

LUDMILLA A'BECKETT

## THE STANCE OF RUSSIAN MASS MEDIA ON THE UKRAINIAN ORANGE REVOLUTION

### Introduction

At the end of 2004, Ukraine came to the center of the world's attention. A series of political protests flared up throughout the country in response to an attempt by the ruling elite to rig presidential elections and to their alleged abuse of power. Eventually, the charismatic opposition leader Victor Yushchenko<sup>1</sup> with the support of his ally Yulia Tymoshenko won the run-off and became the third legitimate President of independent Ukraine. The events that led Yushchenko to his victory became known as the peaceful Orange Revolution. Yushchenko's supporters chose orange ribbons as a sign of their affiliation with the political block Yushchenko–Tymoshenko, often referred to as the Orange Coalition.

Russian political circles largely condemned the Orange Revolution. Russian leaders openly supported Victor Yanukovich, the Ukrainian Prime Minister at the time and an anticipated successor of the ruling President Leonid Kuchma. The Russian President Vladimir Putin was quick to congratulate Yanukovich on his victory despite claims made by international observers that the results were rigged. The Russian mass media was reluctant to acknowledge that the Orange Revolution defended the right of the majority of voters who were deprived of their choice being recognized. Russian public discourse focused on the “embarrassing” actions of supporters of the Orange Revolution and placed in the background or concealed positive aspects of the movement.

Russian media still has a significant influence on the shaping of the Ukrainian political and social landscape. On the one hand, a large proportion of the Ukrainian population uses the Russian language for day-to-day communication and is, therefore, highly susceptible to opinions presented in its first language. On the other hand, Russians and those from the brother nations<sup>2</sup> of the former USSR often access information about former Soviet

---

1. I use Russian versions of names for transliteration.

2 The term *brothers – Slavic brothers* is widely used in the Russian mass media. The following publications can be considered: “Pochemu raspalsia Sovetskii Soiuz?” [“Why Did the Soviet Union Collapse?”], *Argumenty i fakty*, no. 49 (2001); “Voprosy s gazovym dushkom” [“Questions with Gas Tinge”], *ibid.*, no. 51 (2005); “Brat'ia po razumu: Saakashvili poteshil Yushchenko” [“Spiritual Brotherhood: Saakashvili Amused Yushchenko”], *ibid.*,

Republics from Russian sources because products of Russian mass media are in broad circulation. As a consequence, the attitude of Russian mass media toward events in Ukraine has influenced the perceptions of an audience that was not able to access alternative sources of information. At the same time, many Ukrainians who participated in Presidential elections and saw Russian reports on the situation in their country felt betrayed and expressed resentment.

*Zaimites' soboi! Ob'iasnite, rossiiane, zachem vy lezete so svoim ustavom v ukrainskij monastyr'. Ia uzh ne govoriu pro potoki propandy, livsheisia s vashix gosudarstvennyx kanalov. Takoe oshchushchenie, chto v Rossii drugix problem ne ostalos'.*

[Mind your own business! You Russians, explain why do you poke your nose in Ukrainian people's business? [lit. monastery – L.A.] I do not mention the streams of propaganda that have been poured through your national channels. You try to make the impression that in Russia, problems do not exist.]<sup>3</sup>

The above statement prompted an investigation of the “streams of propaganda” in Russian mass media. However, the collection of evidence on the propaganda campaign has been anything but simple. Russian public discourse does not adhere to the practice of black and white labeling that was a widespread technique used by the Soviet press.<sup>4</sup> In the past, if Soviet newspapers were assigned to destroy a reputation they would use dysphemisms (verbal resources we have for being offensive<sup>5</sup>) such as *vonyuchaia padal'* (stinking carrion/animal corpses), *beshenye sobaki* (mad dogs), *razdavit' poganuyu gadinu* (to squash repulsive reptiles/vermin), *rasstrel'iat' kak poganyh psov* (to shoot like vile/filthy dogs).<sup>6</sup> Hudson observes that the Russians “introduced a new, crude and repulsive ideological vocabulary with which to abuse their enemies.”<sup>7</sup> A step away from the highest

---

no. 33 (2005); “Komu nuzhna kashtanovaia revolyutsiya?” [“Who Needs the Chestnut Revolution?”], *ibid.*, no. 48 (2004); “Denezhnoe nedovol'stvo voennosluzhashchih” [“Monetary Dissatisfaction of the Military Personnel”], *ibid.*, no. 8 (2005).

3. “Zaimites' soboi!” [“Mind Your Own Business!”], *ibid.*, no. 48 (2004).

4. V. G. Kostomarov and N. D. Burvikova, *Starye mehi i molodoe vino* (St. Petersburg: Zlatoust, 2001).

5. K. Burrige, *Blooming English* (Sydney: ABC, 2002), p. 221.

6. From a collection of expressions by Vyshinsky (a prosecutor on the trial of Rykov, Bukharin and their associates). Cited from the Internet newspaper *Eto interesno* at: [www.etointeresno.com](http://www.etointeresno.com) (Febr. 20, 2003).

7. K. Hudson, *The Dictionary of Diseased English* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1997), p. xv.

point of negative evaluation and condemnation were clichés of the Soviet style of disapproval such as *shatkoe mirovozzrenie* (slippery worldview), *obshchestvennaia i lichnostnaia degradatsiia* (social and personal degradation), *meshchanstvo* (philistinism), *uzkii krugozor* (narrow mindedness), *otsutstvie duhovnosti* (absence of spirituality).<sup>8</sup> Objects of sympathy or contempt could be clearly identified. The language of Soviet newspapers carried on social commands such as “accept” or “reject and shun.”

The Russian mass media learned a lesson from the Soviet past: extremely intense language used for the purpose of convincing someone of a certain position has the opposite effect on the receiver and creates a “boomerang effect.”<sup>9</sup> However, the Russian press exploited the “boomerang effect” when they published letters from supporters of the Orange Revolution. In the letter above the author used abusive words like *torgovat’ mordoi* (sell their snouts) and vernacular, emotionally-charged expressions that could hardly please the general public. A range of viewpoints that form a rich continuum delimited by the explicit negative and positive peaks of evaluation can be found in Russian public discourse that represent political pluralism. In the following example two conflicting opinions have been expressed in a single statement; democrats welcome the Orange Revolution, but a newspaper reader in his letter condemns both Russian democrats and the Orange Revolution.

*Prochital v AiF, chto partiia Hakamady vybrala svoim partiinym tsvetom oranzhevyi. Nemtsov naniatsia v usluzhenie prezidentu Ukrainy Yushchenko. . . . Ob’iasnite, pochemu vse nashi ‘demokraty’ druzhno legli pod Zapad – oni chto, hotiat i zdes’ ustroit’ tsvetnuiu revolyutsiiu?*

[I have read in *AiF* [a Russian newspaper – L.A.] that the party of Hakamada [a right wing party – L.A.] chose orange as their party color. Nemtsov [a right-wing politician – L.A.] became employed as a serviceman by the President of Ukraine, Yushchenko. . . . Explain to me, why do all our “democrats” unanimously give blowjobs to the West – do they really want to organize a Colored Revolution here?]<sup>10</sup>

8. These examples were collected from *Komsomol’skaia pravda*, June 17, 1977.

9. J. W. Bowers, “Some Correlates of Language Intensity,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, no. 50 (1964), pp. 415-20; J. W. Bowers and M. M. Osborn, “Attitudinal Effects of Selected Types of Concluding Metaphors in Persuasive Speeches,” *Speech Monographs*, no. 33 (1966), pp. 147-55. See also J. S. Mio, “Metaphor, Politics, and Persuasion,” in J. F. Mio and A. N. Katz, eds., *Metaphor: Implications and Applications* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1996), pp. 127-47.

10. Citation came from a reader’s letter: “Pochemu demokraty pokrasilis’ v oranzhevyi?” [“Why Did Democrats Paint Themselves in Orange?”], *Argumenty i fakty*, no. 5 (2004).

In the example above the negative opinion subsumes the positive and, therefore, the negative prevails. Russian media cultivated the belief that the Orange Revolution was some sort of mistake and a fearful event. This belief is embodied in the statement below.

