Childhood After Chornobyl: A Social History of Childhood in Ukraine 1986-1996

by

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Abstract

Childhood After Chornobyl is about children and childhood in Ukraine in the period surrounding the establishment of independent Ukraine in 1991 (1986-1996). As an interdisciplinary and multi-lingual project with a focus on linguistic, narrative, and theoretical perspectives on childhood, the aim is the expansion of field knowledge toward the further development of theoretical perspectives for international Childhood Studies. The dissertation *documents a social history of Ukrainian children* through interviews and the investigation of secondary discourses. The recollections of individuals are supported by an investigation of narratives for and about children appearing in periodicals published at the time and archived at Vasyl Stefanyk Scientific Library in L'viv. The study of children is therefore limited to the reconstruction of memory and language towards an understanding of late-Soviet and Ukrainian childhoods.

The study documents the recollections of school-going children age 5-12 at the time of Ukrainian independence through interviews conducted with Ukrainian citizens from a range of backgrounds and geographical locations. The interviewees are asked to describe childhood memories and their responses often come with references to the experiences of the collapse of the Soviet Union, the cultural and deeply material event of the Chornobyl disaster, and the rise of independent Ukraine. Economic and social conditions confronted by the Soviet policy initiative *Perestroika* and the disaster at the nuclear power plant at Chornobyl (April, 1986) are crucial to understanding the lives of children in 'Ukraine' during this period. By the late 1980s, environment, food, and housing had registered as the overwhelming concerns of the public. What the interviews reveal is that children of the time were significantly aware of and influenced by these pressures, even as this "awareness" of the sequence of events at the Chornobyl Nuclear Power Station remains vague and distant from the meaning of the living concept of "Chornobyl," remembered here as a kind of distant war effecting daily life through its ubiquity in the

background of lived experience. As such an engagement with the event "Chornobyl" dominates many of the memories discussed, as does a concern for the relative experience of children during the period.

Increasing social pressures coupled with the displacement of the Russian language in education and State services by Ukrainian cultural policy further complicated the lives of children. *Surzhyk*, a Cyrillic language form that mixes Russian and Ukrainian, had previously been an informal but common linguistic mode in reaction to the language assimilation policy and culture of both Russian Empire and the Soviet Union. In the 1990s, *surzhyk* arises with new force among Ukraine's population and, for the first time, in the media and mass culture. Existing between Ukrainian and Russian language in informal cultural spaces in and out of the domestic sphere, *surzhyk* becomes an important language form for remembering the period.

The late-Soviet Union and early independent Ukraine both exhibited a strong periodical press aimed at young readers. Analysis of these texts reveals that the children of the period were subjects of a traumatic shift in the signification of childhood. Reconstructed from the imagery of memories and published sources, this childhood is a construct not unlike any other childhood, and yet it reveals an historical generation of Children defined in large part by the disaster at Chornobyl and the experience of the transition to National Independence. The concept of childhood, as I argue in this dissertation, is a phenomenon constructed upon recollection, and differs from experience of an actual child. Discourse of childhood is a result of negotiation of a child-adult relationship, which manifest socially as intergenerational forms of pressure and engagement. Despite the modern tendency to demarcate the two against each other more assertively, both children and adults are actively engaged in a process of reproduction of everyday life. Accordingly, and for the first time, this dissertation provides the discipline of Childhood Studies with the testimony, historiography and cultural analysis of a distinct and historically important generation of children in Ukraine.

Preface

This thesis is an original work by Viktoriya Yakovlyeva. The research project, of which this dissertation is a part, received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, Project Title: "The Changing Image of Childhood in Ukraine: Turning Point of 1991," Study ID Pro00009508, January 9, 2011.

