On the Satirical Counter-Discourse of *Processed Cheese*

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1. Introduction and theoretical framework

The post-Soviet period presents an illuminating picture of competition taking place between different public discourses for meaning construction and articulation. It has been observed that after an initial period when the public narrative of the nation experienced fragmentation, and, using Pierre Bourdieu's term, went through a period of heterodoxy[1] during the last decade—roughly corresponding with the presidency of Vladimir Putin—it has displayed the growing characteristics of orthodoxy[2], with its centrally produced "common sense" meanings and assumptions.[3]

This article focuses on contemporary radio satire and on the language tools that it uses in order to perform the role of the counter-discourse, in other words, to produce meanings that can counteract the dominant discourse in contemporary Russia by contesting its ways of expression. In particular, it explores the various patterns of satirical construction based on the interplay of the mainstream and the alternative frames of knowledge and beliefs.

The analysis of satirical counter-discourse is informed by a complex theoretical framework combining the socio-cognitive approaches to discourse, developed in particular by Pierre Bourdieu, Teun van Dijk, and Richard Terdiman, and Paul Simpson's theory of satire as a cognitive, stylistic, and discursive phenomenon. The data analysed comprise of a corpus of the satirical programme *Plavlennyi syrok* ('*Processed Cheese*') broadcast on the *Ekho Moskvy* radio channel. In particular, the corpus includes five months of programme transcripts – February, March, June, October, and November 2007, twenty thirty-minute texts in total. A programme mainly authored and performed by Viktor Shenderovich, it has other contributors and participating

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[1] Bourdieu, Pierre *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge University Press, 1977. According to the scholar, heterodoxy means "reference to the choice," the existence of competing *possibles*' including the critique of the established order (p.169).

[2] By orthodoxy, Bourdieu means the discourse that seeks to re-establish meanings that facilitate the submission of people to the established order. *Language and Symbolic Power*, 1991, pp. 131-132.

[3] Ryazanova-Clarke, Lara "The Crystallization of Structures": Linguistic Culture in Putin's Russia, Ingunn Lunde and Tine Roesen (eds.) *Landslide of the Norm: Language Culture in Post-Soviet Russia*. Bergen: Slavica Bergensia, 2006, pp.31-63; Ryazanova-Clarke, Lara "Re-creation of the Nation: Orthodox and Heterodox Discourses in Post-Soviet Russia," *Scando-Slavica*, 2008 (in press).

voices. The major part, which constitutes the material for this article, is the satirical monologue read by Shenderovich. In addition, the programme has a female voice reading items of news usually as quotes or summaries, which function as a commentary to the satirical narrative; satirical reports from "the newspapers of the future" that were provided by the agency called "With a pretence of sincerity." Each issue of the programme also features a topical poem by the "truth-hacker" poet Igor Irten'ev and ends with stylized couplets written by Sergei Plotov and Vadim Zhuk, and sung by two actors, Sergei Losev and Boris Smolkin.[4]

Viktor Shenderovich is widely known in Russia as a writer, poet, journalist and a political activist whom Dmitry Bykov characterised as having "an irreproachable moral compass."[5] Shenderovich's name is inseparable from the notion of Russian post-communist satire. *Plavnennyi syrok*, which has been on the air since 2003, succeeded a number of humorous and satirical television shows; in the author's own words, "a game on the same field of the socio-political commentary on life."[6] Over time, as the freedom of television broadcasting became more constrained by the authorities, Shenderovich's shows were either closed down or forced off the existing channels.

Viktor Shenderovich came into prominence as a script writer and presenter of the extremely popular NTV channel puppet show *Kukly* "Puppets" (1994-2000), a political satire modeled after the British *Spitting Image*. *Kukly* was followed by *Itogo* "In total" (1997-2002). In that period, NTV was the flagship of Russian journalism, standing out for its quality of programming, independence of opinion and a talented creative team. When the channel ceased to exist in its previous form, having been taken over in April 2001 by the Gazprom state company, Shenderovich was one of a group of journalists who left the channel in protest. *Itogo* continued on TV-6, the channel owned by Boris Berezovsky, to which, on his invitation, the team of rebel journalists transferred. After it was closed down in January 2002, programmes *Pomekhi v efire* "Disturbances on Air" (2002) and *Besplatnyi syr* "Free Cheese" (2003) were made on yet another short-lived liberal station, TVS[7]. After the closure of TVS, the satirist moved to radio. In addition to working for the *Ekho Moskvy* channel, he has been presenting the programme *Vse svobodny*, "All are Free," on Radio Liberty. As a political figure, Viktor Shenderovich stood in 2005 as an independent candidate for the Duma

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[4] URL: http://www.echo.msk.ru/blog/video/510682-echo/. Accessed: 29.4.2008.

[5] Bykov, D. "Golubye glaza diktatury," *Sobesednik*, 15.2.2001

[6] Shenderovich, V. "Zhizn' prekratila techenie svoe." Interview given on *Ekho Moskvy*, 12.1.2002. URL: http://www.shender.ru/about/text/?.file=6. Accessed: 3.1.2008

[7] For more details, see Shenderovich, V. "Zhizn' prekratila techenie svoe." Interview on *Ekho Moskvy*, 12.1.2002. URL: http://www.shender.ru/about/text/?.file=6. Accessed: 3.1.2008; Shenderovich, V. *Zdes' bylo NTV, TV-6, TVS i drugie istorii.* Zakharov: 2004.

elections, but lost the seat.[8] A member of the *2008 Free Choice Committee* and other political groups, he has written a number of political articles, has contributed to the online independent analytical daily *Ezhednevnyi Zhurnal,* and has taken part in activities organized by the coalition *The Other Russia.*[9]