*Nam ne nuzhny ni "oranzhevye", ni "rozovye" revoliutsii. . . . Rossii nuzhna revoliutsiia npravstvennaia..*

[We need neither "Orange," nor "Pink" Revolution. . . . Russia needs a moral revolution.]<sup>11</sup>

Unflattering opinions were supported by a set of myths. Charteris-Black has defined the political myth as a tool of control that enables a social group to justify its superior position and denigrate its opponents or a group that is outside their scope of interest.<sup>12</sup> I have examined newspaper texts from *Komsomol'skaia pravda*<sup>13</sup> and *Argumenty i fakty*<sup>14</sup> that present facts and opinions on the Orange Revolution and the personality of its leaders. The genre of publications varied: editorials, letters of opinion, commentators' reports, interviews, analytical articles and jokes regularly collected by both newspapers. I have also taken into account NTV news coverage.<sup>15</sup> I have examined predominantly the presentation of events, contemporary and subsequent, to the Orange Revolution (from late 2004 to the first half of 2005) before the emerging conflict within the Orange coalition.<sup>16</sup> I have attempted to reconstruct Russian political myths about the situation in Ukraine, the Orange Revolution, and its leaders. A political myth often creates a convenient contrast between "us" and "others." One of the functions of Russian political myths about Ukraine was to promote Russian national interests; to present a contrast between "suffering" in Ukraine and stability in Russia, and opposition between the candidate who is willing to strengthen relations with Russia and the candidate who is on the payroll from the West.

---

11. "Odichanie" ["Running Wild"], *ibid.*, no. 19 (2005).

12. J. Charteris-Black, *Politicians and Rhetoric* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 22-23.

13. *Komsomol'skaia pravda* [lit. komsomol's truth], is a popular Russian daily publication.

14. *Argumenty i fakty* is a popular Russian weekly publication.

15. NTV is an independent Russian media corporation selected for Russian news bulletin broadcast in Australia.

16. In September 2005, Yulia Timoshenko's team left the government and the political crisis in Ukraine emerged.

The myths often took the form of topics inconsistent with the facts, and overstatements, provocative comparisons and insinuations. I have paid special attention to titles and headlines because they are a manifestation of beliefs and scripts in an embryonic form. I have analyzed “mininarratives” unfolded through the use of various tropes. I have investigated the stock of *topoi*, motives and stories which serve the purpose of framing, validating or legitimating opinions and actions<sup>17</sup> in the domain of the Russia-Ukraine relationship. I have tried to speculate on motivations behind a linguistic choice made.<sup>18</sup> The linguistic choices in this domain embody soft persuasion – “velvet gloves.”<sup>19</sup> The technique can be observed in a heterogeneous public discourse, which is perceived as free and open. The velvet gloves create a dichotomy with the “iron hand”<sup>20</sup> of authoritatively imposed dogmas.<sup>21</sup> The illusion of free flow of ideas and arguments in modern Russian discourse can be cherished only if it is compared with the iron hand of the Soviet past.

### **The myth of the revolutionary color**

The analysis of beliefs concerning the color orange – the symbol of the Ukrainian revolution – provides an example of the deprecating and belittling of efforts made by Ukrainians to build a democratic society. Media often uses the word “orange” as a metonym for the events and people involved in the Ukrainian revolution. Gibbs argues the metonymic effect takes place when people take one well-understood or easily perceived aspect of something to represent or stand for the thing as a whole.<sup>22</sup> The metonymy allows puns to be created and misleading insinuations to be made based on pseudo-elucidation of the word. A number of themes were developed in the Russian public discourse in relation to the significance and implications of the use of the color orange. They include the myth of the crucial impact of the color as a competitive advantage in a political environment, creating negative associations through the practice of placing orange in a disapproving context, coining puns based on ambiguity of color terms, and elaborating on the framework of the DISEASE metaphor: *orange plague*,

---

17. J. Blommaert and J. Verschueren, *Debating Diversity: Analysing the Discourse of Tolerance* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), p. 25.

18. See notions of variability, negotiability and adaptability in J. Verschueren, *Understanding Pragmatics* (London: Edward Arnold and New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1999).

19. The terms “velvet glove” and “iron hand” were introduced by Kate Burridge in her analysis of linguistic behavior in K. Burridge, *Weeds in the Garden of Words* (Sydney: ABC, 2004), pp. 71-74.

20. *Ibid.*

21. Blommaert and Verschueren, *Debating Diversity*, pp. 15-20.

22. Raymond W. Gibbs Jr., *The Poetics of Mind: Figurative Thought, Language and Understanding* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1994), p. 320.

*virus, infection*. In this section, I investigate the myth of the significance of the use of the color orange.

An independent source, the free online encyclopedia Wikipedia comments on the experience of the Orange Revolution and explains the choice of its symbols:

Ukraine's "Orange Revolution" of 2004-2005 was a series of protests and political events that took place throughout the country in response to allegations of massive corruption, voter intimidation and direct electoral fraud during the 2004 Ukrainian presidential election... Orange was adopted by the protesters as the official color of the movement since it was the election campaign color of the main opposition candidate, Viktor Yushchenko. The symbol of solidarity with Yushchenko's movement in Ukraine was an orange ribbon or a flag bearing the "Tak! Yushchenko" ("Yes! Yushchenko") slogan. . . . Ribbons are common symbols of non-violent protest.<sup>23</sup>

Three points are relevant for filtering information from Russian sources. First, the Orange Revolution was a response to a violation of the rules of elections and the abuse of power by the politicians in charge. Second, orange was adopted by the protesters because it was the election campaign color of the main opposition candidate, Viktor Yushchenko. The color does not seem to signify anything apart from support for the opposition leader. Third, supporters of Yushchenko were engaged in non-violent protest only. All three positions are commonly misrepresented by the Russian mass media.

The "velvet glove" technique was evident in the article "Kak zakrashivaiut mozgi izbirateliu?" ("How to Color [brainwash – L.A.] the Opinions of Voters?") which presented Yushchenko's victory as a coincidence, a clever implementation of election strategy based on the effect of the color orange and its magic ability to arouse a crowd. The topic seemed to be politically neutral – the article was just an explanation of how colors influenced people's behavior. On the surface, the Ukrainian case was selected as one among many other "politically colored" events. The author emphasized solidarity with readers of the article and the Ukrainians among them through the use of the pronoun "us"/"our" which formed an opposition with "them": the manipulative politicians. However, despite speculations from various human behavior experts on colors and their effects, the single target of accusation in manipulation appeared to be Yushchenko who exploited the hidden potentials of "color psychotherapy" better than his op-

---

23. The material on the Orange Revolution can be accessed at: [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orange\\_Revolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orange_Revolution) (Accessed: Jan. 9, 2006).

ponent. Pragmatic inferences from the text lead to the conclusion that Yanukovich lost the election mainly because he did not attempt to play Machiavellian games with the Ukrainian people.

*Pochemu ukrainskaia revolyutsiia – oranzhevaia, natsisty – korichnevye, a kraski mirotvortsev – golubye? Okazyvaetsia politiki manipuliuiut nashim soznaniem s pomoshch'iu psihoterapii tsveta. V 2004 g. oppozitsiia na Ukraine pobedila ne tol'ko blagodaria zapadnym sponzoram i privlekatel'nym lozungam. "Storonniki Yushchenko udachno ispol'zovali oranzhevyj tsvet v simbolike kampanii, – schitaet doktor biologicheskikh nauk, direktor moskovskogo tsentra "Videokologiya" Vasily Philin. – Oranzhevyi – sil'nyi razdrzhitel', on vzbuzhdayet tolpu. Oranzhevye lentochki i flagi vidny izdaleka."*

[Why are the Ukrainian revolution orange, the Nazi brown and the helmets of peacekeepers blue? It appears that politicians manipulate our minds through color psychotherapy. In 2004, the Ukrainian opposition won not because of foreign sponsors and attractive slogans only. Vasily Philin, PhD Biological Sciences, Director of the Moscow center The Ecology of Vision, argues that “Yushchenko’s associates successfully used the color orange as a symbol of their campaign. Orange is a powerful agitator, it excites the crowd. Orange ribbons and flags can be seen from a distance.”]<sup>24</sup>

The publication completely ignores the issues of massive corruption, fraud, voter intimidation and the use of orange in non-violent protests. Off-hand comments on “foreign aid” and “populist slogans” provoke mistrust of Yushchenko. A number of “experts” were summoned to reinforce the belief that the color orange had miraculous powers to conceal political and social problems that led to the Ukrainian Orange Revolution. According to scientists from the Ognev Center of Practical Psychology, the color orange hypnotizes and grips the mind. Orange can be compared to drugs as it creates false happiness and gaiety that may later result in head spin and fatigue. Gleb Pavlovsky, a political image-maker argues that Yanukovich should not have used blue in his campaign because it is a very peaceful, tranquil and romantic color that cannot influence the crowd.

