Open Library of Humanities Journal

Yeremieieva, K 2025 Soviet Bodies in Transition: Sex and Stereotypes in the Visual Satire of Late Perestroika. *Open Library of Humanities*, 11(2): pp. 1–26. DOI: https://doi.org/10.16995/olh.23973

Open Library of Humanities

Soviet Bodies in Transition: Sex and Stereotypes in the Visual Satire of Late Perestroika

Dr. Kateryna Yeremieieva, Ludwig Maximilian University, eremeeevaea@gmail.com

This article examines how late Soviet visual satire—particularly cartoons and caricatures—functioned as a vehicle for expressing and reinforcing gender stereotypes, with a specific focus on sexuality. The relative loosening of censorship under Perestroika permitted an increased presence of sexual humour in Soviet media. However, rather than indicating genuine liberalisation, this humour often reaffirmed patriarchal frameworks. In magazines such as *Krokodil* and *Perets'*, the female body frequently appears as a hypersexualised figure, commodified and rendered interchangeable with consumer goods. These representations did not critique dominant gender ideologies; instead, they naturalised them through visual codes of desire, scarcity, and submission. Employing an iconological approach, this article analyses how this visual rhetoric encoded broader cultural anxieties about gender, sex, and social change. Soviet cartoons simultaneously reflected and shaped discourse on sexuality, portraying it as both emancipatory and destabilising. Through an analysis of official satire, unofficial humour, and visual culture, this article explores how visual satire contributed to the evolution of gender discourses in the late Soviet and early post-Soviet periods.

Introduction

In a 1990 cartoon published in *Krokodil*, a stereotypically sexualised woman in a white shop assistant's robe opens it to reveal her underwear-clad body, standing before a male customer in an otherwise empty Soviet store (Malov, 1990). A sign on the vacant counter reads 'cheese', though no product is present, alluding to the chronic shortages of essential goods that characterised the late Perestroika economy. The caption states, 'I have nothing more to offer you'. The man, in a coat and holding a briefcase, stares back blankly. Though framed as absurd and humorous, the cartoon operates as a visual allegory: the female body replaces consumer goods, sex symbolises economic dysfunction, and humour masks anxiety. The cartoon condenses scarcity, commodification, and gendered objectification into a single image.

Such a cartoon would have been inconceivable only a few years earlier. By 1990, however, sexualised imagery had become increasingly common in Soviet satirical magazines following decades of censorship. This article builds on this shift to investigate the broader function of visual satire during the late Soviet period. It examines how satire—primarily through cartoons and caricatures—operated in constructing and reinforcing gender stereotypes under Perestroika. The analysis focuses on representations of the female body, which not only predominated in sex-related humour but also emerged as the most persistently objectified and symbolically overdetermined figure.

Between 1985 and 1991, the major Soviet satirical magazines—*Krokodil* [*Crocodile*], published in Moscow, and *Perets'* [*Pepper*], published in Kyiv—became widely associated with sexualised visual content. These were not marginal publications: at their Brezhnev-era peak, *Krokodil* reached a circulation of 6 million, while *Perets'* achieved 3 million despite its republican status. *Krokodil* was distributed across all Soviet republics alongside regional or republican journals such as *Perets'*. Editorial openness to erotic material was enabled by the loosening of censorship under *glasno*st (a policy of openness and transparency under Gorbachev), a key feature of Gorbachev's reform agenda. This shift permitted the exposure of previously taboo subjects, including sex and sexuality.

This article interrogates a core contradiction of the late Soviet era. While the 1980s 'sexual revolution' is often interpreted as a moment of openness and liberalisation, its cultural consequences remain contested. The growth of sexualised satire invites deeper analysis of how humour engaged with and shaped these transformations. Rather than challenging patriarchal norms, such representations often reinforced familiar tropes and gender ideologies. By framing them in humour and eroticism, satire blurred the boundary between critique and complicity.

The central research question of this article is: to what extent did satirical depictions of women in late Soviet magazines challenge or reinforce gender and sexual stereotypes through humour and symbolic displacement? I hypothesise that visual humour in *Krokodil* and *Perets'*, while seemingly transgressive, drew heavily on conventional tropes and objectifying codes. By eroticising and commodifying the female body under the pretext of humour, these cartoons rendered gender stereotypes more acceptable—even normative—to Soviet audiences. Sex was not depicted as liberation, but as absurdity, shame, nostalgia, or compensation. Rather than overturning dominant sexual discourse, this humour displaced patriarchal values into a visually mediated and ideologically safer form.

This article brings together humour studies, gender theory, and visual culture to reassess Soviet visual rhetoric in its final phase. Satirical magazines bridged the official and the everyday, articulating cultural anxieties, moral uncertainty, and symbolic collapse. In this context, women appeared not as autonomous agents but as signs of dysfunction, embodiments of male unease, or commodified figures in an unravelling economy.

Theoretical Framework and Methodology

The article employs an interdisciplinary methodology grounded in discourse analysis and visual semiotics to explore the role of satirical representations of gender and sexuality in late Soviet visual humour. This approach aligns with the recent trend in humour studies to integrate historical, cultural, linguistic, and psychological perspectives within a Slavic scholarly tradition (Troitskiy et al., 2021). To bridge the analytical and theoretical dimensions of the study, particular attention is paid to the central question—whether late Soviet satire destabilised or reinforced gender and sexual stereotypes. Rooted in this inquiry, the methodological approach aligns with broader concerns about ideology, symbolic language, and the ambivalent function of humour.

Mary Crawford's (2000) concept of the 'humour mode'—a discursive strategy that enables ambiguity and transgression—underpins the study's logic. In Crawford's view, humour is a coded communicative register capable of expressing socially controversial or ideologically sensitive content in paradoxical or playful forms. This dynamic makes humour especially potent in contexts where direct critique is restricted, allowing it to both challenge and reaffirm existing social norms. This paradox lies at the heart of the analysis.

Building on this premise, Meghana and Vijaya (2020) conceptualise humour as a discursive space in which gender roles are negotiated through irony, indirection, and

cultural play. They argue that humour often conceals its ideological load, facilitating the reproduction of normative assumptions under the guise of entertainment. These insights clarify how late Soviet visual satire could present patriarchal narratives in a seemingly progressive form, aligning humour with shifting public sensibilities while preserving core gendered hierarchies.

Shifman and Lemish (2010) similarly observe that gendered humour in visual media tends to uphold traditional power structures while disguising them as innocuous fun. Thomae and Pina (2015) demonstrate that such humour often contributes to the normalisation of gender inequality. Jennifer Hay (2000) underscores that humour shapes gendered identities through recurring narrative patterns and topic selection. Her findings suggest that media-driven humour reflects and reinforces conventional gender roles—a dynamic particularly salient in mass publications such as Soviet satirical magazines. Rogers (2018) adds that sexist humour not only entertains but also cultivates reductive sexual stereotypes, portraying women as passive and men as inherently dominant. This pattern is crucial for understanding how humour contributed to gender construction during ideological transition.

Given the article's contribution to a broader volume on stereotypes in humour, special emphasis is placed on how visual satire contributed to the circulation and normalisation of gendered and sexualised tropes. A central concern is the depiction of women in reductive terms—whether as erotic objects, commodified figures, or metaphorical proxies for scarcity. Drawing on theories of sexual objectification developed by Martha Nussbaum (1995) and Caroline Heldman (2007), this analysis foregrounds representations of women as dehumanised, fragmented, or consumable entities. These categories inform the close readings that follow, helping to unpack how visual tropes—such as the woman-as-commodity or the fragmented female form—encode power relations and reflect shifting cultural norms. Figures such as the seductive shopgirl or the woman fused with food commodities exemplify the symbolic convergence of desire, deprivation, and market logic. In the Soviet context, as discussed by Kon (2005), Claro (2023) and Gradskova et al. (2020), these images emerged against a backdrop of sexual repression and were often reframed within officially sanctioned humour.