As a piece of journalism, *Plavnennyi syrok* is rooted in the sprightly tradition of the period of the "fourth estate" which emerged out of the spirit of Mikhail Gorbachev's *perestroika.* Following the landmark Soviet press law of June 1990, it enjoyed about a decade of unprecedented freedom from censorship, and was held in high regard by the public.[10] All about the programme: the author, the genre and the playful echo of the previous titles evoke a sense of heritage from the subversive ironic post-modern worldview, which ruled over the early post-Soviet period and encompassed "irony over ideology, not only the ruling ideology, but ideology in general."[11] Proving the Bakhtinian maxim that laughter is an essential ingredient of a society's parting with the past, the ironic worldview was instrumental for the language change away from the authoritative discourse[12] that had dominated the Soviet public domain, and to the post-Soviet language liberalisation. Irony, often coached in the innovatively used language of the margins, such as the low registers, criminal slang or obscenities, was embraced by the Post-Soviet discourse of heterodoxy.

The next political period seemed to have less interest in political irony and satire. Characterised by the emergence of the institutionalised orthodoxy, it had Shenderovich's programmes expunged from the channels of Russian television—and the polyphonic language of irony and choice shifted away from the public sphere. As Enright aptly put it, "during the revolutionary struggle, irony is made welcome for its thrusts... Once the revolution is in the saddle, irony gets a prompt and dishonourable discharge."[13] Quoting стабильность as its key word, the dominant discourse of Putin's regime aimed at establishing a sustained stability of the new status quo, in Bourdieu's term, the doxa, whose meanings tend to employ the standard non-ironic language.[14]

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[8] Shenderovich, V. *Nedodumets*. 2006.

[9] Shenderovich, V. *Monolog s vlast'iu*. Sankt-Peterburg: Amfora, 2007.

[10] Belin, Laura. "The Russian Media in the 1990s." Rick Fawn and Stephen White, *Russia after Communism*. Frank Cass: 2002, pp. 139-160.

[11] Epstein, Mikhail. "Postmodernism, Communism, and Sots-Art," Balina, Marina, et al., *Endquote: Sots-Art Literature and Soviet Grand Style*. Evaston: Northwestern University Press, 2000, p.10.

[12] Yurchak, Alexei. *Everything Was Forever until it was no More*. Harvard U.P.: 2006.

[13] Enright D. J. *The Alluring Problem: An Essay on Irony*. Oxford University Press, 1986: 108-9.

[14] On language debates under Putin including national campaigns for the purification of Russian and return to the use of standard language in public speech, see Gorham, Michael,

For political satire, the loss of television space was a symbolic mark of marginalization. This entailed a shift in Shenderovich's satirical language. Gone was the lighter, brighter humour of the *Kukly* period that according to Roman Arbitman evoked a "sunny" feeling and a sense of harmony and which in Shenderovich's own words was "new and jolly activity":

> …нет его в рассказе отчаяния и чувства свинцовой безнадеги. Все-таки преобладают хмельное ощущение радости от сделанного, солнечное чувство гармонии и некоего даже умиротворения («Мне и моим товарищам повезло: мы приложили руку к новому и веселому делу»).[15]

The "sunny" programmes of the 1990s in which President El'tsin was portrayed as a silly but almost lovable folk dunce—дед[16]—had given way to a harsher, sharper satire of "virulent anger"[17] with the overtones of discontent and symbolic resistance resembling the oppositional counter-discourse of the dissident counter-culture. This might explain why Shenderovich spoke about the dynamics of the titles of his programmes from *Free Cheese* to *Processed Cheese* as degradation, meaning the simplification, the straightforwardness of the satirical position: "What is going on is degradation, or 'democratization', which is more or less the same thing. What can be more democratic than the processed cheese?"[18]

Considering the above context, the notion of counter-discourse developed by Richard Terdiman seems to be suitable to define the subversive and oppositional thrust in *Plavnennyi syrok*. Terdiman considers counter-discourse to be an alternative to the absorptive capacity of the established discourses producing the dominant depiction of the world.[19] A mode of resistance, satirical counter-discourse is dialogical and partly reflects its dominant counterpart. As Linda Hutcheon states, oppositional satire is endowed by communicative dynamics, which "comes into being in the relations between meanings, but also between people and utterances and sometimes between intentions and interpretations."[20]

As any counter-discourse, *Plavnennyi syrok* demonstrates a high capacity for creating a social solidarity mechanism that helps to organise and

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"Language Culture and National Identity in Post-Soviet Russia," in Lunde, I. and T. Roesen, 2006, pp.18-30; Ryazanova-Clarke, Lara "The Crystallization of Structures."

[15] Arbitman, R. "Est' li zhizn' posle TV," *Vzgliad*, 26.3.2006.

[16] Shenderovich, V. *Zdes' bylo NTV*, p.2.

[17] Terdiman, Richard *Discourse/counter-discourse. The Theory and Practice of Symbolic Resistance in the Nineteenth Century France*. Ithaca, N.Y. and London: Cornell University Press, 1985, p.68.

[18] URL: http://www.echo.msk.ru/blog/video/510682-echo/. Accessed: 29-4-08.

[19] Terdiman, R. *Discourse/counter-discourse*, pp. 12-13.