Investigation will reveal that the “impartial analysis” of the use of color by politicians was actually a gimmick used to damage the reputation of Yushchenko. For instance, the publication does not explore the use of the color blue by politicians in a global context. The fact that many victorious

---

24. “Kak zakrashivaiut mozgi izbirateliu?” [“How to Color the Opinions of Voters?”], *Argumenty i fakty*, no. 17 (2005).

political campaigns have been linked to blue-colored symbols was concealed from Russian readers. The 1994 political success of the former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi was attributed to an active use of the color blue among all other strategies. Semino and Masci observe:

When it came to finding a label for party members and activities, Berlusconi rejected the most obvious possibilities (such as *Forzitaliani* or *Forzani*) and opted instead for *gli azzurri* ('the blues') – the expression used to refer to the members of the Italian football team, who traditionally wear blue shirts.<sup>25</sup>

The Australian Liberal Party also uses blue as its symbol, which did not prevent them from winning four consecutive elections. Unfortunately, not all Russian readers were able to refer to global examples to question Gleb Pavlovsky's explanation of the reasons for Yanukovich's setback. Pavlovsky suggested that certain Russian political parties such as *Nash Dom – Rossiia* (Our Home – Russia) successfully used the color blue because it represents stability whereas orange is similar to red which is good for fights. Pavlovsky's suggestion could lead to the weird conclusion that there are no political struggles in Australia and Italy. Success in the political scene often changes our perception of the competitive advantages of a rival group of politicians.

The experts' bias is also evident if one checks the consistency of the explanation of the effect of color in other publications on the topic. Articles from the same newspaper on color therapy provide diverse and sometimes conflicting descriptions on the consequences of the application of those colors.<sup>26</sup> According to household recommendations in *Argumenty i fakty*, orange is good for the lungs and respiratory system, for digestion and for the appetite; yellow improves the nervous system and intelligence; peach is good for rejuvenation. It is worthwhile noting that Yushchenko's supporters have apparently never received any direction on what is regarded as a "true" orange and "revolutionary" color. Pictures of Yushchenko's followers reveal various shades and intensities of color including bright yellow, peach, melon, carrot and ginger. Consequently, the inference can be drawn that in his "Machiavellian" plan, Yushchenko attempted to improve and

---

25. E. Semino and M. Masci, "Politics is Football: Metaphor in the Discourse of Silvio Berlusconi in Italy," *Discourse and Society*, 7, no. 2 (1996), p. 247.

26. My description of the effects of colors is a summary of the following publications: "Lechites' tsvetom" ["Get Cured by Color"], *Argumenty i fakty*, no. 41 (2001); "Tselebnaia raduga po retseptu" ["Prescription for the Healing Rainbow"], *ibid.*, no. 45 (2004); "Tsvet v dome" ["Color in Your House"], *ibid.*, no. 18 (2004); "Dacha dlia avgustovskogo ot-pusknika" ["A Summer House for a Holiday Maker in August"], *ibid.*, no. 23 (2005).

rejuvenate the respiratory systems, appetites and mental health of his electorate. However, blue is also reported to be good for the lungs and respiratory system. It cures mental illness and calms the nerves. One may suggest that subconsciously Yanukovich was trying to implement the opponent's strategy to appeal to his voters. Even the effects of overdoses of orange and blue are very similar: blue should be used carefully as it has an oppressive effect on people suffering from nervous tension. *How to color the opinions of voters?* stated that orange in large doses also leads to fatigue. The only difference between the effects of blue and orange is that blue suppresses appetite whereas orange does the opposite. Nevertheless, orange and blue complement each other.<sup>27</sup> (It is nearly a panegyric to the Ukrainian national flag, which consists of yellow and blue stripes.) The summary of color psychotherapy implies that Yanukovich was rejected because his campaign color suppressed peoples' appetite (it was good for fat people only), was too tranquil and romantic, and failed to rejuvenate Ukrainians and improve their brainpower. This picture is not consistent because green is described as being tranquil and refreshing, much like blue; however, many aggressive terrorist groups adopt the color in their symbols.

The article "How to Color the Opinion of Voters?" is an example of a "soft," persuasive technique that aims to vilify a public figure and his actions. This can be achieved through the unfolding of a casual topic, building solidarity with readers and revealing some intriguing information to them but at the same time filtering details and facts that discredit the real subject of the "unprejudiced" discourse. The article claims it discloses manipulative techniques used by politicians but in fact it displays the tools of brainwashing in action.

#### **"Orange disease" in the family of Post-Soviet countries and "orange contagion" in the Russian public discourse**

Another rhetorical device of the Russian mass media is the frequent use of the metaphoric cliché *oranzhevaia chuma* – "Orange Plague." According to *The St. Petersburg Times*,<sup>28</sup> the Russian audience became aware of the term "Orange Plague" after a concert called *Petersky Maidan* "St. Petersburg's Maidan" (*maidan* is Ukrainian for "square," or "market place"), featuring top Russian and Ukrainian bands, was cancelled for political reasons. The concert's poster had the words *Bei oranzhevuiu chumu!* "Beat the Orange Plague" written over it in white paint. The linguistic potential of the term "Orange Plague" is at least two-fold: first, it gives rise to various

---

27. "Dacha dlia avgustovskogo otpusknika."

28. The article "Orange Plague Killed the Concert" from *The St. Petersburg Times*, no. 23 (2005) can be accessed at: [www.sptimes.ru/story/3155](http://www.sptimes.ru/story/3155); accessed: Jan. 14, 2006.

mininarratives or scenarios associated with the source domain DISEASE,<sup>29</sup> second, the cliché is linked in memory with other clichés evoking cultural scripts – variations of “colored plagues” known in Russia – the “red plague” of the Bolsheviks and the “brown plague” of the Nazis.

Parallels between the uprising of opposition in Ukraine, allegedly promoting the ideology of Ukrainian nationalism, and the “red plague” of Bolshevism, are strengthened through the use of a pun based on the ambiguity of the word *krasnet* ‘to turn red.’ Two meanings of the word are blended: “to be ashamed of something” and “to become sympathetic to the ideals of the Bolsheviks” (to adhere to principles of collectivization, expropriation, etc).

*Predsedatel' Komiteta Soveta Federatsii po mezhdunarodnym delam: "Oranzhevaia revoliutsiia stremitel'no krasneet."*

[The Chair of the Committee on the International Affairs in the Federation Council: “The Orange Revolution is rapidly turning red.”]<sup>30</sup>

This statement is a compact way of saying that the Orange Revolution is doing something shameful and at the same time, is very similar to the Bolshevik revolution in its use of the crowd effect, violent storming of state buildings and expropriation of private property.

Moreover, the “orange plague” metaphor is a linguistic instantiation of the conceptual metaphor DISEASE. Fairclough highlights the effect of the DISEASE metaphor in an ideological context:

The metaphorical representation of social problems as disease . . . is extremely common. . . . It incorporates a metaphor for disease itself, as a vague, subhuman and unthinking force. . . . The ideological significance of disease metaphors is that they tend to take dominant interests of society as a whole, and construe expressions of non-dominant interests (strikes, demonstrations, “riots”) as undermining (the health of) society *per se*.<sup>31</sup>

Although the initial context of “beat the orange plague” is reminiscent of Soviet-style dysphemisms such as “squash repulsive reptiles,” in the published press the intensity of the expression “orange plague” was often

29. See the terms “mininarratives” and “metaphor scenarios” in A. Mussolff, “Metaphor Scenarios in Public Discourse,” *Metaphor and Symbol*, 21, no. 1 (2006), pp. 23-38.

30. “Denezhnoe nedovol'stvo voennosluzhashchih.”

31. N. Fairclough, *N. Language and Power* (London, New York: Longman, 1989), p. 120.

mitigated. It was used in ironic or quasi-ironic contexts. “Orange plague” did not so much refer to scenes of suffering in Ukraine but evoked the Orange Revolution as a secondary referent, for example, a model that other regions were trying to adopt in their political games. The strong negative connotation of the word “plague” is attached to its concept: a contagious disease that brings death to regions and suffering to a large number of people and can sweep rapidly across vast areas and populations.<sup>32</sup> In a figurative sense “plague” is a disaster on a large scale that can be transmitted through virus-like agents and cause internal decay or corruption represented by the metaphor *zaraza* (infection). The passing on of the infection (sometimes through the “velvet virus,” other times through “colored” or “orange virus”) has been discussed in a number of publications.<sup>33</sup> These publications usually activate memories of people’s revolutions in Serbia and Georgia that passed on the “virus” to Ukraine. The evaluation of these events in such publications is ambivalent. The US was identified as a major player in the “colored” or “velvet” revolutions and therefore the people’s power was played down. An accusation in adopting for propaganda purposes the image of velvet revolution, peoples’ peaceful protests in Czechoslovakia in 1980, can be inferred. Any uprising of opposition in Kirgizia, Moldova, Azerbaijan and Belarus has been linked to the “orange plague.” The metaphor scenario of “actions of hygienists” and “imposition of the sanitary norms” was reproduced in the Russian public discourse as an extension of the source domain DISEASE.