This study combines semiotic and iconographic analysis to decode the ideological functions of such imagery. Following Roland Barthes (1972) and Erwin Panofsky (1939), the research examines how motifs—such as domestic interiors, uniforms, nudity, or empty shelves—serve as visual cues that signal broader socio-political tensions. These techniques reveal how satire exaggerates and naturalises gendered power relations by embedding them in familiar forms.

Visual analysis is complemented by critical discourse analysis (CDA) of accompanying textual elements, including captions and editorial commentary. Drawing on Weaver, Mora, and Morgan (2016) and on Tsakona's (2009) work on the interplay between language and image in cartoons, the study examines how figurative language, irony, and exaggeration shape gendered discourse. This helps evaluate whether the rise of sexualised humour during Perestroika functioned as ideological compensation for prior censorship or marked a more substantive cultural shift.

This study draws on feminist theories of sexual objectification to interpret portrayals of the female body in late Soviet visual satire. Martha Nussbaum (1995) outlines seven dimensions of objectification—instrumentality, denial of autonomy, inertness, fungibility, violability, ownership, and denial of subjectivity—which describe how individuals may be treated as objects for use. Caroline Heldman (Heldman, 2013; Heldman, Frankel, and Holmes, 2016) adapts this framework for visual media, proposing the CHIPS test to identify common features of sexual objectification in imagery, such as commodified posing, availability, and passive display. This approach is particularly suited to the analysis of cartoons, where humour and metaphor often mask symbolic forms of gendered violence. Slater and Tiggemann (2001) further emphasise that objectification occurs when a woman's body is primarily framed for others' visual pleasure—through gaze, posture, and the repetition of erotic tropes. Together, these perspectives provide the theoretical foundation for the article's iconological approach, interpreting satirical cartoons not only as entertainment but also as cultural artefacts that encode gendered anxieties and shifting ideological norms.

The corpus consists of satirical cartoons and caricatures published between 1985 and 1991 in *Krokodil* (Moscow) and *Perets'* (Kyiv). The selected examples were chosen for their thematic density and image-text interplay, with emphasis on tropes involving erotic display, gender caricature, and metaphors of consumption (e.g., women as stand-ins for goods). Although the majority of examples derive from *Krokodil*, this asymmetry reflects substantive editorial differences: while *Krokodil* exhibits a pronounced turn toward sexualised imagery in the Perestroika period, *Perets'* remains comparatively restrained, revealing divergent regional sensibilities and thresholds of ideological permissibility. Analysis is supported by structured coding in MAXQDA24, enabling the categorisation of recurring motifs such as scarcity, voyeurism, service roles, and parody. This framework positions visual satire as a field of ideological negotiation, simultaneously reflecting and shaping cultural understandings of gender, sexuality, and symbolic crisis in the late Soviet era.

Nobody Wanted to Fall Behind: Speaking about Sex After Years of Silence

Nobody Wanted to Fall Behind was the title of an article by Poyurovsky (1989), published in *Krokodil*. In it, the author expressed concern over 'Western' cultural influences entering Soviet theatre, particularly the rise of overt naturalism. Actors, he lamented, were appearing on stage in 'Adam and Eve costumes', enacting scenes of sexual intercourse within classical plays. Poyurovsky hoped these developments were only temporary—'a natural reaction to all sorts of restrictions, a childhood disease of leftist theatre', as he put it.

This discomfort was not isolated but reflected broader cultural anxiety about the new visibility of sex in public discourse, particularly in official media. Before the late 1980s, sexual themes in institutional Soviet humour were subject to strict censorship. As Neringa Klumbytė (2022) shows in her study of the Lithuanian magazine Šluota, even mildly suggestive images—such as a cartoon of naked Adam and Eve—were routinely suppressed. Consequently, male-dominated satire focused on ideologically safe subjects like family life, portraying women as overburdened housewives or morally ambiguous figures—'wrong women'—drawn to Western fashion and consumerism. These portrayals were only mildly sexualised, with clothing, makeup, and cigarettes serving as visual codes for deviance, even in the absence of nudity.

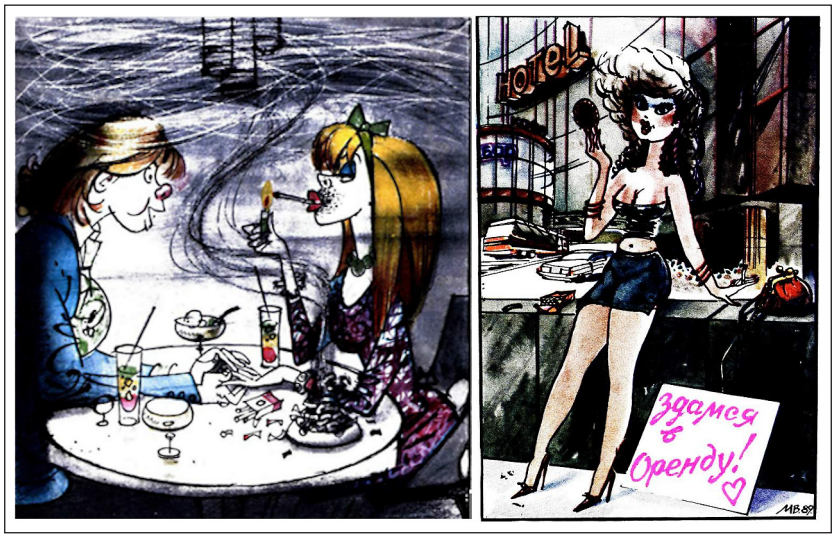
By contrast, unofficial oral culture preserved a robust repertoire of sexual jokes and anecdotes. Bonnie Marshall (1992) demonstrates that these often relied on reductive portrayals of women as deceitful, sexually available, or unintelligent. Scholars such as Nancy Ries (1997) and Alexei Yurchak (2006) have documented the circulation of 'kitchen talk'—a form of private, gendered, and frequently misogynistic humour. These jokes featured archetypes like the unfaithful wife and the hypersexual man, reflecting and reproducing patriarchal norms. They also frequently engaged in meta-commentary—jokes about jokes—that revealed the risks, cultural functions, and boundaries of Soviet humour itself (Astapova, 2020). By the Perestroika period, elements of this humour began to surface in mainstream satire, indicating how patriarchal views on sex and gender were assimilated into official discourse under *glasnost*.

The policy of glasnost encouraged editors and artists to explore topics previously deemed off-limits. The Soviet press began publishing articles on prostitution, providing satirists a way to engage with sex indirectly (Dodolev, 1986). In cartoons, sex workers were often characterised through stereotypes borrowed from older portrayals of 'improper' femininity: bold makeup, tight clothing, high heels, and cigarettes. Over time, this iconography evolved into broader metaphors for scarcity and substitution. A striking example of this visual shorthand appears in a 1989 Perets' cartoon (**Figure 2**),

where a voluptuously drawn woman in revealing clothes leans against a hotel, holding a cigarette. A handwritten sign at her feet reads "I'm for rent!" — signalling that she is offering herself for lease. Her appearance clearly evokes sex work, but the visual and textual framing also comments on the broader commodification of everyday life under late-Soviet economic reform (which introduced elements of market logic, including leasing of land and enterprises). This convergence of erotic and economic codes illustrates how satire encoded anxieties about shifting values through sexualised imagery.

One of the useful conceptual tools for understanding the rise of sexual themes in late Soviet satire is the trickster spot. A trickster figure subverts norms and boundaries, introducing suppressed topics through ambiguity and symbolic inversion. Trickster spots are not confined to mythological figures; they may take the form of images, symbols, or characters that permit subversive meaning to enter public conversation. In transitional periods, such as the late Soviet era, artists often relied on these spots to introduce previously forbidden themes.

