

***Draznilkas* – Russian Children's Taunts (1)**

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The *draznilka* is a short, humorous verse used by children to tease, taunt and play pranks on other children (and only rarely on adults). The origins of the *draznilka* are rooted in adult folklore – in the ancient tradition of nicknames and in traditional taunting rhymes and songs used in wedding ceremonies.(2) The coarse humor and the use of nonsense rhymes, inversions, constant epithets and other formulaic devices also point to *skomoroshina*, *nebylitsa* and *raeshnik* as sources of *draznilkas*.(3) The *draznilka* raises the general epistemological question of how to define children's folklore: what are its sources, who are its creators and who are its performers. This is a particularly important question, since many Russian sources include under the headings of children's folklore compositions by adults, such as *poteshka*, *pribautka*(4) and *kolybel'naia pesnia* (lullaby). Some of the genres that fell into disuse among adults "descended" from adult literature and oral tradition and became subject to creative adaptation by children through a process of genre transformation in children's games, story-telling, or the *draznilka*.(5) Early students and collectors of children's folklore commented on the problem of trying to define the boundaries that separate adult from children's folklore. Pavel Shein wrote that children's humorous verse (he called it *pribautka*) constituted the most authentic examples of children's folklore, since the child and not the adult was the creator and performer. Shein's description of the *draznilka* is still useful today:

[The *draznilka* is] a *pribautka*, which mischievous small children use to poke fun at each other and at adults, making fun of their names, ... their station and ... their physical shortcomings, as well as their non-Russian origins and so on, often without even having any reason, just for the love of word-play.(6)

This last comment about a child's natural affinity for playing with words, written in the second half of the nineteenth century, is wholly in accord with the views of modern scholarship. A century later, Iona and Peter Opie made a similar observation, as did others who noted that children use rhymes not only for practical reasons, to help them remember, but for the deeply ingrained need to play with words and to experiment with language.(7)

In the 1920s Georgii Vinogradov introduced the term "children's satiric lyrics" (*detskaia satiricheskaia lirika*) in his groundbreaking study under the same name. Even though the study has been widely quoted and praised, the term did not take root in Soviet scholarship. Kapitsa rejected Vinogradov's terminology and like many others after him, used the generic *draznilka* to refer to the

rhymes.(8)

Most Russian collections of the *draznilka* present a special problem. They rely heavily on early sources from the nineteenth century, which means that they draw almost exclusively on material collected from villages and the provinces. Soviet collections also tend to favor traditional sources of folklore, the village and provincial towns, and underrepresent large urban centers. Moreover, the *draznilka* created pedagogical and philosophical problems for Soviet scholars; the crude language and obvious delight children took in inflicting pain on their chosen victims seemed to point to the amoral nature of children. Vinogradov, addressing this very issue in his writing, pointed out that children's taunts were likely to be more direct and more painful because young children do not use irony to attenuate the attack and because children are more prone than adults to use crude language.(9) Nevertheless, he insisted on unflinching honesty and faithful recording of children's behavior in their natural environment; he also was against the elision of scatological references and obscenities from children's speech and the use of dots to replace phrases or ideas offensive to adults.(10)

Vinogradov's position was an exception. In Soviet collections, as well as in some in post-Soviet ones, offending words are excluded along with the texts in which they occur. Some scholars disparaged the *draznilka* as being little more than a vehicle for obscenities.(11) Others were made uncomfortable by the evidence of aggression and references to the negative aspects of everyday life. In his introduction to a collection of folkloric texts, Vladimir Bakhtin states that in most *draznilkas* the target is not an individual with a particular physical or mental trait over which he has no control, but undesirable social behavior; thus the *draznilka* can be viewed as a tool for behavior modification: "The children as a group instill in themselves and each other the rules of good behavior."(12) And Mikhail Mel'nikov went even further in denying the negativism of the *draznilka*:

Draznilkas attacking ethnic dignity have disappeared from the repertoire of Soviet children...[along with] texts about...lice, and ...poverty, that is, everything that is unfamiliar to today's children.(13)