[20] Hutcheon, Linda, *Irony's Edge: The Theory and Politics of Irony*. London: Routledge, 1994.

sustain the oppositional discursive community[21] able to share the alternative meanings created in the programme. According to Simpson, it is a triadic structure of satire comprising of the satirist, the satiree (or addressee) and the target, or the object of satire, that ensures the capability of the satirical discourse for building an oppositional community.[22] By manipulating the distance between the satirist and satiree, the counter-discourse may affect the level of solidarity in the discursive community. Indeed, *Plavnennyi syrok* experimented with distance reduction techniques on many occasions. One such attempt took place throughout the summer of 2007, when the programme format was changed to part satirical narrative, part political phone-in. The result was mixed: although the majority of the audience shared the counter-discursive code, they could not fit into the satirical framework. Even when they tried, they failed to match the wit of the scripted part, so the phone-in part sounded altogether flat, clumsy and incoherent with the rest of *Plavnennyi syrok*. The changed framework also revealed the polarised addressee. Apart from asking relevant questions, a number of the calling members who felt they belonged to the counter-discursive community simply expressed admiration for and solidarity with Shenderovich's position. Alternatively, those sharing values of the dominant discursive community called to express their resentment towards the presenter and often insulted him using anti-Semitic rhetoric, for example, advising him as a Jew to leave Russia, which they claimed he did not love, and go to Israel. Among numerous anonymous callers were those who used extremely offensive and threatening language, such as: Беснуешься, жидяра! Недолго осталось.[23] Perhaps these incongruities were taken into consideration, when after a relatively short period, the programme's format was changed back to the original.

Another opportunity to play with the distance between the participants of the satirical triangle was taken in June 2007, when Viktor Shenderovich used the programme as a platform for direct political declarations on the part of the oppositional movements:

> По поводу того, что будет, если оппозиция не победит на выборах, что скорее всего, потому что скорее всего никаких нормальных выборов, собственно, и не будет, значит, мы остаемся на третий год уже, а не на второй. Значит, будем *дальше пытаться посильными* способами объясняться с собственным народом. *Я говорю сейчас немножко как бы от лица оппозиции*. Потому что когда общественность поймет, что это ей нужно, то *власть сменится.*

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[21] Hutcheon, Linda, *Irony's Edge*, p. 91

[22] Simpson, Paul *On the Discourse of Satire*, 2003, p.86.

[23] *Plavlennyi syrok*, 9.6. 2007. http://www.echo.msk.ru/programs/plsyrok/. Accessed: 15-12-08.

> Когда общественность не понимает, что это ей нужно, власть остается.[24]

On June 11 2007, he called upon the listeners to take part in the Moscow March of Discontent, and used the programme as an opportunity to report in the style of non-satirical journalism on another march, in Nizhnii Novgorod:

> СМИ обращают внимание на демонстративную жесткость, с которой был подавлен нижегородский Марш несогласных. Задержано и избито больше двухсот человек, в том числе журналисты.[25]

  Such departures from the regular format show that some inherent contradiction exists in the satirical counter-discursive structure whereby in order to maximise solidarity, the satirical triangle can be manipulated only to a limited degree if it is to remain within the boundaries of the genre.

Apart from the structure of participants, the ability of satire to produce counter-discourses lies in the oppositional character of the language mechanism employed in its production. Hutcheon categorises satire as the oppositional type of irony, whose central function is corrective, "where there is a set of values that you are correcting toward."[26] Many authors writing on satire stress its oppositional character, or in Simpson's words, its "binary conceptualisation."[27] Within the linguistic views on satire, its oppositional value has been reflected in the cognitive and pragmatic theories of humour, such as the Semantic Script Theory of Humour (SSTH)[28] and the General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH)[29]. Both theories propose a semantic conflict and incongruity of the two scripts to be the main language mechanism of satirical humour. According to Attardo, the script is a knowledge structure, which is an expectation-based store of stereotypical situations, whereas the opposition between the two partially overlapping scripts leads to the stage of realisation of incongruity comprising the hub of the joke text, and finally, to the resolution stage, amounting to a switch between the scripts.

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[24] Ibid.

[25] *Plavlennyi syrok*, 31.3. 2007.

[26] Hutcheon, L. *Irony's Edge*, p.52.

[27] Simpson, P. *On the Discourse of Satire*, p.96.

[28] Raskin, V. *Semantic Mechanisms of Verbal Humour*. Dordrecht: Reidel, 1985.

[29] Attardo, S., Raskin, V. "Script Theory Revis(it)ed: Joke Similarity and Joke Representation Model," *Humor: the International Journal of Humor Research*, 4 (304), pp.293-347; Attardo, S. *Humorous Texts: A Semantic and Pragmatic Analysis*. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter. 2001.

[29] See Fairclough, N. *Language and Power*. London: Longman, 1989, p. 158.

Paul Simpson approaches satire as a discursive practice. He builds on Attardo and Raskin's model and suggests two major categories of satirical production: the *prime* and *dialectic* elements and corresponding to those, the *echoic* and the *oppositional* discursive modes. According to his model, the *echoic* stage in the satirical construction activates, or echoes some other discursive event, which may be "another text, genre, dialect, register or even another discursive practice."[30] The *echoic* mode operates as a kind of textual monitoring by which one particular contextual script, or in Simpson's terms, frame, becomes the focus of attention for the audience, reader or listener. The essence of the *prime* element is therefore the interdiscursive mediation. The *oppositional* mode is, on the contrary, text-internal and intra-discursive, as it encapsulates the interpretative element. It is the mediation within the *echoic* mode, the manipulation of its discursive material that, according to Simpson, produces frame shifting leading to the final satirical resolution.[31] Our determination "not to admit contradictions" inherent in the text[32] thus lies at the root of the mechanism that allows the oppositional thrust of satire to transform into a palpable "new point of view."

In my analysis of the satirical counter-discourse of *Plavlennyi syrok* I am following Simpson's discursive view on satire as well as his two-stage model. By looking at Shenderovich's satirical production from the premise of his theoretical framework, I intend to further develop this approach and outline the major patterns of the model relevant to the production of alternative meanings in contemporary Russian political satire.