Prostitution thus functioned as the initial trickster spot in late Soviet satire—an entry point that enabled visual humour to engage with the theme of sex under the guise of moral or social critique. It offered a flexible, culturally ambiguous gateway to discuss sex, allowing artists to allude to eroticism, commodification, and gender without direct confrontation. The visual link to earlier depictions of 'improper' women—for example, through cigarettes—underscores this. A 1975 *Perets'* cartoon by Zelinskyi (1975) (**Figure 1**) shows this iconography re-emerging in later sex work representations,



Figures 1–2: The cigarette as a visual 'trickster spot' enabling sexual themes in satire. Left: Zelinskyi, *Perets'* (1975); right: M.V., *Perets'* (1989). Reproduced with permission of the editorial board of *Perets'*.

highlighting the cigarette as a symbolic connector between moral deviance and sexualised portrayal. Such visual devices allowed satire to expand boundaries while shielding subversion under layers of absurdity.

The cartoon corpus confirms this pattern: in 1987, nearly all references to sex used prostitution as their framing device. Thus, prostitution functioned as the dominant trickster spot—the symbolic tool allowing taboo themes to enter the visual discourse. This framing was far from neutral. Precisely because prostitution connoted moral deviance and commodification, it shaped the terms by which sexuality became visible. The visual language of sex that emerged during this period bore the marks of sex work tropes: fragmented, eroticised, and commercialised female bodies became the default mode of representation.

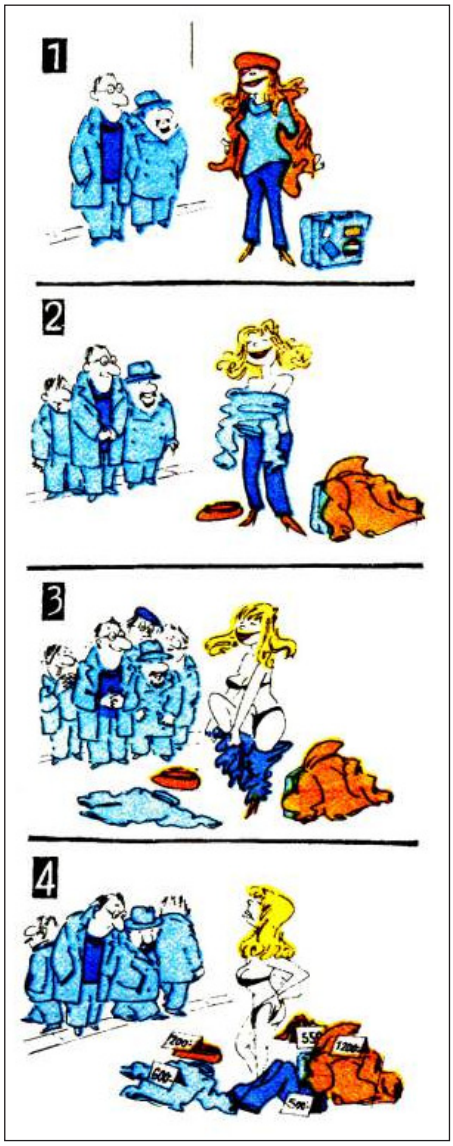


Figure 3: The cartoon merges sexuality with commodification. *Perets'* (1990). Reproduced with permission of the editorial board of Perets'.

By the late 1980s, female erotic figures in cartoons were no longer confined to depictions of sex work. Increasingly, they appeared as stand-ins for products, services, or abstract desires—signalling a shift in the symbolic politics of satire. A striking example of this symbolic shift appears in a 1990 Perets' cartoon (**Figure 3**), which unfolds in four sequential panels. A blonde woman appears in a busy urban setting, beginning to undress under the gaze of a growing group of male passers-by. The scene initially mimics the logic of a street striptease: she slowly removes her coat and dress, prompting excitement among the male crowd. Yet the punchline subverts expectations. Instead of offering her body, she places price tags on the discarded clothing items lying at her feet.

While humorous on the surface, the cartoon draws attention to the broader economic precarity of the time. Her performance is not erotic for its own sake but serves to attract potential buyers to the items she is selling. The erotic pose remains in the final panel, turning her body into a form of visual advertisement—a tactic that

links commodification, scarcity, and gendered display. Such imagery aligns with Heldman's (2013) notion of commodification and illustrates several of Nussbaum's (1995) objectification criteria, including instrumentality, denial of autonomy, and ownership. It encapsulates how satire during Perestroika used humour to naturalise market metaphors, merging sexuality with emerging economic ideologies.

Content Analysis of Cartoons about Sex

To complement the theoretical and iconographic analysis presented above, this study undertook a systematic quantitative and qualitative content analysis of Soviet satirical cartoons from the Perestroika period. The dataset comprises 170 cartoons, drawn primarily from two major publications: the central satirical magazine *Krokodil* and the Ukrainian counterpart *Perets'*. While *Perets'* contributed 19 examples, it typically adopted a cautious, often moralising stance toward emerging discourses on sexuality, framing them as indicative of moral decay or Western contamination. It was not until 1989 that *Perets'* began to address sexual themes more explicitly—and even then, with considerable restraint. In contrast, *Krokodil* established the dominant visual vocabulary for representing sexuality, gender, and moral ambiguity in the satirical culture of the late Soviet period and accordingly constitutes the core of the material analysed.

The temporal distribution of the cartoons reveals a marked increase in both frequency and thematic complexity from 1989 onward. Only six cartoons from 1987 and ten from 1988 contained codable representations related to sexuality or gendered stereotypes. This figure rose sharply to 52 in 1989 and peaked at 60 in 1990, followed by a modest decline to 42 in 1991. This pattern corresponds with broader shifts in public discourse—notably, the resonant 1986 publication of Evgenii Dodolev's *Belyi tanets* [*White Dance*] in newspaper *Moskovskii Komsomolets*, which openly addressed prostitution and broke longstanding taboos on the topic (Dodolev, 1986), and the 1988 release of *Little Vera*, a film that triggered intense debate about the depiction of sexuality in Soviet media.

Cartoons were systematically coded using MAXQDA24 software. The coding framework was developed in alignment with relevant theoretical categories, including sexual objectification (Nussbaum, 1995; Heldman, 2013; Heldman, Frankel, and Holmes, 2016), gender stereotyping, and salient visual tropes such as commodification, erotic display, and moral discipline. Codes were applied when specific visual or textual features met the established analytical criteria.

The resulting dataset enabled both frequency analysis and an exploration of code co-occurrence. Representations of sexualisation overwhelmingly centred on female bodies, while instances of male sexualisation were rare and typically framed

comedically or marginally. The code relation matrix demonstrated that portrayals of female objectification seldom appeared in isolation. Rather, they were frequently entangled with themes such as prostitution, infidelity, AIDS, and moral decline, suggesting that satire embedded sexualised imagery within a broader discourse of risk, deviance, and consumption.

The code map (**Figure 4**) visually articulates the centrality of the female body within the semiotic field of Perestroika-era satire. Each node in the map represents a discrete code, such as 'Female body', 'Prostitution', or 'Consumerism', with node size corresponding to the frequency of that code in the dataset. The connecting lines indicate co-occurrence, showing instances where two codes appear together within the same cartoon; thicker lines represent stronger co-occurrence. Colours differentiate thematic clusters, while spatial proximity further denotes thematic affinity across the dataset. This visualisation makes it easier to identify patterns of association and central motifs in the visual satire of the Perestroika era.