FUNCTION AND USES OF *DRAZNILKAS*

While the *draznilka* has roots in adult folklore, specifically, in the tradition of assigning nicknames, important differences also occur. Nicknames are attached to an individual as a permanent epithet, while the use of a *draznilka* is tied to a particular occasion.(14) Moreover, nicknames can be used in place of proper names in conversations about the person, while *draznilka* cannot be. (Cf. the nickname Ivan the Terrible and the *draznilka* Andrei-vorobei.) Nicknames are frequently used behind a person's back, while a *draznilka* has to be said directly to the victim's face.(15)

The *draznilka* can cover a rather wide range of aggressive behavior: from mild, friendly

ribbing to "ritualized taunts" between competing groups of children (similar to the African-American "dozens") to grievous insults that serve as a prelude to physical violence. Teasing, or a "license to joke," is based on a "joking relationship" between two individuals (or groups); it can be interpreted as a symbolic inversion of a real message.(16) A teasing *draznilka* tends to bridge the distance between two players and to emphasize equality between them. A teasing *draznilka* directed at two friends acknowledges the strong bond between them and can be interpreted as a positive statement:

<i>Boba s Kokoi,</i>	Boba and Koka
<i>Koka c Boboi --</i>	Koka and Boba
<i>parni udalye:</i>	are brave lads.
<i>Boba -- kuritsa slepaia,</i>	Boba is blind as a bat
<i>Koka -- miska supovaia,</i>	Koka is like a soup bowl
<i>Boba - angel, Boba - bog</i>	Boba is like an angel,
<i>i izodrannyi sapog.</i>	Boba is like God
	and a worn out boot.(17)

An even cruder example can be interpreted as having a positive meaning, since it emphasizes the friendship between two boys: "[*Vot idut*] *Dva akrobata: odin khui, drugoi lopata*" (Here are two acrobats: one is a dick and the other a spade.)

A teasing *draznilka* can be used to cement a new friendship as in the following telling example from Vinogradov:

Girls sometimes like to use an affectionately jocular tone in their conversations. "Let's see, how can I needle you?" a seven- or eight-year-old girl pensively asks [her new friend] Olia. And, after a moment...she quickly repeated in a sing-song fashion the non-offensive line: "Olia-bolia, Olia-bolia"... The nickname Alesha-balesha was born in the same way...as was a jocular ditty from the same village:

<i>Alesha-balesha,</i>	Alesha-balesha,
<i>Mat' nekhoroSha.</i>	[His/your] mother is no good.(18)

In contrast to the teasing *draznilka*, a taunt is an expression of aggression, a deliberate insult meant to hurt and publicly humiliate another person. A taunting *draznilka* tends to reinforce hierarchical order within the group. Above all, it creates an insurmountable gap between the aggressor, whose moral or physical superiority is asserted, and the designated victim.(19) Most *draznilka*-taunts are directed against an individual child and focus on physical or mental shortcomings: "cross-eyed," "stupid," "red-head" are common insults. The *draznilka* also derides undesirable behavior, e.g., "*iabeda-goviadina*," "*plaksa-vaksa*," "*zhadina-pomadina*" (tattle-tale, a cry-baby, a greedy child, respectively). Among younger children, who still belong to sexually segregated groups and have not yet begun to date, one of the most common and painfully embarrassing taunts is to pair a boy and a girl and call them bride and groom as "*Tili-tili-testo/Zhenikh i nevesta*" (Tili-tili, dough/

here are the bride and groom).

A child who participates eagerly in the activities promoted by adults is often viewed as a traitor. Belonging to a government-(adult)-sanctioned group, in other words, being seen as part of the "adult establishment" will earn a heap of scorn: "*Predsedadulia, dulia, dulia!*" (Chairman-fig, fig, fig) (directed against a good student, presumably someone active in school organizations, hence "*predsedatel'*"). This occurs in another taunt from Soviet times:

<i>Oktiabrenok, mal'chik Petia,</i>	Little Octobrist Peter,
<i>podavilsia pri minete,</i>	Choked while "eating".
<i>a posmertno govoriat,</i>	It's rumored that after
<i>iskliuchen iz oktiabriat.</i>	he died, he was kicked out
	of the October organization.(20)

Taunts ridiculing individuals can be expanded to include an entire family, father, mother, grandparents. It must be noted, however, that the *draznilka* rarely targets adults. Some *draznilkas* focus on adults in particular professions and occupations. For example, priests are a common subject of derision, as in a very popular ditty:

<i>Grom gremit,</i>	Thunder roars
<i>zemlia triasietsia,</i>	the ground is shaking,
<i>pop na kuritse nesetsia.</i>	the priest is galloping on a hen.