2. *Plavlennyi syrok*: analysis and discussion

Patterns of the counter-discursive construction
Examination of the discursive corpus of *Plavnennyi Syrok* reveals that Shenderovich cleverly uses the ability of language to create different discursive domains that relate to different knowledge frames. His two-part satirical formulas include the *prime* and the *oppositional* modes in which the frames are both blended and contrasted in order to produce new, alternative meanings. In the remainder of the article, a number of recurring patterns in this dynamics between the *prime* and the *oppositional* modes specific for *Plavnennyi Syrok* are identified, categorised and illustrated.

Referential prime pattern

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[30] Simpson, P. *On the Discourse of Satire*, p.89.

[31] Ibid, p.96.

[32] Popper, K. *Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge*. London: Routledge, 1963, p.317.

Shenderovich's satire is regularly produced on the basis of what I will call here the *referential* type of prime. This pattern relies on the *echoic* mode that is minimal, as it usually evokes a well-known episodic or personal target of satire,[33] a target that needs no introductory narrative. Shenderovich relies on the "pre-text" knowledge frames connected with the particular person or event widely known on the Russian political scene. In (1), for example, he refers to such a "pre-text" frame which relates the common knowledge among Russians of the infamous episode of Putin's interview on the American *Larry King Live* programme[34] when, in an answer to King's question about the tragedy with the "Kursk" submarine in August 2000, the President simply uttered: Она утонула ("It sank"). The satirist makes use not only of the listeners' awareness of Putin's words per se, but also of the knowledge of the controversy that his response in relation to the national tragedy produced and the emotive and the attitudinal components in their knowledge frame.

> (1) Ну, а главное умение *для работы* «представителем Кремля» — во все времена—умение не краснеть. Их там так и отбирают в отделе кадров. Соврал— покраснел—или глаза отвел от неловкости—все, профнепригодность! Равнение на президента! «*Она утонула*»—и светлый взгляд на собеседника…[35]

Viktor Shenderovich's use of the contentious phrase in the prime mode seems to be sufficient to activate all the components of the above frame which, when transposed into the oppositional mode, produces meanings of insincerity and shamelessness of power.

Many instances of the *Plavnennyi Syrok* satire based on the *referential* prime demonstrate a tendency for producing relatively stable and frequently occurring frames. Among the mechanisms, which Viktor Shenderovich seems to favour for coding linguistically the long-term attitudes of his counter-discursive community towards a particular person or event, are metaphors and metaphorical blends.[36] In *Plavlennyi syrok*, they regularly perform the function of counter-discursive cohesion, both locally, within a given programme, as well as globally, between different shows.

The programme provides multiple examples of satirical metaphors triggered by the name of President Putin. A flurry of metaphorical activity in the oppositional mode linked with this referential prime includes formulas based on the conceptual connection PUTIN IS THE SUN (2-3)

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[33] Simpson, 2003, p. 71.

[34] The interview was aired on September 8, 2000, on CNN.

[35] *Plavlennyi syrok*, 10.2.2007.

[36] On metaphorical blends and their distinction from conceptual metaphors see: Grady, J. et al. "Blending and Metaphor," Gibbs R and Steen, G. (eds.) *Metaphor in Cognitive Linguistics*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1997, pp.101-123.

(2) Целый Путин, *солнце наше незакатное*, легким манием руки двигающий историю—вдруг сядет в кадр, без Кати с Сережей, один-одинешенек, со злым чужим дядей? А там ведь небось и вопросы заранее не отобраны…[37];

(3) … Удивительный все-таки человек Владимир Путин! Даже не человек—*удивительное явление природы*, которым, *как солнцем, освещено все*, что ни есть на российской земле. Список частных лиц и организаций, выражающих *этому светилу* свой восторг и поддержку, и способы этой поддержки продолжают поражать воображение.[38]

The *echoic* modes in (2) and (3) evoke the "pre-text" referential knowledge frame associated with the target, i.e., Vladimir Putin. The oppositional mode is responsible for production of the alterative knowledge structured in this case by metaphorical mappings of the key meanings between the domains of ПУТИН and СОЛНЦЕ. The elaborations of the metaphor in the expressions солнце незакатное—удивительное явление природы—освещает—светило organise the counter-discursive cohesion backed by a stable oppositional frame. The knowledge in the *echoic* phase in (2) and (3) absorbs episodes of uncritical, sycophantic adoration for the President, the atmosphere that according to Shenderovich, is characteristic of the dominant discursive practices. He creates a metaphorical blend which contains a shared generic space linked by the positively evaluated semantic characteristics of "prominence" and "centrality" to both the President and the sun in the sky. The oppositional thrust is derived from hyperbolization of the core meanings, however the total metaphorical blend is more complex and is produced by multiple input spaces. To list them, one space for example, brings about the archaic medieval senses and overtones of the sun as a symbol of royal privilege (cf., король-солнце as a traditional reference to the French king Louis XIV, *Le Roi Soleil*, or a Russian invocation of the parallel between Prince Igor and the sun in the *Tale of Prince Igor's Campaign*[39]). The frame of "archaic royalty" produces material for an oppositional twist by investing the blend with semantic characteristics "antiquated," "pompous," "out-of touch," and "surrounded by a retinue of flatterers," that acquire salience in the frame.

A further layer of associations is linked with the input space connected with the knowledge of the Stalin era and possibly prompted by the recent film by Nikita Mikhalkov *Утомленные солнцем* ("Burned by the Sun") in which the image of the sun is used—not without irony—as a complex metaphoric

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[37] *Plavlennyi syrok*, 3.11.2007

[38] *Plavlennyi syrok*, 24.3.2007

[39] Cf.: Солце светится на небесе – Игорь князь в Русской земли. Adrianova-Perets, V. (ed.) *Slovo o Polku Igoreve*. Moskva-Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1950, p.30.

representation of Stalin and Stalinism.[40] This input frame maps onto the oppositional mode the salient meanings of danger connected to the personality cult and undemocratic principles of rule.