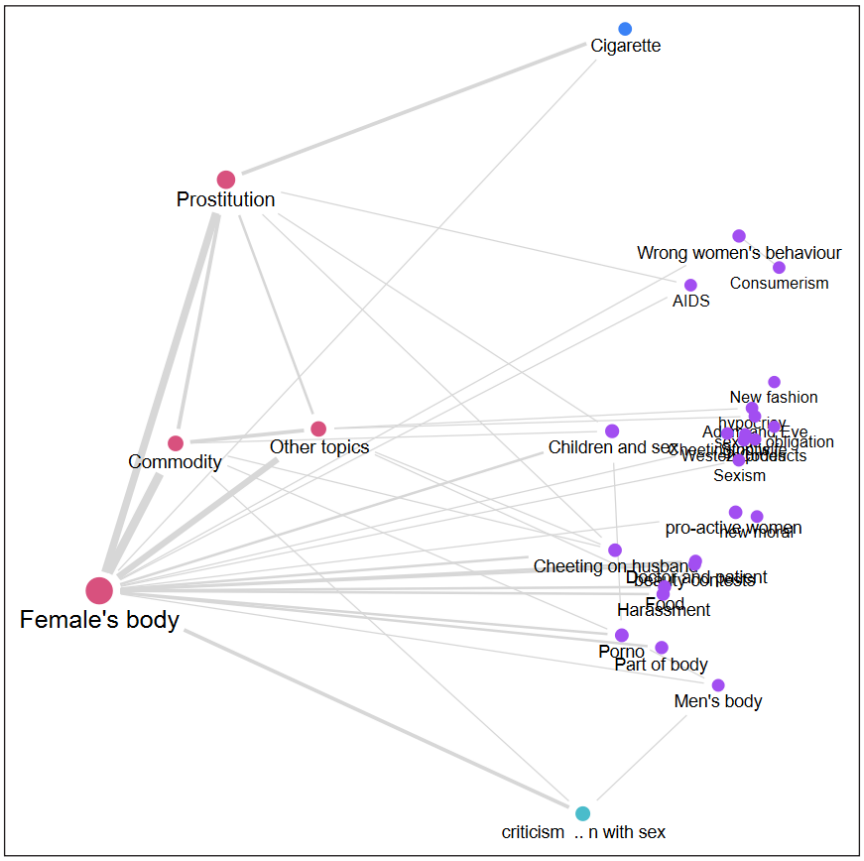


Figure 4: Code Map of Co-occurring Themes in Perestroika-Era Satirical Cartoons. Visualisation generated in MAXQDA24 based on thematic coding of the cartoon corpus.

The ‘Female body’ emerged as the most prominent and densely connected node, closely associated with high-frequency codes such as ‘Prostitution’, ‘Commodification’, and ‘Erotic display’. In contrast, male-coded representations—including ‘Men’s body’ and ‘Harassment’—occupied peripheral positions, underscoring a pronounced asymmetry in the visualisation of sexuality.

This asymmetry is structurally reinforced through the consistent alignment of female imagery with signifiers of crisis, including AIDS, consumerism, and moral collapse. Such patterns indicate that sexuality was not framed as a locus of pleasure, autonomy, or liberation, but rather as a problematic domain necessitating regulation. In this context, humour operated as a subtle disciplinary apparatus, mobilising irony and caricature to naturalise sexual difference and reinscribe normative hierarchies.

Across the dataset, the female body functioned as a polyvalent symbol through which satire negotiated anxieties about morality, modernisation, and ideological instability. Instead of enabling pluralistic or emancipatory representations, these cartoons reaffirmed conventional gender roles by embedding sexuality in familiar visual scripts of deviance, scarcity, and control. Male figures, by contrast, were primarily cast as spectators, commentators, or rational agents, thereby reinforcing a representational economy in which women bore the semiotic and ideological burden of sexuality.

These findings form the empirical foundation for the subsequent section, which offers close readings of selected case studies. Drawing on the statistical patterns and thematic clusters identified above, the following analysis examines how specific cartoons articulate dominant representational strategies, including the conflation of femininity and scarcity, the eroticisation of symbolic spaces such as shops and queues, and the encoding of female sexuality as a site of tension, deviance, or ironic excess. Through detailed iconographic interpretation, these case studies illustrate how gendered bodies operated not as markers of liberated sexual discourse but as vehicles for reproducing and regulating normative visual regimes in the late Soviet context.

Commodified Bodies: Femininity, Desire, and Scarcity

The figure of the prostitute, which initially functioned as a visual trickster introducing taboo topics such as sex and sexuality into Soviet satire, also opened a symbolic pathway for representing the female body as a commodity. Through this device, satire legitimised not only the depiction of sex but also the transformation of the female body into a stand-in for economic value and consumer goods. A cartoon from *Krokodil* (1989) exemplifies this transitional logic: a provocatively dressed woman stands on a street

corner, gesturing to a man walking past a shop window filled with luxury winter clothing, each item marked with a price tag (‘300’, ‘390’, and ‘250’) (Aleshichev, 1989). She offers herself with a speech bubble reading ‘100’, literalising her reduction to another priced item in the consumer landscape. Her body becomes both an eroticised object and a unit of economic measurement, presented as the more affordable commodity. This alignment of the female body with priced goods encodes the commodification of female sexuality, reinforcing the idea that sex, too, was subject to the market logic of late socialism.

In late Soviet satire, artists explored themes of prostitution and commodified sex to indirectly address political issues such as inflation, scarcity, and ideological breakdown. These cartoons functioned on multiple levels: the eroticised female figure was not merely a source of amusement or titillation; it also served as a visual and narrative proxy for deeper systemic anxieties. In a context of unmet promises and declining state credibility, female sexuality was symbolically repurposed to represent the broader failures of Soviet abundance.

One cartoon from *Krokodil*, by Novikov and Zelenchenko (1990), illustrates this dynamic. It depicts a nude woman sitting next to a crate of apples marked ‘3 rubles’, while traffic chaos unfolds around her. Although the price tag refers to the fruit, the juxtaposition visually aligns her body with goods for sale, presented without a set value. The contrast between the priced fruit and the unpriced nudity underscores a symbolic logic of value, desire, and access.

In this context, eroticism merges with economic commentary: the woman’s exposed body, framed by urban disorder and transactional cues, becomes an index of both frustrated consumer expectations and ideological confusion. In this visual economy, sexuality is not just commodified; it is used as a metaphor for political dysfunction. Her body becomes a spectacle that disrupts public order, suggesting that during times of scarcity, representations of sex function as unstable and improvised forms of symbolic exchange.

Soviet satirical cartoons often employed allegory and visual polysemy, creating images that invited multiple readings beyond their surface-level humour. As Christie Davies (2007) argues, humour under communism frequently functioned both as social protest and as reinforcement of dominant ideologies—a duality that applies to the visual satire of this period. In several cases, eroticised representations of women served not simply as titillating content or tools of objectification, but as visual vehicles for articulating frustrations rooted in late Soviet consumer culture. Through the female body, artists conveyed tensions between desire and lack, using sexuality as a canvas

for expressing the absurdities of scarcity, inflation, and disillusionment with state promises. For instance, imagery juxtaposing women with food items or price tags often evoked a sense of commodified longing—one that echoed both sexualisation and the unmet expectations of abundance. Interpreted through a semiological (Barthes, 1977) and iconological (Panofsky, 1939) lens, such juxtapositions function as signifiers of broader anxieties, where the eroticised female form encodes both symbolic excess and systemic deficiency. In this reading, the objectified female body becomes both a symptom and a medium of social critique, articulating not only patriarchal norms but also the contradictions of a society suspended between ideological collapse and emergent consumerist fantasies. Even if satirists used eroticised female bodies to comment on food shortages or broader systemic failures, this did not eliminate the instrumentalisation of those bodies. The female form remained a pliable symbol—mobilised to carry meanings far beyond itself, yet consistently framed through objectification.