Most taunts, however, challenge adults and adult authority indirectly by breaking taboos and the rules of "good" behavior expected of children through the use of parody, crude expressions and references to genitalia.

Both adults and children can be ridiculed for belonging to a particular ethnic group as in the following taunt: "*Evrei – polna zhopa chervei,*" (Jew with an ass full of worms), or, directed at another group, "*Armiashka – v zhope dereviashka,*" (Armenian with a piece of wood in the ass).(21)

Some insults have literary sources, drawn from the names of folkloric heroes or literary characters.(22) A little boy with a name like Il'ia could be called jokingly *Il'ia-prorok* (the Prophet Elijah) or taunted as

<i>Il'ia Muromets,</i>	Il'ia of Murom
<i>na zhope 7 pugovits.</i>	with 7 buttons on his ass.(23)

A spat between two boys can grow to involve other children and lead to a verbal contest or duel between opposing sides. The insults traded are delivered in a sing-song unison with increasingly louder voices as each group tries to drown out its opponent. The stand-off lasts until children exhaust their creative and physical resources.(24)

STRUCTURE OF *DRAZNILKAS*

Draznilkas are rhymed, epigrammatic verses, usually no longer than six lines. The *draznilka*,

like other forms of folklore, is built on formulas: clichés, stock expressions, snippets from popular songs, rhymes, or epithetic pairs, that serve as building blocks in creating a new *draznilka*. Paradoxically, it is the very nature of the cliché that makes improvisation and endless variability possible.(25) These ready-made formulas, moreover, facilitate communication among children and help them comprehend and cope with the "ridiculousness of life...[and] the absurdity of the adult world" around them.(26)

Vinogradov described three types of teasers: the *draznilka* – a rhymed couplet based on an expanded nickname (name-epithet combination); *izdevka* – a taunt, a more hostile *draznilka*, usually 3-6 lines long; and a *poddevka* – a verbal prank based on questions and answers. *Draznilka* is a generic term applied to the first two groups and sometimes includes verbal pranks as well.

The *draznilka* is usually based on rhymed nicknames – a binary construction which is a common feature of Russian folklore. Rhymed nicknames usually consist of proper name-epithet combination with an obligatory internal rhyme. At the heart of such combinations is wordplay based on similarly sounding yet semantically unrelated words. A name can be paired with another noun – "*Ivan-bolvan*" (Ivan-blockhead), "*Vitia-titia*" (Vitia-teat); with a variation of the same name – "*Vasia-Vasenok*" or with a similar sounding name – "*Sema-Eroma*."(27) The epithet in the paired combination can also be a nonsense word, as in "*Fedia-media*." This, in fact, is the most productive means of rhymed-nickname formation in the *draznilka*. The epithet is derived from the proper name by replacing the first consonant by one or sometimes two other consonants. If the word begins with a vowel, one or two consonants are added, as in "*Olia-bolia*."(28)

The paired unit does not always have to contain a proper name. It can be replaced by a noun denoting some trait, usually a negative one:(29) "*zhadina-goviadina*," (stingy-beef) "*reva-korova*" (cry-baby-cow) or the more fanciful "*predsedadulia, dulia dulia*," a clever portmanteau creation from *predsedatel'* (chairman) and *dulia* (fig). Such pairs of common nouns can be used by themselves as a *draznilka*, especially when it is repeated several times in a sing-song fashion and very loudly to drown out protest.