The expression солнце наше незакатное as an extension of PUTIN IS THE SUN metaphor, brings into the blend yet another knowledge frame—that of Pushkin, for which Russian counter-culture traditionally allocates an ironic niche.[41] In (2) and similar examples, the oppositional discourse intertextually appropriates and deconstructs the phrase солнце нашей поэзии закатилось, famously written by Vasilii Zhukovskii on Pushkin's death. Shenderovich's input of the PUSHKIN frame into the blend causes the reversal of the frame: the pun-like anaphoric similarity between the names of Putin and Pushkin cause a satirical twist, while the verb закатилось is reversed to its opposite through the lexical unit незакатное. The satirist's use of anaphora produces the sense that Putin is someone who on the one hand cannot quite reach the name—and therefore the status—of the Russian cultural icon while on the other hand, has been unnecessarily permanent on the Russian horizon, in contrast to the tragically short life of Pushkin.

To add to the complexity of the input meanings, the metaphorical satirical blend of (2) and (3) is additionally invested by the tenor clash between the bookish register associated with the earlier mentioned input spaces of солнце and the low colloquial and prototypically ironic phrase солнце мое, наше[42]. The familiarity connected with this expression contributes to yet another heretical, subversive marker in the counter-discourse production.

Thus, a complex metaphorical blend proves to be a prominent strategy that Viktor Shenderovich uses within the referential prime pattern for the production in the counter-discursive "new vision" of the conceptual integrative frame.

The extended metaphor: *солнце-подсолнух*

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[40] Non-ironic references to Stalin as the sun were usual during the time of the cult of personality, which can be observed for example, in Evgeniia Ginzburg's *Journey into the Whirlwind*: И только в 1939 году, уже в колымском этапе, выяснилось, что Ольга боготворит Сталина, несмотря ни на что, и что в этой самой ярославской одиночке она написала ему заявление в стихах , которое начиналось так: "Сталин, *солнце мое* золотое, если б даже ждала меня смерть, я хочу лепестком на дороге, на дороге страны умереть." (1990)

[41] Sandler, Stephanie, *Commemorating Pushkin: Russia's Myth of a National Poet*. Stanford University Press, 2004, p.301; Adams, Bruce, *Tiny Revolutions in Russia: Twentieth Century Soviet and Russian history in Anecdotes*. London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005, pp. 79-80.

[42] Cf. for example: *Любила завить горе веревочкой, тряхнуть стариной и гульнуть так гульнуть с театральной братией какой-нибудь проезжей белореченской или гомельской труппы: "Федька, солнце мое, совсем ты стал лысый!"* (Gandlevskii, Нрзб, *Знамя*, 2002).

Conceptual metaphors exist in hierarchies and their linguistic representations are called upon when a new item of experience needs to be comprehended and connected to the previous ones.[43] Many instances of the oppositional discourse of *Plavnennyi Syrok* hinge on such hierarchies forming a complex system of inter-connected metaphors, or *megametaphors,* which condense the oppositional gist of the message.[44] In (4), Shenderovich extends the sun metaphor and elaborates in the oppositional mode on the salient image moving the counter-discursive links further into the adjacent fields:

> (4) Одно немного смущает – эмблема этой новой партии. На ней, по словам Барщевского, предполагается изобразить *подсолнух*. Это, я думаю, по неосторожности подсознание сработало, выдав глубокое природное стремление этой гражданской силы поворачиваться *за солнцем*. Куда *солнце наше, Владимир Владимирович*, туда и они… А впрочем, все это, конечно, *семечки*![45]

So, the inter-discursive metaphorical structure ПУТИН - СОЛНЦЕ branches further out and creates a *megametaphorical* image of the sunflower under the sun. The satirist uses the lexical item подсолнух "sunflower" in the echoic mode where it refers to the symbol the Kremlin-manufactured party "The Citizen's Force," while in the oppositional mode, he semantically deconstructs and reassembles it again. The resultant extended metaphor is now built up from the composite meaning of the word's derivational components: the prefix под- "under" and the root солн – "the sun," both of which undergo re-semantization under the prominence of the global megametaphor Путин – солнце. In the oppositional mode, the metaphor thus foregrounds the meanings of "an object under Putin," "following Putin," as well the semantic characteristics "dependent" and "subservient."

Textual prime pattern: the citational prime

Another regular pattern of the satirical counter-discourse construction that the corpus of *Plavlennyi syrok* demonstrates is what I call *a textual prime pattern*. It is characterised by the echoic mode that contains instantiations of the dominant discourse. In Shenderovich's text, such echoic mode occurs either in the form of a textual verbatim transposition (*the citational type*) or in the form of transposition with some modifications (*the mixed type*). In *Plavlennyi syrok*, the mixed type is usually characterised by an additional counter-discursive evaluation penetrating the echoic mode.

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[43] Lakoff, Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By.* Chicago: University of Chicago, 1980.

[44] Werth, Paul, "Extended Metaphor: a text world account." *Language and Literature,* 1994, 3, 2, pp. 79-103.

[45] *Plavlennyi syrok,* 3.3.2007.