A related cartoon published in *Krokodil* in 1990 builds on this critique (Zuev, 1990). It uses the fairground trope of a greased pole-climbing contest: men are invited to scale poles, each topped with a prize—a bottle of alcohol and sausage on one, a naked woman on the other. Most men gesture toward the sausages. Here, the sexualised female body is not limited to sex work; it is rendered interchangeable with material goods, an erotic reward competing with basic needs. This cartoon stages a male dilemma between desire and scarcity, collapsing sexual and economic value into a single frame. The female figure becomes a static reward, embodying broader crises of supply and legitimacy.

Some of the most visually potent examples fuse the female body with food imagery, intensifying its consumable status. A 1989 cartoon by Kholmovsky and Shadurov shows a shop assistant with a slice of sausage as her tongue, collapsing flesh, speech, and product into one erotic-commodity sign. In another cartoon, a woman hangs like meat in a butcher's shop while her boss quips: 'Dusya, you'd better undress, or the auditor will suspect cheating!'. Her body becomes subject to inspection and economic regulation—no different from meat. Innuendo also appears through punning, such as in a cartoon where a man looks at a woman in a green bikini and says, 'I could really go for some ripe watermelon', clearly referencing her breasts (Drukman, 1991).

These strategies echo feminist critiques of visual culture (Berger, 1972; Mulvey, 1975), where women are fragmented into fetishised parts. Fragmentation here entails formal dismemberment and symbolic reduction—a rendering of women as legible only through eroticised, decontextualised parts. In one cartoon, two dehydrated men hallucinate in the desert—one sees palm trees and domes, the other a pair of stylised

buttocks (Malov, 1990a). The woman becomes a mirage, replacing spiritual imagery with sexualised fantasy—an object of unattainable fulfilment.

This logic intensifies in a cartoon set in an educational context: a hyper-stylised blonde woman appears not in the classroom, but on a geometry poster (Novikov and Vaisbord, 1990). Her breasts are circled like reference points, and the teacher remarks, 'Well, you'll learn geometry better now'. Here, the female body serves as visual aid—not for learning, but for male arousal. This example aligns with scopophilic humour, derived from Mulvey's theory of visual pleasure, where the woman is not a subject, but a passive object for viewing.

In both cases, women are rendered as static, decontextualised signs within a visual system that aestheticises eroticism while systematically erasing female subjectivity and agency. Metaphors of food and fragmentation are not neutral—they legitimise eroticisation through substitution and spectacle. In cartoons where women are likened to sausages, meat, or fruit, the female body becomes edible, inert, and violable—a passive object reduced to her consumable parts. These depictions do not signal emancipation but rather immobilise the female figure, fixing her in roles of passive availability and symbolic excess. Men are consistently positioned as speakers, observers, or decision-makers, while women are framed as subjects for visual consumption, judgment, or ridicule. Humour, in this structure, functions as a mechanism that rehearses and naturalises gender hierarchy, masking domination through irony and caricature.

A key aspect of this symbolic economy is the public spectacle of the female body. In a cartoon about the Miss ZHBK beauty contest—a workplace pageant at a concrete factory—rows of women are presented for male assessment (Nasyrov and Zelenchenko, 1991). One man suggests, 'What if we trade the whole batch for rebar?'. Women are displayed as interchangeable and priced—subject to industrial logic that treats their bodies as commodified, standardised units. Notably, the scene implies that rebar—a scarce and prized commodity—is perceived as more valuable than the women on stage. This reversal of expected erotic or aesthetic value underscores the absurdity of late Soviet consumer logic, where even idealised femininity appears more abundant than essential industrial materials.

Another cartoon shows a naked woman being thrown into a theatre audience under the banner 'erotica for the masses' (Kononov, 1991). Sexualisation becomes public performance, no longer taboo but commodified and collectivised. These examples illustrate a shift: sexuality is not repressed, but staged, circulated, and consumed as entertainment.

Through repetition, exaggeration, and ironic framing, gender stereotypes are not dismantled but rather reinforced. The female body becomes a visual symbol of systemic failure—a metaphor for absence, unmet need, and ideological fatigue. Far from challenging patriarchal representations, late Soviet satire reasserts them by embedding objectification into humorous visual codes.

Male Sexuality and the Visual Economy of Satire

In contrast to the objectified and commodified portrayal of female bodies, male figures in late Soviet satirical cartoons typically occupy positions of dominance as consumers, spectators, initiators, or institutional agents. Rarely sexualised themselves, they exert control over the erotic spectacle, reinforcing a cultural logic in which male presence shapes both narrative and visual access. The male gaze governs this dynamic: men are positioned as viewers, interpreters, and gatekeepers of female sexuality. Their gaze structures the cartoon's visual logic, directing how the audience engages with scenes of desire or exposure. Even when not explicitly eroticised, male characters maintain narrative authority, often depicted as teachers, doctors, or bureaucrats who regulate female sexuality through institutional power.

A cartoon by Novikov illustrates this configuration: a naked man wearing only a hat lifts a bedcover to reveal a surprised naked woman, with the caption, 'I'm from Ivan Ivanovich...' (Novikov, 1989). The cartoon satirises *blat*—the informal Soviet system of favours—but redirects it toward sexual access. The woman's body becomes a metaphorical scarce good, accessed not through romance or merit but via male-dominated networks. This joke captures the broader asymmetry of sexual agency: men act, enter, initiate, while women are the terrain of exchange. Male centrality defines the humour, where sexual initiative belongs to those with symbolic or institutional capital.

This gender asymmetry is reinforced in a 1990 *Krokodil* cartoon that parodies the well-known 'returning husband' trope. A man returns home to find his wife in bed with her lover (Mochalov and Stepanov, 1990). Instead of reacting with outrage, he permits the affair on the condition that the lover pays in hard currency, implying the man is a foreigner. The cartoon critiques inflation and the encroachment of foreign capital while presenting the woman as a negotiable commodity. Even within this satirical structure, male authority remains unchallenged: it is the husband who sets the terms. While multiple readings are possible—ironic critique or banal normalisation—male agency structures them all.

Eroticised spectacle is also addressed in a cartoon from the more conservative Ukrainian magazine *Perets'*, which parodies the novel *Eugene Onegin* by Alexander

Pushkin. Both Onegin and Tatiana appear nude: Tatiana writes her famous letter topless by candlelight, while Onegin reclines nude in bed. In the audience, a woman comments to her male companion, 'I don't recall this scene'. The men replies: 'It must be that the theatre has switched to *khozraschyot*' (Sakhaltuiev, 1989) (**Figure 5**). Her comment wryly links nudity to Gorbachev's economic reforms, implying that sex has become a commercial strategy for attracting audiences. Even when men are disrobed, the framing voice belongs to a clothed, ironic spectator, distancing the scene from any real inversion of sexual power.

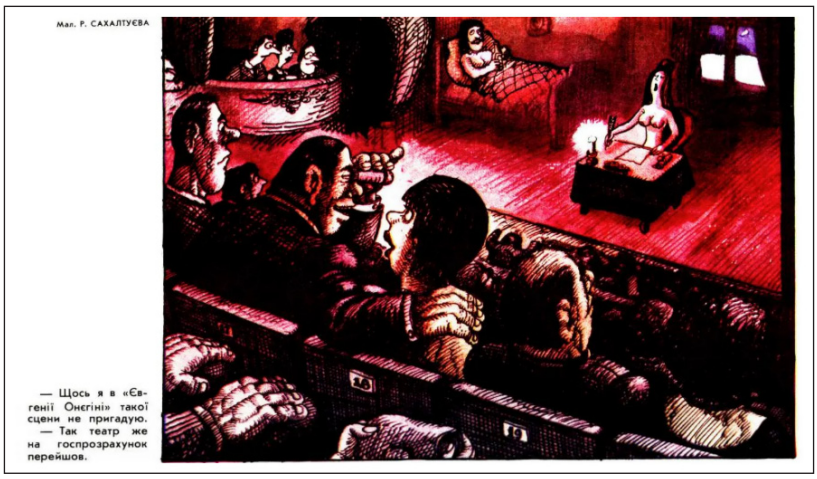


Figure 5: Erotic spectacle meets classical parody—nudity in *Eugene Onegin* staged as market-driven sensationalism. Sakhaltuiev, *Perets'* (1989). Reproduced with permission of the editorial board of *Perets'*.