A taunting *draznilka-izdevka* is derived through the process of accretion, when the child extends the epithet in the paired nickname by piling up additional modifiers; as the verse lengthens, the *draznilka* gains in strength:

Baba iaga
kostianaia noga
nos kriuchkom
golova suchkom
zhopa iashchichkom

Baba-yaga
 with a leg of bone
 with a hooked nose
 with a head like a stump
 with an ass like a box.(30)

Baba-yaga is of course a common nickname applied to any old(er), mean woman. Lines 3-5 transform a widely-known and rather boring *draznilka* (lines 1-2 borrowed from folktales) into a funny, biting taunt.

The paired unit usually appears in the opening line of the verse, where it sets the rhythm. But its location is not fixed, and it can appear in the middle or in final position. Moreover, the pair itself can be split:

<p><i>Idi priamo, priamo-priamo, tam bol'shaia iama, tam zhivet Boris, predsedatel' dokhlykh krys, a zhen a ego Larisa zamechatel'naia krysa.</i></p>	<p>Go straight ahead where you'll find a large pit Boris, the chairman of dead rats, lives there with his wife Larisa, who is a splendid rat herself.</p>
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Here we have a popular pairing "*Boris - predsedatel' dokhlykh krys*" and "*Larisa - zamechatel'naia krysa*" inserted in the middle and end of a *draznilka*; internal rhymes are turned inside out as it were to mark the ends of lines: *Boris/krys, Larisa/krysa*.

A rhymed nickname is frequently developed to include another set of modifiers. Such extended epithetic pairs can appear as a list of undesirable traits, as in

<p><i>Anna-banna, vshivyi bok tit'ki miagki kak klubok.</i></p>	<p>Anna - [bath]tubby lice-infested [side] with teats as soft as a ball of yarn.(31)</p>
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Most extended epithetic pairs are realized as rhymed couplets: "*Baba-Yaga/Kostianaia noga*". Other lines or couplets can be added and tied with simple rhymes: aabb; aabbcc, or aabbb and aabbc are the most common rhyme schemes.(32) As the stanza lengthens, the epigrammatic *draznilka* changes and acquires a narrative character; direct or rhetorical questions (and even rhetorical answers) are frequently employed devices:(33)

<p><i>Reva-korova, dai moloka. Skol'ko stoit? Dva piataka.</i></p>	<p>Cry-baby cow give [me/us] some milk. How much does it cost? Two nickels.</p>
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Humor, rhythm and rhyme are the sine qua non of the *draznilka*. Humor is achieved in a variety of ways. Rhyme, unusual combinations of disparate elements and hyperbole are perhaps the most commonly used devices in achieving a comic effect:

<p><i>Iasha, Iasha ne balui A to slon otkusit khui.</i></p>	<p>Iasha, Iasha don't kid around Or an elephant will bite off your dick.34</p>
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The *draznilka* has a strong rhythmic structure and regular beats. Although many collectors

refer to the *draznilka* as a ditty (*pesenka*), Vinogradov describes it as "choral poetry". He points out that children discriminate between chanted texts that rely on precise meter and rhythm, such as counting rhymes, and texts that are executed in a sing-song, such as the *draznilka*. It is not unusual to find irregularities in the rhythm and meter of the *draznilka* that would not be tolerated in counting-out rhymes. However a child singing or reciting a *draznilka* in a sing-song will readily make up for missing beats by adding a syllable or lengthening a vowel.(35) Group performance -- chanting in unison -- is an important component of taunts, as are special gestures, rhythmic movements and the skipping or hopping that frequently accompany the *draznilka*.(36)

And finally, as has been demonstrated, the *draznilka* cannot exist without rhyme. Rhyme binds together absurd combinations and "underscores the unreal, made-up and ludicrous [*shutovskogo*] elements in the text."(37) In addition to playing a crucial role in the structure of the *draznilka*, rhyme acts both as a conservative force, and as a dynamic device, the very feature that allows a child to adapt a shop-worn expression to a particular situation within formulaic constraints.(38) The efficacy of an adult joke depends on delivery and timing. In the *draznilka*, rhyme plays a similar role; it is what makes a *draznilka* work.(39) "*Zhid parkhatyi*" (lousy Jew) is a common insult, but it takes a rhyme to turn it into a *draznilka*: "*Zhyd parkhatyi/Nomer piaty,*" which is realized here as a rhymed couplet. An acquaintance, a redhead, remembers the following taunt as the one that caused her the most pain: "*Ryzhaia psina, bez benzina!*" (Red-head dog/bitch, without gasoline). She could understand the first part, but "why '*bez benzina*'?" she asked plaintively. Indeed, her tormentor effectively used the rhyme to bring together two semantically unrelated phrases. The unexpected combination and the rhyme heightened both the humor and the derision and increased the pain.