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Contents:

Introduction

1. The Study of Children and Childhood in Ukraine

This study brings the skills of discourse analysis and critical theory to bare upon both the private life-stories of those born in Ukraine in the 1980s and the documents and periodicals intended to shape them that were produced by the state in both its Soviet and nation-state forms. Over the course of this study, specifically through interviews conducted with Ukrainian young-adults, three concepts emerge as dominant modes within the discourse of Ukrainian children and childhood: Chornobyl, play and language. These three concepts are the structure through which I provide edited selections of English translations of the interviews, conducted in Ukrainian, Russian, and *surzhyk* with fifteen persons of Ukrainian citizenship all of whom were school-going children at the time of Ukrainian Independence.[1]

The interviews and their documentation form the core of the project and the chapters presented. By providing these selected excerpts in English my aim is the opening up of Ukrainian perspectives on children and childhood to the international discourse of childhood studies regarding the final years of the Soviet Union and the first important years of Independent Ukraine. The New International Childhood Studies, as a discipline in its most inclusive conception, produces a discourse that seeks to add to the knowledge of human

[1] "Childhood after Chornobyl" theorizes and presents a *social history* of children and childhood. As such, collective memory, supplemental historiography crucial to historicising the memories and events covered, and a thorough investigation of the periodical press for children and the substantial changes it underwent are the core of the project and the dissertation. The goal is to provide a theoretical framework within which to rethink the social study of childhoods as well as to provide an example of how to carry out and present such invaluable research. Necessarily then, and as a means of dispensing with the study of children through historically outmoded or otherwise inappropriate discourses and practices, the dissertation does not substantially engage the discourses of psychoanalysis, medicalization of the body, structuralist and post-structualist play theory, nor the adult oriented realm of bureaucratic policy production, among other established frameworks. The attempt here is not to appear merely iconoclastic, but to offer the negativity of an 'eastern' childhood in the context of globalized Western standards and provide a template for further study of the post-Soviet world and beyond.

childhoods across space and time. Accordingly, *Childhood after Chornobyl* supplements the recollections of Ukrainian children with the documentation and analysis of discourses aimed at children in the periodical press as well as historical data, analysis and theoretical reflections pertinent to the construction of an internationally engaged Ukrainian childhood studies.

A picture of childhood in the 1990s in independent Ukraine in this project is unveiled largely through the interviews. The scope of the project focuses on the year 1991 as a turning point for the experiences of children who were between five to twelve years at this time and lived in urban areas in Ukraine, attended kindergarten, and then school, hobby groups, pioneer summer camps, and had established social connections in the neighborhood and courtyard. The geography of children's travels spreads from East to West on the contemporary map of Ukraine. For some, moving from one region to another meant crossing back and forth between Ukrainian and Russian language dominant places that were and are currently defined as existing in cultural confrontation in Ukraine.

The respondents of this study were young children during the notable Chornobyl events, the collapse of the Soviet Union, Ukrainian independence and the many social changes that followed. Almost all of them moved from one place of residence to another, sometimes several times while being children. Within the interviews, what was initially supposed to be "urban" childhood often subsequently appeared to be experienced in relation to regular trips to the village to live with or visit relatives or grandparents, usually for summer months, but sometimes for several years.

The methodological nature of this project was largely shaped by gaps in the sources – even the most complete available data of periodicals for children and youth from the time under consideration contains many gaps and synchronic pauses in print around 1991-1996. Data for this period is fragmentary and inconsistent and much of it continues to disappear from libraries and archives in Ukraine. As such, the memories recorded and transcribed for this dissertation

are crucial to supplementing and expanding the information and knowledge base for studies into these important, formative years of the Ukrainian state.

The methods of recollection engaged with in this study empower the overcoming of the negative forces of history, unravel them and bring to the light experiences of the forbidden and forgotten. It is the power of memory to reclaim what once belonged to the realm of a child. The approaches that are combined in this dissertation qualitatively include ethnography through both interviews and observations, discourse analysis, life story approaches, narratology and oral history. Memory, needless to say, is the essential element of the methodology and the bones of this archeological study of knowledge. The research is governed by the focus on the individual within the social. As Paul Schempp responded to Hatch and Wisniewski in an interview about narrative:

> In so much as life histories are stories of people's lives, they are narratives; it is the connection of one's life events to social events that distinguishes life history from other forms of narrative. The life is seen as being lived in a time, space, and under particular social circumstances rather than a simple collection of events.[2]

Accordingly, one of the major goals of this project is to connect the individual life stories and memories to the historical events and social processes in which they unfolded, connections that the respondents themselves are only ever partially capable of making unlil threir stories are recollected.

