff.com new Discourses – ways of experiencing, thinking, and believing. Among other things, they bring in new understandings of what it means to be a *Real Padonak*, and thus, they transform the Discourse of *Real Padonki* and change the cultural model itself.

This tendency is also reflected in the phenomenon of topic rotation discussed in chapter two. From 2003 (the year this rubric was created) till 2014 the list of writers who contributed to this rubric changed at least three times. Significant changes in topics discussed are also evident. Slowly, internal udaff.com issues and philosophical debates about counter-culture and the true meaning of "padonki movement" disappeared giving way to the texts that focused primarily on international affairs. While these texts demonstrated the interest in and awareness of international politics among Real Padonki, they also largely expressed views and opinions that went in complete agreement with those presented through the official Russian mainstream media (anti-American; anti-Ukrainian; pro-Putin).

In 2014 events on Majdan square in Kiev (Ukraine) brought about very strong negative responses from Russians. Something about those responses sounded very familiar. Utter derogatoriness, disrespectful attitude towards protesters, and the Ukraine as a country flooded Russian Internet sites. Those views echoed Russian mass media, but they also echoed the opinions I had read in *Polit.sru* - the political debate rubric on udaff.com years ago. In an informal interview, Serhij Lep'yavko, an expert in Comparative History of Ukraine, suggested that udaff.com could be a part of Putin's

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propaganda program of "pynannya" (Lep'yavko's term which literally means kicking somebody with feet) implemented by Russia against the Ukraine (2014). Although Lep'yavko is not the first person who suggested Purtin's involvement with padonki, I consider this hypothesis implausible. However popular, political debate is among *padonki*, it has never been described as the key practice of the resource, and Udav stated many times that he will never "sell" political propaganda on his site.

At the same time, the irony is striking. The community that worships independent thinking and defies mainstream culture in reality shares political views promoted through Mass Media. This controversy gets resolved if we accept the view of udaff.com as multiglossia of Discourses which was proposed earlier. Then, pro-Putin and anti-Ukrainian Discourses become logical continuation of the Discourse of the Lost Empire – the old days when Ukraine was "one with Russia" and the USA was the "probable enemy." From this perspective, udaff.com also becomes a representation, a mirror that reflects the values, beliefs, and attitudes that circulate in contemporary Russian society. In is natural then, that the 'big' D Discourse of *Real Padonki* carries anti-Ukrainian and anti-American discourses because these discourses exist in Russia today.

In the final few paragraphs I will address the significance of my study, point out its limitations, and outline a few directions for further research. In this dissertation I am drawing attention to the new developments in the fields of language and literature in Post-soviet Russia. As a descriptive analysis of an Internet community of creative writers, the study of udaff.com increases our understanding of the practices of reading and writing in the virtual word. This dissertation also documents a creation of a new layer of Russian language literature and suggests the view of cyclical development of

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literature. This view can be expressed in the following algorithm: whenever a society goes through a significant transformation accompanied by technological advancements, literature created by this society will develop a new form. This new form, or a new layer, or a new cycle of literature will incorporate forms of linguistic innovation (*Albanskij*); new archetypes (*Real Padonak* as an archetype continuum) will be developed, and finally, this literature will utilize technological advancements and create a new medium of publication.

As an example of exploratory research, this study definitely has its limitations. As most exploratory studies, this dissertation does not have a clearly defined problem; rather, it begins with an open ended question and intends to produce a descriptive analysis of the phenomenon in question. Another limitation comes from the absence of a pre-stablished methodology. Consequently, research design, data collection, and system of codes had to be invented and modified in the course of the study. As an interpretive analysis, this study also carries a significant amount of subjectivity[317]. In Rosenblatt's words, this dissertation is based on the transaction that happens between a reader and a text, where the researcher functions as the reader and the phenomenon being studied (in this case udaff.com) is the text being read and interpreted. Consequently, the result of interpretation greatly depends on who the reader is and what kind of prior knowledge and experiences the reader brings to the moment of transaction (Rosenblatt, 1978).

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[317] This problem surfaced during the oral defense. James Paul Gee's interpretation of some of the terms and descriptions I used (male chauvinistic Discourse of *Real Padonki*) differed significantly from my understanding.