Verbal tricks (catch rhymes) are a special form of victimization. As in the *draznilka*, verbal tricks depend on rhymes; the victim is set up so that he or she falls for a false premise.(40) The chosen victim is weaker, usually younger, and less experienced than the aggressor. Moreover, the same trick cannot be played twice on the same victim. Tricks can also be accompanied by a physical action:

– <i>Skazhi klop.</i>	–Say "bedbug"
– <i>Klop.</i>	–Bedbug
– <i>Po lbu khlop!</i>	–Bang your head! [slapping the head].

The structure of the *draznilka* is stable: there is a great consistency and regularity among the vast number of examples across many generations. Children rely on a fairly small repertoire of ready-made "derision formulas," that is, well-known texts of jeers and taunts, in which a word or a phrase can be replaced by another to fit a particular situation. A child's creativity and originality are

expressed in a particularly apt choice and adaptation of a ready-made formula to a given situation and in a felicitous combination of materials borrowed from various sources.(41) A successful *draznilka* will make its victim feel singled-out and isolated, even though it is made up almost entirely of clichés and stereotypical images:

The tearful child tends to feel that the calls are entirely personal; newly made up to apply only to him. He wonders if he will ever escape from the shame of the hateful verses... Yet, newly made-up as the children often believe these verses to be, most of them have been helping tears to flow faster for generations.(42)

It is common to find the same line appearing in different *draznilkas*: "*tebia/ee liubit muzykant*" is a popular ending. Equally widespread are echoes of well-established lines: the above-cited example "*podavilsia pri minete*" is an updated version of "*govnom podavilsia*." Children often resort to popular songs in creating new *draznilkas*. The *chastushka* (ditty) and humorous "novelty" song, which like the *draznilka* can be crude and funny, are especially well-suited for such use.(43) In Odesa a popular *draznilka* addressed to an overweight Jewish child in the 1950s was:

<i>Ia nikomu ne dam,</i>	I won't give away [food] to anyone,
<i>pust' kushaet Abram,</i>	let Abram eat,
<i>pust' budet zhirnyi</i>	may he be fat
<i>i zdorovy kak baran.</i>	and healthy/big as a ram.

These lines are borrowed from the refrain of a song popular in Odesa, "*Starushka ne spesha, dorozhku pereshla...*" (An old woman slowly crossed the street).

In a *draznilka* we know who is being attacked, but we can only surmise who the aggressor is. One example of an identifiable male voice is the following:

"Natasha, dva rublia i nasha"
Natasha, two rubles and she's ours.

"Ours" here clearly refers to boys. Overall, however, the *draznilka* does not have an easily identifiable male or female voice. Vinogradov associated friendly jocular teasing, like the "*Olia-bolia*" example cited earlier, with girls. Virtanen, in her study of Finnish children's lore based on 30,000 samples collected from 6- to 18-year-olds, observes that, by and large, girls tease other girls while boys torment other boys. Erotic and sexual teasing, she writes, are the girls' "special province".(44) Her study, however, does not include truly obscene taunts and it is difficult to imagine most girls yelling:

<i>Prikhodi ko mne Alesha</i>	Come visit with me, Alesha,
<i>U menia pizda khorosha!</i>	I've got a nice cunt!

As far as obscene rhymes are concerned, girls are frequently passive consumers of a culture shared with boys. Thus, while both sexes could recite a ditty popular in Odesa in the 1950s: "*Khui i pizda, /brat i sestra*" (Dick and cunt are brother and sister), only boys could be seen scribbling the

graffitti on the walls of buildings. Similarly, while both boys and girls knew a bawdy parody of the 1920's street song "*Tsiplenok zharenyi...*" [Fried chick], only boys would indulge in a public performance. The identity of the speaker is more often revealed in a teaser-rejoinder, as in the following example, where the speaker is intentionally misinterpreting "*nakhal*" (boor) and turning it into "*makhal*" (masculine form of "waved"):

[to an insult ending in "nakhal!" (a boor)]
"Ne makhal, a dirizher!"
 I did not wave; I am a conductor!