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[2] Paul Schempp, qtd. in *Life history and narrative: Questions, issues, and exemplary works*, Eds. Hatch and R. Wisniewski (Washington: Falmer Press, 1995), 115.

2. Sources and Data Collection

Material was collected in Ukraine throughout the summer 2010, winter 2011, and summers of 2012 and 2013 and, along with the interviews, included observations, and close reading of anything available published in 1980-96 for children and youth – periodicals, books, and textbooks. Many small conversations, suggestions and observations were considered while writing. My goal was to collect memories and interpretations of individual childhoods through in-depth interviews and supplement it with relevant historiography.

I recruited all respondents in person, following the leads of mutual acquaintances and inclinations familiar to me as an insider from Ukraine. Most of the individuals whose memories are presented in this dissertation are people who I have met over the course of this study (begun as an MA project in 2007 in Ukraine) and with whom I have developed intellectual companionship and friendship after their participation in my research. In return, I was granted personal perspectives into many valuable and unique memories and reflections pertaining to the experience of childhood in Ukraine in the early 1990s. I had met several respondents prior to this study that had been acquaintances before I had asked them for an interview. I met Inna at a journalistic conference in 2004 in L'viv, Ukraine. We stayed penfriends, and in 2012 I travelled to Kyiv, Ukraine to record an interview with her. Natasha, on the other hand, is someone I knew back in my own schooling time in Lozova, Ukraine. We were friends at a young age and then drifted apart growing up as I moved to L'viv, Bologna and eventually Edmonton. Years later, we stumbled upon each other on the street of our hometown, and after I had told her about my study she volunteered to participate. Natasha laughed at my "informed consent" form with its options of anonymity and confidentiality; she wondered what sense her interview would even bare if she remained anonymous. So thought Iryna, another person I had come to know before this project. We once participated in an Evangelical youth summer camp. Some individuals preferred to stay unnamed, however, and are quoted under a pseudonym. Some third persons

named by the respondents were disguised at the respondents' behest. The majority bear their real names.

All interviews required more than one meeting to be set up. All of them had some form of follow-up communication as well. Many times meetings included food and beverages. All interviews were recorded in settings deemed by the respondents to be appropriate and comfortable. Depending on the participant, some interviews were recorded sitting on a bench in the park, others in the kitchen or a private residency, a restaurant, coffee shop, or conference room. Once, I gave an interview in return (based on my experience living in Canada). On another occasion, the follow-up included an entire night out and I returned from the interview in the morning.

Childhood experience, as universally familiar as it seems, is not an easy topic to talk or even think about. Remembering requires a daring effort to confront the unknown. To pin childhood down to any special characteristics, structures, routines, time or even location turned out to be a difficult task. Childhood is a topic that requires special trust and a certain setting to talk about and the experiences collected are measured not by quantity but by depth and meaning. It became quickly apparent to me that autobiographical stories collected in the interviews would require special representation as well; as I collected more stories it became increasingly difficult to maintain the preservation of individual voices behind the precious data. As a result of this process, 15 semi-structured in-depth interviews were recorded.

Along with oral histories, it looks at publications from the late 1980s and early 1990s in both Russian and Ukrainian languages. In my research experience, periodic press material published in the Soviet Union was commonly disregarded and discarded in the euphoria of the first years of Ukrainian independence. Librarians I worked with repeatedly expressed surprise and curiosity regarding the data requested. Several times I was told that I was the first person to request these materials for an academic study within the last 20 to 30 years. Children's libraries

I visited in L'viv and Kharkiv oblast did not have any pre 1991 periodicals preserved. In fact, I was told that such data was commonly discarded as recycling in early 1991, often considered meaningless or useless. That is why the search for data also took me to rooftops and cellars, into private collections of textbooks and press articles. The main sources included periodicals that were produced by the state in both its Soviet and nation-state forms. Several Ukrainian language journals existed throughout Soviet times and continued publishing in the 1990s. Few of these journals have survived until the present day as active publications. A large selection of the publications considered here were eventually located at the Stefanyk Scientific Library in L'viv, Ukraine, which had not yet gotten rid of the periodicals for children from the years in question.

