

Title: Spontaneity and Negativity in the Work of Viktor Pelevin  
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Abstract:

The leading contemporary Russian writer conceives literature and cognitive labor along the lines of symbolic resistance to ideological authority. In this, he relies on the work of the Soviet thinker Boris Porshnev, the theorist of human negative energy who was much obliged to Bakunin. While spontaneity remains a central issue for Pelevin as well, he is critical of naive spontaneous protest characteristic of contemporary social movement. The typical cyberpunk dilemma of programming and revolt is resolved by Pelevin, like later in *Westworld*, to the credit of the rebellious mechanisms. The talk will explore the political message of Pelevin's prose and of the cyberpunk imagination in general.