The 'School for Laughter': Visual Satire, Transmediality, and Performativity in *Krokodil*, 1954-1964

John Samuel Etty

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Leeds
School of Languages, Cultures and Societies

June, 2016

The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

This copy has been supplied on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement.

The right of John Samuel Etty to be identified as Author of this work has been asserted by him in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

Acknowledgements

Abstract

This thesis investigates the forms, production, consumption, and functions of *Krokodil* (*The Crocodile*) magazine in the period 1954-1964. *Krokodil* was among the most popular publications in the USSR, producing state-sanctioned satirical comment on Soviet and international affairs from 1922, but until now it has been the subject of only limited study. This thesis answers the question: How does an empirical analysis of the text of *Krokodil* allow us to extend and nuance our understanding of Soviet graphic satire beyond state-sponsored propaganda?

The thesis comprises three chapters; each employs a post-structuralist theoretical framework to reinterpret an aspect of *Krokodil*. Chapter 1 explores how *Krokodil*'s cartoons deployed ideologically shaped schemata in the construction of satirical critiques, and draws upon Mikhail Bakhtin's definition of Menippean satire to explain the nature of the journal's satire. Chapter 2 investigates the production and consumption of the journal, illuminating readers' contributions to the magazine, and using transmedia theory to extend our understanding of *Krokodil* to include a previously unacknowledged range of extensions in other media. Chapter 3 examines the performative force of *Krokodil*'s political cartoons, challenging assumptions about the limitations placed upon Soviet satirists by exploring the magazine's use of theatrical performance as a metaphor in cartoons satirising domestic politics.

Examining *Krokodil*'s satirical vision, its expressive means and the interpretive possibilities suggested by its cartoons, this study shows that *Krokodil*'s satire was complex, subtle and intermedial. The thesis highlights the importance of *Krokodil*'s readers' and artists' collaborative exploration and shaping of the boundaries of permissible discourse. Finally, the thesis argues that *Krokodil*'s cartoons simultaneously affirmed, refracted and critiqued official discourses in the Post-Stalin period and counterposed them with visions of Soviet citizens' responses to them. Ideology, *Krokodil*'s satire suggests, is an interpretive tool for negotiating everyday reality and official discourses, and it was not always to be taken seriously.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Introduction

i. *Krokodil* Magazine and the Soviet Media System, 1922-1991

This thesis investigates the forms, production, consumption, and functions of *Krokodil* (*The Crocodile*) magazine in the period 1954-1964. In particular, it explores the nature of Soviet graphic satire through an examination of *Krokodil* and its political cartoons. *Krokodil* was the longest-serving and most significant satirical journal in the Soviet Union, and it was unique in producing state-sanctioned graphic satirical comment on Soviet and international affairs for over seventy years. *Krokodil* No.1(13) appeared on 27 August 1922, and the journal remained in continuous publication until after the dissolution of the USSR in 1991.[1] During that time, as Evgenii Dubrovin, the magazine's Chief Editor in 1982, noted, *Krokodil* took part in the seminal events in Soviet history: it 'took patronage over the construction of "Magnitogorsk" in the Urals […] participated in collectivization, [and] fought in the Second World War.'[2]

Figure 1: Maliutin, I. 1922. *Krokodil*'s first front cover.
***Krokodil* 1922: 1(13)/1.**

---

[1] *Krokodil* was first published as *Rabochii* (*The Worker*), the Sunday supplement to *Rabochaia gazeta* (*The Workers' Newspaper*), on 4 June 1922. After twelve issues, the name was changed and *Krokodil* became an independent journal.

[2] '"Krokodil" bral shefstvo nad stroitel'stvom "Magnitki" na Urale…"Krokodil" uchastvoval v kollektivizatsii, srazhalsia na frontakh Otechestvennoi voiny.' (Dubrovin 1982: 5-6).

While Soviet state-sanctioned satire was not restricted to *Krokodil*—the newspaper *Pravda* (*Truth*) published political cartoons, and the journals *Ogonek* and *Literaturnaia gazeta* both published a page of jokes, satirical poems and feuilletons (short, light literary pieces)—the magazine was the USSR's primary satirical publication after 1933. Almost 250 publications like *Krokodil* existed in the 1920s (Stykhalin and Kremenskaia 1963: 458-466), but by 1933, when *Krokodil* came under the aegis of the *Pravda* Publishing House, which produced the newspapers and magazines of the Communist Party, most other journals had closed down. Practical difficulties such as paper shortages, printing problems and infrequent publication, editorial deficiencies leading to poor quality or uninteresting content, and intervention by the Central Committee after 1927, all combined to ensure that *Krokodil* found itself in a privileged position after the extension of state control over cultural production.[3] This outcome was no coincidence: *Krokodil*'s editors, through their close association with *Rabochaia gazeta* and *Pravda*, and in their own right, had inside knowledge of Central Committee priorities. Evidence shows that *Krokodil* was enthusiastically consumed. Contemporary and scholarly accounts describe *Krokodil*'s popularity with its readers,[4] while many remained frustrated at supply limitations. A technologist at the Izhevsk Steel Mill, A. Bataiev, in a *Literaturnaia gazeta* article, complained:

> It is easier to win a state lottery ticket than to get a subscription you need…At least, I have already had four winning lottery tickets at the savings bank, but for four years a subscription to *Krokodil* has been only a dream. (Anon 1956.)

Krokodil thus represents, according to Sergei Mostovshikov, editor of *History through the Eyes of Krokodil* (2014-15) and Deputy Editor of *Izvestiia*, 'a pretty honest archive [and] an unprecedented spectacle'[5] (Fedotova 2014). Indeed, it has been suggested that, '[i]n the history of Soviet satire, *Krokodil* virtually requires a chapter of its own' (Henry 1972: xx). Remarkably, however, the history of *Krokodil*'s satire remains to be written.

As I explain below, *Krokodil* has not been ignored, but existing studies relating to the journal are limited. In most cases, as Section ii of this Introduction shows, the literature on *Krokodil* is based on various overly selective methodologies,

---

[3] For a discussion of this process of centralisation and rationalisation, see Stykhalin and Kremenskaia (1963: 7-25) and Lenoe (2009: 17-23).

[4] See Pehowski (1976) and Hopkins (1970).

[5] 'Eto dovol'no chestnyi arkhiv…nevidannoe zrelishche'.

and it also displays the influence of ideological biases formulated during the Cold War. Many existing studies downplay the journal's significance, relegating it below other forms of satirical or humorous commentary, or using blanket terms such as 'propaganda' to describe the magazine's form, contents and socio-political functions. Indeed, as I suggest throughout this thesis, what I call the 'propaganda paradigm' has dominated analyses of Soviet satire in general, and *Krokodil* in particular. Consequently, the existing literature provides limited insights into *Krokodil*'s visual diversity, ideological complexity, production and consumption practices, the nature of state-sanctioned graphic satire and its intended effects. Only since approximately 2005, with the advent of a hermeneutics of Soviet graphic satire, prompted by growing interest in Soviet visual culture, has there been any interest in reinterpreting *Krokodil*.

This thesis aims to reconsider *Krokodil* and answer the question: How does an empirical analysis of *Krokodil* allow us to extend and nuance our understanding of Soviet graphic satire beyond the concept of state-sponsored propaganda? In order to consider the nature of the Soviet satirical aesthetic, its humour and its critiques, this thesis sets out to re-evaluate *Krokodil* magazine, its construction of satirical visual texts, and its performance of an active satirical socio-political role, which made it unique among Soviet printed media. I consider the **entire** corpus of images from across a decade, and conduct close readings of a large number of cartoons of various types, produced by over 40 artists, rather than selecting an artist, theme or subject. My primary approach is to look beyond content analysis and consider how meaning was made in Soviet cartoons, but I also compare treatments of related subjects across different media. I therefore do not consider *Krokodil* to have been a 'closed' system, and indeed I explore how *Krokodil* transgressed media boundaries in order to construct new satirical critiques. Furthermore, in my analysis I consider the tensions, absences and ambiguities found in these cartoons.

The period between the first issue in 1954 and the last issue of 1964 is my primary focus, although I also draw upon significant material from outside these years to illuminate my analysis. This decade, which follows the death of the Soviet premier Josef Stalin (1878-1953), coincides with the post-Stalin power struggle, the leadership of Nikita Sergeievich Khrushchev (1894-1971; First Secretary of the USSR's Council of Ministers from 1953-1964), and the era of 'The Thaw'. This period, so named because of the influence of Il'ia Ehrenburg's novel *Ottepel'* (*The Thaw*, 1954) saw a relaxation of political regulations governing personal freedoms, as well as Khrushchev's 1956 Twentieth Party Congress 'Secret' Speech, which generated de-Stalinisation and other shifts in policy, cultural practices, and popular attitudes. At this time, *Krokodil* was among the most popular of over one thousand

magazines in print, each with an average circulation of 94,500 (Hopkins 1970: 227), and, indeed, 1954-1964 was the decade that saw the most sustained period of circulation growth (from 400,000 up to 2,000,000) in the magazine's history.[6] *Krokodil*'s circulation was smaller than only a few of the national newspapers and magazines by 1968 (see Table 1).[7] One noteworthy consequence of the magazine's expanded circulation is the relative ease of access to surviving copies of the magazine. Indeed, the methodological difficulties in using political cartoons as evidence were avoided in this study by securing a complete set of the magazine from 1954-1964.[8]

Magazine Title	Circulation in January 1968
Rabotnitsa (*Woman Worker*)	10,000,000
Zdorov'e (*Health*)	8,000,000
Krest'ianka (*Peasant Woman*)	5,400,000
Krokodil (*The Crocodile*)	4,600,000
Nauka i zhizn' (*Science and Life*)	3,600,000
Ogonek (*Little Flame*)	2,000,000
Sem'ia i Skola (*Family and School*)	1,500,000
Za rubezhom (*Life Abroad*)	1,100,000

Table 1: Circulation of Selected Soviet Magazines in 1968.
(Adapted from Hopkins 1970: 227)

A study of *Krokodil* in the period 1954-1964 is especially revealing for three reasons. First, an investigation of *Krokodil* during 1954-1964 offers the opportunity to consider the zone in which sanctioned visual critiques of Soviet ideology and graphic discourses about the priorities of state and populace were created in a time of liberalisation and de-Stalinisation. Scholarly attention on such questions has conventionally been directed at literature, which is generally considered to have been the principal medium for high cultural reflection on contemporary politics and recent history.[9] This tendency stems from assumptions about Russian culture's logocentricity, now challenged (see Hutchings 2009). My analysis of *Krokodil*

---

[6] *Krokodil*'s circulation, which reached 150,000 within six months of its first issue, peaked at 5,920,000 in 1975. The magazine's annual circulation figures are reproduced in Appendix B.

[7] *Pravda* had a circulation of less than 6,600,000 in 1966, while *Izvestiia* (*News*), the newspaper of the Soviet government, had a circulation of 8,300,000 in 1965 (Hopkins 1970: 209).

[8] The rise in interest in Soviet graphic satire in recent years is illustrated by the fact that it has become significantly easier to access digital copies of the magazine online since 2015.

[9] Studies of literary responses to de-Stalinisation in this period include Kozlov (2013), Lygo (2006), and Hodgson (2006). The key works produced during this period are Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* (1962), Il'ia Ehrenburg's *People, Years, Life* (1960-63, 1965).

magazine, however, is grounded in analysis of the combination of visual and verbal languages, and my study offers important conclusions on how graphic satirical discourse engaged with the politics of de-Stalinisation. Second, the post-Stalin period offers particular insights into the nature of Soviet satire because, according to Karen Ryan-Hayes, it represented a 'Silver Age' for Soviet satire (1995: 2).[10] For Ryan-Hayes, this renaissance in Soviet satire occurred because of the reissue of many of the best satires from the 1920s, but our understanding of the nature of Soviet satire is enriched by a study of this period because, as contemporaries observed, it was when *Krokodil*'s own satire became more incisive.[11] Finally, this decade is particularly apposite because it was the historical moment when postmodernism originated in the USSR.[12] Writing specifically about Russian culture in the Soviet era, Slobodanka Vladiv-Glover argues that during The Thaw, Russian culture opened up to, represented and assimilated an abstracted American 'other' into its discourses. This shift, she suggests, was part of the 'normal evolution along the trajectory of modernism/post-modernism' that Russian culture followed approximately coevally with the west (1999: 32). While the development of postmodernism in literature, fine art and spirituality (Epstein, Genis and Vladiv-Glover 1999) show that an American 'other' was absorbed into Russian literary modern/post-modern liminal discourses at this time (Vladiv-Glover 1999), the study of *Krokodil* offers us the opportunity to consider a different transformation—the process of using satire to re-view the Soviet 'self' and the 'other' that existed in Soviet society—that was underway at the moment when Stalinist modernity was re-evaluated by its survivors.

ii. Literature Review

As I suggest above, *Krokodil* has received popular and scholarly attention, but the existing literature on the magazine is limited in scope and depth. As Ryan-Hayes notes, there is a dearth of criticism focusing on the praxis of satire in Russia (1995: 9), and there is very little literature on state-sanctioned satire; instead the majority of Western scholarship on satire in the USSR focuses on works that demand regime change. This thesis represents the first thesis-length study of *Krokodil*. Owing to this

---

[10] The decade after the October Revolution is often described as a 'Golden Age' for Soviet satire (Ryan-Hayes 1995: 1).

[11] See Stykalin and Kremenskaia (1963: 210) and Shabad (1964: 87).

[12] This period gave rise to Moscow Conceptualism. See Balina, Condee and Dobrenko (2000), Rosenfeld (2011), Jackson (2010) and Groys (2013).

lack of attention, no significant evolution in the interpretation of Soviet sanctioned satire has taken place in the scholarly literature. The following review outlines three trends identifiable, including their weaknesses, in the existing approaches to the journal.

a) Selectivity and Structuralism

The development of scholarly criticism of *Krokodil* magazine, from the 1930s to the present, but especially since 1945, illustrates how two tendencies—selectivity with material and structuralist approaches—have dominated interpretations of the journal. These same tendencies have limited our understanding of Soviet graphic satire in general, and *Krokodil* in particular. Selectivity is essential when considering a publication like *Krokodil*, with its large number of images, but consequently no previous study has engaged with all the types of image to be found in the magazine, and our picture of the magazine's graphic satire is therefore unrepresentative. Instead, all studies of *Krokodil* have been highly discriminatory in their recruitment of images, depending upon their author's political allegiances or, more recently, their particular focus. From the 1930s, especially during the Second World War, and at times of international détente, numerous studies of Soviet humour, including *Krokodil* cartoons, were published by authors who were more or less sympathetic toward the Soviet political project, and they highlight similarities between Western and Soviet peoples, as well as the magazine's amusement at universal social problems. During World War Two, for example, *Krokodil* cartoons appeared in Lord Beaverbrook's *Spirit of the Soviet Union* (1942), F.D. Klingender's *Russia: Britain's Ally* (1942) and Montagu's *Crocodile Album of Soviet Humour* (1943). Such collections stressed that 'plenty of Soviet jokes are universal jokes, that might have appeared in the humorous magazines of any country' (Montagu 1943: 6). Similar collections appeared after 1945.[13] Swearingen described *Krokodil* as 'a sort of Red *New Yorker*', and suggested that 'what is ironic to Ivan and naughty to Natasha is likely also to amuse Betty and Bill' (1961: 2-3).

Selectivity also characterised scholarly American studies of Soviet graphic satire after 1945. Western commentators often analysed cartoons that reflected the journal's increasingly anti-Western aggression, and, suggesting that *Krokodil*'s readers were expected to align with the Soviet satirist, reacted against *Krokodil*. William Nelson's *Out of the Crocodile's Mouth* (1949) selected anti-American

---

[13] See Tempest (1949), Swearingen (1961), Scott (1965), Kavalerov (1971), Kolasky (1985) and the Editors of *Krokodil* (1989).

images that appeared in the magazine in the three years after an April 1946 Stalin speech that accused the West of initiating a new conflict with the USSR. Nelson explains that the magazine was part of the Soviet government's attempt 'to teach its people to hate the United States' (1949: 7). Nelson's collection, and subsequent comparable works, used similar highly selective methodologies and set the tone for studies of *Krokodil* during the Cold War.

The ultra-selective uses of *Krokodil* by revisionist historians highlight the magazine's value as source material for researchers, but do little to deepen our understanding of the magazine. *Krokodil* is used primarily as an archive of illustrations of popular responses to Soviet policy. Extracts from it—usually cartoons—illustrate scholarly analyses of Soviet economics, history and politics in countless academic works, but they usually lack critical commentary. These studies essentially adopt the same view of the magazine as the Soviet artistic establishment—that cartoon art was 'functional imagery' rather than high art.[14] Sheila Fitzpatrick's acclaimed history of the Soviet 1930s (1999) refers to numerous cartoons and jokes from the magazine in this decade. Explaining these images, she notes:

> The stupidity, rudeness, inefficiency, and venality of Soviet bureaucrats constituted the main satirical targets of the Soviet humorous journal, *Krokodil*. Its stories and cartoons illustrated the various methods by which officials secured scarce goods and luxuries for themselves and their acquaintances and denied them to the rest of the population. (Fitzpatrick 1999: 29)

Fitzpatrick assumes that the magazine's purpose was to reveal or illustrate, and she deploys the magazine's visual texts in the same way. Describing individual cartoons as 'eloquent' (1999: 29), noting that particular social trends were 'reflected' (1999: 60) or were 'evident in the pages of *Krokodil*' (1999: 81), or suggesting that 'cartoons captured' (1999: 99) tendencies observable in everyday life, Fitzpatrick's analysis is of historical phenomena rather than graphic art, and she uses *Krokodil* as a source of visual anecdotes without considering questions of medium-specificity. Fitzpatrick is not alone in using *Krokodil* cartoons as illustrations of various social phenomena without critical comment on the nature of graphic satire or the cartoon medium.[15] Our understanding of the magazine, based on the existing literature's

---

[14] This phrase comes from Zegers and Druick (2011: 38), who highlight the hierarchy of Soviet visual culture, wherein traditional media (easel painting, sculpture and architecture) were given higher status than illustration, poster design, and political cartoons.

[15] Similar applications may be found in many other works. See Ledeneva (1998), Yurchak (2005) and LaPierre (2012).

selections, is therefore too partial, unsystematic and unrepresentative of the journal's output. Since these selections have all been made on the basis that they illustrate some point outside the journal, they are of limited help in shaping our understanding of *Krokodil*'s satire.

"Wrongful accusation." Caption: "You have someone else's passport. Did you steal it?" "God forbid. I bought it with my own money." Artist: B. Klinch. From *Krokodil*, 1935, n. 23, p. 14.
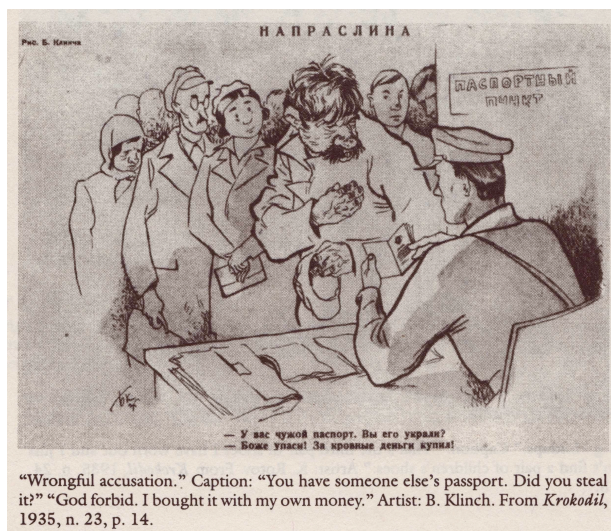
**Figure 2: Cartoon from *Krokodil* 1935: 23/14.
(Fitzpatrick: 1999).[16]**

Structuralist approaches to the magazine have likewise dominated Western understandings of *Krokodil*, but they too have failed to engage meaningfully with the magazine's contents. I use the term 'structuralist' in its broadest sense, not in specific relation to linguistic theory. I describe as 'structuralist' those approaches to *Krokodil* that suggest that it is possible to make inferences about the nature of the magazine, its satire and its production processes by studying patterns in the magazine's surface forms. These approaches base their conclusions upon observations about the magazine's apparent reliance upon binaries and hierarchies, and upon its ostensible subservience to political power structures. Influenced by theories of totalitarianism,[17] Cold War studies of the Soviet media system essentially accepted Leninist and official Soviet media theories,[18] which said that media were subordi-

---

[16] Images from *Krokodil* are generally reproduced at 8cm in this thesis. Where more than one *Krokodil* cartoon makes a similar point, they may be reproduced at 6cm. Other images are usually reproduced at 7cm.

[17] Hannah Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1973) and Carl Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski's *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy* (1965) were among the most influential of such theories. Arendt says propaganda is 'part and parcel of "psychological warfare"' (1973: 344).

[18] See, for instance, Lenin's 'Where to Begin' (1901), 'On Party Organisation and Party Literature' (1905), 'Our Foreign and Domestic Position and Party Tasks' (1920), and Stalin's 'The Press as a Collective Organiser' (1923).

nate to power, that political power structures controlled the functions and contents of media, and that media were themselves instruments to exert political power over the masses. As Mark Hopkins notes, in the USSR 'the mass media are in the first instance responsible to the party apparatus, from the very pinnacle to the base' (1970: 29).[19] If the traditional view of satire can be conceived as a triangle, with the satirist at one point, the satiric object or target at another, and the reader at the third,[20] then the structuralist approach to *Krokodil* unambiguously regards the triangular relationship as a structure dominated by political power. As Wilbur Schramm suggested in 1963, 'the mass communication system in the present Soviet thinking is about as much an instrument as a typewriter or a megaphone […] Soviet mass communications do not have integrity of their own. Their integrity, such as it is, is that of the state.' Moreover, he suggested, since they are '"kept instruments" […] they follow humbly and nimbly the gyrations of the Party line and the state directives' (1963: 122). The context of Schramm's work led him to imagine the Soviet media system engaged in a battle for global dominance with America's, as if media logics exactly mirrored geopolitics, but since 1991 this has clearly become an out-dated interpretation.

Many other key studies of Soviet media in the 1950s and 1960s were, because of limited access to resources and reliance upon official Soviet theory, structuralist in approach,[21] and their analyses confirmed the political interpretation of the nature of Soviet media.[22] This kind of structuralist interpretation has also been extended to analysis of *Krokodil*'s content. Studies by Milenkovitch (1966), Becker (1999), and McKenna (2001) have all sought to explain the nature of Soviet graphic satire through statistical analyses of different types of image. As Chapter 1 of this thesis shows, *Krokodil*'s imagery can profitably be understood up to a point through a study of the general laws that characterised any given issue of the journal. Certainly, a selective and superficial study of *Krokodil* seems to confirm that the journal reflected and perpetuated the binary logics of the Cold War, for instance, but, as I explain below, this kind of superficial analysis conceals important lessons about the

---

[19] For similar interpretations of Soviet media, see Inkeles (1950), Buzek (1964), Markham (1967), Hopkins (1970), and Mickiewicz (1981).

[20] This triangular model is borrowed from Bogel (2012: 2).

[21] See, for instance, Buzek (1964), Inkeles (1967), Markham (1967), Hopkins (1970), and Mickiewicz (1981).

[22] Interestingly, this interpretation is still traceable in post-Soviet media studies. See Zassoursky (2004).

nature of the journal and its satire. I aim to overcome the limitations of structuralist approaches by considering how *Krokodil* may be more fully understood through theories that extend beyond binaries, hierarchies and state power structures.

In a large number of existing studies, *Krokodil* is described as 'propaganda'. In my view, the 'propaganda paradigm' has dominated literature on Soviet sanctioned satire. Indisputably, the term 'propaganda' is useful shorthand for describing some of the images in *Krokodil* and for implicitly bundling together many of the magazine's political aims, but as a theoretical explanation of the magazine's entire output over seventy years, it is rather incomplete. As Cunningham suggests, the term 'propaganda' encapsulates 'an inherently epistemological commentary upon the defective quality of certain kinds of information exchange' since the word has come to mean '"not really informative or truthful"' (2002: 3). Indeed, in categorising *Krokodil*, it has generally been so unhelpful as to impede the development of our understanding of the subject. The propaganda paradigm ensures, for example, that *Krokodil* is presented in many works exclusively in ideological terms: Soviet political cartoons are viewed as 'blatant propaganda tools of the regime' by Timothy Benson (2012: 11). Olga Mesropova suggests that satire was employed in many official discourses because it was 'ideologically safe and easily moulded to the messages of propaganda' (2008: 2). Richard Stites memorably describes the magazine as propaganda in form and function (1992 and 2010). *Krokodil* was, he suggests, along with *Ogonek*, one of the two most important 'mass circulation illustrated serials of social satire and Cold War propaganda' (2010: 351).

Referring to Stites' characterisation of the magazine, Stephen Norris argued that Soviet caricature 'was propaganda' (2012: 105) and that Boris Efimov (1899-2008; the USSR's most famous and enduring cartoonist) 'literally created Soviet visual propaganda from beginning to end' (2012: 113). Norris' description of Efimov's work differs from the artist's own, and the contrast highlights the limitations of propaganda as a paradigm for studying *Krokodil*. In an interview, Efimov described Soviet propaganda as 'huge, broad, and I would say skillful, talented'. Propaganda, he said, 'used music, and poetry and songs and paintings and cartoons' (PBS 1999). In a characteristic attempt to abdicate personal responsibility, Efimov suggests that cartoons were employed *by* propaganda, which was always already the dominant force, always something larger than any individual art form. Norris, by contrast, attributes to artists much more authorial responsibility when he credits Efimov with creating graphic propaganda, and he hints that artists might have been allowed the authority to create works with a degree of ideological originality. Authorial independence, and the extent to which *Krokodil* may be viewed as the prod-

uct and/or the mouthpiece of the Soviet state is one of the questions explored in this thesis.

Indeed, it is an interesting problem in the literature on the magazine that many scholars of the Soviet Union describe *Krokodil* as propaganda, but studies of propaganda generally do not cite Soviet satirical journals as examples. Peter Kenez's *The Birth of the Propaganda State* (1985) remains the only book-length study explicitly and exclusively considering Soviet propaganda techniques covering the period 1917-1929, while the Stalin years are scarcely more fully studied.[23] Despite extensive surveys of Soviet media, including the press, Kenez does not mention *Krokodil*. In *Comic Art Propaganda: A Graphic History* (2013), Fredrik Strömberg draws upon Cold War-era propaganda comics art from around the world, without referring to *Krokodil*. One might have expected *Krokodil* to feature prominently in an exhibition dedicated to propaganda, but in the British Library's 2013 celebration of the form, images from the magazine appeared just twice.[24] The propaganda paradigm is so problematic and contentious in Soviet studies, Elizabeth Papazian notes, that many critics avoid the term altogether (2014: 67). David Welch points out that 'propaganda' is often used to describe the enemy's opinion-forming techniques in contrast to one's own (2013: 5), but it is nevertheless frequently used in reference to Soviet graphic satire.

The propaganda paradigm represents a flawed model for understanding Soviet graphic satire for several reasons. Simply identifying a political bias in a political text is no great aid to fuller understanding, and 'propaganda' is too often used as a (pejorative) label rather than a critical framework for investigation. The term is so broad that, for anti-communists of the 'totalitarian' school, 'all cultural production in the Soviet Union could be labeled "propaganda", thereby denying it any potential legitimacy as art' (Papazian 2013: 67). Identifying propaganda sheds little light on how a text achieves its effect, since it assumes a universal and uncritically accepting consumer response, and neither is it specific enough to suggest the aims of the creator. The propaganda paradigm also offers no way to understand the magazine's popularity, since propaganda must either go unnoticed as propaganda and be accepted as truth, or be recognised but nevertheless inflicted on an unwilling population by a controlling regime. *Krokodil* (which, as we know, was extremely popular in the

---

[23] See Brandenburger's *Propaganda State in Crisis: Soviet Ideology, Indoctrination, and Terror Under Stalin, 1927-1941* (2011).

[24] See Semenov's 1961: 11/1 (Figure 116), and Prokhorov's 1951: 34/1.

USSR) is therefore a problematic example of Soviet propaganda. Propaganda theory also fails to explain the role of humour, since irony and parody sit uneasily in a propaganda paradigm. Finally, propaganda makes no distinction between political information communicated in the media, education, and less overtly political cultural forms. Clearly these three fields overlapped in the USSR, but they must not be uncritically conflated. More nuanced concepts exist, and James Markham, employing Lenin's distinction, suggests that *Krokodil* is agitation rather than propaganda (1967: 220). Agitation aimed at audience mobilisation in pursuit of specific goals, while propaganda was a more abstract, complex concept. Nelson also described *Krokodil*'s cartoons as agitation (1949: 7-8), but his approach is still to view the cartoon as a top-down communicative mode, taking little account of consumer agency. In this thesis I revisit 'propaganda' as a critical framework for understanding *Krokodil*'s satire, considering it in light of poststructuralist theories (see Section iii), and provide some qualifications for its use in regard to Soviet graphic satire.

b) 'Official' and 'Popular' Humour

Academic interest in humour in so-called 'totalitarian' regimes[25]—Hitler's and Stalin's in particular—has increased in recent years.[26] It may even be possible to describe recent scholarship as constituting a 'humorous turn to history' (Cheauré and Nohejl 2014: 7).[27] The 'humorous turn' reveals much about laughter in the Soviet Union, but in all cases, a distinction is drawn between 'official' and 'popular' humour. Attempts have been made to study the state's 'official' use of humour,[28] but most histories of Soviet humour and satire exclude *Krokodil* (Henry 1972, Mesropova and Graham 2008). Many scholars, carefully delimiting the boundaries of the humorous along structural and generic lines, counterpose *Krokodil* against the

---

[25] The usefulness of 'totalitarianism' as a model has been challenged. See Geyer and Fitzpatrick (2009: 1-40) and Tormey (1995: 167-190).

[26] Journal issues with a special focus on humour include the History Workshop Journal (Spring 2015), Social Research (Spring 2012), Slavic Review (Summer 2011), East European Politics and Societies (November 2011), and International Review of Social History (Vol.52, Supplement S15, December 2007). Although the contents are diverse, there is particular interest in these two regimes, perhaps because joking in these contexts seems incongruous (see Oring 2007). Monograph treatments include Hillenbrand (1995), Lewis (2008), Graham (2009) and Herzog (2011). See also Davies (1997: 28-9, 175-7, 185), Volkogonov (1998: 90), Fitzpatrick (1999: 3, 166, 183-5, 221), and Brooks (2001: 61).

[27] Interestingly, a key feature of the 'humorous turn', suggest Cheauré and Nohejl, is the preference for combining verbal and visual (2014: 7). Clearly, the political cartoon is a primary mode for this type of humorous communication.

[28] See, for instance, Halfin (2007), Skradol (2011 and 2009), and Waterlow (2015).

telling of the 'popular' oral joke or *anekdot*, which they interpret as a more authentic form of laughter (Graham 2009, Brandenburger 2009). *Krokodil*'s joke-tellers and cartoonists are thus distinguished from the rest. David Brandenburger, for example, asks 'Who, aside from party card-carrying cartoonists at *Pravda* and *Krokodil*, would have risked telling jokes in such a repressive state?' (2009: 1). The humour of the empowered is perceived to be qualitatively different from that of the disempowered. Seth Graham argues that the separation occurred with the consolidation of Stalinist cultural policies around 1932, which brought humorous and satirical modes of expression into 'the realm of the professional and not explicitly folkloric art forms' and consequently produced a qualitative decline and meant that 'professional comic texts were dominated by examples of non-satirical humor [sic]' (2009: 10-11). Similarly, Egon Larsen suggests that once *Krokodil* was controlled by *Pravda*, the USSR's 'genuine satire was left to the people who made and spread Russia's political jokes' (1980: 81).[29] Professionalism, then, prevented the creation of genuine or satirical humour, according to these explanations. The creation of a hierarchical binary of comic forms in the scholarship has thus devalued the official joke. Graham points out the formal similarities between sanctioned and unsanctioned humour, but argues that 'the above-ground variety of the *anekdot* was, predictably, no competition for the popular form' (2009: 9). This hierarchy of joke-tellers is also imagined by other scholars, with a recent interest in the laughter of the dictators extending the field vertically somewhat.[30]

It will be evident, then, that structuralist tendencies are identifiable in the binarism of many studies of Soviet laughter. The assumption underlying the distinction between 'popular' and 'official' humour is that one will be against the political regime, while the other must be unequivocally for it. Iain Lauchlan, for example, suggested that Soviet citizens in the 1930s chose between just two options: 'they could either sell their souls and devote themselves to the celebration of Soviet power in public or they could sit on the sidelines and make fun of the whole charade in private' (2010: 266).[31] Humour is thus viewed by some as an avenue for people to

---

[29] Talmadge similarly distinguishes between 'the government-tolerated brand (of humour) which appears in print, and the bootleg products of anonymous wags which are circulated orally' (1943: 46).

[30] See Skradol (2011: 335), Caplan and Feldman (2015: 178), Waterlow (2015: 199), Gundle (2015: 216).

[31] Lauchlan continues, judging that '[t]hose with integrity chose the latter path of glorious defeat' (2010: 266). This view typifies the kind of moral commentary inherent in critiques of Soviet humour.

interact with ideology and political authority, wherein joking was a mode of resistance to political power,[32] while others elevate the jokes themselves to the status of weapons.[33] These arguments are variants of the 'Superiority Theory', which originated with Plato's critique of laughter and is developed in Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* (1651). Scruton and Jones argue that 'laughter de-values its object in the subject's eyes' (1982: 208), and Janet Tucker suggests that satire achieves maximum effect when it is opposed in the extreme to its subject (2002: 5). Of course, as I discuss in Section iii (below) this was also the assumption underlying official Soviet theories of humour, which adopted an equally staunchly opposed stance.

For many scholars, a positive role of popular humour in the USSR was to vent dissatisfaction and negate the likelihood of more significant oppositionist action. Advocates of variants of the 'Relief Theory', proposed in Lord Shaftesbury's *The Freedom of Wit and Humour* (1711) and later revised by Herbert Spencer and Sigmund Freud, extend the argument and include a political dimension when they suggest that Soviet humour functioned as a kind of 'safety valve' or safe outlet for dissatisfaction. Jokes, according to Freud, provide satisfaction by allowing the release of excess energy in laughter (1976: 146-9). Gayle Hollander makes little distinction between different forms of joking, but applies the 'relief theory' very generally by suggesting that 'Together with political jokes, satirical articles provide one of the major outlets for frustration with the tensions of Soviet life' (1972: 66-67). Swearingen describes *Krokodil* in the same way: it served as 'a sort of escape valve through which people can blow off steam' (1961: 3). Alexander Rose regards Soviet political jokes as having a more overtly political function, suggesting that they were 'temporary pain relievers serving as a substitute for being allowed to participate in real politics' (2001-2: 68).[34] Davies concurs, viewing joking as a pastime that reveals otherwise hidden political truths (2010), and consequently, he argues, trends in the transmission of Soviet political *anekdoty* may be used as predictors of political crises (Davies 2011: 245-52). These explanations of *Krokodil* still regard the magazine as a state facility for achieving social control, however, which fails to acknowledge the significance of other functions, subordinates humour to other forms of authoritarian restriction, and overlooks the particular qualities of

---

[32] James C. Scott advocates this explanation (1990) and there is broad agreement in literature on various different fields. See also Hillenbrand (1995).

[33] See Larsen (1980), Davies (2007 and 2011), Mikes (1971: 109), Speier (1969: 182).

[34] Davies echoes this theory, calling them 'the aspirin of the people taken to suspend political pain' (2011: 248).

different forms of humour. The 'escape valve' interpretation has merit, however—the traditional 'Relief Theory', after all, applies to any type of humour. It represents an acknowledgement that the journal was responsive to the concerns of its readers, since a journal with this function would have joked about the topics that caused social or political tensions. It helps us to understand, moreover, why readers' letters were so highly valued by the magazine's editors (see Chapter 2).

More recently, some scholars have used Soviet humour to explain popular engagement with official discourses. These interpretations tend to use variants of the 'Incongruity Theory', which was first enunciated in Henri Bergson's *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic* (1900). Graham argues that the *anekdot* exploited and exposed 'Soviet diglossia' and emphasized the divergence between official discourse and everyday language. Indeed, as he suggests, many jokes self-referentially commented upon their own inconsequentiality (2009: 51). Alexei Yurchak views popular humour as a genre through which individuals could engage with the paradoxes inherent in Soviet official discourse and everyday life (2005: 277-281), and it becomes clear that Soviet popular humour is instructive about relationships between citizens and symbols of state power, rather than the state itself or its politicians. Humour, modern scholarship explains, is also important in illuminating relationships between citizens. For Jonathan Waterlow, for example, humour was an interpretive tool employed by Soviet citizens in the 1930s, which served as an alternative idiom that existed parallel with, and contested, state discourse (2014). Even these interpretations posit citizenry and official discourse in opposition to each other, however. In this thesis, I consider the extent to which humour could be both 'popular' and 'official'.

For some scholars in Soviet Studies, including studies of joke telling, it is conventional to distinguish between satire and humour, where satire refers to repression and humour is regarded as a form of resistance. Evgenii Dobrenko, for example, made such a distinction when he noted that 'the form of comedy that was the most organic fit for Stalinism, which eschewed humor [sic] and irony, was satire, which corresponded to the spirit of Stalinism by virtue of its inherent and profound conservatism' (2014b: 30).[35] By contrast, others suggest that laughter in support of

---

[35] Dobrenko makes the same distinction when he calls the 1930s a time of 'satirophobia', although he notes that 'situational' or 'lyrical comedies' were generally acceptable. See Dobrenko (2008: 118 and 123-4). Draitser similarly distinguishes between different types of humour (1989: 121-2).

the state cannot be satire, and thus exclude *Krokodil* from the realms of the satiric.[36] Robert C. Elliott likewise equates satire with political freedom, arguing that 'Under extreme conditions satire against the reigning order is out of the question; so canonical is this rule that political analysts use the amount and character of satire permitted in the Soviet Union as an indication of the relative intensity or relaxation of pressures there at any given time' (1960: 262-3).[37] Different types of humour are thus assumed to have had exclusive ideological valences in the USSR. Certainly, some well-known historical facts about the politics of Soviet culture support such a conclusion,[38] and this explanation fits with the narrative of the instrumentalisation of satire by the state that occurred in the 1930s.[39] Thereafter, this model suggests, the state's laughter became a tool of oppression.[40] In this framework, Sergei Oushakine identifies 'a particular version' of what Michel Foucault (1990) calls 'the repressive hypothesis' as the dominant explanation of satire in the USSR (2012: 192). This argument, Oushakine suggests, regards the Soviet regime as so unwilling to tolerate any criticism that it supervised a system of techniques, '[grouped] together in one great central mechanism destined to say no' (Foucault 1990: 12), and intended to suppress humorous and potentially subversive commentary. In general, the Soviet state's merciless response to criticism is not at issue here, but as this thesis will show, the repressive hypothesis provides only an incomplete explanation of humour and satire in the USSR.

---

[36] *Krokodil*'s exclusion is evidenced by its almost complete absence from the most important scholarly works on satire in the Soviet period. See Laursen (2013), Maus (2012), Ryan (2009), Chapple (1980), and Henry (1972).

[37] Elliott refers here to an article by Deutcher in *Dissent* (Winter 1955), which interpreted increasing amounts of political satire against the government as a favourable sign.

[38] Under Stalin, joking became very dangerous. Roy Medvedev claims that 200,000 people were convicted for joke telling (1979). The NKVD paid particular attention to jokers, as Waterlow's studies of case files shows (2012). Joking was imagined by secret policemen to have serious subversive political potential: 'Behind an anecdote there may lurk a Menshevik, Trotskyist, class enemy.' (Quoted in Davies (1997: 153)).

[39] Versions of this account appear in Peters (1990), Chapple (1980), and Henry (1972).

[40] Skradol argues that laughter was 'a consolidating force among those who gave voice to state power and was, therefore, also an integral part of the Stalinist legal system as a whole. Laughter is a crucial aspect of not only Stalinism but oppressive social structures in general' (2011: 335). The state's laughter might be shared with citizens, but in those circumstances it represented 'the safest way to affirm one's belonging to the group in control, to manifest one's complete surrender, mind and body, to an order of things that is established and maintained by an ad hoc and exceptional law' (2011: 348). Likewise, Dobrenko suggests that in Soviet theatre 'laughter—a transmuted form of fear—performed its basic function, which was to *terrorize*' Dobrenko (2014b: 60).

In their binarism, the majority of scholarly works on Soviet humour bundle together a series of assumptions, all of which are imbued with distinct moral judgements. Proceeding from the premise that satire normally functions by means of clear reference to universal moral standards, not the least of which is that it is a genre for the politically dispossessed,[41] many critics are averse to *Krokodil*'s satirical attacks being directed against 'the *dis*empowered rather than the empowered' (Tucker 2002: 12).[42] Likewise, Christie Davies argues that humour in state-sanctioned journals represented an extension of the government's tendency to divert blame and scapegoat the innocent.[43] This characterisation of *Krokodil*, its aims, satiric objects, and scope—which I term the 'list-of-targets' approach—remains the most commonly found in the literature.[44] This interpretation derives at least in part from the Soviet government's own prescriptions of the targets for the magazine, as expressed in the 1948 decree 'On the Work of the Magazine *Krokodil*' (also see Section 2.1.1):

> With the weapon of satire the magazine must unmask embezzlers of Socialist property, grafters, bureaucrats, and any instances of bragging, sycophancy or banality; it must respond promptly to controversial international events, must criticize the bourgeois culture of the West, showing up the insignificance and degeneracy of its ideas. (*Soviet Studies* 1950: 202).

Although scholars' lists of targets vary, many broadly accept this description, and it is frequently the basis for qualitative or political judgements about Soviet satire. Some have argued, for instance, that *Krokodil*'s immoral satire makes the magazine morally complicit with some of the crimes of the Soviet regime. A notable example, from outside the period of this study, concerns the anti-Semitism of certain cartoons about the so-called 'Doctors' Plot' in 1952-3 (see Figure 3).[45] This criticism over-

---

[41] This sentiment finds perhaps its best expression in the words of Molly Ivins, who said '(satire) has historically been the weapon of powerless people aimed at the powerful. When you use satire against powerless people[…] it is not only cruel, it's profoundly vulgar.' (1995). See also Lauchlan (2010).

[42] For many scholars, this inversion of the standard satirical pattern is what makes orthodox theories of humour inapplicable to *Krokodil*, and perhaps what makes the propaganda paradigm seem more appropriate. Here, as elsewhere in the thesis (unless otherwise noted), quotes containing italics appear as they do in the original.

[43] See Davies 2007 (298). For similar comments, see also Chamberlin (1957: 27), Oring (2004: 216), Sanders (1962: 22–27, and 1982: 21-29), and Talmadge (1943: 46).

[44] See Graham (2009: 10-11), Larsen (1980: 81), Stites (1992: 136) and Draitser (1994: 34).

[45] *Krokodil*'s contribution to the 'cosmopolitanism' campaign of the post-war years was '[to] its discredit', Alaniz comments (2011: 62), and its anti-Semitism 'could easily be mistaken' for Nazi attacks, according to Weiner (2012: 198). Rapoport, moreover, noted that cartoons like this

looks, and obviates the need to enquire into, the moral stances adopted by Soviet audiences, however, and it therefore must be approached with caution.

Figure 3: Kukryniksy. ***Traces of the crimes.*** **(*Sledy prestuplenii.*)**
***Krokodil* 1953: 3/16.**

In the eyes of *Krokodil*'s 'moral' critics, these crimes are compounded by the magazine's ostensible 'blindness' to Soviet leader figures and to many of the most serious problems and failures of the Soviet state, which were so obvious to critical commentators. Graham cites a Soviet émigré, who wrote in 1932 that 'the "arrows" of official Soviet satire did not reach higher than "the secretary of a factory Party cell," that above that level there was a strict taboo on satirizing officials' (2009: 11). For Stites and others, the failure of Soviet satirical 'arrows' to penetrate a ceiling imposed from above was what defined Soviet satire: 'they could strike out at social abuses but not at the system' (2010: 351-2). Kavalerov also suggests that 'certain topics such as The Party Itself, Party Leadership and Party Doctrine' were off limits for official satirists (1971: 9).

Criticisms of *Krokodil* on moral grounds betray certain assumptions about the universalism of the role of satire. Judging *Krokodil* against a generalised set of moral norms is not only a rather out-dated approach to criticism of satire (Griffin 1994: 35-37; Bogel 2012: 81-2), but it is also to miss a series of more important points. On one hand, in a state that systematised mass terror and had no effective checks on power, a lack of sanctioned jokes about the Soviet leadership and a 'strict

'would have done honor to the Black Hundred press of tsarist times, which nauseated even conservatives of pre-revolutionary days (1991: 80).

taboo' on ridiculing individual government officials is neither surprising nor the most significant moral turpitude. On the other hand, it is a gross oversimplification to imply that caricaturing a politician's physical form represents the most effective satire. Moreover, a study of the practice of creating satirical critiques in *Krokodil*, in fact, reveals that the journal was far from blind. *Krokodil* adopted an independent standpoint in some respects, making significant criticisms of the Soviet Union's leading figures. As Section 3.2 of this thesis demonstrates, although Soviet satirists rarely depicted their political leaders, *Krokodil* at times found it possible to visualise and lampoon the leading political authorities. Moreover, even when politicians were not the subject of jokes or cartoons in the magazine, I argue that they were always present. In a media environment where images of Soviet leaders were ubiquitous, they could never truly be absent. The number of jokes and cartoons about subjects that were associated with government policy and the problems experienced everyday by citizens amounted to a criticism of policy itself. Furthermore, as I show through-out my thesis, the magazine's apparent silences and blind spots are instructive about the nature of Soviet graphic satire, revealing the boundaries of acceptability in satiri-cal commentary in Soviet official publications. My analysis of some of these im-portant images in the magazine is intended to enrich our understanding of Soviet satirical discourse by highlighting *Krokodil*'s exploration of these boundaries. My analysis reveals that they were not as sharply or as narrowly defined as the existing literature suggests.

More broadly, although it is appealing in some ways, the binary model of Soviet humour is flawed. As Alexei Yurchak shows, a binary model of support and resistance is generally not helpful for understanding Soviet citizens' views and lives in the post-Stalin period (1997), and it is no more useful for explaining laughter in the Thaw era. It is complicated, for one thing, by the limited available evidence on the comic tastes of either Soviet citizens or their political leaders. Nothing suggests that the Soviet political elite eschewed 'popular' humour. In fact, there is evidence to the contrary, suggesting that a third type of laughter existed. Waterlow indicates the existence of a 'repertoire of shared humour' (2015: 204). Memoirs suggest that state employees enjoyed the same jokes as anyone else.[46] Furthermore, biographers

---

[46] Vitalii Vitaliev recalls that party apparatchiks enjoyed satirical theatre performances during the Brezhnev years: 'Usually half of the seats for every performance were booked by the Central Committee of the Communist Party! They liked jokes about themselves, apart from the stupidest ones. And now that all these documents have been declassified from the Soviet archives, it turns out that even Brezhnev actually liked jokes about himself, and allegedly even invented some.' (quoted in Carpenter 2000: 137).

note the crudeness of both Stalin's and Khrushchev's senses of humour.[47] There is no record that Stalin or his leadership enjoyed reading *Krokodil*, but as Vatlin and Malashenko show, they took pleasure in caricaturing each other and producing crude satirical cartoons (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Bukharin, N. 1928. Caricature (Joseph Stalin).
Vatlin and Malashenko (2006: 19).

In 1959 and 1961, Khrushchev several times commented on the needs of Soviet satire.[48] Despite these calls, Khrushchev was apparently uninterested in *Krokodil*. When he was introduced to Malcolm Muggeridge at a cocktail party at the British Embassy in February 1959, Khrushchev admitted that 'he was not much amused by *Krokodil*…His grandchildren made him look at it, he said, and—what was worse—(had to) explain the jokes' (Hunter 2003: 211). Whether this was because of the journal's puerilism or because Khrushchev was out of touch, we do not know.

Finally, the distinction between 'official' and 'popular' humour—one dating from the Cold War and based upon the assumptions of the propaganda paradigm—disallows any possibility of a third category. It fails to explain why, for example, if *Krokodil*'s humour was unamusing, the magazine remained popular, why the editors were content to produce an unamusing humour magazine, and why there were no demands to improve the quality of the humour in the magazine after the Central Committee's admonition of *Krokodil*'s editors in 1951 (see Section 2.1.1). Further-more, by categorizing humour in terms of 'professional' or 'amateur', these explana-tions overlook the possibility that amateur producers might be published in

---

[47] Stalin's sense of humour is described by Service (2005: 575) and Brackman (2004: 311). Taubman refers to Khrushchev's sense of humour (2003: 38, 80-81, 351).

[48] His comments from 1959 are discussed in Section 1.1, and those from 1961 are covered in Section 2.2.2.2.

professional media. The significance of this kind of production is explored in Section 2.1.2. These interpretations also ignore the chances of a joke that originated in one field migrating (with or without amendments) to another. Cross-overs of satirical strategies and characterisation between official and popular spheres have been explored by some scholars,[49] and Robert Thurston shows how Soviet official humour in the 1930s tried to cater to popular taste in humour and explains that 'it complemented and contributed to their private folklore' (1991: 554); nevertheless such is the power of the orthodoxy separating official and popular humour that interactions between the two are almost entirely unexplored. In fact, my study of *Krokodil* reveals that a reconceptualization of the realm of political discourse is necessary, in order to recognise the interaction of different influences.

More recent studies of Soviet media have been less convinced of the importance of ideology and propaganda, instead taking poststructuralist approaches that investigated 'plural' activities and influences. Wolfe (2005), Huxtable (2012) and Kozlov (2013), for example, use literary and journalistic texts, editorial meeting minutes, reader responses and interviews to bring new insights into Soviet media production. Consequently, we now understand newspapers, for example, as two-way channels 'of both instruction and engagement' administered by journalists who became 'part of the enormous collective effort to ensure that all the texts and images of the newspaper page were ultimately an assemblage of teachings' (Wolfe 2005: 18). Soviet printed media, especially, may now be seen as sites for discursive engagement between journalists and readers with the most important political issues. This thesis also takes this type of approach to Soviet media. As the title of this thesis suggests, Soviet graphic satire aspired to educate its readers, but in my view *Krokodil* was more than simply an 'assemblage of teachings' since, as this thesis will show, it eschewed didacticism and encouraged in its readers a greater degree of active participation and individual engagement than this analogy implies.

c) Interpreting Krokodil's Visual Satire

The scholarship on *Krokodil* magazine suffers from a dearth of literature on state-sanctioned satire. In recent years, however, a hermeneutics of Soviet visual satire has begun to develop. Exhibitions in Russia, the USA and Britain have all raised the profile of Soviet graphic satire and the genre's leading artists.[50] In Russia, increased

---

[49] See Laursen (2013) and Mesropova (2008: 2-3).

[50] In Russia, 'Merry Pictures: The First Russian Comics' ran at the Tretiakov Gallery, Moscow, 15 December 2010 until 20 February 2011. 'Classic Soviet Cartoons' ran at the Moscow Central

interest in Soviet and pre-revolutionary graphic satire has led to the publication or reproduction of several important works.[51] In 2015, the encyclopaedic *History through the Eyes of Krokodil* (*Istoriia glazami Krokodila* 2014-15) was crowd-funded online and received significant support, which is testament not only to a degree of nostalgia for *Krokodil* and the USSR, but also to popular interest in the cartoon form. This popular interest in *Krokodil* has to a degree preceded modern scholarly consideration, but it is indicative of a greater willingness in the post-Soviet period to recognise the validity of approaches to the magazine that are not dominated by Cold War politics.

Less politicised textual interpretations of *Krokodil* have appeared in scholarly literature in recent years. Mike O'Mahony's use of satirical cartoons from *Krokodil* and other publications, and his analysis of individual texts suggests how methodologies aimed at exploring the aesthetics of political cartoons might extend our appreciation of Soviet graphic satire (2006). José Alaniz, likewise, takes an approach that suggests the broader value of the journal, placing *Krokodil* at a crucial moment in the prehistory of modern Russian comics culture (2010: 67). *Krokodil*'s productiveness is not generally acknowledged, but Alaniz notes the magazine's aesthetics and explains how it 'fully exploited caricature and strips to define a sensibility'. For Alaniz, *Krokodil*'s humour 'had a cynical edge, reflecting a worldview that looked on foreign exploiters and domestic shirkers with a jaundiced eye' and this approach—'on the side of the "little man" against power, be it for or against Soviet orthodoxy'—was the key to its popularity (2010: 50). Alaniz's study of Rus-

---

Artists' House between 9 and 12 June 2012. 'Vitalii Goriaev: Artist and the War' ran at the New Manege Gallery from 16 to 30 May 2012. 'Laughter from the Audience' ran as part of the 6th Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art at the Moscow Showrooms between 21 October and 31 December. 'Kingdom of Crooked Mirrors: From the history of the domestic cartoons' ran at Russia's National Library from 21 January to 25 February 2016. In USA, 'Views and Re-Views' was held at the David Winton Bell Gallery and the John Hay Library Gallery between 6 September and 19 October 2008. 'Windows on the War: Soviet TASS posters at Home and Abroad, 1941-45' ran at the Chicago Art Institute from 31 July until 23 October 2011. In Britain, 'Drawing the Curtain: Soviet Cartoons from the Cold War' was hosted by Guardian News and Media from 19 January until 16 February 2012 and by Pushkin House from 6 to 16 March 2012. Soviet cartoons also appeared in 'Propaganda and Persuasion' at the British Library between 17 May and 17 September 2013, and 'Rude Britannia: British Comic Art' at Tate Britain between 9 June and 5 September 2010. Numerous other exhibitions have run elsewhere, notably 'Forced Laughter: An Exhibition of 105 Cartoons by Boris Efimov' at the Nová Síň Gallery, Prague, between 6 and 30 October 2005.

[51] A history of Russian and Soviet cartoons appeared under the title *Russian Cartoons, 1812-1985* (*Russkaia karikatura, 1812-1985*) in 2006. A collection of cartoons by the artist Herman Ogorodnikov entitled *Krokodil…and Not Only* (*Krokodil…i ne tol'ko*) was published in 2011. Vasilii Vereshchagin's 3-volume collection entitled *Russian Cartoons* (*Russkaia karikatura*; 1911-1913) was reprinted in 2013.

so-Soviet graphic art is therefore unique in acknowledging the magazine's political bias and its appeal, and it is invaluable for showing the influence of earlier forms upon the development of Soviet political cartoons, and for exploring the legacy of *Krokodil* for Russian comics art.

Alaniz's approach is to consider the intertextual connections between Soviet visual satire and Russian comics over a long period. Although my objectives differ, Alaniz's work exemplifies the kind of re-evaluation of the magazine that I advocate in this thesis. The limitations of the existing literature, outlined above, require that we take a new approach to *Krokodil* magazine, which goes even beyond Alaniz's. In order to reconsider the forms, nature and functions of the journal, I aim to develop our understanding of Soviet graphic satire by reassessing the journal in light of existing literature and employing poststructuralist theories.

iii. Theoretical and Empirical Base of This Thesis

Much of my investigation is based on a critique of what might be called 'official' Soviet theories of satire. According to authoritative sources in the Soviet Union, satire was interpreted as:

> [A] form of the comic, in which the object described (and criticised) receives a ruthless, devastating reinterpretation that is resolved by laughter, open or concealed ("muffled"); a specific method of artistic reproduction of reality, in which images that evoke laughter and ridicule (the formal aspect of art) are used to reveal the distorted, absurd, internally unstable character of reality (the content aspect). (Vulis 1973: 642)

In the USSR, satire also foregrounded an unambiguously political aspect: it was regularly described as 'an essential weapon in the social struggle' (Vulis 1973: 642), following a 1931 speech by Lunacharsky. Anatolii Vasil'evich Lunacharskii (1875-1933; first Soviet People's Commissar for Enlightenment, 1917-1929) stressed laughter's combative and cohesive qualities in *On Laughter*: 'Laughter is a weapon—and a very serious weapon at that—of social self-discipline of a particular social class' (quoted in Oushakine 2012: 202). Lunacharsky's arguments became standard explanations for the value of satire in Soviet society, and for Soviet visual satire in particular. Boris Efimov was the most prolific commentator on the nature of Soviet cartoon art, and he likewise consistently described visual satire as a weapon that 'battles for or subverts something' and 'mercilessly strikes, combats, and exposes all that is hostile and dangerous to its [societal] spirit and morals' (quoted in Norris 2013: 52). As the *Great Bolshevik Encyclopaedia* notes, caricature is 'the main form of graphic satire and is clearly ideological and socially critical in content' (Sternin 1973: 134).

While, as I have suggested, existing works on *Krokodil* differentiate the journal from other areas of study, they do not employ alternative theoretical frameworks with which to consider the journal. Swearingen (1961), Tempest (1943) and Fitzpatrick (1999) are all typical of an approach that treats cartoons no differently from written or spoken anecdotes, for example. Richard Stites, outlining the uniformity of Soviet propaganda content, discusses literary fiction, a Radio Moscow broadcast and *Krokodil* cartoons in the same terms, without references to any differences between media (2010: 359). Even Benson, whose methodology involves the study of cartoons, makes no mention of picture theory (2012).

My approach, by contrast, is to consider *Krokodil* in relation to theories of political cartoons and other graphic satire. Political cartoon theory remains rather under-developed, despite recent interest and the deep historical roots of the art form. The production of satirical imagery is almost as old as art itself, and modern graphic satire has been produced in Europe since the fifteenth century. The political cartoon's broad significance was indicated by the convocation of a special United Nations-sponsored seminar, at which Secretary-General Kofi Annan noted that they 'have a special role in forming public opinion—because an image generally has a stronger, more direct impact on the brain than a sentence does' (2007)[52]. Political cartoons, moreover, reflect opinions, provide insights into the depths of opinions, and teach us about opinion-formation in the societies in which they are produced (Kemnitz 1973: 81-6). Nevertheless, satirical cartoons were long the victims of scholarly neglect. As W.A. Coupe notes, cartoons fall into 'a peculiar no-man's-land where several disciplines meet' and so attract scorn from purists (1969: 79). For one of the form's advocates, 'caricatures are neither more nor less embedded in a definite historical context than are state portraits or altar paintings', and for this reason 'neglect of this imagery by the art historian cannot reasonably be defended' (Gombrich 1963: 120).[53] Despite increased interest in graphic satire, modern scholars have been castigated for being 'blind to the visual' (Porter 1988: 188) and for failing

---

[52] The 'Unlearning Intolerance: Cartooning for Peace' Seminar was held at UN Headquarters in New York on 16 October 2006.

[53] Gombrich's terminology reflects one of the problems associated with studying political cartoons. Caricature is extensively studied as a mode of artistic expression, although 'caricature' and 'cartoon' are often used as if they are synonymous. For analyses of caricature, see Ashbee (1928), Gombrich and Kris (1940), Hoffman (1957), Gombrich (1963, 1977), Lucie-Smith (1981), Gould (ed.) (1981), Lambourne (1983), McPhee and Orenstein (2011), Porterfield (2011). For analysis of the political cartoon, See Low (1935), Geipel (1972), Press (1981), King and Porter (1983), McKenna (2001), Althaus (2012), Navasky (2013). The terminological distinctions I draw in this thesis are discussed in Section v.

to allow graphic satire 'a historical status beyond the illustrative or the evidential' (Maidment 2001: 1).

My analysis of *Krokodil* is based on political cartoon theories, many of which are influenced by structuralist urges to reduce cultural codes to minimal units so as to systematise artistic representations. In 1967, for instance, Lawrence Streicher called for a theory of political caricature that provided 'some kind of construct of the "language of caricature"' which categorised the elements of graphic satire 'used for particular purposes of persuasion' (1967: 428). Scholarship on graphic satire had hitherto broadly followed either psychoanalytic or sociological approaches. The psychoanalytic method of Ernst Kris (1952), and his colleague Ernst Gombrich (Gombrich and Kris 1940) derived from Sigmund Freud's *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*, and it explored how artists' visual techniques '*mythologize the world of politics by physiognomizing it*' (1963: 139). Sociological approaches interpret deeper sociological meanings in cartoon texts.[54] Ray Morris, for instance, studies binary oppositions such as male-female, adult-child and English-French in cartoons' rhetoric (through devices including condensation, combination, opposition, and carnivalization) in order to explore the portrayal of singular and collective identities (1993). Similar binaries are explored by Gamson and Stuart, who view cartoons as a media arena in which competing discourses advance opposing interpretations (1992).

The structuralist urge in studies of political cartoons is further manifested in the classifications of cartoons. In studies of cartoons in the USSR, numerous works have undertaken content analyses,[55] although in many non-Soviet studies, the focus has been upon understanding communicative strategies through classification of different visual techniques.[56] Even where aesthetic choices are the object of study, cartoons still form data for political science analyses on particular issues or events,[57] which provides much richer pictures of the events without advancing our understanding of the cartoon form. Although most sociological studies consider European

---

[54] See Bogardus (1945), Streicher (1965 and 1967), Coupe (1967 and 1969) and Alba (1967).

[55] See McKenna (2001), Nelson (1949), Milenkovitch (1966) and Becker (2002).

[56] See Morris (1993), Medhurst and DeSousa (1981)

[57] Recent examples include studies of cartoon representations of Aids in South African cartoons (Wigston 2002), of George H. Bush's Secretary of the Interior (Bostdorff 1987), of Muslims and Arabs after 9/11 (Diamond 2002), and of Hurricane Katrina (Romano and Westgate 2007).

or American contexts, and an increasing number look elsewhere,[58] no similar re-search has considered the Soviet context.

A third approach to political cartoons—the communicative paradigm[59]—explores individual symbols or representational techniques. Many modern studies may be described as 'communicative' in their approach, although they borrow psychoanalytical and sociological tools. The focus upon visual language, which is high-ly influenced by dominant trends in Comics Studies,[60] has been at once both highly productive and rather restrictive. Such structuralist studies have provided a vocabu-lary for political cartoon scholars and highlighted the importance of aesthetic and communicative distinctions between different levels of graphic abstraction (see Figure 5 and Figure 6). Many works on political cartoons display a fascination with how far graphics can be understood as a form of visual language.[61]
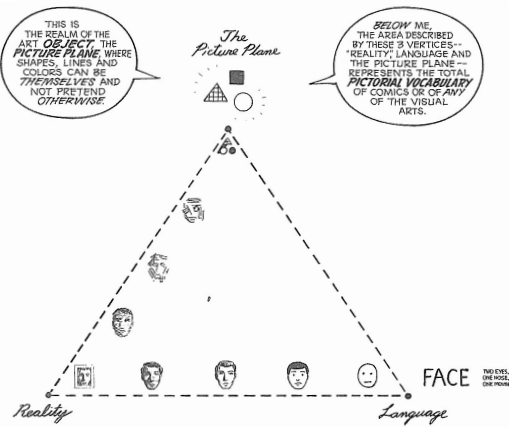
Figure 5: *The Picture Plane.*
McCloud (1994: 51).
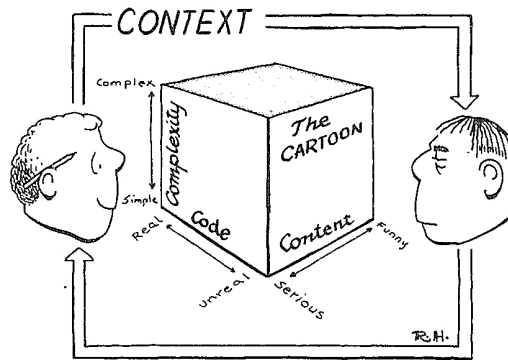
Figure 6: *Cartoon Context, Code, Complexity,*
and Content.
Harrison (1981: 19).

Analysing *Krokodil*'s graphic satire discredits the notion that a single framework might explain every cartoonist's trick,[62] and the idea that a political

---

[58] See Edwards and Ware (2005), Han (2006), Najjar (2007), Eko (2007), Udoaka (2003), Townsend, McDonald and Esders (2008), Willems (2011) and Sani, Abdullah, Abdullah and Ali (2012).

[59] See Gombrich (1960, 1963, 1977), Morrison (1969), Bormann, Koester and Bennett (1978), Cahn (1984).

[60] Important recent works on this subject include McCloud (1994), Saraceni (2003) and Cohn (2013).

[61] See Tsakona (2009), Morris (1993) and El Refaie (2009).

[62] Coupe notes that the diversity of types of political cartoons makes it doubtful 'whether it will ever be possible to fit such a vast collection of topics, each embracing a number of variables and pre-senting us with a mass of contradictions, into a meaningful theoretical framework which effec-tively transcends the simple statement that "Some folks do, some folks don't"' (1969: 79).

cartoon constrains a single, monologic and unambiguous meaning. Meaning in political cartoons is, after all, derived from the interaction of at least two forms of language. The cartoon is, of course, a 'speech-aided' medium (Murawska-Muthesius 2000: 150). Forceville suggests that the reader's encyclopaedic 'world knowledge' combines with the linguistic context to reconcile potential ambiguities when inter-preting the visual (1994). Kress and Van Leeuwen prefer to see text and image as being constantly in interaction and intermeshing with each other (1996: 40), with the boundaries of the verbal context being located spatially or temporally close to the image in question. Even Roland Barthes' highly influential theory of image-text relations, which argues that the meaning of an image may be 'fixed' by language (1977: 39), fails to account for the destabilising effects of ironic contradictions, humour or visual and verbal metaphors. Considering visual metaphors in cartoons, Elisabeth El Refaie notes this complexity when she suggests 'the boundaries be-tween the literal and the metaphorical are fuzzy and highly context-dependent' (2003: 75). The role of visual and verbal humour is an area of scholarly interest for some,[63] but the destabilising effects of satire on cartoons, which have not been in-vestigated, lead me to doubt the comprehensiveness of a structuralist analysis of *Krokodil* cartoons.

In this thesis, therefore, although my approach owes much to the structuralist tradition, I attempt to extend our understanding of *Krokodil*'s graphic satire by employing poststructuralist theories. By 'poststructuralist', I mean an approach that explains *Krokodil*'s satire by looking beyond binaries, hierarchies, structures and boundaries. Instead, I seek multiple interpretations and ambiguities in cartoon texts. I look to the magazine in order to understand the nature of its satire, rather than to outside power structures. I do not, however, assume that creative power was restrict-ed within the magazine's network of professional producers, and I look beyond *Krokodil*'s own structures for sites of creative power and agency. I even consider how the magazine's own aesthetic power worked through the construction of Soviet subjectivity. Much of the inspiration for this poststructuralist approach derives from an epistemology based on the assumption that the author of a political cartoon al-ways leaves the act of interpretation to the reader, since both are absent. The text's agency, in the absence of creator and reader is, according to poststructuralist thought, always essential to written communication (Derrida 1977: 5-6). Pictures of course depend upon absence in the same way, and this is one of the reasons why W.J.T. Mitchell argues that 'pictures form a point of peculiar friction and discomfort

---

[63] See Attardo and Chabanne (1992) and Samson and Huber (2007).

across a broad range of intellectual inquiry' (1994: 13). Also absent from a political cartoon is at least one important logical element. As Medhurst and DeSousa's 'Taxonomy of Graphic Discourse' (1981) shows, the political cartoon is always a visual first order enthymeme (1981: 204)—a syllogism or argument that is incompletely stated, in which one of the premises or the conclusion is tacitly present but not expressed (Cohen and Nagel 1993: 78).[64] The partial or complete absence of at least one meaningful element from the composition is therefore a defining characteristic of the cartoon. The slipperiness of cartoon theory is ascribable at least in part to this absent element, which always escapes definition.

As I explore in Chapter 3, poststructuralist interpretation of cartoon theory suggests important lessons about the agency of a visual text. Indeed, the worldwide debate about the cartoon's ability to cause offence and provoke action (following recent events involving political cartoons) echoes Derrida's argument that any utterance, once materialised, possesses a performative force of its own (1977). Although the existing literature has not explored the performative force of political cartoons, it is clear from a study of *Krokodil* that cartoons have always been conceived as possessing this power. Most recently, the veracity of this assertion was shockingly demonstrated by the worldwide controversy following the publication of cartoons picturing the Prophet Mohammed in the *Jyllands-Posten* newspaper in September 2005, and by two terrorist attacks on the French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* (in November 2011 and in January 2015), which focussed attention on the nature of graphic satire.[65] In 2015, after the shootings at the *Charlie Hebdo* offices, cartoonists worldwide responded with cartoons that employed pen-as-weapon metaphor (see Figure 7). These descriptions echo Soviet theories about the political role of Soviet caricature in general and *Krokodil* in particular. As I discuss in Section 1.3.1, the red crocodile is often pictured carrying a trident as an offensive weapon (see

---

[64] Cohen and Nagel provide the example: '[t]his medicine cured my daughter's cough; therefore this medicine will cure mine. The inference is valid on the tacit admission of the major premise: Whatever is a cure for my daughter's cough is a cure for mine.' (1993: 78)

[65] In some contexts, the cartoon's potential to provoke a response has been praised: historically, cartoons have been important in visualising dissenting opinions against unjust regimes (Keane 2008: 857), and some commentators assert that cartoonists' work may be a barometer for a society's democratic freedoms (Keane 2008: 874, and Laxman 1989). The Cartoonists' Rights Network International monitors the activities of cartoonists around the world and in November 2015 alone it reported the politically motivated incarceration of cartoonists in Iran, Algeria and Malaysia.

Figure 8), and Soviet conceptions of graphic satire included pen-as-weapon metaphors (see Figure 9).[66]

Figure 7: Acharya, S. 2015. *The Little Weapon*. [Twitter] 6 January.
[Accessed 10/2/15.] Available from: https: //twitter.com/

Figure 8: Gorokhov, E. *Picking mush-
rooms… (*Po griby…*)*
***Krokodil* 1956: 27.1.**

Figure 9: Kukryniksy. Druzheskii sharzh (M.M.
Cheremnykh).
***Krokodil* 1960: 30/15.**

Conversely, the freedom to express opinions in graphic satire has broadened considerations of hate speech to include cartoons (Keane 2008: 862-7) and attracted the interest of the United Nations (2006). Cartoons, and caricatures in particular, have long been recognised as possessing the ability and the right to cause offence. Kris and Gombrich describe pictures 'intended to perpetuate in graphic form a hostile

---

[66] The red crocodile also used a bow and arrow (1960: 1/1-16),

action, injury, degradation or shame' (1938: 340). The British cartoonist Martin Rowson said of cartoons:

> it's about deep, dark magic—and not just because caricature can be described as a type of voodoo—doing damage to someone at a distance with a sharp object, albeit in this case with a pen. (2009: 33).

In Chapter 3, I conceptualise the political cartoon as a medium possessing performative force, in order to explain how visual satire engaged with and constituted public discourses.

Political cartoons always have the potential to cause 'supercharged outrage' (Navasky 2013: xv), but particularly hostile responses to *Charlie Hebdo* in January and November 2015 suggest a special sensitivity to the injurious power of cartoons in Russia. A reported 30% of Russians believed that *Charlie Hebdo*'s journalists brought terrorist attacks upon themselves (Moscow Times 2015). Moreover, when the magazine published cartoons in response to the destruction of Russian Metrojet A321, the hash tag '#Ianesharli'[67] became the most popular on Russian social media and the Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova wrote on her Facebook page: 'Is anyone still Charlie?' (Russia Today 2016). Commenting upon the publication of such cartoons, and stressing Russia's unique reaction to it, Vladimir Putin's press secretary noted that '[i]n our country, this would be called "blasphemy"' (Russia Today 2015). This belief in the offensive power of graphic satire is partly explained by the politics of the Russian state under Putin, but is also perhaps caused by a latent faith in the transformative power of images.[68] Russian art, John Berger notes, places value on 'truth and purpose rather than on aesthetic pleasure' (1969: 21) and thereby displays the legacy of the Orthodox tradition of transcendent iconography. Modern media discourse on the *Charlie Hebdo* cartoons[69] also reveals the legacy of the Soviet state's use of graphic satire to ridicule and defame.

<p style="text-align:center">* * *</p>

---

[67] This is a reference, rendered in Russian on Twitter as '#янешарли' ('I am not Charlie'), to the popularity of the slogan 'Je suis Charlie' following the January 2015 attack on the magazine's Paris offices.

[68] Kivelson and Neuberger (2008: 6-11) explore the transformative power of the visual in Russian culture.

[69] Some debate on these cartoons' offensiveness occurred in the cartoon medium. Russian Senator Valentina Petrenko publicly unveiled an anti-*Charlie Hebdo* cartoon (see https: //vk.com/wall-29534144_2430284), and numerous anti-*Charlie* cartoons were published or shared by pro-Kremlin groups on social media.

In studying political cartoons practical difficulties are as much a handicap as prob-
lems of interpretation. Despite being mechanically reproduced by the million, politi-
cal cartoons are ephemeral, fugacious and—most important—unindexed. As such,
they remain inaccessible for most scholars, usable only as decontextualized illustra-
tions or evidence of particular opinions on certain events. In *Krokodil*'s case, only
one archival *fond* exists in Russian state archives,[70] and no other archive of material
relating to the magazine is in public hands. The primary evidence base for this study
is therefore instead drawn from the 396 issues of the magazine published between
January 1954 and December 1964, each of which contained an average of 25 imag-
es. From a database of almost 10,000 images, I created sub-collections comprising
works on important themes, from every issue published between 1954-1964. Many
existing studies make little reference to specific images, and others rely heavily upon
the magazine's high profile images—those that appeared in full-colour and large
scale. By contrast, I examined trends in my sub-collections and selected the most
representative images. I also consulted issues of *Krokodil* from outside the period
1954-1964 and other visual satire publications from pre-Revolutionary and post-
Soviet Russia. My contribution to the scholarship on *Krokodil* is therefore based on
an evidence base substantially larger than any previous study.

Issues of *Krokodil* magazines came from three sources: libraries, my private
collection, and online repositories. At the beginning of the research process, the
majority of issues consulted were hard bound in annual collections.[71] Some were
near-pristine, but age, paper grade, binding quality and accidental damage worsened
the condition of individual issues: some were trimmed by the binder, while others
are stained, stamped or annotated with subscriber's details,[72] or defaced. By 2015,
digitized copies of almost every issue of *Krokodil* were accessible. A *Krokodil* page
(http: //old-crocodile.livejournal.com/) on the LiveJournal network contains material
related to the magazine and its artists.[73] The *Ne Boltai!* online gallery (http:

---

[70] RGALI, the Russian State Archive of Literature and Art in Moscow, contains *fond* 600, including
the papers of the Editors of *Krokodil*, 1922-1942.

[71] Many institutions in the USSR and abroad held subscriptions to the magazine, and had their
magazines bound once all thirty-six issues had been received. Individual subscribers also had
their annual collections bound. I have consulted collections that originated as far afield as the
Slavic Institute of the Karl Marx University, Leipzig, and the Library of the University of Can-
terbury, New Zealand.

[72] This is the case with Figure 3 and Figure 25.

[73] Another site (http: //www.cartoon-twins.ru/) also hosts digitised issues of *Krokodil* and *Biblioteka
Krokodila*.

//www.neboltai.org/) hosts preliminary drafts and original artwork for images that appeared in *Krokodil* and other Soviet publications. Finally, in April 2015, a complete collection of *Krokodil* magazine (1922-2004) became available via online subscription.[74] These online repositories, indicating revived interest in Soviet graphic satire, provided most of the images used in this thesis.

iv. The Objectives and Structure of This Thesis

The overarching research questions in this thesis relate to *Krokodil*'s satirical vision, the expressive means employed by the magazine and the interpretive possibilities suggested by its graphic satirical comment. How did *Krokodil* combine the serious business of Soviet ideology with making jokes? I seek to bridge structuralist and poststructuralist methodologies, and in doing so I will reconsider *Krokodil* and extend our understanding beyond the propaganda paradigm.

In **Chapter 1**, I conduct a broad exploration of the framework within which *Krokodil* operated, and begin to explore how the magazine's satirical critiques were formulated graphically. As I have suggested, the magazine's satire has so far exclusively been understood through the boundaries that delineated the celebrated from the satirised. In this chapter I explore the particular schemata that characterised the magazine's dominant visual communicative modes, challenging the conventional binary explanation for understanding *Krokodil*'s visual language. Most studies of *Krokodil* consider only two types of *Krokodil*'s images—those that 'contested' non-Soviet ideologies and those that 'affirmed' Soviet ideology. I will also analyse and evaluate a third group of images, identified and delineated for the first time, in this study: those that depicted Soviet society in the process of 'becoming' Soviet.

I aim to explore the origins of, and influences upon, *Krokodil* magazine's aesthetic, with the intention of producing a more rounded picture of the journal's heritages than previously presented. In my consideration of *Krokodil*'s theatrical and pre-revolutionary satirical predecessors I intend to investigate how far the magazine may be viewed simply as a product of the Soviet political project.

Finally in the first chapter, I aim to understand the nature of *Krokodil*'s satire, and to establish *how* the magazine *could* be funny. Measuring humour is impossible, especially so far from the original context, and I will not attempt to. In any

---

[74] The archive is provided by EastView.com.

case, the lack of reader response research means that no data exists.[75] It will be enough, then, to identify where humour may still be found in the magazine. Furthermore, it is not my intention to compare *Krokodil*'s humour with that found outside it, or to elevate one form above the other, but I shall be content to highlight the areas where sanctioned satire overlapped with illicit humour, since, as Mesropova notes, both 'official' and 'popular' modes predominantly favoured Juvenalian criticisms (2008: 3). In contrast with most existing studies, which do not define the satire found in *Krokodil*, my analysis will suggest in Section 1.4 that the journal may be more profitably understood as a Menippean satire.

In **Chapter 2**, I investigate the magazine's relationship with political authorities, and the journal's production processes. Is there any evidence that the journal functioned as the mouthpiece for 'official propaganda', or was its relationship with political authority more complex than that? I consider the magazine's editors' unique authorial position by studying the textual and extra-textual role of the eponymous red crocodile character. Moreover, I also consider how the magazine's production process reveals *Krokodil*'s exploration of the boundaries of permissible discourse.

In order to extend our understanding of the production and consumption of *Krokodil*, I propose a new framework informed by poststructuralism. Positing that *Krokodil* was produced as a result of 'co-creation' by professional and 'prosumer' producers, I investigate the magazine's production dynamic and the effects of the creation of a Soviet satirical 'transmedia' phenomenon. Employing transmedia theory, I show that the printed pages of the magazine did not represent the boundaries of the text: *Krokodil*'s content was distributed across several media, beyond the material confines of the journal. Transmedia theory also reveals how *Krokodil* may be understood in relation to new methods of producing meaning. Following Marshall McLuhan, Dick Higgins and Henry Jenkins, I consider how meaning was created across and between media. Bolshevik culture aspired to be a mosaic of cultural forms assimilated from all previous cultures and refashioned to suit proletarian material conditions.[76] This kind of cultural scavenging and the incorporation of

---

[75] Interestingly, while many newspaper and magazines surveyed their readers, *Krokodil*'s audience was apparently not studied. See Hollander (1972: 62-69) for details of such studies.

[76] This is signaled in Lenin's 'On Proletarian Culture' (1920) and in his Plan for Monumental Propaganda, April 1918. The Bolsheviks borrowed cultural heroes as diverse as Karl Marx, Aleksandr Herzen, Maximilien Robespierre, Spartacus, Frederic Chopin, Paul Cezanne, Lord Byron, Francois Voltaire, Giuseppe Garibaldi and Rosa Luxemburg (Bonnell 1997: 138), and memorialised them in diverse styles.

diverse elements (when applied to modern media consumers) would be called 'hunting and gathering' (Jenkins 2006: 179) or 'foraging' (Rose 2011: 147). *Krokodil* embodied this cross-media approach in its inter- and extra-textual extensions, and it continued the tradition inaugurated in this early Soviet cultural tendency to absorb influences and content from various sources. Considering *Krokodil* as a transmedia product which was the outcome of a co-creative production process allows me to challenge interpretations that present *Krokodil* as a unidirectional conveyor, and propose a new interpretation of the magazine as a site for dialogic and cooperative interaction between state-employed media professionals and readers that changes our perception of *Krokodil* and in turn allows us to rethink the nature of satire, laughter, graphic art, media and representations of politics in the USSR.

In **Chapter 3**, I propose a performative paradigm for interpreting Soviet satire. Beginning with an exploration of how ideology was constructed in different types of cartoon in *Krokodil*, Chapter 3 considers the performative construction of ideological meaning. Comparing the performance of ideology in images that contested anti-Soviet ideologies, and those that affirmed the Soviet political project, I aim to understand the magazine's satirical vision. My exploration of the depiction and non-depiction of Soviet leaders shows that it is inaccurate to suggest that Soviet leaders were unrepresentable in 'positive' Soviet satire. I aim to provide a more nuanced and more accurate understanding of *Krokodil*'s visualisation of Soviet leaders. The apparent dearth of images of political leaders prompts interesting questions about the destabilising consequences of this ostensible absence. I show that post-Stalin satirical visions of Soviet society were more pluralistic. In The Thaw, *Krokodil* visualised social types who had not appeared before, and the magazine used satire as a means of re-viewing the recent Soviet past, including the most traumatic episodes of the Stalin period. In the Kukryniksy cartoon from March 1953 (see Figure 10), for example, the message about romanticising or forgetting the past explicitly refers to an alliance between the United States and Nazi Germany, but an analogy with the Stalin period might easily be inferred by a reader thus inclined. For a readership that was familiar with the practice of reading Aesopian language, imagining a critique of Stalinism did not require a significant cognitive shift. Questions of authorial intent do not concern me here, and one of the aims of this thesis is to investigate the ambivalence of *Krokodil*'s satire, including its relationship with leading political authorities. The peculiar nature of *Krokodil*'s remembrance and forgetting of Stalinism in the Thaw era is one of the questions considered in Chapter 3.

In contrast with existing studies that adopt the propaganda paradigm, I reject the notion that *Krokodil*'s cartoons were solely intended to obscure truth or present a

warped vision; instead I argue that Soviet satire represented an exploration of the illusoriness of images, as well as a graphic exploration of the visual's power to reveal truth. This thesis traces the complex acts of representation that reveal, draw upon and even extend the shared cultural and ideological assumptions of artists and readers, which were constructed through and upon the subject of the shared lexicon of Soviet satirical art. High politics and social history mingled in the cartoons of the USSR's popular-official satirical journals, but rather than viewing *Krokodil* as the visual representation of authoritative political speech, I prefer to see it as an ideological performance. In Chapter 3 I consider the reiterative and discursive creation of important ideological identities in *Krokodil* and I investigate the centrality of **performance** to the magazine's satirical vision. Studying *Krokodil*'s cartoons allows us to consider how creators and consumers engaged with Soviet ideology through extra-linguistic discursive modes. I thus challenge the idea that ideology was formed in language—it was also formed in images. The dominant versions of negative images of the Soviet 'other', especially, were in grotesques and caricatures, and the influence of Soviet graphic satire's characterisations of these types was widespread. Key to my arguments are the balances I explore between the pragmatic political need to avoid publishing objectionable material, and the creative desire for more humorous and inventive means of critiquing Soviet everyday reality. My objective is to provide a detailed study of this central publication, to explore the journal's trans-media impulses and the performativity of the political cartoon as a mode of graphic persuasion, a technology aiding the self-construction of Soviet subjectivity, and to investigate the performance of ideology.

As this thesis aims to show, the impulse to highlight discrepancies between 'official' rhetoric and lived experience, often assumed to be satirical and even subversive, was manifested in many *Krokodil* cartoons. The study of graphic satire in *Krokodil* therefore presents the opportunity to consider the discussion of ideology in media that use the visual to challenge the primacy of the written. Mitchell suggests that the threshold between the verbal and visual reveals 'the fundamental contradictions of our culture' (1986: 44) and it is my contention that *Krokodil*'s value is its ability to reflect tensions and problems, not in the sense that Fitzpatrick's usage (see above) implies, but in a manner that reveals more essential conflicts. In particular, I consider the manifestations and implications of ambiguities revealed by ironic and self-reflexive images that suggest a plurality of possible meanings. This allows us to challenge the notion that *Krokodil* was monologic and didactic.