The main sources that build the context of this childhood study include the Ukrainian periodical *Soniashnyk* (*Sunflower*), which started in Kyiv in 1991 as a literary journal for children of young school age and was active until 2007; *Barvinok*, a bilingual journal established in Ukrainian right after World War II that doubled in publication in Russian language editions during 1950–1999. It served as a journal of the Central Committee of the Komsomol organization of Ukraine and the Republic council of the Pioneer organization; it still exists (as of 2014). *Odnoklasnyk* (*Classmate*) is an example of a Soviet era initiative that had successfully adapted to change – it proudly refers to itself as "the oldest children's magazine in Ukraine" – that had been in press since 1923, under different titles. It was originally called *Chervoni Kvity* (*Red Flowers*), in 1940s it became *Pioneeria* (*Pioneers*) and finally, in the 1990s, *Odnoklasnyk*. It is currently a Russian language publication. *Rovesnik* (*Peer*), *Yunyi Tekhnik* (*Young Technician*), *Yunyj Naturalist* (Young naturalist), *Yunost* (*Youth*), and *Molodoi Kommunist* (*Young Communist* and then *Perspectives* after 1991) are other Russian speaking sources that have been considered in this work.

It is important to point out that publication of periodicals for children and youth in the Soviet Union had always been centralized – they were mostly published in Moscow and in

Russian. Their readership, however, extended far from Moscow. Subscriptions were common and cheap; libraries were free and obliged to offer services that had been covered by the state. Soviet state publishing for youth had evidently been diminishing for several decades before it eventually stopped in 1991. Ukrainian language journals for children and youth in the 1990s were new, scarce and underfunded. As a result, there are gaps in publication during the 1990s. The inconsistency of content was not without consequence; it translated into an inability to address children's needs. It is not only what is available and present in terms of discourse that influences readers' experiences and perspectives; rather, as so often arises over the course of this study, what is rendered absent also significantly influences the actual conditions of childhood.

Despite their wide circulation during the massive economic crisis and restructuring of the state, from 1989 – mid 1990s, children's magazines generally became thinner, were published on reduced quality paper, with more frequent and prolonged gaps between the issues. Some journals discontinued publication, e.g. *Yunyi Khudozhnik* (*Young Painter*) stopped in 1994; *Yunyi Naturalist* (*Young Naturalist*) ceased in 1995; *Yunak* (*Youngster*), a magazine published by the Canadian Ukrainian diaspora ended in 1992, *Molodoi Kommunist* (*Young Communist*) which became *Perspektivy* (*Perspectives*) in 1991 completely died two years later. Many subscriptions were canceled because of inflation and new border regulations. For example, some issues of *Yunost* (*Youth*) between 1992 and 1995 are missing or were rather never published. Majority of these publications seased to exist between 1996 and until 2000. Collection of children's illustrated magazines, including *Krokodyl* (*Crocodile*) between 1992 and 1995 is present in fragments and stops in 1995. Another one, the Ukrainian-language journal *Veselka* (*Rainbow*) existed only between 1990 and 1992. Ukrainian-language *Odnoklasnyk* (*Classmate*) was available in fragments between 1993 and 1996 and then absent until 2002. Interviews collected demonstrate that children of *Perestroika* and after felt a deficit of information and entertainment. They commonly read and re-read old Soviet magazines and newspapers available from previous years at home or the library until they were deliberately thrown away in

heaps or collected for recycling. As a result, the few periodicals that remained active in the early 1990s struggled to address children's needs, interests and problems in Ukraine.

3. Disciplinary Concepts of Childhood: Generation, Agency, Narrative

One of the most difficult features of childhood to grasp remains its temporary nature. Every adult was once a child, and yet childhood in adulthood is experienced in the past, in recollection. As James, Prout and Jenks articulate in 1998 in *Theorizing Childhood*:

> childhood is simultaneously our fond, adult remembering of a time past and the immediacy of our own children's lives; childhood is united by the universal biology of human physical development and cognitive potential but, in the same moment, radically different by the varied social context.[3]

Karl Mannheim, whose work is pivotal for the theory of generations within the sociological study of children and childhoods, suggested that to form a generation, members of a particular age group have to live through the same social and historical events during their years of youth, and identify those events as significant to themselves.[4] He emphasizes that a "generation as an actuality" only exists where a concrete bond is created among the members, as a result of exposure to the social and intellectual symptoms of a process of dynamic destabilization.[5] Therefore, certain lived experiences, when they are shared, create a basis for membership in a generational socio-cultural unity and a shared imaginary community. The primary feature of the unity of generation, according to Mannheim, lies in its social location within a particular space

[3] Allison James, C. Jenks & A. Prout, *Theorizing Childhood* (Cambridge UK: Polity Press, 1998), 59.