*Nado pomoch’ brat’iam-slavianam izbavit’sia ot ‘oranzhevoi chumy’.*

[We must help our Slavic brothers to get rid of the “orange plague.”]<sup>34</sup>

---

32. See W. Aichinger, “St. Antony Abbot, the Fire and the Pig: Metaphorisation of Disease, Extension of Meaning in the Middle Ages,” in Z. Maalej, ed., *Metaphor, Cognition and Culture* (Manouba: Univ. of Manouba-Tunis, 2005), pp. 97-113.

33. “Komu nuzhna kashtanovaia revolyutsiya?”; “Budet li v Rossii ‘oranzhevaia revolyutsiia?’” [“Will we have the Orange Revolution in Russia?”], *Argumenty i fakty*, no. 11 (2005); “Azerbaidzhan: Aliev podal primer Putinu” [“Azerbaidzhan: Aliev became a Model for Putin”], *ibid.*, no. 45 (2005); “Kreml’ naniat dvornika – vymetat’ “oranzhevuyu” chumu: pri administratsii presidenta sozano upravlenie dlia bor’by s ‘barhatnym virusom’” [“The Kremlin Hired a Janitor-Cleaner to Sweep the ‘Orange Plague’: The President Administration Created a Department for Fighting the ‘Velvet Virus’”], *Komsomol’skaia pravda*, Dec. 9, 2004.

34. In “Voprosy s gazovym dushkom.”

A manifestation of the same scenario is embodied in the title:

*Kreml' naniial dvornika – vymetat' "oranzhevuyu" chumu: pri administratsii presidenta sozano upravlenie dlia bor'by s "barhatnym virusom".*

[The Kremlin hired a janitor-cleaner to sweep the “orange plague”: The President’s Administration created a department for fighting the “velvet virus.”]<sup>35</sup>

Although the latter title and its article are playful and ironic, the style did not change the overall unsympathetic attitude toward the Orange Revolution. Psychologists argue that hostility often takes on subtle forms of expression that are nevertheless destructive. Braiker claims that “Teasing, by definition, is hostile. Whenever a joke or tease is made at another’s expense some degree of anger and aggression are the undercurrents.”<sup>36</sup>

In the statement of solidarity with Ukrainian “brothers” (*We must help to our Slavic brothers to get rid of the “orange plague”*), the nation is dissociated from the political events. Most Ukrainians are alleged to be victims of delusions and targets of manipulation from the leaders of the Orange Revolution. The use of the phrase “orange plague” creates a belief in that society as a whole had different priorities from those of the protesters.<sup>37</sup> The insinuation is not consistent with the fact that a majority of Ukrainians at that stage did not wish to see Yanukovich as their President. Another deceptive device is the metaphor “Slavic brothers,” which allows external affairs to be treated as family matters, but which neglects the differences in their political interests and presents Ukraine as an inexperienced and naive brother. The term gained prominence in the description of relations between Russians and Ukrainians. It is interesting to note that Russia can claim to be the “big brother” because of its size and scale of political influence, while Ukraine can call itself the “older brother” because the Ukrainian capital Kiev was the cradle of Ancient Rus. The cliché is misleading because emotional appeal conceals the facts. It veils the harsh political reality of alliances, coalitions and partners and that there are no blood relations and family obligations. This is highlighted in a letter of opinion written by a Kievan resident:

---

35. *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, Dec. 9, 2004.

36. H. B. Braiker, *The Disease to Please* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2001), p. 151.

37. See Fairclough, *Language and Power*, p. 120.

*Naverno, ne vse eshche u vas poniali, chto SSSR davno net. I chto Ukraina – ne mladshaia sestra Rossii, a nezavisimoe i samodostatochnoe gosudarstvo.*

[Perhaps, not all of you [Russians] have realised that the USSR ceased to exist long time ago. And Ukraine is not a younger sister of Russia but an independent and self-sufficient country.]<sup>38</sup>

Therefore, the statements of solidarity with “brothers” are pernicious and provoking.

A negative attitude of readers toward the Orange Revolution and its consequences has been formed through the repetitive placement of the word “orange” (which is a metonymy for events in Ukraine) in a negative context. Collocations with negatively laden words like “plague,” “virus,” and “bang-bang”<sup>39</sup> infect the meaning of the word orange, which then acquires the status of a bad word. Although the concept of semantic prosody is currently under debate,<sup>40</sup> the effect of the “infectious” influence between the words underlying this concept is relevant to the description of the case. Sinclair argues that “the meanings of words change by their frequent association with other words – Louw (1993) has revived Darmester’s (1887) notion of ‘contagion’ to describe this effect.”<sup>41</sup> For instance, the pun in the headline *Oranzhevyj iad* (The Orange Poison)<sup>42</sup> triggers the metonymic sense of the word orange, which frequently collocates with the negatively laden words. Therefore, the initial reading of the headline suggests that the news report is about the negative outcomes of the Orange Revolution. However, the title of the article “Iad v krovi Yushchenko okazalsia ‘oranzhevym’” (“The Poison in Yushchenko’s Blood Turned out to be ‘Orange’”) elicits an inversive play on facts – the subject matter is the color and properties of the poison (dioxin) that was used to disfigure Yushchenko’s face. The pun in the headline shows that the adjective orange in the Russian political discourse tends to be used figuratively and has acquired a negative connotation. The acquired negative connotative meaning is activated in

---

38. “Zaimites’ soboi!”

39. These example comes from the publication “Oranzhevyi bats-bats” [The Orange Bang-Bang], *Argumenty i fakty*, no. 9 (2005).

40. See S. Whitsitt, “A Critique of the Concept of Semantic Prosody,” *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics*, 10, no. 3 (2005), pp. 283-305.

41. J. Sinclair, *Trust the Text: Language, Corpus and Discourse* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 150.

42. This headline came from an electronic version of *Komsomol’skaia pravda*, Dec. 12, 2004, from the article “Iad v krovi Iushchenko okazalsia ‘oranzhevym’” [“The Poison in Yushchenko’s Blood Turned out to be ‘Orange’”].

countless puns and jokes using the word “orange.” The following example highlights the pejorative stance attributed to the function of this color.

*M. Fradkov zaxodit v kabinet V. Putina.*  
 – *Vladimir Vladimirovich, takoe delo. Narastaet napriazhennost'. Evropa bez gaza merznet. Chto budem delat'?*  
 – *Vyshlite im dlia sogreva partiyu oranzhevyyx sharfikov.*

[M. Fradkov [Russian Prime Minister – L.A.] enters V. Putin’s office.

– Vladimir Vladimirovich, we have an issue here. Tension is growing. Europe is freezing without our gas. What shall we do?  
 – Send them a batch of orange scarves to keep warm.]<sup>43</sup>

Putin’s jest was aimed at both the West (Europe) and Ukraine. The color of scarves, which were meant to be a substitute for gas supply, was a hint to the West about their support of the “culprit” – Ukraine. The country was alleged to have stolen gas that was running through pipelines over their territory (see below). The pun also illuminates a secondary meaning – the color orange is a reflection of a revolutionary flame. In Putin’s opinion, preserving the flame of the revolution and its attributes should be a sufficient means of bringing happiness and warmth. When Ukrainians started the Orange Revolution, they were roused by their insurgent spirit and turned a blind eye to the fact that they were dependant on fuel supply from Russia. The word “orange” is used as a cursory reference to Ukraine, the Orange Revolution and their leaders. At the same time it becomes almost a synonym of thoughtless inspiration.

### **What do oranges have to do with the Orange Revolution?**

The negative association with the color orange is reinforced in puns and jokes with “oranges” (*pomerantsi* in Ukrainian and *apel'siny* in Russian), a prototypical image for the color. “Oranges” have become another manifestation of the metonymic effect insofar as they are reminiscent of the Orange Revolution. The noun “orange” has been brought into play in some titles. The function of titles is to tune the reader into emotional responsiveness and take away the reader’s neutral attitude to the upcoming text.<sup>44</sup> Derisive titles and jokes are frequently charged with aggression toward the featured people and events. The joke below is a further illustration.