The programme episode in (5) presents an example of the counter-discourse based on the *citational* prime. It is an excerpt from a live broadcast from a mass rally of the short-lived movement "In support of Putin" that was held in Tver' in November 2007. This excerpt was extracted from the speech given at the rally by the organiser of the movement and lawyer Pavel Astakhov and used by Shenderovich as the *prime* mode for satire:

> (5) Астахов: «*Человек* нам на голосование всенародное *положил* все свои заслуги, всю свою репутацию, весь свой авторитет и все, что он сделал за восемь лет. *Он сказал*: я вам доверяю самим сделать выбор! Придите и решите. И мы можем решить этот вопрос. Мы должны прийти и сказать единственное слово: до-ве-ря-ем! Доверяем?»
> Делегаты: «Да-а…»[46]
>
> (6) ШЕНДЕРОВИЧ. Странно. Перед вами *президент* что-нибудь *клал*? Передо мной, слава богу, нет. *И ничего мне не говорил* насчет необходимости выбора… А Астахову и этим *дрессированным*, которых свезли в Тверь *звать хором Путина, как дедушку Мороза*, – им он, значит, что-то такое говорил. *И что-то перед ними клал… Ну, как минимум, перед Астаховым было положено. М-да… Раньше я не понимал старого американского анекдота про адвоката и собаку…* Знаете? У вашей машины отказали тормоза, а впереди – собака и адвокат. Кого давить? Ответ: адвоката, потому что собаку жалко. Ох ты, наш славный наш адвокатский корпус – Астахов, Кучерена, Барщевский, Мирзоев!.. Жаль, что я не за рулем! Впрочем, я отвлекся: вернемся в Тверь! Итак: еще раз то же самое, медленно…[47]

In the oppositional mode (6), the satirist refers to Astakhov and his unscrupulous role in the campaign organised by the Kremlin spin doctors with the intention to manufacture popular support for the unconstitutional third term. Resistance towards Astakhov and what he stands for is coded in a variety of counter-discursive devices. First, Shenderovich addresses his listeners with rhetorical questions and offers an affected attempt to resolve what is presented as an "unclarity" in the speech of the echoic mode. In order to "clarify," the author plays on the diverging meanings of the verb класть cited in the prime and specifies Astakhov's generic term человек, paraphrasing it as the official президент. The counter-discourse in the form of a dialogue with the public builds the oppositional discursive community which the satirist linguistically brackets through a use of the distancing

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[46] *Plavlennyi syrok,* 17.11.2007.

[47] *Plavlennyi syrok,* 17.11.2007.

strategy. In contrast to Astakhov's team, this community is said to have had no privileged knowledge or a display of any special qualities on the part of the President.

Shenderovich also uses conversion between Astakhov's curious speech act of trust in the outgoing President and the frame connected to the Russian "Christmas Tree" children's party. The parallel and transfer of frames in the oppositional mode infantilize the group of lawyers and other professionals who took part in the "In support of Putin" demonstration in Tver'. This device projects the participants as naïve and gullible small children who believe in Father Frost (Дедушка Мороз) and who are as easily manipulated as children at a Russian Christmas Tree party who, according to the tradition, follow the events organiser and call for Father Frost in chorus. A further oppositional frame that Shenderovich mixes in here is the American joke about the driver who in the case of an accident due to failed brakes has to choose whom to run over: a dog or a lawyer. Moved to the Russian context, the joke shifts negative attitude towards the specific subservient lawyers and personalises the sentiment with the sarcastic exclamation: Жаль, что я не за рулем!

Once the multiple oppositional mode frames are established, their shifts and mappings present the material of the prime—the rally in Putin's support—as a deceitful show orchestrated by unprincipled lawyers. Shenderovich's techniques of satirical embellishment includes, in particular, the overlexicalization of the oppositional frame with the verb класть/положить borrowed from the echoic mode. Because this lexical item may also be used as a rude invective carrying sexual connotations and meaning "to feel/express contempt for someone, spit on someone,"[48] the polysemous quality of the verb класть/положить allows the satirist to drop the tenor and to distort the meaning of the echoic mode through its over-interpretation. The invective low tenor interpretation has a deflating and debunking effect on the original text in the prime and the performer cited. Animalization of the opponent serves as another device of status lowering: here it is expressed by the substantivated participle дрессированные usually used in combination with the nouns referring to animals and here used by Shenderovich as a term for his opponents.

Textual prime pattern: the mixed prime

Satire created by Viktor Shenderovich also occurs in the form where the oppositional mode is indicated already at the first stage of the counter-discursive construction. Such material in my corpus can be classified as the

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[48] Shalyakov, Vladimir and Adler, Eve. *Dictionary of Russian Slang & Colloquial Expressions.* New York: Barons, 1995.

mixed type. The inter-discursive manipulation of language and knowledge frames occur here not so much in a staggered form as within the citational model but simultaneously, with echoic and dialectic strands interwoven together.

(7a) Депутаты Мосгордумы одобрили поправки мэра Лужкова, *ужесточающие* порядок проведения массовых акций в столице. Поправки запрещают проведение митингов вблизи исторических памятников и вводят *жесткие* нормы "предельной заполняемости территории": количество участников пикетов и митингов не должно превышать норматив в два человека на квадратный метр.

(7b) *Похвальна забота* мэра Москвы и его депутатов о сохранении исторических памятников столицы! Вот недавно (я уж вспоминал об этом) по Риму прошли семьсот тысяч демонстрантов-оппозиционеров, – так *глупые* римские власти даже *рта не посмели открыть* насчет охраны исторических памятников. То ли они не любят свой город, то ли в Риме нету исторических памятников, даже не знаю… А москвичи, *ежели приспичит помитинговать*, могут теперь *в полном соответствии с Конституцией* собираться в Бирюлево, *не больше двух на квадратный метр*. Хотя, скажем прямо, Конституция совершенно не запрещает им и сидеть тихо по домам![49]