A rare reversal of this pattern appears in a cartoon where harem women confront their male partner, demanding his resignation due to sexual underperformance (Uborevich-Borovskii and Lugovkin, 1990). While still exaggerated for comedic effect, this momentary role reversal undermines typical male dominance, showing that even erotic authority can be ridiculed. A few similar cartoons depict overconfident or awkward men, but these remain exceptions rather than a trend, highlighting how dominant masculinity is usually preserved.

Even when women are central to humour production, their presence in sexual discourse is marked as unusual or exceptional. A 1990 caricature features comedian Klara Novikova, portrayed with exaggerated poise. The accompanying verse praises her for discussing 'intimate themes', noting:

She does not burden us with strict morals
She easily conquered us by

> Bravely speaking in women's monologues
> On very intimate themes (Sivitskii, Timyanskii and Lososinov, 1990).

The term bravely (*muzhestvenno* in Russian) carries masculine connotations, subtly reinforcing the idea that sexual humour remains a male-coded domain. Novikova is celebrated not for redefining the genre, but for entering it acceptably as an exception.

This pattern reflects the deeper logic of Soviet visual satire: authorship and authority are predominantly held by males. Most editorial staff and cartoonists were men, and those who explored sexual themes did so with structural ease. When women approached the same themes, their contributions were marked as bold, even risky. Praise becomes gatekeeping, reinforcing boundaries even as they are crossed. In this system, the gendered punchline is not only about content, but about who is permitted to deliver it.

Disputing Erotica: Editorial Strategy, Public Reaction and the Framing of Sexual Humour

By the late 1980s, Soviet satire was navigating a shifting cultural and ideological landscape. Introducing satire on previously taboo topics—particularly sexuality—was a complex task. Erotic imagery, once confined to the margins of unofficial culture, became increasingly visible in officially sanctioned humour, especially in magazines like *Krokodil* and *Ukrainian Perets'*. Satirists adapted by borrowing themes from folk sex jokes and Western visual styles. They also employed strategies such as provoking debate through published letters and reactions, testing the boundaries of what was permissible. These editorial experiments were made possible by the liberalising effects of *glasnost* and the loosening of censorship, turning sexual humour into both a cultural barometer and a site for negotiated expression.

A key moment in this cultural negotiation occurred in 1988 with the publication of the essay 'A Very Naked Screen' (*Ochen' golyi ekran*) in *Krokodil*. Written by Piotr Smirnov (1988), the article expressed concern about what he perceived as the excessive sexualisation of Soviet cinema and theatre. With *glasnost* allowing for unprecedented freedom of expression, Smirnov lamented that directors increasingly undressed their characters for shock value. His critique was aesthetic rather than moralistic; the real threat, in his view, was not sex itself but the vulgarisation of public taste and the erosion of artistic depth. This essay marked an early effort by *Krokodil* to position itself as a site of cultural discernment rather than mere tasteless provocation.

The article garnered significant attention. In a 1989 issue, the magazine published a curated selection of readers' letters in response to the piece (Smirnov, 1989). Reactions

ranged from moral disapproval to cautious support. By featuring these letters, *Krokodil* positioned itself as a forum for public discourse, embracing multiple perspectives rather than enforcing a singular editorial stance. This strategy allowed the magazine to act as both a participant in and an arbiter of evolving public morality.

The openness of the publication was complicated by the simultaneous release of sexually provocative cartoons. The same pages that featured reader's responses also included illustrations of matryoshka dolls undressing layer by layer, female cosmonauts with exposed breasts, and depictions of commodified or metaphorically consumed female bodies. These illustrations were not just humorous; they provoked thought and reflected reader's perceptions, highlighting the tensions between evolving sexual norms and persistent conservatism. Their placement alongside letters and commentary emphasised their dual role as both subjects and catalysts for cultural debate.

In 1990, the magazine's provocative approach faced new scrutiny when readers from Kaluga raised moral concerns about the portrayal of women in *Krokodil* (Pro eto, 1990). Interestingly, their critique did not follow a feminist framework, largely absent from Soviet discourse at the time. Instead, they used familiar rhetoric surrounding socialist labour and gender equality:

> Our women play an important role in society; you will not find a sector where women do not work. Yet, in every issue of the magazine, women are mockingly ridiculed. They are depicted half-naked or portrayed as prostitutes, with a price tag of 100 rubles, among other offensive portrayals. This is pornography (Pro eto, 1990).

The message also emphasised that women should be seen as comrades and economic contributors, deserving of respect rather than scorn.

Krokodil responded with characteristic irony:

> The concern of Kaluga residents is understandable; after all, how can a woman be depicted half-naked while she is simultaneously contributing to all areas of the Soviet economy? [...] In addition to collective life, a woman has a personal life, where she is simply a woman in a special relationship with a man [...] And yet, the important role of a woman is also to continue the human race (Pro eto, 1990).

This response redefined sexuality within a heteronormative framework, rendering eroticism both biologically and culturally legitimate.

The editors further invoked high art to defend their visuals: 'What about the classics? For example, should we cover up Goya's *Nude Maja*? Should we destroy it?' (Pro eto, 1990).By framing erotic cartoons as part of a global artistic tradition, *Krokodil* distanced itself from accusations of obscenity while reaffirming its place within a male-oriented visual culture.

At the same time, *Krokodil* distanced itself from what it termed 'pseudo-erotic art'—the low-quality, exploitative imagery that flooded the market after *glasnost*. In contrast, the magazine presented its content as refined satire, offering critical commentary rather than crude titillation. In a self-aware moment, the editors mocked Soviet prudishness: 'Dining on 'strawberries' with the windows shut, whispering male anecdotes to one another, we proclaimed loudly, 'We will not tolerate naked women in our highly moral society!' (Pro eto, 1990).

This reflexive humour was more than mere jest; it served as a strategic mode of editorial authority, allowing the magazine to control tone while disarming critique. The magazine acknowledged the longstanding tradition of sexual humour in private male spaces and extended this tradition into the public visual sphere. As a result, sexual humour emerged as a masculinised discursive register, inviting readers to laugh and recognise the coded, gendered nature of the joke.

To formalise this space, *Krokodil* introduced a recurring column titled 'KoopERОtiv dlya uzkogo kruga' ('CoopERОtive for the Narrow Circle') in 1990. The title plays with two linguistic levels. First, it mimics the word *kooperativ* (cooperative), a term associated with small-scale, semi-private enterprises permitted under Gorbachev's reforms, evoking a sense of novelty and semi-legitimacy. Second, by capitalising 'ERO' within the word (KoopERОtiv), the editors embedded the root *erotika* (erotica), cheekily signalling the section's sexual content. This pun works both visually and semantically, marking the column as part of the reform-era economy and a space for erotic humour.

The rubric's title and fixed position on page 11 functioned as contextualisation cues (Gumperz, 1992), guiding reader interpretation and framing the content as sexually themed. Neil Bell (2015: 80) later argued that while such cues may seem conventional, their meaning is context-dependent. In *Krokodil*, this framing neutralised potential offence, established a masculine tone, and positioned the magazine as self-deprecating rather than vulgar. The editors conveyed that any discomfort with their 'cooperative eroticism' could simply be resolved by turning the page.