43. “Krasnaia knopka ‘Gazproma’” [“The Emergency Button of *Gas-prom*”], *Argumenty i fakty*, no. 52 (2005).

44. P. Lennon, *Allusions in the Press: An Applied Linguistic Study* (Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2004), p. 83.

*Russkie i ukraintsy ochen' pohozi. Tol'ko russkie nahodiat v iashchike iz-pod apel'sinov Cheburashku, a ukraintsy – prezidenta.*

[Russians and Ukrainians are akin. Though in a box for storage of oranges, Russians find Cheburashka [a cartoon character with long ears, similar to Mickey Mouse – L.A.] and Ukrainians – their President.]<sup>45</sup>

The pejorative stance can be also found in the title “Slony v apel'sinah” (“The Elephants in Oranges”)<sup>46</sup> – an ironic comment on Yushchenko's comparison of Ukraine with the wise, drowsy elephant that is awake at present; and “Salo v apel'sinah, ili Kuda dreyfuet Ukraina?” (“The Fat in Oranges, or Where is Ukraine Drifting To?”). The latter title and its article are interesting in many respects. The title represents a case of manifold semantic compression. Its constituents form pointers to multiple semantic spaces that can be activated through allusions to cultural stereotypes and idiomatic expression. The article is programmatic as it encapsulates most of the negative insights about Ukraine that gained prominence in Russian press.

The demeaning attitude toward the events and people of Ukraine was created through the ludicrous incongruence of concepts that constitute the title. *Salo* (fat/bacon) is a traditional and simple Ukrainian homemade food that is suited to the harsh and cold Ukrainian climate but does not go with exotic fruit, such as oranges. The author confides that he tried this innovative dish in one of Kiev's restaurants. The title dramatizes a mutual exclusiveness of the two products and is reminiscent of a Russian idiom *s sukonnym ryloom da v kalashnyj riad* (lit. someone with a snout/face for selling a coarse fabric is in a line of fancy bread traders) which refers to the situation in the market: someone who sells heavy coarse cloth (*sukno*) is trying to mix with traders of fancy bread (*kalach*). The underlying motif is that a crude object will always be inferior to fine things, despite anyone's pretense that they are equal. In the given context, the allusion yields the reading that Ukrainian culture and society are too unsophisticated to be democrats and prospective members of the European Union.

An additional semantic space evoked through the names of products that in Russian cultural stereotypes or scripts are assigned to certain regions.<sup>47</sup>

---

45. This joke is quoted from “Vazhnye sobytiia 2005 v anekdotah” [“Important Events of 2005 in Anecdotes”], *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, Dec. 30, 2005.

46. “Slony v apel'sinah” [“The Elephants in Oranges”], *Argumenty i fakty*, no. 52 (2004).

47. See V. Raskin, *Semantic Mechanism of Humor* (Dordrecht: D.Reidel, 1985), on description of scripts about Ukrainians and Georgians encapsulated in Russian ethnic jokes.

Citrus fruits are a common agricultural product of Georgia and *salo* (raw fat /lard) is a common product of Ukraine. The links between Georgia and Ukraine are widespread: the Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili overthrew Shevardnadze's ruling in similar events to the Orange Revolution. Saakashvili graduated from the Kiev University and can speak Ukrainian. There are also similarities in the personal lives of the Ukrainian and Georgian Presidents. Their wives, for example, are both citizens of foreign countries. It is alleged that Georgia and Ukraine are both trying to join NATO and break their ties with Russia. And last, but not least, the murder case of the journalist of Georgian origin, Gongadze, contributed to the corruption allegation of Kuchma – Yanukovich administration. The insinuation is that Ukraine is following the Georgian pattern and both nations are becoming traitors in the family of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

The article introduces recurring topics in the Russian mass media: Western intervention; the corruption of the leaders of the revolution and their self-centered goals; and the violent intentions of the revolutionary crowd and the tragic consequences of their actions.

The Western “intrusion” took various forms. The opponents of the Orange opposition claim that they were receiving financial support from Western politicians:

*Kazhdyi "borets za svobodu" obhoditsia oppozitsii v kruglen'kuiu summu. Po nekotorym dannym, na "oranzhevuii" revolyutsiiu uzhe potracheno 1 mlrd. dollarov – pochti stol'ko, skolko poteriala ekonomika Ukrainy za dve nedeli protivostoianii.*

[Every “freedom fighter” costs a fortune for the opposition. According to some sources, a billion dollars has already been spent on the Orange Revolution – and the Ukrainian economy has lost during two weeks of confrontation approximately the same amount.]<sup>48</sup>

The American geopolitical strategy echoes the topic:

*Podderzhka Yushchenko so storony SSHA imela v pervuiu ochered' voenno-politicheskuiu podopleku, utverzhdaet prezident fonda "Politika" V.Nikonov.*

---

See also Ch. Davies, “Victor Raskin on Jokes,” *Humor*, 17, no. 4 (2004), pp. 373-80 on cultural scripts and ethnic stereotypes.

48. “Salo v apel'sinax, ili kuda dreifuet Ukraina?” [“The Fat in Oranges, or Where is Ukraine Drifting To?”], *Argumenty i fakty*, no. 49 (2004).

[According to V. Nikonov, the President of the foundation *Politics*, The US support of Yushchenko has a military and political underpinning.]<sup>49</sup>

The inferiority of the Ukrainian nation is highlighted in a joke that ridicules the dependence of Ukrainian politics on decisions made by major political players:

*Nakonets-to Ukraina stala svobodnoi: ran'she rukovoditelia vybirali v Moskve, a teper' – v Washington.*

[Finally, Ukraine has gained independence: the head of the state was selected by Moscow before but now he has been chosen by Washington.]<sup>50</sup>

The ubiquitous motif of Western “intervention” in the political affairs of former Soviet Republics stirs Cold War fears: America and its allies undermine stability in the region and unity within the “family” of “brother nations” that gather around “mother Russia.”

A catastrophic consequence of the Orange Revolution has been foreseen in the anticipated division among Ukrainians: a break away of pro-Russian Eastern Ukraine from Western Ukraine and the subsequent economic turmoil. The “prophecy” of the split within the nation has been manifested in various statements:

*S nachala orangevoi revoliutsii na Ukraine podano okolo 40 tys. zaiavlenii o razvode po politicheskim raznoglasiiam. I prichina tol'ko odna: zheni – "belo-golubaia", a muzh – "oranzhevyi".*

[From the beginning of the Orange Revolution 40,000 applications for divorce have been submitted on the ground of political disagreement. There is a single reason for that: the wife is “white and blue” but the husband is “orange.”]<sup>51</sup>

The absence of unanimity among Ukrainians gave weight to claims of potential division of the country even though the heterogeneity of the population of Russia exceeds any diversity of that in Ukraine.

---

49. “Ukraina otmuchilas” [“The Ukraine’s Suffering is Over”], *ibid.*, no. 52 (2004).

50. “Vazhnye sobytiia 2005 v anekdotah.” See also “Komu nuzhna kashtanovaia revoliutsiia?”

51. “Salo v apel'sinax, ili Kuda dreifuet Ukraina?”

*Problema sushchestvovala vseгда. Ukarainu možno uslovno podelit' na "russkuiu", "vostochnuiu" chast' i "zapadnuiu". "Russkaia" bol'she, chem "zapadnaia", poetomu ona budet vyigryvat' vseгда, otsiuda pobeda Yanukovicha. . . . "Vostochnaya" ne možet zhit' pod proamerikanskim prezidentom, "zapadnaia" – pod prorossiyskim...*

[The problem has been always there. Ukraine could be provisionally divided into the “Russian” or “Eastern” part and the “Western” part. The “Russian” part is larger than the “Western,” that is why it will always win – that is the reason for Yanukovich’s victory [as if there had not been allegations in fraud – L.A.]. . . . The “Eastern” part cannot live under the pro-American President, the “Western” one cannot live under the pro-Russian President. . . ]<sup>52</sup>

The prospective disaster has not only included a separation of Western Ukraine from Eastern Ukraine, but also has involved economic hardships. The fake regrets about the loss of a billion dollars during the confrontation of candidates for Presidency and the economic turmoil in Ukraine have unfolded in other publications. The topic is prominent in the gloating heading:

*Oranzhevaia Ukraina' – netu miasa, net benzina*

[Orange Ukraine – it has neither the meat nor petrol.]<sup>53</sup>

A similar motif developed in an interview with the former Ukrainian Prime Minister and one of the organizers of the Orange Revolution, Yulia Tymoshenko.