An identifiably female voice can be heard in the response of a girl who was probably called "*dura*" (stupid) and who in turn calls her tormentor "*soplivyi nos*" (snot-nose):

<i>Ia durochka, Snegurochka,</i>	I am a stupid Snowmaiden,
<i>Moi papa-ded Moroz,</i>	Uncle Frost is my daddy,
<i>A mamochka fialochka,</i>	My mother is a violet,
<i>A ty - soplivyi nos.</i>	And you are a snot-nose.

As can be seen from the above examples, the target of a *draznilka* is not entirely without resources. The chosen victim can use a *draznilka* counter-taunt to turn the table and mock his or her tormentor. In answer to "*Mishka - medved' / Nauchi menia perdet'*" (Mishka-bear/ Teach me how to fart) one can say:

<i>Ia permu, ty poimai.</i>	I will fart, and you catch it.
<i>Nikomu ne otdavai.</i>	Don't give it away to anyone.(45)

A boy or girl may choose to use a magical incantation to undo the evil effect of a jeer:

<i>Shel shel krokodil</i>	A crocodile walked by,
<i>tvoe slovo proglotil,</i>	he swallowed your word,
<i>a moe ostavil</i>	but he let my word stand
<i>i pechat' postavil.</i>	and sealed it.

The *draznilka*, unlike other forms of children's satire, contains very few references to the realia of every-day life or to social interactions among children. Vinogradov sought an explanation for this in the fact that the *draznilka*, as a rule, is directed against an individual, not against an enemy group or an abstract system.(46) The Soviet *draznilka* contains little detail that reflects the society in which the children were raised. References to city life, work in the factory, modern technology are not very common. One example with references to Soviet industrial society is a *draznilka* composed, as it were, from spare parts:

<i>Kat'ka dura protsedura,</i>	Kat'ka -- stupid procedure
<i>sostoit iz trekh chastei,</i>	consists of three parts,
<i>ventilator, kumulator</i>	a [radiator] fan, a car battery
<i>i koroboka skorostei.</i>	and a gear-box.(47)

Another example reflects Soviet bureaucracy:

<i>Zhenia, Zhenia</i>	<i>Zhenia, Zhenia</i>
<i>Zhenotdel!</i>	Women's section! (48)

The widespread crises of the 1920's gave rise to a *draznilka-chastushka* with indirect references to poverty and deprivation:

<i>Fu-ty nu-ty,</i>	Fie, fie on you,
<i>lapti novye obuty.</i>	she is wearing new slippers.
<i>Lapti novy,</i>	Her slippers are new,
<i>piatki goly,</i>	but her heels are bare
<i>sama khodit bosiakom.</i>	and she walks barefoot.(49)

Bezprizorniki, the children lost and orphaned in the wake of WWI and later during the Civil War, rode trains under cars, and in coal boxes. The following *draznilka* is directed at a "voobrazhulia" (braggard) who has a fancy hat, but leads the life of a vagabond.

<i>Voobrazhulia pervyi sort,</i>	Hey, first class braggard
<i>Kuda edesh'? Na kurort?</i>	Where're you going? To the spa?
<i>Shapochka s pumponchikom</i>	Your hat has a pompon
<i>Edesh' pod vagonchikom.</i>	But you're riding under a car.(50)

In the last ten to fifteen years we have witnessed trends that may spell the end of the *draznilka* in its present form. A relatively new form of satire has become popular among elementary-school-age children and young adolescents. The origins of "sadistic verses" (*sadistskie stishki*) are literary and urban; they are quite distinct from the *draznilka*. It is easy to find areas, however, where both overlap. We need only to replace the impersonal *mal'chik* (boy) or *devochka* (girl) that populate "sadistic verses" with, for example, Fedia to turn it into a *draznilka*:

<i>Malenkii mal'chik [Fedia] igral v vodolaza</i>	A little boy [Fedia] was playing diver
<i>smelo spuskalsia na dno unitaza,</i>	he boldly dived to the bottom of the toilet bowl
<i>dobraia teta nazhala pedal'</i>	A nice auntie stepped on the flush-pedal
<i>mal'chik [Fedia] umchalsia v podvodnuiu</i>	and the little boy [Fedia] disappeared under the
<i>dal'. (51)</i>	water.