My interest lies in cartoons that communicate to the reader the importance of critical distance using the resources of graphic satire. The most important resource recommended to the readership by the magazine's artists was a critical-satirical

attitude. Obstacles to clarity of ideological vision, and their removal, are in fact key themes in *Krokodil*'s content during the period 1954-1964, as this thesis will explore. Implicitly referring to Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels' description of ideology as a system of socially created ('false') consciousness, *Krokodil* visualises the construction and perpetuation of an ideological attitude, but always does so in terms that imply the possibility for readers to recognise and remove their own ideological blinders. It is a central element in *Krokodil*'s satiricism, and the political cartoon offers the ideal medium for the performance of this act of demystification. Sometimes, the content, form or context of these cartoons implies surprising and ambiguous messages about all ideologies. In the issue of the magazine published immediately after Stalin's death, for example, after six pages of tributes to Stalin, the back page of the magazine features a cartoon warning against naivety and trustfulness, and over-eagerness to forget the lessons of the past (see Figure 10).
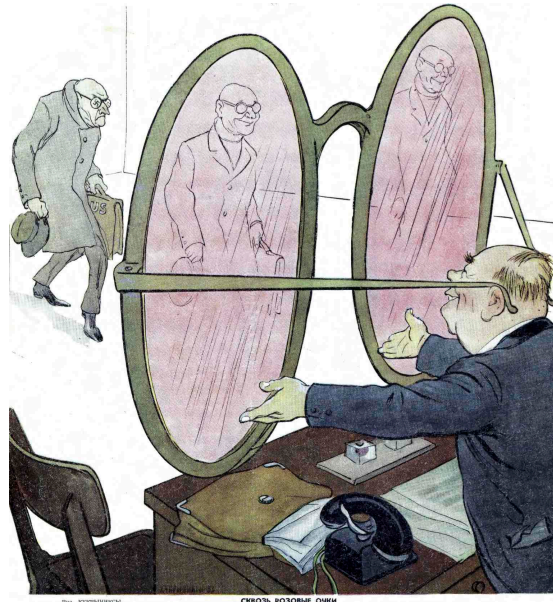
Figure 10: Kukryniksy. *Through rose-coloured spectacles. (Skvoz' rozovye ochki.)*
Krokodil 1953: 7/16.

In this Kukryniksy image,[77] the viewer observes a bureaucrat as he welcomes a visitor into his office, but we enjoy a privileged gaze—we appreciate the effect of a giant pair of rose-coloured spectacles, while also retaining our own unimpeded vision of the same scene. The figure that approaches the desk appears either friendly or sinister, depending on which view we choose. As was typical of the magazine's

---

[77] 'Kukryniksy' was the signature for a collective made up of Mikhail Kupriianov, Porfiri Krylov and Nikolai Sokolov, who met at art school in Moscow in the early 1920s and began working together in 1924.

style, especially under the editorship of Dmitri Beliaev (1948-1953),[78] a degree of naturalism in the rose-tinted view is contrasted with a more grotesque image in order to provide instruction on how to interpret the meaning of the cartoon. For regular readers of the magazine, this image would have seemed very familiar. The binary composition, juxtaposing representatives of two opposing ideologies, was frequently used in Stalin-era poster and cartoon art (Alaniz 2009: 63). The graphic construction of this visitor refers to the discourses of cosmopolitanism in the post-war Stalin years, as well as those invoking Soviet patriotism in the 1930s and the Nazification of the USA that occurred in post-war Soviet graphic satire, as is indicated by the symbols with which he is labelled (he wears swastika spectacles and carries a brief-case embossed with 'US'). The hunched shoulders, stooping gait, pallid skin and unsmiling countenance in the figure on the left contrasts dramatically with the alto-gether more benevolent figures seen through the rose-tinted lenses. Ostensibly, echoing Stalinist rhetoric, this cartoon uses the glasses as a visual metaphor for ideological illusions or lack of vigilance. Looking 'through rose-tinted spectacles', we imagine, will blind us to potential dangers. The glasses form the figurative and compositional centre of the image, apparently dividing the image of the old man in two. The cartoon thus functions as a lesson in the nature of vision and the power of ideology to act as a barrier to true recognition (see Figure 11).

Figure 11: Detail from *Through rose-coloured spectacles.*
***Krokodil* 1953: 7/16.**

This cartoon, though, didactic and monologic as it seems, warrants a more careful consideration. Rather than a binary vision—juxtaposing the obstructed and unob-structed views—this image in fact presents the reader with three different versions of the old man. As if constructing a critique of the binary vision of Stalinism itself and preceding the plurality distinguished the post-Stalin era, this cartoon multiplies the visions of its object. Moreover, it does so in a manner that draws attention to its own act of doubling. The images in the glasses' two lenses are not identical duplica-tions of the original. The visitor's own spectacles, his smile, the angle of his head

---

[78] See Appendix C for the list of *Krokodil*'s Chief Editors.

and the folds of his clothing appear different through the two lenses. Contrary to our expectation that spectacles correct or improve our vision, then, these pink spectacles seem to distort. The cartoon, having created a binary, thus disrupts our understanding of it: bi-ocularism multiplies and complicates the range of images we see.

The Kukryniksy collective, producers of this cartoon, frequently worked on the same image together, but since Jack Chen noted that when they drew a caricature of him 'It was impossible to say where one's line ended and another's began' (1944: 38) we may disregard lack of skill as an explanation for the discrepancy. Scepticism about the veracity of appearances and the importance of mastery of one's own vision, then, are implied in this image. Here, *Krokodil* suggests that seeing is a practice to be learned, and one, furthermore, with which individuals can perform their own psychological shifts. Foucault called such practices 'technologies of the self' (1988: 18), and *Krokodil* cartoons suggest that satirical vision might be considered one such 'technology' or 'technique' for altering the self. *Krokodil*, in fact, repeatedly 'performed seeing' for its readers' benefit. Satire, it suggested, was a kind of x-ray vision, and a thinking tool for rationalising discrepancies between rhetoric and visual experience. While it clearly reminds us of the dangers of naivety, this 1953 cartoon also prompts questions about the illusory power of images and functions as an admission of the possibility of alternative visions or realities.

v. Notes on Terminology, Referencing, Translation and Transliteration

As the reader will have recognised, this thesis follows the academic convention of referring to *Krokodil* magazine in the untranslated form. As the magazine was famous in the USSR and abroad under that name there is no need to do otherwise.

In English-language popular and academic discourses about graphic satire, numerous terms coexist and are even used interchangeably, even if they are not, strictly speaking, synonymous. When describing the graphic satire in *Krokodil*, for example, I use the term 'cartoons'. The word 'cartoon', derived from the Italian 'cartone' (a large sheet of heavy paper), was first used in *Punch* magazine in 1843 to describe a set of satirical illustrations by John Leech (Geipel 1972: 14). It was soon thereafter applied to any amusing graphic comment, and has come to be distinguished by the media in which it appeared (typically being published in newspapers or magazines, and rarely preserved (McPhee and Orenstein 2011: 4)) and also by a number of stylistic conventions, including physical distortion, exaggeration and certain comics techniques. The artistic tendency towards simplification in modern cartoon art leads some scholars use 'cartoon' to denote an artistic style (McCloud

1994: 21, and Molotiu 2013), but I understand this usage as an adjectival descriptor of a distinctive technique, rather than a definition of the genre.

A distinction must also be made between 'cartoon' and 'caricature'. The word 'caricature', also derived from the Italian 'caricare', means 'to load' or 'to exaggerate'. Caricature, or 'joke mock-portraiture' (Gombrich and Kris 1940: 10), was pioneered in Italy by Annibale Carracci after around 1590, and developed into modern satirical graphic comment in France and Britain from the seventeenth century. This nominative complexity is compounded in relation to Russian-language literature about the art form, since the aforementioned distinction does not exist. Modern Russian discourse recognises the term 'cartoon' (Valiakhmetov 2008), but 'karikatura' is still commonly used to describe both cartoons and satirical caricatures. Moreover, in Russia, a distinction is made between satirical and friendly drawings, using the term 'friendly sketch' ('druzheskii sharzh') to describe the latter.

No standardized system for referencing *Krokodil* exists. Issues were conventionally distinguished by their issue numbers, 1-36. The magazine also used an annual volume number (the anniversary of which was 4 June, the date of the first publication of *Rabochii*) and a continuous sequence starting with Number 1(13) (see Figure 1). Therefore, the first issue to be published in 1954 appeared on 10th January and was numbered No.1 (1363) (see Figure 12), and the final issue published in 1964 appeared on 30th December and was numbered No.36 (1758).

Figure 12: Masthead, *Krokodil* 1954: 1/1.

In this thesis I refer to individual texts using the following format—year: issue number/page number. Thus, when referring to the front cover of the first issue from 1954, I use the reference 1954: 1/1.

Except where I have noted in the text, all translations are my own. I have used the Library of Congress system of transliteration, except for those names that have become better known in a different English form.

Chapter 1
From a Structuralist to a Poststructuralist Reading of *Krokodil*: Humour and Satire in the 'School for Laughter'

As I identified in the Introduction, studies of *Krokodil* that present it unambiguously as the mouthpiece for state propaganda fail to resolve certain problems with our understanding of the magazine. Many studies select only the magazine's high profile images for discussion, and they present these as representative of *Krokodil*'s oeuvre. By interpreting *Krokodil* as the purveyor of binary logics, they map Cold War ideological conflict or the domestic politics of repression and resistance onto the magazine's cartoons. Furthermore, they employ mutually reinforcing conclusions about *Krokodil*'s politicism and the binarism of its visual language to suggest that this binary interpretation explains the magazine's entire aesthetic. Selectivity with source material further limits existing studies' capacity for explaining both the magazine's origins, and its satirical attitude. Previous explanations of the magazine therefore make little attempt to locate the journal in any socio-cultural context other than the upper reaches of the USSR's political hierarchy. Moreover, in their analyses of *Krokodil*'s satirical vision, many studies see no satire at all.

In order to develop a more nuanced understanding of the magazine, by addressing questions about the terms in which *Krokodil*'s satirical critiques were constructed, its heritage, and the nature of the journal's satire, in this chapter I explore the complex framework within which Soviet satire operated. I aim to challenge the view that *Krokodil* was constructed solely in response to political imperatives and broaden the parameters within which we consider the magazine. Section 1.2 thus provides a structural analysis, considering the visual language in which *Krokodil* constructed its satirical critiques. In order to challenge the binarism of previous interpretations, I look beyond the most high profile images and explain in particular the significance of cartoons satirising Soviet domestic affairs. Section 1.3 investigates the origins of, and influences upon, *Krokodil*'s peculiar satirical aesthetic, and aims to present a fuller picture of the magazine's diverse heritages. In Section 1.4, I investigate the graphic or rhetorical structures through which *Krokodil*'s images communicated their meanings and propose a new reading of *Krokodil*'s humour by suggesting that it may profitably be understood as a Menippean satire. This interpretation challenges the dominant 'list-of-targets' view of the journal, and it is an original claim: no previous interpretation of *Krokodil* attempts comprehensively to explain the journal's satirical vision, and the Menippea has not been applied to *Krokodil* before.

Following Bakhtin's definition of the Menippea, I view *Krokodil* as a 'serio-comic' text that includes diverse inserted genres and styles producing a multi-styled and multi-voiced (heteroglossic) discourse wherein 'a specific carnival sense of the world' (1984a: 107) is manipulated in order to challenge philosophical ideas and Soviet orthodoxies. I argue that Bakhtin's theory of the Menippea helps us to understand *Krokodil*'s carnivalesque ambivalence and the ways *Krokodil* magazine managed to combine humorous state-sanctioned criticisms of society, social groups and individuals, while maintaining enough critical distance from the regime it served to be able to suggest certain critiques of government policy. In this chapter I want to extend this, however, and show how reading *Krokodil* as a Menippean satire allows us to reconceptualise the magazine itself and the role of positive satire in the USSR. A Menippean reading reveals that *Krokodil* was constantly engaged in the performance of self-revelation, simultaneously engaging in, and exposing and deconstructing, its own satirical mechanisms. As I will contend throughout this thesis, *Krokodil*'s satire was performative; its cartoons had a certain agency, and not only performed exemplary confrontations between individuals or social types and thereby enacted the exclusion of certain satiric targets (as the traditional interpretation of satire, including *Krokodil*'s, suggests), but also invited readers to perform individual interpretations and encouraged them to explore their own positions in relation to the cartoons' subjects.

1.1   Critical Analysis of Representative Issues: *Krokodil*'s Format and Visual Language, 1954-1964

The existing literature on *Krokodil* lacks a critical analysis that fully explains the framework within which Soviet satire operated. This problem underlies studies derived from selections of high-profile images, which consider these images out of context, or as if they appeared alone, like posters.[79] Cartoons are therefore explored only in isolation, or as they relate to other such images in the selection. This selectivity and decontextualisation has propagated a dualistic, rather caricatured binary model for understanding the magazine's visual language and content. Many existing studies suggest that *Krokodil*'s aesthetic comprised two parallel and competing commentaries. Polly Jones argues that 'Soviet propaganda's deconstruction of the

---

[79] Althaus's 2012 collection compares several hundred Soviet and Western Cold War cartoons, but makes no distinction between posters and cartoons, and provides few publication details.

"façade" of Western foreign and domestic policies simultaneously constructed an opposing set of Soviet values' (Jones 2012: 26). She thus implies that, although *Krokodil*'s content might be both anti-Western and pro-Soviet, it was always essentially monologic and didactic rather than dialogic, and affirmation of Soviet government policy was always dominant. Even studies that acknowledge a wider variety of satiric objects emphasise *Krokodil*'s ideological motivation. Benson, for example, notes that *Krokodil* did include cartoons that criticised Soviet domestic politics:

> [*Krokodil* was about] grotesquely vilifying the West on the one hand, and depicting a Soviet paradise of wide-eyed, smiling, ethnically diverse youth (the old are mostly absent), on the other […] Any failings within the Soviet system, if admitted at all, were portrayed in cartoons—as they were in newspaper denunciations—as the fault of incompetent or dishonest lowly bureaucrats rather than the responsibility of those further up the party ladder (2012: 12).

Benson distinguishes between satirical attacks on the capitalist West and on Soviet undesirables, but his explanation suggests *Krokodil*'s satire was always about disparagement and exclusion. Two of *Krokodil*'s commonest themes—attacks on enemies of the USSR and celebrations of Soviet achievements—have been taken as representative of the magazine as a whole and, moreover, they have been equated with the structure of *Krokodil*'s visual language. The existing explanation of *Krokodil*'s visual language therefore does not extend much beyond descriptions of text types based on the satirical objects depicted.

In order to provide an analytical framework that takes the whole magazine into account, and helps us to understand *Krokodil*'s form, format, layout, and conventions in the period 1954-1964, in this section I present an analytical survey of the pages of an entire issue of *Krokodil*. My critical analysis of representative issues of the magazine demonstrates the importance of understanding how texts cohabited, interacted and reflected upon each other. My analysis challenges the view that *Krokodil*'s visual satire was monologic and didactic, highlighting the importance of parody and self-reflexivity in *Krokodil*.

An overview of *Krokodil*'s format, which is not satisfactorily outlined anywhere in the existing literature, is essential for understanding the magazine's satire and its visual language. Between the 1948 Central Committee decree (see Chapter 2) and 1991, *Krokodil* was a sixteen-page, four-colour journal, published thirty-six times annually, on the 10th, 20th and 30th of each month, except in February when it

appeared on the 28th or 29th.[80] The magazine appeared on newsprint paper, and it grew in size, from 320x255mm in 1954, to 330x257mm by the end of 1964.

My whole-magazine analysis over the period 1954-1964 shows that *Krokodil* must be understood as a multimedia production, in which images were dominant in defining the journal's satire, not only because of their importance compared with other text types, but also because of the significant editorial contributions they made to the journal's commentaries. In *Krokodil*, it is notable that around half the images were editorial cartoons that contributed independently to the satirical content of the magazine—these are the images upon which this study is based. On average, images took up approximately 50% more space in *Krokodil* than text, and one issue of *Krokodil* magazine in the period 1954-1964 typically contained 25-35 images.

Krokodil's images were not accorded equal status: size, placement, and use of colour indicated status, and often reflected the artist's prestige. The magazine's high profile images were published on front and back covers. Cover images were generally irreverent, bold, single full-page, full-colour cartoons.[81] Cover images' topics varied over time. In 1954, for example, eight cover images on the 36 issues featured imagined events abroad, but in 1964, only one front cover carried a foreign policy image. The other cover images explored domestic subjects, including cosmos themes, anti-alcoholism, bureaucracy, shoddy work practices, and problems with technology. Other high status images appeared between pages 2-9. Most of *Krokodil*'s lower status images were relatively small (approximately one quarter of a page, or smaller) and while some were published in colour, many were monochrome. Larger images that were credited to a particular artist, I generally term as 'cartoons'. I distinguish between cartoons and 'illustrations'—which were generally drawn by *Krokodil* staff artists, but not credited to them. Here, I apply a definition proposed by Thomas Wartenberg, who distinguishes illustrations from comics by theorizing that 'illustrations are ontologically dependent upon the text they illustrate'

---

[80] Before 1948, *Krokodil*'s format varied more. In 1922, *Krokodil* was sixteen pages long, and printed on paper 298x227mm in size. It appeared weekly at first, and there were eighteen issues of in 1922. In 1923, *Krokodil* grew to dimensions of 338x258mm and appeared 48 times. In 1924, publication was less regular and only 30 issues appeared. Thereafter, publication schedule and format varied quite significantly. The magazine varied between eight and twenty-four pages, two issues were sometimes jointly published.

[81] There were exceptions, however. Fewer than 3% of cover images employed a two-part sequence (see 1954: 1/1, 1957: 7/1, and 1963: 11/1) and only slightly more than 2% used a multi-frame image (see 1955: 18/1, 1957: 5/1, and 1964: 3/1). Photographs appeared, if infrequently (see 1961: 3/1, 1961: 27/1, and 1963: 11/1). In the period covered by this study, only the cover of 1964: 34/1 was in black and white. Here, as elsewhere in this thesis, in the interests of space, I restrict myself to a maximum of three references to relevant examples from *Krokodil*.

(2012: 90) whereas in comics, image and text have equal ontological priority. Wartenburg's distinction refers to comics art, but is also applicable to political cartoons, and it is borne out by *Krokodil*'s editorial practice of crediting the authorship of cartoons, while not crediting illustrations.[82] The results of a survey of *Krokodil* number 17 between 1954 and 1964 provide a simple analysis of the different image types that appeared in *Krokodil* (see Table 2). As this data shows, *Krokodil*'s covers were often the only pages to carry full-page images. Inside the magazine, the commonest image type was smaller than a quarter-page. Cartoons were likely to be produced in full colour, but illustrations were usually single-colour. This survey of image types does not include other image types, but they also appeared.[83]

Image types	*1954: 17*	*1956: 17*	*1958: 17*	*1960: 17*	*1962: 17*	*1964: 17*
Cartoons: full page	2 (0)	3 (0)	2 (0)	2 (0)	3 (0)	3 (0)
Cartoons: half-page or larger	5 (0)	4 (0)	7 (0)	4 (0)	5 (0)	3 (0)
Cartoons: quarter-page or larger	0 (0)	2 (0)	5 (0)	7 (2)	2 (0)	4 (1)
Cartoons: smaller than a quarter-page	8 (0)	9 (0)	3 (0)	4 (0)	7 (1)	7 (1)
Illustrations	1 (14)	4 (9)	10 (2)	3 (10)	5 (1)	7 (1)
TOTALS	30	31	29	32	24	27

Table 2: Image Types in *Krokodil* No.17, 1954-1964.
(Numbers of black and white or one-colour images in brackets)

The editorial practice of publishing a number of special issues annually reveals much about *Krokodil*'s content, diversity and carnivalesque nature. *Krokodil*'s annual production schedule celebrated festivals and events on a unique calendar that combined traditional agricultural and folk festivals with modern Soviet political celebrations. Issue 36, which celebrated the New Year, for example, was conventionally entirely devoted to commemorating the achievements at the year-end, and celebrating 1 January. This issue often featured images of Grandfather Frost (Ded Moroz) and the Snow Maiden (Snegurochka), traditional Russian folk characters with pre-Christian roots but conventionally associated with gift giving at New Year. The incoming year was regularly represented in *Krokodil* by a child, who often

---

[82] In general, most artists did not contribute more than one image per issue. One exception is found in *Krokodil* 1959: 18, where Iuri Fedorov was credited with a cartoon on page two, but his recognisable style is identifiable in an uncredited illustration on the same page.

[83] Photomontages by Alexander Zhitomirski appeared, for example, in 1959: 21/4.

participated in some kind of passage rite. The second most important annual issue was *Krokodil* 30, which usually celebrated the anniversary of the October Revolution. These issues celebrated contemporary manifestations of revolutionary spirit or juxtaposed modern achievements with those of 1917.

Certain dates in *Krokodil*'s annual publishing calendar were also reserved for the celebration of political and agricultural events. Issue number seven celebrated International Women's Day on March 8th, and *Krokodil* number 12 routinely acknowledged Victory Day on 1 May. In addition, issues annually heralded new seasons, usually spring and winter, with warnings to prepare early for changes in weather, while other issues exalted successful harvests. A number of extraordinary special issues were also published. As Table 3 shows, *Krokodil*'s range of special issue subjects was relatively diverse, including political events and anniversaries, celebrations of particular individuals, and more quotidian domestic subjects.

Year: Issue	Special Issue Title or Subject
1954: 7	The 140th anniversary of the birth of T.G. Shevchenko
1954: 19	The 50th anniversary of the death of A.P. Chekov
1954: 33	The 20th anniversary of Socialist Realism
1956: 18	Summer
1956: 27	Autumn
1957: 17	Leningrad
1957: 21	VI World Festival of Youth and Students, Moscow
1957: 22	VI World Festival of Youth and Students, Moscow
1958: 5	The 40th anniversary of The Red Army
1958: 35	'Interested person' (school issue)
1959: 11	Nature and people
1959: 16	The ruble
1959: 35	*Krokodil* marries
1960: 2	The 100th anniversary of the birth of A.P. Chekhov
1960: 11	The 90th anniversary of the birth V.I. Lenin
1960: 20	Sputnik tourist
1960: 25	*Krokodil* goes to Africa (Anti-colonialism issue)
1960: 36	*Krokodil* in the year 20…
1961: 11	The spaceflight of Yuri Gagarin
1961: 17	Children's issue
1961: 22	Sports issue
1961: 27	'Remove make-up!' (Anti-capitalist issue)
1961: 29	Smiles of friends
1961: 30	22nd Congress of the CPSU
1962: 17	'Undivine page' (Anti-religious issue)
1963: 12	*Krokodil*'s Spring Calendar
1964: 5	Family

Table 3: Special Issues of *Krokodil* Magazine, 1954-1964.

In order to illustrate the typical features of the magazine, the three issues from the middle of the period (1959: 17, 18 and 19) will be discussed in detail, and *Krokodil* 1959: 17 will be reproduced in full. In order to consider the magazine as experienced by its readers, I will outline the format of the magazine one page at a time, beginning with the front cover, which, in this case, indicates the issue's theme. The front page of *Krokodil* 1959: 17—see Figure 13—features a poorly functioning production line, on which four gleaming, sophisticated-looking machines (numbered 1-4) produce components, with computer-aided supervision by white-coated operatives. In between machines, however, pre-modern technology and methods are still in use: wheelbarrows, horses, and female factory workers filling their aprons, as well as the man-powered crane, indicate the breakages. The first three pages of *Krokodil* 1959: 17 feature critical commentary on the state of Soviet mechanisation and the failures of technology in industry, accompanied by reports from around the USSR. The first few pages of number 18 also featured texts that echoed the image on the front cover. The cover of number 19, by contrast, did not indicate a general theme for the issue.

Figure 13: Fedorov, Iu. *Breaks in the line.* (*Razryvy na linii.*)
***Krokodil* 1959: 17/1.**

Systematic analysis of an entire issue shows, as previous studies have not, that *Krokodil* was heteroglossic and polyphonic, comprising a range of different contributions. In 1959: 19, for example, there were 36 images (nineteen cartoons, three of which included photographs; eight illustrations; six photographs; and three paintings reproduced) and 35 written texts (twenty articles; thirteen poems or rhymes; and two feuilletons). This was a typical issue, except that it did not include a letters section, as most issues did. As well as the diversity of text types, *Krokodil*'s heteroglossia and polyphonism was also the consequence of the large number of artists and writers who contributed content. The focus of this thesis is the visual

texts, and it is therefore helpful to consider both the importance of the visual and the different types of image in the magazine.

Figure 14: *Krokodil* 1959: 17/2-3.

Figure 15: *Krokodil* 1959: 17/4-5.

A distinction must be made between cartoons in which characters represent social types (the most common in *Krokodil*), and images in which particular figures are caricatured. Caricatures were rare in *Krokodil* (most issues did not contain one), but they might be either grotesque or friendly. Grotesque caricatures depicted the infamous: Adolf Hitler (Figure 26), Konrad Adenauer (Figure 15), and Chiang Kai Shek (Figure 96). By contrast, the 'friendly sketch' ('druzheskii sharzh'—see Introduction Section v) was clearly distinguishable from images carrying more satirical venom, and ranged from the naturalistic (see Figure 16 and Section 3.2.1), to more exaggeratedly caricatured figures. When they appeared, *Krokodil* artists were usually honoured with this kind of treatment, and their appearances, though humorous, were

always gently mocking, rather than ridiculed with the lashing graphic wit applied to the foreign subjects (see Figure 17).
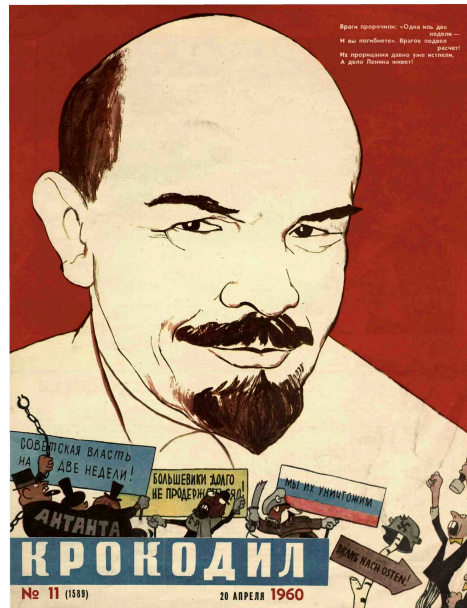
Figure 16: Druzheskii sharzh (Lenin).
***Krokodil* 1960: 11/1.**

| **Semenov, I. *Krokodil:* 1962: 26/14.** | **Tsvetkov, A. *Krokodil:* 1963: 22/14.** | **Tsvetkov, A. *Krokodil:* 1963: 29/14.** |
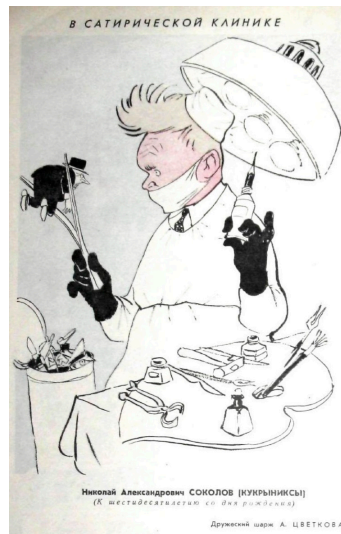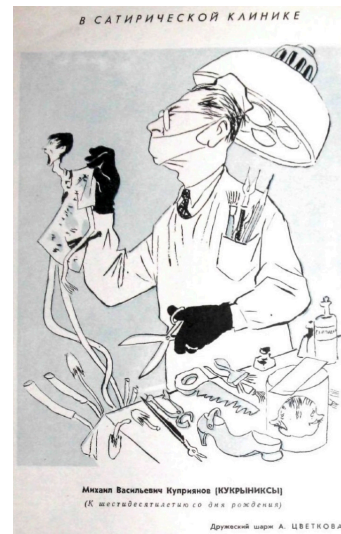
Figure 17: *In the satirical clinic.* (*V satiricheskoi klinike.*) Friendly sketches of the Kukryniksy trio, published in *Krokodil*.

As I explain in Section 1.4, my analysis challenges the notion that *Krokodil* was monologic and that it functioned simply as a mouthpiece for 'official' points of view. In fact, as I argue throughout this chapter, *Krokodil* was heteroglossic; 'official', 'non-official', 'popular' and foreign voices mingled and were juxtaposed in the journal, in a way that was not possible in other state-published media, although it was seldom impossible to tell these different discourses apart. *Krokodil* was, as I explore in Section 3.3, constantly engaged in the performance of self-revelation, and ironic comment in texts that parody the tone or content of different media was one

of *Krokodil*'s primary means of enunciating satirical criticism. In *Krokodil* 1959: 17, one page was dedicated to reports from foreign media in response to a parodic newspaper published in the magazine earlier that year. The miniature newspaper page reproduced at the top of page six (see Figure 18) was reproduced from page six in *Krokodil* 1959: 12. In the earlier issue, the newspaper-within-a-magazine claimed to be 'the most knowledgeable, the most objective newspaper of the Western world'[84] and contained a series of texts that parodied Western tabloid-style news reporting.[85] In 'Meili Emeil', for instance, under the headline 'Baby-killer' ('Bebi-ubiitsa') and alongside a photograph of a hard-drinking baby-faced killer, apparently taken a week before the crime was committed, a report appeared of a seven-month-old baby who had shot his father, mother, two sisters and nanny. Clearly these parodies drew a response from Western newspapers, because in issue number 17, *Krokodil* noted at the head of page six that some Western journalists objected to *Krokodil*'s satire of Western life. Juxtaposing the original parody with articles that detailed the criticisms that had been made of 'Meili Emeil', *Krokodil* responded directly to some of its critics. Having noted at the head of the page that some Western journalists resented *Krokodil*'s satire of Western life, one article in response reproduced three newspaper front pages' headlines about high profile murders in order to verify the factual basis for the parodic articles, and concluded with the comment 'You agree that we had plenty of material for parody'.[86] On the next page, a feature satirising an advert for the General Electric Company's campaign to encourage investment appeared. A cartoon of a stereotypical capitalist figure was superimposed onto the advertising image, and the accompanying article discussed the strategy of the campaign and the poster itself, and pointed out that Iulii Ganf's cartoon was a necessary clarification ('neobkhodimoe utochnenie'). Here, again, *Krokodil* interacted with foreign material, additively engaging with it in order to highlight discrepancies between rhetoric and reality. In fact, as this thesis will show, the magazine often employed the same strategies when commenting upon foreign and domestic subjects.

---

[84] 'Samaia osvedomlennaia, samaia ob'ektivnaia gazeta samogo zapadnogo mira' (*Krokodil* 1959: 17/6).

[85] 'Meili Emeil' is an Anglicised contraction of the Russian idiom *Мели, Емеля, твоя неделя!*, meaning something approximating 'You're talking nonsense!'.

[86] 'Soglasites', chto materiala dlia parodii i nas bylo predostatochno.' (*Krokodil* 1959: 17/6).
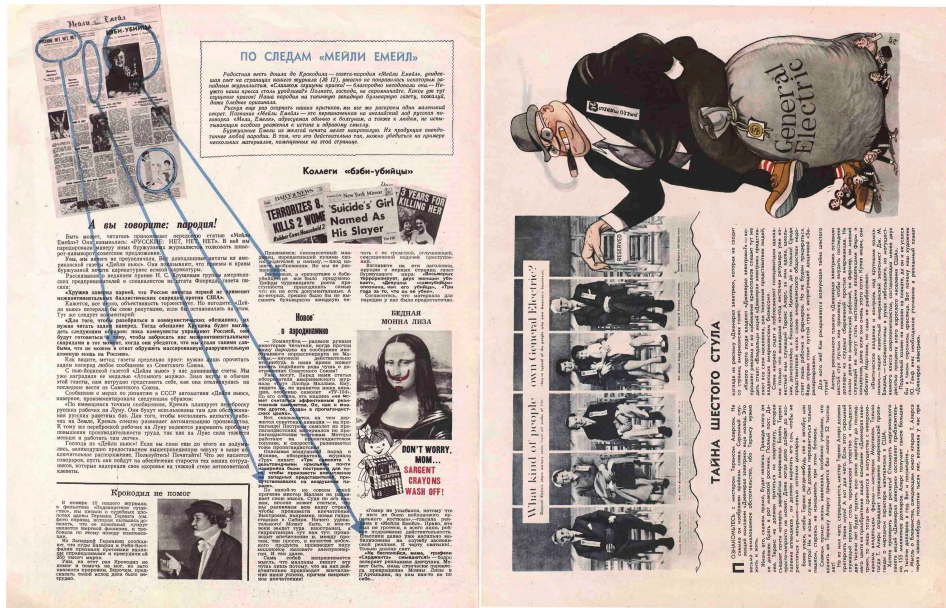
Figure 18: *Krokodil* **1959: 17/6-7.**

The purpose of contextualising foreign material was to satirise Western media's sensationalism, contrast it with the objectivity supposedly evident in Soviet reportage, and to highlight the degeneracy of capitalist society. In some cases, as I explore in Section 1.2, *Krokodil* distinguished the 'otherness' of its satirical objects through its use of different 'languages'.

Krokodil cartoons regularly exposed the workings of the magazine, the functions and processes of satire, or cited seminal works in Russo-Soviet satire (graphic or otherwise). As Chapter 2 shows, *Krokodil* routinely transported material across media boundaries or across epochs. The magazine's fascination with viewing itself in the mirror of other media, or in the light of outside interest or external events, was manifested in various textual forms. *Krokodil* parodied recognisable visual forms from Soviet culture, including the most prominent examples of Socialist Realist art.

Figure 19: Eliseev, K. *Poster artists…masters of their trade.* (*Khudozhniki-plakatisty…mastera na vse ruki.*)
Krokodil **1959: 12/12.**
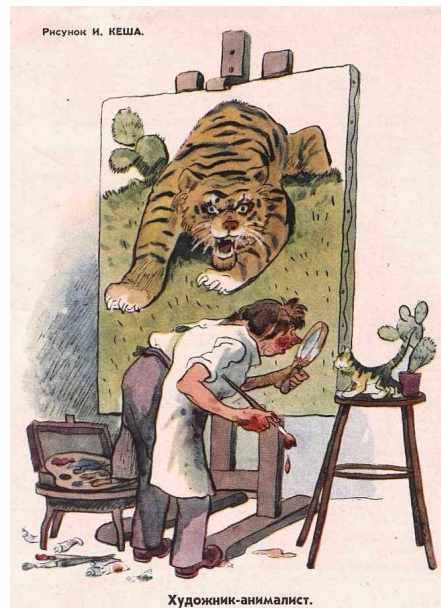
Figure 20: Kesha, I. *Artist-animalist.* (*Khudozhnik-animalist.*)
Krokodil **1959: 10/14.**

The aesthetic of Soviet poster art was frequently recruited as a rhetorical device in or as inspiration for ironic comment in *Krokodil*'s political cartoons (see Figure 19 and Figure 133). The Realist tradition in Russian painting, Socialist Realist easel painting and Western abstract or modern art were all objects of gentle or more critical commentary in *Krokodil*'s cartoons, and these texts indicate a concern about indexicality, discrepancies between image and reality in representational art, and the power of the artist to distort his images (see Figure 20). The effects of these texts, which were published alongside less self-referential cartoons, were fundamentally destabilising. Indeed, the magazine's combination of serious and satirical commentary produced a publication containing some significant ambiguities, for readers seeking contradictions and multiple interpretational possibilities.

The 'Meili Emeil' texts exemplify the way *Krokodil* placed different voices and languages in juxtaposition in the magazine, but the journal also self-reflexively commented on more serious Soviet discourses on the nature of satire. In *Krokodil* 1959: 17, 'Once again, on laughter' ('Eshche raz o smekhe') *Krokodil* reported on proceedings at the 3rd Congress of the Union of Soviet Writers, held in Moscow in May 1959. Quoting extensively from the comments of Nikita Khrushchev, who urged delegates to use satire to defeat 'everything that hinders our progress towards communism',[87] the report spotlighted the two metaphors commonly employed during The Thaw years to describe satire. Khrushchev used a medical analogy to de-

---

[87] '…vse, chto meshaet nashemu prodvizheniiu k kommunizmu' (Mikhalkov 1959: 17/9).

scribe the satirist's work. Satire, he said, 'protects people against diseases, it helps people to live down limitations. So satire should continue to be among the weapons of our Party and people, to strike everything that hinders our advance toward communism.'[88] The satirist, furthermore, could surgically use art to remove harmful abscesses and ulcers.[89] Khrushchev mixed metaphors in this speech, also referring satire as a weapon. He described how 'satirist-artillerymen' ('satirikov-artilleristov') direct their fire against the enemy, 'clearing the ground for our movement forward'.[90] This report, which implies no judgement on Khrushchev's speech, is accompanied by a large cartoon by Ivan Semenov, which imagines a brigade of 'satirist-artillerymen' (see Figure 21).
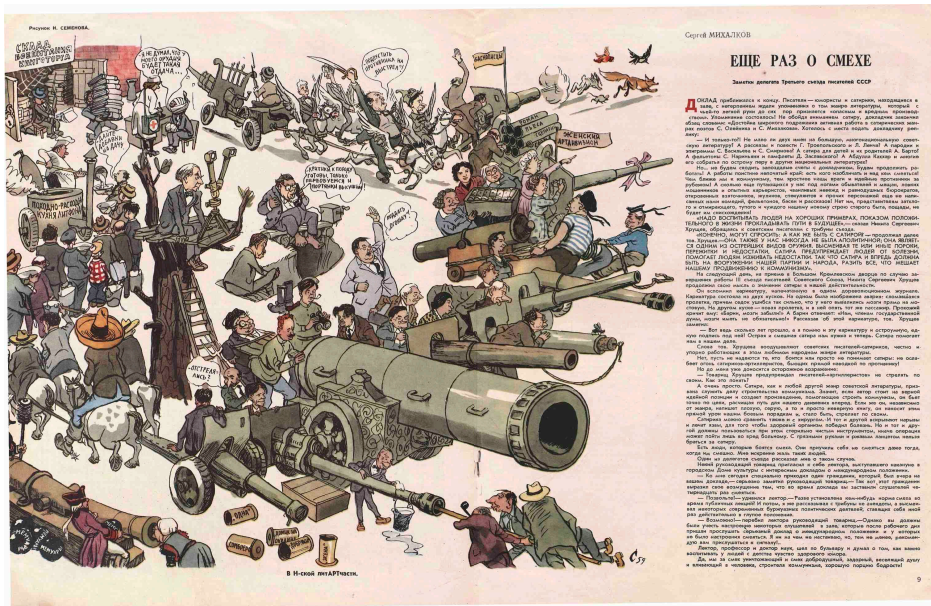
Figure 21: *Krokodil* **1959: 17/8-9.**

Semenov's multi-figural composition features numerous caricatures of famous satirists, including some of the magazine's regular artists, as this unorthodox satirical-military unit apparently readies for action. Although the industry of the participants suggests a degree of anticipation, the satirists look neither militant nor prepared for battle. Placing this image beside an article that quotes the authoritative speech of the USSR's senior politician has a destabilising effect. Khrushchev's call

---

[88] '…preduprezhdaet liudei ot bolezni, pomogaet liudiam izzhivat' nedostatki. Tak chto satira i vpred' dolzhna byt' na vooruzhenii nashei partii I naroda, razit' vse, chto meshaet nashemu prodvizheniiu k kommunizmu' (quoted Stykhalin and Kremenskaia 1963: 5).

[89] 'Satirika mozhno sravit' takzhe i s khirurgom. I tot drugi vskryvaiut naryvy i lechat iazvy, dlia togo chtoby zdorovyi organizm pobedil bolezn'.' *Krokodil* also explored this metaphor graphically—see Figure 17.

[90] '…raschishchaia put' dlia nashego dvizheniia vpered'.

for aggressive and devastating satire is undermined by this response in *Krokodil*. Soviet satire, the cartoon implies, is not fit for the task it has been set. The cartoon is clearly partly self-mocking, but it also parodies Khrushchev's rhetoric, turning the satirical gaze upon the call for sharper satire. The repeated calls for improvements in Soviet satire—suggested by the title of the article—are ridiculed here by the cartoon, which visualises the indolence of Soviet satire, commenting ironically both upon the failures of the genre, and upon the faith placed in it. The comments about the political role of satire, imbued with such authority in the article, are thus ridiculed by the satirists. *Krokodil* performs an act of satirical self-constitution in its reflexive response to the politicised debate regarding its role. As this example shows, then, *Krokodil* was always involved in complex acts of satirical self-revelation.

A close study of a whole issue of the journal challenges the notion that *Krokodil* was entirely political, and that it was dominated by binary visions of geopolitics. An issue's second half usually contained a larger number of lower status images, and shorter texts (see Figure 22 and Figure 23). Whereas a single page in the first half of the journal might contain only one or two texts,[91] towards the end of the magazine a page might feature ten or more. These texts were often created by readers or amateur contributors, and often reported on local circumstances or specific problems. It was here that the magazine's domestic satire was generally found during 1954-1964.
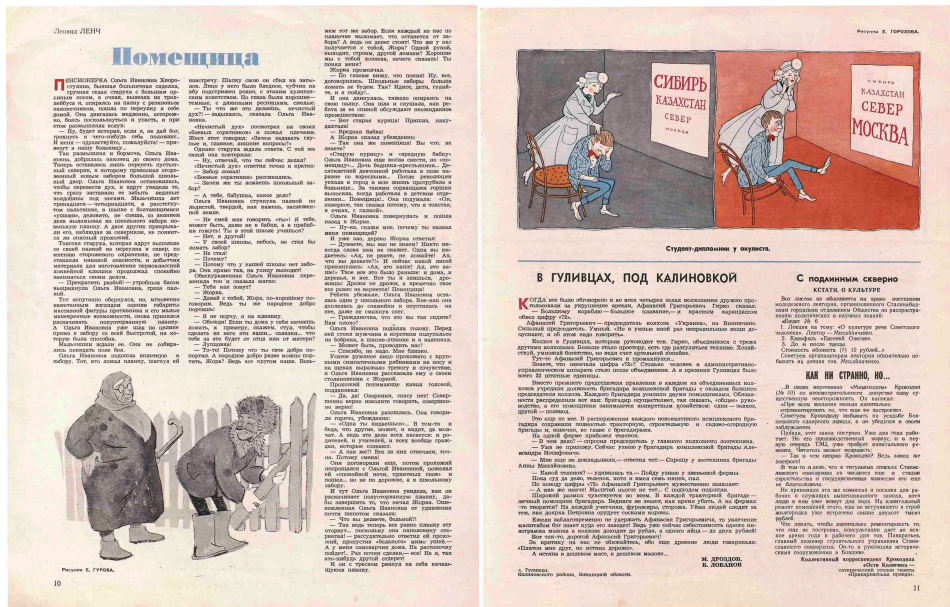
Figure 22: *Krokodil* 1959: 17/10-11.

---

[91] Pages 2-9 generally contained the longest texts.

These images might, as I explore throughout this thesis, contain significant satirical criticism, but they might also be entirely apolitical (see Figure 41). The existence of these cartoons has not been acknowledged in the scholarly literature on *Krokodil*, although collections of images published in the 1930s and 1940s often stressed the universalism of elements of Soviet humour.
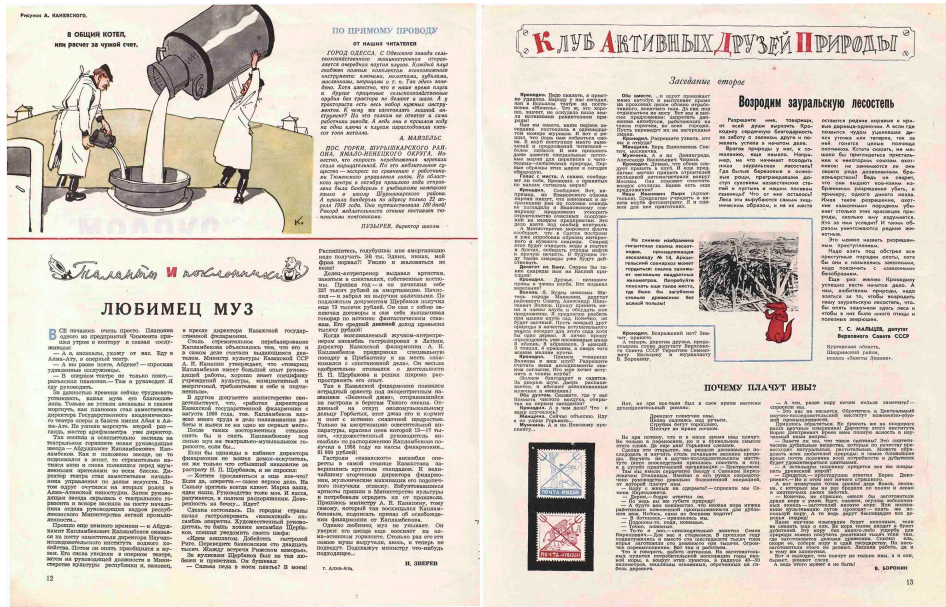
Figure 23: *Krokodil* 1959: 17/12-13.

The latter pages, which are often ignored in existing studies, were often the site of *Krokodil*'s self-reflexive, satirical exploration of its own socio-political role. This was achieved by individual texts, but also by the combined effect of cartoons in juxtaposition. *Krokodil*'s multi-toned and heteroglossic character was largely created through the insertion of a diverse range of different texts by various authors. I explore the significance of the great range of different texts in the final section of this chapter, and consider the importance of reader participation in the construction of the magazine's satire in Chapter 2. *Krokodil* encouraged its readers to participate in the production of content for the magazine, and several regular features functioned as avenues for popular engagement. The most regular of these was a readers' letters page, which appeared in most issues: readers generally detailed complaints about local problems. Sometimes, *Krokodil* articles investigated and reported those problems, and a semi-regular feature was the review column outlining the resulting improvements. '*Krokodil* Helped' ('*Krokodil* pomog') usually appeared on pages fourteen or fifteen, and it generally reminded readers of a feature from a recent issue and provided an update on how the magazine's investigations had brought positive change in the meantime. In *Krokodil* 1959: 17, page six carried a variation of this feature—entitled '*Krokodil* Did Not Help' ('*Krokodil* ne pomog') (see Figure 18). These features are indicative of the importance of the magazine's socio-political

role, its self-conception and investigative function, and these questions will be investigated below.
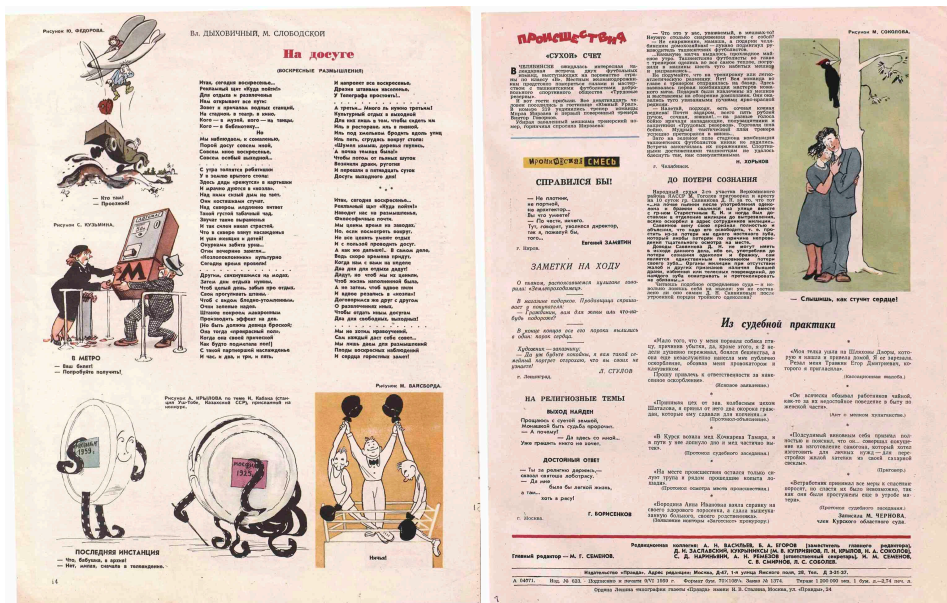
Figure 24: *Krokodil* **1959: 17/14-15.**

As this critical analysis shows, *Krokodil* magazine combined media and genres, as well as texts in different languages to create a diaglossic and polyvalent outlook. Texts incorporating authoritative political speech from the Soviet Union and abroad, sometimes including satirical commentary to add meaning, were juxtaposed with texts that highlighted serious social or political problems. In the same pages, small, humorous, decontextualized and sometimes apolitical texts were also printed.
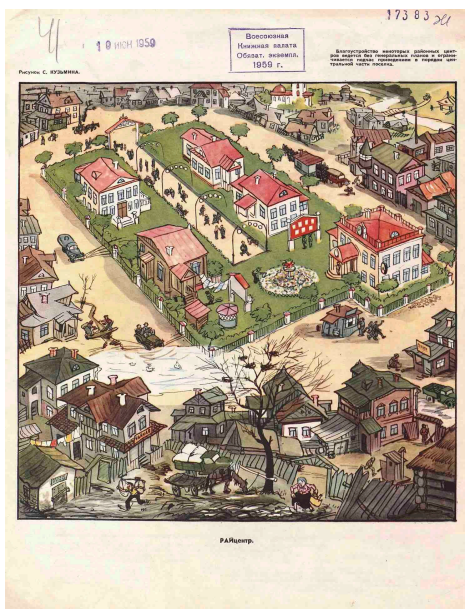
Figure 25: *Krokodil* **1959: 17/16.**

As this section has shown, *Krokodil* was a multimedia and heteroglossic publication. A single issue might contain contributions in different media (text, drawn image, painted image, photographic image), in different genres (journalistic articles, fiction,

satirical feuilletons, letters, and hagiographic or satirical images), in different languages (largely in Russian, but also often containing phrases in English, German, French or Chinese, as well as in authoritative, political or demotic language) and in different registers (literary, satirical, or colloquial). My analysis in this thesis is based upon the acknowledgement of the structural features and format of the magazine, and a recognition that these different texts coexisted in *Krokodil*. Now, having presented a critical analysis and outlined the framework for Soviet graphic satire, in the next section I consider *Krokodil*'s visual language.

1.2   Querying *Krokodil*'s Visual Schemata

In this section, I move on to investigate how the magazine communicated its ideological attitudes in the different types of cartoon that comprised *Krokodil*'s aesthetic. In what visual language did *Krokodil* express its satirical critiques? Given that the magazine contained a large number of images of diverse types, as the previous section shows, how can we understand the relationships between these cartoons?

The visual language of Soviet graphic satire, which has been considered by numerous scholarly works, explores Soviet satire's most significant devices, conventions and formulations. In particular, Soviet cartoon art has been interpreted as an art form characterised by its binarism, and it is this categorisation that I wish to challenge in this section. The existing scholarship commonly distinguishes between two elements in the visual language of Soviet graphic satire. For Zegers and Druick, describing poster art during World War Two, Soviet visual language was dominated by two vocabularies—Socialist Realism and graphic satire (2011: 19). Stites' terminology differs, but he describes a similar binarism. For Stites, Soviet satirical art was fundamentally and distortedly Manichaean; it was 'soaked in self-praise and wicked abuse' (2010: 348). Stites' explanation of *Krokodil* is echoed by other scholars—see Jones (2012) and Benson (2012). He describes *Krokodil* in binary and eschatological terms: it was a purveyor of 'good-vs.-evil, heaven-vs.-hell imagery', where heaven equated to the USSR and hell represented 'the capitalist world, and especially its superpower leader' (2010: 348). The attractiveness of such a binary model obscures three essential problems. First, the 'good vs. evil' analogy explains a number of the magazine's high profile images, but as the previous section showed, the majority of cartoons in *Krokodil* fitted neither of these categories. How, then, should we understand the huge number of other cartoons that appeared in *Krokodil*? Second, as I have already suggested, these interpretations suggest that the whole magazine may be explained in relation to the binary structure of some of its images. Visual contrast created by a binary opposition, which is an essential cartoonist's technique

(Medhurst and DeSousa 1981), was commonly utilised in *Krokodil* (see Figure 22 and Figure 25), especially during the Stalin period, but it is an oversimplification to suggest that this part of the magazine's satire can stand for the whole. Finally, despite the apparent simplicity of these two graphic modes, the question of how these different attitudes were communicated by Soviet cartoon artists has received scant attention. Benson suggests that anti-American cartoons were characterised by a 'recognisable array of quasi-formulaic images and characters' (2012: 13), and McKenna argues that 'cartoon symbols functioning as a code which transforms ideas and perceptions into graphic media, much the same way as Morse code renders the letters of the alphabet into dots and dashes' (2001: 15), but these explanations are not elucidated.

Even elsewhere, where analyses extend outside binaries, the process of 'graphic transformation of ideas and perceptions' (McKenna 2001: 15-16) is little explored, beyond the correlation of certain ideas with visual symbols in Alex Ward's 2007 exhibition catalogue. Ward suggests that Soviet poster artists developed 'a standardised iconography' (2007: 21),[92] and he outlines an 'Iconographic Lexicon' as visual definitions of 41 key terms. 'Death', for example, appears as a skeleton, while the 'Red Army' is represented by a red fist and cuff, adorned with a white star (Ward 2007: 28-31). Holzer, Illiash, Gabrelian, and Kuznetsova (2010) go further, identifying eight styles identifiable in Soviet 'bureaucrat' cartoons. Their classification combines graphic techniques (exaggeration, anthropomorphism, exaggerated negative characterisation, and visual contradiction) with narrative strategies: folklore themes and characters, cartoon-strip like story-telling, and literal depiction of idiomatic expressions.[93] Ward's 'lexicon' and the 'styles' of Holzer et al undeniably constitute helpful visual guides to Soviet graphic satire, but both imply that the simple identification of the cartoons' characters or scenarios is key to reading images; both are extremely narrow in their applicability; neither takes account of the topic or narrative of a particular image; and neither allows for ironic combinations of words and images that undermine the ostensible meanings.

In this section, therefore, in order to understand how the magazine communicated its ideological attitudes, I investigate the visual language in which *Krokodil* expressed its satirical critiques. In doing so, I draw upon the conclusions of certain

---

[92] Ward here refers to works on Soviet poster art by Bonnell (1997) and White (1988).

[93] Both collections accompany public exhibitions, suggesting that the explanation of Soviet visual satirical schemata for popular audiences precedes the attempt to do so in academia.

studies of comics, which, unlike political cartoons, have focused attention on visual language use. Saraceni (2000) equates panel transitions to verbal discourse, while Groensteen argues that 'comics are a language' (2007), for instance, while Cohn reminds us that comics are not a language, but rather they are written *in a form of* visual language (2013: 2, my italics). In distinguishing thus, Cohn acknowledges, as Benson and McKenna do not, problems with systematising visual elements into a linguistic structure. I consider *Krokodil*'s visual language as being composed from a lexicon of images, jointly constructed from artists' imagery and political discourses, and organised into conventionalised schemata. Gombrich used the term 'schema' to describe a kind of pre-existing visual model, around which variations are permitted, that influences artistic representations—perhaps even more than visual observation: 'even to describe the visible world in images we need a developed system of schemata' (1977: 76). As I argue in this section, it is essential to appreciate the significance of all of *Krokodil*'s carefully developed graphic schemata in order to understand the magazine's satire. Indeed, in the Introduction to his *Krokodil Stories* (*Krokodil'skie byli*), Manuil Grigor'evich Semenov (1914-1986, Chief Editor of *Krokodil* from 1958-1975), implied that mastery of the conventions of the magazine's graphic schema required some study, when he described the magazine as a 'school for laughter' ('smekhoshkola'):

> From the first semester of the apprenticeship trainees absorb the
> ability to use irony, sarcasm, where usually humourless people resort
> to shouting, open threats. In short, humour is the basis of the curricu-
> lum of this unusual school, here they say, they think, they create in
> its peculiar language.[94] (1982: 3)

Semenov himself, he explains, spent sufficient time at this school to 'know the bizarre world that surrounds felluietonists and cartoonists'[95] (1982: 8), but the implication is that *Krokodil* communicated in a unique and generally poorly understood language. This metaphor, to which the title of this thesis refers, was central in shaping the nature of Soviet satire. As this thesis argues, *Krokodil* encouraged its readers to study Soviet satirical art, as if enrolled at this school, and to engage with the journal's visual language in order to reach their own understanding of the nature of the 'peculiar language' of *Krokodil*'s satire. In this

---

[94] 'S pervykh zhe semestrov uchenichestva slushateli vpityvaiut umenie pol'zovat'sia ironiei, sarkazmom tam, gde obychno lishennye chuvstva iumora liudi pribegaiut k okriku, otkrytoi ugroze, rugani. Koroche govoria, iumor sostavliaet osnovu uchebnoi programmy etoi neobych-noi shkoly, zdes' govoriat, dumaiut, tvoriat na ego svoeobraznom iazyke.'

[95] '…chtoby poznat' prichudlivyi mir, okruzhaiushchii fel'etonista i karikaturista…'

section, I consider both the 'contesting' and 'affirmative' schemata—those conventionally discussed in the scholarship on *Krokodil*—and I also explore the third, 'becoming', schema. By considering the visual resources employed in all types of cartoon, I aim to challenge the view that *Krokodil*'s visual language was binary. Although some previous scholars recognise the existence of a third schema, my analysis suggests that these images were far more significant than has previously been acknowledged. Indeed, it is part of the novelty of my thesis that I foreground the importance of this third schema in order to explain the existence of a large number of images that fall outside the purview of previous binary systems.

1.2.1   Contesting Anti-Soviet Ideologies in *Krokodil*

The schematic construction of images that visualised anti-Soviet ideologies or life in the West is the focus of this sub-section. The 'list-of-targets' approach is helpful for its identification of the subject matter of cartoons referring to anti-Soviet ideologies. For example, for Stites, the depiction of anti-Soviet ideology is defined by artists' peculiar selectivity. In *Krokodil*, between 1953 and 1959, he finds cartoons about American aggression, neo-Nazism, revanchism, Wall Street capitalism, social neglect, racism and colonialism (2010: 354-360). These images represent an important element in *Krokodil*'s satirical aesthetic—as Figure 26 indicates, these cartoons occupied prominent page space. As my analysis shows, *Krokodil*'s 'contesting' images, which purport to visualise the realities of life in non-Soviet societies, engage in a dual process of revelation and condemnation of their satiric objects. The cartoons thus depict non-Soviet ideologies with their supposed deficiencies externalised.

In large part, in images that contested non-socialist ideology, the cartoon's meaning is embedded in what Medhurst and DeSousa call the 'inventional topos'—the cartoonist's chosen subject matter (1981: 200). Particular topoi drew upon shared knowledge, assumptions and cultural allusions, but in 'contesting' cartoons, the action was always located either in the United States, in foreign territory under US domination, or in an empty 'other' space (see Figure 26).[96] Constructed in these contexts, the ideological thrust of *Krokodil*'s critiques was clarified.

---

[96] Cartoons about life in America were frequently set among brightly lit skyscrapers (1956: 26/9, 1957: 17/11, and 1958: 1/10), alongside Washington landmarks (1957: 32/8-9, 1960: 15/1, and 1959: 13/16) or amongst markers of American capitalist culture (1959: 14/1, 1959: 18/16, and 1958: 7/8).

Krokodil 1955: 5/16   Krokodil 1955: 15/16   Krokodil 1960: 28/16
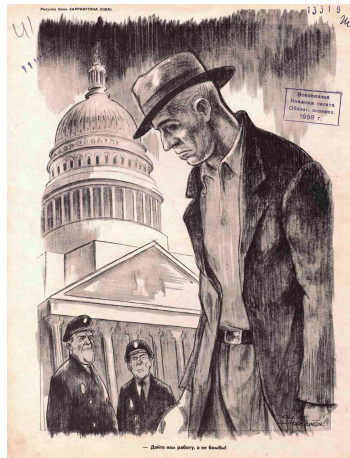
Krokodil 1957: 34/1   Krokodil 1959: 13/16   Krokodil 1956: 27/16
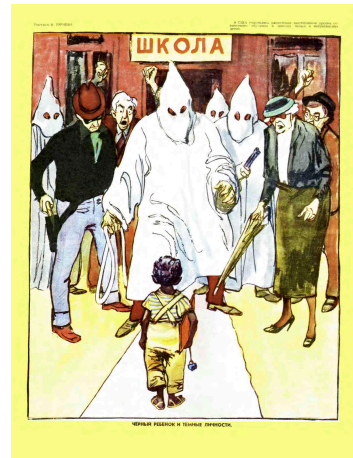
Figure 26: Various artists. 1955-1960. Images of Anti-Soviet Ideologies.

Two-frame compositions were common in *Krokodil* during the Stalin period, and, since they lent themselves to contrasting different ideological situations, they became a standard technique for artists producing 'contesting' cartoons. Reminiscent of the *lubok* style of folk art, which productively developed the 'them/us' dual-frame or 'diptych' image, the visual strategy of juxtaposing contrasting but politically linked images became popular in Soviet graphic art after World War Two (Bird, Heuer, Jackson, Mosaka and Smith 2011: 25). These bi- and multi-frame images themselves parodied Orthodox iconostases or scenes from the lives of Orthodox saints. This recontextualisation of the aesthetics of Orthodoxy paralleled Bolshevik strategies of cultural appropriation in other fields, and from existing studies in the structuralist tradition we are therefore familiar with the notion that Soviet official media achieved alternative meanings by remediating or remodelling culturally significant texts. As Section 3.2.1 shows, this composition was not always employed in order to contest anti-Soviet ideologies, but Alaniz's suggestion that 'this dialectical method secured in the viewer's consciousness a representation of the happiness of socialism and the horrors of capitalism' (Alaniz 2010: 63) is supported by the evidence of 'contesting' images. Moreover, in my analysis of images in this first sche-

ma, the dual-frame cartoon also powerfully visualised the 'seen/unseen' dichotomy, as in Figure 27.

Figure 27: Goriaev, V. *American "Freedom".* **(***Amerikanskaia "svoboda".***)**
***Krokodil* 1957: 32/8-9.**

Krokodil's characterisations were constructed using extreme exaggeration, and they depended upon cultural memory and shared understanding of the heritage of Russo-Soviet graphic satire dating back to 1917 and beyond. Anti-Soviet ideology was often personified, with the character representing either the system or specific problems. Section 3.1 discusses the visualisation of capitalism and its associated anti-Soviet allies, but images in this schema from the period 1954-1964 include crude caricatures with grotesquely obese, or angularly skinny figures and ugly, deformed, or grimacing expressions. Exaggeration of bodily convexities or orifices is, as I explore in Section 1.4.1, one of the characteristics employed by Soviet artists in order to distinguish unsympathetic characters. This graphic technique clearly communicated the satirists' view, and provided unambiguous guidance to the reader on how to interpret these characters and their behaviour. Ideological critiques were also constructed by depicting dastardly allegiances: American imperialists, militarists and capitalists are often imagined in league with deathly Nazis, and weapons of various kinds help to enunciate the threat of war in connection with these characters. As in Figure 29, the contesting cartoon was wont to contrast the behaviour of the anti-socialist with the expected norms of civilised modernity. Yellow and black are frequently used in these cartoons, and this coloration warns of the danger associated with the anti-socialist ideologies being pictured. These images are rarely funny, although the aim was to deride and ridicule the subjects. When cartoons visualised a particular situation, a caption often accompanied the image in order to reinforce the

referentiality of the image (see Figure 29). Many 'contesting' cartoons are based on allegories or visualised metaphors.[97]
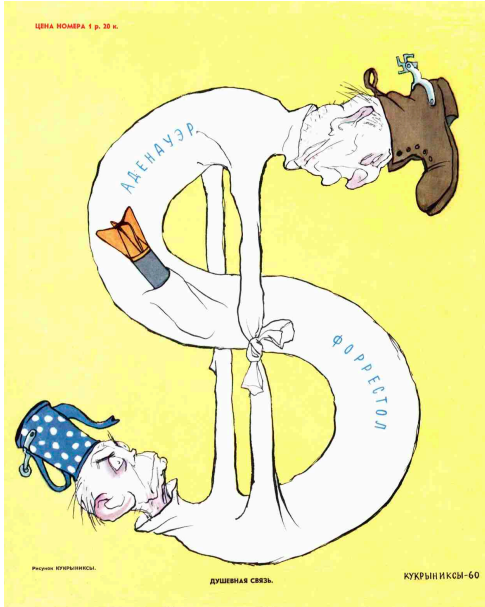
Figure 28: Kukryniksy. *Psychic connection.* **(***Dushevnaia sviaz'.***) ***Krokodil*** **1960: 18/16.**
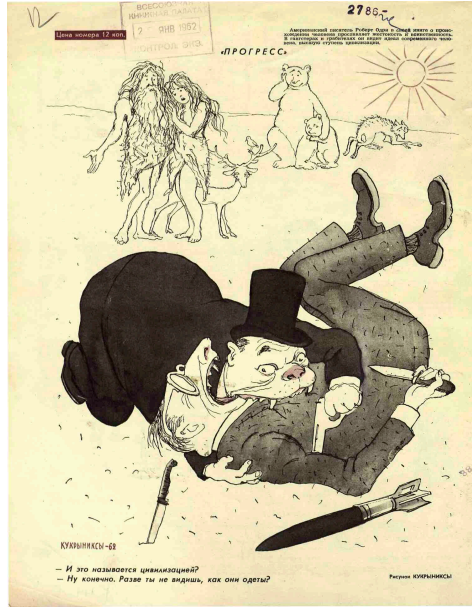
Figure 29: Kukryniksy. *Progress.* **(***Progress.***) ***Krokodil*** **1962: 2/16.**

'Progress' by the Kukryniksy, combines the grotesque vision of two suited[98] capitalists—the vanquished is distinctly rodent-like, while the victor has feline features—engaged in mortal struggle, with a vision of a more innocent, ostensibly less civilised, audience comprising a prehistoric couple and several animals. Having abandoned their modern weapons, the foreground figures attempt to maul each other to death, while the perplexed onlookers consider how far this scene represents an improvement. The spatial arrangement of figures (back-to-front) might be interpreted as an ironic comment on the evolutionary timeline implied by the cartoon, and the terrified fox's decision to flee at the rear of the composition suggests a criticism of the assumptions of capitalist modernity. The human figures in whose confused questions a large part of the cartoon's meaning may be found remind us of the Bible's first couple, and indeed the cartoon may be read as a reference to the lost para-

---

[97] Exceptions include cartoons about American racism (1954: 1/11, 1956: 27/16, and 1961: 16/6), social problems in the West (1957: 36/11, 1958: 11/12, and 1959: 18/16), and US pressure on foreign governments (1954: 21/1, 1958: 3/1 and 1963: 9/11).

[98] The caption to the cartoon draws attention to the significance of the figures' dress. As one of the figures asks 'And it's called civilization?' ('I eto nazyvaetsia tsivilizatsiei?'), the other replies 'Well of course. Can't you see how they're dressed?' ('Nu konechno. Razve ty ne vidish', kak oni odety?'). The importance of the suit and top hat in communicating an ideological critique is discussed in Section 3.1.

dise of the Book of Genesis. Their naivety is thus contrasted with the monstrous cat-and-mouse annihilation that apparently accompanies modernity.

In studies that elevate the significance of *Krokodil*'s visual criticisms of anti-socialist ideologies, this first schema is conventionally explained as a technique for general education. For Norris, *Krokodil* cartoons of Western subjects achieved the Soviet state's political objective of assisting in the construction of communism by creating laughter in their readers. This explanation originates with the theorists and practitioners of Soviet visual satire: for Efimov, the artist's work was 'to reveal what is funny and to force the reader or spectator to appreciate this funny feeling and to accept how it will be used for the general mockery of anyone that deserves this mockery' (quoted in Norris 2013: 52). As I shall explain in the following sections, however, my analysis suggests that *Krokodil* did not simply teach its readers what to laugh at, and its cartoons did not just visualize propaganda (as if propaganda was pre-existing, and waiting for materialization). My approach to the magazine considers all image types, and my central theoretical claim in this chapter is that *Krokodil*'s satirical vision was not defined by one image type. 'Contesting' imagery did not simply expose the Western satirical object—it was one element in a satirical system that functioned as a textual mechanism for the performance of differences. These elements—the schemata discussed in this chapter—juxtaposed in the magazine, simultaneously perform different kinds of ideologically motivated behaviour, and the journal's humour therefore exists as much in-between as in the images.

1.2.2 Affirming Soviet Ideology

My contention throughout this thesis is that *Krokodil*'s satirical critiques were intertextual. It was in *Krokodil*'s presentation of ideological behaviour in contrasting graphic schemata—rather than in individual images—that the magazine's satirical critiques are discoverable. Ideological meaning is therefore only fully articulated through comparisons between numerous cartoons from different schemata. In my view, the purpose of cartoons that affirmed Soviet ideology was to produce difference, when contrasted with the images of other schemata. Since comparisons were so important in generating meaning, exclusion through boundary making was one of the primary functions of *Krokodil*'s schemata, and this sub-section considers how cartoons that affirmed Soviet ideology contributed to that process.

Soviet ideology was explicitly and unequivocally affirmed through the contrast between the 'contesting' cartoons and what Stites calls 'heavenly' imagery. Stites suggests that *Krokodil*'s vision of Soviet life was 'a cross between an idyll and an epic' (2010: 353). According to this view, *Krokodil*'s affirming imagery com-

bined peaceful, optimistic pastoral scenes with cartoons about technological achievements, the high-culturedness of the peace-loving peoples of the USSR, and the celebration of the strengths of the Soviet armed forces (2010: 354-5).[99]

Crucially, however, these affirmative images were often set in Soviet geographical space, or included markers of Soviet identity.[100] In this, *Krokodil*'s affirming imagery differed significantly from 'contesting' cartoons, but location was not the only distinguishing feature. *Krokodil*'s affirmative imagery, which commonly appeared in those issues that celebrated anniversaries or significant achievements (see Section 1.1, above), was often associated with celebrations of certain political or natural watersheds. Anniversaries and annual agricultural festivals, in particular, were always celebrated with affirmative images that glorified the achievements of the Soviet people, and reflected favourably upon the role of the Soviet state, even if only by implication. In these images, in fact, there is usually no hint of internal conflict or ambiguity. Any sources of tension or humour are generally resolved by the image or the caption, and the messages are one-dimensional. Semenov's 'Harvest 1958' (see Figure 30) is typical of many harvest-time images from the Khrushchev period. In one sense, these images may be understood as visual representations of the colossal increases in Soviet agricultural productivity seen at this time. As *Krokodil*'s readers would have known, the Virgin Lands scheme was tremendously successful in its immediate aim of providing vast quantities of cheap grain. The 1958 harvest produced over 58 millions tons of grain from the Virgin Lands areas, a total which was only 8% short of the record set in 1956. Overall, the 1958 harvest was the best to date—up by 75% over the average for the period 1949-53 (Durgin 1962: 262). In another sense, of course, (as in the reference to the statue atop the entrance arch at the Moscow Exhibition of Achievements of the People's Economy[101]) the images were indexical, if exaggerated (compare with Figure 31).

---

[99] Other important themes included the achievements of the Soviet space programme (1957: 32/1, 1959: 3/1, and 1960: 15/4), the growth of Soviet industry (1954: 30/1, 1959: 27/1, and 1960: 23/1), and the successes of Soviet athletes (1954: 29/6, 1960: 27/1, and 1964: 6/12).

[100] Distinctive landmarks such as Moscow's Kremlin and Red Square appear in 1960: 12/3, 1956: 30/10, and 1955: 30/3; VDNKh appears in Figure 30; and landmarks of the 1917 revolution feature in 1957: 31/3, 1959: 3/4, and 1956: 30/1. Factories appear in 1963: 12/1, 1961: 29/3, and 1956: 6/2. Russo-Soviet heroic or mythic figures, including Alexander Pushkin (1964: 30/8), the bogatyrs Alesha Popovich, Dobrynia Nikitich and Il'ia Muromets (1964: 29/1) and Maxim Gorky (1954: 33/1) also feature.

[101] VDNKh (vystavka dostizhenii narodnogo khoziaistva) is in the northern Moscow suburb of Ostankino, and was begun in 1935.

Figure 30: Semenov, I. *Harvest 1958*. (*Urozhai 1958 goda*). *Krokodil* 1958: 25/1.

Figure 31: Entranceway statue, VDNKh, Moscow.

Exaggeration was thus an important visual technique for artists working with the affirmative schema, as it was for those visualising ideological contestation. Here, its purpose is broader than simply to affirm the Soviet project by highlighting contemporary achievements, it also celebrates the success of Khrushchev's policies by turning the visual rhetoric of a Stalinist monument of celebration back upon itself. The cartoon's exaggeration of the size of the sheaf of corn is clearly intended to update the reader's picture of the monument, which was completed in 1953, and placed upon an archway that was begun in 1935. In this case, then, the difference being created is one that contrasts Khrushchevian successes with their Stalinist precursors, and in this image, the affirmation in question is directed precisely at Khrushchev's achievements.

Affirmation was always described graphically. Stites is right to suggest that affirmation was generally achieved through the selection of subject matter, but it was also defined by a graphic style that was generally realist[102] or naturalistic. Individuals, whether they were particular or stereotyped, were beautiful, and were depicted with heroic postures and strong, muscular physiques. The virtues of the ideology and the Soviet socio-political system were thus externalised and personified in affirmative images.

---

[102] I use this term for two reasons. First, it follows McCloud, who defines it in opposition to iconic abstraction and words (see Figure 5). Second, it refers to *Krokodil*'s aesthetic similarities with Soviet socialist realism, and easel painting in particular.

Figure 32: Goriaev, V. *Always together.* (*Vesgda vmeste*). *Krokodil* 1954: 1/1.

Figure 33: Cheremnykh, M. Untitled. *Krokodil* 1954: 12/1.

Figure 34: Fedorov, Iu. *Broken replies.* (*Otzyvy bitykh*.) *Krokodil* 1955: 5/1.

Figure 35: Semenov, I. *Aerial parade over Red Square.* (*Vozdushnyi parad nad Krasnoi ploshad'iu*.) *Krokodil* 1957: 12/1.

Figure 36: Konovalov, V. *1917—1957.* *Krokodil* 1957: 30/1.

Figure 37: Shukaev, E. *At a point on the schedule.* (*Po tochnomu grafiku*). *Krokodil* 1961: 23/1.

Characters' actions were decisive, and their attitudes were always positive. In their construction, they resembled those also found in literature, Socialist Realist painting, poster art, cinema, and hagiographical biographies of revolutionaries. In substance, the references to other media and cultural forms were generally only implicit, but when considered in comparison with the magazine's other schemata, the affirmative message implied by the visual language was clear. Even so, the artistic choices provide clear enough indication to the reader that a sympathetic attitude to the characters is appropriate. As the cartoons reproduced in this sub-section show, affirmation was often achieved graphically through the judicious employment of the colour red. The Russian 'red' ('krasnyi') is culturally and linguistically associated with 'beautiful' ('krasivyi') and the colour has special artistic and religious significance stretching back far into Russia's Orthodox iconographic history, as well as signifying sacred status in Soviet graphic art (Bonnell 1997: 106). *Krokodil* thus combined

the Communist Party's own symbolism and techniques borrowed from much older traditions in the construction of its affirmative imagery.

Krokodil's affirmation was unique in its employment of the friendly sketch or 'druzheskii sharzh' (see Figure 38), and very often this was to denote the appearance of a visual metaphor, or to clarify the intended ideological message in cases where an image juxtaposed an enemy of the USSR with a friendly or heroic figure. Since *Krokodil*'s critiques were generally intertextual, the reader might find contrasts between images, but it is important to acknowledge the importance of cartoons that contrasted scenes or characters from different schemata in the same image.
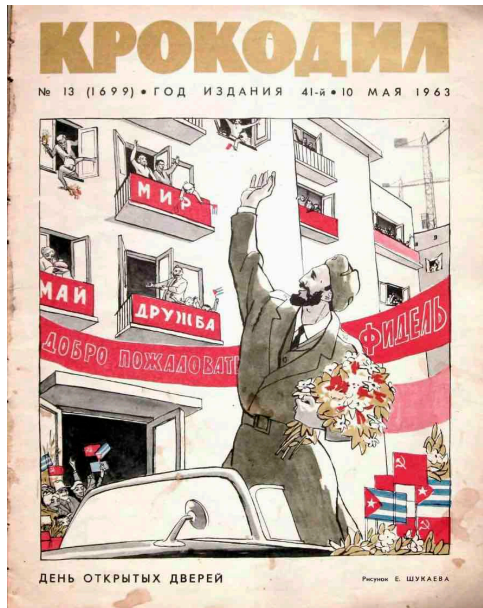
Figure 38: Shukaev, E. *Day of open doors*. (*Den' otkrytykh dverei*.) *Krokodil* 1963: 13/1.

Figure 39: Abramov, M. and Semenov, I. *First anniversary of October…and the forty-first*. (*Oktiabr'skaia godovshchina pervaia…i sorok pervaia*.) *Krokodil* 1958: 30/1.

Two-frame compositions were indeed characteristic of both contesting and affirmative schemata. In these images, characters depicted in contrasting graphic terms were placed in juxtaposition or visualised interacting, but always in a manner that affirmed Soviet ideology (see Figure 34, and Figure 39). Anti-socialists were generally depicted in miniature alongside Soviet characters, and tiny capitalists and warmongers were often shown fleeing in terror, intimidated and shrinking, or confounded by their experiences in contact with Soviet ideology. Affirmation was thus achieved in images that compressed geographical and ideological distance and depicted capitalism and communism in contrast. In the process of contrasting the two, then, *Krokodil* helps to visualise the Soviet system's superiority.

Taken together, the contesting and affirmative schemata provide a compelling explanation of the visual language employed in *Krokodil* magazine. Certainly, it

is ostensibly supported by the evidence of the structure of the magazine, and it seems to explain a large number of the most high profile images in the journal in this period; indeed, Stites' analysis appears to have been based largely on the front cover images of a small number of issues published between 1953 and 1959 (2010: 352). A dual-schema model also echoes traditional assumptions about Russian cultural history. The critics Iurii Lotman and Boris Uspenskii described the 'semiotics' of the everyday behaviour of the Russian nobility in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and analysed the dualism of that culture. Contrasting everyday life ('byt') and spiritual existence ('bytie'), they described Russian culture as extremely polarised, 'without an axiologically neutral zone' (1984: 31).

However compelling, though, a binary model that defines *Krokodil* by its visualisation of Soviet socialism (affirmed) and non-socialist ideology (contested) is flawed. Binarism in Soviet culture is an extremely influential cliché of a branch of academic, journalistic and popular discourse about the USSR, but in its packaging of assumptions about delineated, separated and contrasting political-cultural domains, it is an unhelpful one (Yurchak 2005: 5-10). It is more fruitful to consider *Krokodil*'s schemata as being in dialogue with each other, rather than in opposition. My analysis of *Krokodil* suggests that, rather than understanding each schema as a closed and self-sufficient system, we should see these schemata as highly interdependent. Images in one schema, therefore, can only be fully understood in relation to *Krokodil*'s other schemata. Affirming cartoons, in other words, depend for their meaning upon the reader's appreciation of how the magazine treated subjects in the other two schemata, and it is therefore important to acknowledge that *Krokodil*'s visual language was not simply binary. Russian cultural binarism, Lotman and Uspenskii argue, originated with Russian Orthodox Christianity, and was contrasted with the Western medieval worldview, which had a threefold division between heaven, purgatory and hell. Lotman also discusses ternary models of culture, and in later works he describes binarism 'as a principle which is realised in plurality since every newly-formed language is in its turn subdivided on a binary principle' (Lotman 1990: 124). The essential plurality of the context of any semiotic system thus challenges the completeness of a binary opposition. Svetlana Boym queries whether a third (neutral) sphere exists in Russian culture, or whether it has simply been left out of literary, political and cultural works (1994: 298n1).

As the Introduction of this thesis explains, a binary system of 'official' and 'unofficial' cultures in the Soviet Union does not adequately explain the graphic satiricism of *Krokodil*, and as this chapter shows, my analysis suggests that the magazine was constructed using a tripartite, not a binary, system of schemata. Not only does a binary model fail to account for the shared visual language resources

and techniques of visual rhetoric on which both contesting and affirmative schemata were based (exaggeration and dual-frame images, for example), but it excludes the majority of the cartoons that appeared in the magazine. A binary explanation of *Krokodil*'s visual language implies a belief that the central mechanisms for understanding the journal may be found in just a few pages, and it reflects the Cold War logic from which it was born. From that point of view, it is an understandable assumption, since the journal appears to be constructed on fairly rigid structural principles, but my analysis suggests that it was significantly more complex than that. From my study of all image types from every issue published in the decade 1954-1964, it is clear that the majority of cartoons do not fit either of these two schemata. I would therefore like to emphasise the importance of the third schema.

1.2.3 Becoming Soviet

As I have explained, many studies of Soviet graphic satire overlook the existence, or downplay the importance of the third schema in the visual language of positive satire. I want to emphasise that I do not mean to misrepresent existing studies of *Krokodil* where they do acknowledge this third type of image. Stites and Benson (2012), for example, both refer to *Krokodil*'s satires on domestic subjects: recognising that 'about two-thirds of its pages [are devoted] to permitted "social criticism"' (Stites 2010: 351) and 'mild exposés of un-Soviet behaviour' (Stites 2010: 353-4). These cartoons, others have argued, were indicative of the political restrictions placed on Soviet satirists (see Introduction Section ii). Thus, existing studies denigrate the importance of *Krokodil*'s critical satire of domestic subjects.

The cartoons of the third group represent an undervalued and almost entirely unexplored corpus of material that was essential to defining *Krokodil*'s graphic style and satirical outlook. Moreover, in their focus on the domestic problems of the USSR, they comprise a critical counter-commentary on the efficacy of Soviet policies and priorities. It is one of the central conceptual claims of this thesis, however, that the third group of images warrants greater consideration. Cartoons satirising the 'earthly' activities of citizens in the daily business of 'becoming' Soviet have not received significant scholarly attention, despite the development of the so-called 'Soviet Subjectivity' school of historiography of the Stalinist 1930s.[103] I call this schema 'becoming Soviet' partly in reference to the work of these scholars, and

---

[103] See Kotkin (1997), Hellbeck (1996, 2001, 2006), Krylova (2000 and 2008) and Halfin (2003, 2004, 2007, 2011).

partly because I wish to point out that while Soviet citizens were clearly actively engaged with 'being' Soviet,[104] the Soviet state's 'official' satire stressed what Bakhtin might call the 'unfinalizability' (see Section 1.4) of the process of society actually 'becoming' Soviet. Official culture in the USSR generally viewed time as linear. The Soviet present, which *Krokodil*'s 'becoming' imagery depicted, was clearly distinguished from two other eras: the corrupt past (already largely overcome) and the more familiar beautiful future (already partially achieved).

The Soviet present therefore represented a liminal phase that was both essential and perpetually ending. *Krokodil*'s 'becoming' cartoons therefore visualised the problems of Soviet society, which were both perennial and permanently coming to an end. Temporalities were thus concertinaed; past and future were collapsed into the present. This ran counter to Soviet ideological emphases, which stressed that the political-cultural were always forward, yet it was a phenomenon envisioned in the pages of every issue of *Krokodil*. As this section argues, the journal's schemata juxtaposed images and symbols of the past, present, and future for satirical effect. This was especially true in the case of *Krokodil*'s cartoons about spaceflight (Etty 2016), but there was perhaps a more general adjustment to the permanent postponement of the arrival of the glorious future under communism. What *Krokodil*'s 'becoming' cartoons show us, however, is that the magazine was concerned with the atemporal, the constant and unchanging problems associated with the performance of ideological behaviour by ordinary Soviet citizens. Moreover, as this thesis shows, the journal also visualised the ideal responses of ordinary Soviet citizens to celebrations of important events and the feats of their extraordinary comrades.