*No za 8 mesiatsev vashego premyerstva byli saharnyi i benzinovyi krizisy, protsvetalo vorovstvo rossiiskogo gaza, isportilis' otnosheniia s rossiiskim biznesom. Schitaete li vy sebia v etom vinovatoi?*

[During eight months of your term as Prime Minister, there has been a sugar crisis and a petrol crisis, the stealing of Russian gas has thrived, and the relationship with the Russian business has been ruined. Do you feel guilty for all of these?]<sup>54</sup>

---

52. “Komu nuzhna kashtanovaia revolyutsiia?”

53. “Oranzhevaia Ukraina' – netu miasa, net benzina” [“The Orange Ukraine – It Has Neither the Meat nor Petrol”], *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, April 18, 2005.

54. “Iu. Timoshenko: ‘Ia – stal'naia, hotia mne i bol'no’” [“Yu. Timoshenko: ‘I am Made of Iron Though I Still Feel Pain’”], *Argumenty i fakty*, no. 39 (2005).

The negative facts were deliberately overstated in this publication: economic crises are common in post-Soviet countries regardless of the political orientation of the ruling group. “Ukrainian stealing of Russian gas” is a simplified presentation of the real picture but the interviewer attempts to link the policy of the former Ukrainian opposition to the hardships of its people.

The misrepresentation stretches even further than the implications of fraud and incompetence of the leaders of the Orange Revolution. Ordinary participants in the protests were portrayed as aggressive seekers of adventure. Inhabitants of the Orange Camps were described as promiscuous sexual vagabonds, underdogs and retired military personnel (participants in Afghanistan and Chechnya campaigns) who were paid from US\$10 to US\$30 for their participation in the protests.<sup>55</sup> However, there was silence regarding how Yanukovich, Prime Minister at the time, exploited administrative resources to create the impression of having the people’s support. The reasons, nature and outcomes of the Orange Revolution have been persistently distorted. Portrayal of the leadership of the Orange Revolution in Russian public discourse became the focal point of all distorted themes introduced in “The Fat in Oranges, or Where is Ukraine Drifting To?”.

### **Images of leaders: The coalition of “Joan of Arc” and the “Cossack General”**

Offensive language has not been exploited to discredit the leaders of the Orange Revolution. Unconfirmed allegations, overstatements, jokes, and the use of allusions have been used as substitutes for the words “incompetent,” “hypocritical,” “violent,” “treacherous” and “selfish.” Martin calls these types of appraisal “evoked” and “provoked” that are opposed to inscribed evaluation.<sup>56</sup> Inscribed evaluation is explicit – the way the Soviet newspapers operated; “evoked” appraisal is implicit and triggered by factual events; the “provoked” stance is invited by cultural stereotypes, emotional leads and other rhetoric devices. The line between “provoked” and “evoked” attitudes is very fine, to the extent that it can be neglected in some cases.

---

55. Concerns were raised in “Salo v apel’sinax, ili Kuda dreifuet Ukraina?”; “Pokolenie Pepsi’ na prospekte kapitalizma” [“The Generation of Pepsi-Cola at the Avenue (lit. prospect – L.A.) of Capitalism”], *ibid.*, no. 36 (2005); “V oranzhevyi tsvet Kiev raskrasili my?” [“Have We Painted Kiev in the Orange Color?”], *Komsomol’skaia pravda*, Dec. 9, 2004; and “Budet li v Rossii oranzhevaia revolyutsiia?”.

56. J. R. Martin, “Beyond Exchange: Appraisal Systems in English,” in S. Hunston and G. Thompson, eds., *Evaluation in Text* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2000), pp. 142-75. See also M. Stenvall, “On Evoked and Provoked Appraisal Values in News Agency Reports,” *Abstracts. 9th International Pragmatic Conference*, Riva del Garda: International Pragmatic Association (2005), pp. 238-39.

Both Yushchenko and Tymoshenko have been implicated in national treason. As shown above, the Orange Revolution was linked to the expansion of the American zone of influence and Western strategy to destabilize Russia's position in the international scene. Such allegations provoke the belief that Yushchenko and Tymoshenko are on a payroll from the West and do not represent the interests of Ukrainian people. At the same time, allegations of betrayal of their country have been supported by the controversial claim that they were hired by Russian tycoons to settle scores with President Putin.

*I Yushchenko ne prognulsia pod natiskom Yanukovicha vo mnogom potomu, chto za nim tozhe stoiat rossiiskie politologi i bogachi. "Oranzhevaia revolyutsiia" imenno ih detishche. . . . Znali by eti buntovchshiki, kto sponsiruet i vdohnovliaet ih oranzhevoe shou. . . .*

[One of the main reasons why Yushchenko did not crack under pressure from Yanukovich was that Russian political image-makers and tycoons backed him up as well. The Orange Revolution is their offspring . . . I wish these mutineers knew who sponsored and inspired their Orange show. . . .]<sup>57</sup>

A similar opinion was expressed in "Ukrainian Suffering is Over." During his term as Prime Minister, Yushchenko did not create any impediments to Russian investments in the Ukrainian economy whereas Yanukovich, when he was Governor of the Donetsk region, did not allow Russians to make investments in the region.<sup>58</sup> This statement is a reversal of the stereotype that Yushchenko is a Ukrainian nationalist and Yanukovich is a pro-Russian politician. Both Yushchenko and Tymoshenko have been implicated in connections with exiled Russian tycoon Boris Berezovsky, who allegedly was a sponsor and supporter of the Orange Revolution. Therefore, the whole event was just an instance of the conspiracy against President Putin.<sup>59</sup> Despite the prediction, Boris Berezovsky did not appear on the Ukrainian political scene after the victory of the Orange Revolution.

The following speculations on Yushchenko and Tymoshenko evoke a negative appraisal: *Ukraine: Yushchenko – a product of Polish intrigues?; Yushchenko and Tymoshenko are offsprings from the elite of "nomenklatura"; Finally, Ukraine has gained independence: The Head of the State*

57. "V oranzhevyyi tsvet Kiev raskrasili my?"

58. "Ukraina otmuchilas'."

59. "Oligarhi: BAB postroil domik v Kieve" ["Oligarchs: BAB (Boris Abramovich Berezovsky – L.A.) Built Up a House in Kiev"], *Argumenty i fakty*, no. 5 (2005).

was selected by Moscow before but now he has been chosen in Washington; There are attempts to present Yushchenko and Tymoshenko as heralds of liberation.<sup>60</sup> The last of these is an example of how a positive opinion can be reversed in an echoed presentation. The way facts have been presented in these publications contradicts the belief held by many Ukrainians that Yushchenko and Tymoshenko are leaders of a new generation.

Despite some publications accusing Yushchenko of being secretly subsidized by Russian tycoons, the media has stereotyped him to be the embodiment of anti-Russian sentiments.<sup>61</sup> An interesting example of the portrayal of Yushchenko as an aggressive war-monger who fights Russian authority can be found in a headline that alludes to the historical past of Ukraine. The headline (see below) encodes pointers to various semantic spaces that can be accessed only when supported by background knowledge of Ukrainian culture. The figurative language used in titles attunes the stance of the reader<sup>62</sup> and triggers expectations on the development of the text.<sup>63</sup>

*V. Yushchenko – Visit s getmanskoï bulavoi.*

[V. Yushchenko – A Visit with the Mace of the Hetman.]<sup>64</sup>

The metonymically derived metaphor *getmanskaïa bulava* (Hetman's mace) introduces a number of themes. *Bulava* (mace) is defined in the Russian Academic Dictionary as a polysemous word referring to an ancient weapon and an attribute of the power of the Hetman (Ukrainian commander of Cossacks, elected for chief governor of Ukraine during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries). The word evokes two symbols: a weapon, which is a gesture of aggressive intention; and a symbol of power, similar to a scepter. The writer converts conventional emblems into culture-specific forms. Yushchenko is a legitimately elected head of the country, similar to a Hetman from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and his power is certified by the possession of a *bulava* (mace), which happens to be a medieval weapon akin to the sword. Chantril and Mio argue that

---

60. "Ukraina: Iushchenko – plod pol'skix intrig?" ["Ukraine: Yushchenko – a Product of Polish Intrigues?"], *ibid.*, no. 44 (2004); "Budet li v Rossii oranzhevaïa revolyutsiia?"; "Vazhnye sobytiya 2005 goda v anekdotax;" "Ukraina otmuchilas'."