This early editorial strategy gradually developed into a broader mechanism of cultural navigation. In 1991, erotic cartoons appeared again throughout the magazine, no longer confined to a specific column. This shift was not merely a stylistic choice, it

reflected how deeply sex had become embedded in the symbolic economy of satire. This editorial evolution demanded not only rhetorical flexibility and layered references, but also a sustained use of ideological ambiguity. In *Krokodil*, sexual humour was never solely about sex; it served to test boundaries, manage visibility, and negotiate control within the text, among readers and editors, and within the broader state context.

While *Krokodil* served as the flagship of Soviet satire, regional publications such as the Ukrainian magazine *Perets'* responded differently to the cultural shifts of Perestroika. Structurally similar, the two diverged in editorial tone—a difference shaped by what Neringa Klumbytė terms 'political intimacy', or the shared ideological norms fostered by local political cultures. These internal dynamics directly influenced each magazine's boundaries of permissible satire.

Krokodil embraced provocative topics—sex, Western pop culture, and market reforms—whereas *Perets'* maintained a more cautious editorial stance (Yeremieieva, 2018). This conservatism echoed the hesitancy of the Soviet-Ukrainian political elite toward Gorbachev's reforms. Even by 1989–1990, when *Krokodil* featured increasingly erotic cartoons, *Perets'* kept its distance. Rather than depict sexual liberation, its cartoons explored generational divides and societal discomfort, presenting sex more as a source of anxiety than celebration.

This reserve often played out through depictions of older characters reacting with shock or ridicule to new sexual norms. The humour centred not on sex but on the reactions it provoked. Sexuality became a metaphor for moral confusion, rather than a site of liberation. One cartoon illustrates this well. A grinning man in a doctor's office is covered in provocative tattoos: a Stalin portrait on his chest and a pin-up style nude woman on his belly (Sakhaltuiev, 1990). Pointing to the latter, he complains: 'Could you please take this obscenity out because it's embarrassing in front of my grandchildren?'. The satire lies in the contradiction—he expresses shame over nudity while proudly displaying a symbol of authoritarian violence. This ironic juxtaposition highlights the absurdity of performative morality. Rather than celebrate eroticism, the cartoon turns it into a critical lens through which contradictions of late Soviet discourse are revealed: symbolic violence is naturalised, while nudity—less harmful—remains a source of moral discomfort. *Perets'* thus did not satirise sex itself but the discomfort and hypocrisy surrounding it. Its humour reflected collective unease rather than individual desire.

In short, *Perets'* held up a mirror to social embarrassment, while *Krokodil* provoked, tested, and played with cultural boundaries. Where the former kept its distance, the latter embraced ambiguity and confrontation—two contrasting strategies for negotiating the shifting norms of late Soviet sexual culture.

Conclusion

By the end of the Soviet era, visual satire had become an unlikely but powerful platform for expressing the so-called sexual revolution of Perestroika. As *glasnost* relaxed restrictions on taboo topics, cartoons capitalised on this change, introducing sexual themes into official humour through metaphors of scarcity, absurdity, and commodification. What began as jokes about prostitution quickly evolved into a broader visual discourse, where women's bodies symbolised everything from consumer desire to ideological collapse. The female figure, often eroticised, was reimagined as a representation of systemic dysfunction.

However, this apparent liberation did not result in a more equitable or inclusive portrayal of sexual relationships and gender roles. Sexual humour in satire often reinforced patriarchal norms while masquerading as subversive or playful. Women were rarely depicted as subjects of desire; more often, they were objects to be consumed, laughed at, or exchanged. Their sexualisation became a shorthand not only for gendered desire but also for broader frustrations with late Soviet political and economic collapse. Eroticised female bodies served as visual metaphors for scarcity, inflation, and the state's unfulfilled promises, turning sexuality into a site of displaced critique. In this sense, objectification was tolerated and woven into the fabric of satire's visual and rhetorical elements.

Editors played a crucial role in shaping how this content was framed and received. Strategic elements—such as recurring sections, ironic disclaimers, and juxtaposition with cultural critique—helped guide interpretation. In this dual role, erotic humour emerged as both a marketable asset and a political statement, particularly as publications adapted to new economic models of self-financing.

Importantly, the sexualisation in satire wasn't invented from scratch. It drew legitimacy from well-established sources: the Western tradition of erotic visual art and the long-standing culture of male-dominated anecdotal humour. These references lent a veneer of familiarity and sophistication, shielding cartoons from accusations of vulgarity. Readers were encouraged to see these images not just as jokes, but as echoes of artistic heritage or extensions of private, masculine storytelling.

Ultimately, the so-called sexual revolution in late Soviet satire was less a cultural rupture than a reconfiguration of established gender scripts through new visual codes. While satire embraced bolder imagery and public discussion of sexuality, it rarely subverted patriarchal logic. On the contrary, sexualised humour repackaged longstanding gender hierarchies as irony, entertainment, or symbolic critique. Rather than challenging norms, it made them more palatable and pervasive, facilitating their

survival into the post-Soviet media landscape. What was once confined to kitchen jokes or innuendo became formalised in mass culture, shaping the tone and tropes of future representations. Thus, instead of disrupting stereotypes, Perestroika-era visual satire largely reaffirmed them—cloaked in humour but grounded in familiar asymmetries of power and visibility.

Acknowledgements

This research was supported by the German Research Foundation (DFG) under the Walter Benjamin Programme, project number 531349521.

Competing Interests

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

References

Astapova, A 2020 Soviet Meta-Jokes: Tradition and Continuity. *The European Journal of Humour Research*, 8(3): 60–82. https://doi.org/10.7592/EJHR2020.8.3.Astapova

Barthes, R 1972 *Mythologies*. New York: Hill and Wang.

Bell, N 2015 *We Are Not Amused: Failed Humor in Interaction*. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.

Berger, J 1972 *Ways of Seeing*. London: BBC and Penguin Books.

Claro, M 2023 A 'Sexual Revolution' without Effective Contraception: Youth Sexuality, the Gender Gap and Changing Transitions to Adulthood in Russia (1970s–1990s). *Nordost-Archiv: Zeitschrift für Regionalgeschichte*, 29: 2020.

Crawford, M 2000 *Only Joking: Gender and Humor*. In: Holmes, J (ed.) *Gendered Speech in Social Context*. Auckland: Victoria University Press. pp. 149–167.

Davies, C 2007 Humour and Protest: Jokes under Communism. *International Review of Social History*, 52: 291–305.

Dodolev, E 1986 Belyi tanets [White Dance]. *Moskovskii Komsomolets*, 21 November. Republished in ed_glezin. *LiveJournal*, 1 December 2022. Available at: https://ed-glezin.livejournal.com/1163658.html [Last Accessed: 28 May 2025].

Drukman, R 1991 Karikatura. *Krokodil*, 24: 11. https://archive.org/details/Krokodil1924-1989/crocodile_1991_24.pdf [Last accessed: 28th August 2025].

Gradskova, Y, Kondakov, A and **Shevtsova, M** 2020. Post-socialist Revolutions of Intimacy: An Introduction. *Sexuality and Culture*, 24: 359–370. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-020-09706-8

Gumperz, J 1992 Contextualization and Understanding. In: Duranti, A and Goodwin, C (eds.) *Rethinking Context: Language as an Interactive Phenomenon*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 229–252.

Hay, J 2000 Functions of Humor in the Conversations of Men and Women. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 32(6): 709–742. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0378-2166(99)00069-7

Heldman, C 2013 *The Sexy Lie: Caroline Heldman at TEDxYouth@SanDiego* [video]. 21 January. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kMS4VJKekW8 [Last Accessed 28 May 2025].

Heldman, C, Frankel, L L and **Holmes, J** 2016 Hot, Black Leather, Whip: The (De)Evolution of Female Protagonists in Action Cinema, 1960–2014. *Social Sciences*, 5(3): 23.

Karykatura 1990 *Perets'*, 6: 12.