While cartoons satirising Soviet domestic politics always existed (generally on pages 10-15 in the magazine, and almost always in small scale), they are especially important for understanding graphic satire in The Thaw. While the magazine's high-profile images less commonly visualised the everyday or 'earthly' Soviet Union earlier in the period, cartoons about 'becoming' Soviet were increasingly common after 1958. In 1962, for example, all of the front cover images depicted Soviet domestic scenes except the three issues (numbers 10,23 and 30) that affirmatively visualised Soviet exploits in the cosmos.

Krokodil's readers' ability to understand the third type of cartoon depended upon their appreciation of how these images differed from those in the other sche-

---

[104] Timothy Johnston discusses 'Being Soviet', describing the tactics employed in everyday life and the role of rumour in explaining aspects of the collective mentality of the Stalin era (2011).

mata. 'Becoming' cartoons were defined by their location in the USSR, like many 'affirming' cartoons, but they were unique for their satirical treatments of domestic subjects. These satires of domestic subjects were critical of anti-Soviet behaviour, like 'contesting' cartoons, but their focus was upon Soviet citizens' actions. Their critiques were constructed in graphic terms that avoided both the extremes of the exaggerated caricatures of 'contesting' cartoons, and the glossy optimism of 'affirming' images. The range of caricatures was greater in cartoons about 'becoming' Soviet—it was seldom grotesque but also rarely entirely naturalistic. Characters were stereotyped and recognisable, and always depicted as native types; the 'becoming' cartoon did not situate ordinary Soviet citizens in direct contact with Western figures, although the implicit contrast with life outside the USSR might be interpreted in some images. Otherwise, these cartoons pictured everyday situations as well as metaphorical inventions that included all of the minor inventional topoi found elsewhere. The graphic cues that the reader might come to expect from the other schemata are therefore less readily intelligible in this schema, and herein lie the occasional ambiguities. While these characters were less repulsive that those in the 'contesting' schema, and less heroic than the 'affirming' schema, they were perhaps easier to identify with.

The 'list-of-targets' approach to *Krokodil* (see Introduction Section ii) stresses the restrictedness of the journal's domestic satire:

> Journals with biting and stinging names such as *Krokodil* […], *Nettles*, *Porcupine*, *Hornet*, *Stag Beetle* and *Thistle* were a vehicle for satires and cartoons about those who had to face workers, clients, and customers directly […] It was a limited humor [sic] about those with a little brief authority. No one holding lasting and serious power was ever ridiculed, nor was the political and economic system itself. (Davies 2011: 236)

Some critics have argued that Soviet graphic satirical commentary was never directed at the system,[105] but instead found scapegoats and reported on individual abuses. This suggests a rather literal reading of individual images. Alone, a cartoon such as Lev Semoilov's 'Technology came in handy' (see Figure 40) might not convey significant criticisms, but *Krokodil*'s readers would know that equipment breakdowns and technological problems were also satirised in at least six other cartoons in the same year.[106] Alongside the numerous cartoons that criticised Soviet

---

[105] See Stites (2010: 354), Tucker (2002: 12) and Draitser (1994: 34).

[106] See 1960: 4/1, 1960: 9/10, 1960: 10/6, 1960: 26/3, 1960: 27/7 and 1960: 28/7.

over-mechanisation and poor quality or poor design, this image is part of a much more systematic commentary on the failures of the Soviet economy and the Soviet state's inability to construct a New Soviet Man.

**Figure 40: Samoilov, L. *Technology came in handy.* (*Tekhnika prigodilas'*).
Krokodil 1960: 16/3.**

Although Soviet satirists could not criticise the USSR's policies and politicians the way Westerners could, *Krokodil* always engaged in critiques of the Soviet political, economic and social system, and satirised the USSR's leading politicians at times (see Section 3.2-3.3). 'Becoming' cartoons visualised problems in the Soviet Union, but, paradoxically, whether the issues were localised and specific, or abstracted and generalised, the criticism was always of society. It is important to state that I do not mean to suggest that individual cartoons about society 'becoming' Soviet represent direct satirical attacks on the politics of the state. Instead, I propose an interpretation of the magazine that seeks to move beyond a 'supporter/dissident' binary. Collectively, when considered in the context of *Krokodil*'s other schemata, and compared with normal Soviet mainstream media and political discourses, they comprise a critical counter-commentary on the efficacy of Soviet policies and priorities. *Krokodil*'s satire was essentially sceptical (as opposed to oppositionist or dissident) and a study of these 'becoming' cartoons reveals that the magazine's scepticism extended even to the subjects of which official state rhetoric was most protective.

This third group of cartoons also includes images that are essentially apolitical. Pages fourteen and fifteen very often featured several small, low status images that were not obviously set in any particular location and contained no overt references to political issues but were instead about ubiquitous themes (see Figure 41). The cartoons were often light-hearted and entertaining, and their inclusion highlights

the significance of non-ideological humour. In these images, themes are drawn from everyday life, with benign conflicts and humour based on universal experiences. These images are ignored by the scholarship on *Krokodil*, and consequently, interpretations of the magazine highlight the magazine's performance of Soviet ideology at the expense of apolitical content. This thesis attempts to rebalance the view of the magazine by acknowledging the importance of the images in this third group.

Figure 41: Sokolov, M. Untitled. Caption reads: 'The match is finished, and you're still yelling!'
('Match zakonchilsia, a ty vse oresh!').
***Krokodil* 1961: 17/15.**

Considering all three of the graphic schemata introduced above provides a much fuller picture of the visual language of Soviet positive satirical cartoons than has appeared in previous studies. Together, these three schemata explain all of the cartoons published in *Krokodil* in the period 1954-1964, rather than simply those with the highest profiles. As Sections 1.1 and 1.2 show, *Krokodil*'s high profile page space was often filled with images that contested anti-Soviet ideology or affirmed the Soviet project, especially before 1958, but this fact must not obscure the perennial significance of cartoons about becoming Soviet. In placing stress upon the importance of these images I have attempted to disrupt the binarism of traditional interpretations of *Krokodil* without rejecting the need for an approach that acknowledges the differences between different topoi and graphic styles.

As my structural analysis shows, *Krokodil*'s visual language drew clear distinctions between different types of image. The visual language of Soviet satire, therefore, must be understood as comprising three interconnected schemata. The primary purpose of these schemata was to assist in the graphic construction of satirical difference. Different ideologies and types of ideological behaviour were constructed using different visual resources, and distinguished from each other using

placement in the magazine, image composition and colour, so as to focus readers' attention on the differences. Bogel argues that the definition of difference is the essential satiric gesture, and, moreover, that this is necessary 'in the face of a potentially compromising similarity' (2001: 42). In *Krokodil*, then, lest any reader might question how communism differed from competing ideologies, the graphic resources of the magazine articulated the differences. The contrasts between different schemata also provided visual cues for readers on how to interpret the cartoons, as well as contributing to the work of creating boundaries between in the included (satirist and audience, who were aligned) and the excluded (the satiric objects). The magazine's three schemata, which were clearly so central to the magazine's satirical vision and ideological agenda, represent an exploration of Soviet society's progress towards communism, even though their combination demonstrates the 'unfinalizability' of man (see Section 1.4).

The foregoing analysis allows us to challenge previous interpretations of the journal, which have based their analyses almost entirely upon the high profile examples of the affirming and contesting schemata, and which represent what Bogel identifies as the formalist stage in the criticism of satire, where formal patterns and the historical particulars being satirised are evident (2001: 5-6). It is important to move beyond this stage, however, because identification of schemata does not sufficiently deepen our understanding of the nature of Soviet satire. Distinctions between different types of image are identifiable, in other words, but since they were not 'institutionalised' in the magazine, we are little closer to understanding how these images worked together, or how satirical critiques might exist between texts. These questions, among others, are addressed below.

1.3 Tracing *Krokodil*'s Heritages and Influences

Having outlined the three schemata from which *Krokodil*'s visual critiques were constructed, I now consider the influences upon *Krokodil*'s peculiar satirical aesthetic. What were the different political, cultural and social traditions that influenced *Krokodil*, and what were their effects? According to Norris, Efimov's cartoons 'articulated a form of visual Occidentalism, one that built upon pre-1917 Russian visual nationhood and the traditions of caricature established in 19th-century Europe' but they also 'provide a clear picture of the state's uses of laughter and its connections to power' (2013: 32). The existing scholarly literature on Soviet visual

culture regards the Russian Revolution as a watershed,[107] but a study of *Krokodil* reveals that continuities may be traced. This section explores how *Krokodil*'s self-vision[108] shows that Soviet satire was not simply the tool of a dictatorship, but a phenomenon with deep Russian and European cultural roots.

In this section I aim to draw together *Krokodil*'s various heritages and influences, in combination with certain attempts by the magazine to clarify its debts to its predecessors. In order to trace a fuller picture of the heritages that are identifiable in *Krokodil*, including some of the tensions inherent in the magazine's claims to legitimacy by virtue of cultural continuities, I aim to explore how those textual and visual influences that have been acknowledged in the existing scholarship were manifested in the text. As I show, however, these alone do not provide a rounded picture of the magazine's ancestry; therefore I also aim to explore the legacies of *Krokodil*'s performative predecessors. Despite Oushakine's suggestion that performative qualities were central to the uniqueness of Soviet humour (2012: 198), no previous study has acknowledged the importance of this cultural heritage. As my analysis shows, the variety of influences on the magazine suggests that *Krokodil* must be understood as a complex system of graphic satirical techniques.

1.3.1 Textual and Visual Heritages

Krokodil's self-identification with Russia's literary-satirical tradition transcended the political shift that occurred in 1917 and the journal's self-conception derived from a sense that the magazine occupied the same moral standpoint as pre-revolutionary Russian literary satirists. Indeed, *Krokodil* shares many of the same concerns as Nikolai Gogol's *Dead Souls* (1842), and Mikhail Saltykov-Shchedrin's *Golov'ev Family* (1876): like nineteenth-century satirists, its self-appointed role combined service to society with satirical comment upon the problems of middle- and lower-level government and contemporary society. The Soviet literary-critical establishment co-opted the legacies of satirists such as these, even if they downplayed the humorous elements of their works in favour of their social-political commentaries on pre-revolutionary society (Draitser 1994: 27). *Krokodil*'s affinity with these nineteenth-century satirists was manifest in certain cartoons that drew

---

[107] See Bonnell (1997: 1), Stites (1992: 39), and Alaniz (2010: 31-2).

[108] The self-image and agency of institutions such as *Krokodil* does not feature in the scholarly literature on the USSR. In contrast, Colin Seymour-Ure's study of *Private Eye* (1974) takes this approach to an English satirical magazine.

upon their creations. In 1939, on the cover of *Krokodil* No.13, a cartoon remembering 50 years since the death of Saltykov-Shchedrin revived the author's *Pompadours* as contemporary bureaucrats and imagined their outrage at criticisms of them: 'Slander! We will complain! He died long ago and he couldn't have been writing about us!'[109] (see Figure 42).
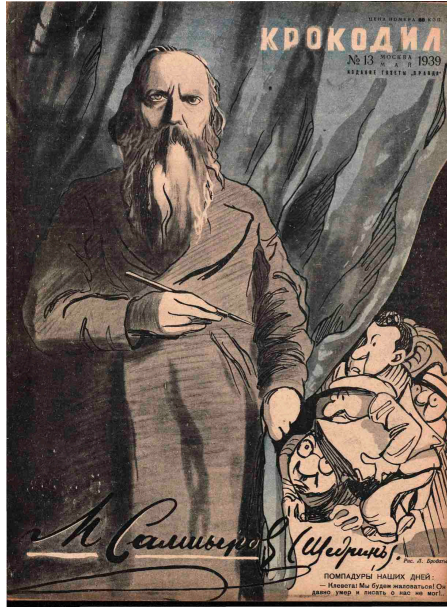
Figure 42: Brodaty, L. *M. Saltykov-Shchedrin*. (*M. Saltykov-Shchedrin*.)
***Krokodil* 1939: 13/1.**

At different times, moreover, the magazine celebrated the anniversaries of various pre-Soviet satirists (see Table 3). Although it lies beyond the scope of this thesis to explore specific continuities in satirical treatments of these socio-political themes, it is nevertheless significant that the journal drew upon this pre-revolutionary literary heritage in the creation of its graphic satirical critiques.

The lineage claimed by state sanctioned satirists did prompt difficult questions, not the least significant of which was whether post-revolutionary artists could live up to the reputations of their illustrious forbears. In 1927, Sergei Gusev, a party official writing in *Izvestiia*, complained 'unfortunately, we are still lacking our own, Soviet, Gogols and Saltykovs, who could be lashing out at our drawbacks (nedostatki) with the same force' (quoted in Oushakine 2012: 198). Likewise, in *Krokodil* in 1954, an article contributed by I. Riabov described the need for satirical attention in

---

[109] 'Pompadury nashikh dnei: Kleveta! My budem zhalovatsia! On davno umer i pisat' o nas ne mog!'

the small town of Belinsky,[110] near Penza. Ridiculing the complacency of certain residents, Riabov notes that some believe that 'satire cannot flourish in the town, since it numbers neither Gogol nor Shchedrin among its inhabitants; what kind of satire can there be without geniuses? One must wait till some are born locally.' The article that follows is a call to arms for modern satire, claiming legitimacy and a socio-political role in the name of these literary greats (1954: 11/13). Thus acknowledging the greatness of their predecessors, and the dearth of contemporary satirists, these appeals implied scepticism about the quality of Soviet satire. For some commentators, however, the Bolshevik government's political achievements rendered satire irrelevant, as discussed below. Manuil Semenov posited this view rhetorically when he asked 'Has not the epoch of brutal social injustice and moral distortions, which inspired the wrathful writings of Gogol and Saltykov-Shchedrin, receded into history never to return?' (Samyonov 1969: 41). *Krokodil*'s continued self-association with these pre-revolutionary satirists, however, indicates that such continuity was essential to the magazine's identity and satirical outlook.[111]

The second heritage to be considered here is *Krokodil*'s most direct antecedent: pre-revolutionary satirical journals in Western Europe and Russia. While Russia had a vibrant literary satirical tradition, published graphic satire remained rather less well developed. Like the later pre-revolutionary journals, *Krokodil* and the satirical magazines of the early Soviet period outwardly resembled West European humour publications. John Bowlt shows that at key moments in the development of Russian graphic satire, including in the period c.1900-1922, Western Europe provided models for Russian satirists to follow. In his comments on the nature of *Krokodil*'s aesthetic development, the satirist Isaak Abramskii notes the influence of *Le Charivari* (1832-1937, Paris), *Punch* (1841-1992, London), *Fliegende Blätter* (1845-1944, Munich), *Ulk* (1872-1933, Berlin) and *Kladderadatsch* (1848-1944, Berlin). In particular, *Simplicissimus* (1896-1967, with a hiatus from 1944-1954, Munich), had a significant impact on the production of Russian satire. Zinovii Grzhebin, editor of the Russian satirical journal *Bugbear* in 1905, had been a student in Munich, and aimed to produce a Russian equivalent of *Simplicissimus* (Bowlt 1975: 70). Abramskii describes how Soviet graphic satire was shaped by some of the most

---

[110] The significance of this town's name—after Vissarion Belinsky (1811-1848), a literary critic and socialist—would have been clear to readers.

[111] Acknowledgement of this continuity tends to undermine the validity of approaches—such as those of Chapple (1980: 1-17) and Henry (1972: ix-x)—that classify Soviet satire according to political periodization.

important European artists of the nineteenth century. The Kukryniksy trio, Lev Brodaty and others, were, according to Abramskii, influenced by Honoré Daumier's political satire from 1848. Ambramskii also explains that the compositions of the French painter and printmaker Théophile Steinlen were an example for *Krokodil*'s proponents of the multi-figure image (massovyi risunok)—Konstantin Rotov, Ivan Semenov, Boris Antonovskii, Evgenii Vedernikov and Anatolii Tsvetkov. Not only did Soviet graphic satirists study the characteristics of the best artists' pen strokes, composition and colour, but 'Russian pre-revolutionary and Soviet satirical magazines partially used the experience of "Simplicissimus" in the design of the magazine's pages, the construction of the layout, [and] the ratio of text and graphics'[112] (Abramskii 1977: 26). King and Porter (1983: 39) and Alaniz (2010: 29) stress the significant influence of *Simplicissimus* in refining the art of the Russian lubok after its creation in 1896, but, with some notable exceptions,[113] little scholarly attention has been paid to the nature and extent of cross-cultural influences upon Soviet cartoon art.

In the existing scholarship, Russian satirical magazines are treated as manifestations of a critical outlook or oppositionist political stance that generally lay dormant, and only proliferated when historico-political circumstances allowed.[114] While Russian graphic satire was in a 'desultory and derivative condition' at the end of the eighteenth century, it 'flowered with exceptional strength' (King and Porter 1983: 224-5) during the war against Napoleon, for example, and it was again stimulated by the political freedom of the post-Emancipation era. These periods saw the politicization of the intelligentsia, and alongside socially conscious literature, the radical satirical journals used Aesopian language and allegory to disguise commentary on proscribed issues. After 1865, although published graphic satire again declined, its influence continued to be felt in radical politics. Lenin's wife said of the satirical journals 'They taught us to analyse, to understand people and events' (Krupskaia 1930: 31).

Alongside European satirical journals, the hundreds of satirical journals published during the 1905 Revolution had the biggest influence upon *Krokodil*'s form.

---

[112] 'Russkie dorevoliutsionnye i sovetskie satiricheskie zhurnaly chastichno ispol'zovali opyt "Simplitsissimusa" v khudozhestvennom oformlenii zhurnal'nogo lista, postroenii maketa, sootnoshenii teksta i risunkov.'

[113] See Norris (2013: 34), McKenna (2001: 19), King and Porter (1983: 39) and Alaniz (2010: 29).

[114] In English language scholarship, the key works include Bowlt (1975), Porter and King (1983), and Alaniz (2010).

Many artists who worked for these journals in 1905 later became painters in the USSR (King and Porter 1983: 38). *Krokodil* acknowledged this debt in 1955, when it published a series of caricatures from the 1905 Revolution, alongside an article entitled 'The Satire of a Terrible Year' ('Satire groznogo goda'), including a reproduction of Ivan Bilibin's famous cartoon 'Ass (Equus Asinus) 1/20 Natural Size', which appeared in the third and final issue of *Bugbear* (*Zhupel*) in 1905 (see Figure 43).[115] Bilibin's 'Ass' was one of two *Bugbear* cartoons directed at the Tsar, and this image was the reason the magazine was immediately closed down after the third issue (Bilibin himself was arrested after publication of this image). Tsarist heraldic emblems including two gryphons, otherwise always used to frame an image of Nicholas II himself, surround a donkey. Typical of the best satirical cartoons from the period, this image employs compositional juxtaposition derived from the Lubok (see below) to imply a strongly subversive political message without verbalizing any criticism. Another *Bugbear* cartoon ('Eagle-Werewolf' by Zinovii Grzhebin) depicted, ostensibly, a stylized double-headed eagle which, when turned upside down, became a view of the Tsar's naked rear (see Figure 44).
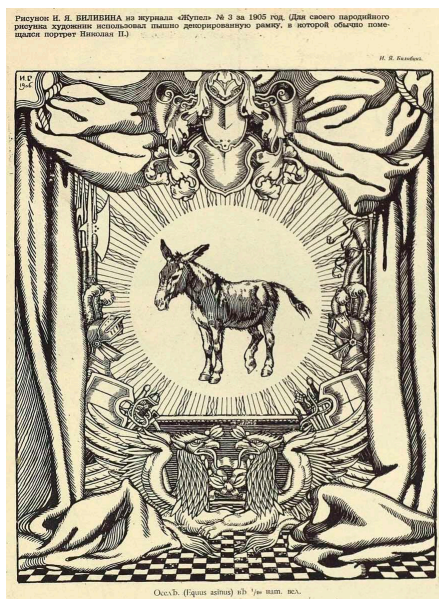
Figure 43: Bilibin, I. *Ass (Equus Asinus) 1/20 Natural Size*. (*Osel' (Equus asinus) v' 1/20 nat. vel.*). Published in *Zhupel*, 1905. *Krokodil* 1955: 34/5.

Figure 44: Grzhebin, Z. *Eagle-Werewolf or Domestic and Foreign Policy, 1905*. (*Orel-oboromen' ili politika vneshniaia i vnutrenniaia*). Published in *Zhupel* 1905: 1/4. Bowlt (2008: 195)

By distributing elements of their critical comment across gutters, between different cartoons, and between image and text, Russian artists were able to evade pre-

---

[115] *Krokodil* repeatedly paid homage in this way. See 1923: 43, 1930: 6, and 1936: 6.

publication censorship in 1905-6, but after the re-imposition of stricter controls, the political criticisms disappeared from Russian graphic art again. Cartoon art and satirical journals did not disappear, however, although their focus shifted to middle class and artistic mores. Between 1906 and 1914, satirical journals, such as *Satiricon* (*Satirikon* (1908-1913)), *New Satiricon* (*Novyi satirikon* (1914-1918)) and *Alarm Clock* (*Budilnik* (1865-1917)), lost their radical edge and gained a degree of respectability, and this shift to the cultural mainstream was assisted by the academic studies of Russian caricature published by the critic Vasilii Vereshchagin. The cartoon art of World War One lacked the psychological force of the 1905-6 period, and it was only rarely that conventional cartoons made any kind of critical commentary before 1917. Bowlt suggests that the most powerful graphic expression of Russian national opinion during the war appeared in the lubok (1975: 74-5).

Undoubtedly, the graphic techniques developed in Russian satirical magazines in the limited windows and the experience of formulating political commentary in restricted circumstances, informed the practices of post-revolutionary cartoon artists. The truth of Alaniz's suggestion that the politicized graphic strategies 'would carry over into the dawn of the Soviet era' (2010: 30) will be obvious. Furthermore, Bowlt stresses that readers of graphic satire now had so much experience with understanding visual Aesopian language that the shift to satirizing the enemies of the Bolshevik state required only a 'subtle, psychological reversal' (1975: 75).

While it borrowed from Europe and matured in satirical magazines, the Russian political cartoon owed much to indigenous forms. Transcultural and transmedia influences are exemplified by the 'World of Art' ('Mir iskusstva'),[116] the movement which was founded in the 1890s by Alexander Benois, and was described by him as 'a society, an exhibiting organisation, and a magazine' (quoted in Gray (1986: 37)). Bowlt suggests that the World of Art's leading members' 'technical finesse, […] graphic clarity, [and] concern with the miniature and the silhouette […] constituted an important and necessary basis for the unprecedented growth of political caricature' in 1905, and continued to influence Soviet artists years later (1975: 67). Ivan Bilibin produced a cartoon during the First World War that featured Kaiser Wilhelm II as the king of spades on a playing card, wearing appropriately regal ceremonial dress in one half, but with the symbols of imperial authority replaced with a fool's cap, a necklace of sausages, a decoration for valour in the form of a stein, and with a fork instead of a sword. An anonymous satirical postcard used the same motif of

---

[116] The relationship between *Mir iskusstva* and Russian graphic arts is discussed by Bowlt (1975 and 2008), and Rosenfeld (1999).

Nicholas II after February 1917 (Jahn 1995: 37). As Section 3.1 shows, the playing card device, and the satirical substitution inherent in it, were well used in *Krokodil* after 1922. Despite the directness of these antecedents and their influence on *Krokodil* artists' compositional choices, the broad tradition of Russian satiric art was shaped by much older forms.

The origins of Russian graphic satire, indeed, are generally traced back to the seventeenth century with the introduction of the 'lubok', 'lubochnaia kartinka' or popular print. The lubok was a woodcut print that originated in the seventeenth century as an inexpensive substitute for icons (Norris 2006: 4). Lubki combined image and text (in speech bubbles, labels and captions), and at times the government used them to propagate certain views, for example when Catherine the Great ridiculed Old Believers, and when Alexander I tried to spread knowledge about smallpox (Wortman 2008: 91). In his study of early comics strip art, David Kunzle notes that in the lubok 'There was of course no question of political satire, although the resourceful Russian schismatic appears to have slipped past the censor some animal illustrations in which the public could infer hostile allusions to Peter the "Cat of Kazan" (Kunzle 1973: 254). This ambiguous interpretation mirrors the form itself, since the lubok was also the primary vehicle for Russian socio-political graphic satire until World War One. Lubki seldom explicitly depicted political subjects, and, while clumsy by comparison with contemporary English and French cartoons, via allegory and Aesopian language, some imply a sharply satirical critique. They represented a significant concern for the Russian state, and numerous attempts at censorship were made after 1801 (Alaniz 2010: 23). While most lubki depicted national triumphs or religious subjects, a series of lubki attributed to various groups opposed to Peter the Great's Westernizing reforms was published in the early eighteenth century, including *Mice Burying the Cat* (see Figure 45). This image, with its numerous references to a rather more specific and subversive meaning than a generic allegorical upturning, is widely understood as a parody of Peter the Great's funeral, and pioneered political cartooning in Russia.

Figure 45: c.1725. *Mice Burying the Cat* (*Myshi kota pogrebaiut*). **[Online].**
[Accessed 12/1/15]. Available from: http: //www.nlr.ru/

The lubok's complexity, codedness, interactivity and multimediality, (Alaniz 2010: 19), created a powerful art form that merged the aesthetics of the official and the popular and allowed for the possibility of new discourses. The World of Art movement was profoundly influenced by the lubok (White 1988: 3), as were the USSR's early satirists.
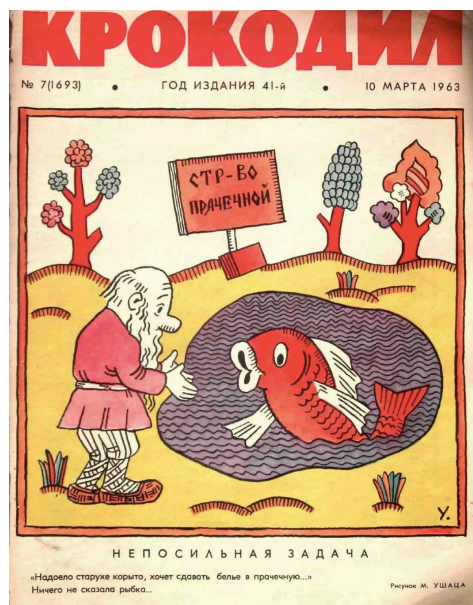
Figure 46: Ushatsa, M. *Impossible task.* (*Neposil'naia zadacha.*)
Krokodil **1963: 7/1.**

Connections between lubki and Soviet posters, in particular, have been explored by White (1988) and Bonnell (1997), but the relationship between the lubok and the political cartoon is less fully understood. Both forms derived much of their popular appeal from their boldness and humour, but they also shared compositional and

visual language techniques. Combining text and image, and with a strongly dramatic element, the cartoon resembles the lubok in its treatment of time. Alaniz, with his focus on proto-comics, highlights the narrative potential of the lubok and the sequentiality of multi-frame lubki (2010: 20), and indeed the two-part compositions that were common in Soviet poster art (Bonnell 1997: 107, 141, 206-209) and *Krokodil* before 1958 derived from the lubok. The Russian cartoon's use of exaggeration (especially in the relative size of figures), inversions and zoomorphic allegories was reminiscent of, even if not directly derived from, the lubok (see Figure 46).

Krokodil, clearly, owed a debt to the satirical influence of the lubok, but that form itself often parodied the Orthodox icon. The history and aesthetics of the Orthodox icon has been widely discussed. Two points related to the icon are worth making here. First, I would suggest that the icon's significance in Russia is one reason for the relatively late development of graphic satire in the region. Orthodox culture conceives the icon as an object with shamanic power, but this kind of belief is, as Kris and Gombrich suggest, a pre-modern relic. They suggest that caricature only developed when men became 'mentally free enough to accept this distortion of an image as an artistic achievement and not as a dangerous practice' (Gombrich and Kris 1940: 15). Arguably, in Russia, where the medieval mindset and the belief in 'image-magic' persisted much longer, the development of caricature was retarded. Indeed, the prevalence of this faith in the power of images might explain beliefs in the power of graphic satire in the region after 1917. I alluded to the persistence of the belief in 'image-magic' in the Introduction to this thesis, and will return to it in Chapter 3. Second, it is important to note that the icon functioned as more than a graphic representation in Russia; it was an object of worship, a portal between two worlds, and it was believed to have miraculous powers (Sinyavskii 2007: 221). The persuasive effects of Russian religious art had certain echoes in the Soviet Union. Numerous Soviet artists had trained as icon painters (White 1988: 26), and Russian religious art exerted great influence upon Soviet political art, including graphic satire. Soviet poster artists borrowed compositional techniques from iconography, and the symbolism of colour was borrowed directly from icon painting (Bonnell 1997: 356). Other devices borrowed or derived from religious art include the frontal view of the heroic character, perspectival distortions of background figures, and the heroic figure in motion (Bonnell 1997: 357). Alaniz argues that sequential narratives and comics visual language originated with the icon (2010: 8). Although icons are more readily identifiable in *Krokodil* as the subject of cartoons, their influence was ever present.

As this section has shown, pre-revolutionary literary and visual forms provided the resources and models for Soviet satirists to draw upon. It is important to

remember that, while the theoretical basis for post-revolutionary satire developed in the 1920s and 1930s, the framework within which Soviet satirists should operate was contested in a series of public engagements. The problem crystallised around the troubling potential for political ambivalence, and the debate was prompted by the provocative arguments of Vladimir Blium, the Moscow theatre critic and member of various proletarian literary organisations, who, in a series of articles published in the 1920s, conducted a sustained attack on the very notion of satire in the USSR. In 1925 he argued that:

> [A]fter the October Revolution, when the government became "ours", the devices of the old satire, the old satirical form, became inapplicable. [...] To mock the proletarian state through the use of old satirical devices and thereby to shake its foundations, to laugh at the first steps (albeit uncertain and clumsy) of the new Soviet society is at the very least unwise and ill-considered (quoted in Russell 1994: 343).

Blium, who reprised his arguments in 1929 and 1930,[117] and who was succeeded by more eloquent critics in the 1930s, was effectively rebuffed.[118] In 1930, Lunacharsky responded with two essays—*What is Humour?* and *On Satire*—in which he employed the language of class conflict and subjectivity to argue that satire strengthens society.

In my view, these theoretical discussions provide essential context for understanding early state-sanctioned satire, but they went largely unstudied during the Cold War, and although they have received more scholarly attention in recent years, so far little attempt has been made to trace their impact on the praxis or forms of satirical modes.[119] Despite Lunacharsky's intervention, Blium's concerns reflect an unease about how Soviet satirists should represent Soviet problems, and the poten-

---

[117] In a *Literaturnaia gazeta* article, Blium proposed two arguments: that Soviet satire had proven itself unsuited to its task, and that satire in a socialist state was self-harming since any satirical attack would inevitably represent 'a direct strike against our own statehood and our own public' (quoted in Oushakine 2012: 200). On 8 January 1930, in a public dispute in Moscow's Polytechnic Museum, attended by various Soviet satirical illuminati, Blium elaborated, suggesting that the notion of the 'Soviet satirist' was as oxymoronic as 'Soviet banker' or 'Soviet landlord' (quoted in Oushakine 2012: 201).

[118] The responses included rejections from Kol'tsov and Lunacharskii. The latter, in 1930, created a special Commission on Researching Satirical Genres under the auspices of the Soviet Academy of Sciences (Oushakine 2012: 202). The planned book-length outcome of the commission, entitled *Laughter as a Weapon of Social Struggle*, never appeared.

[119] The fullest study of Blium's campaign against 'positive' satire appears in Russell (1994) but the debate is also outlined in Oushakine (2011 and 2012) and Vinokour (2015).

tial for damage caused by over-extending the role of Soviet satire, which never really went away. These debates occurred at the time when *Krokodil* established itself as the USSR's sole satirical journal. Indeed, *Krokodil* contributors participated. While the debate continued, however, *Krokodil* and other satirists continued to provide working definitions of Soviet satire. Any consideration of *Krokodil*'s aesthetic must take into account the fact that the journal initially defined its own scope through its artistic and institutional practices.

Therefore, prompted by a belief that the magazine was more than simply a text, albeit one that combined the visual and verbal, I aim to go beyond these textual and visual traditions. In the following section I propose three predecessors of *Krokodil* that will help to clarify my contention in later chapters, that *Krokodil* was a publication that had the power to extend beyond the material boundaries of the magazine.

1.3.2 Performative Predecessors

It is a central theoretical claim of this thesis that *Krokodil*'s satire was performative. With the intention of broadening the approach to *Krokodil*, in this section I suggest that the journal was influenced by theatrical traditions. Indeed, as I argue throughout this thesis, the connections between the magazine and the USSR's dramaturgical art forms were manifest in the themes explored in the magazine, in *Krokodil*'s various extensions, and in its conception of its socio-political role. In my reference to these performative legacies, my analysis differs from previous interpretations of *Krokodil* by expanding the range of phenotypic traits that I identify in the magazine.

Theatrical traditions represent one of the key influences upon *Krokodil*'s satirical worldview and visual language after 1922. The connections between political cartoons and theatre have not been explored in the scholarly literature on *Krokodil*, although clearly the relationship was important and bilateral. Indeed, neither *Krokodil*'s live performances nor its extensive use of theatrical metaphors have been investigated. In Chapter 3 of this thesis, I focus on the performativity of *Krokodil*'s political cartoons, in an attempt to understand the magazine's construction of characters' ideological identities and the cartoons' critique of ideology. It is important to state that *Krokodil*'s aesthetic was heavily influenced by the political theatricalism of the early 1920s. Indeed, the magazine may be interpreted as a textualised form of carnival culture.

According to Bakhtin's theories, carnival is an event and a cultural concept. Bakhtin's interest was in the 'folk festivities of the carnival type, the comic rites and cults […] the vast and manifold literature of parody' (1984a: 4). Bakhtin describes

the Medieval European tradition of carnival, including the 'feast of fools', as distinguished both from the everyday, and from 'the serious, official, ecclesiastical, feudal, and political cult forms and ceremonies' by certain comic protocols and rituals, which were protected by tradition. These festivals were 'a second world and a second life outside officialdom' (1984a: 5-6). Despite this separation, however, during the Renaissance, Bakhtin suggests that 'the primordial elements of carnival swept away many of the barriers and invaded many realms of official life and worldview. […] The carnival sense of the world [and] penetrated deeply into almost all genres of artistic literature' (1984a: 130). Bakhtin's interest in folk humour's ability to subvert hierarchies has often been interpreted as a political: as numerous commentators have suggested, it is very tempting to read Bakhtin's description of the carnivalesque as a lampoon of Stalinism.[120] My interest is not in Bakhtin's critique of Soviet communism, but rather in *Krokodil*'s, and this chapter considers the manifestations of the carnivalesque.

In the USSR, the Soviet state took the role of sanctifier of carnival or festival time. *Krokodil* embodied some of the close connections between satire, theatrical performance, visual arts and magazine publications, all of which may be said to have functioned in a sort of carnivalesque spirit. At the numerous public celebrations and festivities, 'official' culture was affirmed, and what Stites calls 'festive ridicule' was employed to mock the enemies of the state (1989: 100). Caricaturing famous figures from outside the USSR enabled Soviet celebration planners to enlist characters as performers and to control their behaviour in order to deliver a scripted political message. This method was a feature of Soviet public celebrations throughout the 1920s and 1930s (Leder and Bernstein 2001: 33). The imperative to engage spectators, and to express ideological material to a largely illiterate audience, led many festival planners to employ performative modes. In the 1920s—the so-called 'café period' of Soviet satire, printing facilities were unavailable (Henry 1972: ix)—political activism seized on theatre. In 1918 and 1919, revues, circus acts and puppet shows were revived, with new, socialist elements added. There were processions of decorated agit-vans and agit-trams, squares were decorated with caricatures, and enemy-of-the-people dolls were incinerated on bonfires. In public festivals, demonstrations and parades, caricature, and especially animated caricatures, some of which were animated and operated by levers (Gill 2011: 136), of the enemies of the re-

---

[120] This interpretation is discussed by Vice (1997: 151), Stam (1989: 158), Clark and Holquist (1984: 307-9), and Morson and Emerson (1990: 94-95).

gime, were employed in larger-than-life carnivalesque political cartoons (see Figure 47).

Figure 47: Caricatured Western leaders outside the Kremlin, Moscow. 1921. [Online]. [Accessed 29/4/14]. Available from: http: //avaxnews.net/

Zegers and Druick note that carnivalesque papier-mâché effigies of Western imperialists and politicians were carried along by marchers at such parades (2011: 44). Part of the 1933 May Day celebrations included a 'street of satire', where *Krokodil* artists were given free reign to transform the Kuznetsky Bridge in Leningrad (Tolstoy, Bibikova and Cooke 1990: 226). *Krokodil*'s aesthetic dates from this period, and the influence of these performative traditions was profound.

Caricature and theatrical performance were closely interconnected, through acting techniques, costume and masquerade. During the Civil War, the 'living newspaper' ('zhivaia gazeta') was a form of political communication that grew out of efforts to present news in an accessible form at a time when paper and printing facilities were scarce (Mally 2000: 41). Newspaper readings were held, and agitational drama groups performed some of the leading stories. The Theatre of Revolutionary Satire (*Terevsat*) popularised the 'living newspaper', which was a theatrical performance that followed the format of the printed version, including 'attractions' such as satirical sketches or animated posters, in which actors, whose faces and limbs were visible through holes cut in a huge poster, performed the text (Deák 1973: 37). The influence of this satirical technique endured in the magazine, and cartoons continued to draw upon this theatrical method as a satirical device (see Figure 48). Some groups based their work on traditional folk theatre. The largest and most important group was the Blue Blouse movement, which grew to consist of 484 professional and around 8,000 amateur companies in the USSR by 1928 (Deák 1973: 46). *Krokodil* had strong links with Blue Blouse theatre and performed satire in general.

«Спекуляцией на лозунге самоопределения занимаются закоренелые против-
ники национального единства германского народа. Сейчас этот лозунг не сходит
с уст канцлера Аденауэра, который вкладывает в него вполне определенный
смысл — поглощение Германской Демократической Республики».

(Из выступления Н. С. ХРУЩЕВА по радио и телевидению 7 августа 1961 года.)

Figure 48: Lisorgski, N. *Sinister meaning.* **(***Zloveshchii smysl.***)**
***Krokodil* 1961: 23/12.**

Beginning in May 1923, less than a year after the first issue of the magazine, a series of 'Live' *Krokodil* ('Zhivoi' *Krokodil*) performances was staged (see Figure 49). Scripted and acted by members of the magazine's staff, including Vladimir Maiakovskii, these theatrical performances of *Krokodil* magazine-themed material were hosted by theatres, workers' clubs, and Red Army clubs (Stykhalin and Kremenskaia 1963: 186). The repertoire was based on topical socio-political events, and content was performed as short plays and sketches in the style of the magazine. Mally notes that the living newspapers attempted to merge political information of local and national importance with a witty, entertaining and flippant style of delivery (for which they were often criticised) (2000: 73). *Krokodil*, I would argue, embodied this approach throughout its existence, and can therefore be understood as a relic of 1920s politcarnival.

These 'Live' *Krokodil* performances played an important part in the creation of early Soviet identity by modelling responses to ideological concepts. *Krokodil* played a small part in the revolutionary satirical theatre tradition, which was itself an approach popularised by the 'living newspapers', a style of agitational theatre that performed plays and sketches inspired by everyday life in the USSR. The 'living newspaper' was, according to Sergei Eisenstein, a 'montage of attractions', the ultimate aim of which was to 'enable the spectator to perceive the ideological side of what is being demonstrated' (Eisenstein 1974: 78). The performative montage, however, was essential to the formation of *Krokodil*'s satirical vision, however, as I explain below.

Figure 49: Texts from 'Live *Krokodil*' in the *Biblioteka Krokodila* series (1923). [Online]. [Accessed 23/5/12]. Available from: https: //books.bibliopolis.com/

Satire, theatre and art were also connected through the chief protagonists of the genres at the time. As an artist for ROSTA (Russian Telegraph Agency)[121], Vladimir Maiakovskii was a prodigious producer of satirical posters. He also wrote plays and sketches for *Terevsat* and joined the Editorial Board of *Krokodil* after its fourth issue, and his poems provided the inspiration for the Blue Blouse theatre groups that proliferated after 1921 (Deák 1973: 37).

Figure 50: 'An Evening of *Krokodil*' ('Vecher *Krokodila*') poster. [Online]. [Accessed 10/6/12]. Available from: http: //www.krasnoyeznamya.ru/

---

[121] Rossiyskoye telegrafnoye agentstvo

Mikhail Pustynin (real name Gersh Rosenblatt, 1884-1966) was the founder and first director of *Terevsat* in 1919-20. Also the Director of ROSTA in Vitebsk, Pustynin was convinced that news could be made accessible through dramatization, and he therefore created a theatre company that performed revue-style performances including songs, poems, animated posters and lubok and Petrushka puppet shows based on topical political themes (Leach 1994). Pustynin was also a veteran of pre-revolutionary satirical magazines, was a member of *Krokodil*'s first Editorial Board and continued to contribute to the magazine until his death. V.E. Ardov (real name Zil'berman) wrote for satirical journals including *Krokodil*, and wrote for variety shows at the same time as he helped to organize the Moscow Satire Theatre in 1925 (Salys 2009: 333). The embodied connections between these forms did not end with the immediate post-revolutionary period—the Kukryniksy trio mounted the staging of Maiakovskii's *The Bedbug* at Meyerhold's Theatre in 1928, and the writer Viktor Iuzefovich Dragunsky was a founding member of the celebrated 'Blue Bird' ('Sin-iaia ptichka') theatre group and a writer for *Krokodil* at the same time.

The evolution and imposition of this 'politcarnival' (Brandist 1996: 69) is seen by many scholars as a kind of process of sclerosis, in which revolutionary upturnings achieved stasis, so that hierarchies never faced the threat of destabilisation, and the carnival laugh became simply a 'panegyric ritual' (Stites 1989: 100). Such views, which essentially suggest that carnival (the popular, folk culture) is fundamentally opposed to official culture, echo Bakhtin's dualistic conception:

> Images of carnival are dualistic; they unite within themselves both poles of change and crisis: birth and death […] praise and abuse, youth and old age, top and bottom, face and backside, stupidity and wisdom. (1984a: 126)

This dualistic model is too simplistic, however. As I have argued, *Krokodil* may be considered as a carnivalesque form, derived from the 'official-popular' carnival tradition that had its roots in the Middle Ages but was manifested in the USSR in politicised theatre and 'politcarnival' public celebrations in the 1920s. It is my contention that the binarism of existing paradigms that imagine Soviet satire as either 'official' or 'popular' is too restrictive: it narrows our understanding of cultural phenomena through its definition in relation to political allegiance, it assumes that texts are neatly definable and, significantly, it excludes the possibility that a text might be both 'official' and 'popular', either by design or by accident. Kisel points out that individual texts in *Krokodil*, like the early feuilletons of Bulgakov, Olesha, Platonov and Zoshchenko, might strike a balance between 'top-down dictated educational objectives and popular preference' (2008: 31), but so far our understanding of the magazine has not developed sufficiently to allow for this type of interpretation. Interestingly, even Bakhtin, having described the 'popular' and the 'official' cultures

as distinct and contrasting, argues that 'the sphere of folk humour is boundless' (1984b: 58). Indeed, at times, he describes how the boundaries between the 'popular' and 'official' cultures break down. Pointing to a moment during the Renaissance, he argues that 'whole layers of language, the so-called *familiar speech of the public square*, were permeated with a carnival sense of the world' because 'the primordial elements of carnival swept away many of the barriers and invaded many realms of official life and worldview…The carnival sense of the world…penetrated deeply into almost all genres of artistic literature' (1984a: 130). Although Bakhtin's analysis never names this fusion of 'popular' and 'official', in which folk humour ascended to literature and ideology to 'fertilize it' (1984b: 72-3), I suggest that it represents a third type of the carnivalesque. Echoing my analysis of *Krokodil*'s visual schemata, this tripartite carnivalesque vision is an appropriate analogy for understanding *Krokodil* and its critiques.

As this section shows, *Krokodil* was not simply the tool of the Soviet dictatorship. In fact, as I have argued, the magazine was influenced by numerous heritages. *Krokodil* works with a complex system of satirical legacies, and it was also engaged in a mutually productive relationship with contemporary satirical forms. As I suggested at the beginning of this section, the existing literature provides only a very imprecise explanation of the traditions that influenced Soviet visual satire. The magazine clearly had a strong political allegiance to the Soviet regime, it would be wrong to suggest that 1917 marked a terminal cleft in the satirical tradition of the region. Certainly, there was discontinuity, and the debate initiated by Blium in 1925 indicates that satire was re-theorised after the revolution, but the significance of the temporal fracture should not be exaggerated. *Krokodil*'s graphic satirical aesthetic did not originate with Bolshevik seizure of power, and the magazine's pre-revolutionary antecedents were vital in defining the magazine's form and style. It is a key claim of this thesis, and one that will be developed in later chapters, that *Krokodil* was distinguished by its performativity. As this section has argued, after 1922 *Krokodil* and its contemporary theatrical genres existed in productive symbiotic partnership, and as a consequence the magazine developed a distinctively performative aesthetic.

1.4   Unpacking *Krokodil*'s (Post-)Structural Logic: Carnival Laughter and Menippean Satire

In the final section of this chapter, in order to understand how *Krokodil* used its visual language resources to construct ideological critiques and explore Soviet orthodoxies, I turn to the problem of the nature of *Krokodil*'s satire. Despite the cen-

trality of the question of satire to the study of *Krokodil*, the existing literature on Soviet visual culture provides only limited insights into how the magazine's satirical critiques were constructed. The existing scholarship interprets *Krokodil*'s satire as following in the Juvenalian tradition,[122] which is characterised by 'direct and verbally violent attack' and 'by a spirit of indignation or outrage' (Test 1991: 91). As I have suggested, *Krokodil*'s graphic schemata were employed to assist in the magazine's alignment of reader with satirist, in order to define the differences between the reader's (insider) position and the excluded status of the satiric objects. Indeed, the magazine's satire has exclusively been understood through the boundaries that delineated the celebrated from the satirised. Studies of *Krokodil* overwhelmingly focus on the targets and non-targets of Soviet satire, interpreting the magazine's criticisms as the graphic translation of government priorities. For some, therefore, it is impossible to acknowledge anything humorous about *Krokodil*.[123]

The existing literature helpfully identifies the high profile targets of Soviet satire, but in three important respects it does not go far enough. First, in its discussion of the three schemata (see Section 1.2), it provides a rather unclear analysis of the types of satire of domestic subjects that appeared in the magazine, and makes no attempt to investigate the graphic or rhetorical structures through which these images communicated their meanings. Second, in its juxtaposition of two themes, the existing literature provides only an incomplete explanation of how *Krokodil*'s satirical critiques were constructed. According to Stites, *Krokodil*'s schemata were interlaced: 'the tranquil everyday, progress and armed might were knit together in a communication system that was always at the ready to modulate its messages in response to any foreign policy switches' (2010: 355). The 'knitting' metaphor conveys a sense of the organic way that *Krokodil* combined its different schemata and satirical commentaries, but it lacks precision on how the journal's satire was constructed. How, for example, was it possible to combine such different satirical views in such close proximity, and what were the effects of these juxtapositions?

Finally, since the existing literature interprets *Krokodil*'s satire as a strange, pro-Soviet mix of hostility and assent, there is little opportunity for an explanation

---

[122] Juvenalian satire follows the tradition established by Juvenal, the Roman poet (active in the 1st and 2nd Centuries) and author of sixteen poems entitled 'The Satires'.

[123] Sergei Mostovshchikov, editor of the recent 12-volume encyclopaedia of *Krokodil*, is one such commentator (Nureev 2015).

of the magazine's satiricism or humour.[124] As the Introduction explained, most studies of *Krokodil* agree that the magazine was not funny, or at least that it was not satirical in the modern, Western sense. Dobrenko, in fact, suggests a new categorisation for *Krokodil*'s kind of laughter—'State Laughter':

> State laughter is, first, laughter that is not funny. Second, it is laughter out of fear. And third, it is laughter due to the absence (or in the absence) of a sense of humor. State laughter—laughter that has been sanctioned by the state—is in all senses a unique and utterly uncharted phenomenon. It violates all possible stereotypes of the comic: it is not only unfunny, relying as it does on mass tastes and an undeveloped sense of humor […] but also contradicts the stereotypes that hold laughter to be always antitotalitarian, always democratic, a destroyer of hierarchies, and resistant to fear. No, laughter can be an instrument of intimidation, a way to anchor the hierarchy, a powerful tool of totalitarian normalization and control. And that is the kind of laughter that I call State Laughter. (2014a: 7)

Dobrenko may be right in his explanation of the aims of 'State Laughter', and he is certainly correct in his acknowledgement of Soviet satire's unexplored characteristics. His assertion that Soviet satire was unfunny, but instead based on fear, echoes Skradol's invocation of Freudian theory—she suggested that fear explains the laughing response to jokes in political speeches (2009: 29)—and with this claim, in regard to *Krokodil*, I must disagree. Fear cannot explain the popularity of this magazine: against what threat might a subscription to *Krokodil* represent protection? Without diminishing the significance of the historical context in which the magazine was produced and consumed, I wish to propose a new reading of *Krokodil*'s humour by suggesting that it can profitably be understood as a Menippean satire.

It is a central theoretical claim of this thesis that, in form, *Krokodil* was a Menippean satire. The Menippea derived from extant fragments of works by the Greek Lucian and the Roman Varro (both disciples of the Greek cynic Menippus of Gadara) and, according to Bakhtin, had an immense influence on the development of European literature (1984a: 119). The turbulence of the epoch in which the Menippea originated, as Bakhtin describes it, mirrors the upheavals of the revolutionary circumstances in which *Krokodil* was founded, and suggests parallels with the early years of the Soviet Union:

> It was formed in an epoch when national legend was already in decay, amid the destruction of those ethical norms that constituted the ancient idea of "seemliness" […], in an epoch of intense struggle

---

[124] As my Introduction (section i) explained, many scholars take pains to deny *Krokodil*'s satiricism and its humour. Here I deliberately make no such distinction.

among numerous and heterogeneous religious and philosophical
schools and movements, when disputes over "ultimate questions" of
worldview had become an everyday mass phenomenon […] It was
the epoch of preparation and formation of a new world religion:
Christianity. (1984a: 119)

Furthermore, the definition of the genre he offers implies a close degree of proximi-
ty with the magazine. Bakhtin's basic characteristics of the Menippea are: 1) the
prominence of the comic element; 2) freedom from the limitations of history and
memoir; 3) 'the content of the Menippea is the adventures of an *idea* or a *truth* in the
world: either on earth, in the nether regions, or on Olympus'; 4) the combination of
the fantastic, the symbolic, a mystical-religious element and 'crude slum natural-
ism'; 5) the juxtaposition of contradictory points of view in order to test ultimate
philosophical questions; 6) a three-plane construction: earth, heaven and hell; 7)
experimental fantasticality; 8) destruction of the wholeness and finalized quality of
man; 9) the scandalous violation of norms; 10) sharp contrasts and oxymoronic
combinations; 11) elements of social utopia; 12) a wide use of inserted genres,
presented at various distances from the authorial position; 13) a new relationship to
the word, which reinforces the multi-styled and multi-toned nature of the Menippea;
and 14) a journalistic concern with current and topical issues (1984a: 114-119). The
reader who is familiar with *Krokodil* magazine will recognise many of the defining
features of the Menippea. The journal was concerned with topical issues and had a
journalistic quality. It contained a range of different voices—it was multi-voiced, or
polyphonic, rather than monologic. Characters 'spoke' and a particular text might
therefore contain a number of voices, but we may also understand an individual
cartoon as a voice. The magazine's texts and its characters were thus constantly in
dialogue with each other. Despite the presence of state censorship, then, it will be
clear that there was the possibility for texts to contradict or undermine each other.

Interpreting *Krokodil* as a Menippean satire provides a theoretical basis for
the observation that the magazine comprised diverse satirical critiques, including
critiques of Soviet orthodoxies, that were distributed across numerous texts which
might be composed in different visual languages. A Menippean reading of *Krokodil*
thus clarifies the dialogic relationships between different schemata, and allows us to
appreciate that the magazine's satire of domestic subjects may be subtler and more
implicit than its criticisms of non-socialist ideologies. My analysis in this section is
therefore based on Bakhtin's definition of the Menippea, and it follows the logic of
Bakhtin's methodology, which suggests the power of certain structures without
being defined by them. Writing mainly in the 1930s, Bakhtin identified the Menip-

pean satire as the major generic site of the carnivalesque, but his consideration ended with Dostoyevsky and ignored significant works.[125] Bakhtin's literary criticism focussed on literary structures, but his insistence that all texts were in polyphonic dialogue with their predecessors influenced both structuralist and poststructuralist approaches to literature (Dosse 1997: 55). I intend that this section should demonstrate the value of both structuralist and poststructuralist approaches to *Krokodil*. In other words, in this chapter I began by considering *Krokodil*'s visual language and structural characteristics, and I am now moving beyond structures to consider how the magazine's satire resisted, disrupted or traversed boundaries.

1.4.1 From Structuralist Schemas to Poststructuralist Discourse: Ideology and Laughter in *Krokodil*

This section explains what a Menippean reading of *Krokodil* reveals about how the magazine's satire functioned. It is not my intention to excavate a dissident reading of the journal; rather, I want to show how the magazine could be read as a satirical text, instead of rejecting *Krokodil*'s claims to satiricism, as many previous scholars have done. My reading suggests that critical commentary, humour and satires of domestic and foreign subjects are distributed across texts in *Krokodil*, and Bakhtin's explanation of Menippean satire helps us to understand how dialogic relationships, free play and parody, and carnivalesque grotesque realism combined to produce a serio-comic satirical text.

Essential to the interpretation of *Krokodil* as a Menippean text is recognition of the combination of diverse voices, elements or texts that define the serio-comic.[126] As Bakhtin notes, serio-comic texts feature:

> multi-toned narration, the mixing of high and low, serious and comic; they make wide use of inserted genres-letters, found manuscripts, retold dialogues, parodies on the high genres, parodically reinterpreted citations; in some of them we observe a mixing of prosaic and poetic speech, living dialects and jargons (and in the Roman stage, direct bilingualism as well) are introduced, and various authorial masks make their appearance. (1984a: 108)

---

[125] Clark and Holquist point out that condemnation of James Joyce at the 1934 Soviet Writers' Congress meant that Bakhtin could only choose between attacking or ignoring his work (1984: 317).

[126] Howard Weinbrot foregrounds this polyphonality in his definition of the Menippea: 'a kind of satire that uses at least two different languages, genres, tones, or cultural or historical periods to combat a false and threatening orthodoxy' (2005: xi).

These elements, Bakhtin tells us, were combined organically, into a satire with internal unity. As this chapter shows, *Krokodil* had this kind of constitutive variegation. Bakhtin's analysis positions Dostoyevsky's novels in the history of a literary genre (1984a: 106), and this structuralism reveals what Bakhtin calls the 'carnival sense of the world' which permeates all such genres and determines not only their 'basic features' but also the 'special relationship' in them between image, word and reality (1984a: 107). Following my exploration of the magazine's structural composition in Section 1.1, my Menippean interpretation allows us to appreciate that, in Bakhtin's words, *Krokodil*'s 'multi-styled and heterovoiced nature' created the significant effect of weakening the journal's 'one-sided rhetorical seriousness, its rationality, its singular meaning, its dogmatism' (1984a: 107). This view contrasts with existing explanations of *Krokodil*, and it allows us to reconsider the nature of the magazine's satirical critiques.

The first conclusion suggested by a Menippean reading of *Krokodil* is that all cartoons were engaged in the philosophical testing of ideologies. As a consequence of the journal's three schemata, the nature of the explorations into the ideologies in question varied in degree and type, from harsh and lashing to gently disapproving. Understanding that *Krokodil* communicated a tripled satirical vision, and that individual cartoons were therefore part of a broader exploration, helps us to appreciate that while a cartoon on a foreign subject might bundle a series of ideological criticisms together, no single cartoon on a domestic subject would contain the same kind of commentary, but that this did not mean that humour or critiques of Soviet ideology were not present. *Krokodil*'s criticisms of Soviet politicians and policy were not equivalent in style with the attacks it launched against its other targets. If we consider this discrepancy as a Menippean variation in 'voice' adopted by the magazine, rather than simply the result of some structural or political restriction, however, we allow for the possibility that some satirical comment might be contained in *Krokodil*, even in its milder tones, but especially when compared with the affirmation observable in other images.

Krokodil's implicit testing of ideologies may be better understood through a study of the magazine's 'experimental fantasticality'. For Bakhtin, this means 'observation from some unusual point of view…which results in a radical change in the observed phenomena of life' (1984a: 116),[127] and in *Krokodil* this kind of visual

---

[127] Bakhtin refers to the example of the observation of the life of a city from a great height in Varro's *Endymiones*. Aerial perspectives are rare in *Krokodil*, but in *Krokodil* 1954: 9/7 the viewer enjoys a bird's-eye view of a room being renovated. Looking directly down at the workmen, the perplexed architect, and all four walls, we appreciate that that the room has no door.

shift is commonly achieved by radical changes of scale or unusual subject combinations. Images from the magazine's three schemata illustrate the different ways artists used this experimental fantasticality to construct their satirical critiques. Contrasting gigantic characters (often symbols of political concepts) and ordinary people, in order to emphasise dramatic discrepancies in scale, was a common method for *Krokodil* cartoonists. This technique was used in 'contesting' and 'affirming' cartoons, since a contrast in scale might convey various different messages. It was, however, most often used in high profile images. In many cases, when a Soviet worker or a Red Army soldier was pictured in a kind of 'threshold' interaction with a representative of capitalism, he was depicted as a giant,[128] but power, symbolised by gigantic scale, was also commonly associated with negative forces (see Figure 51).[129]
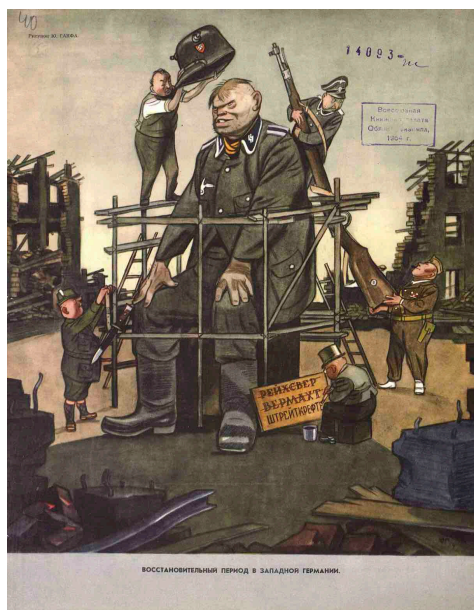
Figure 51: Ganf, Iu. ***Recovery Period in West Germany.*** **(***Vosstanovitel'nyi period v zapadnoi germanii.***)**
***Krokodil* 1954: 32/16.**

In cartoons such as Figure 51 and Figure 30, gigantification is used as a graphic resource for encoding valuative statements about the group or concept being symbolised. This is a common cartoonist's technique (Medhurst and DeSousa 1980: 214), but in *Krokodil*, its effect was to generate a sense of threat. Here, Ganf's graphic critique includes commentary on the nature of Nazism (large and powerful, but also mindless), but also combines a series of political judgements about post-war

---

[128] See 1958: 33/2 and 1960: 5/1 and Figure 34.

[129] American policy brutality (1961: 16/6), militarism (1964: 4/11) were also depicted thus.

international relations and the potential danger to the Soviet Union of an alliance between capitalism and neo-Nazism.

The majority of *Krokodil* cartoons visualised lifelike scenes with no distortion of scale, but in some cases the cartoon gifted the reader with an unusual perspective. This was notably the case in images which symbolised whole nations. Great Britain, personified as John Bull (1961: 15/4) or a wizened lion (1961: 1/9) was sometimes pictured in the whole, interacting with other objects or symbols of other nations. In 'Tender English Mother (for American submarines)' by the Kukryniksy,[130] the reader has an aerial view of the British Isles, surrounded by sea, upon which a giant lioness lies, weeping. Surrounding the skeletal lioness is a litter of US submarines, which poke out of the ocean and suckle. Viewed from above like this, the scale of the figures radically shifts the reader's understanding. Geopolitics is thus visualised on a grand scale, but it is also miniaturised.

This radical shift of perspective was also employed to very different ends in the late 1950s in images of Soviet exploration of the cosmos. In the popular imagination, space travel evoked references to science fiction and conjured visions of celestial or godlike beings, but extra-terrestrial exploration had the potential to unsettle secular modernity in the Soviet Union. The energy with which Soviet space enthusiasts employed anti-religious resources in their description of the achievements of Soviet cosmonauts (Smolkin-Rothrock 2011) is suggestive of the difficulties some citizens were expected to experience with conceptualising space flight. Numerous *Krokodil* images in the period 1958-1964 depicted the globe, in part or whole, and portions of the cosmos, in relation to Soviet spacecraft.[131] The cosmos, it was implied, welcomed incursions from Soviet explorers, and the Soviet space programme was visualised as the consummation of global human enlightenment projects. Cartoons such as Shukaev's 'Happy Orbits' (see Figure 52) can only fully be understood in the whole. The reader must see the earth in its wider context in order to appreciate the significance of the red rocket's orbits (the traces of which spell 'USSR'). Fantasticality in composition and visual metaphor thus serves these images' ability to perform radical revisions of their subjects. The effects of such visual shifts was always disruptive to a degree, but not always subversive.

---

[130] 'Laskovaia angliiskaia matka (dlia amerikanskikh podlodok)'. *Krokodil* 1960: 35/16.

[131] See 1957: 36/1, 1959: 26/5, and 1960: 12/2.

Figure 52: Shukaev, E. *Happy Orbits* (*Schast-livye oboroty*.)
***Krokodil* 1961: 24/1.**

Figure 53: Semenov, I. *Heavenly Cosmodrome*. (*Nebesnyi kosmodrom*).
***Krokodil* 1964: 1/16.**

When contrasted with other cartoons on the same subject, however, *Krokodil*'s testing of certain ideological concepts becomes more readily appreciable. In Semenov's 'Heavenly Cosmodrome' (see Figure 53) markers of Soviet technological pre-eminence are juxtaposed with religious characters. This whimsical vision of Yuri Gagarin's voyage into space contains numerous ironic contrasts between religion's unscientific claims, and Soviet science's capacity for achieving the apparently impossible. The cartoon draws heavily on Orthodox iconography and symbolism, and it is an unstated (and perhaps unintentional) irony that this cartoon, and other images of Soviet space exploration, relied upon readers' familiarity with the aesthetics of the remnants of the past it seeks to destroy. Existing interpretations of the magazine, however, have not found a way to explain the co-existence of the fantastic and the everyday in *Krokodil*, but my Menippean interpretation of the journal means I can employ Bakhtin's definition in order to show that:

> [T]he free and unrestrained use of the fantastic and adventure is internally motivated, justified by and devoted to a purely ideational and philosophical end: the creation of extraordinary situations for the provoking and testing of a philosophical idea. (1984a: 114)

A Menippean reading of *Krokodil* shows that the journal engaged in explorations of some of Soviet ideology's most important ideological principles such as collectivism,[132] and of prestige projects such as the space programme during the

---

[132] See 1959: 30/15 and 1961: 15/12.

period 1954-1964. Communism was not explicitly tested as a philosophical idea during the period 1954-1964, but the role and effectiveness of technology in Soviet society was a politically significant question frequently explored in *Krokodil*. Breakages (see Figure 40), inefficiencies and the tendency towards mechanisation for its own sake were common themes in the magazine. There were close connections between the Soviet state and scientific endeavour, as well as technological progress, as Bailes (1978), Graham (1993), and Andrews (2003) show, but Soviet official rhetoric generally found nothing amusing in technology per se. The modern machinery that facilitated progress was considered to be an indicator of Soviet society's progress, as well as a driver of social change. Numerous *Krokodil* cartoons in this period satirised technological inadequacies, however. The front cover of *Krokodil* 1957: 20, by Konstantin Rotov (1902-1959), visualised a sophisticated machine for collecting grain from the road: two paddles collected the grain and passed it onto a belt which conveyed it into a chute. The chute itself emptied into a truck with so many holes that the grain immediately spilled back onto the road, ready to be swept up again. More than one cartoon imagines how Soviet citizens used technology to complete menial tasks while undertaking much more difficult jobs manually.[133] In some cases, the joke was aimed squarely at individual operators of the machines in question, but some cartoons implied a more searching enquiry into the subject (see Figure 54).
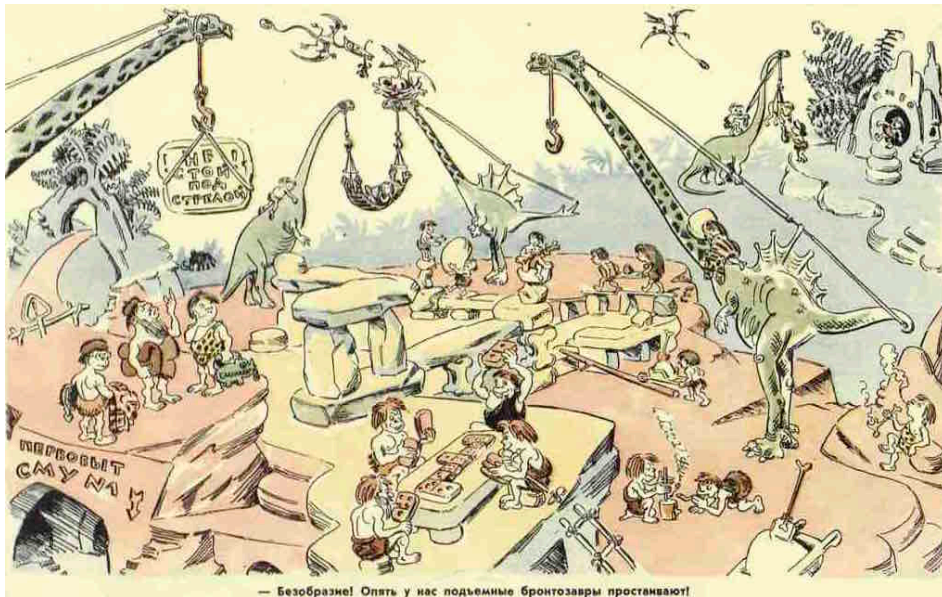
Figure 54: Bitnyi, M. Untitled.
Krokodil **1961: 16/14.**

---

[133] See 1956: 6/12, 1959: 18/1 and 1963: 33/9.

An untitled cartoon (which is very reminiscent of Hanna-Barbera's *The Flint-stones*[134]) by Mikhail Bitnyi visualises a construction site, on which dinosaurs function as cranes and other machinery. The foremen and operators are all human, but the anachronistic narrative of the scene imagines what might happen if the machinery (brontosauruses, in this case) stop working. That this scene represents an analogy with the contemporary Soviet Union is indicated by a sign which designates this site as the 'Prehistoric SMU No.1' ('Pervobyt SMU N1').[135] Read alongside all of the other critiques of Soviet modernity in the magazine, including Figure 40 and Figure 57, this cartoon suggests that construction problems are timeless, and that technology has failed to resolve the difficulties perennially experienced by builders. The cartoon implies a deep scepticism about the power of technology and the capacity for improvement, and this message fundamentally undermines the optimism of official rhetoric in other media. Bitnyi's multiscenic composition, like others in *Krokodil*, contains no guidance on how to read the image, and this cartoon is indeed particularly chaotic. The composition thus strongly implies some political point about the disorganised space it imagines. Although the problem satirised in the cartoon is technological breakdown, the repetition of this theme represents not only a thorough exploration of the problem, but a tacit critique of the Soviet regime's ability to effect fundamental change.

As the foregoing analysis shows, cartoons across *Krokodil*'s three schemata were in dialogic relationships with each other. This observation is itself important, because it highlights the fact that the repetition of certain key themes in numerous texts represented a significant socio-political critique. Whereas previous commentators have interpreted *Krokodil*'s repetition of certain subjects as evidence of its impotence, a Menippean reading of the magazine reveals that repeated critiques, considered cumulatively, point to fundamental and satirical criticisms of important aspects of the Soviet system. One commonly repeated criticism—in cartoons about bureaucrats—will serve as an example.

Bureaucrats have long been the subject of Russian literary satire (see Figure 42), and they were enthusiastically pursued by *Krokodil*'s artists. Ostrander and Schroeder are typical of the existing literature in their reference to the frequency of cartoon satires of bureaucrats in *Krokodil* (1966-7: 49). In this regard, as Holzer,

---

[134] It is plausible that this cartoon was inspired by *The Flintstones*, since it was first broadcast on ABC on 30 September 1960.

[135] 'SMU' is the abbreviation for Construction-Assembly Administration.

Illiash, Gabrelian and Kuznetsova note (2010: 7-9), *Krokodil* was the successor to nineteenth century Russian satirists.

—Говорят, что у меня потеряна чуткость. Клевета! Я всегда держу ее на запоре!
Рисунок Ю. ЧЕРЕПАНОВА

КРОКОДИЛ
№ 4 (1762) • ГОД ИЗДАНИЯ 43-й • 10 ФЕВРАЛЯ 1965

Figure 55: Cherepanov, Iu. Untitled.
***Krokodil* 1965: 4/1.**

While many existing studies cite *Krokodil*'s constant repetition of the bureaucrat theme as evidence of the magazine's uncritical approach, a Menippean reading of the appearance of the bureaucrat in *Krokodil* cartoons suggests that the magazine's critique of the Soviet bureaucracy went beyond scapegoating and represented a fundamental critique of one of the regime's significant problems. Alexander Kozin (2009) shows how the conventions of bureaucrat cartoons, perennially repeated, constructed an image of heartless, greedy, lazy and rude individuals who were separated from the rest of the population by virtue of symbols of their status and power (the desk and the telephone) (2009: 225-6). Kozin's approach highlights the common metaphors employed by *Krokodil*'s artists over time and he thus demonstrates the importance of the subject in Russian satire more broadly. Some of his analysis leads to a rather restricted reading of the magazine's treatment of the subject as a whole, however, and he downplays the significance of implied criticisms. Indeed, his conclusion regarding the effects of *Krokodil*'s repetition of the bureaucrat theme is contradictory. Despite arguing that the bureaucrat's desk (which 'connotes a sense of the officious' and shares a homonymic root with the Russian word 'bureaucrat'[136]) 'stands for the entire professional bureaucracy of the Soviet kind' (2009: 225), he suggests that a typical cartoon depicting an anonymous official did

---

[136] The Russian word 'biuro' means 'desk', much like the English word 'bureau' (Kozin 2009: 225).

not represent a political critique. In the image in question, a bloated, self-important but sinister bureaucrat sits behind his desk, holding the chain to a fantastic key (experimental fantasticality is, of course, another feature of the Menippea). In place of a tie, in fact, this individual has a chasmic keyhole, and the implication, as Kozin points out, is that the bureaucrat is soulless (2009: 224). For Kozin, this cartoon (see Figure 55) exposes the dual nature of the figure of the Soviet bureaucrat—he is both a member of the political establishment (Kozin notes that Soviet bureaucrats were almost always members of the Communist Party) and an individual who performs his professional duties[137]—but Kozin suggests that 'since the former is only implied, while the latter is presented explicitly, bureaucrat's [sic] professionalism overshadows his political affiliation' (2009: 223). A Menippean reading, however, which acknowledges the dialogic continuities between texts and finds ideological meaning even in what the text implies, leads us to appreciate the broader critiques of Soviet bureaucracy to be found in this cartoon.

Bureaucrat cartoons were, as I have noted, staple images in *Krokodil*, and a Menippean reading of the magazine suggests that their repeated criticisms agglomerate into a significant and critical discourse on this essential feature of Soviet modernity. Bureaucrats are frequently visualised as frightening rulers and as the beneficiaries of groveling, and in the post-Stalin era, this criticism carried a particular political valence. *Krokodil*'s cartoons also accused them of excessive personal greed, but perhaps the most damning criticisms were of immobility, a petty unwillingness to use individual initiative, and wastefulness.[138] For a reader who assimilated all these criticisms, *Krokodil* contained far-reaching political critiques. Describing Saltykov-Shchedrin's satiric treatment of Tsarist bureaucracy, Emil Draitser notes that the implicit commentary 'on the whole Russian state and the very spirit that pervades the Russian way of life' was 'devastating' (1994: 9-10). Bearing in mind *Krokodil*'s cultural inheritance, I would argue, Soviet graphic satire implied some significant criticisms of the mechanisms of the Soviet state.

---

[137] The cartoon's caption reads 'People say that I am not empathetic. Of course I am not! I keep all my empathies in check!' ('Govoriat, chto u menia poteriana chutkost'. Kleveta! Ia vsegda derzhu ee na zapore!').

[138] Terrifying bureaucrats appear in 1955: 1/4, 1961: 15/12, and 1962: 27/1. Grovelers appear in 1957: 2/8, 1962: 26/1, and 1963: 1/3. Abuses of power were criticised in 1960: 10/3, and 1964: 32/7. Immobility was depicted in 1956: 13/5, 1960: 6/16, and 1960: 22/3. Bureaucratic inactivity was criticised in 1960: 22/11, 1964: 17/1, 1964: 27/6. Gross inefficiency was satirised in 1954: 35/13, 1956: 31/1, and 1962: 14/3.

Even the most limited satires of Soviet administration might be read as more significant political critiques. Kozin's analysis of post-Soviet cartoons targeting bureaucracy shows that 'the same themes continued to function as comical [although] a noticeable transfiguration can be observed' (2009: 227). What this commentary suggests to me is that post-Soviet cartoonists continued to make essentially the same criticisms, despite the absence of state censorship after 1991. Moreover, the 'transfiguration' Kozin refers to describes a certain liberation from Soviet-era graphic conventions, but not a fundamental change in the character of the bureaucracy being satirized. Criticisms of Soviet bureaucratism, indeed, carried a particular ideological significance in the USSR, since they were enunciated most famously by Trotsky, in his denunciatory account of the development of 'The Soviet Thermidor'. Trotsky's narrative linked Stalin's rise, the degeneration of the Bolshevik Party, and the growth of the power of the Soviet bureaucracy in a damning critique (1967: 86-114), and, moreover, much of his analysis was confirmed by Khrushchev's 'Secret Speech'. The conflict between 'bureaucratic' officials and 'democratic' specialists became something of a cultural trope after Ehrenburg's *The Thaw*, and, notes Susanne Schattenberg, 'served as a parable both of Stalin's demise and post-Stalinist political change' (2006: 64). Soviet-era bureaucrat cartoons, then, were never devoid of political significance. These criticisms were often enough made by implicit reference to the individuals who administered state business, but, as a Menippean reading reminds us, they might just as effectively be conveyed in cartoons in which political critiques were implied via combinations of references.

When studying ideological oppositions in *Krokodil*, a Menippean reading provides a theoretical alternative to the propaganda paradigm. Bakhtin highlights the significance of 'syncresis' or the juxtaposition of stripped-down ultimate positions when he explains that '[e]verywhere one meets the stripped-down *pro et contra* of life's ultimate questions'. The Menippea thus provides 'the ultimate and decisive words and acts of a person' (1984a: 115), and, I would add, their ideological position.

Figure 56: Cheremnykh, M. *The Decisive Round.* (*Reshaiushchii tur.*)
Krokodil **1959: 4/1.**

Especially early in the decade under study, capitalism and communism were personified and visualised in the same frame, but this visual cliché became less common after 1956. One notable exception is Mikhail Cheremnykh's 'The Decisive Round' (see Figure 56), in which a Soviet worker makes a move on a chess board that symbolises the economic conflict between communism and capitalism. The significance of this 'decisive round' is enunciated by a quotation from Nikita Khrushchev's speech on the occasion of the announcement of the upcoming seven year plan at the 21st Party Congress in 1959 at the head of the page.[139] The inauguration of the seven year plan is here visualised as a move in a decisive global battle for ideological supremacy, and the differences between the two systems, synthesised in the individuals who are playing the chess game, are thus directly opposed. This cartoon thus visualises the ideological opposition of Cold War geopolitics, in an image that combines elements of both the 'contesting' and 'affirming' schemata (although the message of the cartoon is unmistakably affirmative).

Krokodil, then, provided its readers with the opportunities to construct critiques of politically significant concepts such as bureaucratism and the Cold War, and, as I have suggested, a Menippean reading of the magazine is helpful in explaining how these different critiques could co-exist in the journal. Bakhtin's study of the Menippea, as I have suggested, echoes the ambivalence of his own approach to literary criticism in that it switches between formalist analysis and methods that go

---

[139] The quote, which comes from Khrushchev, highlights the importance of economic competition between the USSR and the USA.

beyond structuralist oppositions. In the second half of this section, I wish to explore the ways those elements of the Menippea that precede poststructuralism—resistance to binarism or dialogic free play—can further extend our understanding of *Krokodil* magazine and its satirical critiques.

Bakhtin explains that the Menippean satire 'loves to play with abrupt transitions and shifts […] unexpected comings together of distant and disunited things' (1984a: 118). The unexpectedness of alliances of disparate things creates incongruities, which, as we know, often generate humour, and *Krokodil* cartoons exploited this by combining or juxtaposing multiple discourses in the same image. These juxtapositions were often based on binary contrasts (see Figure 56), but many cartoons published after 1958 made more inter-textual references. One of the most skilled protagonists of this particular element of the art form was Ivan Maksimovich Semenov (1906-1982). Semenov was a member of the Editorial Board, frequently published the magazine's highest profile images, and was called by Efimov 'a star of the first magnitude' (Efimov 1976: 147).[140] His incongruous combinations often involved discourses on subjects of very high status, and these cartoons sometimes suggested a scepticism that bordered on the subversive. In 'The Rolling Facility', Semenov parodies Il'ia Repin's *Barge Haulers on the Volga*[141] and ostensibly criticises the immovability of Soviet industrial enterprises (see Figure 57). Repin's painting was widely read as a criticism of the tsarist state, the backwardness of Russian society and the economy, and a celebration of the dignity and heroism of the Russian peasantry, as well as the progressive future that awaited them. Ingrained in Semenov's image, however, are some surprising combinations of discourses. Semenov's cartoon reverses the direction of the haulers' movement, providing a clue about the criticisms ingrained in the image. The original painting was interpreted as a commentary on the backwardness of tsarism, whereas the criticism in this cartoon is of individual industrial enterprises. The timeline along which this SMU is being dragged disappears at both ends. While the reader can see the dates 1961 and 1962, the image contains no indication of how long these *burlaki* will have to drag their factory.

---

[140] 'Zvezdoi pervoi velichiny'.

[141] Repin's *Burlaki na Volge* (1870-3) was hailed as an artistic masterpiece. In it, his *burlaki* hauled their load from right-to-left across the canvas,
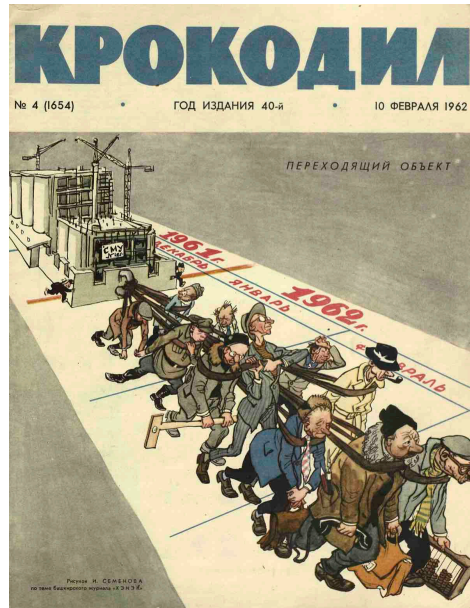
Figure 57: Semenov, I. *The Rolling Facility*. (*Perekhodiashchii ob'ekt*.)
***Krokodil* 1962: 4/1.**

In comics studies, image frames have received considerable attention from scholars. Groensteen, for example, identifies six functions of the frame, all of which affect both the contents of the panel, and the reader's cognition of the comic (2007: 39-57). McCloud suggests that the most important aspect of the frame is its power of 'closure' (1994: 63-65), and the absence of a frame therefore implies a kind of timelessness in the action. Undelineated, the time and space being represented becomes infinite. McCloud refers to 'bleeds'—when a panel extends beyond the page, 'time is no longer contained by the familiar icon of the closed panel, but instead hemorrhages and escapes into timeless space' (1994: 103)—and, indeed, Semenov's treatment of time in this image is very interesting. While Soviet industry is clearly stuck in the recent past, it is moving desperately slowly, and there remains no promise that future progress will be faster. Unlike Repin's peasants, furthermore, who presumably had a destination, Semenov's bureaucrats are apparently destined to haul their load indefinitely.

Semenov's cartoon's ambiguities even extend to the hapless workers pictured. Whereas Repin's barge-haulers were impotent peasants imbued with heroic dignity by their painter, in this case, the toilers are bureaucrats. This criticism of Soviet bureaucracy is ambiguous: does it criticise the industrial enterprise, which resists modernisation, or the slow and drudging progress of administrators? The cartoon, a caption informs us, is based on a theme borrowed from a Bashkiri satirical journal. Geographical distance is thus added to the ironic distance already inherent in the cartoon, but the implication of its appearance in *Krokodil* is that the same problems exist across the USSR.

Normative Soviet discourse stressed man's ability to bend nature and technology to his will, and Khrushchev's repeated promises that Soviet industry and agriculture would out-perform the rest of the world were based on beliefs of unlimited energy and untapped industrial potential. Semenov's cartoon, therefore, suggests significant scepticism about the pace and capability of change in the Soviet economy. The ambivalence of this image might indicate the artistic and comic failure of the artist, but for Semenov's great skill and his ability to imbue so many of his cartoons with this type of unsettling ambiguity.

In contrast with many existing studies of *Krokodil*, which stress its generic stability and its historical referentiality, my Menippean reading of the magazine suggests that many texts are marked by what Bakhtin would call 'freedom and inventiveness'. Indeed, many of the cartoons in *Krokodil* employed fantastic scenarios. In the second part of his definition of the Menippea, Bakhtin highlights the importance of the freedom from 'demands for external verisimilitude, also by plot which is extraordinarily free and philosophically inventive' (1984a: 114). Much of *Krokodil*'s critique was parodic, and a large number of *Krokodil* cartoons allegorise their commentary by substituting human figures for animals, which is of course a stock technique in folkloric or children's narratives (Draitser 1994: 79-86).

Figure 58: Semenov, I. *Mister Capital and his entourage. (Gospodin kapital i soprovozhdaiushchie ego litsa.)*
***Krokodil* 1961: 27/8-9.**

Liberated from representing reality, unlike those working with artforms more closely supervised by the Socialist Realist cultural establishment, *Krokodil* artists were able to imagine fantastic and even supernatural scenes. Images such as 'Mister Capital and his entourage' (see Figure 58) employed macabre elements reminiscent of cartoons from 1905 journals, which indicated a fascination with the gruesome. Terrible alliances like these were not meant to resemble earthly affairs, but the mixing of the fantastic and the mundane—here, the Grim Reaper walks beside an ani-

mated atomic bomb, and they are both accompanied by a hooded member of the Ku Klux Klan—was neither unusual nor problematic.