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Another issue stems from the fact that this study combines several methodologies: exploratory research, Internet ethnography, and grounded theory; however, it also carries elements of literary theory, and discourse analysis. This issue directly connects to the challenge of developing systematic classifications and codes. Exploratory nature of this study required me to keep my focus on the big picture and develop a wide panoramic view of the phenomenon which I have been studying. It limited my ability to provide detailed analysis of "smaller" aspects of the phenomenon of *Padonki*. Below I will list a few of these aspects as directions for future research.

The directions for future research are best presented in a form of "layers," where each layer also encompasses a field of study and methodology. The first layer and direction would be to take a closer look at *Albanskij* as a linguistic innovation. On the surface *Albanskij* is based on violation of standard rules of the Russian spelling; at the same time, the majority of those violations are rule governed.[318] Revealing the most common patterns of violations used in *Albanskij* and possibly discovering the rules that cannot be violated would make a very interesting study. This study, would contribute significantly to our understanding of the role of the Internet in de-standardization of grammars; it might also shift the view of grammars as not rule based but rather pattern

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[318] The following violations seem to be most common: while */a/* is written instead of required */o/* as in, *gala̠v*A *balit* (correct *golov*A *bolit*); the rule also gets violated in the opposite direction: /**a**/ is replaced with an /**o**/. *Albanskij* users also play with replacing */i/* with */e/* and /*e*/ with /*i*/ as in *vchi̠ra* (correct *vchera*[318]). A very popular violation is putting a capitalized grapheme */ы/* (it represents a highly reduced vowel) after fricatives */sh/* and */zh/*. All of these violations are traditionally considered notorious examples of 'uneducated spellers.' When it comes to consonants, padonki usually play with interchanging voiced and voiceless pairs of consonants. For example, in the noun /вчи̠ра/, correct as /вчера/, which can be transliterated in Latin alphabet as /*vchira*/ and /*vchera*/ respectfully, the grapheme /в/ which in Russian stands for a voiced labiodental fricative will be replaced with its voiceless counterpart /ф/; in the names of days of week Monday /ПонедельничеГ/ and Tuesday/ВторничеГ/, both word final voiceless velar plosives /k/ are replaced with graphemes that represent their voiced counterparts.

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based. This study would also improve our understanding of language change as a cycle, specifically the negative cycles addressed by Elly van Gelderen (2007, 2008, 2010, 2011).

The next layer would be on the level of the discourse analysis. Here the focus should be first of all on the communicative style practiced by *Real Padonki*. The term "communicative style" is used here to describe how people communicate with each other on udaff.com, including words that are used to address fellow users (men or women), greetings, ways to initiate an exchange in commentaries, and ways to respond when exchange has been initiated. Here the view of 'face-wants' presented by of Brown and Levinson (1987) would be most instrumental. *Real Padonki* seem to be striving to maintain negative face at all costs. The discussions that develop in "commentaries" after each published text resemble often resemble "fights without rules." Thus, it will be very interesting to see if cases of "positive-face" can be found. It will also be interesting to look closer at patterns of "face-threats" and "politeness" present in male-to-male, versus male-to-female, versus female –to –female interactions. On the level of capital D Discourse I would like to take a closer look at Padonki Discourses of "good writing" (it was briefly addressed in chapter two) and "international politics.

On the layer of literary theory it would be interesting to run a comparative study of udaff.com with other Russian and English language websites dedicated to practices of creative writing. This level would also allow for closer look at the genres used by padonki writers as well as such practices as intertextuality and creative use of obscenities in prose and poetry.

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Finally, the level of Internet ethnography would allow studying the history of the phenomenon of counter-culture on *ru.net*: the early days of "everything goes" that are to this day referred to by some udaff.com users as "the days of *real counter-culture*." More topics for research will most definitely be discovered.

As a final word I would like to state that this study, while not perfect (no exploratory research can be perfect due its nature) has made several contributions: first of all, it proposes the view of udaff.com as a new kind of literature – Post-Soviet Internet based literature and thus opens the discussion about literary cycles and the role of the Internet as a publishing medium. It also examines the cultural model of a *Real Padonak* from several perspectives; *Real Padonki* as real life people – the writers who publish on udaff.com; a *Real Padonak* as a literary character (an archetype continuum), and a *Real Padonak* as multiglossia of capital D Discourses which represent beliefs, attitudes, values, norms and practices present in contemporary Russian society. While this study does not give one definitive answer to one definitive question, it can serve as a foundation for future research in several fields.

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