Perhaps what we are witnessing is a process of transforming the *draznilka* into a form with a darker and more cynical world view.

Notes

1. I wish to thank Natalie Kononenko for her encouragement, James Bailey and Snejana Tempest for their helpful comments, Roman and Irina Yakub for updating my obsolete arsenal of *draznilkas* and Robert A. Rothstein for his indispensable help.
2. James Bailey, Three Russian Lyric Folk Song Meters (Columbus, Ohio: Slavica Publishing, Inc., 1993), p. 203.
3. *Skomoroshina* – satirical or humorous epic songs or tales of Russian minstrels (*skomorokhs*); works of mixed genres that often parody the style and characters of Russian *bylinas* (epic heroic

- songs). Russell Zguta described these as "nonheroic" epic songs. See R. Zguta, Russian Minstrels - History of the Skomorokhi (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978), pp. 92-98.
- Nebylitsa* – "humorous plotless skomoroshina," long considered to be too trivial for the adult world, is particularly closely associated with children's literature and children's folklore. L.M. Ivleva, "Skoromoshiny" in Slavianskii fol'klor (Moscow: Nauka, 1972), pp. 121-122. *Raeshnik* or *raek* – humorous vers libre with varying meter and length of lines tied together with paired rhymes: aabb, etc.
4. *Poteshka* and *pribautka* refer to nursery rhymes. The *poteshka* is accompanied by physical activity, such as touching, counting or massaging different parts of the child's body. The distinction between the two can be quite murky. Nursery rhymes of all kinds, as well as lullabies, belong to what G. S. Vinogradov aptly named *poeziia pestovania* (poetry of nurturing the child with tender, loving care) or *fol'klor materinstva* (folklore of motherhood). Cited by O. I Kapitsa in Detskii fol'klor [Children's folklore] (Leningrad: Priboi, 1928), pp. 52-53.
5. E. V. Pomerantseva, O russkom fol'klore [On Russian folklore] (Moscow: Nauka, 1977), p. 70; G. S. Vinogradov, "Detskaia satiricheskaia lirika" [Children's satirical lyrics] in Sibirskaia zhivaia starina 3-4 (1925), 66.
6. Cited by Vinogradov, p. 67.
7. "[T]he rhymes expressing general dislike have an impersonal air. One has a feeling...that the children are being rude just for the fun of being rude." Iona Opie and Peter Opie, The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren (London: Oxford University Press, 1973 [1959]), p. 175.
8. Kapitsa p. 109.
9. Vinogradov, p. 76.
10. Vinogradov, p. 95.
11. V. P. Anikin, Russkoe narodnoe poeticheskoe tvorchestvo [Russian folk poetry] (Leningrad: Prosveshchenie, 1987), p. 364.
12. V. Bakhtin, Skazki, pesni, chastushki, prislov'ia Leningradskoi oblasti [Fairy tales, songs, ditties, sayings of the Leningrad region] (Leningrad: Lenizdat, 1982), p. 471.
13. M. Mel'nikov, Russkii detskii fol'klor [Russian children's folklore] (Moscow: Prosveshchenie, 1987), p. 68.
14. Mel'nikov, p. 66.
15. Cf M. Jorgensen, "Teasers and Pranks" in Children's Folklore -- A Source Book, ed. B. Sutton-Smith et al. (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1995), p. 222.
16. Jorgensen, p. 220; also J. Mechling, "Children's Folklore" in Folk Groups and Folklore Genres, ed. E. Oring (Utah: Utah University Press, 1986), p. 104.
17. Vinogradov, p. 101.
18. Vinogradov, p. 74.
19. Cf. Mechling, p. 104.
20. M. Armalinskii, (comp), Detskii eroticheskii fol'klor [Children's erotic folklore] (Minneapolis: M.I.P. Company, 1995), p. 36. This is a more obscene version of a popular *draznilka* cited by A. N. Martynova, comp., Detskii poeticheskii fol'klor. Antologija [Children's poetic folklore. An anthology] (St. Petersburg: Dmitrii Bulanin, 1997), p. 281:
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|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <i>Vas'ka-Vasenok</i> | Vas'ka-Vasenok |
| <i>khudoi porosionok</i> | poor piggy |
| <i>na kamushke rodilsia</i> | was born on a rock |
| <i>govnom podavilsia.</i> | and choked on a piece of shit. |
21. Armalinskii, p. 82.
22. Martynova, p. 292; V. A. Vasilenko, "Ob izuchenii sovremennogo detskogo fol'klora" [On the study of contemporary children's folklore] in Sovremennyi russkii fol'klor, ed. E. V. Pomerantseva (Moscow: Nauka, 1966), pp. 192-3; also Vinogradov.