Reading *Krokodil* as a Menippean satire helps us to understand the relationships between *Krokodil*'s three visual schemata. Bakhtin describes the three 'planes'—earth, heaven and hell—across which the Menippea's 'action and dialogic syncresis are transferred' (1984a: 116). *Krokodil*'s three schemata correlate with Bakhtin's 'planes' to a degree: as Section 1.2 explained, although they also function as indicators of geographical location, my 'schemata' primarily denote particular graphic styles. They are, moreover, essential for communicating the magazine's satirical messages. For Bakhtin, however, travel across a threshold marks a narratival stage. In *Krokodil*'s graphic satire, what Bakhtin calls 'dialogues of the threshold' (1984a: 116) were visualised in particular ways. The capitalist (hellish) plane never came into direct contact with the (earthly) Soviet everyday plane. Dialogues across thresholds did occur, however. Dialogues between living and dead, for example, appear in images of hellish and heavenly planes (see Figure 59 and Figure 39).

Figure 59: Efimov, B. Untitled.
***Krokodil* 1956: 36/16.**

Dialogues or interactions between representatives of the hellish capitalist or fascist plane (distinguished by the grotesqueness of the visual language in which they are rendered) are visualised in the same scene as those from the heavenly socialist plane (see Figure 59). In such images, the heroism and happiness of those from the heavenly plane is conveyed through the visual language of the affirmative schema, as well as via the narrative of the image. It is these images, commonly, that employ the 'diptych' structure described above.

The sharp differences (noted by many previous commentators), and the continuities (which have received much less attention) in representation across the three schemata were fundamental to the nature of *Krokodil*'s satirical commentary. In *Krokodil*, where 'threshold dialogues' occur they also enable the magazine's artists to explore the universalism of the magazine's ideological-satirical philosophy. Most interesting are those images visualising the magazine's red crocodile avatar engaging with society 'becoming' Soviet (see Figure 60), because these cartoons suggest important conclusions about the magazine's authorial position and the role it envisioned itself fulfilling.
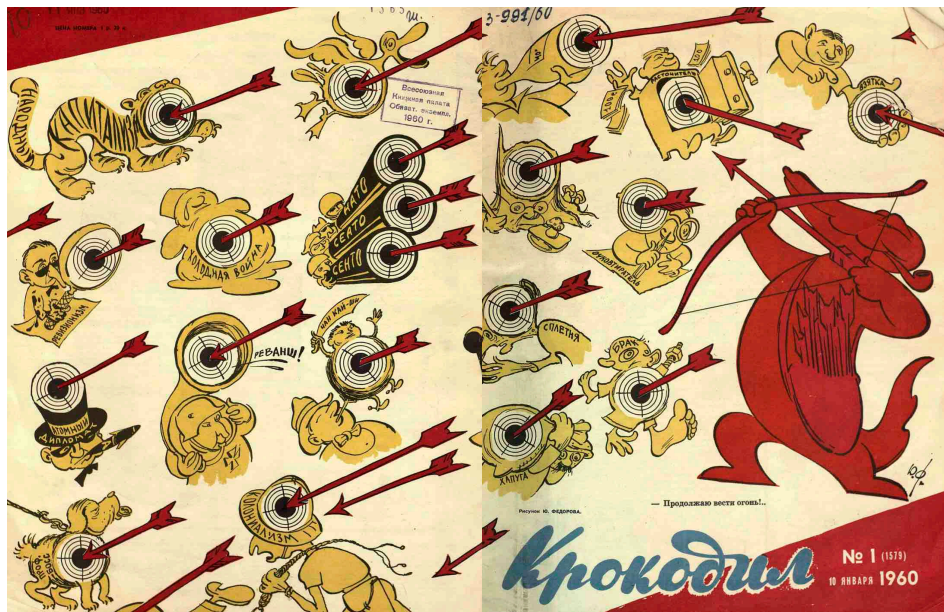
Figure 60: Fedorov, Iu. Untitled. *Krokodil* 1960: 1/1.

A Menippean reading of *Krokodil* helps to explain the wide use of different genres inserted in the text (1984a: 118). As we know from Section 1.1, *Krokodil* was heteroglossic, containing various texts, genres and voices, and the authorship of the majority of these texts was acknowledged. The insertion of these genres was sometimes emphasised in the layout and format of the text (see Figure 61). Here, unusually wide margins surround the text, which is presented as if it has been pasted roughly onto the page of the journal. Alongside numerous other short texts, the emphasis is on the fact that this piece has been recontextualised. The effects of these various inserted genres, and the way the magazine was inserted in other media, is explained in Chapter 2, but now I will turn to an analysis of the inserted genres relating to *Krokodil*'s red crocodile character.
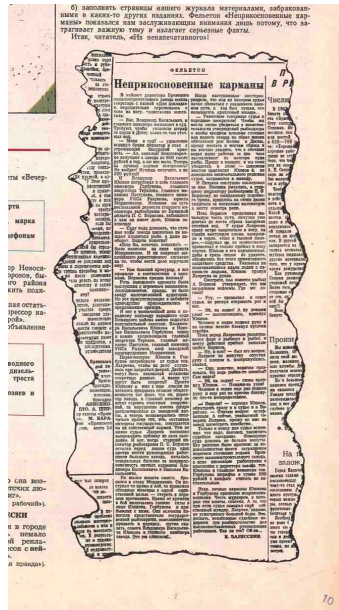
Figure 61: Inserted text (detail).
Krokodil **1959: 18/14**

A study of the inserted texts involving the magazine's red crocodile avatar suggests important conclusions about the magazine's authorial identity and its satirical vision. Bakhtin argues that in the Menippea, inserted genres are 'presented at various distances from the ultimate authorial position' (1984a: 118), but my reading of the inserted genres relevant to the red crocodile in *Krokodil* suggests that we may go further. Indeed, the red crocodile character appeared precisely in order to highlight the problematics of what *Krokodil*'s authorial identity constituted, and where its 'ultimate authorial position' lay. In fact, we may productively see *Krokodil* (and the red crocodile) as a kind of trickster. Like the trickster, *Krokodil* embodies cultural and performative traditions, just as it existed in the liminal zone on the borders of the official and popular realms of culture. As Mark Lipovetsky observes, the trickster's 'principle is not inversion but deconstruction' (2011: 31). *Krokodil*, the trickster, exists at the point of contact, which he brings closer together, between contemporary discourses and the trickster myth (Lipovetsky 2011: 19-20). As a trickster, *Krokodil* thus speaks in at least two tongues: the 'official' language of contemporary discourse, and the 'popular' discourse of the carnival. The trickster therefore serves as a very useful metaphor for understanding *Krokodil* magazine.

The trickster is a cultural figure—he may be divine, human or anthropomorphic animal—whose great intelligence and insight enables him to cross boundaries. While the archetypal tricksters include ancient and mythological characters from all over the world (Lipovetsky 2011: 11-12), the USSR was in fact the setting for numerous trickster myths. The trickster trope was, Lipovetsky suggests, central to the modernist discourse in Soviet culture, as well as to its proto-postmodern tendencies (2011: 10). The trickster moved fluidly and elusively between different

cultural and political orders, maintaining their ambivalence and simultaneously suggesting a vital cultural critique. Lipovetsky identifies four semantic and structural aspects of the trickster trope, all of which were highly significant in the Soviet context: (1) 'ambivalence and mediation', the ability to collapse opposites and fuse ostensibly incompatible features; (2) 'liminality and transgressive vitality', the ability to create tricks and jokes that introduce antistructural elements, expose and create liminal zones, and do so with the ability to register moral lessons and generate enjoyment; (3) 'the transformation of trickery and transgression into an artistic gesture—a sort of performance', always containing an element of 'defamiliarisation' ('ostranenie', to use Victor Shklovsky's term) or 'non-comprehension' (to use Bakhtin's); (4) the 'necessary—direct or indirect—*relation to the sacred*' and the use of transgression as a means of producing the sacred (Lipovetsky 2011: 29-37). In the USSR, official discourse achieved sacral status, and *Krokodil* therefore represents an important avenue for understanding how state discourse was mediated for popular consumption. The trickster has many associated and derivative cognates, such as the rogue, picaro, buffoon, jester, thief, imposter or the holy fool. In Russian culture, the holy fool has a particular significance, and it has been the subject of much scholarship since the mid-nineteenth century.[142] The rogue, the clown and the holy fool were investigated by Mikhail Bakhtin (1984a and 1981), and it is Bakhtin's analysis that links the figures of these tricksters most closely to the spirit of the carnival. Bakhtin argues that these figures were highly significant in the 'low folkloric and semifolkloric forms that tended toward satire and parody', but that they were also extremely influential in the development of the European novel (1984b: 158).

In my study, the trickster metaphor may be applied to the red crocodile character that featured as a character in the magazine, but also served as the journal's avatar, and to the social-political role of the magazine itself. As I explore in Section 1.4.1, the red crocodile character's dual role served to define and destabilize the authorial position of the magazine's editors, as well as the satirical vision of the journal. No existing study of the magazine has explored the important role played by the red crocodile, but his centrality to the magazine's identity and his function in the text is clear. His most powerful trick was to appear in, and act as a substitute for, the magazine, and to perform the feat of conjuring up satirical images. *Krokodil* always credited the work of the Editorial Board, and acknowledged the authorship of most individual texts in the magazine, yet the journal relied upon the reader's acceptance of the conceit that the eponymous red crocodile was the author with the highest

---

[142] See Thompson (1987), Murav (1992), Ivanov (2006) and Hunt and Kobets (2011).

authority. The red reptile was imagined, travelling around the USSR exposing corruption, wrongdoing and hypocrisy, and his ability to discover and visualise these crimes was central to the magazine's satirical vision. The crocodile's own appearances in certain cartoons in the magazine, as well as the convention of attributing certain editorials to him, lent the journal an autobiographical air, but the magazine's self conception was distinctly ambivalent. As I argue, a structuralist approach that separates *Krokodil* from 'popular' culture because of its 'official' status is fundamentally flawed. *Krokodil* was a state publication produced by the union's most significant and prestigious publishing house, and while it portrayed itself as a champion of the ordinary citizen this was not simply disingenuous. As a guardian of the official-popular conscience, the red crocodile thus mediated between political authority and citizenry in a dialogue that drew upon contemporary discourses but was also culturally and politically productive.

The trickster trope, and the red crocodile character's embodiment of it, helps to explain the magazine's paradoxes, as I will show in the next section. The final section of this chapter will also consider the creation of an important carnivalesque visual language in *Krokodil*, and investigate how texts that created and undermined a binary vision of Soviet culture and politics using humour as a transgressive force. The trickster trope is helpful for understanding *Krokodil*'s relationship to political authority (the sacred), but also for analysing the cartoons' ability to delineate the sacred. The definition of the sacred (by which, we mean the authoritative and the unsatirizable) was not achieved didactically, but rather dialogically and indirectly. *Krokodil* conducted a prolonged, polyphonic, transmedia exploration of the boundaries of acceptability, as Chapter 2 shows.

Figure 62: Moor, D. *In the life of the Crocodile.* **(***Iz zhizni "Krokodila".***)**
***Krokodil* 1922: 4/8-9.**

In two closely-related types of image, the red crocodile appears in the magazine. He appears in cartoons, sometimes as an artist-journalist, and often engages in acts of terror or violence against the satirical targets of the journal (see Figure 60 and Figure 62). Especially in the period 1954-1964, however, he mellows, becoming more kindly in appearance, less bloodthirsty and more journalistic. *Krokodil* acquired an autobiographical air: the red crocodile's private life mirrored that of his readers at times, since special issues were dedicated to his summer activities (1956: 18) and even to his marriage (1959: 36). At the same time, however, he also appears in almost every issue of the magazine assuming editorial responsibilities; signing an editorial, or as a representative for the journal's editorial board, usually in the title banner for one of the magazine's regular features (see Figure 63). The red crocodile opened letters, received telegrams, surveyed current events around the country and conducted investigative reporting. In all of these inserted genres, the red crocodile was depicted as the magazine's representative—even, one might argue, the highest authority on the staff.
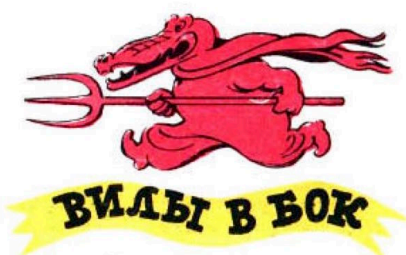
A fork in the side. (Vily v bok.) Krokodil 1958: 3/13.

Dear Krokodil! (Dorogoi Krokodil!). Krokodil 1956: 10/15.
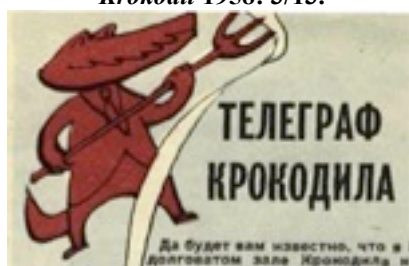
Krokodil telegraph. (Telegraf Krokodila.) Krokodil 1961: 33/10.

Krokodil Raid (Reid Krokodila.) Krokodil 1956: 1/9.

Figure 63: Various artists. Renditions of the red crocodile.

The red crocodile's appearance was generally connected to a graphic explanation of the magazine's satirical aims,[143] and when artists drew him in the act of performing

---

[143] Indeed, the red crocodile was essential in defining the magazine's purpose from the first issue, and the animal was adopted as a symbol of the journal's satirical identity. The name originated in 1922, when the magazine was still called *Rabochaia Gazeta*. As a meeting concluded, the Editorial Board sat among scraps of paper and cigarette butts, discussing names for the publication. When a cleaner entered the office she was shocked at the state of the room, and began muttering about 'crocodiles' making mess. The editors adopted the name.

in either of these roles they more or less conspicuously revealed the workings of the magazine's own ideology. It is sometimes suggested that sanctioned satire differed from popular humour primarily in that it was not self-reflexive,[144] but this examination of the red crocodile tends to disprove that notion. *Krokodil* was constantly reaffirming its satirical role and visualising itself in the acts of achieving its own aims.

The red crocodile is much more than simply a character in his own publication, then, and the ambivalence of the red crocodile's role in the inserted genres in the magazine is further extended by his existence outside the text. As I explain in the next chapter, *Krokodil* found various ways to engage with its readers, and in these outreaches the red crocodile was established as a real creature with a life outside the magazine (see Figure 64).

Figure 64: The red crocodile on a satirical 'raid' with the Maxim Gorky 'agit-squadron'. Abramskii (1977: 18)

As Stykhalin and Kremenskaia note, as a result of the magazine's attempts to connect with its readers, 'At general meetings and rallies, a symbolic crocodile was elected an honorary director, a forester, a fireman, and so on' (1963: 186).[145] When readers addressed letters to him,[146] they signalled their acceptance of this conceit. When he appeared in the text, then, he recalled all of these other functions, and

---

[144] See Waterlow 2015 (199).

[145] 'Na obshchikh sobraniiakh, mitingakh simvolicheskii Krokodil izbiraetsia pochetnym direktorom, lesnichim, pozharnym, i t.p.'

[146] Letters sometimes arrived with nothing but a small red crocodile drawn on the envelope! (Shabad 1964: 22)

because he apparently existed both inside and outside the text, the red crocodile breached the 'fourth wall', engaging the reader directly. As I have explained, *Krokodil* is constructed from multiple inserted genres in numerous different 'voices', and the episodes in which the red crocodile appears in the text function as interruptions that remind the reader about his roles outside the magazine.

These appearances by the red crocodile also draw the reader's attention to the Menippean construction of the whole magazine. Rather than synthesising the different elements of the magazine, those episodes in which the red crocodile appears serve to join together individual texts in such a way that the knots are easily noticed.[147] The magazine therefore becomes a collection of components that clash and interact dialectically, rather than merging in a linear form. This interpretation helps to explain why a Menippean interpretation of *Krokodil*'s satire is so important, and why an approach that fails to recognise the disparate nature of the magazine's elements is flawed. The effect of this construction of the magazine is that *Krokodil* openly declares its own artifice, exposing its own workings and showing its satirical method and in doing so it achieved a degree of alienation in the reader. This alienation had a satirical motivation: it aimed to achieve a jolt of surprise or illumination as the red crocodile disrupted scenes of the familiar and predictable, inviting a novel judgement in the eyes of a newly suspicious and quizzically naïve spectator. The readers' attitude was thus changed from a passive to a productive one. The reader's critical ability is sharpened to recognise the magazine's satirical method. The intended side-effect is also implied by this alienation effect, in that the duality of the red crocodile's function (as character and satirical agent) highlights contradictions in society. Thus norms of behaviour and action and the resulting social relations are no longer taken for granted. Readers are invited to hold their own experience up to comparison with the way these contradictions are presented, and their position shifts from passive reception to more active participation. Just as readers begin to perform their own responses to the text, the journal performs a transformation of sorts upon its audience.

A Menippean reading of *Krokodil*, finally, allows us to understand that the magazine's carnivalesque substitutions, and its fascination with the incompleteness of things (what Bakhtin calls the 'unfinalizability' of man—see below) contributed to the positing of a satirical counter-rhetoric that challenged official normative discourses. This was achieved through several kinds of carnivalesque inversions and

---

[147] Here I paraphrase Berthold Brecht, who describes the construction of narrative in epic theatre in these terms (Brecht 2014: 251).

debasings. Bakhtin's definition of the Menippea highlights the importance of the comic element (1984a: 114). Bakhtin also explains, however, that the opposing 'serious, official' and the 'completely different, nonofficial' realms merged during the Renaissance, when whole layers of the everyday were infused with a carnival sense of the world, since 'the primordial elements of carnival swept away many of the barriers and invaded many realms of official life and worldview…The carnival sense of the world…penetrated deeply into almost all genres of artistic literature' (1984a: 130). This infusion of cultural forms by the carnival sense of the world explains the significance of what Bakhtin calls 'carnivalistic acts', which include mock crownings and decrownings of the carnival king, symbolising the ambivalent inevitability of death and renewal, and the 'poles of change and crisis' (1984a: 126). For Bakhtin, the carnivalesque was represented by the suspension of hierarchical relationships, new 'carnivalistic mésalliances', in which the otherwise dissociated are wed—'the sacred with the profane, the lofty with the low, the great with the insignificant, the wise with the stupid'—and blasphemies, debasings and carnivalis-tic obscenities linked with the reproductive power of the earth and the body (1984a: 123). The debasing of the serious was a popular theme in many *Krokodil* cartoons, and the degradation of the official is often explored through the fascination with the 'material bodily principle' (1984b: 18). As Bakhtin explains, the body's lower stra-tum has 'an absolute and topographical meaning', being associated with the genitals, the belly and the buttocks, and degradation consequently means 'to concern oneself with the lower stratum of the body, the life of the belly and reproductive organs; it therefore relates to acts of defecation and copulation, conception, pregnancy, and birth' (1984b: 21).

As Medhurst and De Sousa note, contrast is one of the primary mechanisms whereby cartoonists create humour and message (1981: 207). In *Krokodil*, the carni-valesque was manifested in cartoons that wedded otherwise dissociated ideas or characters. In high-profile anti-western cartoons this often took the form of substitut-ing body parts or personal accessories for weaponry,[148] and in these cases the hu-morous and satirical intent was unambiguous. In cartoons on domestic topics, however, the techniques of contrast were more diverse and more oblique, but for anyone receptive enough, the critiques of Soviet reality were evident enough. In its contrast with many famous Soviet artworks, *Krokodil* implied a parodic critical comment (Chapter 3 explores this idea further). Socialist Realism was generally interested in the upper body (see Figure 65) which denotes, according to Bakhtin,

---

[148] See 1957: 11/11, 1959: 32/1, and 1963: 9/11.

the heavenly,[149] and was rather prudish in its attitudes to the lower regions of the human form (Clark and Holquist 1984: 312).
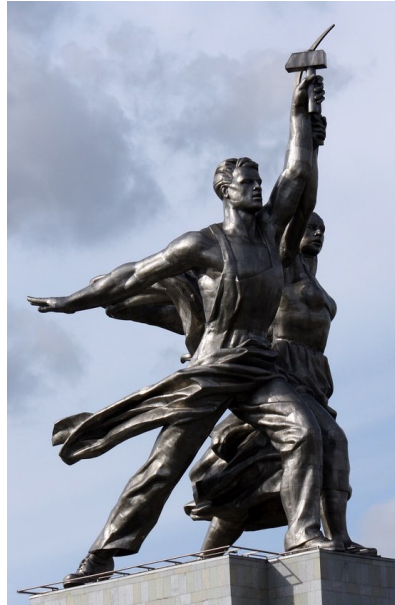
Figure 65: Mukhina, V. 1937. *Worker and Collective Farm Girl* (*Rabochii i Kolkhoznitsa*). [Sculpture.] At: Russian Exhibition Centre, Moscow.

Figure 66: Kukryniksy. *Goldwater Campaign Speeches.* (*Predvybornoe vystuplenie golduotera*.) *Krokodil* 1964: 3/16.

In *Krokodil*, however, a fascination with the earth and man's connection to it, is evident. Quagmires, holes in the ground, floods, broken down and degraded or unbuilt structures, and dilapidated machinery are all common graphic devices or

---

[149] Vladimir Paperny explores the cultural significance of upward movement under Stalinism (2002).

subject matter in *Krokodil* cartoons.[150] Furthermore, humans are often visualised swallowing, with grotesquely large bellies[151] and behinds, or suffering bodily inversions of various kinds (see Figure 66). The magazine's references to the lower bodily stratum and its carnivalesque inversions serve to degrade its subjects, and the images are amusing enough to humiliate. As such, we may believe, they act as weapons and inflict injury upon their subjects. As Bakhtin suggests, however, the body is symbolic of the ambivalence of cyclical time and renewal. The body is also commonly used as a metaphor for the nation state, and the degradation of a capitalist or a communist body therefore represents an implicit comment upon the inevitability of decline. Furthermore, distance from the earth, which was generally indicative of heroic status in Soviet culture, was, in *Krokodil* indicative of an imminent and humiliating decline.[152]

As Clark and Holquist argue, Bakhtin's subject matter (freedom, laughter, irreverence, the upturning of hierarchies and the variegation of the masses) was a subversive and anti-authoritarian stand, given that it was written at the height of pre-war Stalinism (1984: 312). Bakhtin's own Aesopian language and reliance upon ambiguity allows him to appropriate the discourse of the dominant ideology and bend it, employing allegories judiciously, to present an alternative worldview. *Krokodil* employed the same techniques, using a carnivalesque sense of the world in order to construct its critiques. It must not be construed from this, however, that the magazine was in any way dissident or anti-Soviet. In his criticisms of the work of the German scholar G. Schneegans, Bakhtin points out that caricature and the grotesque need not necessarily be negative or satirical, and that positive and negative comments might be combined in the same image (1984b: 306-8). Clearly, then, the carnivalesque may combine multiple critiques, just as *Krokodil* did.

The carnivalesque is also evident in cartoons that stressed the 'unfinalizability' of man, and my Menippean reading of *Krokodil* reveals the significance of these images. In Section 1.2.3 I explained the significance of *Krokodil*'s 'becoming' schema, and made it clear that images constructed from this type of visual language, which was central to the magazine's satirical vision and ideological agenda, represent an exploration of Soviet society's progress towards communism. What a Menippean interpretation of this kind of cartoon suggests, however, is that this

---

[150] See 1955: 17/10, 1957: 20/12 and 1960: 1/3.

[151] For further discussion of the significance of the large belly, see Section 3.1.

[152] See 1954: 15/2-3; 1955: 15/11 and 1955: 21/16.

progress was perpetual. The importance of the third schema shows that *Krokodil*'s satire, in contrast with the rhetoric of the Soviet state, especially under Stalin, which stressed perpetual movement, must be understood as a visual investigation of the unfinalizability of Soviet society. As a Menippean approach reveals, *Krokodil*'s critique of Soviet modernity was to posit a counter-rhetoric that implied atemporality and permanent immobility.

Unfinalizability, one of Bakhtin's constant preoccupations, was foregrounded in his definition of the Menippea. Narrative techniques, such as the introduction of 'unusual, abnormal moral and psychic states of man—insanity of all sorts…split personality, unrestrained daydreaming, unusual dreams, passions bordering on madness, suicides and so forth', are used to 'destroy the epic and tragic wholeness of a person and his fate' (1984a: 116). In *Krokodil*, almost any of the cartoons could be read as a dreamlike image, and many of the 'contesting' cartoons visualise behaviour bordering on madness.[153] For Bakhtin, the essential function of these devices is to reveal the 'unfinalizability of a man, [and] his noncoincidence with himself' (1984a: 117). Many of the cartoons depicting Soviet society in 'becoming' convey this sort of 'noncoincidence', although cartoonists often employ different characters in order to convey the sense of unfinalizability.
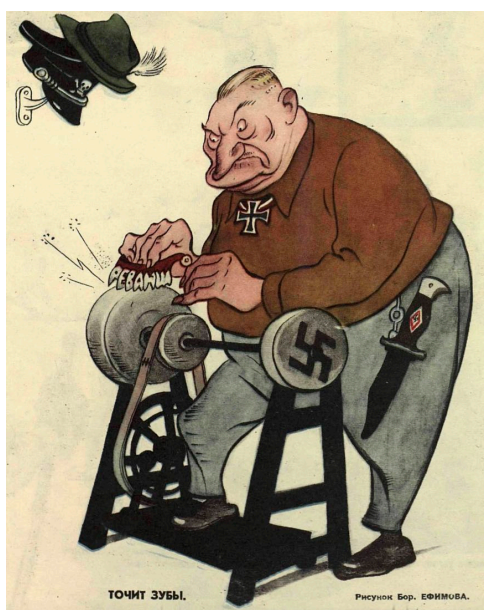
Figure 67: Efimov, B. *Sharpening his teeth*. (*Tochit zuby*.)
***Krokodil* 1958: 5/10.**

---

[153] Numerous cartoons about Western aggression imply insanity as the explanation for the protagonists' conduct. See 1956: 3/10; 1958: 24/2; 1958: 30/1. See the discussion on *Krokodil*'s delight at news of the suicide of James Forrestal in Chapter 3, also.

As Eric Laursen explains, while Soviet literature in the 1920s included characters who wrestled with their own psyches, struggled to contain their animal passions and become rational and disciplined beings, satirical literature after 1934 purged the bestial and the alien and embodied these negative characteristics in the figures of the enemy (2013). In *Krokodil*, these enemies were rendered in grotesque forms, and visualised in interactions with bemused or dismayed citizens who had achieved political consciousness, but the magazine's cartoons still stressed the unfinalized nature of Soviet society. The magazine's 'target' categories, listed by Stites and others (see above) were symbolic of the noncoincidence of the Soviet body politic. In some cartoons, this unfinalizability was personified. For Bakhtin, the open and incomplete nature of the self is revealed most fully at the body's margins, and in particular at the 'convexities and orifices' of the body, where 'an interchange and an interorientation' between the body and the outer world take place, (1984b: 317). For him, these orifices and convexities disrupt the smoothness and completedness of the human form, constructing 'what we might call a double body' (1984b: 318). This doubling disrupts the wholeness of the subject, undermining any celebration of life, since the 'acts of bodily drama'—'Eating, drinking, defecation and other elimination (sweating, blowing the nose, sneezing), as well as copulation, pregnancy, dismemberment, swallowing up by another body'—always link the beginning with the end of life (1984b: 317). As we know, one of the distinguishing characteristics of an unsympathetic character in a *Krokodil* cartoon, indeed, is the exaggeration of convexities or orifices.

СОВРЕМЕННЫЙ ПАЦЮК ИЗ АРТЕЛИ «НАХЛЕБНИК».

Figure 68: Semenov, I. *Modern rat from the cooperative "Freeloader". (Sovremennyi patsiuk iz arteli "nakhlebnik").*
***Krokodil* 1956: 6/5.**

Historically, the development of the carnivalesque in life and literary modes coincided with the appearance of caricature. In *Krokodil*, exaggeration bordering on grotesque is essential to the carnivalesque view of the world. Capitalists, warmongers and enemies of the USSR were drawn with oversized mouths and noses, as were the less desirable members of Soviet society (see Figure 58 and Figure 68).
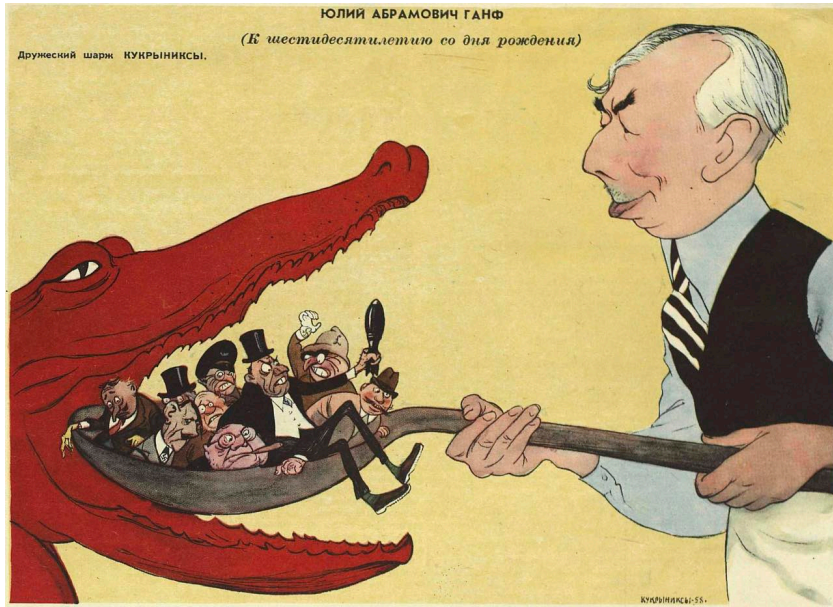
Figure 69: Kukryniksy. Druzheskii sharzh (Iulii Abramovich Ganf).
***Krokodil* 1958: 17/11.**

Interestingly, the magazine's own avatar, of course, possessed the largest mouth of all, but he was almost always depicted with his jaws tight shut during this period. In one notable exception, a 'druzheskii sharzh' pictured Iulii Ganf feeding a giant spoonful of miniature capitalists, Nazis and imperialists to the red crocodile (see Figure 69). In scenes satirising domestic life, caricatural techniques such as the emphasis on exaggerated convexities and orifices draw attention to the grotesqueness of certain bodily forms (which itself carries an ideological critique—see Section 3.1) but also highlight the impossibility of bodily wholeness.

**Figure 70: Semenov, I. *Religious procession against weeds*. (*Krestnyi khod protiv sorniakov*.)
Krokodil 1963: 20/2.**

The presence of these elements in cartoons about the Soviet Union had the potential to destabilise normative discourses about the unity of the Soviet people. The incompleteness of the human body, with its implications of natural decline and death, also undermined the scientific laws of the linearity of progress through socialism to communism.

As I have shown, a Menippean interpretation of *Krokodil* enlightens our understanding of the journal's satire, and enables us to appreciate that its critiques were multi-voiced and variegated. Moreover, as I have attempted to show, it could also be amusing at times. This was perhaps most often the case when multiple topical discourses were combined with skilful artistry and comical drawing, as in Semenov's 'Religious procession against weeds' (see Figure 70). Marrying contemporary anti-religious discourses with references to Orthodox practices and pre-revolutionary realist painting,[154] in 'Religious procession against weeds', Semenov layers numerous critiques in the same image. His comical figures and their humorous expressions contrast amusingly with the unlikely connection between religion procession and agricultural efficiency, but additional comic effect would have been perceived by the contemporary reader, for whom these subjects would have had significant connotations. In the context of failing harvests during Khrushchev's Virgin Lands campaign after 1960, increasing awareness of the problems of Soviet agriculture and criticisms

---

[154] Compare this cartoon with, for example, Il'ia Repin's *Easter Procession in the District of Kursk* (1880-3) or Vasilii Perov's *Village Procession at Easter* (1861).

of Khrushchev's leadership as a consequence, and the admission at the December 1963 plenum of the Soviet chemical industry that weed spraying in the USSR was inadequate (Anon 1964), however, this cartoon assumes greater significance.

Cartoons like this criticised the failings of Soviet bureaucracy to deal with the mundane problems with which they were concerned, and likened their optimistic and aggressive sloganeering to the proclamations of the faithful, but their criticisms were also outwardly and upwardly reflective. Instead of processing with icons, these bureaucrats carry posters that are typical of Soviet propaganda campaigns. The cartoon thus doubles its visualisation of the troublesome thistles: in the imagery of the representatives of the Soviet state the weeds are punched, kicked, and ripped or hoed out of the ground. As the procession walks heedlessly by, however, an abundant crop of thriving thistles smile blithely. This doubling is highlighted by the fact that two or three of the marchers have noticed the weeds' imperviousness to the parade's rhetoric.

Semenov's critique is more nuanced than it might immediately appear. It highlights the discrepancy between Soviet official rhetoric, visualised in propaganda and empty slogans, and the lived experiences of ordinary citizens. By combining multiple references to topical discourses, these cartoons encoded numerous different critiques, which might refract upon each other, sometimes creating new and often unintended surpluses of meaning. Cartoons like this, of course, were always open to diverse and personal readings, but especially when artists chose to select from a wide range of visual images and marry them together, there was always the possibility that readers might reach an unexpected interpretation. As the incongruity theory reminds us, these surprising combinations and unusual outcomes could sometimes provoke a laughing response.

1.5   Conclusions

In this chapter's exploration of the framework within which Soviet graphic satire operated, I have attempted to suggest the ways in which our understanding of *Krokodil* should progress if we are to move beyond previous interpretations. I have argued that *Krokodil* was a Menippean satire, according to Bakhtin's definition. Rather than interpreting the magazine as the uncomplicated propaganda tool of the Soviet state, I have shown how it may better be understood as a 'politcarnival' development in a long Russo-European satirical tradition. *Krokodil* was, as many commentators have noted, distinctive for its scathing graphic attacks on non-socialist ideologies and Western countries, and for its optimistic images of the so-

cialist utopia, but however important these images were, the magazine always consisted of more than grotesque attack and sanguine affirmation. My interpretation attempts to broaden our understanding of the journal's aesthetic by relating it to its satirical and artistic predecessors. This explanation highlights the journal's heterogeneity and multivoicedness, and it allows us to see *Krokodil* as a site of ongoing, subtle, serio-comic critical counter-commentaries on Soviet orthodoxies and political policy.

As a Menippean reading of *Krokodil* shows, texts including different types of ideological and social critiques were always juxtaposed in the same magazine, meaning that the binarism of existing paradigms used to examine the journal is too limited. *Krokodil*'s criticism of Soviet life was offset against its affirmation of communist ideology, and its scepticism was of course also manifested in much more overt and savage criticism of capitalist societies, but these discourses were always balanced by images constructed from the magazine's 'becoming' schema. Indeed, the repeated criticisms of Soviet society made in the third graphic schema represent a significant exploration of official rhetoric. When we consider how *Krokodil*'s cartoons constantly reprised the same themes, we appreciate that the journal's broader criticism was of the state's failure to overcome certain social and political issues. Particular cartoons certainly implied a tendency to individualise problems, but a series of images on the same subject represents a much more fundamental political critique. Moreover, in its contradiction of state rhetoric about the inevitability of the achievement of communism, *Krokodil*'s counter-commentary on the unfinalizability of Soviet society suggests a profoundly sceptical attitude. This understanding of the magazine may only be reached by an approach that looks at numerous cartoons of the USSR in 'becoming' Soviet, published over a long period. By considering the subjects of the repetitions in the journal, I am able to provide an explanation of *Krokodil*'s satirical critiques derived from the broader picture of a large number of issues from a long period of time.

Krokodil engaged, in its sceptical manner, with discourses on the Soviet Union's most prized subjects. Cartoons concerning the subjects of which the Soviet government was most protective, such as the USSR's lead in the space race, appeared in all three of *Krokodil*'s schemata, so that these topics were celebrated and critiqued simultaneously. The magazine therefore produced a unique kind of conflicted official satiricism that, appropriately for this period of profound reassessment of state policies, functioned as a kind of self-reflexive counter-commentary in parallel with other official media outlets. *Krokodil*'s treatment of other, more mundane, subjects was critical enough to imply that the Soviet regime endured some serious problems, and in its oblique commentaries it offered readers the opportunity to

construct their own responses. *Krokodil* cartoons, especially those in the first and second schemata, were often unamusing, but some images in the third schema were entertaining. Although the magazine also contained a large number of small, humorous, and sometimes entirely apolitical texts, the juxtaposition of more than one topical discourse created the incongruities upon which much of the magazine's humour was based.

Chapter 2
Contesting the Boundaries of Discourse?: *Krokodil* and Transmedia Production

We know, from the existing literature, a little about the production of the journal. Several scholarly works stress the influence of the political supervision to which the journal was subject. McKenna argues that political cartoons in Soviet printed media 'served a highly planned, centrally coordinated information system' (2001: 16); and, according to other scholars, Soviet satire was governed by political expediencies and directly responsible to state authorities.[155] This interpretation is supported by Cold War-era studies of Soviet print and broadcast media, whose structures were dominated by Communist Party authorities and state dicta.[156] Our knowledge about the creation of satirical content is imprecise, however, on how the political context influenced artistic choices. Creative production processes have been explored in related fields—Akinsha and Jolles describe the TASS poster studio's operation during World War Two (many TASS artists had strong connections with *Krokodil*) (2011)—but no such scholarly analysis of *Krokodil* exists. Instead, we rely for our understanding of the journal's construction upon inferences drawn from *Krokodil*'s content. In his analysis of the origins and development of comic art in Russia, Alaniz explores the evolution of the comics form, and explains Soviet official 'anti-comics attitudes' (2010: 68), although he does not otherwise discuss influences upon meaning-making and aesthetic decisions. In various works on *Krokodil*, the prevalence and repetition of certain themes is interpreted as evidence of state prescription of appropriate content for *Krokodil*—what I call the 'list-of-targets' approach. Graham, for example, implies very close state supervision of content creation:

> the state encouraged or tolerated the use of satire only with a very narrow aim—for example, when a common enemy was officially identified (NEPmen, Trotskyites, Hitler, capitalism, Ronald Reagan, corrupt bureaucrats, and so on). When it was allowed, satire of domestic phenomena and personalities was severely limited. (Graham 2009: 10-11)

---

[155] See Schramm (1963: 122), Larsen (1980: 81), Stites (2010: 348) and Davies (2007: 298).

[156] See Inkeles (1950), Buzek (1964), Markham (1967), Hopkins (1970), and Mickiewicz (1981).

These interpretations locate *Krokodil* close to the top of the Soviet political power hierarchy, and they suggest that the character of Soviet satire after the 1930s was determined by the political restrictions placed upon it:

> [*Krokodil*] initially published domestically directed barbs (at stupid bureaucrats, for example), but by the 1930s it was completely under the aegis of *Pravda* and its satire was directed almost exclusively toward the capitalist West. (Graham 2009: 10-11)

Graham suggests that state encouragement, toleration and direction was such that the content of Soviet satire precisely aligned with government ideological priorities and that it was, at the same time, a force that suppressed free satirical expression. In my view, however, state supervision only explains *Krokodil*'s content to a limited degree.

On the question of consumption of *Krokodil*, the existing literature reveals considerably less. Many studies suggest a simple pattern of connection—defined by the press's propaganda function—between political leaders and the broad audience. Such interpretations echo Stalin's own views on the role of the media. Stalin called the press "one of the transmission belts between the Party and the working class" (1947: 287), and many studies of *Krokodil* implicitly accept this theory. For Hopkins, 'the press is bound to the Communist Party and government bureaucracies which oversee the mass media' (1970: 22). Zassoursky argues that the newspaper 'served as the main arena for instilling ideology in mass consciousness' (2004: 9). In such interpretations, Soviet citizens are conceived of as passive recipients of mass media content. Discussing Soviet media in general, Friedrich and Brzezinski suggest that 'propaganda strives to present a simple, unrefined, and strikingly negative portrayal [of the West], so as to create the politically desirable conditioned reflex in those to whom it is directed' (1965: 133). My analysis of *Krokodil* suggests that the aims of Soviet satire were not to condition readers to certain reflexes, but rather to engage them and invite a considerably more participatory response than these interpretations admit. Soviet studies of audience behaviour investigated levels of satisfaction with media output, and questioned readers about content preferences, but they reveal little about patterns and modes of consumption. Recent studies of other publications provide a much more nuanced picture of audience responses (Kozlov 2013 and Huxtable 2012), but aside from some limited insights provided by studies that are informative on the distribution and public display of the journal,[157] and the

---

[157] See Montagu (1943: 6) and Pehowski (1978: 729)

magazine's use of readers' letters (Shabad (1964) and Davis (1969)), our understanding of the consumption of Soviet state-sponsored satire is extremely limited.

Our understanding is further limited by previous studies' failure to consider the fact that *Krokodil* was always more than just a magazine. As this chapter shows, the magazine was surrounded by a range of 'extensions', ranging from parallel publications to an aircraft. One example illustrates the gaps in the existing knowledge about the magazine. In 1972, *Krokodil* published, in its *Krokodil Library* (*Biblioteka Krokodila*) series, a 'satirical encyclopaedia'. This fifty-page pamphlet, comprising serious and humorous definitions of everyday terms, as well as words connected with the magazine, appeared in a miniature magazine that was produced parallel with the magazine, for almost seventy years, yet it and other extension texts go unremarked upon in English-language scholarship. The content for this issue, furthermore, was provided by 316 different contributors, from all over the country, whose entries were selected from over 360,000 suggestions, in a year-long competition. Aside from their names and the cities they came from, we know nothing about them or their motivations for contributing content. Previous works have provided neither a theoretical basis for understanding these extensions, nor a way to explain popular engagement with them.

This chapter engages with the inter-related problems of explaining how *Krokodil* was produced and consumed. In Section 2.2 I will investigate *Krokodil*'s various extension texts, among others, textual, visual and performative. I aim to broaden the notion of the magazine beyond the printed journal and consider the ways in which content was distributed across media in order to achieve new meanings and ideological critiques. How, and how far, was *Krokodil* able to explore the boundaries of the permissible? Did *Krokodil*'s editors investigate the potentialities of the media in which they worked? In order to consider these questions, I employ the theory of transmediality. This concept is also helpful for explaining the nature and interaction of different influences upon the magazine during its production processes. This issue is investigated in Section 2.1, where I explore *Krokodil*'s relationship with political authorities in the period 1954-1964, seeking evidence in the text that the journal was subject to direct political supervision. Considering the magazine to be the result of transmedial production practice, I investigate *Krokodil*'s peculiar production processes, which involved professional, amateur, and 'prosumer' producers. These are aspects of *Krokodil* that are entirely unexplored in the existing literature, and analysis of their effects represents a central plank in the theoretical novelty of my thesis. This investigation allows me to reconsider previous interpretations of *Krokodil*'s and by considering the ways the magazine engaged with its readership.

2.1   Co-Creative Producers of Meaning: *Krokodil*'s Production Process

This section builds on the previous chapter's discussion of the magazine's form by considering the dynamic of *Krokodil*'s production process. This study of the magazine's publishing schedule and creative practices will help us to answer the question: How did the USSR provide artists with a creative space in which to explore the boundaries of permissible discourse in Soviet satire?

In this section I consider how different influences combined in the production of the journal. We are already familiar with *Krokodil*'s combination of multiple different genres and forms in order to create a Menippean satirical vision, and this section extends that understanding by referring to 'co-creative' practices, in a way that allows us to nuance the discussion of how Soviet satire was produced. According to Henry Jenkins, co-creation is an extensively collaborative system of content creation (2006: 105), and its practice is integral to 'transmedia' theory.

'Transmedia' describes both a variety of production practices involving the deliberate dispersal of different elements of content across distinct media, and a specific set of media products, as Jenkins' definition shows:

> Transmedia storytelling represents a process where integral elements of a fiction get dispersed systematically across multiple delivery channels for the purpose of creating a unified and coordinated entertainment experience. Ideally, each medium makes it own unique contribution to the unfolding of the story. So, for example, in The Matrix franchise, key bits of information are conveyed through three live action films, a series of animated shorts, two collections of comic book stories, and several video games. There is no one single source or ur-text where one can turn to gain all of the information needed to comprehend the Matrix universe. (Jenkins 2007).

In this chapter, I employ co-creation and transmedia theory in order to explore *Krokodil*'s production practices (in Section 2.1), and the range of other 'extensions' that existed in parallel with *Krokodil* (see Section 2.2). No existing work on Soviet satire employ these concepts, and transmedia theorists have not so far extended their analyses to communist media systems. My application of transmedia theory to Soviet satire therefore represents an innovative approach to considering the interaction of various influences and concerns in the production process, the ways in which *Krokodil* magazine's content was distributed beyond the boundaries of the magazine (what I refer to as 'extension' texts), and how its readers engaged with it. 'Trans-

mediality'[158] and co-creation, when applied to *Krokodil*, allow us to challenge both Soviet theories of media and Cold War-era western studies.

Before considering the roles of key contributors, it is necessary to provide an outline of *Krokodil*'s editorial schedule and the month-long production process, detailing the roles of state employees and reader-contributors, in order to highlight the degree of creative authority enjoyed by artists, writers and editors, and the importance of dialogic 'co-creation'. Although this process was observed by Western visitors (see Shabad 1964, and Davis 1969), was open to the public, is described in memoirs (Semenov 1982, Rep'ev 2007), and was the subject of an article in the magazine (Spassky 1982), it has not received scholarly attention. Nevertheless, in my analysis, it was vitally important, and a study of it shows that co-creation was an essential principle at all stages. In particular, the meetings conducted in the first half of the production of an issue of *Krokodil* demonstrate the large degree of creative autonomy allowed to the magazine's editors. As Figure 71 shows, two or three 'Charging' ('*Zariadki*'), 'Theme-making' ('*Temnoe*') or Art Editorial Board ('*Khudkolle*') or Writers' Editorial Board ('*Litkolle*') meetings occurred each week.
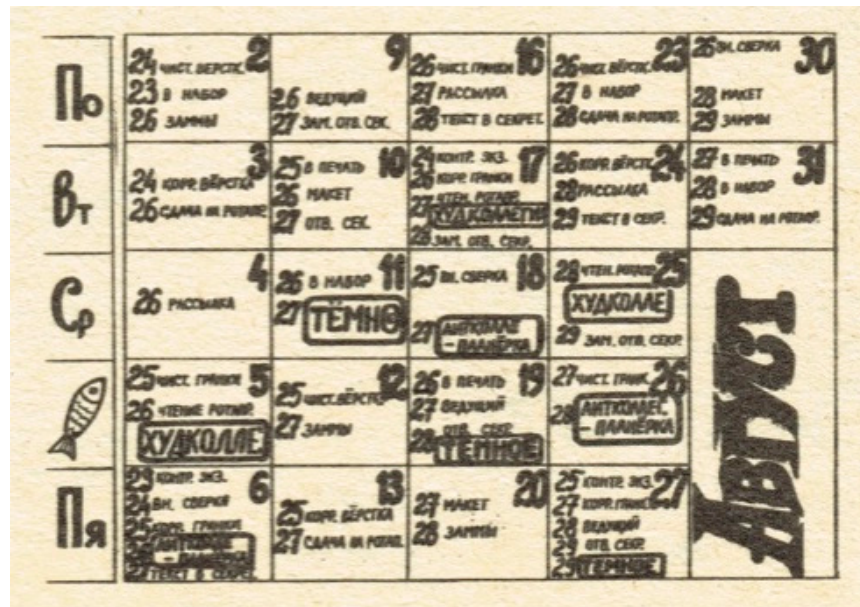
Figure 71: *Krokodil*'s monthly production schedule, August 1982.
***Krokodil* 1982: 24/14.**

Such meetings took place in the magazine's conference room in *Krokodil*'s offices,[159] and they were often raucous affairs. In 1964, when Theodore Shabad of *The*

---

[158] This is a portmanteau term, coined by Richard Grusin, drawing upon Jenkins' 'transmedia' and 'mediality', which means 'the things that media do, the way they act and help govern the variety of human and nonhuman publics'. (Jenkins and Grusin 2011).

New York Times attended a *Krokodil* editorial meeting, the magazine employed around 25 full-time staff members, and regularly published contributions from another 40 freelancers (Shabad 1964: 22). Attendance at these meetings was not compulsory (some of the most high-profile artists—such as Efimov and the Kukryniksy—would send uncommissioned submissions), but because of the high standard of themes that was required at this stage, such meetings were essential for less established artists (Semenov 1982: 28-32).

Figure 72: Belianin, P. *Krokodil* Editorial Board meeting.
Abramskii (1977: 10)

At *Zariadki* meetings, social problems were discussed, along with ideas about satirising them. Suggestions were then proposed at *Temnoe* meetings, where themes for individual cartoons or articles were approved and allocated to contributors. For the editors, these meetings were important opportunities to discuss themes for the magazine. A cartoon on a theme accepted by the Editors at a *Temnoe* meeting was almost guaranteed to be published, even if minor alterations proved necessary. Most artists worked alone on their commissions, and would either send in their completed works, or bring them back to the office for discussion at *Khudkolle* or *Litkolle* meetings.

Khudkolle meetings, where up to 30 of *Krokodil*'s editors, artists and contributors participated in critiquing submissions for upcoming issues, were so important to the meaning-making process that visitors to *Krokodil*'s offices were often

---

[159] *Krokodil* occupied various different premises between 1922-1963, but from April 1963 the editorial staff moved to the *Pravda* newspaper offices (Shabad 1964: 22). *Krokodil* occupied the entire twelfth floor of the building until 1991.

invited to observe. Editorial Board members and the most distinguished artists sat at the end of the conference table, upon which was erected an easel known as the 'guillotine' ('*gil'otina*'). Individual cartoons were pinned on the easel, while the Editors commented on the execution of the themes (see Figure 73). The guillotine was famous among *Krokodil* contributors for being such a difficult hurdle. These meetings were often silent: witty, well-drawn cartoons reportedly drew few comments, but laughter indicated a poorly executed drawing (Rep'ev 2007).

Figure 73: A cartoon is discussed at *Krokodil*'s 'guillotine' by Artistic Editor Andrei Krylov. [Online.] [Accessed 10/10/11.] Available from: http: //old-crocodile.livejournal.com/

Later stages of the production of the magazine, involving layout ('*Maket*') meetings, at which different departments of the magazine vied for page space (Spassky 1982), typesetting and printing, similarly involved constant dialogue between magazine staff, and with no direct supervision by outside authorities.

Co-creation was expertly practised by the USSR's most famous cartoon producers, the Kukryniksy collective. Jack Chen, a Chinese cartoon artist who worked in Moscow in the 1930s noted that a Kukryniksy cartoon 'may be actually the work of one pair of hands, but it is always the product of three brains' (1944: 38). Equally, however, they often worked together on the same images (see Figure 3). Their caricature of Chen, he noticed, was 'perfect though they drew me from three separate corners of the room. It was impossible to say where one's line ended and another's began' (Chen 1944: 38). Such collaboration was also institutionalised in *Krokodil*'s *temisty* system, whereby cartoons were co-authored. Cartoon themes, titles and captions were devised by theme-makers ('*temisty*') before being drawn up by cartoonists. This system of co-creative production was an essential process for producing cartoons for *Krokodil*. For the majority of the magazine's artists, this was a normal work practice, although the Kukryniksy trio and Efimov usually devised

their own themes.[160] *Krokodil* regularly featured cartoons derived from themes suggested by professional *temisty*—they were paid 20 rubles for each theme published as a cartoon or an article—and these were generally not credited in the magazine. Perhaps partly for this reason, the practice of theme-making was so little known that many *Krokodil temisty* were much more famous for their other work. Dem'ian Bednyi, Vladimir Maiakovskii, Oleg Popov, Nikita Bogolovskaia, and Rina Green were all *Krokodil temisty*.[161] This aspect of the magazine's production process was not fully understood,[162] even by those close to it. In July 1956, the poet and satirist Sergei Mikhalkov reported for *Izvestiia* on the opening of a Moscow exhibition of graphic satire, and criticised the 'flawed practice' ('porochnuiu praktiku') of using 'theme-makers' ('temistami'). For Mikhalkov, an artist who works in this way 'is not a cartoonist but an illustrator of other people's ideas'.[163] Despite the profile of the writer and the prestige of the platform, these calls were ignored. *Krokodil* retained its *temisty* and the co-creative practice in which they were involved remained central to the magazine's production process. Indeed, such modes of co-creation, which were suited to the cartoon medium, were also employed in response to unsolicited themes suggested by readers. It was not uncommon in the period 1954-1964 for an issue to feature more than one cartoon credited to an amateur *temist* (see Figure 74). Aside from the credit to the *temist*, these images are indistinguishable from other cartoons in the magazine. Clearly, such images were selected for publication because they successfully met the editorial requirements, but nevertheless, examples such as these demonstrate that readers regularly voluntarily engaged with the magazine and its regular artists in the co-creation of works for publication.

---

[160] Efimov did occasionally work with others' ideas. See *Krokodil* 1954: 10/10.

[161] Other notable *temisty* included Mark Vaisbord, Emil' Iakovlevich Krotkii, Mikhail Glushkov, Aleksandr Chicharkov, Igor Sychev, Vladimir Zharinov, Sergei Kuzmin (Vaisbord 1982: 39).

[162] One of *Krokodil*'s most prodigious *temisty*, Basil Savelievich Kulagin, was at first ineligible for a pension on his retirement because his occupation did not appear on any social security lists. Government officials had to attend a *Temnoe* meeting before they accepted the validity of his claim (Rep'ev 2011b).

[163] '…vystupaet ne tak karikaturist, a kak illiustrator chuzhoi mysli.' Mikhalkov (1956: 9).

Figure 74: Migunov, E. *Who's for?* (*Kto za?*), based on a theme by Iu. Perepelkin (Saratov). *Krokodil* 1964: 29/8.

As this section shows, co-creation and dialogism were central principles in the production process of *Krokodil* magazine, but, having outlined the process of producing an issue of the magazine, it is important to acknowledge the significance of power relations in meaning making. In order to investigate the nature and interaction of different influences upon the magazine in the period 1954-1964, and fully to understand both the creative space in which *Krokodil*'s producers worked and the boundaries of permissible discourse, it is necessary to consider the roles of the magazine's editors and senior contributors, and the journal's relationship with political authorities. With the aim of presenting a fuller picture, I consider the roles of the different contributors who participated in the creation of content for the journal in two groups. In the following two sub-sections, I focus in particular upon state employees (professional producers), whose influence has conventionally been highlighted (Section 2.1.1); and those non-professional (prosumer) contributors who have so far been overlooked (Section 2.1.2).

2.1.1 The Structuralist Approach: Professional Producers

In this section I investigate the contributions of state employees. I loosely group these people together and term them 'professional' producers. The importance of these people has been acknowledged in the existing literature. Since the dominant approach to studying Soviet satire in the existing literature is based on analyses of the influences of political structures, hierarchically structured media authorities, and the direct supervision of state institutions by political authorities, including the relationship between the Department of Propaganda and Agitation and cultural

producers,[164] I describe this approach to explaining *Krokodil*'s production process as the structuralist approach. This approach is exemplified by Louis Nemzer's analysis in his article *The Kremlin's Professional Staff*: 'When the Central Committee decided in 1949 to revise its policies concerning satiric literature, it announced its decision by ordering changes in the structure and policies of the editorial staff of the famous Soviet magazine, *Krokodil*' (Nemzer 1950: 77). Davies, similarly, suggests that the 'planned ridicule' in publications such as *Krokodil* 'follows patterns laid down by the authorities and fulfils explicit political purposes' (Davies 2015: 11). According to Davies (2015: 10), Stites (2010: 351-2), Kavalerov (1971: 9) and Posin, one consequence of this kind of state direction is that *Krokodil* fought the government's battles on foreign and domestic fronts, targeting various ills, but 'never inefficiency or blunders of the Communist Party' (Posin 1950: 302). Journalists are thus regarded as having colluded with politicians, whether by choice or coercion. Indeed, Davies suggests that editors of Soviet publications faced dismissal 'for aiming too high in their choice of target' (Davies 2015: 10). To a degree, I concur with structuralist analyses of the creation of content for *Krokodil*. Political authorities' direct and indirect interventions were always influential in governing the scope of Soviet satire. This interpretation requires qualification, however. Section 2.1.2 considers the important roles of non-professional producers, and, as this section shows, *Krokodil*'s editors and contributors were far from passive in defining the journal's aesthetic and probing the boundaries of public political discourse.

In order to explore the importance of power structures and political authorities upon meaning making in *Krokodil*, in this sub-section I will outline the roles of three key 'professional' groups: the USSR's leading political authorities, the state's censors, and the magazine's editors. In that order, these three groups have conventionally been assumed to have determined content creation in *Krokodil*. My analysis of the evidence in the text, which is not intended to denigrate their individual roles, shows that the state's direct and indirect supervision of meaning making did not result in a publication that was uniformly affirmative, sterile or unambiguous. Furthermore, while oversight and interference by state censors and political authorities governed the form and content of the magazine, editors held a large degree of authority. Indeed, while the threat of coercion or punishment meant that editorial decisions were never truly free, in the period 1954-1964, *Krokodil*'s editors operated with a surprising degree of creative autonomy.

---

[164] See Inkeles (1950), Brooks (1985), Garrison and Gleason (1985), and Hopkins (1970).

A comparison of the editorships of the two men who led the Editorial Board during the period of this study suggests that meaning making was influenced by editorial decisions, as well as external power structures, to a large extent. Sergei Aleksandrovich Shvetsov was the magazine's tenth Chief Editor, from August 1953 until December 1958, and he was succeeded by Manuil Semenov, the magazine's longest-serving Chief Editor, who retired in February 1975 (see Table 4 and Appendix C). The Chief Editor headed an Editorial Board of between ten and twelve members, between 1954 and 1964. This position, like others in the USSR's print media sector, was Party-appointed. These men, being ultimately responsible for the content published in the magazine, were extremely influential figures in the process of making meaning. Indeed, the different approaches of these Chief Editors is instructive about the importance of the Editorial Board, especially in relation to the influence of political context.

	August 1953-December 1958	*December 1958-March 1963*	*March 1963-July 1964*	*July 1964-June 1965*
Chief Editor:	S.A. Shvetsov	M.G. Semenov	M.G. Semenov	M.G. Semenov
Deputy Editor:	I.V. Kostiukov	B.A. Egorov	B.A. Egorov	B.A. Egorov
Executive Secretary:		A.N. Remezov	A.N. Remezov	A.E. Vikhrev
Editorial Board:	A.N. Vasil'ev	A.N. Vasil'ev	A.N. Vasil'ev	A.N. Vasil'ev
	V.N. Goriaev	M.È. Vilenskii	M.È. Vilenskii	M.È. Vilenskii
	D.I. Zaslavskii	E.A. Shukaev	E.A. Shukaev	A.N. Remezov
	M.V. Kuprianov	M.V. Kuprianov	M.V. Kuprianov	I.M. Semenov
	P.N. Krylov	P.N. Krylov	P.N. Krylov	S.V. Smirnov
	N.A. Sokolov	N.A. Sokolov	N.A. Sokolov	A.A. Sukontsev
	S. Nariniani	I.M. Semenov	I.M. Semenov	E.A. Shukaev
	I.A. Riabov	S.V. Smirnov	S.V. Smirnov	
	L.S. Sobolev		A.A. Sukontsev	

Table 4: *Krokodil* Editorial Boards, 1953-1965.

Shvetsov assumed the editorship shortly after Stalin's death, and just over a year after the beginning of official campaigns against 'conflictlessness' ('bezkonfliktnost') and the 'varnishing of reality' ('lakirovka'). He felt the pressure of editing the magazine at this time so overbearing that, according to the artist Evgenii Shcheglov, Shvetsov's ideal magazine 'would be without pictures and text, duly bound in spotless white sheets of paper'.[165] Describing Shvetsov as a satirist who was 'afraid of each comma', and who wished to be 'conflict-free' in his art, Shcheglov said that the legacy of Shvetsov's editorship was the 'inertia of fear' ('inertsiia strakha') (Shcheglov 2007). Under Shvetsov, even cartoons of domestic life had to have unsightliness cleaned up. As Figure 75 shows, Shvetsov asked his artist to remove

---

[165] '…byl by bez risunkov i teksta, sbroshiurovannyi iz belosnezhnykh listov bumagi bez edinogo piatnyshka…' (Shcheglov 2007).

clutter from the hallway in a cartoon satirising neighbourly nosiness, for fear of implying a criticism of standards of cleanliness (Shcheglov 2007). External influences upon the editorship in a period of political upheaval, then, could clearly be very significant.

Figure 75: Shcheglov, E. Two unpublished cartoon drafts. [Online.]
[Accessed 22/4/16.] Available from: http: //e-shcheglov.ru/

The editorship of Manuil Semenov, on the other hand, saw a return to the more savagely satirical approach *Krokodil* had taken in the 1920-30s.[166] Textual analysis supports the suggestion that Semenov's stewardship produced a more profound impact on the nature of the journal's satire than individual political events such as, for example, the death of Stalin. Semenov was, a man with dignity and personal authority (Pianov 2003: 268) whose influence on the magazine was profound. The magazine's historians note that Semenov was instrumental in increasing the number of readers who contributed to the production of each issue (Stykalin and Kremenskaia 1963: 210). As this thesis shows, during his stewardship, the magazine expanded its circulation, and increased the humorousness and liveliness of the journal. The number of 'contesting' and 'affirming' cartoons—especially those based on the two-frame composition—declined, and satires of domestic life increased in importance to the extent that they dominated the magazine's highest profile spaces in the early 1960s. Semenov's revival of the journal continued, moreover, during the

---

[166] Contemporary commentators make this observation. See Stykalin and Kremenskaia (1963: 210) and Shabad (1964: 87).

stagnant post-Khrushchev years. In their leadership of the Editorial Board, and by virtue of their personal responsibility for the magazine's content, these men may be considered tremendously significant in the form of the magazine. Whether their influence was restrictive, out of fear of the consequences, or liberating, the role of the Chief Editor in determining the nature of the magazine's satirical commentary was clearly vital. Indeed, the shifts identifiable in the incisiveness of the satirical comment in the journal during this period suggest that *Krokodil*'s editorship was an important influence on content, which must not be overlooked.

State censorship is the second of the major 'professional' influences to be considered in this section. *Krokodil*'s editors' decision-making was of course always influenced by state censorship practices, since editors of Soviet journals were held personally responsible for the content of their publications. As a publication of the *Pravda* publishing house, *Krokodil* was under the control of the Department of Propaganda and Agitation, was responsible to the CPSU Central Committee, and, like all other printed matter in the USSR, was subject to censorship by Glavlit, (General Directorate for the Protection of State Secrets in the Press).[167] Nevertheless, beyond comments about the consequences of publishing objectionable material (Davies (2015: 10), Sanders (1962: 22-27, and 1982: 21-29)) none of the existing literature on *Krokodil* considers the impact of censorship on the magazine's content.

The evidence from *Krokodil* is instructive about the importance of censorship in the process of meaning-making. While it was a constant influence upon editors and artists, producing the impetus to self-censor, official censorship was not so restrictive that ambiguous material never appeared in the magazine. Pre-publication censorship practices ensured that, as Vladimir Mochalov (Deputy Art Editor 1979-1984, and Chief Art Editor, 1984-2000) said in a 2008 interview, the magazine's meetings were always held 'under the beam of light of the Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee'[168] (Vasianin 2003). Printed works in the USSR were generally reviewed by censors twice before publication. Glavlit representatives worked in the publishing houses and carried out preliminary censorship during the production process, before final censorship was conducted by members of Glavlit central staff. Evidence from *Krokodil* shows that every issue of the magazine was checked by Glavlit censors, who conducted the final pre-publication check for state

---

[167] Glavnoye upravleniye po okhrane gosudarstvennykh tayn v pechati.

[168] '…pod luchom sveta plenuma TSK KPSS'.

secrets and for ideological content, in Moscow.[169] My research has not uncovered any evidence that *Krokodil* was rejected or subject to post-publication redactions by state censors, and this may have been because the Editorial Board included a *Pravda* employee who monitored the production process. In 1978, Marian Pehowski quoted a magazine insider who noted that the '"Pravda man" is an official member of the magazine's editorial board, although "he does not come (to meetings) very often'. Another employee told her, however, that the connection between *Krokodil* and *Pravda* was significantly more slender: '"We share the accounting offices, garage and technical services (of *Pravda*)—period."' (Pehowski 1978: 726). The significant impact of Soviet censorship on meaning making in fact appears to have been in prompting a degree of self-censorship. During the period 1954-1964, when a topic was judged to be ideologically ambiguous, or even interpretable as seditious, the Editorial Board were quick to reject it. B.A. Egorov (Deputy Chief Editor from 1958) was always quick to intervene in such circumstances, with 'As you were! It is not in the format of the magazine!' (Cherepanov 2009: 74).

The influence of state censorship on *Krokodil*'s content must not be overstated, however. Plamper reminds us that Soviet censorship's goal was the reduction of 'semantic ambiguity' (2001: 540), but in *Krokodil*, humour and graphic metaphor combined to produce a publication that always had the potential for ambiguity. Soviet graphic satirists, moreover, were highly skilled at encoding visual jokes, and extra-textual anecdotal evidence suggests that state censorship did not always successfully control *Krokodil*'s content. Isaak Abramskii's memoirs record how comments at Khudkolle meetings about certain accidental likenesses in cartoons led some artists to deliberately include caricatures in their works. Viktor Konovalov hid the famous Socialist Realist easel painters Sergei Gerasimov and Aleksandr Deineka in his cartoons, and David Zaslavskii added the facial features (the ears of John Foster Dulles, US Secretary of State, or the nose of Konrad Adenauer, Chancellor of West Germany) of world leaders to his subjects. The artists ended their game by mutual agreement after caricatures of *Krokodil* staff began to appear (Vaisbord 1982: 5). Pre- and post-circulation censorship practices did not result in an absolutely sterile magazine, or guarantee the acceptability of the magazine's output, however.

---

[169] My analysis of *Krokodil*'s censors shows that a rota operated. In general, censors worked on issues of the magazine roughly in numerical order, ascending at irregular intervals. A survey of censors' numbers shows that 377 censors worked on *Krokodil*, 1954-1964, the majority of whom censored one issue. Some censored two issues; only two censors worked on three issues.

Dismissal was always a possibility for Editors, if *Krokodil* content was deemed inappropriate, but in the period after 1953, a post-publication rebuke was the more likely official response. In 1959, in a case which is unexplored in English-language scholarship, a combination of editorial misjudgement (perhaps as a result of increasingly bold political criticisms under Semenov's editorship), a change in the political environment after Khrushchev's Secret Speech and a failure in censorship procedures, the front cover of *Krokodil* drew the attentions of senior politicians. Accompanied by a note explaining that several Central Committee plenum speakers had noted the slowness of a particular Soviet official to streamline systems and resolve pay problems,[170] the cartoon included a caricature of the minister in question, being refused his own wages. Alexander Petrovich Volkov, Chairman of the State Committee of the Council of Ministers for Labour and Wages (1956-1974), having reached the front of the queue, is told that the accounts department have again delayed his wages: 'They say that you have not streamlined it yet.'[171]
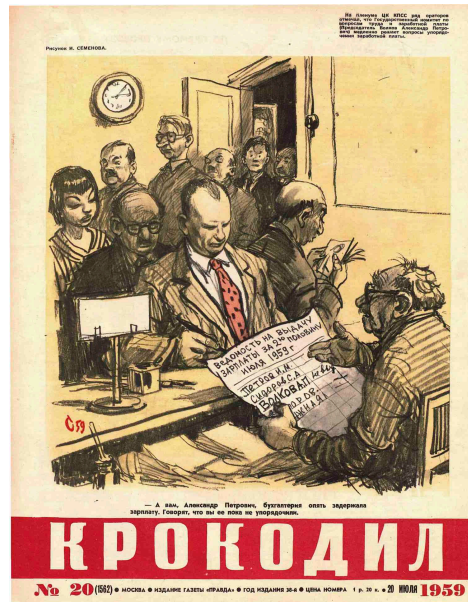
Figure 76: Semenov, I. Untitled.
***Krokodil* 1959: 20/1.**

The government apparently took offence at this cartoon, and Manuil Semenov was called to account for the image, and 'carpeted', so that he was apparently taken from

---

[170] 'Na plenume TSK KPSS riad oratorov otmechal, chto Gosudarstvennyi komitet po voprosam truda i zarabotnoi platy (Predsedatel' Volkov Aleksandr Petrovich) medlenno reshayet voprosy uporiadocheniia zarabotnoi platy.' (*Krokodil* 1959: 20/1.)

[171] 'A vam, Aleksandr Petrovich, bukhgalteriia opiat' zaderzhala zarplatu. Govoriat, chto vy ee poka ne uporiadochili.' (*Krokodil* 1959: 20/1.)

the office by ambulance![172] *Krokodil* staffers sardonically commented on the discrepancy between calls for more incisive satirical comment and this kind of rebuke (Cherepanov 2009: 76). Similarly, Igor Smirnov also remembered how he drew a cartoon containing a character with a resemblance to the then-leader Leonid Brezhnev as a joke, only to be reprimanded when it was published, to his great surprise (Smirnov 2012: 31). Isolated examples of the failure of censorship highlight both the general robustness of the system, and the possibility for occasional lapses, and suggest agreement with Plamper's assertion that 'censorship is no more and no less than one of the forces shaping cultural circulation' (2001: 527). Such examples are also interesting in other ways. The appearance of a high-ranking government minister in the magazine disproves assertions about the limitedness of Soviet satirical aims and *Krokodil*'s blindness to political leaders, an aspect of the magazine's satire to which I return in Chapter 3. Nevertheless, the anger that this cartoon provoked supports suggestions that the government was unwilling to countenance overly critical commentary in the magazine, and this cartoon provides evidence that political involvement was a vital factor in influencing the creation of meaning in the magazine.

The final 'professional' group to influence meaning-making in *Krokodil* were the USSR's highest political authorities. Indeed, the magazine's relationship with Soviet politicians is central to the nature of its satirical vision, and its socio-political role. Conventional explanations locate *Krokodil*, and other Soviet satirists, in a subordinate position to political authority. According to this view, *Krokodil*'s limited satire was determined by authoritarian decree, and the occasions when politicians attempted directly to influence Soviet satirists' output are regarded as typical of the working conditions of those employed in the genre (Low 1950: 165-6, and Larsen 1980: 81). In the rest of this sub-section I will consider the ways in which the USSR's leading politicians attempted to direct *Krokodil*'s satire, and the magazine's responses. Given the circumstances in which *Krokodil* was published, it would be expected that politicians might attempt to influence the output of the journal at times, but it is important to note that these incidents were extremely rare: aside from the solitary incident when Stalin personally involved himself, and the few occasions when *Krokodil* staff fell victim to political repression, the magazine became the subject of Communist Party Central Committee decrees on only four occasions during the journal's almost-seventy year history.

---

[172] 'Redaktor zhurnala Manuil Grigor'evich Semenov byl vyzvan "na kover" i tak "propesochen", chto ego na neotlozhke uvezli iz vysokogo kabineta.' (Cherepanov 2009: 76).

The Central Committee's decrees relating to *Krokodil* were tremendously significant for giving direction on content and structure, and for expanding the number of contributors and widening participation beyond the regular professional artists. In 1927, 1948 and 1951, *Krokodil* received chastening rebukes that were also intended to re-centre the principle of co-creation. In each case, after political intervention, the magazine increased its focus upon producing a heteroglossic magazine through reader submissions. In April 1927, *Krokodil* was among a number of satirical journals subjected to 'harsh and fair party criticism'.[173] The Central Committee ordered the editors of the journal to restructure, raise the ideological content and artistic and printing quality of the journal and turn it into 'an organ that serves the politically mature sections of the workers'.[174] This political discussion, noted the journal's historians, had important effects: the magazine was reorientated towards the working class reader, ties with the mass readership were restored, and the USSR's most prominent satirists were encouraged to work for the magazine again (Stykhalin and Kremenskaia 1963: 189). In the same month, *Krokodil* 1927: 13 pictured a chastened and dishevelled red crocodile on the front cover of a special issue of the magazine dedicated to tidying up.

Figure 77: Ganf, Iu. *Special issue on untidiness*. (*Spetsial'no o neriashlivosti'*).
***Krokodil* 1927: 13/1.**

---

[173] '…surovoi i spravedlivoi partiinoi kritike' (Stykhalin and Kremenskaia 1963: 189).

[174] '…prevratit' ego v organ, obsluzhivaiushchii politicheski zrelye sloi rabochikh…(Stykhalin and Kremenskaia 1963: 189).

That this issue also launched a major new competition was another sign that the journal's editors wished to elevate the ideological content of their magazine as well as strengthen connections with the readership. These same concerns resurfaced in 1948, when the Central Committee published another decree on the magazine.

A wider range of contributors was also recommended on 6 September 1948, when the decree 'On the Work of the Magazine *Krokodil*' criticised the low ideological and artistic content of the magazine, calling it 'quite unsatisfactory' and 'not a militant organ of Soviet satire and humour' (Stykalin and Kremenskaia 1963: 203). The decree announced the replacement of the Editorial Board, and listed a series of problems with the quality of the journal:

> The Editorial Board of *Krokodil* is out of touch with life, works without a plan and does not demand the necessary high standard in the ideas and artistic quality of feuilletons, stories, poems and cartoons; uninspired and inartistic material predominates in the magazine. It has an unattractive exterior, is printed on poor paper in low-quality colours, and its make-up is stereotyped, without artistic attractiveness and taste. (Central Committee 1950: 201)

Criticisms of the production practices of the magazine were also included, and the decree encouraged the wider use of different genres of graphic (photographs, photomontage and caricature) and written texts (prose and verse, feuilletons, humorous stories and fables), and the publication of works from more contributors:

> It is suggested that the editorial board invite a wide range of writers, poets, artists and workers of the central and local press to contribute to the magazine; make a practice of discussing the thematic plan of the magazine and the contents of past issues with the regular contributors; and hold regular conferences of readers of Crocodile at enterprises, kolkhozy, educational institutions and military stations. (Central Committee 1950: 202)

Beliaev, as Editor in Chief, met all the requirements of the 1948 decree, including an All-Soviet conference to discuss ways of improving the magazine attended by over 250 humorists, satirists and cartoonists (Moscow, 25-28 May 1949).[175] In his report on the conference, Beliaev noted that the new Editorial Board had tried to attract as many new contributors as possible (Beliaev 1949: 2), and that a special issue, entitled 'Appearing in *Krokodil* for the first time' was published in January 1949 (*Krokodil* 1949: 1). In addition, *Krokodil*'s circulation increased (doubling to 300,000 copies by December 1952), and the editors made efforts to strengthen connections

---

[175] This conference stimulated journalistic debate. See Beliaev (1949) and Gorbatov (1949).

with the readership through the Editor of the Art Department's courses for young cartoonists (Shcheglov 2007).

Earlier criticisms about the quality of the graphic satire and the limited pool of contributors from which the editors selected were reiterated in the final Central Committee intervention in the work of the journal, which was published on 21 September 1951 as the decree 'On the shortcomings of the magazine *Krokodil* and measures to improve it' (Stykalin and Kremenskaia 1963: 209). This resolution accused the journal of printing 'a lot of far-fetched, meaningless stories and poems, drawings and weak caricatures without serious public value'[176] and ordered them to address their deficiencies in the shortest possible time (Stykalin and Kremenskaia 1963: 209). This decree, unlike the two previous interventions, warned the magazine's editors about the nature of the critiques they published. Often, it suggested, 'single negative facts are given for the common shortcomings of government, trade unions and other organizations, which gives the reader the wrong idea about the work of these organizations',[177] implying that the Central Committee had, despite its insistence upon the inadequacies of the magazine, been stung by some of *Krokodil*'s criticism. While the Central Committee's response was to refute the magazine's critiques, this suggests that the magazine had made some critiques significant enough to prompt a response, which implies that scholarly criticisms about the tameness of *Krokodil*'s satire have failed to take these comments into account.

What is striking about all of these interventions by Party authorities is not that they happened at all,[178] but that in each case their demand was that the Editorial Board increase the number of contributors. In particular, the Central Committee was insistent on widening popular participation in the creation of content. While the Central Committee's methods were didactic, their ultimate aim, it seems, was to increase the number of 'voices' in the text and make the journal more heteroglossic. The increased importance of reader submissions after these decrees and my analysis of the magazine's affinity for co-creation suggests that this was a constant concern for the magazine and the political authorities. This conclusion runs counter to many

---

[176] '…mnogo nadumannykh, bessoderzhatel'nykh rasskazov i stikhov, slabykh risunkov i karikatur, ne imeiushchikh ser'eznogo obshchestvennogo znacheniia…' (Stykalin and Kremenskaia 1963: 209).

[177] 'Neredko v "Krokodile" edinichnye otritsatel'nye fakty vydaiutsia za obshchie nedostatki raboty gosudarstvennykh, profsoiuznykh i drugikh organizatsii, chto sozdaet u chitatelei nepravil'noe predstavlenie o rabote etikh organizatsii.' (Stykalin and Kremenskaia 1963: 209).

[178] The Central Committee regularly decreed on Soviet publishing. See Milenkovitch (1966: 132n8).

of the traditional assumptions about *Krokodil* and the Soviet media system. Stites argues that 'Inside the USSR, there was of course no private press and so the state could speak to the masses, if not in a solo voice, then through a very small choir', (Stites 2010: 350) implying that Soviet media was, very nearly monologic and orchestrated by political authorities. Recent scholarship challenges this view to a degree.[179] Johnston suggests that although on some subjects, Soviet mass media presented a coherent vision, it 'did not always sing in one harmonious voice' (2011: xxvi). Johnston's echo of Stites' analogy highlights, as does my own research, the ambiguities and contradictions that were identifiable in Soviet official media.

Political intervention did, in one unique but often-cited case, extend the practice of co-creation to the USSR's highest political authority. This example is conventionally explained as an example of the extent of political supervision over the artistic practices of Soviet cartoonists, but in my view it is important to recognise it as an opportunity to consider how state authority figures engaged with artists in order to define the boundaries of public discourse in graphic satire. It is also, moreover, notable precisely because of its uniqueness, and must not therefore be used to exemplify normal practices. Unusually, in this case from 1947, Stalin acted as *temist* for Boris Efimov. The artist was invited to draw a cartoon ridiculing the American military presence in the Arctic by Andrei Zhdanov, who apparently told Efimov that Stalin had an idea for a cartoon, and that 'Stalin thought of you'. Zhdanov explained: '"Comrade Stalin sees the cartoon something like this […] General Eisenhower arrives at the North Pole with a large army, spoiling for a fight. And an ordinary American stands next to him and asks, 'What's going on, General? Why so much military activity in such a peaceful place?' And Eisenhower answers: 'Can't you see that the Russians are threatening us?'"' (Reynolds 2000). Efimov was partway through drawing when he received a phone call from Stalin himself, who checked that Efimov had correctly understood the theme. Efimov confirmed that he had, hurried to finish the cartoon, handing it to the messenger sent to collect it later that afternoon. Two days later he was summoned to Zhdanov's Kremlin office to pick up the sketch. From the discussion with Zhdanov, Efimov realised that the image had been discussed in detail by the Politburo. The directness of the political intervention in this case was underscored by the fact that Stalin had added handwritten annotations and a new caption to the cartoon (see Figure 78) which Efimov incorporated in his second draft (see Figure 79).

---

[179] See Evans (2011) and Roth-Ey (2011: 13).
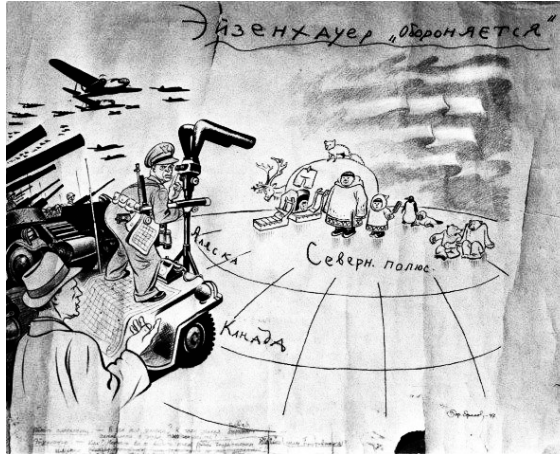
Figure 78: Efimov, B. 1947. First draft, including Stalin's handwritten alterations. [Online.] [Accessed 30/1/16.] Available from: https: //otvet.imgsmail.ru/
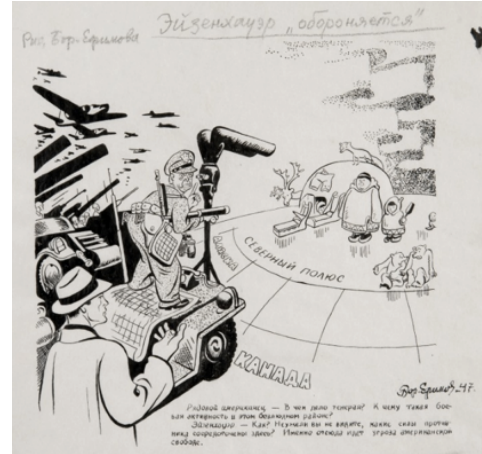
Figure 79: Efimov, B. 1947. *Eisenhower "to the Defence".* (*Eizenkhauer "oboroniat-sia".*) **[Online.] [Accessed 16/9/12.] Available from: http: //www.neboltai.org/**

This anecdote, which was re-told by Efimov with a frequency that obscures its true significance, is highly instructive, for several reasons. First, it highlights how infrequently such direct political interventions occurred. If Soviet political authorities routinely micro-managed the production of content in *Krokodil* and other publications, in other words, this example would not be noteworthy. Second, this example is instructive because it reveals the difficulty of exactly translating a theme into a cartoon and the importance of artistic skill in the construction of graphic satire. On this occasion Efimov, arguably the most talented Soviet cartoonist, initially failed to capture Stalin's meaning. The politicians' discussion and amendment of Efimov's cartoon mirrored *Krokodil*'s production practices, and this itself is indicative of the fact that cartoons' first drafts often failed to hit their mark or allowed room for ambiguities to be perceived. Regardless of the *temisty* and the artists' skills, meanings sometimes became scrambled. This might have made Soviet leaders less trustful or made them commission fewer cartoonists, or make them check more carefully the content of published images. In fact, as we have seen, the Central Committee showed a greater willingness to trust their editors, encouraged them to involve actively more of the USSR's artists, and become more prolific. In *Piggy Foxy and the Sword of Revolution: Bolshevik Self-Portraits*, Vatlin and Malashenko provide numerous examples to prove the artistic abilities of several of the Politburo (see Figure 4). Clearly, had they so desired, the USSR's leading politicians could also have published cartoons in *Krokodil*, but they delegated authority to the magazine's artists to a significant degree. In this example, Zhdanov and Stalin needed Efimov's skill in execution of the image, and valued his ability to add meaning to the cartoon. In fact, they entered a process of co-creation of an image closely connected with a political concept which was central to post-war Soviet ideology.

Like all other sectors of Soviet society, journalists working for *Krokodil* were also subjected to the much more repressive attentions of state authority during the Stalinist Great Terror, between 1936 and 1938. Milkhail Kol'tsov, the Editor of the magazine, and numerous contributors, including Konstantin Rotov, one of the magazine's most famous artists, were arrested during the 1930s (Kiianskii and Fel'dman 2014).[180] As Efimov notes, such arrests had a traumatising effect (PBS 1999), but the Great Terror was no more directed at employees of *Krokodil* than at any other group.[181] By the period 1954-1964, of course, such repressive measures were no longer practiced, but it is interesting to note that even during the Purges, *Krokodil* did not always function as the unequivocal mouthpiece of the regime. In a fascinating and ambiguous exploration of private emotional responses to public catastrophes, *Krokodil* 1938: 32 featured a front-page cartoon that visualised a dark scene. As a factory director and his deputy watch, two men stand outside a house beside a waiting car. The unspoken reference is to the black cars, or 'black ravens' ('chernyi voron', as they were known, and the Soviet secret police (NKVD) practice of arresting people late at night. In the caption, the deputy manager admits that he knows 'all the idlers in our factory in person'.[182] This cartoon, then, hints at questions of personal culpability and problematic assumptions of guilt by association in a time of paranoia. With no little degree of ambiguity, this cartoon might be read as a criticism of those in authority who share guilt with subordinates who suffer the punishment. It might equally imply a sense of shock that colleagues are punished in this way. The cartoon thus suggests a concern about the nature and extent of personal responsibility for so-called 'crimes against the people'.