61. This can be traced to as early as 2001. See "Ukraina – na pereput'e" ["Ukraine at the Crossroads"], *ibid.*, no. 7 (2001).

62. Lennon, *Allusions in the Press: An Applied Linguistic Study*.

63. V. Koller, *Metaphor and Gender in Business Media Discourse: A Critical Cognitive Study* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 90.

64. "V. Iushchenko – Vizit s getmanskoï bulavoi" ["V. Yushchenko – The Visit with the Mace of Hetman"], *Argumenty i fakty*, no. 4 (2005).

“the sword stands for all battles, even those modern ones in which a sword is no longer the weapon of choice.”<sup>65</sup> *Bulava* (mace) in this context provokes the reader’s perception of Yushchenko’s anti-Russian sentiments and is supported by the unfolding text:

*Razumeetsia, on ne pitaet osobyh druzheskih chuvstv k russkomu rukovodstvu.*

[It is clear that he [Yushchenko] does not cherish friendly feelings toward Russian leaders.]

The comparison of Yushchenko to a Hetman strengthens the anti-Russian theme. The prominent Russian poet Alexander Pushkin wrote about the historical figure of Hetman Mazepa who committed treason against the Russian tsar Peter the Great by making an alliance with a Swedish king. An overstatement made on behalf of the Ukrainian people highlights the alleged anti-Russian objectives:

*Izbirateli vostoka i iuga nenavidiat Yushchenko.*

[The electorate from the South and East [regions populated by speakers of Russian] hate Yushchenko.]<sup>66</sup>

Another theme provoked by the allusion to the Hetman is the stereotypical description of Ukrainian Cossacks: a gang of rough, adventure-seeking men. This is conveyed through the picture of Ilya Repin (a Russian artist, born in Ukraine, 1844-1930) in *Zaporozhian Cossacks of Ukraine Writing a Letter in Reply to the Sultan of Turkey*, which was used in a collage illustrating a Ukrainian topic in *Argumenty i fakty*.<sup>67</sup> Using such comparisons, Russian newspapers reinforce their view of the Orange Revolution as an event that enabled rioters and vagabonds to let off steam.

Indirect provocative statements were altered with an overt case of defamation against Yushchenko. On 2 June, 2005, *Komsomol'skaia pravda* published the article “Yushchenko sgbili molodil'nye kletki?” (“Did Rejuvenating Cells Ruin Yushchenko?”), which contained an allegation that Yushchenko attempted to rejuvenate himself at the cost of embryos; that his disfigured face was the result of growing embryonic cells inside his body. *Komsomol'skaia pravda* was not the only source of defamatory

---

65. P. A. Chantrill and J. S. Mio, “Metonymy in Political Discourse,” in J. S. Mio and A. N. Katz, eds., *Metaphor: Implications and Applications*, p. 172.

66. “Oligarhi: BAB postroil domik v Kieve.”

67. “Komu nuzhna kashtanovaia revolyutsiia?”

statements; other popular Russian newspapers such as *Sovetskaia Rossiia* and *Echo Moskvy* participated in the campaign of slander against the Ukrainian President.<sup>68</sup> If claims that Yushchenko tried to rejuvenate himself are taken seriously, then they invite accusations of vanity, narcissism, inclination to misinform the public and insensitivity toward the rejuvenating material: unborn children. The publication aimed to create an emotional aversion to Yushchenko who otherwise is perceived as a martyr who survived an assassination attempt. Reversing the public attitude through the manner that facts are presented can be also observed in the headline “The Orange Poison” and the comment:

*Vot na bratskoi Ukraine, poxozhe, vser'ez reshili smenit' politicheskij tsvet svoej kozhi. Nel'zia skazat', chto . . . Yushchenko eto poshlo na pol'zu.*

[Our Ukrainian brothers seem to make a serious decision on changing the color of their political skin. It does not look like . . . Yushchenko has benefited from this.]<sup>69</sup>

The image of Yulia Tymoshenko, a former Ukrainian Prime Minister, and Yushchenko's ally at the time of the Orange Revolution, has been created in Russian public discourse through the spinning of various associations attributed to female politicians. Newspapers reflected on a controversial character: an iron lady on one hand and a seductress on the other; a clever manipulator and ideologist of the Orange Revolution; a “spoiled beauty” and a criminal, all at the same time. Perhaps Yulia Tymoshenko could be congratulated for blending Thatcher's toughness with Eva Peron's sexuality and charisma. Female politicians throughout the world are often described through piquant insinuation or accusations of excessive callousness. The latter can be illustrated in the comparison of the German Chancellor Angela Merkel with “neo-Thatcherite nemesis.”<sup>70</sup> The former is manifested in the title of *The Guardian* article “A Nod, a Wink and a Wobble too Many” on Harriett Myers, the American Supreme Court Judge.<sup>71</sup>

---

68. V. Chyvokunia, “Ukrains'ka pravda: Nonsense on Yushchenko's Poisoning in the Russian Press. Russian Tabloids are at the Disposal of Yushchenko's Poisoners,” *Ukrainska pravda*, June 6, 2005, accessed at: [www.uottawa.ca/academic/graduate/etudesup/ukr/ukraine\\_list/uk1350\\_13.html](http://www.uottawa.ca/academic/graduate/etudesup/ukr/ukraine_list/uk1350_13.html), accessed on: Jan. 20, 2006.

69. In “Skol'ko vypiut patrioty?” [“How Much will Patriots Drink?”], *Argumenty i fakty*, no. 50 (2004).

70. *Guardian Weekly*, Oct. 14-20, 2005.

71. “A nod, a Wink and a Wobble too Many,” *ibid.*

Sexual innuendoes have been made in many publications regarding Tymoshenko. Newspapers could not resist assigning an exciting sex life to the attractive female public figure. A scene of Putin's seduction by Tymoshenko<sup>72</sup> was followed by an attention-grabbing description of the "romantic" relationship between Tymoshenko and the Georgian President Saakashvili.<sup>73</sup> This topic was very popular in the tabloids. Tymoshenko was compared to the character of provincial gossip and people's pleaser *dama priyatnaia vo vsekh otnosheniiah* (the lady who is pleasant in all respects) created by Nikolai Gogol', a Russian writer of Ukrainian origin.<sup>74</sup> Descriptions of Tymoshenko's carnality and narcissistic habits plant doubts about her competence in political matters.

*Iuliia Tymoshenko so svoei seksual'noi kosoi i vychurnymi tualetami . . . baryshnia ochen' dazhe zhelannaia. Lichno menia pri vide ukrainskogo prem'era . . . presleduiut naviazchivye fantazii (chego ne sluchayetsia pri vide premyera rossiiskogo) . . . Ia diuzhe holodnyi neporochnyi muzhchina. A kakovo zhe energichnym ministram, kotoryh Yuliia sobiraet na soveshchaniia?! Mozhno podumat', ministry v etot moment razmyshliaiut o blage i moshchi ukrainskogo gosudarstva, vdyhaia tonkie vozbuzhdayushchie aromaty frantsuzskih duhov s ee zdorovogo tochenogo tela . . . Ne sekret, chto ukrainskaia prem'ersha zabotitsia o svoei pyshnoi krasi i bol'shuiu chast' svoego vremeni provodit v kompanii lyubimyh portnih, parikmaherov i massazhistov, s kotorymi obsuzhdaet ne tol'ko modu, no i tsenovuiu politiku.*

[Yulia Tymoshenko with her sexy hairstyle and fancy dresses. . . . is a lady one lusts after a lot. Personally, I have to admit – I am haunted by obsessive fantasies . . . when I see the Ukrainian Prime Minister (which does not happen to me when I see a Russian Prime Minister). . . . I am a very frigid and chaste man. What about energetic ministers who are summoned by her for meetings?! It is hard to believe that ministers consider matters of importance and benefits for the Ukrainian state when they breathe in subtle exciting scents from her healthy and graceful body! . . . It is not a secret that the Ukrainian Prime Minister looks after her opulent beauty and spends most of her time in the company of her favorite tailors, hairdressers, masseurs and she discusses with them not only latest fashion but price-making policy as well.]<sup>75</sup>

72. "V. Putin: dva dnia – dve stolitsy" ["V. Putin: Two Days – Two Capitals"], in *Argumenty i fakty*, no. 12 (2005).

73. "SNG: Slyet premyerov" ["CIS: Meeting of Prime Ministers"], *ibid.*, no. 23 (2005).

74. "V. Putin: dva dnia – dve stolitsy."