Klumbytė, N 2022 *Authoritarian Laughter: Political Humour and Soviet Dystopia in Lithuania*. Cornell University Press. http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctv29sfzrk [Last Accessed: 5 February 2025].

Kon, I 2005 *The Sexual Revolution in Russia: From Lenin to Putin*. New York: Free Press.

Kononov, D 1991 Karikatura. *Krokodil*, 6: 11. https://archive.org/details/Krokodil1924-1989/crocodile_1991_06.pdf [Last accessed: 28th August 2025].

KoopEROtiv dlia uzkogo kruga 1990 Karikatura. *Krokodil*, 1: 11. https://archive.org/details/Krokodil1924-1989/crocodile_1991_01.pdf [Last accessed: 28th August 2025].

M.V. 1989 Karikatura. *Perets'*, 15: 5.

Malov, N 1990 Karikatura. *Krokodil*, 29: 7. https://publ.lib.ru/ARCHIVES/K/''Krokodil''_(jurnal)/%ca%f0%ee%ea%ee%e4%e8%eb,%201990,%20%b929.pdf [Last accessed: 28th August 2025].

Malov, N 1990a Karikatura. *Krokodil*, 31: 11. https://publ.lib.ru/ARCHIVES/K/''Krokodil''_(jurnal)/%ca%f0%ee%ea%ee%e4%e8%eb,%201990,%20%b931.pdf [Last accessed: 28th August 2025].

Marshall, B 1992 Images of Women in Soviet Jokes and Anecdotes. *Journal of Popular Culture*, 26(2): 117–124.

Meghana, P and **Vijaya, R** 2020 Gendered Stereotypes and Humor: A Discourse Analysis. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention*, 9(3): 48–53.

Mochalov, V and **Stepanov, Yu** 1990 Karikatura. *Krokodil*, 23: 11. https://publ.lib.ru/ARCHIVES/K/''Krokodil''_(jurnal)/%ca%f0%ee%ea%ee%e4%e8%eb,%201990,%20%b923.pdf [Last accessed: 28th August 2025].

Mokhov, V 1989 Karikatura. *Krokodil*, 21: 11. https://publ.lib.ru/ARCHIVES/K/''Krokodil''_(jurnal)/%ca%f0%ee%ea%ee%e4%e8%eb,%201989,%20%b921.pdf [Last accessed: 28th August 2025].

Mulvey, L 1975 Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema. *Screen*, 16(3): 6–18. https://doi.org/10.1093/screen/16.3.6

Nasyrov, L and **Zelenchenko, T** 1991 Konkurs krasoty 'Miss ZhBK-7'. *Krokodil*, 24: 1. https://archive.org/details/Krokodil1924-1989/crocodile_1991_24.pdf [Last accessed: 28th August 2025].

Novikov, I and **Vaisbord, M** 1990 Karikatura. *Krokodil*, 25: 11. https://publ.lib.ru/ARCHIVES/K/''Krokodil''_(jurnal)/%ca%f0%ee%ea%ee%e4%e8%eb,%201990,%20%b925.pdf [Last accessed: 28th August 2025].

Novikov, I and **Zelenchenko, T** 1990 Karikatura. *Krokodil*, 23: 11. https://publ.lib.ru/ARCHIVES/K/''Krokodil''_(jurnal)/%ca%f0%ee%ea%ee%e4%e8%eb,%201990,%20%b923.pdf [Last accessed: 28th August 2025].

Novikov, N 1989 Karikatura. *Krokodil*, 10: 11. https://publ.lib.ru/ARCHIVES/K/''Krokodil''_(jurnal)/%ca%f0%ee%ea%ee%e4%e8%eb,%201989,%20%b909.pdf [Last accessed: 28th August 2025].

Nussbaum, M C 1995 Objectification. *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, 24(4): 249–291. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1088-4963.1995.tb00032.x

Panofsky, E 1939 *Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Pourovskij, U 1989 Nikto ne hotel otstavat' ili 'Da zdravstvuet svoboda!'. *Krokodil*, 22: 4–5. https://publ.lib.ru/ARCHIVES/K/"Krokodil"_(jurnal)/%ca%f0%ee%ea%ee%e4%e8%eb,%201989,%20%b922.pdf [Last accessed: 28th August 2025].

Pro eto 1990 Karikatura. *Krokodil*, 1: 10. https://publ.lib.ru/ARCHIVES/K/"Krokodil"_(jurnal)/%ca%f0%ee%ea%ee%e4%e8%eb,%201990,%20%b901.pdf [Last accessed: 28th August 2025].

Ries, N 1997 *Russian Talk: Culture and Conversation during Perestroika*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Rogers, A 2018 The Normalisation of Sexist Humour in Popular Media. *Humour and Discourse in Contemporary Culture*, 12(2): 141–159.

Sakhaltuiev, R 1989 Karykatura. *Perets'*, 13: 2.

Sakhaltuiev, R 1990 Karykatura. *Perets'*, 4: 8.

Shifman, L and **Lemish, D** 2010 Between feminism and fun(ny)mism: Analysing gender in popular internet humour. *Information, Communication & Society*, 13(6): 870–891. https://doi.org/10.1080/13691180903490560

Sivitskii, A, Timyanskii, Yu and **Lososinov, I** 1990 Druzhestkii sharzh na Klaru Novikovu. *Krokodil*, 15: 15.

Smirnov, P 1988 Ochen' golyi ekran. *Krokodil*, 36: 10–11. https://publ.lib.ru/ARCHIVES/K/"Krokodil"_(jurnal)/%ca%f0%ee%ea%ee%e4%e8%eb,%201988,%20%b936.pdf [Last accessed: 28th August 2025].

Smirnov, P 1989 Otrazhenie lyubvi v zerkale ekrana: razmyshleniya nad chitatelskimi pis'mami posle feĭletona 'Ochen' golyĭ ekran'. *Krokodil*, 23: 8. https://publ.lib.ru/ARCHIVES/K/"Krokodil"_(jurnal)/%ca%f0%ee%ea%ee%e4%e8%eb,%201989,%20%b923.pdf [Last accessed: 28th August 2025].

Thomae, M and **Pina, A** 2015 Sexist Humor and Rape Proclivity: Examining the Roles of Benevolent and Hostile Sexism. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 30(5): 758–772. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801216654017

Tiggemann, M and **Slater, A** 2001 A Test of Objectification Theory in Former Dancers and Non-Dancers. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 25(1): 57–64. https://doi.org/10.1111/1471-6402.00007

Tsakona, V 2009 Language and Image Interaction in Cartoons: Towards a Multimodal Theory of Humor. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 41(6): 1171–1188. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2008.12.003

Uborevich-Borovskii, V and **Lugovkin, V** 1990 Karikatura. *Krokodil*, 10: 11. https://publ.lib.ru/ARCHIVES/K/"Krokodil"_(jurnal)/%ca%f0%ee%ea%ee%e4%e8%eb,%201990,%20%b910.pdf [Last accessed: 28th August 2025].

Weaver, S, Mora, R A and **Morgan, K** 2016 Gender and Humour: Examining Discourses of Hegemony and Resistance. *Social Semiotics*, 26(3): 227–233. https://doi.org/10.1080/10350330.2015.1134820

Yeremieieva, K 2018 *Bity satyru: zhurnal 'Perets''* v *sotsiokul'turnomu seredovyshchi Radians'koi Ukrayiny*. Kharkiv: Rarytety Ukraïny.

Yurchak, A 2006 *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Zelinskyi, V 1975 Karikatura. *Perets'*, 3: 1.

Zuev, V 1990 Karikatura. *Krokodil*, 19: 11. https://publ.lib.ru/ARCHIVES/K/"Krokodil"_(jurnal)/%ca%f0%ee%ea%ee%e4%e8%eb,%201990,%20%b919.pdf [Last accessed: 28th August 2025].