---

[180] Kol'tsov was arrested in December 1938, and shot in 1940 (Conquest 1990: 300), but was rehabilitated after Stalin's death. Rotov was arrested in June 1940, and released in 1948. He was rehabilitated in 1954 and immediately returned to work as a *Krokodil* artist. Viacheslav 'Slava' Sysoev was also convicted under Article 228 of the Soviet Penal Code in February 1983 and spent two years in prison (Alaniz 2006: 145).

[181] Getty and Chase analyse vulnerability to repression based on social, educational and occupational indicators (1993).

[182] The full quote reads: 'Ia, Tovarishch Direktor, vsekh lodyrei na nashem zavode znaiu v litso. Ved' ia sredi nikh, kak ni kak, tretii god vedu raz raz'iasnitel'nuiu rabotu.' This might be translated as 'I, Comrade Director, know all the idlers in our factory in person. In fact, I have been catechizing them for three years, no joke.'
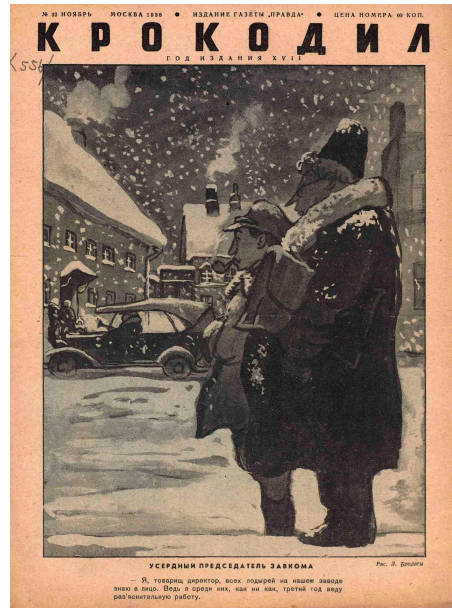
Figure 80: Lev Brodaty, 'Diligent chairman of the factory committee' ('Userdnyi predsedatel' zavkoma').
Krokodil **1938: 32/1.**

In this issue of the magazine, for the first time, the names of editors were not listed individually, being replaced by the words 'Editorial Board' ('Redaktsionnaia kollegiia')—this practice continued until *Krokodil* 1943: 12-13. Was it an expression of collective responsibility or solidarity? Was the disappearance of individual names from the magazine's banner a form of protest, or a silent tribute to the men in question? It is part of the image's ambiguity that this gesture goes unexplained.

As an exploration of the creative space in which *Krokodil*'s producers worked, this sub-section offers clarification of how so-called 'professional' groups interacted with and influenced the making of satirical meaning in *Krokodil*. A central theme in my argument is that that co-creation and the involvement of plural influences were vital at all stages of the production process, and censorship and political authorities were among the more significant.

2.1.2   The Poststructuralist Approach: Prosumer Contributions

Having considered the roles of 'professionals', I now turn to explore the contributions of non-professional producers. As the sample issues of *Krokodil* 1959: 17, 18 and 19 surveyed in Chapter 1 show, texts produced by those outside of the magazine's professional staff and regular freelance contributors were very significant. Number 17 included five readers' letters; Number 18 contained 27 texts written by readers; and Number 19 featured two cartoons by readers, as well as the results of a cartoon competition listing winning entries from 21 different contributors.

As I have already suggested, an explanation of *Krokodil*'s production process that excludes the non-professional satirist is incomplete, but the existing scholarly literature provides only a very limited theoretical basis for understanding the contributions of non-professionals. Many scholars writing during the Cold War suggested that popular culture wholly reflected the interests of the dominant class. The Frankfurt School, and Adorno and Horkheimer (1944) in particular, viewed cultural consumers as completely pacified and homogenised in their various acts of consumption. According to this interpretation, *Krokodil*'s readers were unquestioning recipients who passively consumed the magazine, as they did all other state-produced media content, being 'repetitively victimised and immobilised by it' (Harrington and Bielby 2000: 8). Indeed, for scholars of Soviet printed media, then, the sole purpose of receiving letters from readers was political. Hopkins quotes Lenin and Communist Party decrees that regulated techniques for dealing with reader feedback (Hopkins 1970: 302). For Brian McNair, the rabsel'kor (Worker-Peasant Correspondent) movement was the most important form of popular participation (McNair 1991: 19-20). Fitzpatrick divides letter-writers in the 1930s into 'supplicants'—writers of humble requests for official assistance with a personal problem— and 'citizens', who wrote out of concern for the public interest. *Krokodil* received letters of these types, but it also received a large number of letters from readers who wished to participate in the construction of content for the journal. In *Krokodil*, however, readers' letters do not suggest that the magazine had an immobilising effect. In fact, they registered complaints about local institutions or appointed officials, raised issues for investigation, and contained themes for cartoons or completed texts for publication in the magazine. Pehowski notes that *Krokodil* received an average of 500 letters per day, and that readers' letters generated some of the journal's most popular articles (1976: 9). Shabad, similarly, records that *Krokodil* received 100,000 letters annually, some of which arrived with nothing more than a crocodile drawn on the envelope instead of the address (Shabad 1964: 22). Nevertheless, the majority of works in the structuralist tradition make no mention of the importance of *Krokodil*'s readers' correspondence. Readers' correspondence with newspapers and literary journals had a long history in Russia, and in the USSR, writing letters to a newspaper editor represented an officially encouraged method of interacting with political authorities (Kozlov 2013: 15-17). It was highly regarded, indeed, as 'input from below, a manifestation of mass, democratic participation in Soviet power' (Lenoe 2004: 83).

Explanations of reader submissions in *Krokodil* must go beyond political feedback, therefore. Texts by non-professionals contributed productively to satirical discourses in the magazine, and input from outside the magazine's staff was highly valued. In order to extend our understanding of *Krokodil*'s production processes

beyond explanations of structural factors, to include the possibility that reader submissions represented productive contributions to the creative process, in this section I propose a poststructuralist approach. As before, I use 'poststructuralist' in the broadest sense, meaning 'beyond structures' and 'beyond binaries'. In particular, the structure I wish to look beyond is the magazine's permanent staff structure; and the binary I wish to disrupt is the professional/amateur distinction.

In this sub-section I employ the term 'prosumer' in my exploration of the dynamic of creating meaning in the magazine. 'Prosumers' were first described by Alvin Toffler, who argued that post-industrial society would see the fusion of consumer and producer (1980: 275-290). In modern media theory, the notion that consumers play an active role in shaping media dynamics and flows is familiar. Theorists describe this type of product as 'user-generated', 'fan fiction' (Jenkins 2003) or 'produser' (Bruns 2008: 23) content. In these analyses of media flows, texts and content creation traverse conventional distinctions between producers and consumers and transgress boundaries between media. Traditional structures assume much less significance in these critical contexts. My approach, which focuses on prosumer contributions in the USSR represents a novel application of these theories.

My contention is that, from the beginning, *Krokodil* encouraged a kind of active and participatory consumption of media content on the part of its readers. In *Krokodil* 1922: 10, a question in a letter from a comrade in Smolensk province which complained about how difficult life was, and asked '*Krokodil*! Can you recommend how to live?' was published.[183] The editors' reply was to 'Read "*Krokodil*" and write in more often—maybe it will become easier.' According to the magazine's editors, sixty years later, this response identified the principal goal of the magazine—for people to air grievances and resentments, for them to arrive from 'every gubernii, oblast, and krai, and republic' and that the magazine's relationship with its readers would ensure that 'every year life would become easier and better' (Semenov 1982: 9).[184] Indeed, as this sub-section argues, prosumer submissions were important and productive contributions in the meaning-making process, and the magazine's operations were designed with this participatory aspiration in mind. Public access to the editorial board offices (generally 1: 00pm until 5: 00pm, Monday to Saturday) was advertised in the magazine every issue, and was almost unre-

---

[183] '*Krokodil*! Posovetui, kak byt'?'

[184] '…kazhdym godom zhit' stanovitsia legche i luchshe.'

stricted before 1965.[185] Moreover, the red crocodile character who features in *Kro-kodil* magazine himself may be understood as a rabsel'kor. He was frequently char-acterised as a citizen journalist, often carried a reporters' notebook and pen (as well as artist's brushes), and even conducted his own 'raids' (see Figure 63). Like a rabsel'kor, the red crocodile was pictured embarking upon a 'raid', and the maga-zine reported upon the particular circumstances he was uncovering. Subsequent editions followed up with reports of how '*Krokodil helped*' ('*Krokodil pomog*'). A similar regular feature in the magazine was the short column entitled '*Pitchfork in the side*' ('*Vily v bok*'), which exposed, ridiculed and criticised antisocial behaviour. As this chapter argues, *Krokodil*'s production process relied upon co-creation and upon a large degree of involvement from its readership, and, moreover, the maga-zine's multimedia form and Menippean satirical effect demanded the reader to be willing to engage with the text actively. As the final section of this chapter explains, the magazine was also at the centre of a transmedial system which enabled readers to seek new media via which to engage with *Krokodil*'s satire.

Krokodil's readers must be regarded as active consumers rather than passive receivers of content. Modern scholarship has productively interpreted the USSR as a consumer culture, albeit in relation to material goods rather than media content consumption. As Reid and Cowley (2000), Reid (2002), Gronow (2003) and Bren and Neuberger (2012) have shown, despite Stalinism's rejection of style and con-sumerism, of course consumption existed under communism. The example of *Kro-kodil* shows, however, that Soviet readers were consumers of media as well. It is necessary to make clear that I do not use the term 'prosumer' as a substitute for 'amateur', although the prosumers who contributed to the magazine may have been amateurs. In other words, I am proposing a new categorisation that moves beyond structuralist oppositions between professional and amateur producers.

Far from representing the united 'voice' of the state's 'very small choir' as Stites suggests (2010: 350), *Krokodil* achieved a greater degree of participation than has previously been acknowledged. Who were these prosumers, however? The existing evidence about the magazine's prosumer contributors is scant, aside from the details printed in the magazine (usually only name and home town). Some prosumers sent unsolicited submissions, even from the USA (Gladnick 2002). Soviet prosumers may have contributed to magazines such as *Krokodil* on a semi-regular but not-yet professional basis, they may have entered competitions, and they may

---

[185] After a coat belong to *Pravda*'s editor was stolen from his office, access was more tightly con-trolled. Even artists needed entry passes to get past security guards (Korchagina 2000).

have been regular correspondents who were employed in other jobs. Some prosumers became professional or regular freelance artists as a result of their early contributions: this was certainly the case with Shcheglov, and Ivan Semenov.

Although relatively little is known about these prosumers' biographies and motivations, the text provides more information about the type of material they provided for the journal. *Krokodil* solicited much of its correspondence, and published a large proportion (Pehowski estimated that in 1978 95% of *Krokodil*'s cartoons came from freelancers (1978: 731)). Indeed, *Krokodil* published two forms of prosumer content. The more common type was produced, and perhaps published, abroad by foreign cartoonists. *Krokodil* reproduced this material in the magazine and noted the artist's location and, if appropriate, the publication in which the image first appeared. Irregular series such as 'Satire from abroad' ('Satirika za rubezhom') reproduced cartoons from around the world. In many cases, though, foreign cartoons were published alongside Soviet ones, with no additional comment beyond the credit. In *Krokodil* 1959: 3, as well as the contributions from the magazine's regulars, there were also cartoons from artists from China (p.4), Romania (p.5), Italy (p.), Poland (p.8-9), USA (p.8-9), Czechoslovakia (p.9), Albania (p.14-15), and Hungary (p.16). The second type was submitted by readers in the USSR. These might be unsolicited submissions to the magazine. *Krokodil* 1959: 3 featured cartoons from artists in Leningrad (p.3), Baku (p.14-15), Riga (p.14-15), and Tblisi (p.14-15), for example. They might also be sent in response to *Krokodil*'s competitions.
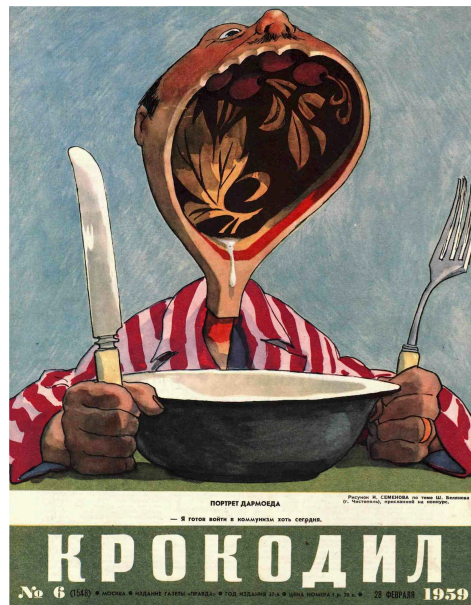
Figure 81: Semenov, I. *Portrait of a useless mouth.* (*Portret darmoeda.*).
Cartoon based on a theme by Sh. Beliakov (Chistopol), submitted for a competition. *Krokodil* 1959: 6/1.

Competitions represented an important mechanism by which *Krokodil* engaged with its readership. The magazine held major competitions in 1954, 1958-59, 1959-60

and 1964, and these competitions, as well as other campaigns inviting contributions, provided large amounts of material for the magazine.[186] In 1954, *Krokodil* number 11 was not atypical in publishing three cartoons—out of the total of fifteen in that issue—derived from competition entries.[187] Sometimes competition entries were printed exactly as they were sent,[188] but the higher quality contributions were rendered as cartoons by the magazine's leading artists, and these co-created works were sometimes accorded high status in the magazine (see Figure 81).[189]

In the absence of an archival source on *Krokodil*'s competition entries and judging procedures, we must be careful with conjectures about the significance of reader submissions, but evidence from the text allows us to draw some conclusions. What is interesting to note, and what existing scholarship has failed to consider, is that the magazine's readers clearly enjoyed participating in these competitions: the 1959-60 competition attracted 15,000 entries in six months.[190] Moreover, the content of some competition entries is instructive on the subjects on which readers wanted to make constructive comment. Clearly, *Krokodil*'s Editorial Board was arbiter in meaning-making, and in the production of an ideologically correct magazine, however. This was made absolutely clear, for instance, in the adverts inviting entries to competitions. Competition entries published in the magazine must therefore be interpreted not as unmediated utterances from an authentic reader voice, but rather as reflective of the magazine's apparent willingness to participate with its readership in the construction of shared agendas. In these cases, *Krokodil* and its readers made meaningful contributions to contemporary discourse.

Krokodil's graphic satire relied heavily upon schemata, as Chapter 1 showed, but certain visual tropes were also very important. It was via engagement with these schemata and visual devices that prosumers were able to contribute to and shape

---

[186] In 1959: 34, the 1959-60 competition was announced. Readers were invited to write a one- or two-page description of their idea for a cartoon on the theme of 'The most ridiculous case!' ('Samyi smeshnoi sluchai!'). As well as the prospect of having one's cartoon published in the magazine, entrants would likely have been tempted by the eighteen prizes on offer, including 1000 rubles for the winner, 600 rubles for second place, and 400 rubles for third.

[187] See cartoons drawn by Ivan Semenov (p.5) and Leonid Soifertis (p.8), and a cartoon by V. Magdeburov from Magdagachi, Amur Oblast (p.14).

[188] See the irregular series 'What will happen is always the same' ('Sluchitsia zhe takoe') in 1960.

[189] This image reappeared in miniature on the cover of *Krokodil* 1963: 4/1 in a montage of cartoons exemplifying the magazine's satirical stridency.

[190] *Krokodil* 1960: 21/14.

political discourses in the USSR. Competition entries, in particular, illustrate the degree to which political cartoons offered the opportunity for prosumer contributors to participate in dialogue with an official publication about matters of political significance. *Krokodil* 1954: 9, for example, published a number of entries from the 1953-54 competition, and not only were all of them related to domestic issues, but they frequently used highly recognisable, native settings and graphic techniques in order to make their commentaries. In 'Portrait of a useless mouth', the theme relies upon the reader's familiarity with the khokhloma spoon. These wooden items, painted in a combination of red, gold and black (Smorodinskaya et. al. 2007: 214), were associated since the seventeenth century with a wealthy church foundation at Khokhloma-Ukhozheia, (Hilton 1995: 76). In this cartoon, the material object is incorporated into the composition of a greedy but (we are told) 'useless mouth' ('darmoeda'). The political critique is extended by the caption, since the character explains 'I am ready to enter communism even today'.[191] This text implicitly refers to Khrushchev's predictions of 1959, when he repeatedly told Americans that their grandchildren would live under communism (Carlson 2009: 304), and to the promises of the advent of communism made at the Twenty-First (1959) and Twenty-Second (1961) Party Congresses.

The ridicule of this particular character type is not especially remarkable, but the manner in which it is achieved provides an interesting example of the way co-created content could contribute to broader discourses in the magazine and in society. A khokhloma spoon had been used in *Krokodil* cartoons only twice in the five years since January 1954,[192] and never in additive relation to the human body. The publication of this prosumer cartoon, though, created a trope that recurred in professional artists' works in subsequent years. In the four years after this cartoon appeared, large spoons appeared five times (three of them were distinctively khokhloma spoons) in *Krokodil* cartoons. Moreover, many in Soviet society began to see khokhloma as rather kitsch by the 1960s (Boym 2008: 333), perhaps because of their similarity with icon painting techniques, their over-production or their lack of stylistic inspiration. Tellingly, these items came to be associated with petty-bourgeois materialism ('meshchanstvo'), which became the subject of numerous ideological attacks.[193] In 1964, for example, Vladimir Dudintsev argued that the

---

[191] 'Ia gotov voiti v kommunizm khot' segodnia'.

[192] See 1956: 2/1 and 1958: 4/3.

[193] See Jones (2013: 238), Zubok (2009: 278)

nature of Soviet society had been changed: 'Today's meshchanstvo is against mechanstvo' (quoted in Marsh 1986: 95). The 'meshchanstvo' was, suggests Marsh, something of a symbol of the early 1960s protests against the power of the post-Stalinist state (1986: 95). The impossibility of tracing the origins of this kind of motif means that it would be wrong to claim that this particular *Krokodil* image generated new popular associations for the khokhloma spoon, but we can say that *Krokodil* was able to make meaningful contributions to contemporary debates using productive native references, and this example shows that its prosumer contributions were valuable ones. Cartoons such as this made ambivalent critiques of state power and individual irresponsibility, and they did so using familiar symbols derived from traditional forms. While some prosumer cartoons (especially those from abroad) did comment on international themes, the majority of local contributions satirised domestic life, reflecting the concerns of many readers. *Krokodil* was not simply a mouthpiece for official commentary, then; it was able to generate new critiques in original forms; and co-creation was central to this process at times.

This section investigates how meaning was made in the magazine, and how *Krokodil*'s producers explored the boundaries of permissible discourse in Soviet satire. My approach was to consider the external influences upon meaning making commonly implied by structuralist studies of the magazine, and then to move on to explain my interpretation of the magazine according to poststructuralist media theory. As I have shown, those boundaries were policed by a censorship system that was generally effective but suffered occasional lapses. Certainly, *Krokodil*, like other Soviet media was subject to interference by politicians, especially before the death of Stalin, when the leader himself meddled with various media.[194] This direct political involvement came in the form of government decrees and personal intervention before and after publication, but incidents were relatively few in the long history of the magazine. Repression of individual artists and the effects of wider purges probably had a bigger impact on shaping editorial policy than these infrequent contacts with the Central Committee. Of course, censorship was an on-going influence on the nature of the magazine, but self-censorship appears to have been a more important in deciding the content of texts at the design stage. Censorship, as I have shown, was subject to failure, but the magazine did not escape rebuke when its criticisms overstepped the boundaries of the politically acceptable.

---

[194] See Tucker's chapter 'The Scripted Culture' (1992), and Montefiore (2004).

Taking an approach that foregrounds the co-creative artistic approach allows us to appreciate that conventional explanations of the magazine as directly and closely supervised by the USSR's highest political authorities is only true to a degree. In fact, as I argue, the magazine's production process was always dialogic and exploratory, and based on principles of co-creation of meaning. This was formalised in the relationship between prosumers and editors. *Krokodil* differed from most Soviet media in that it elevated the importance of the co-creative principle. Claire Bishop explains that encouraging participation in art is generally motivated by three factors: 1) 'activation' or the desire to create an active subject, who will be empowered by their participatory experience; 2) 'authorship', or the impetus to cede some authorial control, which is an egalitarian move; or 3) 'community' or the hope of bonding a group together through a collective elaboration of meaning (Bishop 2006: 12-13). All these motives are explicitly political but, although in the case of *Krokodil* the political motivations are highly relevant, there are also important social aspects to co-creation and participatory culture. The example of *Krokodil* also shows that co-creative cultural practices existed in mainstream Soviet media. Dobrenko has investigated the way Soviet literature was co-created by writers, political authority and its readers (1997: 303), but the making of the Soviet viewer has not been explored in the same detail. Certainly, this approach has not been applied to *Krokodil* magazine. As an analysis of *Krokodil* shows, the construction of meaning was understood as a process in which both producers and consumers had agency. The audience was an actively functioning part of the Soviet media system, and *Krokodil* made participation and co-creation central to its function and identity. Indeed, as I show in the rest of this chapter, the magazine was the site of artistic dialogue and experimentation, and the journal itself always existed in dialogic relationships with a series of transmedial extensions.

2.2 Transmedia Extensions: From a Recipient Reading to a Participatory Reading of *Krokodil*

The preceding discussion concerns the importance of extending scholarly understanding of *Krokodil*'s content creation to include prosumers. In this section, I focus upon a different order of extension. Here, I investigate a range of transmedia 'extensions' that existed alongside the magazine. The connections between these texts and the journal are not explored anywhere in English-language scholarship, and our understanding is therefore based on the journal in isolation. Not only do we lack a critical framework for understanding *Krokodil*'s extensions, but as a result, our knowledge of the journal, the extent of the creative freedom afforded to the maga-

zine's editors, and the modes of consumption via which its readers knew it, is incomplete.

The existing literature on *Krokodil* is almost entirely silent on the question of how the magazine was consumed, but the implication is that *Krokodil* must have been consumed in a passive, recipient mode. Despite many references to the magazine's popularity, none of the scholarship on the magazine investigates reader response, and the only consideration of the magazine's readership is in relation to subscription rates. Pehowski notes that an estimated 90% of the print run were sent to subscribers, and that supply was limited by paper supply and printing problems, rather than demand (1978: 729). Moreover, once subscribers' copies were despatched by mail, the remainder were distributed to clubs, libraries or for display in frames in public places: 'everybody reads it' (Montagu 1943: 6).
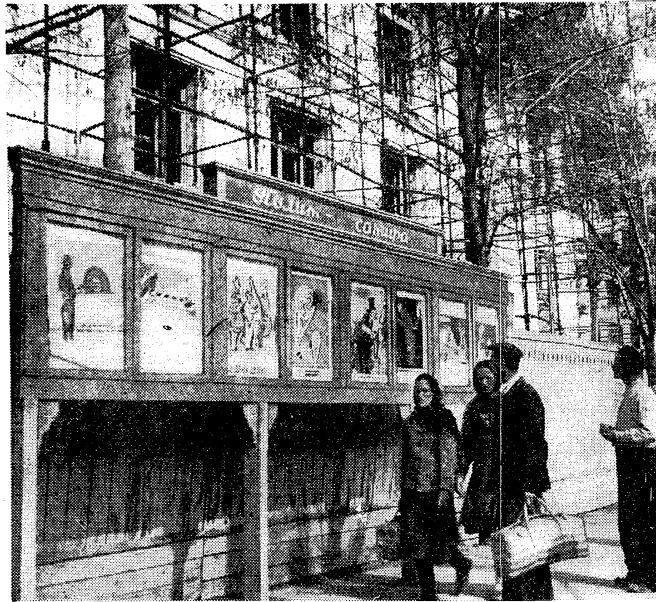
Figure 82: Boards featuring pages from *Krokodil* on public display in Kishinev.
New York Times Magazine. **May 5, 1956.**

As Figure 82 shows, however, it is important to acknowledge that viewing the magazine was not restricted to traditional modes of readership. Different public display issues of the magazine were not produced, so design practices had to take into account this mode of consumption. As can be seen in Figure 82, the pages chosen for public display were essentially posters, with very little or no text (Figure 95 is one of the cartoons displayed in the photograph above). Many pages in *Krokodil* magazine, especially the front and back covers, and the centre spread, were poster-like and it is entirely plausible that these pages were designed with this type of consumption in mind. This aspect of the consumption of the magazine is not explained by the existing literature. In a Russian-language history of Soviet satirical publications, mention is made of the editors' efforts to extend the content and spirit of the journal outside the magazine, from its very earliest days:

> In February 1923 the magazine began regularly publishing *Krokodil Library* featuring the best works from the satirical magazine and albums of cartoons by its leading artists. In May of that year, *Live Krokodil* was organized—a repertory theatre of satirical plays, feature articles, miniatures—for theaters, workers' and Red Army clubs. They were written by *Krokodil* staff, who often appeared as performers. One active participant in the *Live Krokodil* was Vladimir Maiakovskii. Oral issues further expanded *Krokodil*'s sphere of influence over the masses, and increased his popularity. The magazine became the friend of workers, their adviser and protector. (Stykhalin and Kremenskaia 1963: 186)

The various ways in which *Krokodil* extended itself beyond the magazine text are clearly, then, of fundamental importance to our understanding of the magazine's form, self-conception, satirical attitude and consumption, and, indeed, the magazine's very first issue featured a red crocodile bursting through the cover (see Figure 1), which may be considered a metaphor for the magazine's impetus to expand beyond the boundaries of an individual medium. Nevertheless, this is a problem that has not previously been explored.

As a consequence, various questions remain. How did *Krokodil* function—and how was it consumed—beyond the magazine? How and why did *Krokodil*'s editors pursue transmedial production, and how did these transmedia extensions alter meanings? What can we learn about how transmedia extensions affected readers' engagement with the magazine? *Krokodil* magazine has not been considered as a transmedial phenomenon before, none of the transmedia extensions considered below have featured in the scholarly literature on the subject, and indeed neither has the journal been studied according to theories of 'mediality'. It is therefore one of my central theoretical claims that *Krokodil* and its extensions should be understood as a diverse transmedia product. Employing transmedia theory allows me to explain how the extensions related to *Krokodil* and why it is important to understand the connections. By considering the *Krokodil* unity, we may better understand that (trans)media considerations were fundamental in deciding the form and function of the journal and its extensions. As the examples below will demonstrate, *Krokodil* editors had significant authority—they felt at liberty to conceive and explore transmedia extensions, and they were given material resources and assistance where necessary. This insight helps us to understand the roles that publications such as *Krokodil* adopted in the USSR. Rather than simply functioning as mouthpieces for official points of view, they had genuine agency and were allowed a degree of freedom that is not always acknowledged. We may also challenge certain assumptions about the passivity of Soviet readers, and re-imagine *Krokodil*'s readership as active consumers and participants.

While no extensive studies of Soviet transmediality exist, Plamper uses the term 'transmedia' in his discussion of the Stalin Cult's various products (Plamper 2012). In Russian-language scholarship, post-Soviet Russian transmedia in online gaming culture is explored by Natalia Sokolova (2012a and 2012b). In his study of Soviet jesting, Oushakine notes that the 'source of the Soviet comic was not so much *intra*-textual, as in traditional comedy, but *inter*-medial' (Oushakine 2011: 253). This distribution of content between forms was not only something instinctively done by skilled artists, on an individual basis, or in relation only to a few of their own texts. In fact, as this chapter shows, cross-media experimentation and the distribution of content across media was an essential production practice in *Krokodil*'s satire, and it was also applied in the design and creation of various extra-textual extensions, as I explain in the following sub-sections. It is also important to acknowledge that transmediality was at the heart of the magazine's humour, in many cartoons. In many cases, the joke in a cartoon lay in the gap between text and image, or in the space between images in the case of multi-frame cartoons. Figure 83 is a rare example of a two-frame cartoon from 1962—as the previous chapter explained, this two-part image had deep cultural roots, but became loaded with ideological meaning during the Stalin years. Here, the gutter is the source of humour, since it represents the moment of the customer's stunned reaction after requesting razor blades and hearing the positive answer. The cartoon criticises the poor supplies of consumer goods and is a variation on a common *anekdot* about shortages.[195] Whereas more common versions of the joke based their humour upon shortages, this cartoon's humour is located in the customer's shock at news of supply. As in many *Krokodil* cartoons, however, the intermedia skill of the designer is in locating the humour between text and image. As Oushakine has noted, the visual is essential to understanding 'the peculiarities of the comic under socialism' (Oushakine 2011: 253).

---

[195] A man walks into a shop and asks, 'Do you have any fish?' The shop assistant replies, 'No. We're a butcher: we don't have any meat. The shop that doesn't have any fish is across the road.'

Figure 83: Gurov, E. Untitled.
Krokodil 1962: 16/8.

While the text in a cartoon often provided a 'streamlined narrative backbone to the comical performance', Oushakine notes that it was 'nonverbalized imagery that effectively undermined the ideological predictability of narrative canons, producing a situation of laughable incongruence' (Oushakine 2011: 253). Transmedia flows and incongruities also existed beyond the magazine, however.

Transmedia extension provides us with the theoretical basis for understanding the magazine's satellite texts. Jenkins defines transmedia extension as 'moving content across different delivery systems' (Jenkins 2006: 19). Since transmedia storytelling (Jenkins' preferred 'logic') is generally not based on individual characters or plots but rather 'complex fictional worlds which can sustain multiple interrelated characters and their stories' the reader is encouraged to engage more actively in the content because the 'process of world-building encourages an encyclopedic [sic] impulse' to which consumers and producers are both subject (Jenkins 2007). For the consumer, the satisfaction to be gained from mastering dispersed content is much greater than that derived from 'most classically constructed narratives', but Jenkins also suggests that consumers experience 'a strong incentive to continue to elaborate on these story elements, working them over through their speculations, until they take on a life of their own'. Using modern media examples, Jenkins describes 'fan fiction' as 'an unauthorized expansion of these media franchises into new directions which reflect the reader's desire to "fill in the gaps" they have discovered' (Jenkins 2007). In the context of Soviet transmedia imperatives, the generation of content by prosumers would have brought similar pleasures, but the political significance of producing a satirical critique adds an extra dimension which Jenkins' theories do not take into account. He perhaps comes close when he de-

scribes how transmedia texts provide 'a set of roles and goals which readers can assume as they enact aspects of the story through their everyday life' (Jenkins 2007). It is one of the concerns of this chapter to explore how and why extensions to *Krokodil* magazine encouraged prosumer engagement and in the process produced new meanings.

2.2.1 Participatory Consumption: Analysis of Case Studies

The focus of this section is on how the magazine functioned—and how it was consumed—beyond the magazine. Krokodil magazine was, as I argue in the remainder of this chapter, conceived as a *trans*media phenomenon from its very earliest days and was always surrounded by various 'extensions' in different media. These extensions varied over time, but the distribution of *Krokodil* content across media always provided opportunities for the magazine's editors to broaden their reach beyond the boundaries of the journal. Several unique and fascinating examples of the magazine's transmedial impulses lie outside the temporal scope of this thesis, but they are such important and instructive case studies of *Krokodil*'s transmedial extensions and so indicative of the evolution of Soviet transmedial attitudes that they will be considered here nevertheless. Using five exemplary types of *Krokodil*'s transmedia extensions, I show that the magazine's editorial staff had significant authority—they felt at liberty to investigate the potentialities of their media by conceiving and exploring transmedia extensions, and they were given material resources and assistance where necessary. Moreover, I aim to explore how the magazine's readers engaged with *Krokodil*'s transmediality and became active consumers of satirical content. By considering a range of extensions, from examples where content was simply transposed or translated from one medium to another, to radical extensions of content across boundaries between completely different media, I aim to consider how *Krokodil*'s readers were encouraged to adopt new modes of consumption, and to question the effects of transmediality on the nature of *Krokodil*'s satire.

2.2.2.1 Transmedia Adaptations (*Krokodil Library* and Exhibitions)

In defining transmedia, Jenkins distinguishes between extensions ('An extension seeks to add something to the existing story as it moves from one medium to another') and adaptations ('an adaptation takes the same story from one medium and retells it in another') (2011). In fact, as Jenkins admits, transmedial adaptations and extensions belong on the same continuum, much as Linda Hutcheon describes (2006: 171). I begin my analysis of *Krokodil*'s transmedia at the 'adaptation' end of the spectrum, with the forms that represented the least radical extension of meaning.

Although *Krokodil* content was reproduced on postcards and posters, in this subsection I focus on *Krokodil Library* and exhibitions of *Krokodil* artwork.

Krokodil was always accompanied by other texts in the same medium. One of the extensions which surrounded *Krokodil*, *Krokodil Library* (*Biblioteka Krokodila*), featured large amounts of material reproduced from the magazine.[196] Also published by *Pravda* after 1932, and edited by *Krokodil* staff, the *Krokodil Library* first appeared in February 1923, and became a series in irregular publication thereafter. Issues in the series were compiled from images selected from *Krokodil* and other Soviet publications, and they were published in collections organized by cartoon type (for example 'Without words' ('Bez slov'), published in 1975), publication (for example 'Scorpion' ('Chaian'), published in 1981), theme (for example 'Satire about sport' ('Satiriki o sporte') published in 1976), or by artist (for example 'Vitalii Goriaev' published in 1961). Regular themes, and prolific or popular artists might have several collections published in the series.

Each issue opened with an introduction written by the editor-compiler, which set the collection in context, but often the collection contained no further text, other than that which was reproduced as part of the cartoons. Similarly, some issues of the *Krokodil Library* series contained reproductions from *Krokodil* magazine. Hundreds of issues were published in these extension series, usually in print runs of 100,000 copies, and they were sold at cheaper prices than the magazine itself. Since access to *Krokodil* magazine itself was limited, as has been explained above, these series of extracts from the magazine extended content to a wider audience. This series was restarted again in 1945, with a mixture of poems, anecdotes and cartoons by professional and amateur soldier-satirists from various armed forces newspapers and magazines during the war. Published more or less regularly from then on, the series numbered over 1100 issues by December 1991.

Krokodil Library engaged with readers of the magazine by publishing content that was unique, and that significantly extended and deepened the consumer's understanding of *Krokodil*, and, by extension, Soviet ideology. In 1972, for example, *Biblioteka Krokodila 11* (664) contained the memoirs of I. Abramskii, (*O vremeni i o sebe: Iz moei krokodilovoi biografii*), which contained stories and anecdotes about the magazine, its contributors and its history. Another such venture, which can literally be said to have engaged readers' 'encyclopaedic' impulses to

---

[196] Another such extension was the Masters of Soviet Caricature (Mastera Sovetskoi Karikatury) series.

search for and gather information, was the *Krokodil Satirical Encyclopaedia* (*Krokodil'skaia satiricheskaia entsiklopedia*), which was a transmedial extension of a phenomenon that began in the magazine itself. The first call for prosumer contributions to a satirical encyclopaedia appeared in *Krokodil* 1923: 3 (p.531) and the first such encyclopaedia was published in *Krokodil* 1934: 29-30 (see Figure 84). This special issue provided a 'dictionary of common expressions, technical formulas, names, consumer goods… philosophical systems, as well as polite treatment and transport terms'.[197]
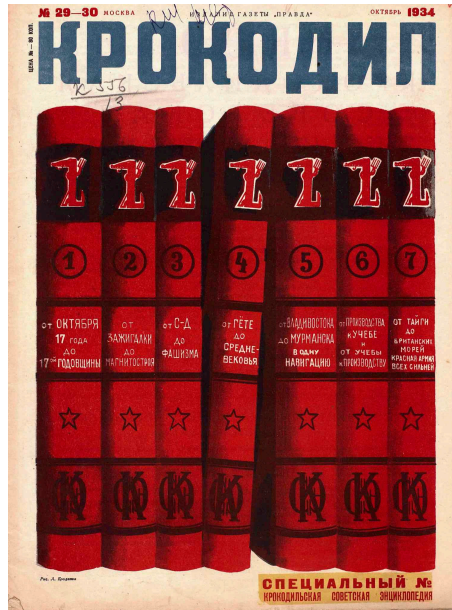
Figure 84: *Krokodil* 1934: 29-30/1.

The magazine also issued a military encyclopaedia (*Krokodil* 1936: 5) and a second edition of the magazine's satirical encyclopaedia (*Krokodil* 1936: 30). The notion was revived again several times, including in January 1971, as a competition. For sixteen months, readers sent in suggestions for humorous explanations or cartoons related to the broadest range of topics, before the 1972 issue of Number 15 (668) in the *Biblioteka* series. The *Satirical Encyclopaedia* contained some serious and some humorous definitions of everyday terms, as well as words connected with the magazine. Over 360,000 suggestions were received for this publication, and the completed encyclopaedia featured over forty pages of satirical *Krokodil*-themed entries from hundreds of different contributors all over the country. *Krokodil*'s extensions considerably added to readers' understanding of the magazine's satire through what Jenkins calls 'additive comprehension', which he sees as part of the 'world-building

---

[197] 'Slovar' obshcheupotrebitel'nykh vyrazhenii, tekhnicheskikh formul, nazvanii shirpotreba i filosofskikh sistem, a takzhe vezhlivykh obrashchenii i transportnykh terminov.' *Krokodil* 1934: 29-30/2.

process'. Most transmedia extension content, he argues, fulfils one or more of four functions: 1) offering backstory; 2) mapping the world; 3) offering other characters' perspectives on the action; and 4) deepening audience engagement (Jenkins 2011). The magazine functioned beyond the printed journal, therefore, by distributing itself across different media with the aim of deepening and broadening engagement.

Krokodil content was distributed in unaltered forms, but in new contexts. *Krokodil* cartoons appeared in exhibitions of artworks by Soviet artists, for example, and through public display in an art exhibition the meaning of the images was fundamentally extended and changed.[198] These exhibitions took place from the early days of the magazine, and continued during The Thaw era. In 1931, Ogiz-Izogiz (Visual Arts Publishing House) hosted an exhibition entitled *Cartoons for the Defence of the USSR* (*Karikatura na sluzhbe oborony CCCP*) in Moscow and Leningrad. A similar exhibition was held at the Tret'iakov Gallery in Moscow in 1932. In 1933, the Tret'iakov showed caricature exhibits as part of the *Artists of the RSFSR over the Past Fifteen Years* exhibition (Plamper 2012: 172). An exhibition of *Krokodil* artists' works was held in October 1952, and in July 1956, an exhibition of Soviet satirical art opened at Gorky Park of Culture and Rest in central Moscow. Although the potential of the medium was not fully explored in these cases, exhibitions represented an opportunity for engagement with *Krokodil*'s consumers.

2.2.2.2 Transmedial Extensions (Film and Drama, and Shostakovich's *Five Romances*)

Krokodil's editors consciously adapted or extended content from the magazine into different media as a way of extending the reach of the magazine. As I suggested, however, these transfers were between similar media and were therefore not very radical transmedia extensions. In this sub-section I will explain how *Krokodil* staff and prosumer, or user-generated, content by Dmitri Shostakovich extended the magazine's meaning as transfers between media occurred.

Krokodil's transmediality led the editors, even as early as May 1923, to explore the possibilities of transferring *Krokodil* content into live drama. *Live Krokodil* was the first, but another transmedial extension, again under Kol'tsov, was into animated films. *Kino Krokodil* was an animated satirical journal. Only seven films were produced, in 1932-1933, before 'being discontinued due to changes in the

---

[198] A similar alteration took place when *Krokodil* also reproduced cartoons from the magazine on posters, or on postcards, which were sold in booklets of 8-10.

political sphere' (Pontieri 2012: 67). A similar project (called *Animated Krokodil*) was revived in 1960-1961. Initially called 'Muk' ('Myk'), the conception was for three (ten minute) issues to be produced per month (mirroring the magazine's publication schedule). In fact, only three issues appeared in 1960 and three in 1961 (see Figure 85).

Figure 85: Screenshot from *Kino Krokodil* No.5. [Online.]
[Accessed 14/7/15.] Available from: http: //www.youtube.com/

These six episodes, of which only five were preserved, are quite different from each other in character. Films 1-3 and 5-6 consist of several unconnected short stories, while film number 4 is linked to just one plot: water pollution. Each plot follows the red crocodile as he successfully investigates and resolves a domestic issue. In 1961, Khrushchev, noting that satire 'is an effective weapon […] It freshens the skin, clears the pores and makes breathing easier' called for more satirical newsreels (Khrushchev 1964: 139) but the project was not continued, perhaps as a consequence of the 'internal difficulties in organizing a constant group of animators dedicated exclusively to this project' (Pontieri 2012: 68).

The examples discussed so far all originated with the magazine's staff or Editorial Board, but one piece of prosumer content must also be considered, since the meaning of the magazine was also significantly extended by the work of the composer Dmitri Shostakovich, who, in September 1965, set five poems from the 'Believe it or not' section of *Krokodil* magazine from 30 August (1965: 24) to music. On 28 May 1966, he played piano accompaniment to Evgeni Nesterenko (bass) as he sang the *Five Romances on Texts from 'Krokodil'* at the Glinka Concert Hall in Leningrad (Hulme 2010: 487). The poems from readers were chosen for their ordinariness, and for this reason, the song cycle may be considered a satire on the original texts. Nevertheless, Shostakovich reproduced the content of the magazine verbatim in the lyrics of his song cycle, which was performed several times in Shostakovich's lifetime. By not adding any commentary or altering any words, but simply setting them to music, he fundamentally altered the meaning of the text. This

fascinating example illustrates the complexity of *Krokodil* and its relationships with its various extension texts. When interviewed about this new work in *Ogonëk* in September 1966, and asked why these magazine texts were important, Shostakovich's response was 'Image' ('Obraz'). He continued by explaining that he was interested by the challenge of translating the character or 'subtext' ('Podtekst') into musical tone and mood (Khentova 1966: 7). This insight helps us to understand that readers of *Krokodil* actively engaged with the magazine, and that Soviet artists outside the magazine's usual contributors set themselves the task of adapting content from one medium for another. It illustrates how the translation of content into a new medium might reflect a new meaning in the original, and shows that artists were fascinated by these transmedia possibilities. Moreover, by studying *Krokodil*'s extensions we may understand that the artistic life in the USSR provided opportunities for such experimentation, long after the inauguration of state control over cultural production. This challenges the views that Soviet media resisted innovation, and that individual producers had little autonomy, suggesting that a transmedial vision of Soviet media institutions such as *Krokodil* can shed new light on the the Soviet media system.

2.2.2.3 A Radical Transmedial Extension (Aircraft)

The most radical extensions of *Krokodil* content across media boundaries were vehicular. While several historical studies mention *Krokodil*'s aircraft, none digress into a discussion of the significance of this extraordinary phenomenon. My interest is in the aircraft itself, as a radical instance of Soviet transmediality, but also in the effects of the extension of *Krokodil* content into aviation technology.

Figure 86: A modified ANT-9, sponsored by *Krokodil* magazine. [Online.] [Accessed: 22/10/12.] Available from: http: //dieselpunks.blogspot.co.nz/

Even in 1923, the Editorial Board of the magazine hoped to buy an aircraft for the magazine. The magazine was created so soon after the Russian Civil War that such

an aircraft would have represented a logical progression from the Reds' agit-trains and agit-barges, which performed the function of agitation and delivered propaganda to the widest possible audience. In *Krokodil* 1923: 17 a campaign was launched to raise funds to buy an aircraft. Calling for contributions from the magazine's readers, the editors promised that, with 'a keen eye, he will look down from a height of three thousand metres and make out each internal enemy of the workers and peasants in the USSR' (see Figure 87).[199]

Figure 87: *Krokodil* 1923: 17/1-2.

The Editorial Board of *Krokodil* magazine contributed to the Soviet airmindedness campaign of 1923,[200] and the magazine's campaign to fund an aeroplane continued through the 1920s, with regular updates (1923: 24/15) and texts that elaborated on the usefulness of the aircraft to the magazine. On the rear cover of *Krokodil* 1923: 27, for example, the red crocodile held a wing and a wheel, as if waiting for the other parts of the aeroplane to be provided. The extension of the magazine across media was a constant theme in the 'air-minded' texts of the mid-1920s. *Krokodil* 1923: 27/1 featured a rather literal aircraft-crocodile chasing Christ, the Mother of God, angels, and capitalists across the sky (see Figure 88). The aerial crocodile even has the figure of Christ and a capitalist in its jaws, while angels and capitalists scatter behind it. The sub-title 'Double Trouble' indicates that the extension of *Krokodil*

---

[199] 'Zorkim glazom budet on gliadet' s vysoty trekh tysiach metrov i razgliadit kazhdogo vnutrennego vraga rabochikh i krest'ian Soiuza Sovetskikh Respublik.' *Krokodil* 1923: 17/2.

[200] The campaign aimed to inculcate aviation-minded spirit and raise money for aeronautical development (Palmer 2006: 111).

into this new medium was intended to increase the power of both media. *Krokodil* magazine would become more effective, it is implied, by its use of an aircraft. The aircraft was imagined in various cartoons, as the weapon with which to combat religious belief (1923: 27/3) capitalism and imperialism, and domestic malefactors (1923: 24/3).

Figure 88: Cheremnykh, M. *Double Trouble***. (***Dvoinoi perepolokh***.)**
Krokodil **1923: 27/1.**

This plan might have seemed fanciful or allegorical in 1923, but in 1933 *Krokodil*'s transmedial urges were materialised in the celebrations of the fifteenth anniversary of the October Revolution, which included the redecoration of Moscow's public transport infrastructure. *Krokodil* artists thus transformed the city's trams, following themes such as 'The Crisis of Capitalism' and 'Disarm' (Tolstoy, Bibikova and Cooke 1990: 214). In the same year the Editorial Board realised their aims when they sponsored two ANT-9 aircraft which joined the Maxim Gorky Agitsquadron (*Agiteskadrilia Maksima Gorkogo*), itself created at the suggestion of Mikhail Kol'tsov (Duffy and Kandalov 1996: 61). The decision to resurrect the plans and launch a fundraising scheme to pay for an aircraft was explained in the magazine in terms of Stalinist ideological discourse:

> In the North, our icebreakers have conquered the ice. At the heart of our Union our stratospheric balloon broke the world record. […]

> Could *Krokodil* then calmly stay in one place? Never! And so he de-
> cided to fly.[201] (Vesenin 1972: 18)

When Kol'tsov spoke in defence of the socio-political role of satire (implicitly in response to some of Blium's arguments in favour of abolishing Soviet satire) at the 1934 Writers' Congress, he explicitly linked the plans to build a *Krokodil* aircraft with the worldwide ideological victory of communism:

> And we flatter ourselves with this hope: that when communism tri-
> umphs in all countries, when it gains firm footing, when all wars end
> and armed force becomes obsolete—if there remains, at that time, a
> single island where a small group of people still defend the old ways,
> then a *Krokodil* airplane will be sent there as a deterring force. And
> when that plane lands and out of it come our Soviet satirists, with
> their stories, epigrams, and poems, these people will say: "It's all
> right, we give up, long live communism!" (quoted in Vinokour
> 2015: 346)

The *Krokodil* aeroplane was no gimmick, then. It was always intended to combine the virtues of healthy satirical laughter and Soviet ideology with the technological advances prized by the Bolsheviks. In the short-term, though, the agitsquadron was supposed to bring aviation to the countryside and thereby increase the Soviet popu-lation's 'air-mindedness', as well as spreading Soviet ideology by delivering propa-ganda material and creating local-specific agitation publications. Forty aircraft, all sponsored by national publications such as *Pravda*, *Izvestiia*, *Ogonëk* and *Komso-molskaia Pravda* flew propaganda tours around the country in the 1930s (Figure 89), visiting an estimated ten million people (Jones 1998: 248). Journalists would meet locals, research and write reports on local problems, and visit local publications and give interviews (see Figure 64). The visit of an aircraft was thus remediated several times. The Agitsquadron's telecommunications equipment and printing presses could produce 8000 leaflets every hour after May 1935 (Jones 1998: 248).

---

[201] 'Na Severe nashi ledokoly pokorili l'dy. V tsentre Soiuza nash stratostat pobil mirovoi. […] Mozhet li Krokodil posle etogo spokoyno ostavat'sia na meste? Ni v koyem sluchae! I vot on reshil letat'.'

Figure 89: The route of 'Krokodil' and the Maxim Gorky agitsquadron.
Vesenin (1972: 18)

The magazine regularly updated readers on the squadron's exploits and reported stories in the magazine, and *Krokodil* 1933: 24 was a special issue aviation-themed issue. *Krokodil*'s ANT-9 aircraft extensions assisted in meaning-making around the magazine. The agit-squadron's role matched the rabsel'kor role of the printed magazine. Furthermore, the aircraft's power to shrink distance and reduce time enabled the magazine (represented by the aircraft) to reach more consumers, faster.

As well as meeting *Krokodil* staff when they visited, and reading the magazine itself, people found novel ways to engage with the magazine's transmedial extensions. Indeed, it is an interesting and unexplored fact that these aircraft themselves became the subject of other works. V. Liushin's painting *A Winged Propagandist: The Crocodile Plane is Getting Ready to Take Off* (1937, State Museum, Moscow) pictures the ANT-9 preparing to depart, for example. Also, these aircraft featured in anekdoty: "Two crocodiles were flying: one red, the other to Africa." This is an example of a reflexive anekdot, which are briefly discussed in Graham (2009: 147). The joke seems to be a comment upon the incongruity of flying, red, ethnic Russian crocodiles, and therefore functions as a critique of the existence of this strange, foreign phenomenon in the USSR. This suggests that transmedia phenomena were themselves strange- and foreign-seeming, and that jokes were used to deal with the incongruity.

It is clear, then, that *Krokodil*'s editors seized the opportunity to experiment with the potentialities afforded by a transmedial extension into aviation technology. The ANT-9s were ostensibly rather unadventurous explorations of the boundaries of permissibility, however, since aviation was such a high priority for the Soviet government in the decades after the revolution. Careful consideration suggests, though, that the extension of *Krokodil* content into a new medium allowed the possibility for key discourses to be undermined. Whereas most publications displayed their name on their aircraft's fuselage or the under-sides of the wings, *Krokodil* magazine went

further, creating a unique transmedial extension: a 'new phenomenon in journalism, zoology and public life' (Vesenin 1972: 22) in their modifications. The ANT-9s were designed to resemble an aerial crocodile (modelled on the magazine's red crocodile) like the one on the cover of *Krokodil*, 15 July 1923, a decision which illustrates the importance of this transmedia decision: the aircraft did not simply represent the magazine, and the magazine was not simply the sponsor of the aircraft. The connection between the two media was more fundamental than that. An elongated nose, clawed wheel fairings, and a spined ridge along the top of the fuselage were added. These modifications were jointly designed, in dedicated talks between Kol'tsov and aircraft engineer, Andrei Tupolev, and the engineering was completed by Vadim Shavrov (Duffy and Kandalov 1996: 54). To complete the effect, the aircraft were painted red and given toothy smiles beneath their cockpits (see Figure 86).

A transmedial interpretation of the *Krokodil* aircraft is instructive and important because it helps to explain how the magazine interacted with the government's most high status discourses, and how, because of its satirical attitudes, the magazine's transmedial tendencies had the potential to undermine them. In this case, the meanings inherent in both aircraft and magazine media infused into each other and modified the meanings of both. The engineering modifications to the aircraft suggest a firm belief in the transferability of a design concept from one medium to another, and the embodiment of the magazine's satirical persona in the airframe must have effected a radical impact on observers. Paradoxically, while the gesture was on the one hand an affirmation of the Soviet government's prioritisation of technological and aviation goals, it also had the potential to undermine those discourses. On one hand, the modification of the airframe symbolises the infiltration of the technical by the comical. The aviation industry has been assaulted by satire, and at least on the surface, the satirical has assumed priority. This seems such an outrageous extension of the journal's scope, that it seems absurd, however. It reminds us of a peculiar form of irony, known as 'stiob'. Yurchak defines 'stiob' as a type of humour characterised by extreme 'overidentification' with the object of ridicule (2005: 250); while Yoffe prefers 'ironic mockery, parodic double-talk' (2013: 209). I do not mean to imply that the editors of the magazine designed an aircraft in order to mock government priorities, or that the aircraft was symbolic of subversive or anti-Soviet sentiments, since, as Yurchak notes, 'stiob' cannot be simplified in this way.

This type of ironic overidentification also shared some elements with Bakhtin's description of the fool, which was an ambivalent figure, not really belonging to this world but able to exploit their ties with the world to make parodic criticisms of

it. The aircraft's freedom to move, and its political message, are reminiscent of the holy fool's divine mission, and the modifications to the aircraft's appearance are an allegory for the fool's behaviour. In another way, the aircraft's redesign may be seen as a kind of mask, which unfixes the aircraft's position in relation to political authority. Without the mask, in other words, the *Krokodil* ANT-9s would have been identical to the other aircraft in the squadron and their relationship to the state would have been obvious. The mask, however, transforms the aircraft somewhat, and the metamorphosis has a paradoxical effect, simultaneously distancing it from and overidentifying it with the purpose shared by state and magazine.

2.3   Conclusions

In this chapter I have attempted to broaden our understanding of *Krokodil* beyond the magazine by exploring the influences upon meaning-making during *Krokodil*'s production processes, and considering a range of its most important transmedial adaptations and extensions. From my investigation of the roles of the magazine's professional staff, including their interactions with the state's censors and political authorities, and the various prosumer contributors who engaged with the magazine, we may understand that political authorities were, in their influence upon the magazine, always in dialogic relationship with a range of other actors, and that *Krokodil*'s content was co-created. My analysis of various transmedial extensions also highlighted the magazine's editors' urge to exploit opportunities to probe the boundaries of different media, the boundaries of acceptability, and the boundaries between producers and consumers.

My focus on these boundaries reveals how prosumers made meaningful contributions to public discourse through the magazine, which shows the importance of Leninist notions of participatory media culture. Most Soviet culture was participatory in a one-dimensional sense: the aim of the artwork was to activate the viewer— a socialist realist poster or painting was intended to inspire the viewer in an aspect of everyday life. This one-dimensional participation took place in public (posters in the street, or paintings in an art gallery) and only very limited opportunities for feedback were provided (visitors' comments books in museums and galleries, or letters pages in newspapers and journals for instance). In general, there were few opportunities for amateurs to participate in meaning-making in official culture. Soviet newspapers invited letters, but only certain trusted citizens (rabsel'kory) were expected to create content. Previous studies have assumed that *Krokodil* magazine conformed to the same model. Skradol suggests, in fact, that humour played an increasingly important role in Stalinist discourse as society became less free since it helped to 'preserve the

façade of openness, of a democratic involvement of its citizens in power structures at all levels, and of a dialogic, unconstrained nature of exchange between the leaders of the state and the rank-and-file' (Skradol 2012: 282). My analysis of *Krokodil*'s use of prosumer material, and the enthusiasm with which Soviet readers participated in the construction and consumption of satirical material, suggests that the magazine represented more than simply a façade—*Krokodil*'s participatory principle, which challenges the conventional view of Soviet media as hierarchically organised, dominated by political authorities and essentially closed to all but a few professionals, was a defining feature of the magazine in the period 1954-1964.

In fact, as this chapter has shown, *Krokodil* magazine aspired to a significantly greater degree of participation than other Soviet media, and the magazine's participatory aspects were manifested in two production modes. First, *Krokodil*'s participatory aspiration was acted out by magazine staff: editors, *temisty*, artists, writers (and sometimes politicians) co-created the bulk of the magazine's content, and designed the extensions alongside other specialists. Paraphrasing Richard Wagner's 'The Art-work of the Future' (1849-50), Groys suggested that creating participatory art involved passing over an artist's egoism, which itself required that he/she overcome boundaries between media and form fellowships 'in which creative individuals with expertise in different media would participate' (2008a: 21). Second, there were also opportunities for amateurs to contribute meaningfully to the creation of content by submitting cartoons, poems, themes and letters. In the early years of the Soviet state, street theatre and re-enactments of historic events such as the storming of the Winter Palace, or the performance of musical works by factory sirens and whistles across entire cities, represented mass-scale physical participatory art. *Krokodil* differed from these experiences in several obvious ways, but also in that, whereas these early participatory experiences were highly authored, the prosumer's opportunity to create content for *Krokodil* was unscripted and unsupervised.

This understanding allows us to challenge conventional views of Soviet media consumers as passive recipients. As the second part of this chapter shows, if a reader of the magazine wanted to broaden or deepen their engagement with the magazine at any time, they had the ability to produce content for the journal itself, or to seek new content in one of a range of transmedia extensions. As Jenkins points out, fans and consumers are attracted to transmedia texts, and they seek sites of potential performance where they may be able to make personal contributions to the text. The performative aspects of a transmedia text provide 'a set of roles and goals which readers can assume as they enact aspects of the story through their everyday life' (2007). Modes of consumption (reading the magazine at public display points) contained elements of performance, but so did writing letters to the magazine or

producing prosumer content. Local versions of *Krokodil* were produced by institutions. Furthermore, on Gorky Street in Moscow, on 21 March 1959, *Krokodil* opened a shop. The first of its kind in the USSR, and decorated with images drawn by the magazine's artists, the *Krokodil* shop sold copies of the magazine, as well as its extension texts *Krokodil Library* and the *Krokodil* album, along with satirical journals from China, Poland, the GDR and elsewhere (Anon 1959). Even seeking out the new shop, however, represented a degree of active engagement that has not always been acknowledged in the scholarship. In the next chapter, however, I extend the notion of performativity in relation to *Krokodil* much further, by considering performative dimensions of the text itself.

Chapter 3
Making the Risible Visible: Performing Ideology in *Krokodil*

Having studied the visual language in which *Krokodil*'s critiques were represented in Chapter 1, and the ways in which the journal's contributors explored the boundaries of the permissible in Chapter 2, I now move on to investigate the nature of *Krokodil*'s visual satire by considering the question of how *Krokodil* constructed Soviet and non-Soviet ideologies in its graphic commentaries. In the three sections of this chapter, I explore the graphic construction of ideological meaning in the three schemata I identified in Section 1.2—cartoons that contested anti-Soviet ideologies, affirmed Soviet ideology, and depicted society in the process of 'becoming' Soviet. Soviet and non-Soviet ideology was embedded in cartoons of all schemata through techniques for the creation of individual and collective identities, which were produced performatively. Performance has been an important theme implicit in my discussion of *Krokodil* so far. As Section 1.2 showed, *Krokodil* embodied some of the close connections between satire, theatrical performance, visual arts and magazine publications, and the magazine continued to draw upon this cultural understanding of the nature of satire and performance. In Chapter 2 I explored the production and consumption of the magazine, and suggested that they might be considered performative acts. In the final chapter of this thesis I develop my poststructural approach further by applying a performative paradigm to the magazine in order to consider how an appreciation of *Krokodil*'s performance of ideology nuances our understanding of the nature of the journal's satire.

The question of how characters' identities or ideologies were constructed in *Krokodil*'s cartoons has not been explored in detail in the scholarly literature. While many commentators have noted the significance of ideology as subject matter or inspiration in *Krokodil*, only limited attempts have been made to explore the graphic techniques employed by the magazine's artists in the visual construction of ideology. Stites' description of what he calls the 'categories' of *Krokodil*'s satire involves some identification of graphic techniques, but he does not explore the artistic choices underlying the depiction of ideological ideas or their consequences (1992: 136). Alaniz's analysis considers artistic decisions to a greater degree, but his focus is necessarily narrowed by his interest in comics techniques (2010: 50&67). In Soviet Studies, particularly in History, the notion of performance of identity is familiar. As Sheila Fitzpatrick (2005) shows, discourses of theatricality were common under Stalin—official Soviet discourses employed metaphors of 'staging', 'masking' or

'unmasking' (see Figure 90 and Figure 91) and 'acting' usually related to the performance of a class identity, whether the performance was sincere or not (2005: 10).

Figure 90: Ganf, Iu. and Brodaty, L. *On vigilance*. (*O bditel'nosti*.). *Krokodil* 1937: 14/1.

Figure 91: Kanevski, A. Untitled. *Krokodil* 1960: 34/5.

Official discourses are reminiscent of Erving Goffman's theories of the public presentation of self (1959). This approach supposes the pre-existence of the subject, who may more or less consciously adapt their performance to suit their environment. While Cold War-era studies assumed that Soviet subjectivity was represented as 'the opposite of the liberal self, or as the death of liberal man in Stalinist Russia' (Krylova 2000: 2), post-Soviet studies employ a different methodology. Soviet subjectivity has been understood differently since Kotkin's influential study of Magnitogorsk, in which he famously explained the imperative of 'Speaking Bolshevik' (1997). Hellbeck (2006), Halfin (2000, 2007, 2011) and Yurchak (2005) show how Soviet discourses actually constituted selfhood and everyday reality. These approaches betray the influence of gender studies and performativity theory, and of Judith Butler's work in particular. Following French poststructuralists, Butler considers the theory and politics of individual and gender identity. Butler disrupts anatomical gender binaries and demonstrates that gender identity is a political construction rather than an essential category. The construction of identity she describes, which is known as 'performativity', does not arise 'as a singular or deliberate "act", but, rather, as the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names' (1993: xii). Butler argues that social and political power, felt as regulatory social norms, work 'in performative fashion to constitute the materiality of bodies' (1993: xii). Bodies, in other words, do not stand outside of culture or society; instead, corporeality and identity co-create each other. Deriving my analysis from Butler's (1990: 278), I propose that we may understand *Krokodil*'s vision of ideology as performative in the sense that it is enacted corpore-

ally on the surface of characters in cartoons and is taken to be expressive of an ideological core.

Importantly, all of the aforementioned existing studies consider the construction of identity through verbal language. The 'performative turn' in Cultural Studies—which is, according to Manuele Gragnolati, motivated by anti-hermeneutic urges that tend to reject assumptions about authorial intention, meaning or essence (Gragnolati and Suerbaum 2010: 5)—has extended performativity theory to visual artworks. According to Jonathan Lahey Dronsfield, Jacques Derrida's *The Truth in Painting* (1987) represents an exploration of the artist's signature and frames as performative devices (2013). For Dave Davies, the artwork itself represents the performance (Davies 2008), while Barbara Bolt regards the artwork as a performative practice (Bolt 2010). Studies by Fein and Kasher (1996), Mallan (2002), Bahrani (2002), and Mannheimer (2011) pay less attention to authorial intention and view the pictorial subjects themselves as performative texts.

This chapter considers *Krokodil* as a site for the historically grounded reiterative and discursive co-creation of ideological meanings. My approach is to investigate character construction and metaphors related to different modes of seeing in all three schemata, and to explore how ideological meaning and political critiques were deposited in cartoons in the process. This method reveals that in *Krokodil*, ideology was regarded not as a canon of dogma, but rather as a 'political thought-practice' (Freeden 1996: 239). As this chapter shows, a performative reading of *Krokodil*'s political cartoons is helpful for three reasons. First, it allows us to understand how *Krokodil* engaged satirically with all ideologies and enables us to see that the journal explored the nature of ideology as something in which psychology is materialised as physical appearance and where behaviour is representative of an individual's true beliefs. A performative approach also highlights *Krokodil*'s fascination with the theatricality of ideological behaviour, and the possibility that acting, costume and masquerade symbolise falsely or theatrically performed beliefs. In these texts we may see how *Krokodil* explored the divergence between thought and practice. Furthermore, performativity provides us with a theoretical framework for understanding how political cartoons might explore what was acceptable subject matter for Soviet satirists.

Second, a performative approach invites us to explore the fundamentally self-reflexive nature of Soviet graphic satire. Soviet satire itself, then, was a discourse that was constantly engaged with other topical discourses, but was almost equally concerned with a continual self-reflexive redefinition and refinement of aims (see Oushakine 2012). In 1962, in an article entitled 'The Weapons of Laughter', Efimov tellingly noted that 'The strength of this eternally living, disruptive genre is

in the fact that it draws attention to itself' (quoted in Norris (2012: 106)). While the discourse about defining the role of Soviet satire was unending, *Krokodil*'s vision of its own satirical role altered little, and as this chapter shows, it was perpetually self-reflexive. *Krokodil*'s graphic satire performed a series of exercises in seeing satirically for its readers, and its cartoons frequently employed theatrical and surveillance metaphors in order to visualise Soviet citizens in the act of seeing. A study of the cartoons about 'becoming' Soviet, in particular, reveals the potential ambiguities created by this self-reflexivity.

Thirdly, a performative approach to political cartoons reveals something of the nature of Soviet graphic satire that previous interpretations have not expressed. Whereas previous studies have stressed, in the 'list-of-targets' approach, that *Krokodil* ridiculed and highlighted what was comical about its subjects, I argue that *Krokodil*'s cartoons employed laughter as a route to psychological transformation, and performed acts of revelation intended to alter ideological beliefs. In this sense, *Krokodil* may be considered to have possessed performative force beyond the text. Section 3.3 investigates the centrality, as what Medhurst and DeSousa call an 'inventional' theme (1981: 200) and as a metaphor, of performance in *Krokodil*'s satirical vision. My key arguments are that a study of visual language and graphic schemata are important for understanding individual images, but in order to understand *Krokodil*'s ideological-satirical vision we must look beyond them and consider the performativity of the magazine. In this sense, *Krokodil*'s satire is more than graphic—it goes beyond the graphic and is also performative. In *Krokodil*'s performativity, moreover, may be found a fundamental scepticism about outward appearances and visible signs as indicators of truth, and about all ideologies and their value as bringers of change or as interpretive resources. My contribution to the discussion of Soviet visual satire, therefore, is in my exploration of the performativity of the political cartoon as a mode of graphic persuasion, a technology aiding the self-construction of Soviet subjectivity, and the performance of ideology.

3.1 Participating in and Performing Non-Soviet Ideology

Images of non-Soviet ideologies were defining characteristics of *Krokodil*'s aesthetic, as Section 1.2 showed, and, according to Norris' explanation of Efimov's output, many such cartoons aimed 'to mock foreign enemies in order to reveal the "true" self behind the exterior façade' (Norris 2013: 35). Notwithstanding their significance, our knowledge of the graphic mechanisms by which ideological critiques were constructed through both the 'true' identities and the 'exterior façades', much less the acts of revelation that connected them, remains rather rudimentary. In this

section, I explore how *Krokodil*'s cartoons performed, and thereby participated in the construction of, non-Soviet ideology. In particular, I investigate how the theory of performativity helps us to reach a fuller understanding of *Krokodil* magazine's 'contesting' cartoons. How did the critiques of anti-Soviet ideologies performed in *Krokodil*'s cartoons contribute to Soviet political discourses? How did *Krokodil*'s graphic satire explore the nature of performatively constructed ideological identity?

The value of performativity in explaining the construction of ideological critiques through identities and behaviours in politics has been explored in later post-Soviet scholarship, but the existing literature on Soviet graphic satire has not examined in detail how ideological meaning was communicated in political cartoons. Employing performativity theory's theatrical and discursive elements, Natalia Skradol, for example, explores how politically authoritative public legal discourses manipulated 'the humorous performative' in order to appropriate and parody the identities of certain opponents in the 1930s (2012). In his speeches, Stalin adopted the persona of an opposition politician, speaking ironically in a clownish and grotesque form of theatrical imitation intended to ridicule and discredit (2012: 283). In written texts, ironic quotation marks encoded certain ideological critiques designed to highlight the political failures of certain oppositionist actors (2012: 293-4). We understand, then, that the function of the Stalinist performative was to delineate and police the boundaries between 'the most politically reliable and the most abominable, the canonized and the clownish' (Skradol 2012: 294). Halfin's 'symptomatic reading of Stalinist language, written and oral' similarly distinguishes between those who 'belong' and those who 'don't belong' (2009: 380n78). Studies of graphic satire have tended to overlook what Skradol calls the 'hidden mechanisms of the formation of political subjectivity' (Skradol 2009: 282), and it is upon the performativity of these mechanisms in *Krokodil*'s cartoons that I focus in this section.

In order to explore the existence of ideological meaning in *Krokodil*'s visual texts, I analyse the way characters in cartoon texts are performatively shaped. In this section I consider different artists' numerous iterations of the most important cartoon characters. In Section 3.1.1 I investigate the appearance of the fat capitalist, and in Section 3.1.2 I explore the character's contributions to ideological discourses. My approach to this problem is thus to consider the archetypal graphic embodiment of an ideological critique in *Krokodil*: the fat capitalist. The caricature of the corpulent, cigar-smoking capitalist, wearing striped trousers, waistcoat and a top hat was one of the most common characters in Soviet graphic satire. This character was present

from the first issue of the magazine until the final months of the Soviet Union,[202] and in 1958, for example, the fat capitalist appeared in 53 cartoons, almost half of which were on covers or centre pages. In my analysis, the character may be understood as something more than a character; he was a visual ideologeme. For Mieke Bal, the term 'visual ideologeme' means the visual mechanism for communicating ideological information (2006: 180). My use of this term more self-consciously borrows from the structuralist tradition (outlined in the Introduction, Section iia)) and the poststructuralist tradition (explained in the Introduction, Section iii). In my view, this term is valuable partly because it enables us to isolate and abstract the material signs through which an ideological critique of capitalism itself is refracted in the character, in the way P.M. Medvedev describes in his critique of formalist literary method (Medvedev and Bakhtin 1985: 22-23). My use of the term also follows Fredric Jameson's definition of the ideologeme as the 'smallest intelligible unit' of larger discourses (2002: 61). Studying the capitalist ideologeme in this way extends beyond the enunciation of particular viewpoints in the text, however. I also acknowledge that the ideologeme has a transtextual function and I recognise its ability to root a text to its 'historical and social coordinates' (Kristeva 1980: 36). As a performative approach to studying the fat capitalist in *Krokodil*'s cartoons reveals, however, the visual ideologeme does more than manifest outside ideological discourses inside the text. The character's construction may be viewed as the performance of an ideological critique, and a performative approach thus allows us to identify how *Krokodil*'s political cartoons performed the function of stabilising and enunciating certain definitions of central ideological concepts, as well as participating in the graphic performance of Soviet ideology and contributing to political discourses.

3.1.1   The Performativity of the Ideologeme

In this sub-section I consider the artistic construction of the fat capitalist visual ideologeme through the character's body shape, physical and facial gesture, masquerade and costume, in cartoons that contest anti-Soviet ideologies. As a performative reading of cartoons such as Iulii Ganf's 'Cards from the Washington Deck' (see

---

[202] In *Krokodil* No.33 from 1991, personifications of capitalism appeared twice. Space does not permit a detailed discussion, but the differences between these two characterisations reflect both the emerging paradox of early post-Soviet attitudes to capitalism, and the concomitant evolutions in graphic humour.

Figure 92) reveals, these characteristics may be interpreted as symptoms of the character's ideological-psychological condition, rendered on the bodily surfaces.

Figure 92: Ganf, Iu. *Cards from the Washington Deck*. (*Karty iz vashingtonskoi kolody*.)
Krokodil **1954: 23/16.**

Butler names this corporeal signification of the cultural 'the surface politics of the body' (1990: 136) and this provides us with an avenue for usefully investigating the performative construction of the fat capitalist, with all his deficiencies externalised. As Haslam and Haslam argue, using obesity to convey a critique has a long history in art: 'Size speaks volumes' (2009: 249). Corpulence is used 'to denote lack of control, weakness and ineffectiveness, as an emblem of dissolution and bad government' (2009: 258), just as it may also betoken 'prosperity, or greed, or sagacity and importance' (2009: 249). In the case of the fat capitalist, all these qualities are implied. Figure 92, which is representative of *Krokodil*'s treatment of non-Soviet ideologies, typical of Ganf's output, and includes many of the dominant visual ideologemes commonly found in the magazine in the post-war period, reveals how signs of ideological belief were inscribed on various bodies' surfaces. The fat capitalist, with his florid skin, sunken eyes, sinister grimace and superfluous wealth, is here associated with numerous other performers of anti-Soviet ideology. From our privileged, elevated perspective, looking directly down on a card table, we see that the invisible player in this geopolitical game has several cards of varying ideological potency at his disposal. In the top row, the financier suit's 'Ace' ('Tuz') card shows a hook-nosed, cigar-smoking capitalist whose shoulders are made from gold coins and whose cigar smoke curls into a dollar sign as he glowers from beneath a top hat. The pack's 'trump deuce pair' ('Kozyrnaia dvoika') is a card showing two nuclear bombs dropping. The Queen of Spades in this deck is represented by the personification of war, supporting the barrel of a large gun, wearing a gas mask and metal

helmet and in the suit of the skull and crossed bones. Below, espionage and diversion ('shpionazh' and 'diversiia') are represented by masked figures, the King of Clubs is drawn as a double-headed card featuring Konrad Adenauer wearing an Iron Cross and a Wehrmacht soldier with a bayonet. This suit, whose symbol is a swastika, is represented by 'a card from Hitler's deck', [203] and in a suit symbolised by a dollar sign, are the 'Wall Street worms' ('Uoll-stritovskie chervi'), Syngman Rhee (Li Syn Man), the President of South Korea, and Chiang Kai Shek (Chan Kaishi) leader of the Chinese nationalists. The six suits depicted in Ganf's image are representative of the ideological identities that contested Soviet ideology in their performances in *Krokodil*.

The fat capitalist ideologeme was a co-created character in *Krokodil*: in 1958, the capitalist cartoons were produced by 20 different artists, of whom Ganf (fourteen) and Efimov (eleven) were the most prolific. In these images, the capitalist is stylized and repeated by particular artists. Efimov's capitalist has big feet and perilously thin ankles revealed by trousers that are too short for him, and he habitually grimaces as he smokes a cigar which protrudes between his prominent chin and nose. Ganf's character sometimes resembles Uncle Sam, but generally has a round, smiling face. Both artists distinguished their characters through the materialization of his inner ideological motivation on the bodily surface, but whereas Efimov's capitalist conducts himself with grim determination, Ganf's derives more enjoyment. It is clear, then, that the creation of the capitalist visual ideologeme was dependent upon the creation of a graphic tradition, through the shareability of a character's traits. These traits were appropriated and re-contextualised, infused with new ideological meanings, and constantly recycled in the process of constructing the visual ideologeme. The capitalist visual ideologeme performed its ideological critique as a direct consequence of this perpetual reiteration. The capitalist character was not created in Russo-Soviet caricature, despite its later popularity with Soviet artists. Of course, equating obesity with economic wealth has a long history in satirical art, as does depicting individual or anonymous capitalists in this manner, and the fat capitalist in many ways echoes *lubok* images of obese German officers produced by the Contemporary Lubok (*Segodniashny lubok*) publishing house during World War One. Elsewhere, before the end of the nineteenth century, the fat capitalist was firmly established in graphic satire as a personification of capitalism. Will

---

[203] 'Karta iz gitlerovskoi kolody'

Dyson[204] and Phil May (see Figure 93)[205], for example, were notable for their caricatures of the fat capitalist figure in the Anglophone press before World War One, and the character was also well known in Germany (Norris 2013: 34).

LABOUR AND CAPITAL.
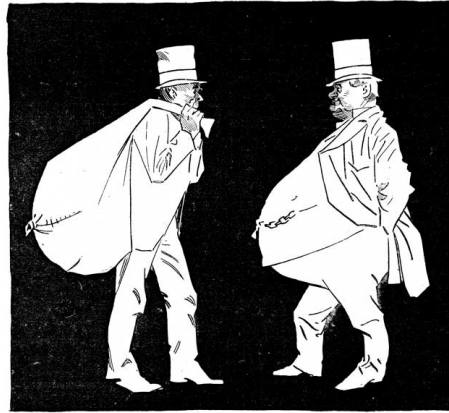
Figure 93: May, P. *Poverty and Wealth; It all depends on the position of the bundle.*
Dyrenfurth and Quartly: 2009.

Nevertheless, in Russian graphic satire the convention of personifying capitalism in such a way was rare. Radical criticisms of Russian politics in visual satire before 1917 had other targets, and the capitalist was not prominent.[206] At least one satirical cartoon from 1906 featured a fat cigar-smoking capitalist character, a 1916 cartoon by Dmitri Moor used a similar image (Bonnell 1997: 201), and by 1919 the character was increasingly common. Even so, other visual metaphors for capitalism, including a serpentine monster (Dmitri Moor, *Death to World Imperialism*,[207] 1919), and a mythological horned lizard-man beast (Alexander Apsit, *The Internationale*, 1918/19) existed at the time.

The establishment of the fat capitalist ideologeme in Soviet visual language, the consolidation of the Soviet state, and the inauguration of *Krokodil* magazine all occurred in the same historical moment, and the journal thus played an important role in stabilising and popularising certain critiques of non-Soviet ideology and the explanation of the Soviet state's ideological opposition to capitalism. As Bonnell has

---

[204] See 'Labour Wants "A Place in the Sun"', in *The Daily Herald*, 1913, and 'Economic Darwinism', in Cartoons (London, 1913).

[205] See (Dyrenfurth and Quartly 2009)

[206] Russian cartoonists and producers of *lubok* art made criticisms of social and political problems but made little explicit comment upon capitalism (Bowlt 1975).

[207] Smert' mirovomu imperialismu.

shown, the establishment of certain visual codes, such as the visual cliché of the capitalist, was closely tied to terminology popularised by the Bolsheviks in the months following the October Revolution in 1917, and trends in language were echoed by shifts in visual tropes, as artists eschewed lubok-style narrative images in favour of satirical caricatures of individuals or groups of Soviet enemies. Bonnell argues that this change represented an important evolution in Soviet visual culture, and was formative in the subsequent development of graphic satire (1997: 200). Undoubtedly, the reappearance of recognisable characters in Soviet visual culture did mark the beginning of a tradition of graphic satire. Moreover, it is my contention that the visual ideologeme of the capitalist was a more complex phenomenon than a visual symbol that simply followed its spoken equivalent. Rather, it was a visual performative extension of the term and it defined and elucidated the ideological concept. The ideologeme, in other words, encapsulated and conveyed all of the ideological associations of the linguistic term, but visualised them in a way that memorably contributed meaning.

As Bonnell suggests, the familiar capitalist caricature was derived from an image created by Sergei Chekhonin for the celebrations for the first anniversary of the revolution, in which a hammer-wielding worker prepares to strike a tiny capitalist (Bonnell 1997: 201). By the end of the Civil War period, then, the capitalist character was conventionalised in graphic satire as a visual ideologeme and had entered the Soviet visual lexicon thanks to posters such as Victor Deni's 1919 poster 'Capital' ('*Kapital*') and his 1920 'Capitalists of the World, Unite!' ('*Kapitalisty vsekh strain soediniaites'!*'). At the same time, it was also established as a popular visual critique of capitalist ideology. The Soviet caricature of the capitalist shared similarities with its counterpart in Anglophone satire, perhaps unsurprisingly, given the origin of the character and the fact that capitalism was frequently depicted in Soviet graphic satire as a foreign phenomenon.

The strongest ideological critique was communicated through the capitalist ideologeme's physical form and gestures. He was always an ageing, white male who was corpulent or even obese, and the character's grotesqueness (which carried its own ideological associations, as Section 1.4.1 suggests) is further emphasised through his gestures. Bodily and facial gestures in *Krokodil* cartoons were central in the performance of ideological belief and could contribute to the ideological critique implied by the image. The performativity of gesture in drawn images is little researched, but Fein and Kasher's application of Austinian theory to comics (1996) shows the importance of gesture in communicating the force of an utterance in visual language. In many *Krokodil* cartoons of this period, the capitalist appeared as a rather beleaguered and desperate figure. Frequently, the capitalist's agony is the

consequence of a Soviet triumph. In some cases, news of the development is relayed via a radio, as in Evgenii Gorokhov's 'Monday: A Hard Day' (see Figure 94). Here, Soviet achievements provoke anguish and inflict discomfort upon the capitalist. The cartoon shows him covering his ears in agony in order to drown out news of the success of the Soviet manned space mission of October 1964. *Krokodil* artists employed a comics technique to clarify the direct connection between the communication of the achievement and the impact upon Western capitalists. The sound waves that convey the message about the cosmic achievements of the Soviet Union do not strike the capitalist's ears, but his gesture, facial expression and the direction of his gaze indicate that he is suffering pain as a result of what he hears. In two Efimov cartoons (1956: 7/11, and 1956: 7/11), sound waves carrying the news from the USSR literally impact upon the capitalist listener, and their effect is indicated by the gestures of the capitalist characters. In all cases, the news from the USSR would only be objectionable to the most unreasonable, and the capitalist character thus, through his physical reactions, performs his ideological opposition to the Soviet Union.

Figure 94: Gorokhov, E. *Monday: A Hard Day.*
Krokodil, 1964: 30/9.

In other images the capitalist's demeanour reflects the inevitable progress of his natural decline. In 'Sewn with White Thread' (see Figure 95), for instance, the figure of capitalism remains, despite the efforts of some creative tailors, decrepit and grotesque. Supported by two walking sticks, the sickly aged figure inspects the reflection of his face (which is even more hideous than his own) in a mirror. Even the floral drapery being secured around his shoulders with a banner that adds 'Peoples'' (*'Narodnyi'*) to the label 'Capitalism' that he already wears cannot beautify him. The image includes a text that quotes a speech by Dmitri Shepilov, Editor in

Chief of *Pravda* and ally of Nikita Khrushchev, which rather dismissively explains that an American travelling exhibition entitled "People's Capitalism" is planned in the United States, as well as pointing out the inherent contradiction in the notion of popular capitalism.[208]

Figure 95: Ganf, Iu. *Sewn with white thread.* (*Shito belymi nitkami.*)
Krokodil **1956: 7/10.**

Such explanatory additions to images were not uncommon in *Krokodil*. They usually quoted a political authority in the USSR or referred to events or news reports abroad. These contexts contextualised the narrative of the image, and provided the reader with further resources to assist in interpreting the cartoon. The text and cartoon image are mutually illustrative and they serve as performative interpretations of each other. The ideological meaning of the capitalist's facial gesture is reinforced by the text, which lends the image credibility and weight through its apparently objective truthfulness. Like the satirical theatre sketches that were interspersed with news reports in the early years of the Bolshevik regime (see Section 3.3.1 below), cartoons containing texts referring to real events, reported outside the magazine, represented a performative mode in their own right.

All of the images discussed above explore the possibility of the materiality of the body prior to its signification. In some cases, the characters' form is signification of the political beliefs that constitute them. I would like to stress that, to use Butler's

---

[208] Caption reads: 'Informatsionnoe agentstvo [SShA.—Red.] organizovalo dazhe spetsial'nuiu vystavku pod nazvaniem "narodnyi kapitalizm", kotoraia budet demontrirovat'sia na iarmarkakh vsego mira. No "narodnyi kapitalizm"—eto takaia zhe bessmyslitsa kak zharenyi led (smekh). (Iz rechi tov. D.T. Shepilova na KHKH s'ezde KPSS).'

terms, these characters are performatively constructed—their behaviour and appearance is the product of the effect of an ideological core transcribed onto their surfaces. The capitalist's obesity and grotesqueness is an embodiment of his ideological unpleasantness. In Figure 92, characters whose material forms represented a transcription of ideological belief themselves acted as weapons. These figures (the financier, the spies, Adenauer) believed in and performed ideological opposition to communism.

It is important to note, however, that *Krokodil*'s performativity was always more complex than the foregoing analysis has suggested. While the capitalist's bodily surface always materialised his psychological core, many *Krokodil* cartoons suggest a more complex understanding of ideology. In many images, rather than being embodied, ideology was manifested as a costume or mask, to be worn over the bodily surface. *Krokodil*'s vision, then, suggested that, while outward signification is representative of an individual's true beliefs, masquerade may symbolise falsely or theatrically performed beliefs. *Krokodil*'s graphic critique therefore betrays a sceptical and even ambivalent attitude. In Figure 92, for example, Ganf also includes other figures (the Wehrmacht soldier, Shek and Rhee) whose outer psychic spaces imply a duality of effects. These characters' bodily forms bear the signs of ideological struggle—they are associated with their ideological cousins by proximity in this image (and by convention in the extra-artistic context of this image) yet they do not appear to enjoy the same strength of belief. In the narrative of the image, the explanation for the difference may be found in the importance of the role each symbol played. While finance, weaponry and war were very important (as implied by their cards' suits) forces in the ideological contest, and while spying and diversion were important though largely unseen and secretive strategies, the Nazis, Shek and Rhee were relatively valueless. They were, as the caption says, worms that might be bought by Washington. In that sense, these cards do not belong in the same pack as the others. The German characters are after all; we are told, borrowed 'from Hitler's deck'.