[4] See Karl Mannheim, *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 1952), 303.

[5] Ibid., 303.

and time, which site he compares to and engages with as class structure.[6] As such, generation is to be understood as a structural phenomenon. The social location of a generation and its members can only be defined by specifying the structure within which and through which groups emerge in socio-historical reality.[7]

Research in childhood studies has drawn on Mannheim's hypothesis that each generation forms "a specific internal alliance," and is structured in interactive relation between structural elements of childhood and adulthood.[8] Necessary internal rationality between generational categories is a grounding assumption for the generational order manner of thinking.[9] Inter-relationality of elements generates a heterogeneous entity, and there are emergent subcategories to each generational category. Such subcategories form in accordance with their relationship to other socially constructed categories of race, gender, sexuality, labour, citizenship and even age, which however biologically defined mark different relationships of agency of children and adults in different cultures and social conditions.[10] Developing a generation from the narration of the experience – common experience of a certain social condition – is a primary task of this dissertation. The narration of experience is presented in a structural relation against which the childhood of the collapse of the Soviet Union and Ukrainian Independence forms a new generation, a collective subjectivity that is defined by its relationship to the social changes occurring. Generation is understood here as an age cohort that consciously shares a cultural life-stage and significant events of historical emergence during their youth; they also share potential

[6] Ibid., 289.

[7] Ibid., 290.

[8] Leena Alanen, "Generational Order," *The Palgrave Handbook of Childhood Studies*, eds. Jans Qvortrup, et al. (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 161.

[9] Ibid., 161.

[10] See James, Curtis and Birtch, "Care and Control in the Construction of Children's Citizenship," *Children and Citizenship* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2008); and Qvortrup, ed. *Studies in Modern Childhood*: Society, Agency, Culture (London, Palgrave MacMillan, 2005).

for intellectual and social change.[11] Some generations have been constructed on the basis of studies in childhood, including the Freedman's *Children of the Great Depression* (2002), Adelman's "Children of Perestroika" (1994), Raleigh's *Spuntik Generation* (2006), Yurchak's "Last Soviet Generation" (2005), the preliminary discussion in 1995 of the "Chornobyl Generation" in Petryna's "Sarcophagus: Chornobyl in Historical Light."[12] All of these studies illustrate that belonging to a generation requires coexistence in space and historical time. While generation is structured by age its meaning is created in synthesis of social classifications of gender, race, class, and location, which change over time. The generational approach arising out of Mannheim's sociology of knowledge has proven a valid way of putting historical experience into relative perspective.

As the activity of monitoring, studying and classifying human knowledge, Mannheim's sociology of knowledge presupposes the primacy of development as an organizing principle. However, the focus on development of and in social structure is often inherently problematic for understanding relationships between growing generations of children and adults. Priscilla Alderson, theorist of childhood studies, warns researchers against mystifying the reality of childhood, especially in a way that entails the assumption that certain models of childhood, including oppressive and disparaging ones, are "inexorable, given or non-negotiable."[13] What is at stake for Alderson is that childhood studies acknowledge the changing nature of childhood through the active processes of intergenerational engagement. Instead, she states, "like many adult-adult relationship, child-adult ones are often complicated by loving interdependence,

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[11] Priscilla Alderson, *Childhoods Real and Imagined. Volume 1: An Introduction to Critical Realism and Childhood Studies* (London: Routledge, 2013), 115.

[12] Russell Freedman, *Children of the Great Depression (*New York: Clarion Books, 2002); Deborah Adelman, *The "Children of Perestroika" Come of Age* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1994); Donald Raleigh, *Russia's Sputnik Generation: Soviet Baby Boomers Talk about Their Lives* (Indianapolis: Indiana UP: 2006); Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2005).