75. "Oranzhevaia" Ukraina – netu miasa, net benzina!"

The image of Yulia Tymoshenko as a vain and spoiled beauty has been supported by her nickname: the Orange Princess. Carston shows that the concept of “princess” includes a set of diverse properties.<sup>76</sup> Some of them can have positive connotations but many features evoke a negative attitude. Positively laden properties consist of components: a princess has certain public duties to perform and is expected to behave in certain ways (to be civilized, polite, gracious, and charming). Negative evaluation can be triggered by our knowledge that a princess expects to be treated with deference, and may be spoiled, indulged and used to ordering people around. The Russian press reinforces our negative perception of a princess but also acknowledges the charm and grace of Tymoshenko.

Tymoshenko is also described as the iron lady, the engine that propelled the Orange Revolution. Repeated jokes about Tymoshenko’s alleged criminal activity<sup>77</sup> (in 2000-2001 Yulia Tymoshenko, her husband and several employees of the Joint Energetic Systems of Ukraine, were implicated in a criminal case connected to a series of economic crimes, and in 2004 Tymoshenko was suspected of bribing judges but in 2005 charges against her were dropped<sup>78</sup>) were a convenient tool for playing down the topic of Yanukovich’s conviction and imprisonment for robbery and bodily injury. For her inspirational role in the Orange Revolution, Tymoshenko was called the Joan of Arc of Ukraine.<sup>79</sup> The image has also attracted visual effects: *Argumenty i fakty* published a collage that portrayed a half-stripped Tymoshenko – Joan of Arc inspiring a cheering crowd of rampant Ukrainian Cossacks from Repin’s picture *Zaporozhian Cossacks of Ukraine Writing a Letter in Reply to the Sultan of Turkey*.<sup>80</sup> The collage evokes the effect of ludicrous incongruity also used in the title “The Fat in Oranges, or Where is Ukraine Drifting To?” The juxtaposition of Tymoshenko and Joan of Arc may sound sarcastic if relations between Ukraine and Russia are compared to the relations between France and England during the Hundred Years War.

However, what has been left behind is the former Ukrainian Prime Minister’s intelligence and her amazing talent as public speaker, which have come to be appreciated by the people of Ukraine. In July 2005, the

---

76. See R. Carston, *Thoughts and Utterances: The Pragmatics of Explicit Communication* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002).

77. “Naruchniki dlia Timoshenko” [“Handcuffs for Timoshenko”], *Argumenty i fakty*, no. 3 (2005).

78. “Julia Tymoshenko May Bid for Old Job as Charges are Dropped,” *The Independent*, Nov. 21, 2005.

79. “Iu. Timoshenko: ‘Ia – stal’naia, hotia mne i bol’no.’”

80. “Komu nuzhna kashtanovaia revoliutsiia?”

American magazine *Forbes* named Yulia Tymoshenko as number three in its list of the 100 most powerful women of the world. Moreover, if the audience of the Russian mass media were aware of the fact that Yanukovich could not spell the word “professor” properly either in Russian or in Ukrainian,<sup>81</sup> they would probably pay more respect to the Orange Princess and be more careful in the judgement about the choice between the illiterate professor and the Cossack General.

Although some publications have been sympathetic to Yushchenko and Tymoshenko,<sup>82</sup> the general trend is to ridicule, belittle and slander them. Understanding that Ukrainians made their choice in a certain context where the alternatives were viewed as more perilous, has been omitted by Russian mass media. The weaknesses of the leaders of the Orange Revolution have been scrutinized and judged against non-existing ideal politicians.

### Conclusion

A number of myths were elaborated by the Russian press to create the impression that a catastrophic mistake took place in Ukraine under the name of the “Orange Revolution.” The main myth was that the Orange Revolution was a public delusion, an outlet for adventure-seekers and a provocation on behalf of corrupt politicians. The various facets of this myth include the aggressive policy of the West, the influence of the wounded Russian oligarchs, the narcissism and self-indulgence of the leaders of the Orange Revolution, the weakness of the Ukrainian statehood and economy, the gullibility of the people of Ukraine, the anti-Russian sentiments, the exploitation of the potential explosiveness of the crowd and the lack of a proper PR campaign on the side of Yanukovich.

Facets of the Orange Revolution mythology have sometimes been created from different perspectives and represent incoherent viewpoints. A good example is the contradiction between regrets of the Soviet past in which all nations, including Ukraine, lived together cordially as a family that despised Western values, and the allusion to the “red plague” of Bolshevism. Another example is the controversial portrait of Yushchenko who, on the one hand, was sponsored by big Russian business and facilitated the advance of Russian capital in Ukraine, and on the other hand, was the embodiment of anti-Russian sentiments. The inconsistent ground for criticism

---

81. “Kandydat Ianukovych dumaie, scho vin ‘proffesor’” [“Presidential Candidate Yanukovich Believes he is a ‘Proffesor’” [Yanukovich’s spelling – L.A.], *Svit* (a Ukrainian weekly publication – L.A.), no. 38 (2004) (in Ukrainian).

82. “Ubit’, ne isportiv ‘shkurku’” [“To Kill without Damaging the Skin”], *Argumenty i fakty*, no. 47 (2004); “Ia ne ponimayu, pochemu na Ukraine oligarhov chistiat, a v Rossii – net?” [“I Don’t Understand Why Ukraine is Cleansing Oligarchs but Russia is Not?”], *ibid.*, no. 6 (2005).

shows that Russian public discourse is not governed by a dogma and a single group of control. This observation corroborates the view that ideology in a heterogenous public discourse is represented by constellations of beliefs and ideas.<sup>83</sup> The negative attitude toward Ukraine does not reflect the policy of the Russian Government only. On various occasions the mass media was critical of Kremlin actions. The impact of ethnic prejudice toward Ukrainians,<sup>84</sup> manifestation of cultural scripts and mistrust of the West should not be underestimated.

From a linguistic perspective it has been interesting to analyze the technique used by the Russian mass media to disseminate these myths. Quite often negative evaluations have been traded under the guise of a superficial positive judgment – the appraisal of the symbol of the Orange Revolution provoked a vilification of its ideals, the exhilarating description of the public image of its leaders hinged on the refutation of their moral values, intellectual strength and a compromise of their intentions. Often positive opinions about Ukraine were framed within statements of disapproval – the admirable became the subject of condemnation. On the surface multiple voices have been heard, despite only some of them having gained dominance in Russian political discourse. The use of tropes allowed the Russian mass media to promote their position in a safe way – it is always easy to later claim that they did not mean to do so because metaphors, allusions, irony are open to unpredictable interpretation. An understanding of the meaning of tropes requires the activation of background knowledge and cultural literacy. For example, it is hard to follow all associations linked to the “Hetman’s mace” unless you are familiar with the relevant history, cultural stereotypes and underlying contemporary events. Figurative language is also used to create proximity between the reader and the writer. The writer appeals to a shrewd reader who can understand a cryptic message. Therefore, the impact of allegorical expressions is manifold: on the one hand they create intimacy between a clever writer and a smart reader; on the other hand, all insinuations are mainly a product of the reader’s interpretation and the writer does not bear any responsibility for any advanced reading. Playing with words such as “orange” or the name “Joan of Arc” in multi-dimensional texts creates various pragmatic effects – ludicrous incongruence and sarcasm, evaluative contamination and ambivalence, activation of visual imageries, etc. The inclusive “we” (the foundation of solidarity between writers and readers including Ukrainians), vivid references, and simplified and playful presentation of facts in the contemporary Russian media replaced abstract vocabulary (e.g., “absence of

---

83. Verschueren, “Contrastive Ideology Research: Aspects of Pragmatic Methodology”; Blommaert and Verschueren, *Debating Diversity*.

84. Raskin, *Semantic Mechanism of Humor*.

spirituality'), impersonal statements and blunt abuse associated with the Soviet style.

Now that Ukraine has entered a new stage, former allies in the Orange coalition seem to experience difficulties in preserving unity. Many Ukrainians are displeased with indecisive actions of their President. Despite present disagreement, the role of Yushchenko and Tymoshenko in supporting justice and democracy in Ukraine during the presidential elections of 2004 cannot be underestimated. The condescending presentation of those events in the Russian press has tightened the vicious circle of reciprocal accusations between Ukrainian and Russian "brothers." Russians condemn Ukrainian desire to be different from them at any cost and recall unpleasant episodes in their shared history, while Ukrainians have not been left with any choice but to break the ties with the nation that tries to dominate them.

*Monash University*