Krokodil's performative cartoons, like other normative Soviet discourses, commonly employed the metaphor of a disguise or mask to convey notions of dishonesty and deceit. The performative power of costume and masquerade was often employed in order to signify the adoption of different ideological identities, to invite the readers' consideration of which layer of the body's surface contained the character's 'true' identity, and (often) to imply the impossibility of achieving psychological-ideological transformation. A character's psychological condition, as well as his assumed identity, might be indicated by the costume assigned to him. Characters were created with different surface-level features, however, and clothing might perform the function of (more or less completely) hiding an individual's bodily

form. The capitalist's pot-bellied physique was conventionally costumed in a pin-striped suit and a top hat. This attire marked the character as a capitalist, but it also assumed an independent performative agency, as I explain below.

While the mask has received considerable attention in scholarly circles, theatrical costume has been rather neglected. Donatella Barbieri notes that, without its own scholarly discourse, theatre costume is subsumed into the performer's body, and along with its contribution to the performance, the problem remains unexplored (2012). The scholarly treatment of the subject, then, mirrors the performative effect of the costuming of the body. The costume becomes part of the body it obscures, in the act of dressing, but the viewer's awareness of the presence of the costume creates an unsettling sense that the boundary between real and unreal has been merged, and that the essential reality of the body has been obscured. The performance of dressing becomes part of the performance of the gendered body, moreover. As my analysis shows, *Krokodil*'s 'contesting' cartoons explored the question of the appearance and reality of the costumed body and problematise the issue of where the two meet.

Masquerade was an important element in Soviet satirical theatre, since, as *Krokodil* shows us, it had great satirical potential as a dramatic device. Although the mask is understood to represent simply the most superficial performance of an identity, the space behind the mask is populated by other identities. Obscuring identities and unmasking the truth became something of an obsession in *Krokodil*, despite the fact that carnivalesque masquerade does not necessarily conceal counter-cultural forces. This interest, however, invites the question of whether any visage represents the true face of the actor, and whether any mask matches the identity of the actor as he appears. The presence of the performative mask, which 'is the very image of ambiguity, the variety and flux of identities that otherwise, unmasked, are conceived as single and fixed' (Clark and Holquist 1984: 304), is unsettling for the viewer because it indicates the duality of existence, and the deceptiveness of appearances.

Masquerade was an important metaphor in *Krokodil*'s 'contesting' cartoons, since it provided artists with the opportunity to visualise the attempt to hide something that would otherwise be obvious. Cartoons employed masks to disguise the aggressiveness of warmongers and imperialists (1955: 14/16 and 1956: 21/16), and costumes were used to camouflage the true intentions of militarists and capitalists (1955: 13/16). On the front cover of *Krokodil* 1958: 21, for example, was a Efimov cartoon satirizing the capitalist's militaristic greed for oil on the one hand, and the desire to conceal aggressive ambition under a peaceful disguise on the other. He wears a US military uniform, and Efimov shows him being handed an angelic costume. The 'peace costume' ('*mirnyi khiton*'), angel's wings ('*angel'skie krylyshki*')

and 'peace palm branch' ('*pal'movaia vetv' mira*') are indicative of a metaphor employed by *Krokodil* artists to satirise insincere behaviour of all types. The costume items, straight off their hanger and labelled with their inventory numbers attached, refer to the impermanence and capriciousness of an ideological performance.

In 'Sewn with White Thread', Ganf highlights the futility of the attempt to disguise the true nature of capitalism through the narrative of the cartoon but also with his choice of caption. The idiomatic phrase refers to an obvious attempt to make something invisible. This phrase assumed special significance in Thaw-era culture, of course, when it could also be used to describe Stalinism's illusions. The ambivalence of *Krokodil*'s critique of all ideologies was thus apparent even in images that ostensibly referred explicitly to capitalism. Here, the paradoxical and unintentional effect of the use of white thread by the tailor is to draw attention to the deceit. Despite his immobility in this image, the performance of ideological belief is constructed through physical form and facial gesture, as well as the duality of the character's costume.

Krokodil's exploration of the performativity of belief reveals that although ideological belief is always materialised on the bodily surface, the difference between truthful and theatrical ideological performances may be imperceptible. Ideology, moreover, does not provide a reliable determinant, or a comprehensive explanation of all behaviour. Given this potential for ambiguity, then, it was essential to the critique implied of all *Krokodil*'s costumed performers that the reader was gifted a kind of x-ray vision by the cartoonist. The meaning of these cartoons, in other words, was revealed only by the reader's ability—assisted by the cartoonist's cues—to see through the façade. The real message, however, lay in the artist's implicit invitation to the reader to extend this lesson into their experience outside the magazine. The magazine therefore drew the reader's attention to certain ambiguities in its own texts, and it is in these ambiguities that certain unsettling implications may be detected.

3.1.2   Ideological Alliances: Ideologemes at Play

The capitalist, being a visual critique of an ideology rather than an individual identity, performed in different guises and scenarios through embodiment, gesture and costume. Constant reiteration, moreover, was key to the construction of ideological critiques in *Krokodil*. My investigation into the visual ideologeme through certain general conventions is not meant to imply rigidity, however. The capitalist character was not uniformly characterised, and it would be inaccurate to say that visual ideologemes did not evolve or form new meanings through the construction of certain

alliances. It is clear that *Krokodil*'s artists enjoyed relative creative freedom regarding their visual ideologemes. How were new ideological commentaries shaped in the magazine's political cartoons? In this section I consider how artistic 'play' contributed to the evolution of the magazine's visual ideologemes.

Many commentators have noted that the fat capitalist character apparently reprised the same performance for seventy years. Stites, for example, criticizes *Krokodil*'s content for being 'painfully repetitive' (2010: 353). Likewise, Low laments the repetition of clichéd forms and the lack of innovation in the magazine: 'too often in Soviet cartoons Capitalists still have the fat white waistcoats and wear the out-of-date top-hats of sixty years ago, although obviously the reality has changed' (1950: 168-169). The existing literature fails to explore the reasons for the constant reiterations of similar content, and it also does not take into account the potential for *Krokodil*'s graphic critiques to evolve and thereby contribute to development of visual ideologemes. My performative reading of *Krokodil*'s cartoons aims to explore the reasons for, and the effects of, the magazine's repetitious tendencies.

In this sub-section I first consider the repetitions in *Krokodil*'s critique of capitalism, before moving on to explore how what Low calls 'tabs of identity'—graphic symbols of idiosyncrasies of appearance, such as Hitler's moustache (Low 1935: 18)—could be condensed together to create new critiques. Gombrich employs the term 'condensation' to describe the cartoonist's 'telescoping of a whole chain of ideas into one pregnant image' (Gombrich 1963: 130). A study of the capitalist visual ideologeme reveals how, through *Krokodil*'s co-creation, seriality, transmediality and high profile, the 'tabs of identity'—his striped suit, top hat, and fat belly—became so closely associated with the caricature and the performativity of the character that they also had the power to embed an ideological meaning in an image when used in isolation. They also embodied ideological critiques that could be transported and augmented as the ideologeme became associated with new characters and critiques. Finally, I suggest how and why *Krokodil*'s cartoons contributed to political discourses.

Before considering artistic 'play' in the creation of new ideological critiques, it is necessary first to explore the repetitions identifiable in *Krokodil*'s critique of capitalism. Broadly, it is true that the capitalist character reprised the same performance for seventy years. When *Krokodil* reprinted cartoons from years before, as it commonly did, there was a remarkable similarity between images. [209] The performa-

---

[209] See Moor's cartoons in *Krokodil* 1958: 28/8-9, and Efimov's in *Krokodil* 1957: 28/4.

tive creation of the capitalist character, however, depended precisely upon its reiteration, and in its constant repetition lies its citational value. As Norris suggests, repetitious Soviet cartoons '*acted* as bearers of a specific form of social memory' (2013: 50) (my emphasis). The repetition of certain norms of representation helped to construct and perpetuate norms of ideological critique. In her study of visual metaphor in cartoons, El Refaie suggests that 'it is possible that the constant repetition of particular metaphors will encourage the unconscious or at least semi-conscious acceptance of a particular metaphorical concept as the normal, natural way of seeing a particular area of experience' (2003: 83). As Norris suggests, it was in their repetitions that Efimov's critiques of capitalism acquired their ideological significance:

> Efimov's remarkably consistent rendering of the West as enemy make his images not just important artifacts of Soviet socialism. To a certain extent, *they were Soviet socialism*. The identification of enemies and the visualization of the West as a corpulent capitalist figure were important visual components to the ongoing processes of defining the enemies of socialism and the qualities of the new Soviet person. (2013: 50) (My emphasis.)

As Norris implies, the ideological critiques reiterated in cartoons came to constitute political discourse. This was an effect of *Krokodil* cartoons' performativity. It is worth remembering that reiteration plays a vital role in performativity theory, for, as James Loxley reminds us, norms 'become law-like only through being repeated' (Loxley 2007: 124). Representational continuity was essential to the magazine's critique of capitalism, moreover. The fat capitalist visual ideologeme was constructed out of borrowed imagery that was foreign to Russia in 1917, of course. Anachronism and anatopism were always defining characteristics of the capitalist in Russo-Soviet graphic satire—he was always an outsider in the narrative, even in images in which he was central. Indeed, in the Thaw era, his anatopism had become a component in the visual critique of the concept of capitalism.

To overlook the manner in which new critiques were constructed in *Krokodil*'s cartoons would be mistaken. By focusing on how the fat capitalist ideologeme provided artists with the opportunity to evolve their performances of ideological identities and behaviours, we may consider how the journal contributed to political discourses. In order to do so, it is necessary to clarify those elements of the capitalist visual ideologeme that transported meanings from one text to another. Indeed, the capitalist's tabs of identity are sufficiently recognisable, as a result of their frequent reiteration in Soviet graphic satire, to have a kind of performative power in their own right: the use of a particular tab of identity could be employed in conjunction with others in order to create a unique critique of a character or an ideology. The capitalist's distinctive body shape was essential to the visual ideologeme, and his obesity became a defining tab of identity, to the extent that his pear-like silhouette

became a referent to capitalism even when used in the depiction of a different character (see Figure 98). American characters, regardless of their other physical features, were often drawn in the shape of the capitalist, with a rotund belly and narrow shoulders. Even this silhouette invoked the connotations of the inscription of ideological belief. In order to explore how the extension of an ideological critique might occur, however, it is more productive to discuss the most distinctive component in the visual composition of the character.

The capitalist's suit was the most powerful element of the ideologeme, and its power enabled *Krokodil* artists to use it to construct different critiques. In some cases, the capitalist's suit was also used to conjoin the character with Uncle Sam, a symbol of the United States. Uncle Sam conventionally wears a suit with stars and stripes in red, white and blue, and is distinguished by being much slimmer than the typical capitalist character and wearing facial hair.[210] Occasionally, however, caricatures appeared in *Krokodil* in which a character resembled both.[211] Where a slimmer capitalist appears, he so closely resembles Uncle Sam that the critique of the capitalist system may also be read as a comment on the American nation. In other images, the suit was employed in order to condense ideas and create less obvious critiques, as in Efimov's 'On the sidelines of the UN' (see Figure 96).
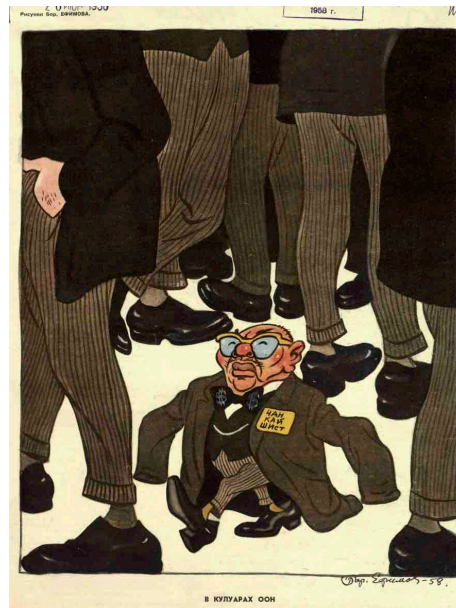
Figure 96: Efimov, B. *On the sidelines of the UN*. (*V kuluarakh oon*.)
***Krokodil* 1958: 17/16.**

---

[210] See 'First trumpet in the Washington Orchestra' ('Pervaia truba v vashingtonskom orkestre')—1963: 11/16.

[211] See 'American missile carrier' ('Amerikanskiy raketonositel'')—1958: 4/11.

In this image, Efimov dresses Chiang Kai Shek in the suit conventionally associated with the fat capitalist ideologeme, implying a criticism of capitalist countries' domination of the United Nations. Specifically, the cartoon draws our attention to the potential performative power of the suit. Self-evidently, Efimov's central comment about Shek is that he believes that his suit possesses the power to transform him. By drawing Shek in this way, however, Efimov conducts an exploration into performativity in cartoons. Here, the implication is that by acquiring some of the accoutrements of the capitalist through dressing like one, a character can acquire all of their other characteristics and become one. The cartoon suggests that the suit is signifier not only of political belief but also of aspiration and desire. Efimov's use of a poorly fitting suit on an exaggeratedly small Shek also implies that he does not belong in the United Nations. Efimov's implicit reference to dressing up, playing in costume and child-like pretending connote a theatrical type of performativity, but inherent in this metaphor is Efimov's secondary comment upon the failed performativity of the capitalist's suit.

This cartoon, which represents an exploration of costume as a technique of graphic satire, is indicative of how an element borrowed from the capitalist visual ideologeme could be used to extend an ideological critique. By picturing a character's attempt to play at being a capitalist, Efimov highlights the costume's failure to effect a transformation of inner core. While the outward signification of ideological identity resembles the other characters', Shek's costume cannot disguise his essential difference. As the next section shows, this was a common theme in *Krokodil* cartoons in The Thaw era, and here Efimov uses one of the cartoonist's standard methods for condensation and satirical transformation to emphasise the failure of a theatrical performance to achieve a psychologically performative act. The image therefore also suggests the impossibility of achieving change in an individual's ideological beliefs. The corporeality of the ideological core resists the transformation suggested by the costume, so that the attempted deception is revealed for ridicule. The theatricality of ideological behaviour itself is thus exposed as a sham. The common opposition of surface and depth, which stand as metaphors for false behaviour and true beliefs in this case, is therefore highlighted as a deception that may be discovered and resisted by a careful observer.

The existing literature on *Krokodil* suggests that political supervision extended to theme selection. Stites argues that the anti-Americanism in *Krokodil*'s cartoons altered 'strictly in line with current foreign policy, swinging from harsh condemnation to mild détente but never warming up' (Stites 2010: 352). This interpretation echoes the explanation of the archetypal analysis of political totalitarianism. Friedrich and Brzezinski suggest that Soviet print media, 'controlled centrally,

repeat day after day the political themes set by *Pravda'* (1965: 144). My analysis of *Krokodil* suggests that a revision of this interpretation is necessary, since the suggestion that the journal simply followed state dicta lacks nuance. A performative reading of *Krokodil*'s graphic satire reveals that the magazine contributed to political discourses more productively than has previously been acknowledged. The extent to which ideological critiques enunciated in *Krokodil* cartoons contributed to political discourse, while difficult to measure with certainty, may be explored in three ways. First, it seems that visual critiques disseminated in *Krokodil* were accommodated into political discourse at the highest level in the USSR. As Figure 97 shows, when leading members of the Communist Party imagined capitalism, they conceived of it in terms borrowed from Soviet graphic satire. This cartoon, which was passed around the table at a Politburo meeting—the cartoon was drawn by Mezhlauk, annotated by Stalin, dedicated by Beria, and gifted to Mikoyan—betrays the influence of the fat capitalist ideologeme on the thinking of leading Soviet politicians. Far from visualising authoritative political speech, *Krokodil* was creating the visual vocabulary in which certain political discourses were framed.

Figure 97: Mezhlauk, V. 1937. Trotsky, Bukharin and Rykov worshipping capitalism. Vatlin and Malashenko (2006: 197). Note that the label 'Capitalism' above the fat capitalist's head was added by Stalin.

Krokodil's second contribution to political discourse was in its revision of recent Soviet history. The 'play' in *Krokodil*'s system of graphic representation—the condensation of multiple 'tabs of identity'—provided opportunities for the creation of new critiques and narratives to be created in *Krokodil*. Many 'contesting' cartoons explained the shift in post-war international relations, but they also narrated the Soviet victory in World War Two in a manner that revised the motivations of former allies. In the period 1954-1964, the fat capitalist visual ideologeme rarely appeared on his own: he was frequently depicted in alliance with at least one other

character. Along with American warmongers, opportunistic West German politi-
cians, mangy British imperialists or cadaverous Hitlers, the capitalist repeatedly
performed the same ideological identity in the pages of the magazine. *Krokodil*'s
reiterative and discursive construction of the alliance of visual ideologemes may be
explored through an examination of cartoons connecting capitalism and Nazism.
Krokodil cartoons depicted the connection between these two ideologies by con-
densing multiple references to different visual ideologemes in the same image (see
Figure 26). Perhaps more importantly, *Krokodil*'s contribution to political discourse
was in its visualisation of the transformation of the West's relationship with fascism
in the years after 1945. In several *Krokodil* cartoons, the evolution of the fascist,
from an enemy to an ally of the West, is visualised. These cartoons mirrored real
changes to military-strategic priorities that occurred in the Soviet Union and the
West in the years after 1945, but they also formed part of the representational
change to treatments of the West that occurred in official-popular culture. At the
same time, they commented upon and thereby allowed a critique of those shifts.

Cartoons visualising alterations to international relations often used the Na-
zi's experience of incarceration as a transformative inventional device. In some
cartoons, prison is the site for ideological or power transfer.[212] Some cartoons im-
plied Nazi ideology was, like a contagion, transmitted from captive to captor, while
others imagined the Nazi as such a cunning character that he managed to dupe his
naïve Western guards into allowing him far too much freedom.[213] These cartoons
relate a narrative in which the Nazi characters' opportunism and the Westerner's
lack of vigilance combine to ensure that, rather than being punished in prison, the
war criminals are allowed to assume a dominant position in the relationship with
their former captors, sometimes even before their release. In Bidstrup's cartoon strip
'How it Ended'—see Figure 98—as the Nazi officer shifts allegiances his relation-
ship with his guard changes. In other examples, the artist juxtaposes two images,
showing the same character before and after the ideological change, so that the
extent of the transformation is only implied by the comparison (1957: 20/16), while
in some cases, the recently assumed identity is not enough to disguise the psycho-
logical motivation (1963: 2/16 and 1956: 27/12).

---

[212] See *Krokodil* 1956: 27/12, and 1957: 20/16.

[213] Other media told the same story—See the animated cartoon *A Lesson Not Learned* (Urok ne
nauchilis') (1971, dir. V. Karavaev).
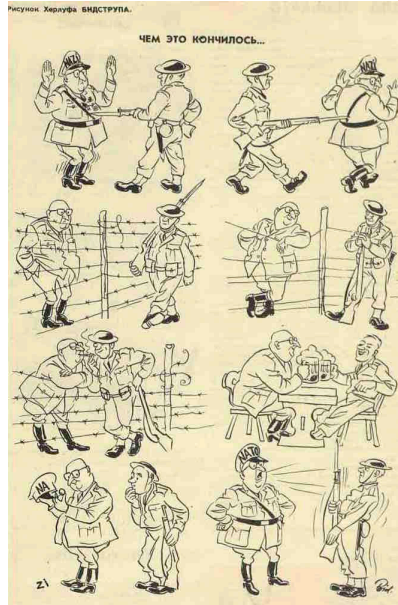
Figure 98: Bidstrup, H. *How it ended… (Chem eto konchilos'…)*
Krokodil **1958: 5/13.**

The journal also contributed to political discourse by narrating the changing relationships between the wartime Grand Alliance members. In this case, *Krokodil*'s contribution was not to changing representations of Nazism.[214] *Krokodil*'s cartoons after the first few months of peace reverted to depicting capitalism in league with Nazism, as they had done in the 1930s. In Semenov's cartoon 'Toilet' ('*Za tualetom*'), a gleeful globe shaves himself free of any trace of Nazism with a razor representing the Soviet Union, the United States and Great Britain (1945: 28/12). This cartoon echoed similar wartime images in which the three allies were symbolised together, united in their opposition against Nazi Germany. Within months of the end of the war, however, the visual rhetoric of *Krokodil*'s cartoons had altered substantially, and the former allies were increasingly imagined as ideological opponents.[215] Studies of Soviet media and attitudes to America produced before 1991 noted *Krokodil*'s tendency to associate Nazism with USA, but their assumption was that graphic satire followed or simply visualised authoritative political speech. Nelson, for example, notes that the depiction of Soviet enemies as fascists followed a

---

[214] Efimov was part of the Soviet press delegation to the Nuremburg War Trials. There, he produced a series of caricatures entitled 'Fascist Menagerie' ('*Fashistskaia zverinets*'). Although these images are much more closely observed than previous images of leading Nazis, they do not suggest a significant shift in ideological attitude.

[215] Four especially interesting images, viewed together, exemplify this evolution. In 1945, the members of the Grand Alliance work harmoniously together towards victory over fascism (see 1945: 25/1 and 1945: 28/12); in 1946, at Nuremburg, Western judges cooperate in order to protect Nazi war criminals (see 1946: 2/12); and in 1947 Britain and USA recklessly re-release Nazism (see 1947: 4/1).

Stalin speech in April 1946, in which he accused foreign powers of making war plans (1949: 12). Norris attributes great significance to Efimov's cartoons, suggesting that, by the end of 1949, Efimov's cartoons 'had mapped out the visual parameters of Soviet Cold War culture' (2013: 40). An analysis of Soviet cartoons shows, moreover, that the Nazification of the West in graphic satire was at least coeval with broader cultural-political shifts. Indeed, in the period 1954-1964, Soviet cartoons employed elements of visual ideologemes and symbols of Nazism and capitalism frequently, contributing to the discourse about American aggression, and constructing new narratives about a coalition of evil ideologies and pseudo-ideologies dedicated to the destruction of communism.

A performative reading suggests a third way in which *Krokodil*'s graphic satire made contributions to political discourses. These cartoons may be understood as 'speech acts' in visual form, and, as such, they may be considered to have possessed a certain kind of illocutionary force. According to J.L. Austin, an illocutionary utterance is a kind of 'speech act', in which 'to *say* something is to *do* something' (1962: 12). The power of an illocutionary speech act lies in its ability to secure in the mind of the listener a firm connection between the speaker's utterance and their intention. Speech act theory, the subject of much scholarly debate,[216] conventionally applies to oral language, but in this chapter, in order to consider the performative power of the political cartoon, I extend that approach to visual language. As I have argued, in a performative reading of a cartoon, the character's embodiment, behaviour and costume is central to the meaning of the image, and indeed these representational choices are the essential methods by which a cartoon can be said to perform an ideology. A performative approach to graphic satire also allows us to consider how the performative construction of a critique in a cartoon may be ideologically productive. Indeed, *Krokodil*'s cartoons participated in the construction of ideological subjectification. Louis Althusser argues that the 'interpellation' of the subject through language is an essential method by which ideology is created (1994: 128-132). The act of identification or name-calling is ideologically productive, and therefore we may contend that the interpellative power of visual language endows the artist with the power to bring the subject into existence in a form of their choosing. Thus, when *Krokodil*'s artists drew symbols of America in league with Nazism they created visual speech acts possessing a certain illocutionary force. As this chapter argues, Soviet graphic satire was intended to deploy this illocutionary force to

---

[216] John Searle and Jacques Derrida famously debated this concept between 1975 and 1988 (Derrida 1977).

achieve certain political goals. As I will contend in later sections, the ultimate object of Soviet graphic satire was to effect a change in the psychology of the reader, but in this section I will consider another illocutionary effect of the cartoon: the power to cause offence.

One incident—the minor diplomatic dispute between the USA and the USSR caused by *Krokodil*'s publication of a Lev Brodaty cartoon in May 1954—will serve to exemplify *Krokodil*'s potential to contribute to political discourse through causing offence. None of the existing literature approaches *Krokodil*'s cartoons in this way, despite the fact that cartoons' power to offend is well understood in the post-Soviet world (see Introduction, Section iii). In my view, however, the responses to Brodaty's cartoon illustrate *Krokodil*'s potential to generate significant political dialogue. Brodaty's cartoon suggested a design for a monument to James Forrestal, former US Secretary of Defence. Forrestal, who suffered from depression and nervous exhaustion before he fell from a sixteenth floor window in the hospital where he was receiving psychiatric treatment after his dismissal in March 1949, was the subject of numerous cartoons. After the publication of this particular cartoon, however, the United States government issued a formal protest to the Soviet Foreign Office (Anon 1954a). The American note squarely blamed the Soviet government for the offense, arguing that Soviet media never published views that were contrary to official opinion.

Figure 99: Brodaty, L. Untitled.
***Krokodil* 1954: 14/11.**

Clearly, Brodaty's image was intended to offend, and in fact, straightjackets and people falling from windows became relatively common in *Krokodil* in the 1950s,[217] suggesting at least that *Krokodil*'s editors were unperturbed by the upset they had caused. The *New York Times* reported a week later that the Soviet Foreign Office had disdainfully returned the protest along with a note explaining that it was being sent back 'without consideration because of its unworthy character' (Anon 1954b). By choosing to interpret the cartoon as an utterance representative of Soviet government opinion, the American government acknowledged the cartoon's authority to contribute to political discourse. The United States' protest demonstrates, then, that in the minds of some viewers, *Krokodil* cartoonists possessed political authority. Regardless of the intentions of party authorities, by virtue of his cartoon's publication in *Krokodil*, an individual producer spoke with the sanction of the Soviet state, and his cartoon was endowed with the authority of a political speaker. This episode demonstrates that, despite its ephemerality and light-heartedness, a political cartoon had the potential to engage governments in official discourse over perceived slights. Causing offence in this way was not uncommon for *Krokodil*. In USA and Britain, *Krokodil*'s cartoons critiquing post-war capitalism attracted much interest,[218] and much of it suggests a voyeuristic curiosity. Nelson warned readers, for example, that his 1949 collection of anti-American cartoons would make them 'embarrassed, contemptuous, offended, and outraged' (1949: 7). Similar offence was caused in the USSR, moreover. In a letter of complaint to the Party Central Committee in response to satires published in *Krokodil* in 1961, aggrieved scientists grumbled that clearly 'the editors of the newspapers and of the journal *Krokodil* have forgotten Lenin's injunction about the need for a caring, sympathetic, and attentive attitude to the human person if they allow filth to be poured on totally innocent people in the pages of their publications' (quoted in Weiner 1999: 307).

As this section shows, *Krokodil*'s cartoons constructed critiques of non-Soviet ideology using visual ideologemes, and this mechanism enabled artists to construct new commentaries that possessed the power to contribute meaningfully to political discourses. Despite the potential for graphic critiques to evolve in *Krokodil*'s cartoons, representational continuity was essential to the magazine's visualisation of capitalism. What, though, were the consequences of the character's permanence? The first important effect of *Krokodil*'s reiterative reinforcement was

---

[217] See *Krokodil* 1954: 16/8, 1955: 17/16, and 1960: 18/16.

[218] Over one hundred articles on *Krokodil* appeared in *The New York Times* alone, between 1954 and 1964.

that the ideologeme confirmed the journal's critique of capitalism as a system that was unable to reform itself and doomed to collapse. In other words, therefore, when a capitalist character appeared in 1990 in precisely the same form as he had been drawn in 1922, the later cartoon indexed the earlier event, and this was precisely the point. Citations, according to Michael Silverstein, are examples of 'interdiscursivity' (2005: 7), the connection of two or more discursive events to form complex acts. The complexity of the interdiscursive act lies not only in the reanimation of all other events in the discourse, which are presenced in the new and perhaps alien context of the citation, but also in the self-referentiality of that very act (Nakassis 2013: 56). The citation functions as such by playing upon the sameness and difference of the cited and the citing, and, in this case, the capitalist's continuity of depiction emphasised his fixity. Capitalism, the cartoons of *Krokodil* suggested, was not able to change itself.

Herein, however, lay a troubling potential for ambivalence, and it was one that echoed *Krokodil*'s own critique of capitalist ideology. The constant repetition of the same graphic critiques created a sense of timelessness and contributed to the sense of permanent immobility I described in Section 1.4.1. If capitalist ideology was depicted as fixed, in stasis and, despite all efforts, impossible to change, and if *Krokodil*'s critique of it was also unchanging, then a reader might question both the image of the ideology, and the basis for the critique itself. Butler argues that citations are potentially fundamentally destabilising: the subject who 'cites' the performative 'is temporarily produced as the belated and fictive origin of the performative itself' (1997: 49). One consequence of *Krokodil*'s constant repetitions, therefore, was that its graphic critiques might seem baseless, fictional or produced only by the magazine's own performative process. The fat capitalist visual ideologeme was, after all, constructed out of borrowed imagery that was foreign to Russia in 1917: Anachronism and anatopism were always defining characteristics of the capitalist in Russo-Soviet graphic satire. The capitalist was always depicted as an outsider, even in images in which he was central. Indeed, in the Thaw era, although his anatopism had become a component in the visual critique of the concept of capitalism, that very fact had the potential to undermine the plausibility of the criticism being performed. Moreover, the ambivalence implied by *Krokodil*'s exploration of the performance of ideological identities might lead some readers to question whether the magazine's critique actually applied to all ideologies. As the rest of this chapter will explain, *Krokodil*'s sceptical satirical attitude implied a faithlessness in all ideologies as guides to everyday existence or as interpretive resources.

3.2   De-centring Visual Discourse: Affirmative Satire in *Krokodil*

Having considered *Krokodil*'s performative construction of anti-Soviet ideology, I now turn to the performance of Soviet ideology in cartoons that affirmed the USSR's political project and authority figures. If we look in *Krokodil*'s affirmative cartoons for a positive antithesis of the fat capitalist visual ideologeme, we find none. *Krokodil*'s affirmative imagery apparently lacks the equivalent of a capitalist visual ideologeme, who was reiteratively and discursively constructed and who theatrically performed ideologically motivated acts in the magazine's cartoons. We might expect to find cartoons featuring the heroic Soviet worker, who figured in so many products of socialist realist culture, but this character did not appear frequently enough in *Krokodil* to perform the same function as the capitalist visual ideologeme. Moreover, we might anticipate that *Krokodil* would regularly contain affirmative images of Lenin, Stalin and Khrushchev, especially since, as Figure 100 shows, the USSR's political leaders frequently appeared in other printed media. *Krokodil* adopted different strategies when devising affirmative images, however. Affirmative cartoons in *Krokodil* very rarely visualised Soviet politicians, although there were exceptions (see Figure 76).

| Stalin, pictured on the front page of *Pravda*, May 10, 1945. | Khrushchev, pictured on the front page of *Ogonek*, October 1960. | Khrushchev, pictured on a poster, with Lenin, 1962. |

Figure 100: Affirmative images featuring Soviet leaders in different media.

As a consequence, since images of those at the centre were so rare, we may describe *Krokodil*'s affirmation of Soviet ideology as being hollow. Instead, as Section 1.2.2 explains, affirmative images in *Krokodil* visualised Soviet ideology as it was manifested in the ideal practices of Soviet everyday life and in the achievements of ideologically conscious individuals (see Figure 101). The problem to be investigated in this section relates to the apparent absence of positive visual ideologemes in *Krokodil*'s affirmative images.
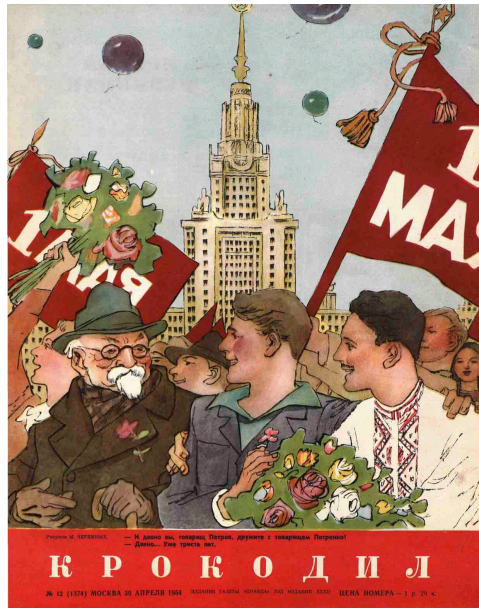
Figure 101: Cheremnykh, M. Untitled.
Krokodil 1954: 12/1.

In the existing literature on *Krokodil*, which, as the Introduction explains, often fails to distinguish between cartoons 'affirming' Soviet ideology and images of Soviet communism in the act of 'becoming', the question of how ideology was affirmed graphically is rather neglected. As I explain in Section 3.2.1, existing interpretations of *Krokodil* argue that the journal never visualised the USSR's political leaders. *Krokodil*'s vision of Soviet ideology, being essentially hollowed out, must therefore be understood as providing a picture of visual discourse, de-centred. Such an explanation has only been implied in previous literature, and then only through content analysis. When Stites detects an overall picture that was 'a cross between an idyll and an epic…pastoral scenes, warm home life, peaceful citizens going about their business in an aura of optimism […] high energy achievements in technology (2010: 353), he suggests that *Krokodil*'s affirmative art looks beyond the politicians at the centre and instead visualises how ideology is understood and performed at the margins.

In this section, I aim to consider the effects of *Krokodil*'s satire upon its treatment of Soviet ideology. As the previous section showed, the performative signification of ideology on the bodily surface was extremely influential in *Krokodil*, but this section investigates the possibility of productive performativity when the physical body was absent or invisible. If *Krokodil* almost never visualised Soviet leader figures, why was that, and what were the implications of their absence? How far, for example, could *Krokodil* contribute to ideological discourses, and could these contributions include satirical critiques of ideology or government policy? A performative reading of *Krokodil*'s cartoons is helpful here because it enables us to interpret the journal's own performance. *Krokodil*'s visualisation of the ideal and

ideologically informed behaviour of Soviet citizens itself represented a performance. As this section explores, *Krokodil* was always concerned with visualising the invisible, but this presented political cartoonists with a problem: if we cannot see a picture of something (an ideology, or a leader figure) in a graphic text, how do we still 'see' it? As I argue throughout this chapter, the solution was to depict the absent entity by performatively constructing characters whose appearances and behaviour manifested the effects of ideology. The magazine thereby performed its own acts of engagement with all of the dominant popular-official themes of the Thaw era. In the absence of a regularised visual ideologeme who represented Soviet ideology itself, the magazine's affirmative cartoons implied a troubling hollowness, and *Krokodil*'s affirmation was therefore ambivalent and had the potential to undermine normative discourses.

3.2.1 *Krokodil*'s Hollow Centre: The Absence of Ideological Master Figures

If we search in *Krokodil* for visual ideologemes symbolising communism we discover a troubling absence. On first inspection, issues of *Krokodil* in the period 1954-1964 appear to feature almost no images referring to the Communist Party's leaders. This is not an insignificant observation. Indeed, *Krokodil*'s apparent myopia towards Soviet leader figures and many of the USSR's most significant problems represents one of the defining characteristics and most essential criticisms of Soviet satire in the existing literature. Most existing accounts, indeed, imply the existence of a formal ban on satirising the Communist Party. Henry's explanation of the proscription of satires of Soviet politics is typical:

> 'In Soviet Russia some things cannot be joked about. There is no satire about Lenin and Stalin who were deified out of the reach of satire, the one after his death, the other during his life. Similarly, no jokes are published about the fundamental principles of Communism or the current leadership—but there are plenty of private ones' (1972: xvi)

Kavalerov suggests that 'certain topics such as The Party Itself, Party Leadership and Party Doctrine' were off limits for official satirists (1971: 9), while Stites argues that 'they could strike out at social abuses but not at the system' (2010: 351-2). On the other hand, Pehowski, quoting the magazine's editors, asserts that 'from government or party there are no official taboos or even "guidelines"' (1976: 2), and she is alone in suggesting that in the journal 'there is little evident favouritism of the elite or powerful' (Pehowski 1976: 9). There is, however, some disagreement on the degree of absence from satire enjoyed by political leaders. Some writers, like Benson, argue that 'No caricature of Stalin as leader ever appeared in a cartoon in the

Soviet press while he was alive' (2012: 16).[219] McKenna points out that 'neither Lenin nor Stalin had ever appeared in Soviet political cartoons' but distinguishes between this absence and their appearances in 'friendly sketches' (2001: 109). Sarah Davies agrees, acknowledging that leader figures did appear in the magazine, but asserting that 'The official satirical journal, *Krokodil*, never made fun of the *vozhdi*' (1997: 153). All of these explanations are broadly accurate, and, in a state that sys-tematised political repression and had no effective checks on power, a lack of sanc-tioned jokes about the Soviet leadership and an aversion to caricaturing individual government officials should hardly be surprising.

In fact, *Krokodil* did visualise Soviet politicians, and in this section, without overstating their significance, I trace their 'absent presence' by considering how Soviet leaders were depicted in the magazine. The term 'absent presence' suggests that, even when Soviet leaders were physically absent, their presence was still im-plied. I aim to nuance our understanding of *Krokodil*'s apparent hollowness by considering the reasons for, and the implications of, the absence of the USSR's leading authorities. Problems of presence and absence characterized the Stalinist approach to the politics of aesthetics. The presence or absence of a figure was more a political than an aesthetic fact, in Soviet visual culture. Enemies of the people were obliterated in photographs and textbooks immediately after their political destruction in the 1930s (see King 1997: 9-10), and presence beside Lenin or Stalin was indica-tive of leadership status (see Plamper 2012: 97). Where convention suggested that presence in state media was equatable with political power or personal prestige, in *Krokodil* the issue was significantly more complex.

As this sub-section argues, Khrushchev, Lenin and Stalin seldom appeared in *Krokodil* in the post-war period. Stalin's almost total absence was in complete con-trast to his ubiquity in other media between 1945 and 1953, which made *Krokodil* almost unique in Soviet state publishing. Satirical treatments of Stalin and Stalinism appeared in the USSR before and after Glasnost, they were published in the West more commonly from the 1960s, and they also appeared in self-published (samizdat) texts, but *Krokodil* generally did not satirise Stalin during The Thaw.[220] Not only did Stalin remain almost absent from *Krokodil* after his death, but very rare too were discourses about the removal of his influence. The magazine therefore presents a unique and important avenue for investigating popular-official responses to Stalin,

---

[219] See also Low (1950: 169-170) and Aulich (2005: 13).

[220] For a study of Stalin in Russian satire see Ryan (2009).

the Personality Cult and the de-Stalinisation process. *Krokodil* has not been approached in this way before, and my contribution to the discussion of the post-Stalin period is to consider the question of how the magazine's cartoons contributed to the performance of affirmation, even when the political leaders were bodily absent.

In order to explore the way *Krokodil* performed Soviet ideology without invoking (the living or dead bodies of) Soviet leaders, Derrida's term 'trace' is helpful. Describing not the object itself, but the empty substitution for it, Derrida's 'trace' refers to the impression or mark made by the absence of a presence. The term 'trace' is helpful because it refers to any 'mark made by or gesturing towards something pre-existing and non-linguistic that the trace points to' (Gaston and MacLachlan 2011: 47), but also because it pre- and post-dates the object. As Derrida says, 'The trace, where the relationship with the other is marked, articulates its possibility in the entire field of the entity [*étant*], which metaphysics has defined as the being-present starting from the occulted movement of the trace. The trace must be thought before the entity' (Derrida 1974: 47). Since Soviet leaders were never fully present or truly absent from *Krokodil*, the term 'trace' is appropriate to describe their non-appearance in the magazine.

Before considering the absence of Soviet leaders, and in order to clarify our understanding of this phenomenon, I wish to highlight certain instances where politicians did appear in the magazine. Figure 102 and other images in this sub-section illustrate some of the occasions when Soviet leaders were pictured in *Krokodil*. Several things become clear from a study of these images. Self-evidently, Soviet politicians were visualised in satirical imagery, so the suggestion that they were entirely avoided by Soviet graphic satire must be qualified. First, although they appeared, they did so only rarely, and they cannot be said to have performed communist ideology. Soviet leaders participated in the performance of ideological actions, but in general in *Krokodil*, Soviet ideological authorities did not perform ideology. Their presence or slight gesture, indeed, was enough to prompt others to perform. Where they appeared, they did so as individuals whose personas and political identities communicated messages about communist ideology without them having to perform, and they symbolised ideological orthodoxy or canonism rather than the act of performance. Second, like the depiction of bureaucrats or low-level government employees, Trotsky, Kamenev and Zinoviev (see Figure 102) and Khrushchev (see Figure 106 and Figure 107), visualisations of Stalin and Lenin in *Krokodil* were not always respectful. Henry was correct to suggest that Soviet state-sponsored culture expended little energy on satirizing these politicians, but Stalin in particular, like other Soviet leaders, did appear in cartoon images, in *Krokodil* and in other publications.
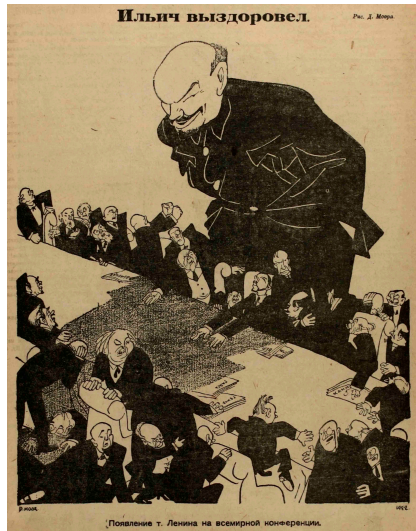
Moor, D. Il'ich recovered. (Il'ich vyzdorovel.)
Krokodil 1922: 7/3.
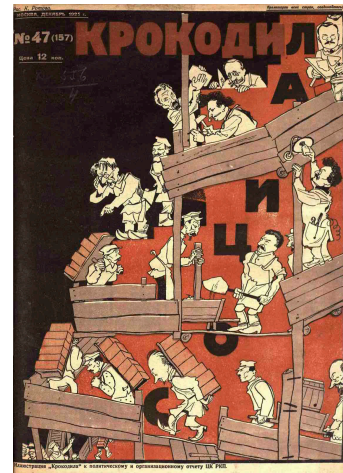
Rotov, K. Untitled. *Krokodil* **1925: 47/1.
Communist Party leaders building
socialism. Trotsky and Stalin are in
the centre-right of the image.**

Eliseev, K. Druzheskii sharzh (Stalin). *Krokodil*
1925: 47/3.

Eliseev, K. *Tired of this music! Krokodil*
1927: 44/1.
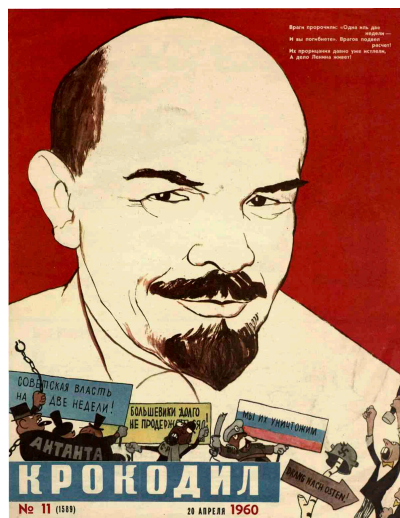
Druzheskii sharzh (Lenin). *Krokodil* **1960:
11/1**

Shtabel', A. *The shadow that lasts longer than
a century.* (*I dol'she veka dlisia ten'...*)
Competition winner, published in *Kro-
kodil* **(1989: 35/1).**

Figure 102: Various artists. Images of Soviet leaders in *Krokodil*, **1922-1989.**

He was caricatured in the pre-war period, and not always entirely flatteringly, and he appeared at times after his death as well (see Figure 103).[221] It is important to note, however, that *Krokodil*'s depictions of Stalin were never humorous. His physical form was not made grotesque, his behaviour was not ridiculed, and official media found nothing humorous about him: he was not the subject of jokes in *Krokodil*, but he was the object of satire.
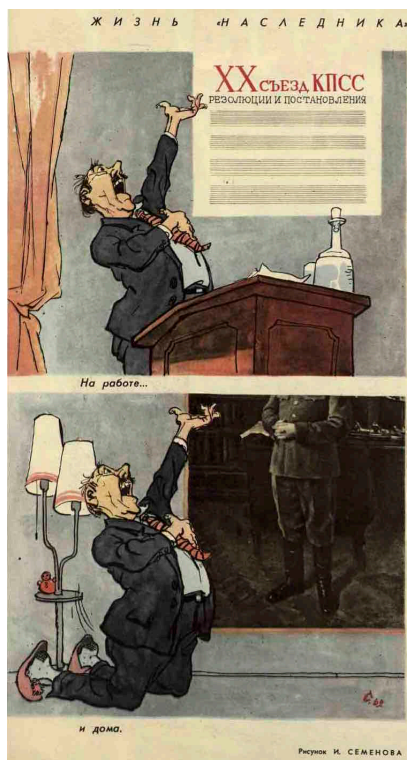
Figure 103: Semenov, I. *The Life of the Heir*. (*Zhizn' "naslednika".*)
***Krokodil* 1962: 34/2.**

On 10th December 1962, *Krokodil* published a cartoon by Ivan Semenov entitled 'The Life of the Heir', in which the hypocrisy of a Communist Party member is highlighted (see Figure 103). The repetition of the character's entreating gesture in the very different contexts 'At work' ('*Na rabote*') and 'at home' ('*i doma*') provides a warning about the difficulties of authenticating public utterances and physical gestures. Between the protagonist's public avowal of the resolutions and decisions of the 20th Party Congress, at which the Cult of Personality was discredited by Khrushchev, and his private allegiance to a large portrait of Stalin, we are presented with an image that sums up some of the complex problems of The Thaw period. Semenov's cartoon raises questions of life, death and undeath; relationships

---

[221] That this cartoon was exceptional is indicated by an article in the Washington Post in December 1962, which claims that this was the first time a Soviet cartoon had featured Stalin.

between Stalin, Khrushchev and the Party; and the possibility of presence, absence and trace. As this section and the rest of the chapter will show, Semenov's cartoon is of fundamental importance to our understanding of the magazine's performance of ideology during the post-Stalin period.

Semenov's concern in this cartoon is the hidden perpetuation of Stalinism in Soviet political life. His title quotes a poem by Evgenii Evtushenko. First performed in 1961, the poem was apparently deemed helpful to the policy of de-Stalinisation, but *Pravda* nevertheless required Khrushchev's personal authorization before they published Evtushenko's 'The Heirs of Stalin' ('*Nasledniki Stalina*') on 21 October 1962 (S. Khrushchev 2001: 709n6). The poem warns:

> Believing in the great goal,
> he judged all means justified
>   to that great end.
> He was far-sighted.
>   Adept in the art of political warfare,
> He left many heirs
>   behind on this globe.
> I fancy
>   there's still a telephone in that coffin:
> Stalin instructs
>   Enver Hoxha.
> From that coffin where else does the cable go?
> No, Stalin has not given up.
>   He thinks he can
>   outsmart death.
> We carried him from the mausoleum.
> But how to carry Stalin's heirs
>   away from Stalin!
> Some of his retired heirs tend roses,
> thinking in secret
>   their enforced leisure will not last.
> Others,
>   from platforms, even heap abuse on Stalin
> but,
>   at night,
>   yearn for the good old days. (Johnson 1965: 94).

Echoing Evtushenko's final few lines, Semenov imagines an 'heir' who secretly yearns for the return of Stalinism, despite his public professions to the contrary. Like Evtushenko, Semenov's cartoon thus visualises the undeath of Stalin and the perpetuation of Stalinism in the USSR, depicting an undead figure—decapitated but still standing, restrained inside a frame and confined to the privacy of this man's home but still demanding loyalty. This cartoon exemplifies *Krokodil*'s engagement with, and its ability to amplify and contribute to, topical discourses in other media, and it turned the visual language of Stalinism into a vehicle for discussing de-Stalinisation.

As earlier chapters explained, the two-part image held particular ideological significance in the Stalin period, but in this case, Semenov employs a visual strategy that was previously used to envision the Stalinist worldview in order to construct his critique of discourses of de-Stalinisation. As this chapter shows, in the post-Stalin period, *Krokodil* continued to use the two-part device, but what is striking about this image is the way Semenov's decision to structure his image in itself communicates an ideological critique. The question of how these compositional devices were turned back upon the discourses of Stalinism has not been explored in the existing literature, but this image provides a fascinating example. As we know from Section 1.2.1, images in which alternative visions were juxtaposed in separate frames for direct comparison were common before 1953. In 1952, ten of *Krokodil*'s 36 front cover images featured some formal or stylistic separation between elements, and the same device was employed in numerous cartoons of lower status. The message of this distinctively Stalinist vision emphasised an 'us/them' or 'either/or' contrast (Bird, Heuer, Jackson, Mosaka and Smith 2011: 25). By contrast, the visual language of the post-Stalin era eschewed this 'diptych' style. Semenov's 1962 cartoon was one of just ten cartoons in all issues in 1962 to employ this binary design. Contrasts and comparisons were still important features of *Krokodil*'s graphic satire in this period, as they are in all political cartoons, but in the Thaw, where the juxtaposition was inherent in the cartoon structure, the image often cited an earlier text or a graphic style from an earlier era (see Figure 111 and Figure 136). More commonly in this period, *Krokodil* cartoons were single-framed, and they combined two visions (see Figure 132); the graphic device by which the two visions were connected was itself part of the construction of the cartoon. Thus, the message of cartoons produced during the period 1954-1964 was that both visions could be true at same time. Semenov's composition in 'The Life of the Heir' must therefore be seen as a multi-layered contribution to the discourse on de-Stalinisation. Semenov's composition emphasises the fact that exhortation towards post-Stalin reform and veneration of the fallen leader are embodied in identical gestures. Not only does Semenov warn his reader about the dangers posed by the continuation of the Stalin Cult, but also he implies that denunciation and exultation of the fallen leader might be equally mistaken. Like many of the cartoons discussed in this chapter, this image is notable because it performs an exercise in seeing satirically, for the reader's benefit. The reader is instructed on the unreliability of both speech and physical appearance as a guide to inner psychology. The cartoon thus performs the function of a kind of x-ray vision, assisting the reader's interpretation of meaning. This echoes the interrogation of ideological identities to be found in *Krokodil*'s 'contesting' cartoons, but here the method has more significantly ambiguous consequences.

In its immediate historical context, this cartoon supports the suggestion that the magazine adopted the role of a political activist. The post-Stalin era was a period of increasing popular participation in political affairs, and Khrushchev's speeches since 1959 consistently called for a participatory political culture in which collective public action and the mobilization of the moral weight of the majority became a method of mass monitoring and social control (Kharkhordin 1999: 298-9). This particular image was published shortly after a Central Committee Plenum (19-23 November 1962) at which Khrushchev announced the creation of the Party-State Control Committee of the Soviet Communist Party and the Council of Ministers of the USSR. This innovation, part of Khrushchev's 'new period of Communist construction' requiring 'Social discipline' and 'attitudinal homogeneity' (Breslauer 1982: 69), was part of a tacit admission that action was necessary against party members who committed criminal acts. The organisation's main function was to serve as a deterrent against embezzlement and theft of public property, to prevent active Party members from making errors, and to direct them towards compliance with Party and government institutions (Boim 1966: 67). In 1962: 34, *Krokodil* interpreted the new institution as a call to arms. On the front page, the red crocodile, wearing a red armband labeled 'Public control' ('Obshchestve… kontrol'') marches up the front steps of a building named after the Party-State Control Committee, under the title 'To the new address—I hasten to report' ('Po novomu adresu ...speshu dolozhit'). While other cartoons in the issue were dedicated to the illegal or immoral actions the Control Committee was set up to tackle, Semenov's cartoon was directed at a different kind of 'error'.

Despite the centrality of discourses about de-Stalinisation in the Khrushchev period, Semenov's cartoon is a rare example of an officially sanctioned cultural treatment of the theme. The cartoon is distinctive for two reasons. First, despite the approval that its parent poem received from Khrushchev, the cartoon is segregated from the rest of the magazine. While the Control Commission cartoons on pages 2-3 appear under the same title as the image on the front cover, 'The Life of the Heir' does not. Taking up half of page 2, the cartoon is separated by a blue line from the other images on the Control Commission theme, which stretch across the rest of the page and all of page 3. Its encirclement, like a quarantine, separates it from the rest of the magazine. In several ways, then, this cartoon represents a very unusual contribution to the popular-official discourse on de-Stalinisation.

A similar quarantining, through mediation, of Stalin images also occurs in the issue of *Krokodil* that appeared immediately after his death. Figure 104 is the only image of Stalin in the issue, half of which is devoted to visual and written eulogies.

Figure 104: Stalin, mediated.
Krokodil 1953: 7/2.

The only cartoon to feature Stalin in the period 1954-1964 is Semenov's, and his image similarly presents the reader with an already mediated vision. Given the large number of affirming images in the magazine, and his prevalence in other media, even after the de-Stalinisation process had begun, this is a remarkable fact. *Krokodil* thus depicts Stalin's 'absent presence'. Although Stalin is clearly visible, the artist's visual strategy and the subject of the picture is the paradox of his politically expedient absence, in spite of his perennial presence. As in Evtushenko's poem, Stalin remains present but hidden: this 'heir' can only acknowledge the presence of Stalin at home. He appears only as a painting, so his presence is double mediated, and moreover, although we recognize Stalin's portrait from his stance, clothes and boots, he is only partially present because his upper torso and head are not included.

The example of *Krokodil* magazine shows that in satirical commentary, which had the power to undermine normative discourses and therefore generally avoided depicting politicians, the USSR's senior-most leaders were always present by implication. The question of presence and absence of political leaders in Soviet culture is central to issues of power and control of images. While both Lenin and Stalin died, and were embalmed and displayed in the Red Square Mausoleum (albeit briefly in Stalin's case), in neither case did the individual's death lead to his disappearance from Soviet public discourse or official culture. The question of the trace of Stalin in *Krokodil* is, to some extent, paralleled by the paradox of his absent presence in other aspects of Soviet life. Stalin's Cult of Personality saturated public space and Soviet media between 1929 and 1953, yet he was generally personally reclusive (Shepilov 2007: 170). As Plamper notes, Stalin's attitude to the Cult may be termed 'immodest modesty', since he publicized his professed disdain for his

veneration, but deliberately expanded it at the same time (2012: 123-4). Visual representations of Stalin became increasingly indirect after 1941 so that Stalin remained present in images, despite actually being absent. Paintings, for example, shifted towards 'absent representations', as Figure 115 shows. Stalin's absence was one that 'implied presence' (Plamper 2012: 59).[222] Plamper's analysis of Stalin's presence in *Pravda* shows that he appeared far less frequently after 1946 than before the war, and that in the year of his death he appeared fewer times than in 1929 when the Cult started.[223] Plamper suggests that this gradual disappearance may be explained by two factors, one artistic and the other political. First, the expansion of radio broadcasting in the USSR prompted changes in the representation of the Soviet leader, since he was now implied in images of radio sets and avid listeners (2012: 59). Second, his increasing absence can be viewed as a kind of visual-psychological preparation for his imminent death (2012: 223).[224] Moreover, Plamper's analysis shows that de-Stalinization began almost immediately, since by 20th March 1953, *Pravda* did not publish a single headline related to Stalin, and during the rest of the year, he appeared in pictures only five times (2012: 84). Of course, Stalin's absent presence in culture was mirrored by the fate of his bodily remains and his political reputation. In February 1956, at the 20th Party Congress, Stalin's Cult of Personality was assaulted by Nikita Khrushchev, and the process of de-Stalinisation entered a new phase. Stalin's physical remains had been embalmed and placed alongside Lenin's in the Red Square mausoleum after his death, but on 31st October 1961, he was removed and buried in an unmarked grave (Jones 2013: 1). The reform agenda of the new Soviet leadership and their search for legitimacy, as well as the colossal impact of Stalinism on the USSR meant, however, meant that Stalin was never truly absent from the Soviet Union, as Evtushenko's poem and Semenov's cartoon suggests.

The suggestion that Soviet leaders were physically absent from all graphic satire is complicated by a study of images featuring Nikita Khrushchev. As McKen-

---

[222] Stalin himself commented upon the paradox of his absence from his own personality cult when he admonished his adopted son for using his famous surname to avoid punishment for a drunken indiscretion: 'You're not Stalin and I'm not Stalin. Stalin *is* Soviet power. Stalin is what he is in the newspapers and the portraits, not you, not even me!' (Montefiore 2003: 4).

[223] See Plamper (2012: 228). Stalin's appearances fell from 142 (in 1939) to 53 (in 1945), 23 (in 1952) and just 6 times in 1953.

[224] Stalin was indeed too ill to attend much of the 19th Party Congress in October 1952 (McCauley 2014: 292) and was apparently taking steps to ensure his own political succession (Medvedev and Medvedev 2003: 40-41).

na (2001: 109) and Benson (2012: 16) note, friendly sketches of Khrushchev appeared in *Pravda* and *Krokodil* during the period 1954-1964 (among the first of which was Figure 105). This is explained as the graphic response to the post-Stalin period of liberalisation, when *Krokodil*'s satire became more critical (see McKenna 2001: 109, and Stykhalin and Kremenskaia 1963: 210).

Figure 105: Efimov, E. *The Miner's Way.* (*Put' shakhtera*.)
Althaus 2012: 16

What the existing literature omits, however, is a discussion of cartoons that depicted Khrushchev in less friendly hues. As we know, the distinction is conventionally made, in Soviet graphic satire, and in the existing literature, between caricatures and friendly sketches. *Krokodil*, indeed, published several images featuring characters that closely resembled Khrushchev (see Figure 106 and Figure 107). In an untitled front cover image from *Krokodil* 1956: 16, a peasant 'nanny' ('*nianka*') nurses a baby cob of maize while surrounded by nappy-like Communist Party reports and protocols. The nanny might be considered to be a caricature of Khrushchev, a famous supporter of a Soviet switch to maize production in 1954 and 1955, and known as 'Mr Corn' ('*Kukuruzshchik*'). In this cartoon, however, the maize cob ('*Kukuruza*') complains 'With this nurse I'm not growing up quickly' ('S takoi nian'koi ia ne skoro vyrastu'). This infant seems, then, to be suffering from an overbearing compulsion, on the nanny's part, to measure growth and report on progress.

Figure 106: Semenov, I. Untitled.
Krokodil **1956: 16/1**

The cartoon's critique of policies closely associated with Khrushchev continued the following year with another front-page cartoon by the same artist. The resemblance with Khrushchev is again very striking and, as before, the cartoon satirizes a response to a government policy very closely associated with Khrushchev. The cartoon refers to The Law on Strengthening the Fight against Anti-Social, Parasitic Elements, which was drafted in August 1957. This law, which proposed punishments of two-to-five years in exile with forced labour (to be imposed by neighbourhood 'assemblies of citizens' rather than criminal courts) for 'parasitism', which was defined as people who had jobs 'for the sake of appearances' only, since they actually live off non-labour income, or who performed no useful work but engaged in 'vagrancy and begging and often commit crimes' (Fitzpatrick 2006: 388). This law was a personal project for Khrushchev. As party leader in post-war Ukraine he had proposed measures for dealing with 'parasitical and criminal elements, [...] parasites (tuneiadtsy)' which were adopted into All-Union law in 1948. In a 20th Party Congress speech he had continued his attacks on shirkers and parasites, and the 1957 draft law echoed the 1956 speech.[225] Fitzpatrick notes that this law appears to have suffered some significant opposition in 1956 and 1957.[226] Indeed, *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* comprehensively ignored the issue, not even publishing

---

[225] On this law, see also Beerman (1957 and 1960).

[226] Fitzpatrick suggests that this '(leads) one to speculate that the Russian Republic's law was encountering problems not only in Russia's Supreme Soviet (and perhaps judicial institutions) but also in the Soviet party leadership' (2006: 389).

the draft law, and in fact, the relatively unprestigious Sovetskaia Rossiia published the draft law on 21 August 1957. This cartoon is, perhaps, commenting upon the difficulty of reading this new law in its joke about blindness (see Figure 107).

Figure 107: Semenov, I. *See the Light.* (*Prozreli.*)
***Krokodil* 1957: 26/1.**

The Khrushchevian figure, dishevelled and unshaven, and wearing a sign around his neck reading 'Help the blind' ('Podaite slepomu'), turns away from the draft law, with his glasses pushed down, and looks at a similarly conceived character. The caption 'Read it!'/'Read it…' ('Chital!'/'Chital…') provides proof that these beggars will be targeted by the new measure. The implication that Khrushchev's political struggles created uncomfortable situations for him is clear enough for a viewer inclined to look for references to the USSR's political leadership in these two cartoons. As I have shown, Lenin, Stalin, Khrushchev and other Soviet leaders all appeared in *Krokodil* during the period 1954-1964. They do not suggest anti-Sovietism or subversiveness, but rather a willingness to depict Soviet politicians (both physically and in their absent presence). As I argue below, even when Soviet leaders were physically absent, by virtue of the nature of the cartoon medium, they were rendered present by implication. In her exploration of visual metaphor, El Refaie notes that 'an abstract entity cannot be depicted at all without the mediation of symbols or metaphors' (2003: 85). El Refaie (2003) and Forceville (1994) both note that the topics of particular visual metaphors are often absent from images about them. The cartoons discussed above, of course, represent a tiny minority of the images published in Krokodil at this time, and, even if they were sometimes present and always at least traceable, for the majority of the period, it remains true that the magazine largely ignored the USSR's leaders.

The foregoing analysis prompts the question 'Why was *Krokodil* largely blind to the USSR's leaders?' The reasons for, and the implications of, *Krokodil*'s silence on Soviet leaders have not been investigated deeply in previous literature. These problems are the focus of the remainder of this chapter. Indeed, the magazine's selective blindness assumed a moral dimension in the post-Stalin period, just as it does in some of the criticisms of Soviet satire in the subsequent literature (see Introduction, Section iib, above). Silence during times of repression was a particular sore point for the magazine's editors in the period 1954-1964. When at a party meeting at the newspaper *Izvestiia* in March 1956, Grigorii Ryklin (1894-1975; Editor in Chief of *Krokodil* between 1941-1948) suggested that the purges of the 1930s intimidated many into silence: 'We saw that something was going wrong. We were appalled, and yet we kept silent' (quoted in Kozlov 2013: 183). The then-Chief Editor of *Krokodil*, Semenov, disagreed: 'I was not a slave, and the people were not slaves either' (quoted in Kozlov 2013: 184). Semenov's avowal of personal and professional independence from 1956 echoes other statements about the magazine's autonomy from the Thaw period. Indeed, the extent to which *Krokodil* pursued its own satirical agenda is one of the concerns of this thesis. As I argue throughout, *Krokodil* must be understood as a more complex publication than one that simply echoed the voices of political authorities, and it is important to acknowledge that *Krokodil*'s uniqueness, in fact, lies partly in its rare satirical depictions of Soviet politicians.

The significance of the magazine's willingness to satirise those in political authority must not be exaggerated, however. For the most part, Soviet leaders remained bodily absent from *Krokodil*. Our understanding of the magazine, including its satirical role, and the performativity of its images, remains incomplete, though, if we fail to consider the full range of reasons why Soviet satire generally ignored Soviet leaders. Because of the dearth of scholarly attention paid to *Krokodil*, this question has not been fully explored. Here, I suggest eight reasons for the ostensible absence of Soviet politicians from *Krokodil*. The following discussion reflects my interest in moving beyond structuralist interpretations of the journal, as I attempt to extend our understanding of *Krokodil* beyond propaganda. The commonly asserted explanation is that fear of repression precluded the depiction of Soviet political leaders. This explanation implies that the magazine was restricted by punitive government controls. Several scholars imply that satire of the Soviet leadership was prohibited (See Davies 1997: 153, and Stites 2010: 351 and Stites 1992: 136). Efimov frequently recalled how his 'friendly sketch' of Stalin was returned with the note 'do not print' attached (Benson 2012: 16). Aside from this anecdote, I have found no evidence of a formal prohibition on satirical representations of Soviet leaders, nor of any punishment following a breach, other than the rebukes mentioned in Section 2.1.1.

Figure 108: Efimov, B. 1924. Unpublished druzheskii sharzh (Stalin).
Benson (2012: 16).

The repression of graphic satirists has also been suggested as a reason for the absence of satirical comment relating to Soviet leaders. Under Article 58 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR, which was introduced in 1927 and substantially revised, notably in 1934, certain counter-revolutionary crimes, including joke telling, were specified. As I noted in Section 2.1.1, employment on the staff of *Krokodil* did not bring immunity from prosecution, but self-censorship and fear of arrest must have influenced artists and editors who might otherwise have been tempted to make jokes at their leaders' expense. Efimov commonly repeated that fear of repression after his brother's arrest governed his attitude and the nature of his output in the years after 1938. During David Low's 1932 visit to Moscow, Efimov boasted that he enjoyed autonomy, but when Low asked whether he ever criticized the government, the reply was 'It is unthinkable' (Low 1956: 217).[227] In a 1999 interview, Efimov noted that '[w]hat happened during those years in any newspaper, any magazine, any home, of any conviction, people disappeared. You would arrive in the morning and ask where is Yuri? Well, they had taken him away in the night' (PBS 1999). Regardless of any formal ban, the punitive removal of artists who satirised Soviet leaders certainly had a traumatising effect on survivors. This explanation relies, however, upon the assumption that the magazine's relationship with the Soviet political leadership was subservient, and that *Krokodil* enjoyed no editorial or creative agency at all. As my arguments in Chapter 2 showed, and as my analysis of images in this chapter exemplifies, however, *Krokodil* contributors were allowed a greater degree of freedom than has sometimes been supposed. My analysis leads me to assert that although fear

---

[227] Low notes that the interpreter for this meeting was the 'Soviet Chief Censor' and that this may have cramped Efimov's style (Low 1956: 217), but the sentiment would probably have been the same if the conversation had been more private.

of arrest constitutes a significant part of the explanation, it is not entirely satisfactory. If fear of repression always governed *Krokodil*'s output, and the magazine was subject to strict political supervision, no cartoons featuring the Soviet leadership would ever have appeared. As Chapter 1 showed, Soviet cartoonists distinguished between a satirical drawing and a 'friendly sketch'. Such friendly cartoons carried no satirical venom and were clearly distinguishable from more critical images; yet Soviet leaders were not even regularly subject to 'friendly' or affirming treatments. Without rejecting the political reason outlined above, I would like to suggest an additional seven explanations for the almost total bodily absence of Soviet leaders from *Krokodil* magazine.

The first three reasons for the absent presence of Soviet political authorities from the magazine derive from a 1969 interview with *Krokodil* Chief Editor Manuil Semenov published in *Punch* magazine (Davis 1969). Like David Low, *Punch* queried the extent of political restrictions upon *Krokodil* staff, and Semenov offered three consolations for political restrictions on content. First, the majority of readers were not interested in high politics. Second, *Krokodil* was not forced to print extensive government information in the way that newspapers were, so that the absence of explicit criticism was balanced by the absence of explicit praise of Soviet leaders. Third, since 'For most Russians the real oppressor is not some shadowy figure in the Kremlin, but the little dictator strutting about in a little office down the road', *Krokodil*'s more important targets were bureaucracy and inefficiency. Semenov argued that 'as the bureaucratic set-up *is* the Government, *Krokodil* can be regarded as a vigorous opponent of the State machine' (Davis 1969: 571). It is impossible to be sure how far, in interviews like this, *Krokodil* staff were seeking common ground with visitors based on their shared knowledge of the differences between Soviet and non-Soviet satire. Semenov may, for example, have been recasting *Krokodil* as 'the small man's champion' (Davis 1969: 571) and disingenuously placing it in opposition to the state for the benefit of his interviewer, but even if he was, in the combination of these three explanations, Semenov re-stated the aims of the magazine as they had been outlined ever since 1922.

Moving beyond arguments about the relationships between journalists and external political power structures, my analysis suggests that four other possible explanations for the bodily absence of Soviet leaders must also be considered. First, since the magazine was satirical, any depiction of a real person ('friendly' or not) had the potential to be interpreted as a satirical attack. *Krokodil*'s use of graphic satire placed it in a history of humorous art and caricature, and as numerous scholars

have remarked, the origins of this mode of satirical comment lie in the graphic creation of types, rather than individuals.[228] *Krokodil* did, of course, direct some of its comment at particular individuals, but only on very rare occasions did it visualise the USSR's political leaders. Moreover, the parodic nature of many of *Krokodil*'s images threatened to undermine more serious representations in other media.[229] As Section 3.3 shows, *Krokodil*'s cartoons often satirised discourses recognisable in other media treatments, sometimes with destabilising consequences. The second explanation for their absence is one that belies their spiritual presence. Their physical forms may not be depicted, in other words, but that does not render them entirely absent. This apparent paradox lies in the nature of the political cartoon. As Medhurst and DeSousa note, the political cartoon is always a visual first order enthymeme (1981: 204). An enthymeme is a syllogism or argument that is incompletely stated, in which one of the premises or the conclusion is tacitly present but not expressed (Cohen and Nagel 1993: 78).[230] As a form of discourse, then, the political cartoon relies upon the absence of a central concept. Given the other reasons for absenting political leaders, I would argue, it is hardly surprising that Soviet cartoons made politicians invisible. This fundamental aspect of political cartoons' generation of meaning is important when considering the question of the trace of Soviet leaders. Even when a figure may be bodily absent, he is still tacitly present, invoked by the cartoon's topic and associated with the satirical target of the cartoon by the viewer. Soviet cartoonists utilized the cultural memory, beliefs, values and attitudes of *Krokodil* readers when constructing their images, and readers used the enthymematic form of the images as interpretive resources when they studied the images. The presence or absence of particular characters might therefore be said to be a matter of interpretation rather than visual fact.

I would also suggest two further reasons for the absent presence of Soviet political leaders in the cartoons of *Krokodil*, both of which have to do with the performativity of Soviet political cartoons. The performative paradigm for reading political cartoons suggests that the discourse contained in and created by the image is both constituted by and constitutive of ideology. The identities performed in

---

[228] See Gombrich and Kris (1940: 8), Geipel (1972: 52), Kunzle (1973: 3), Lambourne (1983: 5).

[229] For a detailed discussion about the implications of the parodic on Stalin jokes see Kozintsev (2009).

[230] Cohen quotes the example: 'This medicine cured my daughter's cough; therefore this medicine will cure mine. The inference is valid on the tacit admission of the major premise: Whatever is a cure for my daughter's cough is a cure for mine.' (Cohen and Nagel 1993: 78)

Krokodil's political cartoons were created in the cartoons—there was no prior identity and there was no afterlife—which is why the magazine's creations were constantly reprised. As this chapter has shown, the performative paradigm for reading political cartoons suggests that the images represent the construction of productive discourses. The capitalist visual ideologeme and affirming images of Soviet ideology were both constructions of the magazine, but the USSR's political leaders could not be constructed in discourses that produced or performed ideology. *Krokodil* did not attempt to perform the identities of real-life individuals who were able to perform their own speech and actions in the USSR. The performance of Soviet political leadership, in other words, was embodied in the persons and personas of the individuals themselves; *Krokodil* did not presume to perform their identities for them.

The final explanation for *Krokodil*'s general silence on Soviet politics relates to the journal's self-conception. As Chapter 2 shows, *Krokodil* adopted the role of a political activist and the journal therefore participated in supporting the Soviet socio-political project. *Krokodil* could and routinely did comment upon and contribute to Soviet ideological discourses, but in the journal's visual language, there was only one way to visualise a position or an identity that was external to those discourses. As this chapter shows, standing outside normative Soviet discourse was only conceivable in the visual language as an oppositionist position. *Krokodil* was, as its 'contesting' imagery shows, adept at visualising opposition to Soviet discourses, but its visual language did not include a way to express the convention by which Soviet political leaders remained outside of ideological discourse. Employing Claude Lefort's notion of the 'master', Alexei Yurchak explains how Stalin took precisely this external position, using his external editorial position to evaluate all forms of discourse against the canon of Marxism-Leninism, to which he had unique access until the last years of his rule. Yurchak highlights Stalin's interventions in numerous public discourses in 1950, the most important of which was his 'Marxism and Questions of Linguistics', which was published in Pravda. These interventions, says Yurchak, undermined the position external to public discourse that he had previously carefully maintained (2005: 44-46) and pre-mediated his full entry into public discourse after his death on 5th March 1953. For this reason, as my analysis in this section shows, in the periods when the nature of Soviet leadership and the individuals who performed it were central issues in official-popular discourses, the Soviet leaders were visualised in *Krokodil* more frequently. Nevertheless, for the reasons already outlined, the leaders of the Soviet Union remained largely an absent presence.

As the title of this sub-section suggests, I characterise *Krokodil*'s visual discourse as one in which ideological master figures are largely absent. Despite their

rare but significant physical appearances, and notwithstanding their constant implied presence, the USSR's leading politicians were generally not visualised. *Krokodil*'s aesthetic, then, represented the materialisation of a 'world' that overlapped with, but was fundamentally different from, the world of lived experience for the magazine's readers, since it contained a hollow centre. *Krokodil*'s hollowness distinguished it from the rest of the Socialist Realist system, and allowed it to stand outside and present critiques of that system.[231] The term 'system' is appropriate for describing Socialist Realist culture since it reminds us of the importance of the structural relationships between centre and periphery. 'Centring' in Soviet culture is always associated with the semiosis of political power. In official Soviet discourses expressed in media, and in architectural and engineering projects, all elements revolved around a physical or symbolic centre.[232] Moscow was frequently allotted this significance, although various cities served as centres where the plots in Soviet literature reached their denouements (Clark 2000: 71). Boris Groys argues that at the centre of Stalinist social and artistic life was the myth of Stalin and his close colleagues (1992: 113). In easel painting, according to Plamper, pictorial representations centred on Stalin, with concentric circles becoming the dominant pattern of spatial organisation around him (Plamper 2003 and 2012).[233]

In contrast to the Socialist Realist system manifested in other media, where the Soviet political leadership inhabited the centre, *Krokodil*'s vision was of a Socialist Realist world that was characterised by its empty core. Indeed, *Krokodil*'s critiques of capitalism and affirmative references to Soviet achievements relied upon the reader's appreciation that the magazine's vision of reality was a peculiar and unique one, and, importantly, one from which Soviet leaders were almost always absent. In order to conclude my consideration of the absent presence of Soviet leaders from *Krokodil*, I will explore two important implications for the magazine's performance of ideology in the period 1954-1964.

---

[231] Socialist Realism is variously described as a 'movement' (Bown 1998), an 'aesthetic' (Robin 1992), a 'dogma' (Bown and Taylor 1993: 2) and a 'canonical doctrine' (Clark 2000: 3). It is also described as a 'system' by various scholars. Dmitrii Markov called Socialist Realism the 'historically open aesthetic system of the truthful representation of life' (quoted in Lahusen 1997: 5). Also, see Milosz (1982: 134). Dobrenko (2007: xiv, and 2001: xv) has described Socialist Realism as a system.

[232] For more on this in the context of pre-war Stalinism, see McCannon (1998), Widdis (2003), Paperny (2002).

[233] Neuberger questions this reading of Stalin paintings (2012a and 2012b).

The first implication of *Krokodil*'s hollow centre is a total freeing of the magazine from the rigid hierarchical power structures that are assumed to have governed Soviet media. As Derrida argues, the function of a centre is 'to orient, balance, and organize the structure [and] to make sure that the organizing principle of the structure would limit what we might call the *play* of the structure' (2001: 352). With no centre, a structure can exert no control over the elements inside it, and indeed the centrifugality that orders different elements dissipates. As Derrida notes, 'Play is the disruption of presence. The presence of an element is always a signifying and substitutive reference inscribed in a system of differences and the movement of a chain' (2001: 369). *Krokodil* was polycentric, as Chapter 2 showed; production was dispersed and creative authority was delegated to a degree, and as a consequence a high degree of 'play' was integral. *Krokodil* created a world for itself in which free play permitted the disruption of the absent presence of Soviet political leaders. By playing on the theme of the trace of the leadership, the magazine was continually able to extend the chain of references far from the embodied centres that kept other media texts organised in relation to political structures. *Krokodil*'s free play, therefore, led it to visualise a unique and hollow, decentred world that mirrored but at the same time did not reflect the Socialist Realist and lived worlds that it apparently reflected.

The second consequence of the hollowness at the centre of *Krokodil*'s aesthetic is that Soviet ideology was not performed in the same ways in graphic satire as it was elsewhere. This distinction may be understood by again considering Yurchak's use of Lefort's theory of the ideological 'master' figure. Lefort describes how, conventionally, a 'master' figure 'embodies an authority which does not have to account for itself or, as they say, for divine right; while on the other hand, he lavishly displays the signs of his competence' (1986: 213). As Yurchak notes, in Soviet political culture before 1950, this role was assumed by Stalin, who was both external to and constituted by official discourse (2005: 44-47). As my analysis implies, however, the perennial absence of Soviet politicians (save for those rare instances when they were visualised, and ridiculed) created in *Krokodil* a world in which there were no ideological 'master' figures performing self-affirmation through ideological discourse. Instead, as the following sections show, *Krokodil*'s world was one in which ideology was an everyday practice, performed by 'non-masters'.

3.2.2 The Performance of Affirmation

The performance of affirmation in *Krokodil* is not explored in depth in any of the existing literature, and neither has previous scholarship considered the effects of

Krokodil's satire upon its treatment of Soviet ideology. In this sub-section, I consider *Krokodil*'s visualisation of Soviet ideology. In particular, in light of the magazine's de-centred vision, I explore how the magazine's graphic texts performed ideological affirmation.

The journal always features images of the performance of Soviet ideology, but it proved rather too difficult to solidify into regularised personifications or symbols like those cartoons that contested non-Sovietism. Karl Marx appeared, for example, but when he did, he was always represented as an idol: static and constrained, as in Figure 109.[234] In fact, as an analysis of similar affirmative cartoons shows, Soviet ideology appeared in *Krokodil* in images showing ideologically informed behaviour and celebrations.
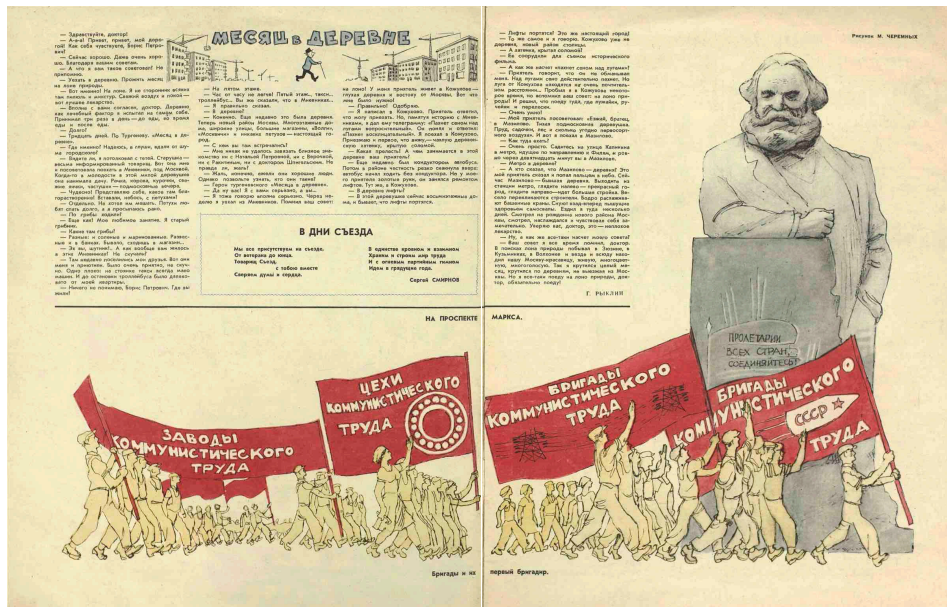
Figure 109: Cheremnykh, M. *On Marx Avenue.* (*Na prospekte Marksa.*)
***Krokodil* 1961: 31/2-3.**

In affirmative cartoons, in the absence of Soviet leaders, ideology was represented proximally by the physical manifestations of Soviet achievements, and ideological behaviour was performed through the acts of celebration. In these cartoons, *Krokodil* visualised how ordinary citizens affirmed the Soviet political project through their participation in public celebrations, but, as I argue in this sub-section, these images also reveal how the magazine engaged with topical ideological discourses. A performative reading of *Krokodil*'s cartoons is helpful here because it enables us to interpret the journal's own performance. Indeed, the magazine performed its own

---

[234] He is depicted as an image in a painting or a banner (see 1924: 17, 1933: 7, and 1956: 29/2), or is symbolised by the appearance of a book (see 1956: 4/13, 1958: 14/2, and 1958: 33/2).

acts of engagement with all of the dominant popular-official themes of the Thaw era, and it frequently did so in a manner that implied a troubling hollowness. *Krokodil*'s affirmation was therefore ambivalent and had the potential to undermine normative discourses.

In order to explore the question of how *Krokodil* performed the affirmation of Soviet ideology I will consider cartoons that visualised the celebration of certain significant achievements. In the USSR, significant achievements were celebrated on festival thresholds—special moments in the Bolshevik calendar marking natural events or significant anniversaries, and affirmative cartoons in *Krokodil* visualised the festivities associated with these thresholds. As James Von Geldern notes, public celebrations of significant festivals incorporated important performative elements. They were also productive because they resolved tensions and generated discourses (1993: 134-141). Applying a performative reading to these cartoons is therefore helpful because it reminds us that *Krokodil* performed its own acts of engagement with these celebrations, as well as playing an important role in influencing the polit-ical effects of the festivals. News media provided publicity for upcoming celebra-tions and subsequently framed the discussion of the events, a function that was especially important in the early months of the Bolshevik regime (Von Geldern 1993: 89-91). They also, as this section shows, performed ideal responses of Soviet citizens to the celebrations themselves. By communicating news about the main events they allowed non-attendees to feel part of the celebrations, but the media themselves participated in the festivities. *Krokodil*'s publication of affirmative car-toons in celebration of an anniversary or public holiday was the magazine's acknowledgement of the event, attempt at topicality, and contribution to the gaiety. Malte Rolf argues that Soviet festivals had two aims: 1) representing political pow-er, and 2) enabling citizens to ritually practise, perform and internalise ideology (2013: 83). Performative embodiment and physical gesture were thus the archetypal modes of representation of power in Soviet festivity. In *Krokodil*, of course, embod-iment and gesture in political cartoons were avenues for the performative construc-tion of ideological meaning, and the important role played by humour injected a destabilising influence. By analysing the graphic construction of cartoons affirming Soviet ideology from the post-Stalin period, we may understand more fully the magazine's performances of remembering and critiquing present and past achieve-ments.