In contrast to (6), the *echoic* mode in (7a) presents a reported rather than a direct reference to an event—this time, to the Moscow local government passing of Mayor Luzhkov's amendments to the rules relating to mass street meetings and pickets in the city. Shenderovich's stylized report boasts no impartiality; it draws on an oppositional voice notable in the use of qualifiers ужесточающие, жестокие that mark a critical position towards what has been reported. Another stylistic feature of this mock news report is that it is overlaid with the voice representing the dominant discourse of power. The voice of power is embodied in the directly quoted phrase "предельной заполняемости территории: количество участников пикетов и митингов не *должно* превышать норматив в два человека на квадратный метр." This stylistic shift towards the domain of the bureaucratic official register with typical preposterous phrasing brings about a sense of satirical incongruence. As a result in the oppositional part a counter-discursive view is projected and further elaborated, the view that that which is narrated in the prime is a euphemistic cover-up for the authorities' attempt to squeeze the rights and freedoms of Moscow inhabitants. By allowing the above stylistic leap, Shenderovich employs the strategy of "text saturation"—a condition of a

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[49] *Plavlennyi syrok,* 3.3.2008.

satirical text whereby the prime is so outlandish that it turns on itself and does the self-satirising job even without resorting to the oppositional elaboration.[50] Thus the author's inclusion in the echoic mode of the dominant discourse in saturated form signals the presence of the satirical strand overlaying the "objective reporting" tone of the prime.

The oppositional mode (7b) transfers the frames opened by the prime into two domains: the domain of the positive reception of the dominant discourse and that of the social and moral "norm." Shenderovich assumes a verbal mask of a persona producing a *skaz*-type narrative. This technique operates as a vehicle for the transition between the domains and allows placement of the satirised qualities, downplayed by the language of the prime, into the focus of the frame in the manner of the figure—ground reversal[51]. The narrator's voice follows in an exaggerated, over-enthusiastic way, the script of the dominant discourse. This persona engenders a naïve perspective, projecting the image of a simple-minded conformist who is gullible to believe that the government's attempt to clamp down on the freedom of demonstrations is indeed a concern for protection of historical monuments and happy to accept a conveniently curtailed interpretation of the Constitution. The voice emphatically praises Mayor Luzhkov's historical concerns while criticising the authorities in Rome for having no courage to oppose their demonstrators and therefore to protect their ancient monuments.

The persona's rhetoric is characterised by crudely demotic tenor and derogatory attitude towards the rally-goers. This is coded in the use of the verb приспичит "will get an urge" associated with the scatological field, and the irregular prefix по- in combination with the verb митинговать, adding the meaning of the limited extent of action and thus lowering the political significance of the event. The register clash between elements of the déclassé ranting and the stylised quasi-archaic ежели as well as the bookish похвальна забота injects into the narrator's monologue a sneering overtone, uncovering arrogance towards ordinary Muscovites and their human rights. The persona therefore mirrors (the *echoic* mode), as well as distorts (the *oppositional* mode), the viewpoint of the Moscow authorities: the direct quotation from the dominant discourse—не больше двух на квадратный метр—migrates again, this time from the *echoic* to the *oppositional* phase. However here, with a satirical twist, Shenderovich applies it to the context of the city outskirts, where holding mass demonstrations makes no point.

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[50] Simpson, 2003, pp.126-130.

[51] On the cognitive view of figure and ground changing place in the production of humour, see Veale, T. et al. "The Cognitive Mechanisms of Adversarial Humor," *Humor*, 2006, 19-3, p.333.

Another oppositional leap for the counter-discursive satire relates to the collision between the frames of the "dominant practice" and the "norm." The first one represents the knowledge world in which the Moscow Mayoral amendments match the common sense assumptions and which for Shenderovich metonymically stands for the process of reduction in democratic practices in Russia. The second is the normative frame, which, contrasted with the "dominant practice" frame, highlights a distortion of values in the dominant frame. The normative frame is also metonymic and is activated by the toponym Рим. It encompasses for the counter-discursive community a system of knowledge resources related to what is seen as a liberal society that upholds the freedoms of the individuals. In particular, it holds that authorities in Rome make no effort to prevent street protest demonstrations and, to the apparent surprise of the narrating persona, they do not rush to protect their architectural heritage from the demonstrators. Satire again is produced in the form of an incongruity, derived from a clash between the two frames, the dominant and the normative. It is made apparent in the monologue of the speaking persona as he transposes the Russian practices and attitudes onto the frame "ROME": looking from the dominant Moscow position, he qualifies the Roman authorities as stupid (глупые) and timid (рта не посмели открыть). Here again, the blend like cross-domain mapping serves to reveal a profound rupture between the domains and the worldviews they represent in favour of the counter-discursive frame of values.

The Linguistic Prime Pattern

Viktor Shederovich displays an acute language sense and language reflection makes a separate layer in his satire. Although all types of relations between the echoic and the oppositional modes reviewed here are inherently language related, yet a large number of our examples in the corpus suggest that Shenderovich often places language in the focus of the frames, making it the primary material for counter-discursive meanings. These instances of satire can be separately categorized as the *linguistic* pattern of counter-discursive construction.

The *Plavlennyi syrok* samples related to this pattern demonstrate the prime construed in terms of language as well as the metadiscursive oppositional mode. In other words, the second stage of the satirical production comprises of an explicit commentary on the language of the prime. As Verschueren points out, the interpretative quality of metalanguage

is conducive to the expression of ideologies.[52] This might explain why Shenderovich is so willing to use this pattern of satirical production whereby the opposition between the dominant and the normative frames is presented as the contrast of language forms. An example of the *linguistic* pattern of counter-discursive construction may be seen in (8):

> (8) К черту конкуренцию, пускай американцы *хрипнут* в *диалогах*! А наш жанр—*монолог*. *Бла-бла-бла* по Первом каналу, *бла-бла-бла* по второму, и еще много, много раз *бла-бла-бла* по всем остальным каналам… «*Прямой разговор с избирателем*». Так победим.[53]