23. Vinogradov, p. 75.
24. For a detailed description see Vinogradov, pp. 69 ff.
25. Vinogradov, p. 77; also G.I. Mal'tsev, *Traditsionnye formuly russkoi narodnoi neobriadovoi liriki* [Traditional formulas of Russian non-ritual folk lyric poetry] (Leningrad: Nauka, 1989), pp. 13, 43-44. Cf. Ivleva's comments on the chain-like structure of the *nebylitsa*: they are built of discrete components with varying contents. Such a chain can be broken off at any link and other links can be added. The structure of the *nebylitsa* accounts for its dynamic character and makes improvisation possible (p.122).
26. Opie & Opie, p. 18.
27. Vinogradov, p. 78.
28. See E. A. Zemskaja, "Iazykovaia igra" [Word play] in *Russkaia razgovornaia rech'* (Moscow: Nauka, 1983), pp. 193-194, on "slovo-ekho" and parallel constructions in Turkic languages and L. Virtanen, "Children's Lore," *Studia Fennica* 22 (1978), pp.62-63, on rhymed nicknames in Finnish taunts. Roman "Noveishaia russkaia poeziia" [The Latest Russian Poetry] in his *Raboty po poetike* (Moscow: Progress, 1987 [1921]), pp. 271-316. English speakers are familiar with this process from the Yiddish-based structure, where "shm" replaces the initial consonant or consonants: "president-shmesident."
29. Vinogradov, p. 77.
30. Vinogradov, p. 100.
31. Vinogradov, p. 97.
32. For more details see Vinogradov, pp. 79-84.
33. Vinogradov, p. 70.
34. Armalinskii, p. 36.
35. Vinogradov, pp. 80-81. One of the most readily recognizable American taunts dispenses with the text altogether and is based on a chanted melody: nya-nya, nya-nya, nya-nya.
36. D. S. Likhachev, "Smekh kak mirovozzrenie" [Laughter as worldview] in "*Smekhovoi mir*" *drevnei Rusi* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1976), p. 64; also Virtanen, pp. 80-81.
37. Likhachev, pp. 64.
38. Mechling, p. 109.
39. Cf. J. Sherman and T.K.F. Weisskopf, *Greasy Grimy Gopher Guts: The Subversive Folklore of Childhood* (Little Rock: August House, 1995), p. 12.
40. Jorgensen, p. 214.
41. Vinogradov, p. 77.
42. Opie & Opie, pp. 187-188.
43. Vinogradov, p. 98; Martynova, p. 299.
44. Virtanen, pp. 69-70.
45. Vinogradov, p. 98.
46. Vinogradov, p. 76.
47. Martynova, p. 299.
48. Martynova, p. 296.
49. Martynova, p. 311.
50. Bakhtin, p. 182.
51. Cf. a popular *draznilka-chastushka* from the 1930s:

<i>Andrei-vorobei</i>	<i>Andrei-sparrow</i>
<i>v ozere kupalsia</i>	was swimming in the lake.
<i>ruki-nogi utomuli</i>	His arms and legs drowned
<i>a zivot ostalsia.</i>	but his belly stayed on the surface.

(Martynova, p. 275)