The topic that featured most frequently in *Krokodil*'s affirmative imagery in the period 1954-1964 was the Soviet Union's lead in the race to explore the cosmos. *Krokodil* cartoons implicitly referred to the ideological environment that fostered the development of a scientific infrastructure capable of building such technology. In

fact, the magazine adopted a range of different attitudes towards Soviet explorations of the cosmos, from the uncomplicatedly affirmative to the profoundly sceptical. *Krokodil* performatively contributed to the official affirmative discourses on space exploration in several ways, many of which echoed techniques found in other media. Affirming images of the cosmos drew more or less direct links between cosmic achievements and Soviet ideology or the Soviet state, representing an act of recognition of Soviet state patronage. In some cases, the connection with Soviet ideology was direct—more than one cartoon referred to the significance of the launch of Sputnik at the time of the 40th anniversary of the October Revolution.[235]

While many affirmative images reflected glory upon the USSR and its achievements, a number depicted Soviet successes in space exploration as genuinely supra-national endeavours, worthy of global acclamation and likely to provide inspiration to people everywhere. These images affirmed Soviet ideology implicitly, by equating the achievement of spaceflight with principles of morality that the Soviet state espoused. In the USSR, dominant discourses in state-run media emphasised the role of technology in bringing material improvements. Three *Krokodil* cartoons published in 1958 are indicative of the ways the magazine extended these arguments by implying that the effects of space exploration included an end to cruelty and oppression. In each case, the performance of affirmation depends largely upon the gestures and behaviours of the characters. In Krokodil 1958: 2, a cartoon by a Czech artist, entitled 'Without a word about the satellite' ('Bez slov o sputnike') visualised the change brought about by the flight of Sputnik (see Figure 110). Using the relative size and the stance of the figures as an indicator of confidence and power, the artist juxtaposes two scenes: in the first, the colonial exploiter stands over his toiling workers' manual labour, while in the second (as Sputnik flies overhead), the newly empowered labourer dominates the flinching former-overseer. In the lower frame, the worker's pose mirrors the overseer's pompous stance, his torso is muscular and broad whereas the slave driver's lower bodily stratum is exaggerated. As Chapter 1 explained, *Krokodil* found humour in the carnivalesque, and here the heroic pose of the slave, which is reminiscent of both classical sculpture and late Stalinist images of the male form in paintings and posters, emphasises the ignoble bearing of the colonist.

---

[235] The timing of the mission was not accidental. Khrushchev pressed for a mission date that would coincide with the anniversary (Siddiqi 2003: 172).
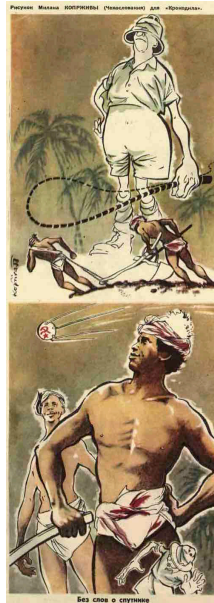
Figure 110: Koprzhiv, M. *Without a word about the satellite*. (*Bez slov o sputnik*.) *Krokodil* **1958: 2/9.**

In *Krokodil* 1958: 3, a cartoon by an Egyptian artist entitled 'Soviet satellite at work' ('Sovetskii sputnik za rabotoi') depicted Sputnik as a ball of wool. Instead of orbiting the earth, the object is circling Mars, the God of War. Mars, grimacing and struggling, sits tied to a throne, wearing a tunic bearing the dollar sign as insignia. As the ball of wool completes its circumnavigations, it ties hapless small figures representing Great Britain, the USA and France to Mars' throne (1958: 3/10). Soviet space exploration, the affirmative discourses in *Krokodil* cartoons said, also had the power to protect children from physical harm. In a cartoon published in celebration of International Child Protection Day, Sputnik flies over a group of playing children. The multi-ethnic group of young people, including at least three members of the Pioneer movement, form a circle and dance, holding hands under the threat of a dark cloud which originates beyond the horizon and resembles an atomic explosion, but remain apparently oblivious of Sputnik as it pushes the cloud away (1958: 15/8).

Many of *Krokodil*'s affirmative space-themed cartoons depicted Soviet achievements as the pinnacle of all human technical endeavours, and therefore to be celebrated by everyone. On 10 April 1962, for example, almost exactly a year after Yuri Gagarin's space flight, *Krokodil*'s front cover was drawn by Vitalii Goriaev, and it showed a cartoon female admirer, gazing lovingly at a photograph of Gagarin. The woman wears a globe headscarf and blue star-spotted blouse, which suggests that she is a feminine representation of the earth and the cosmos. She utters the words 'I've loved you for a year now…' ('Uzh god, kak ia tebia liubliu…'), imply-ing that the whole world shares her feelings of affection for Gagarin. A few months later, the front and back covers of *Krokodil* 1962: 23, drawn by Evgenii Shukaev, featured a wraparound cosmos, populated by tiny stars, a crescent moon, a ringed

planet, and a giant white dove, accompanied by the Vostok 3 and 4 rockets, speeding through azure space. Spaceflight is thus conceived as a supra-national human achievement while at the same time specifying numerous Soviet identity markers.

These affirmative cartoons performed ideologically motivated responses to the Soviet achievements in the cosmos. In their visions of how Soviet citizens or cultural hero figures might react, the magazines helped to create the discourses of celebration and thereby produced an affirmative effect. They also performed politically correct behaviour and modelled ideal responses to the events they depicted. This effect was achieved by visualizing the behaviours of (real or imagined) historic heroic figures and of modern Soviet citizens. In both cases, the achievements in space were acknowledged with due respect. When Nikolai Gogol (1964: 30/8), Konstantin Tsiolkovsky, the so-called father of Soviet rocketry (1961: 11/5), or three bogatyrs (see Figure 113) saluted Soviet cosmonauts, significant prestige was bestowed upon them. These modern Soviet heroes had proven able to transcend time. In these images, *Krokodil* could claim pre-eminence. Since technical information was so closely controlled (Siddiqi 2010: 47-73), images could not achieve a high degree of realism, and satirists could therefore indulge in fantasies.

Before moving on to consider some of *Krokodil*'s images of celebrations, it is helpful to explore how *Krokodil*'s affirmative cartoons aimed to encourage ideal responses to these Soviet achievements in images that performed acts of commemoration. Individual acts of remembrance of Soviet achievements were not intended to require scripting: the ideal citizen's response, in the vision presented by *Krokodil*, was spontaneous and ideologically appropriate. In order to provoke this type of reaction, the magazine's affirmative cartoons included many visual references to affirmative texts in other media, but they lacked guidance on how to interpret the cartoons. Moreover, in their references to other texts, they frequently verged on parody, and they thus possessed the potential to undermine other authoritative texts. On 10th November 1957, for example, a small two-frame cartoon entitled 'Long-range volley' juxtaposed the events of 1917 and 1957 (see Figure 111).[236] The Cruiser Aurora, on the left, firing the shot that signalled the start of the October Revolution, is separated, by a white gutter that symbolises the intervening years, from the launch of the Sputnik satellite in 1957.

---

[236] A similar point was made in 1959: 3/4.
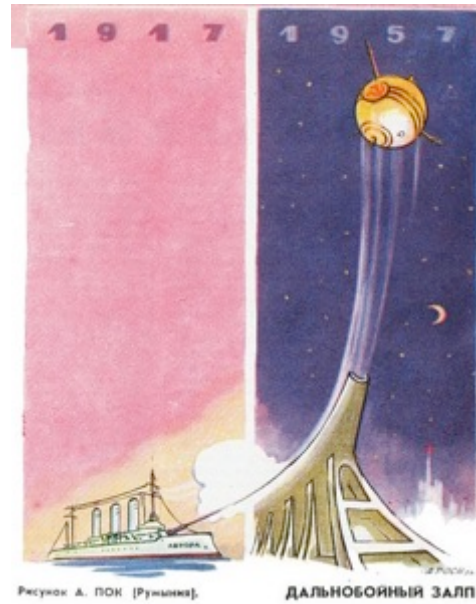
Figure 111: Pok, A. *Long-range volley.* (*Dal'noboinyi zalp*.)
***Krokodil* 1957: 31/3.**

While the gutter is representative of the forty-year time difference, the cloud of white smoke that interrupts the gutter and connects the barrel of the gun with the vapour trail of the satellite serves to collapse the interval and symbolise the Thaw-era return to Leninist revolutionary values. Visualising two transcendental events in Soviet history, the image also literalises the implication of a link between Soviet ideology and scientific achievement. The Soviet state's role in the Sputnik mission is further implied by the presence of the red star at the top of the building on the right of the image. Indeed, several elements of the cartoon closely resemble prestigious projects completed by the Soviet state. The pyramidal shape of the buttressed structure from which the satellite has been launched is reminiscent both of hydroelectric dams constructed in the 1930s, and Stalinist skyscrapers such as the Moscow State University. The significance of similarities to these landmarks of Soviet development is implied but not enunciated in the image. The cartoon therefore invites the readers to perform their own interpretive act of construction. Relying upon the reader's knowledge of recent history and, understanding of Soviet visual language and ability to construct new ideological narratives. Indeed, the mixing of disparate but distinctive visual elements in the same image was used in numerous *Krokodil* cartoons, with the expected effect being to invite personal responses.

Soviet space technology was pictured, without explanation, alongside other markers of Soviet modernity and progress. It was depicted as an indicator of technical development, but also as a reward for previous work, a facilitator for future advances and a driver for ambition. In an untitled cartoon published in *Krokodil*

1959: 3, for example, above the caption 'So we will see the progress in Soviet manufacturing at the end of the seven year period'[237] (see Figure 112), several conventions of Soviet visual culture were condensed in order to construct an ironic critique of references to aviation and spaceflight as a leisure activity, clichés about the strength and potential of Soviet industry and orthodoxies of the scientific predictability of human development.
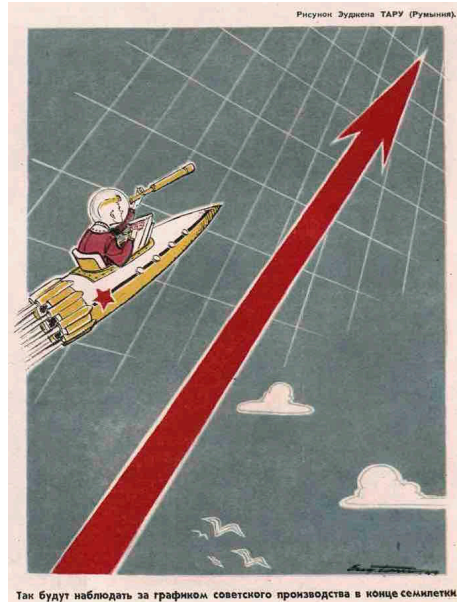
Figure 112: Taru, E. Untitled.
Krokodil **1959: 3/5.**

Referring to the newly-launched Seven Year Plan (1958-1965), the cartoon's implied meaning is created via the merging of three visual conventions. The lower half of the image reminds us of Soviet posters published in support of organisations such as Osoaviakhim since the 1920s. These images visualised the air as a broad and limitless leisure space, but a domain nevertheless conquered by individual heroism. In this cartoon, however, the virgin leisure space of the air is unconventionally anchored at the foot of the frame, and, moreover, it is bounded on four sides and crossed by the cartoon's other elements. In this cartoon, the sky is no longer freely accessible, except with the most advanced technology. Unlike many other images that visualised space technology as the physical manifestations of Soviet industrial progress, and the latest example of a historic propensity for technical leaps forward,[238] this cartoon allowed the possibility of contrary interpretations.

---

[237] 'Tak budut nabliudat za grafikom sovetskogo proizvodstva v kontse semiletki'

[238] See 1958: 36/3, 1959: 27/1, and 1959: 30/2.

Above the blue sky, a red rocket-like arrow divides the page diagonally. In the upper half of the image, where the background resembles graph paper, the arrow looks more like a line graph indicating industrial output. The cartoon implies that production has increased as rapidly as rocket propulsion. The graph-like upper half of the image refers to Soviet target- and norm-driven production practices and fascinations with the measurability of historical development. The inclusion of the figure in the rocket is an incongruity that invites the reader to engage in a personal interpretation of the cartoon. The rocket's placement behind the head of the arrow suggests that Soviet space technology is not at the leading edge of industrial progress. Moreover, while the rocketeer's telescope jokingly implies that the final output figures will be so high that any observer will require a telescope to see them, it also refers to the pre-modern explorations of the world's earliest navigators. Locating Soviet space exploration in the linear narrative of the conquest of the globe, paradoxically, grounds it in the mundane history of the already known and tends to contradict official-popular discourses about the revolutionariness and transcendentalism of the space age.

Krokodil's affirming cartoons had the potential, then, to produce ambiguous messages, or to undermine normative discourses found in other media. Many affirming images combined references to multiple historical, topical and conventional popular-official discourses. This was a common satirical technique and it had the effect of refracting one reference through the lens of another, producing unexpected and entertaining results. It also had the effect of disorienting the reader, however. Whereas conventional Soviet graphic language included relatively clear guidance for the reader on how to interpret the image, these *Krokodil* cartoons contained no such instruction. Combining discourses, images and historical narratives erased or muted instructions on how to read an image, meaning that the reader performed the act of constructing their own ideological message. In Figure 113, Semenov ironically constructs a celebratory remembrance of pre-Soviet Russian folk hero figures whose fame derives from epic poems ('bylinas') and fictional works, and the cartoon draws heavily upon Victor Vasnetsov's painting *Bogatyrs* (1898). The space rocket hovers, timeless and rather unrealistic, above the three knights, and this mixing of real and fictional, modern and pre-modern elements has the effect of confusingly blending historical narratives and visual references.

Figure 113: Semenov, I. Untitled.
***Krokodil* 1964: 29/1.**

Cartoons that performed the ideal responses of Soviet citizens in the act of participating in public celebrations were constrained by more realistic orthodoxies, however. In images such as 'Festive dawn' ('Prazdnichnyi rassvet') everyday interactions between Soviet citizens behaving in an ideologically correct manner and the achievements of the Soviet state were performed (see Figure 114). This cartoon is accompanied by the caption (apparently spoken by one of the figures in the image) 'Today we came to the October demonstration with a "Sunrise"!'[239] This tethering of attendance at a public parade on the anniversary of the October Revolution with the celebration of the 'Sunrise-1' ('*Voskhod-1*') mission solidifies the connection between the two events. The placement of the rocket placard in line with the sign commemorating the 47th anniversary of the revolution and the Cruiser Aurora naturalizes the shape as a significant symbol of Soviet ideology. Including visual references to the symbols of the achievements of the Soviet state, as many *Krokodil* cartoons did (see Figure 111), associated these various signs, but also contributed to the construction of the magazine's intermedial and intertextual critical commentary on topical discourses.

---

[239] 'My segodnia vyshli na oktiabr'skuiu demonstratsiiu s "Voskhodom"!'
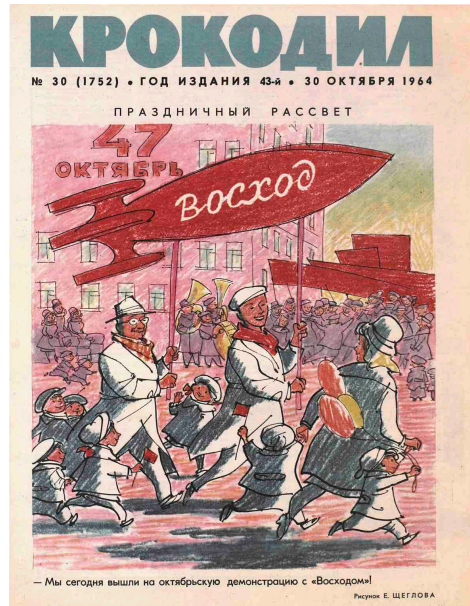
Figure 114: Shcheglov, E. *Festive dawn*. (*Prazdnichnyi rassvet*.)
***Krokodil* 1964: 30/1.**

This cartoon draws upon the conventions of the brigade painting, which was an ideological-aesthetic trend in post-war easel painting. Individuals are depicted as part of the masses, and revellers' gazes and gestures link them together in the shared enjoyment of the moment, which invites an element of interaction with the characters on a psychological level. Its composition, style and theme are reminiscent of *After the Demonstration (They Saw Stalin)* (1949) by Dmitri Mochalski (see Figure 115).

Figure 115: Mochalski, D. 1949. *After the Demonstration (They Saw Stalin)*. (*Posle demonstratsii (Oni videli Stalina)*.)
[Oil on canvas.] At: Tretiakov Gallery, Moscow.

Figure 115 and Figure 116 both visualise the performance of ideal responses by Soviet citizens. The Stalin-era painting is invoked in the *Krokodil* cartoon indirectly, so that the visual culture of Stalinism, which glorified the achievements of the Sovi-

et state, is rendered present through the reference. In this way, on one hand, the cartoon affirms Soviet socialism and the post-war regimes, but, importantly, the cartoon refers as much to the Mochalski painting as it does to the problems of the Stalin period and discourses of de-Stalinisation and Thaw-era reform. The *Krokodil* cartoon's parodic citation serves to highlight the difference between the two modes of affirmation. Whereas Mochalski's painting performs an affirmation of Stalin and ideal responses to him, Semenov's cartoon performs an affirmation of Soviet achievements and makes no direct reference to any political authorities.

Many of *Krokodil*'s space images combined affirmative sub-texts with anti-Western tones,[240] and many others were also whimsical or humorous,[241] but of the other straightforwardly affirmative cartoons, some of the most striking were those that celebrated the individual heroism and the return to earth of Yuri Gagarin.

Figure 116: Semenov, I. Untitled.
***Krokodil* 1961: 11/1.**

It is through the example of these images that some of the key differences between *Krokodil* and other media, as well as some of the important ambiguities created by these differences—become apparent. The front cover of *Krokodil* 1961: 11 features a full-page illustration of an imagined return celebration for Gagarin (see Figure 116). The joke in the cartoon's caption refers to the effects of weightlessness on the

---

[240] See 1956: 30/16, 1957: 30/16, and 1962: 12/5.

[241] See 1958: 36/6-7, 1959: 27/8-9, and 1962: 33/8-9.

human body.[242] Previous Soviet space missions had been designed to test the effects of zero gravity on living organisms, but Gagarin was, of course, the first man to experience the prolonged effects of weightlessness. Here, the cartoon makes a gently mocking reference to the Soviet celebrations upon his return, suggesting that his flight has not yet ended, despite his return to earth. Phrased in the style of the report delivered to Khrushchev by Gagarin, as part of official celebrations on 14th April 1961, the caption refers to the cartoon, rather than reality. Taken together, however, caption and cartoon comment upon the irony that the people celebrating the achievement of a cosmonaut might be impelled to throw him into the air. In the image Gagarin has returned to earth, only to be hurled back into the air and made weightless again in celebration of his return. Semenov's cartoon cites and even parodies some of the conventions of Socialist Realist cultural products depicting the triumphant return of heroic individuals. Semenov's cartoon provides an interesting comparison with other images depicting the homecoming celebrations after Gagarin's spaceflight (see Figure 118), some of which were themselves reminiscent of Stalin-era images commemorating the aviation achievements of the 1930s. Paintings such as Samuil Adlivankin's *The First Stalinist Route* helped to construct graphic discourses about Soviet aerial heroism and the aviator's interaction with the senior representatives of the state (see Figure 117).

Figure 117: Adlivankin, S. 1939. *The First Stalinist Route* (*Pervyi stalinskii marshrut*). [Oil on canvas.] Location unknown.

---

[242] 'Iu.A. Gagarin: —The flight continues normally. Coped well with the condition of weightlessness.' ('*IU. A. GAGARIN: —Polet prodolzhaetsia normal'no. Sostoianie nevesomosti perenoshu khorosho.*')

In such paintings, Soviet heroes performed roles in the ritualistic returns to Moscow after the successful completion of record-breaking flights. The conventions of Socialist Realist painting combined with the theatrical orthodoxies of Stalinist culture in the creation of a 'master plot' for political ceremony. The pilot was greeted by Stalin and Communist Party leaders on his return to Moscow, in a highly publicised yet private meeting, at which the leading technical and political figures discussed the achievements. The symbolic return of the state's favourite sons, visualised in many media, had strongly performative connotations. The conventions established in the 1930s, moreover, scripted the Soviet celebrations of the space age.

Figure 118: Khmelko, M. 1962. *The Greeting of the First Cosmonaut, Yuri Gagarin, on his return to earth.* (*Privetstvie pervogo kosmonavta Yuriia Gagarina , po vozvrashchenii na zemliu.*) **[Oil on canvas.] Location unknown.**

Figure 119: Photograph of Gagarin's official welcome celebration on 14th April 1961. [Online.] [Accessed: 4/5/14.] Available from: http: //www.tert.am/

In keeping with the orthodoxies of Stalinist return celebrations, Gagarin's welcome celebration in Moscow on 14th April 1961 culminated with his appearance alongside political luminaries atop Lenin's Mausoleum in Red Square. Symbolical-

ly, Gagarin became a member of the Soviet elite.[243] Visual commemorations of his return performed an act of remembrance of Stalinist images (see Figure 118). Echoing images from the 1930s, paintings of Gagarin's meeting with Khrushchev performed the same conventions.

Citation, to the point of parody, is central to *Krokodil*'s satirical vision of affirmation, as these images of welcome celebrations reveal. Despite sharing some similarities with contemporary images, *Krokodil*'s representations of Gagarin's return were not typical of the way the subject was treated in Soviet media. The most striking difference is that, whereas the climax in the narrative of Gagarin's welcome in other media was the meeting with the USSR's political leaders, in *Krokodil* no political authorities were present. In *Krokodil*'s visualization of his return, however, Gagarin receives acclaim from ordinary citizens. Indeed, *Krokodil*'s image imagines a different moment in Gagarin's welcome. He is clothed, for example, in a lightweight pale blue suit, and we presume that this represents his space suit. In fact, famously, Gagarin wore a much bulkier suit that was coloured bright orange. In Semenov's cartoon Gagarin still wears his parachute pack, unopened. In reality, however, Gagarin parachuted from his spacecraft. The precise details of Gagarin's landing were not known publicly at the time, but *Krokodil* speculates about a scene that might have occurred. In reality, as the newsreel and photographs showed, (see Figure 119) Gagarin stepped from an aeroplane at Vnukovo Airport and made a long solitary walk along a red carpet before delivering a report to Khrushchev. The barriers, which delineated the ceremonial zone from the spectators, ensured Gagarin's physical isolation, and this separation was extended when he was elevated above the spectators on top of the Mausoleum. Gagarin's remoteness from the people who came to see him echoed a trend in official celebrations, seen in the 1930s, to stage official festivities around a single, central platform so that the separation of leaders from masses was built into the fabric of the physical structure, space and choreography of the celebration.[244] In *Krokodil*'s cartoon, however, the distance between Gagarin and his admirers is much smaller and is only momentary. For *Krokodil*, Gagarin is not an aloof, sacrosanct hero figure, and his popularity is indicated by the enthusiasm of the individuals pictured, rather than by the size of the crowds. The cartoon provides a much more intimate image of engagement and excitement at the achievement than the photographs or the easel painting.

---

[243] Gagarin became a Deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR in 1962.

[244] For a discussion of this development, see Rolf (2013: 87-88).

Krokodil's cartoon also imagines an almost spontaneous welcome celebration. The enthusiastic greeting of the cosmonaut is unorthodox and wildly different from those reported in the mainstream news media. Spontaneous outbursts of joyful release of this kind were not unknown in Soviet welcome celebrations. In 1936 and 1937, Stalin had been kissed by returning Soviet daredevils who were overcome at meeting their hero,[245] but in this image the enthusiasm motivates the crowd rather than the hero. Their uninhibitedness reminds us of Katerina Clark's 'spontaneity/consciousness dialectic'. This dialectic is the structuring force that shapes the master plot of socialist realist literature (2000: 15), but the arc of transformation—from behaviour unguided by political awareness to more disciplined conduct—common to Soviet novels echoes the dominant theme in Soviet culture and the Marxist-Leninist idea of historical progress. In this cartoon, however, the crowd do not display truly spontaneous behaviour. We are not witnessing the moment Gagarin returned to earth for the first time: the crowds have had time to prepare banners and gather bouquets of flowers. In reality there was no crowd to greet Gagarin—he was first encountered by a farmer and two schoolgirls (Doran and Bizony 2011: 7). On the other hand, however, little political 'consciousness' is evident in this welcome celebration. Official public celebrations were organized spatially, so that marchers were ordered in disciplined rows constituted of especially chosen according to social-political rank, wore uniforms or prescribed clothing and processed in groups to ensure homogeneity (Rolf 2013: 89-91). In this cartoon, however, there is no order. The crowd is a diverse group of admiring citizens, apparently from across the world rather than solely the USSR. Their depiction is reminiscent of the crowds in posters from the later Stalin era, such as 'Under the guidance of the great Stalin—Forward to Communism!' (Berezovskii and Solov'ev, 1951). The multi-ethnic crowd emphasises that the celebrations were international rather than Soviet.

As this section has shown, in *Krokodil* the interaction of ordinary citizens with Soviet ideology did not occur at the level of high politics, but rather it took place with the supposed manifestations of it, including the public celebration of Soviet achievements. The performance of affirmation through the ideal responses of Soviet citizens and the celebration of achievements was a regular theme in *Krokodil*, as it was in other media. *Krokodil*'s tendency to reference other images, sometimes even to the point of parody, and its use of humour, however, meant that the maga-

---

[245] In 1936 and 1937, *Pravda* published photographs of Stalin being kissed by returning adventurers Valerii Chkalov (11 August 1936) and Otto Schmidt (26 June 1937), who were overcome at meeting their hero.

zine's cartoons functioned not just as performances of public memory of previous events and artistic representations of them, but also as commentaries on Soviet conventions of celebration. *Krokodil* cartoons regularly referenced Stalinist achievements and the cultural memories of them, but in the Khrushchev era the magazine envisioned a new form of ideal response to Soviet achievements. Khrushchev-era *Krokodil* depicted a spontaneous and personal reaction to the achievements of Soviet space science. In the 1950s and 1960s, *Krokodil*'s affirmative vision remembered past achievements, but responded to Gagarin personally, rather than to the Soviet state or political leaders. With no political authority figures in the magazine's cartoons, the conventional prompts to interpretation were removed, and the reader's resources for understanding the images were considerably reduced. The removal of interpretive guides encouraged readers to attempt an individual engagement that reinforced the images' underlying themes, but as a consequence these images became ambiguous.

3.3   Post-Graphic Satire: Becoming Soviet in *Krokodil*

The final section of this thesis considers how *Krokodil* constructed ideology in the cartoons that depicted Soviet society in the act of 'becoming Soviet'. I aim to understand how ideological meaning was deposited in cartoons of the third schema. These images reveal much about the nature of *Krokodil*'s satire, and its vision of Soviet ideology. They dealt with problems of everyday life ('voprosy byta') and attempted to reconcile some of the USSR's more mundane questions, in contrast with the content of some cartoons in the other schemata. As this chapter shows, *Krokodil* presented ideology as a set of behaviours that could be more or less consciously adopted, and could therefore be theatrically performed. In cartoons about citizens 'becoming' Soviet, however, artists frequently depicted the failed performances of ideological acts by 'non-masters', in order to illustrate possible ideologically incorrect responses to circumstances, and they evaluated official discourses in relation to lived experiences. The magazine conducted a satirical exploration of Soviet lived experience, testing ideology as an interpretive resource for understanding how ordinary citizens interacted with official discourses. As I suggest in this section, *Krokodil* conducted this exploration via the performance of acts of revelation for its readers' benefit. A large number of *Krokodil*'s 'becoming' cartoons thereby contributed to the project of encouraging the self-construction of Soviet subjectivity.

In literary studies, scholars of Soviet subjectivity show how power, language and ideology were resources for constructing Soviet selfhood.[246] These approaches, which have not been applied to visual texts, still assume that official discourses were monologic, unidirectional and conflict-free, and that any tensions arose in the process of the subject's internalization of ideological discourses. My approach to this problem in *Krokodil* is to foreground this third group of cartoons and to assess internal and intertextual tensions.

This section considers the further potential of the performative paradigm for analysing political cartoons by exploring how *Krokodil* participated in the project of transforming its readers' perceptions of both lived experience and Soviet ideology. It also reveals something of the nature of *Krokodil*'s satire. I describe it as 'post-graphic', since *Krokodil*'s political cartoons were graphic satire, but their effect was also intended to multiply beyond the reader's interpretation of the visual. 'Post-graphic' therefore means graphic, but multiplied beyond the visual; cartoons that possessed a performative force of their own. As this section argues, *Krokodil*'s 'becoming' cartoons from the period 1954-1964 were self-reflexively graphic texts in that they heightened readers' self-consciousness about the act of seeing, through three metaphors. *Krokodil*'s cartoons regularly employed i) theatrical performances, ii) aids and hindrances to clear vision of all types, and iii) surveillance to refract discourses about the Soviet government's highest policy priorities. Building, generational differences and social conformity were common themes visible through *Krokodil*'s critical lens. *Krokodil*'s cartoons thus engaged in what Kiaer and Naimark call 'bringing ideology to consciousness' (2005: 6). *Krokodil* was the site of the visual construction and critique of normative discourses in cartoons that performed acts of revelation intended to inspire cognitive shifts on the reader's part.

Krokodil cartoons were post-graphic in the sense that they were conceived as having a performative force that went beyond the texts. This interpretation contributes to our understanding of the nature of Soviet visual satire since it adds to existing knowledge about how practitioners of graphic satire regarded their work. Following Lunacharsky, Soviet satire theory conventionally described the cartoon as a weapon in an ideological struggle (see Introduction, section ii), and, as the 'list-of-targets' approach suggests, much of the existing literature accepts this explanation. The problem with the weapon metaphor is that it implies that the power of the cartoon resides with its creator, to wield against enemies of their choice, and that the

---

[246] See Kotkin (1997), Hellbeck (1996, 2001, 2006), Krylova (2000 and 2008) and Halfin (2003, 2004, 2007, 2011).

subject of the cartoon is also the text's target. In the early 1960s, however, Khrushchev also employed a medical metaphor to describe Soviet satire's operation (see Introduction, Section ii and Section 1.1) and in many ways, this is preferable. While it still implies that a cartoon's value is in its ability to deal with harmful disorders, it is useful because it highlights the fact that the primary object of *Krokodil*'s satire was not the subject of the texts but was always the magazine's readers: the satirist's scalpel (see Figure 17) was carefully applied primarily in order to provide remedy, rather than simply to destroy. As this chapter argues, *Krokodil*'s satire must be understood as having had a potentially transformative power, and it may be described as post-graphic because it aimed to use ocular exercises to revolutionise readers' understandings of what they saw, in order to enable the self-construction of Soviet subjectivity. This interpretation of *Krokodil*'s satire also enables us to appreciate that, when the magazine communicated its satirical critiques by parodying other media, or engaged satirically with topical discourses related to the state's most highly celebrated subjects, it betrayed a fundamental scepticism about the value of ideology as an interpretive resource. For this reason, as I have suggested throughout this thesis, using propaganda as a model for analysis of *Krokodil* is insufficiently helpful.

3.3.1   Critiquing Theatricalism and Performance

As this chapter shows, theatrical performance, a commonly employed metaphor in *Krokodil*, was used in cartoons about 'becoming' Soviet, as well as 'contesting' images.[247] The effect of the theatrical construct was to highlight the artificiality of characters' behaviours, but, as this sub-section's title suggests, *Krokodil*'s 'critique' of theatricalism as a satirical device involves making the reader conscious of the cartoon's depiction of ideologically-motivated behaviour as a performance. What, then, does a study of *Krokodil*'s critique of theatricalism as a mode of ideological behaviour reveal about the nature of Soviet graphic satire?

In her study of the 'humorous performative' in public Stalinist discourse, Skradol highlights the ways laughter was employed in Stalin's speeches as a means of exposing the ridiculous or criminal 'under the guise of the serious (=politically

---

[247] Contesting cartoons often employed the theatrical performance device. Imperialists, capitalists and warmongers wore masks (see 1955: 14/16, 1956: 21/16, and 1956: 36/16) and costumes (see 1956: 7/10, and 1958: 21/1). They played together in dastardly orchestras and concerts (see 1955: 2/8-9, 1960: 30/8-9, and 1963: 11/16) and staged dramas or circuses (see 1954: 18/16, 1954: 30/8-9, and 1958: 5/12).

reliable)' (2012: 286). In Stalin's speeches, as Skradol shows, masks were torn away using humour, and enemies' true natures were exposed, while straight-faced heroes appeared one-dimensionally virtuous by comparison. This mode, she explains, reflects Stalinist dialectics since 'in an ideology where simplicity equals truth, any type of confusion is to be considered incompatible with the honest way of life' (Skradol 2012: 286). The existing literature on *Krokodil* does not consider the use of metaphors of theatrical performance in the journal, but Skradol's analysis echoes many explanations of *Krokodil*, which stress binary aesthetics (see Section 1.2).

In fact, *Krokodil* cartoons employing theatrical metaphors reveal a much more complex satirical vision. In these images, the humour often resides in the reader's appreciation of their privileged insights: although the reader sees the inadequacies in the scene's theatre, the cartoons' actors fail to realise the failures in their performances (see Figure 120), and participants fail to detect the deceptions to which they are subject (see Figure 121). Ambiguities are thus implied by the characters' misrecognition of the truth. Indeed, it is these ambiguities, which have not been acknowledged in the existing literature, that are the focus of this sub-section.

As this chapter shows, *Krokodil* cartoons themselves performed acts of revelation, and were imbued with the power to expose the nature of a performance. These performances might be genuine materialisations of inner psychology, or they might be dishonest and theatrical attempts to disguise an underlying ideological bent (see Figure 90). *Krokodil* cartoons frequently referred to this metaphor as a mode for discussing the unreliability of outward appearances as a guide to ideological belief, but the magazine's understanding of performance and ideology was more complex than this simple binary implies. *Krokodil* also imagined a third type of performance, in which performatively constructed belief without real belief was possible, and not entirely objectionable. These cartoons therefore function as graphic explorations of the nature of ideological belief. *Krokodil* cartoons visualised the possibility of multiple conflicting performances, and multiple interpretations of performances. Ambiguity about the underlying truth of a performance created the humour to be found in such images. These cartoons are significant because of their ambiguity, and because they injected the potential for ambiguity into the magazine. Moreover, they contributed to the sense that ideological objectivity was not only impossible, but also less desirable than a subjectivity that was based on careful (satirical) observation. Carefully and self-consciously performing the act of seeing sceptically, these cartoons imply, was a more reliable guide to everyday experience than ideology.

Krokodil's cartoons frequently employed theatricalism in order to critique the false, inept or dishonest acting out of ideological belief, and many such images reveal the misfiring acts of ideological non-masters. In some cases, *Krokodil* em-

ployed its ideological satirical vision to highlight the artificiality of the theatrical, for example. In '*Krokodil* Concert' (see Figure 120) theatricalism provides the conceit for a cartoon criticising dishonest work practices.

Figure 120: Semenov, I. *Krokodil Concert*. (*Krokodil'skii kontsert*.)
***Krokodil* 1954: 12/8-9.**

Here, as the red crocodile stands beside the stage curtain in the left of the image, numerous gymnastic, musical and magical acts are being performed all over a stage delimited in two dimensions (the proscenium is formed by curtains on left and right, with a stage and arch implied) but apparently of infinite depth. Different acts have no spatial relationship to each other, and we presume that these performances might be occurring at all times and in all places, rather than solely in the theatrical ritual we are watching. The red crocodile, dressed (unusually) in the garb of a compere or ringmaster, allows Semenov to utilise the convention of making a formal announcement to introduce the leading artist, but (parodying the Soviet tendency to use very long honorary titles) by the time we finish reading the star's introduction, he has left to perform in another show. The second-rate acts we are left with, then, are those who always manage to survive or thrive in their professional environments, despite their limitations. The man who, once inside the wicker basket, should be skewered by the multiple 'reprimands' ('vygovor') he receives, emerges unscathed. The scientist, who is propelled from desk to desk by his colleagues in a series of acrobatic parabolas, lands safely in the hands of the Scientific Research Institute. While one man performs his 'limitations' ('nedostatki') on a clarinet, his colleague loudly bangs out his 'achievements' ('dostizheniia') on a big bass drum. The metaphorical performances of these characters invite the reader to consider the shifting margins separating true identities from assumed ones. The performers' acts here demonstrate the potential for political discourses to be performed theatrically,

without genuine belief, and Semenov uses the device of a theatre stage to highlight the boundaries between the real and the unreal. The cartoon itself provides another opportunity for Semenov to pose questions about the truthfulness of a performed identity. The viewer is invited to share a private joke with the performers. Not only does the red crocodile character break the fourth wall by speaking to the viewer directly, but several of the performers in the image look directly, and knowingly, at the reader. One of the figures (just before he disappears into the wicker basket) even winks at us, as if communicating a personal joke about his ability to escape danger. These gestures violate the conventions of the theatrical performance and engage the reader, inviting him/her to enter the action of the cartoon, in a way that makes him/her complicit. By watching the performance, the reader tolerates its dishonesty and condones the protagonists' behaviour.

Cartoons like Figure 120, in which the protagonists are low-level government employees and bureaucrats, exemplify the kind of explicitly politicised criticisms that *Krokodil* produced in the period 1954-1964. The journal also injected an element of political criticism into its graphic commentaries when it revealed the discrepancies between official rhetoric and lived experience, and when it highlighted the boundaries between genuine belief and theatrically performed behaviour. *Krokodil*'s cartoons achieved this by refracting politically charged topical discourses through the lens of the façade or illusion. Barriers to clear vision of various types were employed by *Krokodil* cartoons as metaphors for the obscuring of reality. The metaphor of a theatrical façade was productively employed by artists critiquing government housing construction policies in the period 1954-1964.[248] In these cartoons, material progress or poor quality was obscured behind more perfect visions. Often, the act of visual deception is for the benefit of an employee of the state. Bureaucrats, planners and inspectors all allowed themselves to be duped by such apparitions, suggesting a direct criticism of the weakness of state oversight. In an untitled Shcheglov cartoon, four members of a buildings inspection team are deceived as they pass approval on a renovation project (see Figure 121). As the inspectors stare up at the façade of a delightful house, they are invited to move on to look at the next building. At least seven workers stand beside the building's façade, while the guide leads the inspectors' tour. From the viewer's position we can clearly see that the frontage of the building is a two-dimensional image, but the cartoon provides no clues about the outcome of this attempted deception.

---

[248] The metaphor was also employed by 'contesting' images. See 1954: 18/16, 1954: 30/8-9, and 1960: 30/8-9.
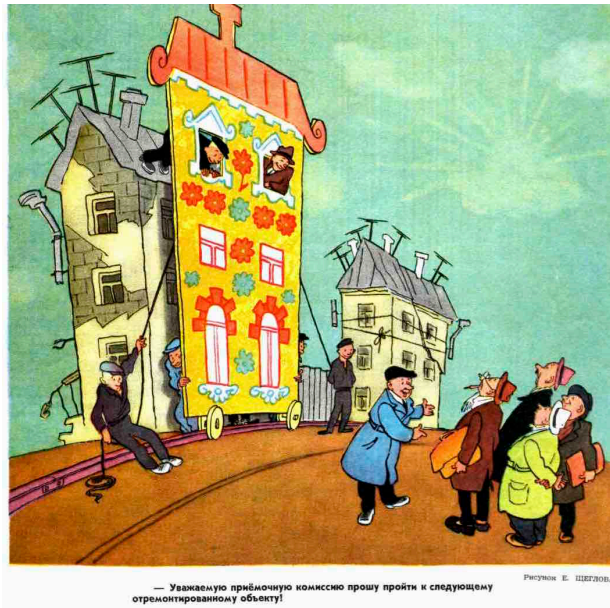
Figure 121: Shcheglov, E. Untitled.
Krokodil **1956: 24/3.**

The guide wears a happy smile, while the inspectors' expressions are inscrutable (see Figure 122). The reader cannot be sure whether they appear slightly overawed as they look up at the building façade, or whether this scene precedes their reactions. The fourth man seems to be smiling, but it is unclear whether this indicates mirth or pleasure.

The cartoon is ostensibly a critique of dishonest building practices, and incompetent bureaucratic inspections. The artist provides few visual instructions on the extent to which these criticisms exist in equal measures in this cartoon, however. The reader is therefore left to imagine whether the deception will succeed, or whether the building inspectors will see through the lie. While Shcheglov's inspectors remain impassive, their graphic characterisation does, I suggest, render them slightly less sympathetic. The guide and his accomplices' faces are drawn very simply, with single line strokes of the pen, making their skin appear smooth and their expressions open; there is nothing inherently comical about their appearances, except their raised eyebrows, which might be a sign of their hidden guilt. The inspectors' faces, on the other hand, are only partially visible. The reader sees them only in profile, which provides a better view of their ears and their hats than of their expressions, and their individual physical-character traits do imply an artistic joke at their expense. The leftmost inspector comically wears his spectacles on the end of his nose, and appears to be smoking through a cigarette holder. The Soviet government periodically revived anti-smoking campaigns, but the popularity of tobacco in the USSR, its association with masculinity and the state's demands for increased production reflect the tensions in official discourse associated with the habit (Romaniello & Starks 2009: 5-6). In *Krokodil*, smoking was frequently used as visual shorthand for an unheroic

character.[249] Distinguished from the *papirosi* cigarette with an inbuilt disposable cardboard holder, such as the *Belomorkanal* brand, the cigarette holder, moreover, was associated with both Western and feminine characters in Soviet culture.[250] The inspector wearing the black coat seems to sport a pencil moustache, which appears to sprout from his nose, and resembles Hitler's moustache. For these reasons, I suggest, the reader tends to interpret the cartoon as mildly critical of the inspectors. This being the case, we presume that the inspectors are blind to the deception being practised before them.

Figure 122: Shcheglov, E. Detail from an untitled cartoon.
***Krokodil* 1956: 24/3.**

The criticism of the bureaucrats is therefore made more damning because of the inadequacy of the illusion. Two men lean precariously from upper floor windows, as if to lend plausibility by suggesting a depth that does not exist behind the window frame. Since this façade is mobile, being mounted on wheels on a track, we presume that the next building will appear to be identical to the first.

Numerous cartoons from the period 1954-1964 satirised government policy by exploring the divergences between responses to official rhetoric in other media and everyday experience. As argued above, *Krokodil*'s strategy of citing texts in other media in a fashion that satirised the original work created parodic critiques of media treatments of these topical discourses. More than that, however, *Krokodil*'s

---

[249] *Stiliagi* and other West-looking 'degenerates' (1954: 6/16, 1960: 3/13 and 1963: 15/10), bureau-crats (1956: 13/5, 1956: 31/6 and 1956: 35/3), and gun-toting capitalist-militarists (1958: 4/11, and 1958: 1/8-9) all commonly smoked in *Krokodil* cartoons.

[250] *Krokodil* examples include 1959: 18/11. See also Furst (2010: Ch.5n.105).

cartoons visualised the act of seeing, and performed acts of revelation designed to encourage in the reader a particular kind of sceptical vision. Cartoons about Soviet housing represent an important case study via which to explore this phenomenon. House building was especially politicised during the period 1954-1964 because it was associated so personally with Khrushchev. When he came to power, Khrushchev made the increase in housing stock central to his social, political and ideological policymaking agenda. In the 1950s and 1960s he urged that houses be built as economically and as quickly as possible, for maximum living space. Rationalised design, new building techniques and the rapid expansion of the labour force combined to realize Khrushchev's aims: four or five-story apartment blocks (since this was the maximum height of building possible without lifts or rubbish chutes) were built all over the country. These prefabricated concrete apartment buildings had been completed at tremendous speed under Khrushchev's leadership, when he was Head of the CPSU in Moscow, and the programme was now extended to the whole of the USSR (and Eastern Europe in due course). On 31 July 1957, Khrushchev's major housing decree promised to end the housing shortage within twelve years.[251] Between 1955 and 1970, 35,688,000 separate apartments were built in the Soviet Union (Kozlov and Gilburd 2013: 42). Build quality in these apartments was generally poor, and they became known, in fact, as '*Khrushcheby*', a pun on the Russian word for slums ('trushcheby') and a reference to Khrushchev's housing programme. Khrushchev's apartments were also distinguished by the privacy that they accorded to inhabitants. These single apartments marked a departure from the Soviet state's experiment in revolutionary living—the 'Soviet common place par excellence (Boym 1994: 124)—the communal apartment. By the early 1950s, as Boym notes, the communal apartment was 'both omnipresent and invisible. It was everywhere in daily life and nowhere in official representation. Only the idealized *New Apartment*, albeit spoiled by the bourgeois rubber plant, appears in the painting of 1952' (1994: 129) (see Figure 123). Aleksandr Laktionov's painting received heavy criticism for its 'varnishing' of reality and its unrealistic portrayal of Stalinist domesticity (Bown 1998: 296).

---

[251] Although the policy was a failure in that the housing shortage remained until the end of the Soviet Union, Mark B. Smith argues that this was a highly significant social reform (2009).

Figure 123: Laktionov, A. 1952. *Into a New Flat* (*V novuiu kvartiru*.).
[Oil on canvas.] Location unknown.

Elsewhere, *Krokodil* cartoons satirized the uncomfortable proximity of communal living (1954: 1/10), but the journal's satirical commentary always contrasted with treatments such as Laktionov's. In a cartoon from 1960, a man, when moving out of his flat, rushes back to kiss his telephone goodbye (see Figure 124).[252]

Figure 124: Bazhenov, A. Untitled.
***Krokodil* 1960: 28/12.**

---

[252] Caption reads: '-Lucky man, he was given an apartment, and he's moving to a new home!' '- Why is he greiving?' '- He's saying goodbye to the telephone!'. ('Schastlivchik, poluchil kvartiru, pereezzhaet v novyi dom!' '- Chego zhe on ubivaetsia?' '- Proshchaetsia s telefonom!')

The architecture of the background in the Bazhenov cartoon, as well as the narrative associated with both images, means that the *Krokodil* image may be read as a parody of the Laktionov painting. Like some of the affirming images discussed already, Bazhenov's performs a parodic remembrance of a Stalin-era easel painting, but, while the *Krokodil* cartoon functions as a joke about housing under Khrushchev, the critique of the image and government housing policy is deposited in the contrast between the two images.

The central joke in the Bazhenov cartoon relates to the fact that the inhabitant is upset to be leaving behind a telephone rather than the dwelling itself. The flat, in fact, does not seem very luxurious, and this explains why the vacating family's feelings of nostalgia for the place are manifested in affection for the telephone. The flat's services, indeed, are highlighted in the cartoon; the telephone cable, electric lighting cables and radiator have all been fitted since the building was completed. The essential services, like the detritus left behind after the furniture has been removed from this flat, are visible outside the body of this building. By contrast, the Laktionov painting depicts a flat that has been finished to a high standard. The parquet floor and the wallpaper are spotlessly clean, and there is no sign of electrical wiring or heating pipes—this flat conceals its services. Whereas the clutter in Bazhenov's cartoon refers to the basic facilities that made this flat habitable, in Laktionov's painting the texture of the image refers to personal possessions. Notably, in Laktionov's painting, an image of Stalin is carried reverentially by the young pioneer, who looks around the new flat with a proprietorial air, as if giving the Soviet leader a guided tour. Along with other references to political authorities, this portrait signifies Stalin's absent presence. Bazhenov's cartoon substitutes such direct signs of political presence for the telephone, which is kissed, as if in religious reverence. In contrast with the glossy optimism of Laktionov's painting, Bazhenov's characters appear bemused—the man even weeps as he kisses the telephone goodbye—at the emotion they experience upon leaving the residence.

Apartment living itself was, on the whole, rather gently satirized in *Krokodil*. Semenov's 'Great Migration of the People' ('*Velikoe Pereselenie Narodov*') refers to the USSR's massive post-war urbanization, but also to the huge Khrushchev building programme. As construction proceeds in the background, a brand new housing block receives its first inhabitants in the foreground. This image combines references to official discourses about the USSR's happy multinationalism, the advantages of *Khrushcheby*, and Khrushchev's promise to end the housing shortage, with cultural tropes such as centrifugal movements towards the major cities, and humorous non-official references to everyday living.

Figure 125: Semenov, I. *Great Migration of the People.* **(***Velikoe Pereselenie Narodov.***)**
Krokodil **1964: 22/8-9.**

At least two rubber plants appear in this cartoon, in satirical homage to Laktionov's painting, but the crowdedness, loud music emanating from one flat, and the exclamation 'What views!' from a balcony suggest some of the residents' problems. The techniques employed in the house-building boom of the Khrushchev period did prompt other critiques, however.

Figure 126: Shcheglov, E. *The best gift box for May Day.* **(***Luchshaia podarochnaia korobka k pervomaiu.***)**
Krokodil **1960: 12/1.**
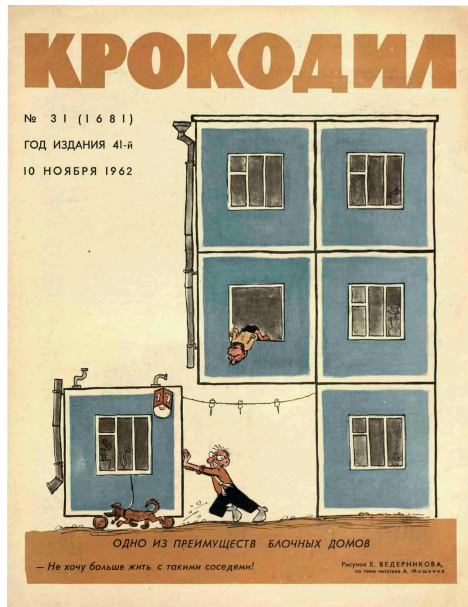
Figure 127: Vedernikov, E. *One advantage of a block of houses.* **(***Odno iz preimushchestv v blochnykh domov.***) Based on a theme written by A. Moshkin.**
Krokodil **1962: 31/1**

The swiftness of building these apartments, as well as their interchangeability, was a theme that was connected with uncommunal behaviour. While some cartoons imagined furnished apartments being craned into place as their future inhabitants moving

in, complete with rubber plant, others imagined the reverse operation.[253] In 'One advantage of a block of houses' ('Odno iz preimushchestv v blochnykh domov', see Figure 127) a disgruntled citizen trundles his apartment away from the rest of the black of apartments. As an angry occupant looks on, he explains 'I don't want to live with neighbours' ('*Ne khochu bol'she zhit' s takimi sosediami*'). Both cartoons use the modularization of all aspects of these buildings (the drain pipes, for example, are fixed to individual sections and simply connected to the others when the apartment is in place) as a visual joke that underlines the individuality of the apartments[254]. The irony of the cartoon is, of course, that despite differences from pre-war housing, these apartments were not individual and could not be detached and moved. No matter how much an individual might wish to move his own residence (Figure 127), he was obliged to live where the state had built his apartment (Figure 126). Many cartoons, furthermore, satirized the unfortunate conduct of people who behaved in anti-social ways.[255]

As I have shown, *Krokodil*'s 'becoming' cartoons could be ambiguous images. Through visual satirical discourses relating to lived experiences of Soviet achievements, especially images that contrasted with the unequivocal optimism found in other cultural texts, *Krokodil* drew attention to ambiguities and divergences between rhetoric and reality. Far from being a purveyor of the same glossy optimism as other official media, *Krokodil* used its satirical stance to highlight its own difference from other Soviet media outlets. *Krokodil*'s critique of theatricalism reveals, then, that appearances and behaviour are unreliable guides to realities such as objective truth, lived experience and inner beliefs. Theatricalism and the façade, the metaphors that *Krokodil* employed in order to critique and satirise official discourses, were explored in ways which highlighted the value of subjective observation, rather than official rhetoric or Soviet ideology, as a guide to interpretation. *Krokodil* thus advocated the individual performance of seeing satirically, rather than outward appearances (which might conceal an alternative reality), as the most reliable interpretive resource.

---

[253] For cartoons about moving in, see 1964: 34/2, 1959: 3/13, 1959: 17/2 and Figure 126. For cartoons about moving out, see 1959: 20/4, 1962: 32/3 and Figure 127.

[254] The drainpipe is subject of a commonly used visual joke in *Krokodil* in this period. See 1956: 32/13 and 1964: 4/1.

[255] See 1963: 27/12, 1958: 7/12, and 1958: 31/4.

3.3.2 Performing Panopticism in *Krokodil*

In Section 3.2 I considered *Krokodil*'s exploration of the nature of vision from the perspective of the viewer, but some cartoons visualised the experience of being observed. Numerous *Krokodil* cartoons deployed the journal's satirical vision in critiques of the value of different modes of surveillance. This suggests that *Krokodil* enunciated an important critique of the reality of Soviet rule, and the existing literature has so far failed to consider how state-sanctioned satire engaged with everyday experiences of the act of watching or being watched. Even at a time of liberalisation and an increased willingness on the part of political authorities to discuss state abuses of power, *Krokodil*'s fascination with snooping, panoptic vision and different forms of surveillance, which all appeared in cartoons as content matter, and as metaphors through which artists explored other topical discourses, represents a significant critique of Soviet governance.

Total surveillance, or the citizen's self-monitoring as a result of their awareness of the state's panopticism, is a central feature in the analysis of the Soviet state's political control methods, barely separated from other symptoms of totalitarianism, in many Cold War-era studies of the regime.[256] Post-Soviet studies have drawn distinctions between different motives, types and effects of surveillance in the USSR.[257] For Peter Holquist, Soviet surveillance was 'not designed to uncover popular sentiments and moods, nor was it intended merely to keep people under control; its whole purpose was to act on people, to change them' (1997: 417). In the USSR, the body was the physical site for the psychological reconstruction of the Soviet subject, and the physical and psychological transformations were understood to be almost synchronous.[258] Trotsky, writing in 1924, outlined the preparatory work required for the achievement of this goal: '[t]o issue a new "improved edition" of man—that is the further task of communism. But for this it is necessary as a start to know man from all sides, to know his anatomy, his physiology, and that part of his physiology which is called psychology' (1973: 140). In Socialist Realist discourse, self-discipline, self-education and self-surveillance became essential commitments for heroic individuals. The internalization of ideological surveillance was especially

---

[256] See Arendt (1973: 42-43), and Friedrich and Brzezinski (1965: 177).

[257] See Fitzpatrick (1999: 190), Hoffmann (2011: 211), Johnston (2011: xx), and Kharkordin (1999: 110).

[258] I am using following Soviet and scholarly conventions by referring to the 'New Soviet Man', but my discussion should be understood as gender-neutral. For discussions of gender difference in this context, see Attwood (1985, 1990 and 1999).

important, since it represented the most widespread mechanism by which society would be protected. Stephen Kotkin, in his analysis of collective living in Magnitogorsk in the 1930s, described an 'interlocking web of state surveillance and tenants' mutual surveillance' in which individuals willingly (though with varying degrees of enthusiasm) participated (1995: 196). Similarly, Oleg Kharkhordin called mutual surveillance 'the reliable bedrock of Soviet power, the foundation on which pyramids and hierarchies are erected' (1999: 110). Both these models essentially follow Foucault's description of the functioning of the disciplinary society, which includes the theory of panopticism (1977: 195-228). Built on an interpretation of the architecture of Jeremy Bentham's panopticon penitentiary,[259] Foucault's theory was of discipline as a type of power utilizing various instruments. As this sub-section shows, *Krokodil* employed the panopticon as metaphor and subject matter in numerous cartoons. Clearly, whether we choose to imagine Kotkin's web, or Kharkhordin's three-dimensional pyramidal structure, individual and collective education, surveillance, criticism and punishment overlapped, and the state assumed greater authority at different periods in Soviet history. Indeed, the de-Stalinisation process begun after 1953 may be understood as a re-balancing of the responsibilities. Khrushchev's reforms aimed to increase the degree of social pressure and 'practices of mutual surveillance profoundly intensified and admonition came to rule the day' (Kharkhordin 1999: 280).

Rather than re-considering surveillance as a state-directed practice, or as a function of authoritarianism, in this sub-section I consider how *Krokodil*'s cartoons on surveillance offer us the opportunity to explore popular-official humorous responses to individuals' experiences of different modes of surveillance. *Krokodil* conducted a series of complex, introspective acts of investigation and revelation related to surveillance in the USSR. While *Krokodil* employed the panopticon as a device for highlighting the despicable (see Figure 135), the magazine itself functioned as a kind of prison house for the socially undesirable, whose actions were quarantined in the pages of the journal. As always, however, *Krokodil*'s self-reflexivity and satirical imperatives informed its representational strategies. While some cartoons commented upon a lack of privacy in Soviet housing (see Figure 128 and Figure 129), others employed doors as metaphors for divisions between bureaucrats and citizens (see Figure 130). *Krokodil* thus engaged in graphic expressions of

---

[259] Interestingly, Samuel Bentham's plan for the panopticon was derived while he was working for Prince Potemkin in Russia. Further, one of the only panopticons built in Europe was the St Petersburg Panopticon School of Arts, designed and supervised by Samuel Bentham in 1806.

philosophical freedom. To borrow from Clark and Holquist's description of Bakhtin's method, *Krokodil* may be understood to have conjured up visions, 'making things present as the reader saw the argument go back and forth before his very eyes' (1984: 31). As this thesis argues, therefore, *Krokodil* was a site for the shared construction of productive and self-critiquing discourses of a peculiar type.

Krokodil's exploration of the nature of satirical vision may be understood partly through a study of cartoons about snooping. In images featuring doors and windows, many of which echo the critiques of Soviet communal housing discussed above, *Krokodil* drew attention to the nature of seeing and to the possibility of being watched without one's knowledge. Indeed, doors and windows functioned in *Krokodil* cartoons as a metaphor for both personal privacy and domesticity, and the physical and political barriers placed between citizens and government officials. Doorways served as markers of thresholds between two domains.[260] As entranceways, they might be crossed, with or without permission, and therefore as barriers they were not always successful. Doors provided artists with opportunities to find humour in domestic life. Iosif Offengenden pictured the 'Force of habit' ('Sila privychki') of a cleaning lady in a door-maker's workshop. Unable to stop herself, she snoops through the keyhole of an unhung door.

Figure 128: Offengenden, I.
Force of habit. (*Sila privychki.****)***
***Krokodil* 1958: 4/9.**

Figure 129: Eliseev, K. *Clinical case*. (*Klinicheskii sluchai.*)
***Krokodil* 1960: 8/13.**

---

[260] Doors themselves varied, in their various manifestations in *Krokodil* cartoons, from the wide open and therefore barely visible or effective as barriers (see 1954: 8/3) to the very substantial (1955: 6/7). When closed, their significance as barriers was often highlighted by ornate handles and knockers (see 1963: 5/14), or padlocks (see 1957: 34/2). Doors also featured as barriers in 'contesting' images related to foreign affairs topics—see 1958: 19/12, 1958: 2/16, and 1961: 25/1.

The consequences of peeping through doors might, according to *Krokodil*, sometimes be more serious. In a cartoon by Konstantin Eliseev, punningly entitled 'Clinical case',[261] a confused doctor considers the treatment options for a nosy neighbour whose head has became stuck through the keyhole she was spying through. In their appearances in satirical commentaries about domestic life and communal living, they functioned as critiques of the failure of the Soviet project in its aim of breaking down family units and creating a new kind of society. The nosiness of a neighbour, it is implied, is always justification for the desire for privacy, personal space and private possessions.

Krokodil's critique of government bureaucrats also included door metaphors, but in these cases the door symbolises the barrier between citizens and state representatives. Many cartoons satirised the principle of participatory democratic involvement in politics by employing barriers across an open door, as a metaphor for the actual inaccessibility of political power. In numerous images, the threshold into the bureaucrat's office, even when the door is open, remains impassable for other reasons. The bureaucrat's fearful temper or aggressive behaviour, or some otherwise unexpected obstacle, is often visualised as the reason for the bureaucrat's unhelpfulness or unavailability (see Figure 130 and Figure 131).

Figure 130: Lisorgsky, N. *Ratspredlozhenie Krokodila.* (*Krokodil's rationalization proposals.*) *Krokodil* 1962: 27/6.

Figure 131: Vaisbord, M. Untitled. *Krokodil* 1964: 1/15.

A closed door, on the other hand, was usually symbolic of the bureaucrat's complete unavailability.[262] In an untitled cartoon from 1963, for example, the Director, a

---

[261] The title of the cartoon is a pun on the verb 'to listen' ('*slushat*').

[262] For one exception, see 1964: 2/1.

Comrade Bear ('*Tovarishch Medved*') was unable to see his visitors because he had switched to his winter schedule (see *Krokodil* 1963: 29/3).

Krokodil's satirical critique also considered the nature of vision in other ways. In particular, *Krokodil* was concerned with demonstrating the power of satirical observation to reveal what would otherwise remain hidden. As I argue throughout, *Krokodil*'s satirical approach was always to make the reader self-conscious of their own active role in the performance of consuming the magazine and reaching an individual understanding of its contents. Cartoons on this theme often referred to the bureaucrat, as a representative of state power, and used spectacles to symbolise the bureaucrat's (sometimes willing) short-sightedness. Some criticisms of bureaucrats in *Krokodil* in the period 1954-1964 imply either a propensity for falsifying reports, or a readiness to be deceived. As Holzer, Illiash, Gabrelian, and Kuznetsova note, Soviet industrial management practices encouraged false reporting and creative accounting, and Soviet satirical artists frequently engaged with the theme of the Soviet bureaucratic optical illusion (2010: 124-144). A poster from 1961 featured a poem that included the lines 'He has no shame and not a speck of conscience!/Pulling the wool over someone's eyes—it's a habit of a sort' (Holzer, Illiash, Gabrelian, and Kuznetsova (2010: 126).[263] In a 1960 cartoon, the bureaucratic report ('*Otchet*') is imagined as a sort of distorting eye glass (see Figure 132).

Figure 132: Ganf, Iu. *Optical illusion*. (*Opticheskii obman*.)
***Krokodil* 1960: 6/5.**

---

[263] '*Ni na kopeiku v nem styda! Vtirat ochki—ego privychka*'. N.B. Instead of 'pulling the wool over someone's eyes', Holzer et al use the American term 'eye-washing'.

When the viewer looks through the glasses, a perfect scene is visible. A smooth road and well-built bridge, comically well-fed animals, well maintained buildings including a House of Culture ('*Dom kul'tura*') and a satisfied-looking milkmaid are all present in this report. This 'Optical Illusion' is both real and unreal. The 'illusion' is real in the sense that the image has been performatively created in this cartoon. This image, of course, parodies some of the affirmative treatments of idyllic rural life to be found in other media. Moreover, such falsified reports were published: the text at the top of the cartoon informs us of actual reports that have been exaggerated.[264] It is unreal, however, because the viewer can perfectly see an alternative vision outside the scope of the report. In this 'outside' world, swampy roads and collapsed bridges, undernourished animals and incomplete buildings exist. These problems, of course, were all separate subjects for other *Krokodil* cartoons, and, as such, they represent the subject of an alternative official discourse on life in the USSR. This cartoon, then, presents the reader with a paradoxical and troubling view of Soviet reality.

It is an important conceptual claim of this thesis that *Krokodil* engaged in exercises of performing seeing for its readers' benefit. In all of the images discussed in this section so far, the magazine leads the reader through acts of revelation designed to invite the reader self-consciously to perform the act of seeing satirically, as *Krokodil* does. Performing seeing therefore means understanding how to see reality, and how to rationalise different images. As this thesis argues, *Krokodil* was hyper-aware of its satirical visuality, and the red crocodile character constantly reminded the readers of the magazine's form and function. *Krokodil* was also reflexive: it commented upon and satirized other media, setting itself apart from them in the process. An unusual cartoon from 1956 explicitly satirised the repetitive glossy optimism, formulaic slogans and standardized visual language of the posters published by Izogiz (The Art Department of the State Publishing House) (see Figure 133).

---

[264] Text reads: 'Chtoby priukrasit' polozhenie del v sel'skom khoziaistve, v nekotorykh raionakh Aktiubinskoi oblasti sostavliali ochkovtiratel'skie otchety'.

Figure 133: Bazhenov, A. Untitled.
***Krokodil* 1956: 17/14.**

This cartoon contrasts official graphic discourse with the world outside Soviet visual culture. The poster symbolises and performs a critique of Soviet media representations of ideologically correct behaviour by idealised citizens. The cartoon satirises the unchanging performance of a distinctive Soviet gesture, the outstretched arm and pointing finger. Following countless statues of Lenin and wartime images, these posters exhort citizens to perform their own ideal responses. The young man's gesture is static, the girl's flowers do not move, and the smiles remain fixed. When the ideal figures step outside their posters, however, and become present in reality, the poster does not cease to perform. Even with the trace of the characters outlined, the slogans remain and the meaning is clear enough. Outside the poster, however, the newly realised characters do not materialize entirely authentically. Their unreal appearances confuse one another ('Have we met before?' ('My s vami gde-to vstrechalis'?')) and indeed the multiplication of the same image implies a self-referential joke about the referentiality of Soviet visual culture's own tendency to reuse the same images. *Krokodil*'s tendency to recycle the same visual ideologemes and its frequent references to images common in other media is itself implied in this cartoon.

In this cartoon, *Krokodil* engages in an exploration of a triad: the different versions of official discourse (the serious and the satirical, the high-level and the low-level) were compared with people's responses to them, and with the lived expe-

rience of Soviet citizens.[265] What emerges from this triad is a complex critique. The rupture between official discourses and lived experience is acknowledged in these cartoons. *Krokodil* made no attempt to gloss over the gaps; rather, the magazine visualised the differences and made them humorous. *Krokodil*'s vision of its own satirical role, indeed, altered little, and it remained self-reflexive, as the depiction of the red crocodile, which symbolised the magazine in various situations, shows. The red crocodile frequently featured in cartoons performing the act of satirical attack. Whether he was using his pitchfork to pick mushroom-vices (1956: 27/1), chasing personified malignancies downhill on a sledge (see Figure 134) or firing arrows at symbols of the remnants of capitalism (see Figure 60), the red crocodile functioned as a device for reminding readers of the magazine about the satirical function of the publication and the media in which it operated.

Figure 134: Goriaev, V. *Winter-Spring*. (*Zimnii-Vesna*.)
***Krokodil* 1957: 4/1**

Krokodil's exploration of the nature of seeing satirically repeatedly referred to panoptic vision (see Figure 135 and 1956: 27/1). In 1961, for instance, a feature entitled 'Panopticon' ('*Panoptikum*') invoked references to the penitentiary in its metaphorical and self-reflexive description of its own work.[266] Like the penal institution, *Krokodil* places the socially undesirable individual on permanent show, inducing in him a consciousness of his own visibility in order to ensure the individu-

---

[265] Similar cartoons include 1955: 16/1, 1959: 15/12, and 1962: 24/3.

[266] 'Panoptikum' ('паноптикум') also means 'freak show'. As this thesis shows, *Krokodil*'s satire contained a strongly grotesque aesthetic.

als' assumption of responsibility for self-regulation. In this cartoon, as the red crocodile announces on his billboard in the top-left corner, the magazine is open for members of the public to view. Here presented is 'a kind of catalogue' ('nechto vrode kataloga') of the inmates. In order to make the experience seem more like a penitentiary, to avoid misreadings, and perhaps to reassure the nervous observer about the security measures in place, the crocodile informs that 'Each (exhibit) is equipped with a serial number'.[267] At the end of the crocodile's message to the magazine's readers, he invites them to 'see and read' ('*smotrite i chitayte*'). In many ways, this distinction between alternative routes to ocular comprehension represents a formula for *Krokodil*'s cartoons' method. They showed the unseen, and materialized the metaphorical. Using the panopticon as a metaphor for a diverse range of gazes, seeing a subject from different angles, and bringing mass observation to focus on one individual, this *Krokodil* cartoon proposes that 'seeing' may be an ideological method. Performing 'seeing' for its readers, the magazine suggested that ideological 'seeing' was a practice which the diligent might master, and it provided guidance on how to use ideology as both a resource for exposing and an interpretive resource for understanding the unhidden.
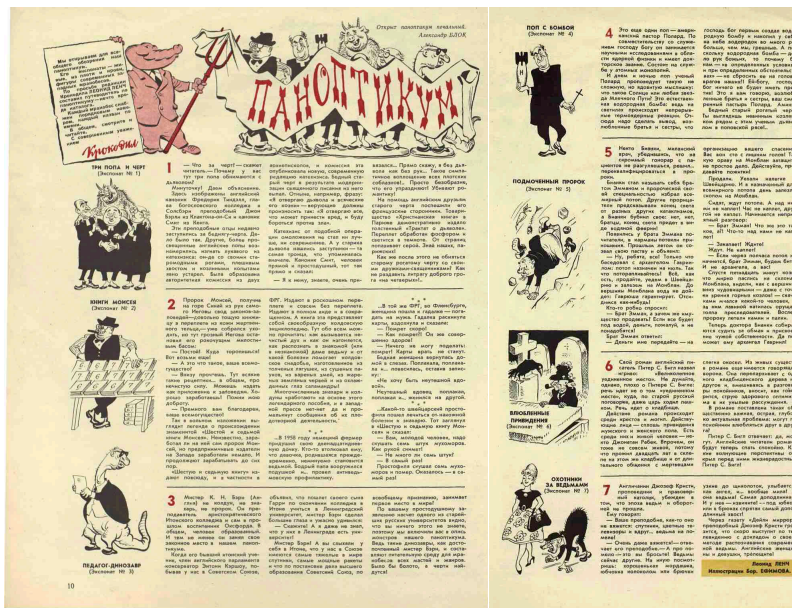
Figure 135: Efimov, B. *Panopticon*. (*Panoptikum*.)
***Krokodil* 1961: 9/10-11.**

Krokodil's exploration of seeing satirically thus included its graphic explorations of the nature of seeing, and of being seen. The journal revealed its own method for

---

[267] 'Kazhdyy mrakobes snabzhei poriadkovym nomerom'

seeing satirically by visualising its own mechanisms. It did so by exploring the nature of self-reform and the self-construction of subjectivity.

Krokodil's cartoons about surveillance and the self-construction of Soviet subjectivity reveal the significance of the magazine's self-conscious performance of its own socio-political role. These cartoons represent important contributions to the public discourse on different models of surveillance during the period 1954-1964. Indeed, they represent *Krokodil*'s best-known original contribution to Soviet political discourse. These cartoons, on the subject of '*stiliagi*' (from *stil'*–style, and variously translated as 'dudes', 'hipsters' or 'teddy boys') or fashionably dressed youths, were an element of what Kharkhordin describes as the first test of mutual surveillance conducted at a practical and media level on a national scale (Kharkhordin 1999: 289). Part of Zhdanov's broader official campaign of criticism of Western affectations, of which non-realist art and fashion were central components, the state's critical focus on *stiliagi* emerged in the late 1940s. In fact, D. G. Beliaev, *Krokodil* Editor-in-Chief between 1948 and 1953, coined the name '*stiliagi*' in an article published on 10 March 1949. Beliaev's article described a youth sub-culture: 'they've worked out their own style of clothing, speech, and manners. The most important part of their style is not to resemble normal people. As you see, their efforts take them to absurd extremes. The stiliaga knows the fashions all over the world, but he doesn't know Griboyedov…' (See *Krokodil* 1949: 7/10). Other publications quickly added their voices to what Kharkhordin called a 'war on *stiliagi*' (1999, 291),[268] but the most influential images of *stiliagi* appeared in *Krokodil*. One of the most famous images of the *stiliagi* appeared in *Krokodil* on 28th February 1954 (see Figure 136). Entitled 'Daddy's "Victory"' ('*Papina "Pobeda"*'), the cartoon pictures a young man in front of a GAZ-M20 'Pobeda' car. Ambiguity is critical to the cartoon's multiple meanings, of course, since the reader is left to decide which pictorial element represents the 'victory'. In fact, I suggest, the ambiguity is a hint at ambivalence in this case; the reader deduces that the ascription of the monicker 'victory' to the young man is ironic, and the term is a more literal signifier. The 'Pobeda' was designed to capture the spirit of the post-war age, and was the first soviet vehicle not to be based on a foreign design. The model went into production in 1946, but production difficulties meant that there were initially few available for sale. Large numbers were eventually bought by the state for government employees, and the appearance of the car in this cartoon therefore

---

[268] Recent studies of this 'war' include Raleigh (2012), LaPierre (2012), Kharkhordin (1999), Yurchak (2005), Stites (1992).

situates the young man in relation to the government. Many of the early *stiliagi*, indeed, were the sons and daughters of the Soviet political elite, although the trend spread to wider Soviet society in later years (Starr 1983: 238-9).

Figure 136: Prokhorov, B. *Daddy's "Victo-ry"*. (*Papina "Pobeda".*) *Krokodil* 1954: 6/16.

Figure 137: *Daddy's Rocket*. (*Papina raketa*.) *Krokodil* 1960: 36/11.

As O'Mahony notes, the intention of *Krokodil*'s satires of *stiliagi* was to ridicule (2006: 178), but these cartoons assume new significance when considered in the context of the magazine's investigation of modes of surveillance. *Krokodil*'s intention was, therefore, also to make *stiliagi* the subject of a general popular surveillance. Mass observation, or panopticism, was expected to remedy the social problem that *stiliagi* were believed to represent. Indeed, the problem of *stiliagi* extended beyond the disavowal of social orthodoxies. Casting the *stiliaga* as the offspring of a party member reflected a criticism of abuse of power that otherwise was directed at deviant individuals. Bureaucrats were criticized in *Krokodil* cartoons for self-aggrandizing or embezzlement, but the extension of *Krokodil*'s discourses on nepotism or Party privilege represented a strike upwards at the Party's more senior members. *Krokodil* repeated the same critique in 1960, reprising the role of the young *stiliaga*, this time in cosmonaut's garb, in front of 'Daddy's Rocket' ('*Papina raketa*') (see Figure 137). Given the dominant discourse in Soviet media about the role of cosmonauts, and the emphasis placed upon the proletarian roots of individuals such as Yuri Gagarin (Jenks 2011: 123), this cartoon represented a serious challenge to orthodoxy. Considered together, moreover, the cartoons imply scepticism both about whether the state's (and *Krokodil*'s) previous criticisms of *stiliagi* had been effective in altering behaviour. Moreover, the suggestion that *stiliagi* might one day travel into space undermined state rhetoric about the utopian-

ism of space flight. They even seem to suggest that privilege was more than just protection for these young people—they might even be elevated (figuratively and literally), despite their nonconformity. In many ways, *Krokodil*'s treatment of the *stiliagi* mirrors the capitalist visual ideologeme. The magazine's conception of what it meant to be a *stiliaga* was communicated via hairstyle and costume, and the performative construction of the character was, as was the case with the capitalist, intended as a critique of the character's ideology and behaviours.

Krokodil's concern with modes of surveillance was further explored in cartoons that depict these young people being watched. In a cartoon published on 20 January 1957, even the monkeys at the zoo found the *stiliaga*'s appearance and ignorance ridiculous (see Figure 138).
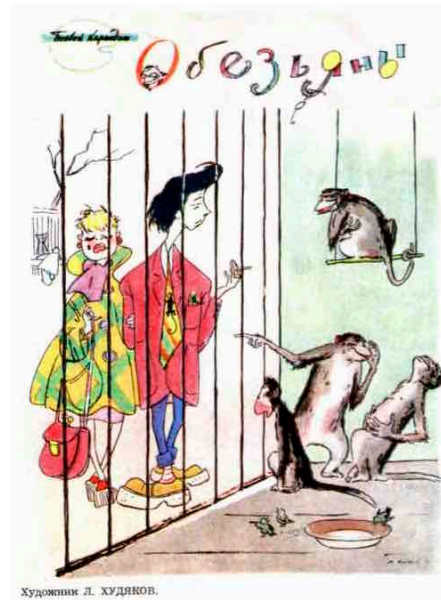
Figure 138: Khudiakov, L. *Monkeys*. (*Obez'iany*.)
***Krokodil* 1957: 2/7.**

Here, the reader's gaze is directed, through the bars, at young people viewing monkeys at the zoo. The ironic effect is to place the *stiliagi* behind the bars, as if they are encaged. Creating an explicit visual connection between the *stiliaga* and monkeys, as Figure 136 does,[269] was one way to justify the need for constant supervision. The *stiliaga*'s deficiencies in education and cultural grounding, as Beliaev's article explained, made him somehow subhuman. Other images suggested that the *stiliaga*'s extreme immaturity necessitated intensive surveillance.

---

[269] See also 1957: 24/5, 1957: 7/14, and 1960: 29/9.

Krokodil's cartoons on the subject of surveillance suggested a profound scepticism about the value of such oversight. This theme was explored via two cartoon topics. The first critiqued doting parents and indulged offspring. Indeed, *stiliagi* cartoons in *Krokodil* may be interpreted as a rationalisation of the political and familial strands in the discourses on generational difference in the Thaw era. *Krokodil* cartoons, including those related to the *stiliagi*, explored the rupture between generations, and found interest in visualizing not ideological disagreement, but rather the causes of everyday conflict. The Stalin generation inherited the revolutionary project and endured numerous hardships, while the Thaw-era generation were expected to be, according to the new party programme adopted in October 1961, the first to live under communism. The politicization of generational differences was to some degree mirrored in official culture. Nancy Condee suggests that this theme was manifested in culture via the rupture between fathers and sons. Furthermore, she suggests that Khrushchev injected into Thaw-era culture 'a destabilizing variant: uncles and nephews. It was destabilizing because the limitations of kinship authority were all too evident' (2000: 163). *Krokodil* cartoons explored the nascent tensions between teenagers or young adults and their parents and found fault on both sides. *Krokodil*'s young people were politically unaware, irresponsible, disrespectful and slovenly, but the magazine's parent figures' mollycoddling made them equally responsible for their offsprings' deviance.

Figure 139: Kanevsky, A. *With all the Conveniences*. (*So vsemi udobstvami*.)
***Krokodil* 1958: 8/7.**

O'Mahony suggests that criticism of the older generation and the Soviet state itself was implicit in the debate about generational differences (2006: 177), and this is supported by an analysis of *Krokodil*'s cartoons. Parental protection and constant watching did not produce the desired outcomes. In 'With all the Conveniences' (see

Figure 139), a young man enjoys his parents' complete commitment to his comfort. His parents wear his hammock as a burden around their necks, but do so happily. This cartoon employs the spoiled child and generational differences as subject matter, via which to critique the efficacy of a particular mode of surveillance,[270] and when considered alongside the cartoon satirising Khrushchev's supervision of Soviet agriculture (see Figure 106), these images convey an explicitly political criticism.

Finally, *Krokodil*'s interest in different models of surveillance also extended to the technological. Aside from the magazine's affirmation of Soviet cosmonaut heroes and their machines, *Krokodil* generally presented a sceptical view of the potential of Soviet technology to effect profound social change. There were close connections between Soviet government and technology (see Bailes (1978), Graham (1993) and Andrews (2003)), but outside of *Krokodil* none of the official discourse on scientific developments was humorous. My analysis of the magazine shows that *Krokodil*'s scepticism about the power of technology suggested that machines were unreliable and broke down,[271] were overly complex and unnecessary,[272] and were likely to be employed primarily for the purpose of increasing the surveillance capabilities of those in positions of authority. In several cartoons, while resources have been poured into technology to increase the surveillance capabilities of managers, ordinary workers continue with manual labour and inefficient production techniques. In a cartoon entitled 'Technology on the Verge of the Fantastic' ('*Tekhnika na grani fantastiki*'), an eager interviewer asks about the revolutionizing effects of automation on a factory (see Figure 140). Very proudly, the factory director presses a button and awakens a screen in order to demonstrate the capabilities of the new technology, an array of which surrounds him at his desk, only to show two workers carrying a stretcher of parts. *Krokodil*'s critique, then, is of the paradox of an industrialised society being capable of building such powerful technology, yet only conceiving of the value of surveilling its own workforce. Another 1962 cartoon entitled

---

[270] Similar critiques appear in 1957: 22/14, 1958: 35/5, and 1962: 32/1.

[271] In *Krokodil* 1960: 28/7, an opportunist foreman attempts to lure workers into his wharf full of broken down machinery by advertising it as a weightlifting gym. Similar images imagined a broken-down track-laying crane was carried into position by a large team of workers (see 1960: 27/7). See also Figure 40.

[272] On the front cover of *Krokodil* 1959: 18, a humanoid robot, controlled remotely by an even larger-human operated computer control system, was being used to push a wheelbarrow. Similarly, robots were employed to hold chisels steady (see 1963: 33/9), and machines were devised to harvest coconuts (see 1962: 33/1) or dill (see 1959: 34/1) or to write reports while rocks were collected by hand (see 1956: 6/12).

'In the World of Bureaucratic Science and Technology' depicts an operator of an impressive computer, complete with two satellite dishes and a monitor, watches as a maid milks a cow by hand in the distance (1962: 25/2-3).
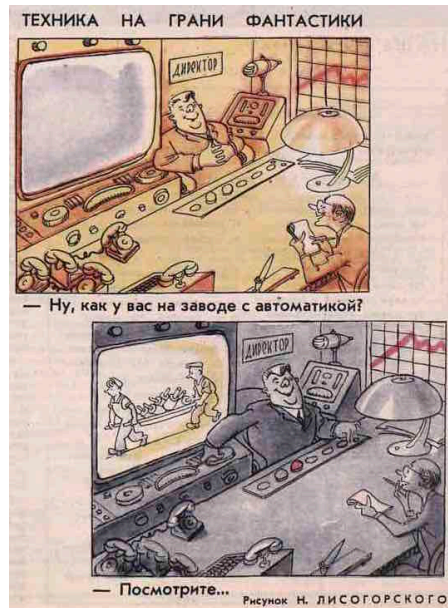
Figure 140: Lisorgsky, N. *Technology Verging on the Fantastic*. (*Tekhnika na grani fantastiki*.) *Krokodil* **1964: 27/5.**

Krokodil cartoons thus explored some of the contradictions implied by the Soviet state's adoption of technological surveillance. While the television screen, like the door or the window, narrows and focuses the viewer's gaze on its subject, it also multiplies the potential number of observers. As the cartoons in this section show, however, *Krokodil* explored the possibility that the technology might not be employed to best effect. While technology enhanced the capabilities of the surveiller, it did not make the subject any more interesting, and it did not make the act of watching more fruitful. As this chapter has argued, *Krokodil*'s different modes of 'seeing' were imagined as more beneficial to the observer than modern technology.

3.4   Conclusions

This chapter set out to investigate the graphic construction of ideology in *Krokodil*'s cartoons. Considering the visual ideologeme and the construction of ideological critiques in the three schemata to be found in the magazine, I explored the performative visual extension of key concepts. Rather than viewing the cartoon as a visualisation of political speech, therefore, this chapter recast *Krokodil* as a journal in which ideological critiques were defined and extended. I investigated the nature of Soviet visual satire, using performativity as a conceptual framework through which to consider the ways ideological meaning was communicated in

visual texts, but also as a route to better understanding the magazine's visualisation of itself. *Krokodil*'s political cartoons have not previously been understood in this way, and my contribution to scholarly understanding of the performativity of Soviet graphic political discourse has been to explore how an image could have perlocutionary force. Developing a paradigm from literary understandings of the performative power of language, I explored how character construction may be viewed as a process of performative construction. Viewing cartoons as performative texts with agency, and investigating how ideological meaning was deposited in them, I showed how a Soviet political cartoon possessed a kind of perlocutionary force, with which it had power to affect its readers' judgement and to cause offence. This understanding challenges the conventional view of *Krokodil* as a simple conveyor of political content; if we view the cartoon as a text with perlocutionary force, we come to appreciate that the main target of Soviet satire was not its ostensible objects, but rather its readers.

My discussion of *Krokodil*'s fascination with 'performing seeing', through various theatrical and ocular graphic metaphors, reveals that the magazine's primary aim was to effect a psychological shift on the part of its readers. The journal's cartoon texts were intended to perform acts of self-revelation in order to enlighten its readers about the value of seeing satirically. The cartoon, then, may be understood as having a kind of 'x-ray' vision, or the power to reveal something otherwise hidden in the scenes it performed. The ideological power of this performance was often conveyed through characterisation. Highly ideologically charged characters were constructed by artists who drew heavily upon certain shared visual ideologemes. Artists created images wherein corporeal signs were worn on the bodily surface as inscriptions of ideological belief. The 'surface politics of the body' was performed by characters whose ideological cores were visualised through gestures, behaviours, costumes and masks. In order to emphasise the potential difference between the inner and outer worlds of these characters, *Krokodil* cartoonists became adept at employing theatricality as a metaphor for dishonest behaviour. Facades, deceptions and opportunities for observation appeared frequently in the magazine, and the ideological significance of these images was considered here.