In (8), the constituent elements of the *prime* and the *oppositional* modes are not staggered but occur simultaneously as the counter-discursive thrust is already expressed in the notion of "the monologue" characterised as "our genre." This is an ironic reference to what Shenderovich sees as a lack of a variety of views and opinions on contemporary Russian television, so in effect such a dominant discursive practice itself constitutes the prime. The knowledge frame opened by the noun монолог is rephrased in the oppositional mode by the repeated onomatopoetic sequence *бла-бла-бла*, which usually refers to meaningless talk.[54] With rephrasing, Shederovich foregrounds the meaning of "emptiness" and expresses disdain towards the language the word describes. Then the satirist uses the tool of rephrasing further, this time referring to the title of the television programme broadcasting the interaction between the authorities and the people—разговор. His rephrasing produces a string of local synonyms and places among them the name of the televised political communication: монолог—бла-бла-бла—Прямой разговор с избирателем, all of which are imbued with the satirical counter-discursive meaning. Thus by keying an attitude towards prime as a linguistic notion, Shenderovich manages to highlight in a coded way the qualities such as a lack of pluralism and substance in then Russian media, and by a metonymic link, in the society

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[52] Verschueren, Jef, "Notes on the Role of Metapragmatic Awareness in Language Use," Jaworki, Adam et al., *Metalanguage: Social and Ideological Perspectives*. Berlin and New York: mouton de Gruyter, 2007, pp. 53-74.

[53] *Plavlennyi syrok*, 3.11.2007.

[54] Бла-бла is an English loan adopted in the post-Soviet period. *The National Corpus of the Russian Language* records its early occurrence in 1993 which, the context tells us, is perceived then to be an American word: Постепенно мусора вокруг стало меньше, а в одно тихое утро, с трудом прокапывая ход меж корней старой липы, Сережа обнаружил маленькую зеленую карточку - произошло это через день после того, как он узнал второе главное американское слово "у-упс" (первое, "*бла-бла-бла*," ему сказал по секрету еще Гриша). [Виктор Пелевин. *Жизнь насекомых* (1993)]. After 1991, according to the Corpus data, the word appears rather frequently and in specifically Russian contexts. http://ruscorpora.ru/search-main.html. In *The Oxford English Dictionary* the word is defined as: "Meaningless, insincere or pretentious talk or writing; nonsense, bunkum." *Oxford English Dictionary*. Oxford University Press, 2008.

as a whole. This "dominant" frame is pitted against the normative frame that contains knowledge of American democracy. Shenderovich represents the "American" frame also in linguistic terms as a society of "dialogue," the linguistic notion signifying the democratic principles of plurality of opinions allowed to be publicly expressed. Similarly to (7), (8) presents the contrast and incongruity between the two frames as a parody text performed by the persona of the dominant discourse. Here the satirist stylises his text in the Cold War rhetoric: it contrasts "us" versus "them," traditionally positions the United States in the role of an enemy over whom a victory will be achieved, wishes them harm ("to get hoarse voices") and finally, ends in a Communist war cry Так победим. Thus, within the *linguistic* pattern, Shenderovich chooses the metalinguistic device throughout the stages of the counter-discursive production as a potent ideological tool of framing the satirical opposition.

In (9), Shenderovich's satirical discourse transposes the event of alleged vote rigging during the Duma elections of December 2007 into the field of language. Shenderovich frames the reluctance that The Central Elections Committee showed regarding the entry of international observers into the country as a metalinguistic question, a problem of translatability of the Russian authentic phrase вброс бюллетеней "adding in ballot papers."

> (9) Ну, не хотят они, чтобы международные наблюдатели зафиксировали их честную победу! Не *любят оваций*… Быть знаменитым некрасиво, не это поднимает ввысь… Конечно, не это, а тихий сбор открепительных талонов, десятикратно засиженный телевизор, накачка явки, планы, спущенные в местные администрации—и тихое, *непереводимое на языки народов мира, русское слово «вброс»*… Нет, не надо пускать сюда наблюдателей, мы уж как-нибудь сами.[55]

Again, a linguistic item becomes for Shenderovich an embodiment of a deep incongruence in the frames including assumptions of acceptability and decency between the dominant and the normative knowledge. Thus in this pattern of counter-discourse production, the linguistic, the metalinguistic and the ideological elements demonstrate their profound inseparability.

Conclusion

During the course of writing this article, I learned that the programme *Plavlennyi syrok* was taken off the air. This news seems to be a sign of the end of public political satire in today's Russia. This article has shown, however, that from the language point of view, Viktor Shenderovich was successful in the creation in *Plavlennyi syrok* of the discourse that organised the frames of

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[55] *Plavlennyi syrok*, 3.11.2007.

knowledge oriented to counteract the dominant discursive practices of the Russian political establishment. Through utilising the triangular structure pertaining to satire and playing with the distance between the participants, his attempts to shore up the counter-discursive community of the like-minded audience who shares the counter-discursive frames were bold—although sometimes worked against the coherence of his satirical genre. Building on the discursive theory of satire developed by Paul Simpson, and through the analysis of a large corpus of the programme's discourse, the article hopes to have demonstrated that Viktor Shenderovich has been and will remain a master of satire. The specific patterns of the interaction between the *echoic* and the *oppositional* discursive modes which he regularly uses for counter-discursive construction prove to be complex and versatile and are described here within the *referential*, *textual* (*citational* and *mixed*) and the *linguistic* primes. However, all the patterns that Shenderovich employs seem to be connected by some similar features: the frames constructed of culturally and linguistically populated domains undergo switching and blending, revealing the deeply metaphorical mechanism that guides the satirist's text production. The result is his recognizable satirical leap — a sarcastic fight for a different meaning within the contest of discourses in contemporary Russian society.