This chapter also challenged the assumption that *Krokodil* never depicted the leaders of the Soviet state. By investigating several examples of how the magazine's artists were able to depict the state's leading political authorities, we considered both the reasons for their apparent absence, and the implications of their implied presence. My analysis reveals that *Krokodil*'s critique of Soviet society was decentred. In the absence of the USSR's leaders, what was actually being envisioned was the performance of ideology by non-master figures. The amateurish and misfiring at-

tempts to behave in ideologically correct fashion suggested a fundamental criticism of the failure of Soviet citizens to perform Soviet ideology appropriately.

Conclusions

This thesis uses an original framework combining structuralist and poststructuralist theories for reconsidering the forms, production and consumption, and functions of *Krokodil* magazine in the period 1954-1964. In several ways, this thesis challenges existing approaches and represents original research. It analyses material not previously explored in the scholarly literature on Soviet graphic satire, including a large range of different types of cartoon that have not before been discussed in depth (Section 3.3). Significantly, this thesis conducts close readings of these visual texts, looking beyond content analysis to consider visual language and the performative construction of character (Section 3.1 and 3.2). It critically engages with the 'propaganda paradigm' for understanding *Krokodil* magazine, highlighting the shortcomings of this approach, and it proposes new theoretical frameworks for the analysis of the journal. Rather than reading *Krokodil* simply as the visual expression of political agitation, I have considered the magazine to be a productive part of Soviet visual culture.

One of the ways in which this thesis approaches *Krokodil* in an innovative way is in the application of transmedia theory to explain the journal's extensions (Section 2.2). This reveals that *Krokodil*'s editors expressed their creativity through experimentation with media and content throughout the Soviet period, creating works of satire that transgressed boundaries between media previously assumed to have been impermeable. These texts, moreover, possessed the potential to add to, or undermine, normative discourses. Furthermore, extending transmedia theory to the magazine's production and consumption allows me to argue that *Krokodil* was co-created. This foregrounds the role of prosumer contributors, highlighting the popularity of the journal's competitions, which allows us to reconsider how graphic satirical content was generated in the USSR and to challenge the notion that *Krokodil* was simply a propaganda publication (Chapter 2). This thesis also reveals that *Krokodil*'s editors' attitudes to cross-media experimentation and dispersed content production, which were in line with Leninist media theory and which were such distinctive features of Soviet cultural production in the 1920s, were still manifested in the magazine's creative practices in the 1960s. Not only that, but these cultural practices were encouraged by the Soviet government. Whereas previous studies have interpreted the Soviet government's interventions by decree as evidence of overbearing state control, my analysis of their content, in the light of the insights provided by studying *Krokodil* in relation to transmedia theory, shows that the Central Committee shared the editors' aspirations to greater audience participation (Section 2.1). All

of this suggests that an analysis of *Krokodil*'s production processes enables us to reconceptualise the formation of cultural and political discourses, and the media in which they were constructed, in the USSR in the post-Stalin period.

These new approaches enable me to challenge the view that *Krokodil* was subservient to political authorities, and to point out for the first time the manner in which Soviet graphic satire engaged productively and critically with various discourses. I showed that *Krokodil*'s content, in its diversity, reflected its multiple heritages (Section 1.3). Furthermore, I suggested that moving beyond binary oppositions such as official/popular, support/opposition, and presence/absence allows us to appreciate *Krokodil*'s satire in new ways. The journal's satirical comment, for example, was expressed in Menippean form, an original insight that moves our understanding of the journal away from discussions of Juvenalian and Horatian satire (Section 1.4). This contrasts with the predominant view of *Krokodil*, which suggests that Soviet cartoonists 'changed their views in strict conformity with the zigzags of official policy' (Podshivalov 1989: 14). I also enhanced our understanding of the qualities of *Krokodil*'s satire through my consideration of how the journal's cartoons' depiction and lampoon of the USSR's leading politicians was intimately connected with its critique of the success of the Soviet project's social aims (Section 3.2). Thus, challenging the notion that the journal may be characterised by the 'list-of-targets' approach, and evaluating different theories and practices of satire in evidence in the journal, this thesis recasts the magazine's attentive and active reader as Soviet graphic satire's ultimate objects.

Re-evaluating the nature of Soviet graphic satire was one of the primary aims of this thesis, and through my study of the way *Krokodil*'s political cartoons communicated their critiques I have enriched our understanding: *Krokodil* enjoyed a degree of freedom to perform its own ideological critiques and it did so largely through acts of revelation. *Krokodil* was concerned with 'performing seeing', through various theatrical and ocular graphic metaphors. This understanding of the nature of Soviet cartoons allows us to reconsider the role of the journal more widely, suggesting that individual cartoons' self-revelations were performed in order to enlighten its readers about the value of seeing satirically and with the intent of engaging them in the self-construction of Soviet subjectivity. In this sense, *Krokodil*'s images had an educative aim, as the title of this thesis suggests, but that is not to say, as some studies have asserted (Friedberg 1962: 160), that Soviet satirical cartoons were didactic.

This thesis has expanded our understanding of the nature of Soviet propaganda, in fact. The typical use of the propaganda paradigm for describing *Krokodil* stresses the journal's political motivations and its attacks on ideologically motivated

targets (see Stites 2010). Such usage leaves so much about *Krokodil* unexplained as to be hardly useful, but that is not to say that Soviet satire cannot be defined as propaganda. What my study of *Krokodil* reveals, however, is that our conception of propaganda in the USSR must be elastic enough to include humorous, satirical material that was not only self-reflexive but also parodied other cultural and political forms. In the Soviet context, after all, 'propaganda' (*propaganda*) aimed to appeal to its audience's reason and 'cultivate in them a whole new worldview' (Lenoe 2004: 28). Soviet propaganda, then, aimed beyond immediate persuasion, toward 'the creation of a complex web of cultural associations that would reflect, reinforce, and in turn shape the political, social, and economic system' (Papazian 2013: 69). The crucial lesson suggested by my study of *Krokodil*, then, is that the journal was discursively engaged in reflexive relationships with a circle of different influences, including Soviet propaganda. *Krokodil*'s satire was discursive, it was participatory, and it was performative, and so, therefore, was Soviet propaganda. This thesis demonstrates that Soviet propaganda could be popular, and that it was not necessarily created at the political centre of the Soviet state: some of the content published in *Krokodil* was highly devolved and created outside of government control. Moreover, what the example of *Krokodil* shows is that consumers willingly engaged in the co-creation of propaganda content.

My study of *Krokodil* has also contributed to our understanding of Soviet propaganda by showing that it was not a stable category. In the era of The Thaw, the propaganda to be found in *Krokodil* magazine differed significantly from that in other media, and had changed markedly since the 1930s and 1940s. *Krokodil* contributed to the changing discourse in Soviet culture and propaganda in the period 1954-1964, as Figure 141 and Figure 142 suggest.

Figure 141: Neprintsev, V. 1951. *Rest After Battle.* **(***Otdykh posle boia.***)**
[Oil on canvas.] At: Tretiakov Gallery, Moscow.
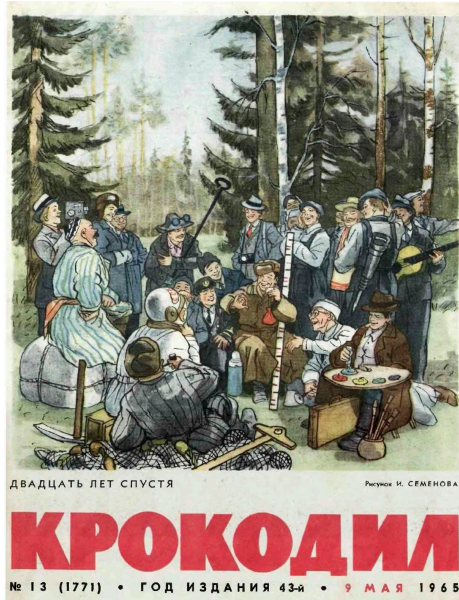
Figure 142: Semenov, I. *Twenty Years Later.* **(***Dvadtsat' let spustia.***)**
***Krokodil* 1965: 13/1.**

I have demonstrated that the content of Soviet visual culture changed, but so too did the tones in which authoritative commentary was made. During the period 1954-1964 (a time that, as Kristin Roth-Ey shows (2011), was transformed by political reform and technological change) none of the central political discourses, even those relating to de-Stalinisation, were conducted entirely outside of graphic satire. *Krokodil* always engaged with other Soviet media, sometimes to the point of parody that threatened to undermine normative discourses found elsewhere, and in the process it altered the nature of those discourses. My thesis, likewise, has attempted to shift the nature of the discourse relating to *Krokodil*. I have shown the need to reconsider *Krokodil* and Soviet graphic satire in general. I have explored new theo-

retical approaches to the journal, intended to change the angle from which we approach Soviet political cartoons.

No previous study has re-assessed *Krokodil* between 1954-1964 in the light of its post-Soviet survival in print and its online afterlife. Despite its apparent dependence upon the protection of the state and the specific circumstances of the Soviet project, *Krokodil* magazine has outlived the Soviet Union. The magazine was still in publication, bearing the Order of Lenin and numbered according to the continuous system followed since 1922, in December 1999, although only between 10 and 13 issues had been printed annually since 1992. It was re-established several times until publication finally lapsed for the final time in June 2008. The magazine retains a small and loyal following online, and, in 2015, Twentieth Century Crocodile, a company which now owns the copyright to the original magazines, compiled a partly crowd-funded twelve-volume *History Through the Eyes of a Crocodile* (*Istoriia glazami Krokodila*). This perspective highlights the importance of adopting new approaches to the magazine and looking beyond Cold War binary logics when studying Soviet cultural texts.

My analysis of *Krokodil* also suggests some important conclusions about the reasons for the magazine's popularity. What my study suggests is that the magazine's irreverence and its propensity to engage with discourses of significant national and international significance in a humorous manner won it a loyal following. Anecdotal evidence collected during my research suggests also that some readers scoured the magazine's pages in search of non-Soviet or potentially subversive material, but, as I indicate below, more research is required in this area before further conclusions may be drawn about reader responses.

This study also enriches our understanding of the theoretical frameworks that have been brought to bear on *Krokodil* here. The existing literature on transmedia theory and practice focuses on the core business of selling stories and spreading content across media to maximise consumer engagement, largely based on the assumption that consumer satisfaction equates to financial benefit for the producer. Indeed, the examples cited in transmedia theory all come from late twentieth or early-twenty-first century capitalist societies. What my study shows, however, is that transmedia impulses existed in the pre-internet age, and that transmedia production practices were commonplace in the USSR. Soviet media 'synergy' and the nature of the USSR's 'participatory culture', as revealed by this study, extend our understanding of transmedia theory beyond Western capitalist entertainment contexts. My study of *Krokodil* also extends our understanding of performativity. Conventionally, the related frameworks of speech act theory and identity performativity are considered to relate to spoken or written language. The performativity of gender,

for example, is, in the works of Judith Butler and others, a political question in which social norms, expressed in language, materialise themselves on the surfaces of gendered bodies. In this study, my contribution was to apply performativity theory to visual language, and to show how identities might be constructed in a graphic text, and how satirical critiques might materialise on the surfaces of ideological bodies. This extension of performativity theory beyond social contexts, to textual subjects, allows us to appreciate that the performative construction of real or fictional characters may be undertaken for satirical, as well as serious, reasons.

Future research is needed into *Krokodil* and the nature of its satire, as well as the many other satirical journals that existed in Russia before 1933, and in the other socialist republics thereafter, if we are fully to understand the phenomenon. In particular, this thesis highlights three directions for future research. First, future investigation into *Krokodil*'s written texts is required. My focus in this thesis has been on the cartoon texts, but *Krokodil* also contained photomontage and other visual forms. Of course, the magazine was also largely composed of satirical prose, poetry and other written forms—next to no research has been carried out into this aspect of the journal. Many of the USSR's leading satirists—Il'f and Petrov, and Zoshchenko among them—worked for *Krokodil* at times, and their work in state employment is under-studied. Second, our understanding of the producers of Soviet satire would be further extended by research into the biographies and working practices of the magazine's producers. In Chapter 2 of this thesis, I proposed the notion that *Krokodil*'s production processes may be more fully understood if we consider 'prosumer' interaction with professional satirists. While our understanding of the importance of a small number of well-known professional artists is relatively good, there are very many whose stories remain untold, and thousands of prosumer contributors about whom we know nothing. Furthermore, the question of how prosumer submissions were altered before publication, which raises the fascinating and important possibility that reader submissions were not edited at all before publication, remains to be investigated, although, in the absence of archival records beyond 1942, there are few obvious sources to assist with this. Finally, future research should conduct audience research in order to more profoundly understand how readers received *Krokodil*. No reader response research relating to *Krokodil* exists, but ex post facto reader response inquiry would be profitable. Evidence collected during the research for this thesis suggests that some readers dismissed the criticisms they saw in *Krokodil* as untrue, and investigations into audience responses to the magazine would provide valuable depth to our knowledge of the journal, as well as revealing the role of the Soviet public in creating and critiquing official discourses. Furthermore, although this study has shown that Soviet cartoons possessed genuine perlocutionary force, it

would be fascinating to explore the extent to which the magazine's satire genuinely effected change in reader perceptions.

All of the approaches employed in relation to *Krokodil* in this thesis might profitably be extended to internet-age graphic satire. *Krokodil* was a broadcast-era technology that died out at the beginning of the Internet age, and despite its online presence in 2016, it is ossified there. This thesis offers new insights into contemporary visual satire, however. My conclusions on the perlocutionary force of performative graphic texts provide a theoretical explanation for the strength of feeling observed in Russia in response to recent the Prophet Mohammed cartoons and the *Charlie Hebdo* massacres (Introduction, Section iii), for example. Indeed, my reading of *Krokodil* suggests that we may read cartoons not as images, but as performances. This original analysis of the magazine potentially offers the opportunity to reinterpret the nature of all (satirical) imagery.

Moreover, the conclusions drawn here about *Krokodil* provide essential historical context for the analysis of contemporary Russian cartoons that is not provided in any other study. Although a satirical magazine largely comprising political cartoons entitled *Cartoon and Feather* (*Sharzh i pero*) was published irregularly throughout 2015, much modern political cartoon publication now occurs outside newspapers and magazines, but even images published on Facebook or Twitter may be more fully understood in the historical context of the form.

Figure 143: Elkin, S. 2014. 'That's not my leg'. [Twitter] 6 March. [Accessed: 6/3/14.] Available from: https://twitter.com/
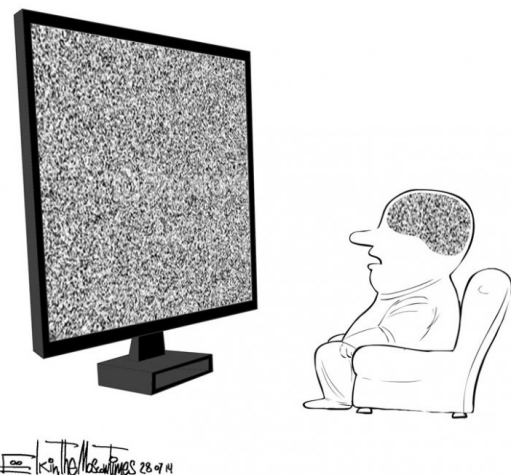
Figure 144: Elkin, S. 2014. Untitled. [Online.] [Accessed: 28/7/14.] Available from: http://www.themoscowtimes.com/

Cartoons by Sergei Elkin, for instance, present a satirical vision of contemporary Russia, and while they imply criticism based on the caricature of Putin's physical form, so that they collectively 'debunk the specifics of Putin's self-presentation, exposing Putin's promotional stratagems and situating him in a political Imaginary

or Wonderland' (Goscilo 2013: 27), their satirical critique is never made explicit in a single image. By contrast, a great deal of the graphic political material published online in contemporary Russia is affirmative. The number of posts has recently increased, in particular, as a result of the recent emergence of an art collective called 'Studio 13' (*Studiia 13*), a project run by the Young Guard of United Russia (*Molodaia Gvardiia*), a pro-Kremlin direct action youth group. With a presence on all of the major social networks, artists post images and animated videos almost daily, and have held several exhibitions of artworks in four Russian cities in 2015. In many respects, these images are very reminiscent of *Krokodil*'s affirmative artwork (see Figure 145 and Figure 146).

Figure 145: Studiia 13. Untitled. [Online.]
[Accessed: 21/6/15.] Available from: https: //www.facebook.com/

Figure 146: Studiia 13. 2015. *The important thing is what's inside.* (*Glavnoe to, chto vnutri.*)
[Twitter] 20 May.
[Accessed: 21/6/15.] Available from: https: //twitter.com/

The full extent of *Krokodil*'s legacy remains unexplored, and the evidence from the work of these youth artist-activists suggests that people barely old enough to re-

member the original have absorbed the magazine's influence on composition, style and graphic schemata. Scholarly and popular interest in contemporary Russian satire is strong. A research project into censorship and satire in Putin's Russia began at Stockholm University in 2016, for example (Semenenko 2016). My thesis provides important historical and theoretical context for all of these recent developments, since *Krokodil* represents such an important heritage for contemporary graphic satire in the region. Indeed, for its insights into the nature of permitted social criticism, this thesis introduces several interpretational tools which might be used to analyse graphic satire produced in autocratic regimes elsewhere.

According to Ronald Grigor Suny, ideology 'gravitates between two poles of meaning', one of which may be understood as 'discourse or culture', while the other resembles 'dogma or doctrine' (2008: 253-5). My analysis of *Krokodil* raises important questions about the nature of ideology in the USSR. On one hand, the study of *Krokodil* suggests that ideology may also be understood as 'performance or practice'. On the other, it leads me to posit that ideology may not always have been the 'serious' business many interpretations imply that it was. The cartoons considered here suggest the Soviet state's willingness to inhabit criticisms of itself. *Krokodil*, in its constructions and deconstructions of discourses related to government policy, represented an important facility for acknowledging the state's own problems. This was not cosmetic catharsis or a mechanism for sham absolution, but rather an instruction for readers on how to use ideology to look for problems and solutions through participation and performance.

Slavoj Žižek famously suggested that 'Totalitarian ideology…is no longer meant, even by its authors, to be taken seriously'. Žižek, of course, was discussing ideology's claim to be the source of truth, and he concluded that ideology was 'a means of manipulation, purely external and instrumental; its rule is secured not by its truth-value but by simple extra-ideological violence and promise of gain' (1989: 27). For those familiar with the USSR, even during the relative liberalisation of the post-Stalin years, this description seems accurate enough. A study of *Krokodil*, however, helps us to understand Žižek's comment in a new light. The magazine does, indeed, allow us to see that the authors of Soviet communist ideology did not always intend to be taken seriously. *Krokodil* shows us what they believed it was acceptable to laugh at.

Peter Sloterdijk's *Critique of Cynical Reason* (1987), and his distinction between cynicism and kynicism provides an interesting avenue via which to explore *Krokodil*'s satirical attitude. For Sloterdijk, cynicism means 'enlightened false consciousness…that modernized unhappy consciousness' (1987: 5). It has, moreover, 'cut itself off from the powerful traditions of laughter in satirical knowledge, which

have their roots in ancient kynicism' (1987: 16). Modern cynicism, then, is a central feature of the postmodern condition, which originated in the political disillusionment of the 1960s in the west. By contrast, what Sloterdijk calls 'kynicism' is much older. Kynicism, says Sloterdijk, is 'the urge of individuals to maintain themselves as fully rational living beings against the distortions and semirationalities of their societies. Existence in resistance, in laughter, in refusal' (1987: 217-8). Žižek suggests that Sloterdijk's view of cynicism might be summarised as 'they know very well what they are doing, but still, they are doing it'. This, of course, is in reference to Marx's well-known definition of ideology: 'they do not know it, but they are doing it' (Žižek 1989: 24-25). Žižek also questions whether the illusion created by ideology is on the side of knowing or doing. Sloterdijk and Žižek both assume that the illusion affects the mass of the population, while the smiling ideologist is not subject to any form of illusion or misrecognition. In the case of *Krokodil*, however, it seems more accurate to suggest that the formulation might be: 'we know that you know very well what you are doing, and we don't mind because, still, we are both doing it'. In other words, what *Krokodil* reveals, is that both producers and consumers shared a common joke.

Reference List

Abramskii, I.P. 1977. *Smekh sil'nikh: O khudozhnikakh zhurnala 'Krokodil'*. Moskva: Iskusstvo.

Akinsha, K. and Jolles, A. 2011. Hand-Painted Propaganda: The Tass Poster Studio *In*: P. K. Zegers and D. W. Druick, eds. *Windows on the War: Soviet TASS Posters at Home and Abroad, 1941-1945*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Alaniz, J. 2010. *Komics: Comic Art in Russia*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.

Alba, V. 1967. The Mexican Revolution and the Cartoon. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. **9**(2), pp.121–136.

Althaus, F. ed. 2012. *Drawing the Curtain: The Cold War in Cartoons*. London: Fontanka.

Althusser, L. 1994. Ideology and the Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an investigation). *In*: S. Zizek. ed. *Mapping Ideology*. London: Verso Books, pp. 100–140.

Andrews, J.T. 2003. *Science for the Masses: The Bolshevik State, Public Science, and the Popular Imagination in Soviet Russia, 1917-1934*. College Station: Texas A & M University Press.

Annan, K. 2007. Cartoons Have the Power to Inform, and to Offend. *Qantara.de*. [Online]. [Accessed 17 June 2016]. Available from: https://en.qantara.de/content/kofi-annan-cartoons-have-the-power-to-inform-and-to-offend.

Anon. 1954a. Forrestal Cartoon Protested by US. *New York Times Magazine*. June 18 1954.

———1954b. Soviet bars US protest; Returns Note on a Cartoon Lampooning Forrestal. *New York Times*. June 27 1954.

———1956. Review of Readers' Letters: The Subscriber Complains. *Literaturnaia Gazeta*. December 22, p.2; cited in *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, vol.VIII, No.52, p.34.

———1959. Krokodil Shop. *Pravda*. March 22, p.6; cited in *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, vol.XI, No.12, p.34.

———1964. Problems of refractory producers in the light of the December (1963) Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU. *Refractories*. **5**(1–2), pp.54–56.

Arendt, H. 1973. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. Orlando: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Ashbee, C.R. 1928. *Caricature*. London: Chapman & Hall.

Attardo, S. and Chabanne, J.-C. 1992. Jokes as a text type. *Humor: International Journal of Humor Research*. [Online]. [Accessed 17 June 2016]. Available from: http: //psycnet.apa.org/psycinfo/1992-38588-001.

Attwood, L. 1985. The New Soviet Man and Woman: Soviet Views on Psychological Sex Differences. *In*: B. Holland, ed. *Soviet Sisterhood: British Feminists on Women in the USSR*. London: Fourth Estate, pp. 54–77.

———1990. *New Soviet Man and Women: Sex Role Socialization in the USSR*. Basingstoke: Macmillan Press.

———1999. *Creating the New Soviet Woman: Women's Magazines as Engineers of Female Identity, 1922-53*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Aulich, J. 2005. Boris Yefimov and the Soviet Political Cartoon *In*: *Boris Yefimov: Forced Laughter*. Prague: Galerie Nova Sin.

Austin, J.L. 1962. *How to Do Things with Words*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Bahrani, Z. 2002. Performativity and the Image: Narrative, Representation, and the Uruk Vase. *In*: E. Ehrenburg, ed. *Leaving No Stones Unturned: Essays on the Ancient Near East and Egypt in honor of Donald P. Hansen*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, pp. 15–22.

Bailes, K.E. 1978. *Science and Technology Under Lenin and Stalin*. Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press.

Bakhtin, M.M. 1981. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

———1984a. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

———1984b. *Rabelais and His World*. Bloomington, IND: Indiana University Press.

Bal, M. 2006. *A Mieke Bal Reader*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Balina, M., Condee, N. and Dobrenko, E.A. 2000. *Endquote: Sots-art Literature and Soviet Grand Style*. Evanston, ILL.: Northwestern University Press.

Barbieri, D. 2013. Performativity and the Historical Body: Detecting Performance through the Archived Costume. *Studies in Theatre and Performance*. **33**(3), pp.281–301.

Barthes, R. 1977. *Elements of Semiology*. London: Macmillan.

Beaverbrook, B.M.A. 1942. *Spirit of the Soviet Union: Anti-Nazi Cartoons and Posters*. London: The Pilot press.

Becker, J.A. 2002. *Soviet and Russian Press Coverage of the United States: Press, Politics and Identity in Transition*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.

Beermann, R. 1957. A Discussion on the Draft Law against Parasites, Tramps and Beggars. *Soviet Studies*. **9**(2), pp.214–222.

———1960. The Law against Parasites, Tramps and Beggars. *Soviet Studies*. **11**(4), pp.453–455.

Beliaev, D.G. 1949. Improve Humour Magazines. *Kultura i Zhizn.*, p.3; cited in *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, vol.I, No.46, p.34.

Benson, T.S. 2012. The Cartoonists' Cold War. *In*: F. Althaus, ed. *Drawing the Curtain: The Cold War in Cartoons*. London: Fontanka Press, pp. 1–20.

Berger, J. 1969. *Art and Revolution: Ernst Neizvestny and the Role of the Artist in the U.S.S.R.* London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

Bird, R., Heuer, C., Jackson, M., Mosaka, T. and Smith, S. eds. 2013. *Vision and Communism: Viktor Koretsky and Dissident Public Visual Culture*. New York: The New Press.

Bishop, C. ed. 2006. *Participation*. London: Whitechapel Art Gallery.

Bogardus, E.S. 1945. Sociology of the Cartoon. *Sociology and Social Research*. **30**(2), pp.139–147.

Bogel, F.V. 2012. *The Difference Satire Makes: Rhetoric and Reading from Jonson to Byron* Reprint edition. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Boim, L. 1966. *Legal Controls in the Soviet Union*. Leyden: A.W. Sijthoff.

Bolt, B. 2010. *Art Beyond Representation: The Performative Power of the Image*. London: I.B. Tauris.

Bonnell, V.E. 1997. *Iconography of Power: Soviet Political Posters Under Lenin and Stalin*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Bormann, E.G., Koester, J. and Bennett, J. 1978. Political Cartoons and Salient Rhetorical Fantasies: An Empirical Analysis of the '76 Presidential Campaign. *Communications Monographs*. **45**(4), pp.317–329.

Bostdorff, D.M. 1987. Making Light of James Watt: A Burkean Approach to the Form and Attitude of Political Cartoons. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*. **73**(1), pp.43–59.

Bowlt, J.E. 1975. *Art and Violence: The Russian Caricature in the Early Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries*. Faculty of Humanities of the University of Kent at Canterbury.

———2008. *Moscow & Saint Petersburg 1900-1920*. London: Thames and Hudson.

Bown, M.C. 1998. *Socialist Realist Painting*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Bown, M.C. and Taylor, B. eds. 1993. *Art of the Soviets: Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture in a One-party State, 1917-1992*. Manchester University Press.

Boym, S. 1994. *Common Places: Mythologies of Everyday Life in Russia*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

———2008. *The Future of Nostalgia*. New York: Basic Books.

Brackman, R. 2004. *The Secret File of Joseph Stalin: a Hidden Life*. London: Frank Cass.

Brandenberger, D. ed. 2009. *Political Humor Under Stalin: An Anthology of Unofficial Jokes and Anecdotes*. Bloomington, IND: Slavica Pub.

———2011. *Propaganda State in Crisis: Soviet Ideology, Indoctrination, and Terror Under Stalin, 1927-1941*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Brandist, C. 1996. *Carnival Culture and the Soviet Modernist Novel*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Brecht, B. 1964. *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic*. London: Eyre Methuen.

Bren, P. and Neuburger, M. eds. 2012. *Communism Unwrapped: Consumption in Cold War Eastern Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Breslauer, G.W. 1982. *Khrushchev and Brezhnev as Leaders: Building Authority in Soviet Politics*. London: Allen & Unwin.

Brooks, J. 1985. *When Russia Learned to Read: Literacy and Popular Literature, 1861-1917*. Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press.

———2001. *Thank You, Comrade Stalin!: Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War* New Ed. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Bruns, A. 2008. *Blogs, Wikipedia, Second Life, and Beyond: From Production to Produsage*. New York: Peter Lang.

Butler, J. 1990. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. London: Routledge.

———1993. *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex*. Abingdon: Routledge.

———1997. *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative*. New York: Routledge.

Buzek, A. 1964. *How the Communist Press Works* 1st Edition. London: Pall Mall Press.

Cahn, D. 1984. The political cartoon as communication. *Media Development*. **4**, pp.39–42.

Caplan, J. and Feldman, D. 2015. Laughing Out Loud: 'Official' Humour in Three Dictatorships, Introduction. *History Workshop Journal*. **79**(1), pp.177–180.

Carlson, P. 2009. *K Blows Top: A Cold War Comic Interlude Starring Nikita Khrushchev, America's Most Unlikely Tourist*. New York: Public Affairs.

Carpenter, H. 2009. *That Was Satire that Was: The Satire Boom of the 1960s*. London: Faber & Faber.

Central Committee. 1950. On the Magazine Crocodile. *Soviet Studies*. **2**(2), pp.201–203.

Chamberlin, W.H. 1957. The 'Anecdote': Unrationed Soviet Humor. *Russian Review*. **16**(3), pp.27–34.

Chapple, R.L. 1980. *Soviet Satire of the Twenties*. Gainesville: University Presses of Florida.

Cheauré, E. and Nohejl, R. 2014. *Humour and Laughter in History: Transcultural Perspectives*. Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag.

Chen, J. 1944. *Soviet Art and Artists. Life and Literature in the Soviet Union.* London: Pilot Press.

Cherepanov, I. 2009. *Reportazh iz 'Krokodila'*. Moskva: Kontakt-Kul'tura.

Clark, A. and Holquist, M. 1984. *Mikhail Bakhtin*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Clark, K. 2000. *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual*. Bloomington, IND: Indiana University Press.

Cohen, M.R. and Nagel, E. 1993. *An Introduction to Logic*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Cohn, N. 2014. *The Visual Language of Comics: Introduction to the Structure and Cognition of Sequential Images*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Condee, N. 2000. Cultural Codes of the Thaw. *In*: W. Taubman, S. N. Khrushchev and A. Gleason, eds. *Nikita Khrushchev*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, pp. 160–76.

Coupe, W.A. 1969. Observations on a theory of political caricature. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. **11**(1), pp.79–95.

———1967. The German cartoon and the revolution of 1848. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. **9**(2), pp.137–167.

Cunningham, S.B. 2002. *The Idea of Propaganda: A Reconstruction*. Westport, CONN: Praeger.

Davies, C. 2007. Humour and Protest: Jokes under Communism. *International Review of Social History*. **52**(S15), pp.291–305.

———2011. *Jokes and targets*. Bloomington, IND: Indiana University Press.

———2015. Political ridicule and humour under socialism. *European Journal of Humour Research*. **2**(3), pp.1–27.

Davies, D. 2008. *Art as Performance*. Oxford: John Wiley & Sons.

Davies, R. 1928. *Caricature Of To-Day*. London: Studio.

Davies, S. 1997. *Popular Opinion in Stalin's Russia: Terror, Propaganda and Dissent, 1934-1941*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Davis, W. 1969. Smile, Tovarich! *Punch*., pp.570–574.

Deák, F. 1973. 'Blue Blouse' (1923-1928). *The Drama Review: TDR*. **17**(1), pp.35–46.

Derrida, J. 1974. *Of Grammatology*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

———1977. *Limited Inc*. Evanston, ILL.: Northwestern University Press.

———2001. *Writing and Difference*. London: Routledge.

Diamond, M. 2002. No Laughing Matter: Post-September 11 Political Cartoons in Arab/Muslim Newspapers. *Political Communication*. **19**(2), pp.251–272.

Dobrenko, E. 1997. *The Making of the State Reader: Social and Aesthetic Contexts of the Reception of Soviet Literature*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press.

———2001. *The Making of the State Writer Social and Aesthetic Origins of Soviet Literary Culture*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press.

———2008. *Stalinist Cinema and the Production of History: Museum of the Revolution*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

———2014a. From the Compiler. *Russian Studies in Literature*. **50**(2), pp.6–7.

———2014b. The Gogols and the Shchedrins: Lessons in' Positive Satire'. *Russian Studies in Literature*. **50**(2), pp.27–62.

Doran, J. and Bizony, P. 2011. *Starman: The Truth Behind the Legend of Yuri Gagarin*. London: Bloomsbury.

Dosse, F. 1997. *History of Structuralism: The sign sets, 1967-present*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Draitser, E. 1989. Soviet Underground Jokes as a Means of Popular Entertainment. *The Journal of Popular Culture*. **23**(1), pp.117–125.

———1994. *Techniques of Satire: The Case of Saltykov-Shchedrin*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Dubrovin, E.P. ed. 1982. *Krokodilu - 60 let*. Moscow: Pravda.

Duffy, P. and Kandalov, A. 1996. *Tupolev: The Man and His Aircraft*. Warrendale PA: SAE International.

Durgin, F.A. 1962. The Virgin Lands Programme 1954-1960. *Soviet Studies*. **13**(3), pp.255–280.

Dyrenfurth, N. and Quartly, M. 2009. 'All the World Over': The Transnational World of Australian Radical and Labour Cartoonists. *In*: R. Scully and M. Quartly, eds. *Drawing the Line: Using Cartoons as Historical Evidence* [Online]. Clayton, Victoria: Monash University Publishing. [Accessed 13 June 2016]. Available from: http: //books.publishing.monash.edu/

Edwards, J.L. and Ware, L. 2005. Representing the Public in Campaign Media A Political Cartoon Perspective. *American Behavioral Scientist*. **49**(3), pp.466–478.

Efimov, B. 1976. *Shkol'nikam o karikature i karikaturistakh*. Moskva: Prosveshchenie.

Eisenstein, S. 1974. *Notes of a film director*. Moscow: Foreign Languages Pub. House.

Eko, L. 2007. It's a Political Jungle Out There How Four African Newspaper Cartoons Dehumanized and Deterritorialized African Political Leaders in the Post-Cold War Era. *International Communication Gazette*. **69**(3), pp.219–238.

El Refaie, E. 2003. Understanding visual metaphor: The example of newspaper cartoons. *Visual communication*. **2**(1), pp.75–95.

———2009. Multiliteracies: How Readers Interpret Political Cartoons. *Visual Communication*. **8**(2), pp.181–205.

Elliott, R.C. 1960. *The Power of Satire: Magic, Ritual, Art*. Princeton University Press Princeton, NJ.

Epstein, M., Genis, A. and Vladiv-Glover, S. eds. 1999. *Russian Postmodernism: New Perspectives on Post-Soviet Culture*. New York: Berghahn Books.

Etty, J. 2016. Comic Cosmonaut: Space Exploration and Visual Satire in Krokodil in The Thaw. *In*: V. Strukov and H. Goscilo, eds. *Russian Aviation, Space Flight and Visual Culture*. London: Routledge, pp. 89–115.

Fedotova, A. 2014. Sergei Mostovshikov o zhurnale 'Krokodil', vremenakh i natsional'noi idee. *Lenta.ru*. [Online]. [Accessed 6 June 2016]. Available from: https: //lenta.ru/articles/2014/11/11/mostmostmost/.

Fein, O. and Kasher, A. 1996. How to Do Things with Words and Gestures in Comics. *Journal of Pragmatics*. **26**(6), pp.793–808.

Fitzpatrick, S. 1999. *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

———2005. *Tear Off the Masks!: Identity and Imposture in Twentieth-Century Russia*. Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press.

———2006. Social parasites. *Cahiers du monde russe. Russie - Empire russe - Union soviétique et États indépendants*. **47**(47/1-2), pp.377–408.

Forceville, C. 1994. Pictorial Metaphor in Advertisements. *Metaphor and Symbol*. **9**(1), pp.1–29.

Foucault, M. 1977. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Vintage Books.

———1990. *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*. New York: Vintage Books.

Freeden, M. 1996. *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Freud, S. 1976. *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd.

Friedberg, M. 1962. *Russian Classics in Soviet Jackets*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Friedrich, C.J. and Brzezinski, Z. 1965. *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Fürst, J. 2010. *Stalin's Last Generation: Soviet Post-War Youth and the Emergence of Mature Socialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gamson, W.A. and Stuart, D. 1992. Media Discourse as a Symbolic Contest: The Bomb in Political Cartoons *In*: *Sociological Forum*. Springer, pp. 55–86.

Gaston, S. and MacLachlan, I. 2011. *Reading Derrida's Of Grammatology*. London: Bloomsbury.

Geipel, J. 1972. *The Cartoon: A Short History of Graphic Comedy and Satire*. Newton Abbot: David & Charles.

Geldern, J.V. 1993. *Bolshevik Festivals, 1917-1920*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Geyer, M. and Fitzpatrick, S. 2009. After Totalitarianism: Stalinism and Nazism Compared. *In*: M. Geyer and S. Fitzpatrick, eds. *Beyond Totalitarianism: Stalinism and Nazism Compared*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1–40.

Gill, G. 2011. *Symbols and legitimacy in Soviet politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Givens, J. 2014. Gossmekh: State Laughter: Editor's Introduction. *Russian Studies in Literature*. **50**(2), pp.3–5.

Gladnick, P.J. 2002. I Was a Commie Writer (My Experiences As American Correspondent For Krokodil Magazine In USSR). *Free Republic*. [Online]. [Accessed 3 May 2016]. Available from: http: //www.freerepublic.com/

Gombrich, E.H. 1963. *Meditations on a Hobby Horse: And Other Essays on the Theory of Art*. London: Phaidon.

———1977. *Art and illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation*. London: Phaidon.

Gombrich, E.H. and Kris, E. 1938. The Principles of Caricature. *British Journal of Medical Psychology*. **17**(38), pp.319–342.

———1940. *Caricature*. Harmsworth: Penguin.

Gorbatov 1949. On Soviet Satire and Humor. *Novyi Mir*. (10), pp.214–229; cited in *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, vol.1, No.46, p.17.

Goscilo, H. 2013. Russia's Ultimate Celebrity: VVP as VIP objet d'art. *In*: V. Strukov and H. Goscilo, eds. *Putin as Celebrity and Cultural Icon*. London: Routledge.

Gragnolati, M. and Suerbaum, A. 2010. *Aspects of the Performative in Medieval Culture*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

Graham, L.R. 1993. *Science in Russia and the Soviet Union: A Short History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Graham, S. 2009. *Resonant Dissonance: The Russian Joke in Cultural Context*. Evanston, ILL.: Northwestern University Press.

Gray, C. 1986. *The Russian Experiment in Art 1863-1922*. London: Thames and Hudson.

Griffin, D. 1994. *Satire: A Critical Reintroduction*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky.

Groensteen, T. 2007. *The System of Comics*. Jackson: Univ. Press of Mississippi.

Gronow, J. 2003. *Caviar with Champagne: Common Luxury and the Ideals of the Good Life in Stalin's Russia*. Oxford: Berg Publishers.

Groys, B. 1992. *The Total Art of Stalinism: Avant-Garde, Aesthetic Dictatorship, and Beyond* Reprint edition. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

———2008a. A Genealogy of Participatory Art. *In*: R. Frieling, ed. *The Art of Participation: 1950 to Now*. New York: Thames & Hudson Ltd.

———2008b. *Art Power*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

———2013. *History Becomes Form: Moscow Conceptualism*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Gundle, S. 2015. Laughter Under Fascism: Humour and Ridicule in Italy, 1922–43. *History Workshop Journal*. **79**(1), pp.215–232.

Halfin, I. 2003. *Terror in my Soul: Communist Autobiographies on Trial*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

———2004. *Language and Revolution: Making Modern Political Identities*. London: Routledge.

———2007. *Intimate Enemies: Demonizing the Bolshevik Opposition, 1918-1928*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.

———2009. *Stalinist Confessions: Messianism and Terror at the Leningrad Communist University*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.

———2011. *Red Autobiographies: Initiating the Bolshevik Self*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington.

Han, J.-S.N. 2006. Empire of Comic Visions: Japanese Cartoon Journalism and its Pictorial Statements on Korea, 1876–1910. *Japanese Studies*. **26**(3), pp.283–302.

Harrington, L. and Bielby, D. 2000. *Popular Culture: Production and Consumption*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Haslam, D.W. and Haslam, F. 2009. *Fat, Gluttony and Sloth: Obesity in Medicine, Art and Literature*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Hellbeck, J. 1996. Fashioning the Stalinist Soul: The Diary of Stepan Podlubnyi (1931-1939). *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*., pp.344–373.

———2001. Working, Struggling, Becoming: Stalin-era Autobiographical Texts. *The Russian Review*. **60**(3), pp.340–359.

———2006. *Revolution on My Mind: Writing a Diary Under Stalin*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Henry, P. 1972. *Vol. 1: Classics of Soviet Satire*. London: Collets.

Herzog, R. 2011. *Dead Funny: Telling Jokes in Hitler's Germany*. New York: Melville House.

Hillenbrand, F.K.M. 2002. *Underground Humour In Nazi Germany, 1933-1945*. London: Routledge.

Hilton, A. 1995. *Russian Folk Art*. Bloomington, IND: Indiana University Press.

Hodgson, K. 2006. 'Russia is Reading Us Once More': The Rehabilitation of Poetry, 1953-64. *In*: P. Jones, ed. *The Dilemmas of De-Stalinization: Negotiating Cultural and Social Change in the Khrushchev Era*. London: Routledge, pp. 231–249.

Hoffmann, D.L. 2011. *Cultivating the Masses: Modern State Practices and Soviet Socialism, 1914-1939*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Hofmann, W. 1957. *Caricature: From Leonardo to Picasso*. London: John Calder.

Hollander, G.D. 1972. *Soviet Political Indoctrination: Developments in Mass Media and Propaganda since Stalin*. New York: Praeger.

Holquist, P. 1997. ' Information is the alpha and omega of our work': Bolshevik Surveillance in its Pan-European Context. *The Journal of Modern History*. **69**(3), pp.415–450.

Holzer, M., Illiash, I., Gabrelian, V. and Kuznetsova, L. 2010. *Red Tape from Red Square: Bureaucratic Commentary in Soviet Graphic Satirical Art*. Newark, N.J.: Rutgers.

Hopkins, M.W. 1970. *Mass media in the Soviet Union*. New York: Pegasus.

Hulme, D.C. 2010. *Dmitri Shostakovich Catalogue: The First Hundred Years and Beyond* 4th Revised edition. Plymouth: Scarecrow Press.

Hunt, P.H. and Kobets, S. 2011. *Holy Foolishness in Russia: New Perspectives*. Bloomington, IND: Slavica.

Hunter, I. 2003. *Malcolm Muggeridge: A Life*. Vancouver: Regent College Publishing.

Hutcheon, L. 2012. *A Theory of Adaptation*. London: Routledge.

Huxtable, S. 2012. A Compass in the Sea of Life Soviet Journalism, the Public, and the Limits of Reform After Stalin, 1953-1968.

Inkeles, A. 1967. *Public Opinion in Soviet Russia: A Study in Mass Persuasion* 1st Edition. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Ivanov, S.A. 2006. *Holy Fools in Byzantium and Beyond*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ivins, M. *Mother Jones*. [Online]. [Accessed 29 April 2015]. Available from: http://www.motherjones.com/politics/1995/05/lyin-bully.

Jackson, M.J. 2010. *The Experimental Group: Ilya Kabakov, Moscow Conceptualism, Soviet Avant-gardes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Jahn, H. 1995. *Patriotic Culture in Russia During World War I*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Jameson, F. 2002. *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*. London: Routledge.

Jenkins, H. 2003. *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture*. London: Routledge.

———2006. *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* Revised edition. New York: New York University Press.

———2007. Transmedia Storytelling 101. *Confessions of an Aca-Fan: The Official Weblog of Henry Jenkins*. [Online]. [Accessed 21 November 2012]. Available from: http://henryjenkins.org/2007/03/transmedia_storytelling_101.html.

———2011. Transmedia 202: Further Reflections. *Confessions of an Aca-Fan*. [Online]. [Accessed 27 October 2013]. Available from: http://henryjenkins.org/2011/08/defining_transmedia_further_re.html.

Jenks, A. 2011. The Sincere Deceiver: Yuri Gagarin and the Search for a Higher Truth. *In*: A. A. Siddiqi and J. T. Andrews, eds. *Into the Cosmos: Space Exploration and Soviet Culture*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, pp. 107–132.

Johnson, P.& L.L. 1962. *Khrushchev and the Arts:* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Johnston, T. 2011. *Being Soviet: Identity, Rumour, and Everyday Life Under Stalin 1939-1953*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Jones, D.R. 1998. The Rise and Fall of Aeroflot: Civil Aviation in the Soviet Union, 1920-1991. *In*: R. Higham, J.T. Greenwood and V. Hardesty. *Russian Aviation and Air Power in the Twentieth Century*. London: Frank Cass, pp. 236–268.

Jones, P. 2012. Reimagining the Enemy: Soviet Images of the West after the Second World War. *In*: F. Althaus, ed. *Drawing the Curtain: The Cold War in Cartoons*. London: Fontanka Press, pp. 21–29.

———2013. *Myth, Memory, Trauma: Rethinking the Stalinist Past in the Soviet Union, 1953-70*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Kavalerov, N. 1971. *Krokodil Tears: Lament for a Lost Utopia*. New York: Vantage Press.

Keane, D. 2008. Cartoon Violence and Freedom of Expression. *Human Rights Quarterly*. **30**(4), pp.845–875.

Kelley-Romano, S. and Westgate, V. 2007. Blaming Bush: An Analysis of Political Cartoons following Hurricane Katrina. *Journalism Studies*. **8**(5), pp.755–773.

Kelly, C. 2009. *Petrushka: The Russian Carnival Puppet Theatre*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kemnitz, T.M. 1973. The Cartoon as a Historical Source. *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*. **4**(1), pp.81–93.

Kenez, P. 1985. *The Birth of the Propaganda State: Soviet Methods of Mass Mobilization, 1917-1929*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kharkhordin, O. 1999. *The Collective and the Individual in Russia: A Study of Practices*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Khentova, S. 1966. Razgovor s Shostakovichem. *Ogoniok*. (39), pp.6–7.

Khrushchev, N.S. 1964. *The Great Mission of Literature and Art*. Moscow: Progress Publishers.

Khrushchev, S.N. 2001. *Nikita Khrushchev and the Creation of a Superpower*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press.

Kiaer, C. and Naiman, E. eds. 2005. *Everyday Life in Early Soviet Russia: Taking the Revolution Inside*. Bloomington, IND: Indiana University Press.

Kiianskii and Fel'dman 2015. K istorii sovetskoi satiricheskoi pechati 1930-x godov: zhurnal 'Krokodil' *In*: *Ocherki istorii russkoi sovetskoi zhurnalistiki: portrety i skandaly*. Moskva: Forum, pp. 240–273.

King, D. and Porter, C. 1983. *Blood and Laughter: Caricatures from the 1905 Revolution*. London: Jonathan Cape Ltd.

Kisel, M. 2008. *Mass Culture to Master: Literary Metamorphoses of Early Soviet Satire*. Ann Arbor: ProQuest.

Kivelson, V.A. and Neuberger, J. 2010. *Picturing Russia: Explorations in Visual Culture*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Klingender, F.D. 1942. *Russia-Britain's Ally 1812-1942*. London: George G. Harrap & Co.

Kolasky, J. 1985. *Laughter Through Tears: Underground Wit, Humor, and Satire in the Soviet Russian Empire*. Bullsbrook, Australia: Veritas.

Kotkin, S. 1997. *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Kozin, A. 2009. 'Krokodil' in Transition: The Case of Bureaucrat Cartoons. *Russian Journal of Communication*. **2**(3–4), pp.215–233.

Kozintsev, A. 2009. Stalin Jokes and Humor Theory. *Russian Journal of Communication*. **2**(3–4), pp.199–214.

Kozlov, D. 2013. *The Readers of Novyi Mir*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Kozlov, D. and Gilburd, E. eds. 2014. *The Thaw: Soviet Society and Culture During the 1950s and 1960s*. Toronto: Toronto University Press.

Kress, G.R. and Leeuwen, T. van 1996. *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*. London: Routledge.

Kris, E. 1952. *Psychoanalytic Explorations in Art*. London: G. Allen & Unwin.

Kristeva, J. 1980. *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Krupskaia, N. 1930. *Memories of Lenin*. New York: International Publishers.

Krylova, A. 2000. Soviet Modernity in Life and Fiction: The Generation of the 'New Soviet Person' in the 1930s. PhD thesis, John Hopkins University.

———2008. The Tenacious Liberal Subject in Soviet Studies. *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*. **1**(1), pp.119–146.

Kunzle, D. 1973. *History of the Comic Strip: The Nineteenth Century*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Lahey Dronsfield, J. 2013. The Performativity of Art. *In*: M. Senatore, ed. *Performatives After Deconstruction*. London: Bloomsbury, pp. 169–185.

Lahusen, T. 1997. Socialist Realism in Search of Its Shores: Some Historical Remarks on the 'Historically Open Aesthetic System of the Truthful Representation of Life'. *In*: E. Dobrenko, ed. *Socialist Realism without Shores*. Durham, N.C: Duke University Press, pp. 5–26.

Lambourne, L. 1983. *An Introduction to Caricature*. London: HMSO.

LaPierre, B. 2012. *Hooligans in Khrushchev's Russia: Defining, Policing, and Producing Deviance during the Thaw*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press.

Larsen, E. 1980. *Wit as a Weapon: The Political Joke in History*. London: Frederick Muller Limited.

Lauchlan, I. 2010. Laughter in the Dark: Humour under Stalin. *In*: A. Duncan and A. Chamayou, eds. *Le rire européen/European Laughter*. Perpignan: Perpignan University Press, pp. 257–274.

Laursen, E. 2013. *Toxic Voices: The Villain from Early Soviet Literature to Socialist Realism*. Evanston, ILL.: Northwestern University Press.

Laxman, R.K. 1989. Freedom to Cartoon, Freedom to Speak. *Daedalus, Another India*. **118**(4), pp.68–91.

Leach, R. 1994. *Revolutionary Theatre*. London: Routledge.

Ledeneva, A. 2011. Open Secrets and Knowing Smiles. *East European Politics & Societies*. **25**(4), pp.720–736.

Leder, M.M. and Bernstein, L. 2001. *My Life in Stalinist Russia: An American Woman Looks Back*. Bloomington, IND: Indiana University Press.

Lefort, C. 1986. *The Political Forms of Modern Society: Bureaucracy, Democracy, Totalitarianism*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Lenin, V. 1961. Where to Begin? *In*: *Collected Works of V.I. Lenin*. Moscow: Foreign Languages Pub. House, pp. 13–24.

———1965a. On Party Organisation and Party Literature. *In*: *Collected Works of V.I. Lenin*. Moscow: Progress Publishers, pp. 44–49.

———1965b. On Proletarian Culture. *In*: *Collected Works of V.I. Lenin*. Moscow: Foreign Languages Pub. House, pp. 316–317.

———1965c. Our Foreign and Domestic Position and Party Tasks. *In*: *Collected Works of V.I. Lenin*. Moscow: Progress Publishers, pp. 408–426.

Lenoe, M.E. 2009. *Closer to the Masses: Stalinist Culture, Social Revolution, and Soviet Newspapers*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Lewis, B. 2008. *Hammer And Tickle: A History Of Communism Told Through Communist Jokes*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

Lipovetsky, M. 2011. *Charms of the Cynical Reason: The Trickster's Transformations in Soviet and Post-Soviet Culture*. Boston: Academic Studies Press.

Lisin, V. and Medvedeva, L. 2006. *Russkaia karikatura: 1812-1985*. Moskva: Knigi WAM.

Lotman, Y. 1990. *Universe of the Mind: A Semiotic Theory of Culture*. Bloomington, IND: Indiana University Press.

Lotman, Y.M. and Uspensky, B.A. 1984. *The Semiotics of Russian Culture*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Low, D. 1935. *Ye madde designer*. London: The Studio.

———1950. Krokodil Cartoonists. *Soviet Studies*. **2**(2), pp.163–170.

———1956. *Low's Autobiography* First Edition. London: Michael Joseph.

Loxley, J. 2007. *Performativity*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Lucie-Smith, E. 1981. *The art of caricature*. London: Orbis.

Lygo, E. 2006. The Need for New Voices: Writer's Union Policy towards Young Writers 1953-64. *In*: P. Jones, ed. *The Dilemmas of De-Stalinization: Negotiating Cultural and Social Change in the Khrushchev Era*. London: Routledge, pp. 193–208.

Lynch, B. 1926. *A History of Caricature*. London: Faber and Gwyer.

Maidment, B. 2001. *Reading Popular Prints 1790-1870*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Mallan, K.M. 2002. Picturing the Male: Representations of Masculinity in Picture Books. *In:* J. Stephens, ed. *Ways of Being Male: Representing Masculinities in Children's Literature and Film*., pp.15–37.

Mally, L. 2003. Exporting Soviet Culture: The Case of Agitprop Theater. *Slavic Review*. **62**(2), pp.324–342.

Mannheim, B. 2011. *The Language of the Inka since the European Invasion*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Markham, J.W. 1967. *Voices of the Red Giants: Communications in Russia and China*. Ames: Iowa State University Press.

Marsh, R.J. 1986. *Soviet Fiction Since Stalin: Science, Politics and Literature*. London: Croom Helm.

Maus, D.C. 2012. *Unvarnishing Reality: Subversive Russian and American Cold War Satire*. Columbia, SC: Univ of South Carolina Press.

McCannon, J. 1998. *Red Arctic: Polar Exploration and the Myth of the North in the Soviet Union, 1932-1939*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

McCauley, M. 2014. *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Union*. London: Routledge.

McCloud, S. 1994. *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*. New York: Harper-Perennial.

McKenna, K.J. 2001. *All the Views Fit to Print: Changing Images of the U.S. in Pravda Political Cartoons, 1917-1991*. New York: Peter Lang.

McNair, B. 1991. *Glasnost, Perestroika and the Soviet Media*. London: Routledge.

McPhee, C.C. and Orenstein, N. 2011. *Infinite Jest: Caricature and Satire from Leonardo to Levine*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Medhurst, M.J. and DeSousa, M.A. 1981. Political Cartoons as Rhetorical Form: A Taxonomy of Graphic Discourse. *Communications Monographs*. **48**(3), pp.197–236.

Medvedev, P.N. 1985. *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship: A Critical Introduction to Sociological Poetics*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Medvedev, P.N. and Bakhtin, M.M. 1985. *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship: A Critical Introduction to Sociological Poetics*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Medvedev, Z.A. and Medvedev, R.A. 2003. *The Unknown Stalin*. London: I.B.Tauris.

Mesropova, O. 2008. Of Tears and Laughter: Humor and Satire in Post-Soviet Russia. *In*: O. Mesropova and S. Graham, eds. *Uncensored?: Reinventing Humor and Satire in Post-Soviet Russia*. Bloomington, IND: Slavica, pp. 1–10.

Mesropova, O. and Graham, S. 2008. *Uncensored?: Reinventing Humor and Satire in Post-Soviet Russia*. Bloomington, IND: Slavica.

Mickiewicz, E.P. 1981. *Media and the Russian public*. New York: Praeger.

Mikhalkov, S. 1956. Ostroe oruzhie. *Izvestiia*. 14 July, p.9.

———1959. Eshche raz o smekhe. *Krokodil*. (17), p.9.

Milenkovitch, M.M. 1966. *The View from Red Square: A Critique of Cartoons from Pravda and Izvestia, 1947-1964*. New York: Hobbs, Dorman.

Milosz, C. 1982. Introduction. *In*: A. Tertz. *The Trial Begins; And, On Socialist Realism*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Mitchell, W.J.T. 1986. *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

———1994. *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Molotiu, A. 2013. List of Terms for Comics Studies. *Comics Forum*. [Online]. [Accessed 7 October 2015]. Available from: http://comicsforum.org/2013/07/26/list-of-terms-for-comics-studies-by-andrei-molotiu/.

Montagu, I. 1943. *Crocodile Album of Soviet Humour*. London: Pilot Press.

Montefiore, S.S. 2003. *Stalin: The Court of the Red Tsar*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

Morris, R. 1993. Visual Rhetoric in Political Cartoons: A Structuralist Approach. *Metaphor and Symbol*. **8**(3), pp.195–210.

Morrison, M.C. 1969. The Role of the Political Cartoonist in Image Making. *Communication Studies*. **20**(4), pp.252–260.

Morson, G.S. and Emerson, C. 1990. *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of a Prosaics*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press.

Mostovshikov, S. ed. 2014. *Istoriia glazami Krokodila XX Century*. Moscow: XX Century Krokodil.

Murav, H. 1992. *Holy Foolishness: Dostoevsky's Novels & the Poetics of Cultural Critique*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press.

Murawska-Muthesius, K. 2000. Who Drew the Iron Curtain? Images East and West *In*: *Proceedings of the Fourth Joint Conference of Polish and English Art Historians*. University of East Anglia, Norwich: Institute of Art, pp. 241–248.

Najjar, O.A. 2007. Cartoons as a Site for the Construction of Palestinian Refugee Identity An Exploratory Study of Cartoonist Naji al-Ali. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*. **31**(3), pp.255–285.

Nakassis, C.V. 2013. Citation and Citationality. *Signs*. **1**(1).

Navasky, V.S. 2013. *The Art of Controversy: Political Cartoons and Their Enduring Power*. New York: Knopf Publishing Group.

Nelson, W. 1949. *Out of the Crocodile's Mouth:* Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press.

Nemzer, L. 1950. The Kremlin's Professional Staff: The' Apparatus' of the Central Committee, Communist Party of the Soviet Union. *The American Political Science Review*., pp.64–85.

Neuberger, J. 2012a. The Stalin Cult: Painting and Socialist Realism | Russian History Blog. [Accessed 13 January 2015]. Available from: http: //russianhistoryblog.org/2012/03/the-stalin-cult-painting-and-socialist-realism/.

———2012b. The Stalin Cult – More (Clearly, I hope) on Thinking Visually | Russian History Blog. [Accessed 13 January 2015]. Available from: http: //russianhistoryblog.org/2012/04/the-stalin-cult-more-clearly-i-hope-on-thinking-visually/.

Norris, S.M. 2006. *A War of Images: Russian Popular Prints, Wartime Culture, and National Identity, 1812-1945* annotated edition. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press.

———2012. Laughter's Weapon and Pandora's Box: Boris Efimov in the Khrushchev Era. *In*: *Cultural Cabaret: Russian and American Essays for Richard Stites*. Washington, D.C.: New Academia Publishing, LLC, pp. 105–138.

———2013. The Sharp Weapon of Soviet Laughter: Boris Efimov and the Visual Humor. *Russian, Croatian and Serbian, Czech and Slovak, Polish Literature*. **74**(1–2), p.31.

Nureev, I. 2015. Reality is Better than Cartoons. Just turn on the TV. [Accessed 28 March 2016]. Available from: http: //www.siapress.ru/blogs/43159.

Ogorodnikov, G. 2011. *Krokodil...i ne tol'ko*. Moskva: Izdatel'skii dom Meshcheriakova.

O'Mahony, M. 2006. *Sport in the USSR: Physical Culture—Visual Culture*. London: Reaktion Books.

Oring, E. 2004. Risky Business: Political Jokes under Repressive Regimes. *Western Folklore*., pp.209–236.

Ostrander, S. and Schroeder, L. 1966. From Russia with Laughs. *The World of Comic Art*. **1**(3), pp.48–52.

Oushakine, S.A. 2011. Laughter under Socialism: Exposing the Ocular in Soviet Jocularity. *Slavic Review*. **70**(2), pp.247–255.

———2012. 'Red laughter': On Refined Weapons of Soviet Jesters. *Social Research*. **79**(1), pp.189–216.

Papazian, E.A. 2013. Literacy or Legibility: The Trace of Subjectivity in Soviet Socialist Realism. *In*: J. Auerbach and R. Castronovo, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Propaganda Studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Papernyi, V. 2002. *Architecture in the Age of Stalin Culture Two*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

PBS 1999. Interview with Boris Efimov. *RED FILES: Soviet Propaganda Machine*. [Online]. [Accessed 5 June 2016]. Available from: http://www.pbs.org/redfiles/prop/deep/prop_deep_inter_frm.htm.

Pehowski, M. 1976. 'Krokodil' Magazine: Laughter in the Soviet Union. *In: Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism, July 31-August 4, 1976, College Park, Maryland*.

———1978. Krokodil: Satire for the Soviets. *Journalism Quarterly*. **55**(4), pp.726–731.

Peters, J.-U. 1990. Satire under Stalinism: Zoshchenko's Golubaya Kniga and M. Bulgakov's Master i Margarita. *In*: H. Günther, ed. *The Culture of the Stalin Period*. Studies in Russia and East Europe. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 210–226.

Petrone, K. 2000. *Life has Become More Joyous, Comrades: Celebrations in the Time of Stalin*. Bloomington, IND: Indiana University Press.

Pianov, A.S. 2003. Manuil G. Semenov. *In*: *Zhurnalisty XX veka: liudi i sud'by*. Moskva: OLMA Media Grupp.

Plamper, J. 2001. Abolishing Ambiguity: Soviet Censorship Practices in the 1930s. *The Russian Review*. **60**(4), pp.526–544.

———2003. The Spatial Poetics of the Personality Cult: Circles Around Stalin. *In*: E. Dobrenko and E. Naiman, eds. *The Landscape of Stalinism: the art and ideology of Soviet space*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press.

———2012a. *The Stalin Cult: A Study in the Alchemy of Power*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

———2012b. The Stalin Cult – Response by Jan Plamper. [Accessed 13 January 2015]. Available from: http: //russianhistoryblog.org/2012/04/the-stalin-cult-response-by-jan-plamper/.

Podshivalov, I. 1989. Soviet Cartoons: From an Aesopian Language to the Language of Satire. *The Democratic Journalist*. **1989**(July), pp.14–18.

Pontieri, L. 2012. *Soviet Animation and the Thaw of the 1960s: Not Only for Children*. New Barnet: John Libbey & Co Ltd.

Porter, R. 1988. Review: Seeing the past. *Past & Present*. (No. 118 (Feb., 1988)), pp.186–205.

Posin, J.A. 1950. Soviet Satire. *The Russian Review*. **9**(4), pp.296–302.

Press, C. 1981. *The Political Cartoon*. London: Associated University Presses.

Raleigh, D.J. 2012. *Soviet Baby Boomers: An Oral History of Russia's Cold War Generation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rapoport, I.L. 1991. *The Doctors' Plot of 1953*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Reid, S.E. 2002. Cold War in the Kitchen: Gender and the De-Stalinization of Consumer Taste in the Soviet Union under Khrushchev. *Slavic Review*., pp.211–252.

Reid, S.E. and Crowley, D. eds. 2000. *Style and Socialism: Modernity and Material Culture in Post-War Eastern Europe*. Oxford: Berg.

Rep'ev, S. 2007. Kak 'Krokodil' sdelan. [Accessed 11 December 2012]. Available from: http: //old-crocodile.livejournal.com/29221.html.

———2011a. 'Krokodil' No. 02,03,05,07,09 i 13 za 1951g. v formatakh PDF i DjVu. *Livejournal.com*. [Online]. [Accessed 14 November 2012]. Available from: http: //old-crocodile.livejournal.com/169535.html#comments.

———2011b. Iurii Cherepanov 'Reportazh iz Krokodila'. Chast 10. *Livejournal.com*. [Online]. [Accessed 14 November 2012]. Available from: http: //old-crocodile.livejournal.com/213932.html.

Reynolds, M. 2000. Drawing Out Life in Russia: Looking through the Life and Art of a Cartoonist: Boris Yefimov Dies in Moscow at 109. *Los Angeles Times*.

Robin, R. 1992. *Socialist Realism: An Impossible Aesthetic*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press.

Rolf, M. 2013. *Soviet Mass Festivals, 1917-1991*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Romaniello, M. and Starks, T. 2009. *Tobacco in Russian History and Culture: The Seventeenth Century to the Present*. London: Routledge.

Rose, A. 2001. When Politics is a Laughing Matter. *Policy Review*. (110), pp.59–71.

Rose, F. 2011. *The Art of Immersion: How the Digital Generation Is Remaking Hollywood, Madison Avenue, and the Way We Tell Stories*. New York: W. W. Norton.

Rosenfeld, A. 1999. *Defining Russian Graphic Arts: From Diaghilev to Stalin, 1898-1934*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

———2011. *Moscow Conceptualism in Context*. New Brunswick: Zimmerli Art Museum at Rutgers University.

Roth-Ey, K. 2011. *Moscow Prime Time: How the Soviet Union Built the Media Empire that Lost the Cultural Cold War*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Rowson, M. 2009. *Giving Offence*. Chicago: Seagull Books.

Russell, R. 1994. Satire and Socialism: The Russian Debates, 1925–1934. *Forum for Modern Language Studies*. **XXX**(4), pp.341–352.

Russia Today. 2015. JeSuisCharlie now? Social Media Outrage at Cartoon Mocking Death of Syrian Toddler Aylan Kurdi. *RT International*. [Online]. [Accessed 8 June 2016]. Available from: https: //www.rt.com/news/315290-charlie-hebdo-cartoon-aylan/.

Ryan, K.L. 2009. *Stalin in Russian Satire, 1917–1991*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press.

Ryan-Hayes, K.L. 1995. *Contemporary Russian Satire: A Genre Study*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Salys, R. 2009. *The Musical Comedy Films of Grigorii Aleksandrov: Laughing Matters*. Bristol: Intellect Books.

Samson, A.C. and Huber, O. 2007. The Interaction of Cartoonist's Gender and Formal Features of Cartoons. *Humor–International Journal of Humor Research*. **20**(1), pp.1–25.

Samyonov, M.G. 1969. Soviet Satire. *Indian Literature*. **12**(2), pp.40–43.

Sanders, J. 1962. The Tactful Satirists. *East European Politics & Societies*. **11**(2), pp.22–27.

———1982. The Seriousness of Humor: Political Satire in the Soviet Bloc. *East Europe-Euromonitor*. **11**, pp.21–29.

Sani, I., Abdullah, M.H., Abdullah, F.S. and Ali, A.M. 2012. Political Cartoons as a Vehicle of Setting Social Agenda: The Newspaper Example. *Asian Social Science*. **8**(6), p.156.

Saraceni, M. 2000. Language Beyond Language: Comics as Verbo-Visual Texts. [Accessed 18 June 2016]. Available from: http://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do?uin=uk.bl.ethos.364410.

———2003. *The Language of Comics*. London: Routledge.

Schattenberg, S. 2006. 'Democracy' or 'Despotism'? How the Secret Speech was Translated into Everyday Life. *In*: P. Jones, ed. *The Dilemmas of De-Stalinization: Negotiating Cultural and Social Change in the Khrushchev Era*. London: Routledge, pp. 64–79.

Schramm, W. 1963. The Soviet Communist Theory of the Press. *In*: F. S. Siebert, ed. *Four Theories of the Press: The Authoritarian, Libertarian, Social Responsibility, and Soviet Communist Concepts of what the Press Should be and Do*. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, pp. 105–146.

Scott, I.- 1965. *From Russia with Laughter*. London: Tandem.

Scott, J.C. 1990. *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Scruton, R. and Jones, P. 1982. Laughter. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volumes*. **56**, pp.197–228.

Semenenko, A. 2016. Aleksei Semenenko. *Stockholms universitet Profiles*. [Online]. [Accessed 21 June 2016]. Available from: http://www.su.se/profiles/alse9990-1.187465.

Semenov, M.G. 1982. *Krokodil'skie byli*. Moskva: Mysl'.

Service, R. 2005. *Stalin: A Biography*. London: Macmillan.

Seymour-Ure, C. 1974. Private Eye: The Politics of the Fool. *In*: *The political impact of mass media*. London: Constable, pp. 240–264.

Shabad, T. 1964. Behind the Smile on Krokodil. *New York Times*., pp.22, 85, 87.

Shcheglov, E. 2013. 7 'Krokodil'. *Evgenii Borisovich Shcheglov grafik, Karikaturist*. [Online]. [Accessed 22 April 2016]. Available from: http: //e-shcheglov.ru/?page_id=764.

Shepilov, D.T. 2007. *The Kremlin's Scholar: A Memoir of Soviet Politics Under Stalin and Krushchev*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Siddiqi, A.A. 2003. The Rockets' Red Glare: Technology, Conflict, and Terror in the Soviet Union. *Technology and Culture*. **44**(3), pp.470–501.

———2010. *The Red Rockets' Glare: Spaceflight and the Soviet Imagination, 1857-1957*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Silverstein, M. 2005. Axes of Evals. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*. **15**(1), pp.6–22.

Sinyavsky, A. 2007. *Ivan the Fool: Russian Folk Belief, a Cultural History*. Moscow: Glas.

Skradol, N. 2009. Laughing with Comrade Stalin: An Analysis of Laughter in a Soviet Newspaper Report. *The Russian Review*. **68**(1), pp.26–48.

———2011. 'There Is Nothing Funny about It': Laughing Law at Stalin's Party Plenum. *Slavic Review*. **70**(2), pp.334–352.

———2012. Funny Enemies: The 'Humorous Performative' in the Stalinist Master Narrative. *Journal of Political Ideologies*. **17**(3), pp.281–299.

Sloterdijk, P. 1987. *Critique of Cynical Reason*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Smirnov, I. 2012. Cartooning Under Communism. *In*: F. Althaus, ed. *Drawing the Curtain: The Cold War in Cartoons*. London: Fontanka Press, pp. 31–32.

Smith, M.B. 2009. Khrushchev's Promise to Eliminate the Urban Housing Shortage: Rights, Rationality and the Communist Future. *In*: M. Ilic and J. Smith, eds. *Soviet State and Society under Nikita Khrushchev*. London: Routledge, pp. 26–45.

Smolkin-Rothrock, V. 2011. Cosmic Enlightenment: Scientific Atheism and the Soviet Conquest of Space. *In*: J. T. Andrews and A. A. Siddiqi, eds. *Into the Cosmos: Space Exploration and Soviet Culture (Pitt Russian East European)*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, pp. 159–194.

Smorodinskaya, T., Evans-Romaine, K. and Goscilo, H. 2007. *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Russian Culture*. London: Routledge.

Sokolova, N. 2012a. Co-opting Transmedia Consumers: User Content as Entertainment or 'Free Labour'? The Cases of S.T.A.L.K.E.R. and Metro 2033. *Europe-Asia Studies*. **64**(8), pp.1565–1583.

———2012b. 'This is your show!' Mass Creative Practices in Transmedial Projects. *Digital Icons*. (6).

Spassky, S. 1982. Kak on delaetsia. *Krokodil*. (24), p.14.

Speier, H. 1968. *Force and folly: Essays on foreign affairs and the history of ideas*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Stalin, J. 1947. The Press as a Collective Organiser. *In*: *Works*. Moscow: Foreign Languages Pub. House, pp. 286–290.

Stam, R. 1989. *Subversive Pleasures: Bakhtin, Cultural Criticism, and Film*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Starr, S.F. 1994. *Red and Hot: The Fate of Jazz in the Soviet Union 1917-1991*. New York: Limelight Editions.

Sternin 1973. Caricature. *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*. **11**, p.134.

Stites, R. 1989. *Revolutionary Dreams: Utopian Vision and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

———1992. *Russian Popular Culture: Entertainment and Society Since 1900*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

———2010. Heaven and Hell: Soviet Propaganda Constructs the World. *In*: *Passion and Perception: Essays on Russian Culture*. Washington, D.C.: New Academia Publishing, LLC.

Streicher, L.H. 1965. David Low and the Sociology of Caricature. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. **8**(1), pp.1–23.

———1967. On a Theory of Political Caricature. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. **9**(4), pp.427–445.

Strömberg, F. 2010. *Comic Art Propaganda: A Graphic History*. Ilex.

Stykhalin, S. and Kremenskaia, I. 1963. *Sovetskaia satiricheskaia pechat', 1917-1963*. Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo.

Suny, R.G. 2008. On Ideology, Subjectivity, and Modernity: Disparate Thoughts about Doing Soviet History. *Russian History*. **35**(1–2), pp.251–258.

Swearingen, R. 1961. *What's so funny, comrade?* Praeger.

Talmadge, I.D.W. 1943. The Enjoyment of Laughter in Russia. *Russian Review*. **2**(2), pp.45–51.

Taubman, W. 2003. *Khrushchev: The Man and his Era*. WW Norton & Company.

Tempest, P. 1949. *Soviet Humour: Stories and Cartoons from Crocodile*. London: Society for Cultural Relations with the U.S.S.R.

Test, G.A. 1991. *Satire: Spirit and Art*. Tampa: University Press of Florida.

The Editors of Krokodil. 1989. *Soviet Humor: The Best of Krokodil*. Andrews and McMeel.

The Moscow Times. 2015. Russian State Poll Shows Empathy for Hebdo Killers. *Moscow Times*. [Online]. [Accessed 17 June 2016]. Available from: http: //www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/russian-state-poll-shows-empathy-for-hebdo-killers/514892.html.

Thompson, E.M. 1987. *Understanding Russia: The Holy Fool in Russian Culture*. New York: University Press of America.

Thurston, R.W. 1991. Social Dimensions of Stalinist Rule: Humor and Terror in the USSR, 1935-1941. *Journal of Social History*. **24**(3), pp.541–562.

Toffler, A. 1980. *The Third Wave*. London: Pan.

Tolstoy, V., Bibikova, I. and Cooke, C., eds. 1990. *Street Art of the Revolution: Festivals and Celebrations in Russia 1918-1933*. London: Thames and Hudson.

Tormey, S. 1995. *Making Sense of Tyranny: Interpretations of Totalitarianism*. Manchester University Press.

Townsend, K.J., McDonald, P. and Esders, L. 2008. How Political, Satirical Cartoons Illustrate Australia's WorkChoices Debate. *Australian Review of Public Affairs*. **9**(1), pp.1–26.

Trotsky, L. 1967. *The Revolution Betrayed: What is the Soviet Union and Where is it Going?*. London: New Park Publications.

———1973. *Women and the Family*. London: Pathfinder.

Tsakona, V. 2009. Language and Image Interaction in Cartoons: Towards a Multimodal Theory of Humor. *Journal of Pragmatics*. **41**(6), pp.1171–1188.

Tucker, J.G. 2002. *Against the Grain: Parody, Satire, and Intertextuality in Russian Literature*. Bloomington, IND: Slavica Publishers.

Udoaka, N. 2003. Uyo Residents' Perception of Political Cartoons in Nigerian Newspapers. *Nsukka journal of history*. **270**.

Vaisbord, M. 1982. *Ostroslovy*. Moskva: Pravda.

Valiakhmetov, M. 2008. Kartun/Cartoon. *Bolshaia entsiklopediia karikatury*. [Online]. [Accessed 14 June 2015]. Available from: https: //web.archive.org/web/20150316212226/http: //cartoonia.ru/entsiklopediya-karikatury/k/kartun-cartoon.

Varnum, R. and Gibbons, C.T. 2007. *The Language of Comics: Word and Image*. Univ. Press of Mississippi.

Vasianin, A. 2003. Vladimir Mochalov: Chem karikatura razrushitel'nei, tem ona luchshe. *Politjournal.ru*. [Online]. [Accessed 20 June 2016]. Available from: http: //www.politjournal.ru/preview.php?action=Articles&dirid=67&tek=8131.

Vatlin, A.I. and Malashenko, L. 2006. *Piggy Foxy and the Sword of Revolution: Bolshevik Self-portraits*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Vereshchagin, V.A. 1913. *Russkaia karikatura*. Moskva: V. Sekachev.

Vesenin, E. 1972. Krokodil v nebesakh. *In*: *O vremeni i o sebe*. Biblioteka Krokodila. Moskva: Pravda.

Vice, S. 1997. *Introducing Bakhtin*. Manchester University Press.

Vinokour, M. 2015. Books of Laughter and Forgetting: Satire and Trauma in the Novels of Il'f and Petrov. *Slavic Review*. **74**(2), pp.334–353.

Vladiv-Glover, S. 1999. The 1960s and the Rediscovery of the Other in Russian Culture: Andrei Bitov *In*: *Russian Postmodernism: New Perspectives on Post-Soviet Culture*. Berghahn Books, pp. 31–86.

Volkogonov, D.A. 1998. *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Empire: Political Leaders from Lenin to Gorbachev*. HarperCollins.

Vulis 1973. Satire. *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*. **22**, p.642.

Wartenberg, T.E. 2012. Wordy Pictures: Theorizing the Relationship between Image and Text in Comics. *In*: A. Meskin and R. T. Cook, eds. *The Art of Comics: A Philosophical Approach*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 87–104.

Waterlow, J. 2012. Popular Humour in Stalin's 1930s: A Study of Popular Opinion and Adaptation. Ph.D. thesis, University of Oxford.

———2013. Intimating Trust. *Cultural and Social History*. **10**(2), pp.211–229.

———2014. More than Resistance: Political Humour under Stalin in the 1930s. *Humour and Laughter in History: Transcultural Perspectives*. **15**, p.103.

———2015. Sanctioning Laughter in Stalin's Soviet Union. *History Workshop Journal*. **79**(1), pp.198–214.

Weinbrot, H.D. 2005. *Menippean Satire Reconsidered: From Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Weiner, A. 2012. *Making Sense of War: The Second World War and the Fate of the Bolshevik Revolution*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Weiner, D.R. 1999. *A Little Corner of Freedom: Russian Nature Protection from Stalin to Gorbachev*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Welch, D. 2013. *Propaganda: Power and Persuasion*. London: British Library.

White, S. 1988. *The Bolshevik Poster*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Widdis, E. 2012. *Visions of a New Land: Soviet Film from the Revolution to the Second World War*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Wigston, D. 2002. Aids and Political Cartoons: A Case Study. *Communicato: South African Journal for Communication Theory and Research*. **28**(2), pp.74–94.

Willems, W. 2011. Comic Strips and 'The Crisis': Postcolonial Laughter and Coping with Everyday Life in Zimbabwe. *Popular Communication*. **9**(2), pp.126–145.

Wolfe, T.C. 2005. *Governing Soviet Journalism: The Press and the Socialist Person after Stalin*. Bloomington, IND: Indiana University Press.

Wortman, R. 2008. Lubki of Emancipation. *In*: V. A. Kivelson and J. Neuberger, eds. *Picturing Russia: Explorations in Visual Culture*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, pp. 90–95.

Yoffe, M. 2013. The Stiob of Ages: Carnivalesque Traditions in Soviet Rock and Related Counterculture. *Russian Literature*. **74**(1), pp.207–225.

Yurchak, A. 2005. *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Zassoursky, I. 2004. *Media and power in post-Soviet Russia*. Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe.

Zegers, P.K. and Druick, D.W. eds. 2011. *Windows on the War: Soviet TASS Posters at Home and Abroad, 1941-1945*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Žižek, S. 1989. *The Sublime Object of Ideology*. London: Verso.

Online Images

Acharya, S. 2015. *The Little Weapon*. [Twitter]. 6 January. [Accessed 21 June 2016]. Available from: https: //twitter.com/satishacharya/

Anon. 2008. Khudkollegiia v 'Krokodile' (1977g.) - Zhurnal 'Krokodil'. *LiveJournal*. [Online]. [Accessed 10 October 2011]. Available from: http: //old-crocodile.livejournal.com/35849.html.

Anon. 2016. Pomogite naiti rech' Stalina o transporte i/ili ob Arktike. *Otvet@Mail.ru*. [Online]. [Accessed 30 January 2016]. Available from: https: //otvet.mail.ru/.

Anon. 2011a. Reklama i kul'tura - Vecher Krokodila. *Krasnoe znamia*. [Online]. [Accessed 21 June 2016]. Available from: http: //www.krasnoyeznamya.ru/.

Anon 2011b. The Flying Crocodile. *Dieselpunk*. [Online]. [Accessed 22 October 2012]. Available from: http: //dieselpunks.blogspot.co.nz/.

Anon 2011c. Zhivoi Krokodil ('Live Crocodile'). Plays. First edition. By (Various authors.) from Russian Art and Books. *Bibliopolis*. [Online]. [Accessed 21 June 2016]. Available from: https: //books.bibliopolis.com/

Avax News 2011. Art of Caricature. *Avax News*. [Online]. [Accessed 29 April 2014]. Available from: http: //avaxnews.net/touching/Art_Of_Caricature.html.

Elkin, S. 2014. *That's not my leg!* [Twitter]. 6 March. [Accessed 21 June 2016]. Available from: https: //twitter.com/Sergey_Elkin/

Neboltai. 2012. Eisenhower's 'Defence Line'. *Neboltai!*. [Online]. [Accessed 16 September 2012]. Available from: http: //www.neboltai.org/

Studiia 13. 2015a. *The important thing is what's inside*. (*Glavnoe to, chto vnutri*.). [Twitter]. 20 May. [Accessed 21 June 2016]. Available from: https: //twitter.com/13studiya/

Studiia 13. 2015b. Studiia 13. Untitled. [Online]. [Accessed 21 June 2016]. Available from: https: //www.facebook.com/13studiya/

Tert.am 2014. 'Poyekhali!' 80th birthday of Yury Gagarin, first man in space. *Armenian News*. [Online]. [Accessed 5 April 2014]. Available from: http: //www.tert.am/

The Moscow Times 2014. Putin's Russia. *The Moscow Times*. [Online]. [Accessed 28 July 2014]. Available from: http: //www.themoscowtimes.com/multimedia/

Appendix A: *Krokodil* Issue Dates

Krokodil Issue Number	Publication Date
1	10 January
2	20 January
3	30 January
4	10 February
5	20 February
6	28/29 February
7	10 March
8	20 March
9	30 March
10	10 April
11	20 April
12	30 April
13	10 May
14	20 May
15	30 May
16	10 June
17	20 June
18	30 June
19	10 July
20	20 July
21	30 July
22	10 August
23	20 August
24	30 August
25	10 September
26	20 September
27	30 September
28	10 October
29	20 October
30	30 October
31	10 November
32	20 November
33	30 November
34	10 December
35	20 December
36	30 December

Appendix B: *Krokodil* Circulation Figures, as published in the magazine on the anniversary of the first issue in June

Year	Circulation	Year	Circulation
1922		1958	1000000
1923	150000	1959	1200000
1924	150000	1960	1400000
1925	150000	1961	1500000
1926	175000	1962	1650000
1927	175000	1963	1700000
1928	117000	1964	2000000
1929	127000	1965	2900000
1930	225000	1966	4300000
1931	500000	1967	4600000
1932	500000	1968	4900000
1933	210000	1969	5400000
1934	300000	1970	5750000
1935	300000	1971	5000000
1936	266000	1972	5050000
1937	275000	1973	5580000
1938	275000	1974	5600000
1939	275000	1975	5920000
1940	271000	1976	5800000
1941	250000	1977	5850000
1942	200000	1978	5850000
1943	100000	1979	5850000
1944	100000	1980	5810000
1945	100000	1981	5810000
1946	150000	1982	5620000
1947	150000	1983	5610000
1948	150000	1984	5450000
1949	165000	1985	5300000
1950	275000	1986	5300000
1951	300000	1987	5300000
1952	300000	1988	5300000
1953	350000	1989	5200000
1954	400000	1990	5050000
1955	600000	1991	2310000
1956	700000	1992	548500
1957	1000000		

Appendix C: *Krokodil* Editors-in-Chief, 1922-2000

Period in office	*Krokodil Editor-in-Chief (Glavnyi redactor)*
1922-1923	Konstantin Eremeev
1924-1926	Nikolai Smirnov
1926-1928	Konstantin Mal'tsev
1928-1930	Felix Kon
1930-1934	Mikhail Manuil'skii
1934-1938	Mikhail Kol'tsov
1938-1941	Yakov Robinskii
1941-1948	Grigorii Ryklin
1948-1953	Dmitrii Beliaev
1953-1958	Sergei Shvetsov
1958-1975	Manuil Semenov
1975-1985	Evgenii Dubrovin
1986-2000	Alexei Pianov