[13] Alderson, *Childhoods*, 34.

which can be used to excuse or mask oppression."[14] Most importantly, "children and parents exist in a relative process of intergenerational emergence… As children change, so do parents."[15] Children and adults, in other words, are constantly engaged in the interaction of redefining the meaning of their relationships in a changing world, a point supported widely in the scholarship of childhood studies.[16]

Childhood studies in its new phase, built upon a concern for the concepts of childhood agency and experience, is considered to have been established as a specialized field of social science study since only around 1989/1990,[17] whereas changes towards understanding children as social actors as opposed to the passive participants in social order dates back to the 1970s and 1980s. Allison James, a senior theorist of the sociology of childhood, connects the shift in the paradigm of thinking about children, for example, to the International Year of the Child of 1979 and the corresponding emergence of the idea of the 'world's children' and the public attention to child abuse beginning to question the idyllic world of childhood around 1975. To consider also is the work L.S. Vygotsky (1978), a Soviet developmental psychologist, whose research focused on socially transmitted internalized skills and competences of a child that proves child's involvement in social relations and therefore positions children as social actors.[18] Academic

[14] Ibid., 92.

[15] Ibid., 67.

[16] For example see Christiansen and James, "Research with Children: Perspectives and Practices," Pia Christiansen and M. O'Brien eds., *Children in the City: Home, Neighbourhood and Community* (London: Routledge Falmer, 2003); Allison James & A. Prout, *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood* (London: Falmer, 1997); and S. Stephens ed., Children and the Politics of Culture (New Jersey, Princeton UP, 2007); Adriana Petryna, "Sarcophagus: Chernobyl in Historical Light," *Cultural Anthropology* 10, No. 2 (1995): 196-220.

[17] See A. James, C. Jenks and A. Prout, *Theorizing Childhood* (London: Polity Press, 1998); and Priscilla Alderson, *Childhoods Real and Imagined. Volume 1: An Introduction to Critical Realism and Childhood Studies* (London: Routledge, 2013))

[18] Allison James "Agency," *Palgrave Handbook of Childhood Studies*, Eds Jens Qvortrup et al. (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 34-45.

attention paid to the studies of everyday life in the 1950s and 1960s, as well as Ariès's *Centuries of Childhood* (1962) is what contributed to the intellectual climate of further inquiry in the lives of children that followed.[19]

In the context of the new, post 1989 childhood studies, agency is defined as "the capacity of individuals to act independently," and sees children as independent social actors.[20] New Childhood Studies is devoted to approaching relationships in childhood from the child's point of view, to bring research closer to the margins, gaps and absences, as well as addressing "adult" power over childhood via the research of vulnerabilities and the economics of contemporary childhood. Several recent approaches to childhood studies emphasize the agency of children and their powerful impact on adults in the process of the child-adult interaction.[21] Studies of agency point out that the adult's power over a child is not absolute and is subject to renegotiation and resistance. Even though the boundaries of childhood are mostly imposed and regulated by adults, children also have their own strategies to manage and renegotiate their time and space, avoiding or reshaping some of the imposed norms, provided the circumstances of interaction are flexible and mutually controlled by the participants.

For Alderson and others modern ideas of childhood evolved or were invented in seventeenth-century Europe as a life stage between dependent infancy and independent adulthood. This suggestion draws upon and agrees with Philippe Ariès' argument that "up to and including the Middle Ages it would seem that there was no collective perception of children as being essentially different to anyone else."[22] Modernization reifies the separation between the

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[19] Ibid., 38.

[20] Allison James & Aiden James, *Key Concepts in Childhood Studies* 2nd ed (London: Sage, 2012), 3.

[21] See Alderson, *Childhoods*, 2013; Leena Alanen, "Explorations in generational analysis" in *Conceptualizing Child-adult Relations* (London: Routledge Falmer, 2001); and Jennifer Hockey and Allison James, *Growing up and growing old: ageing and dependency in the life course* (London: Sage, 1993).

[22] Alderson, *Childhoods*, (13).

generations, children and adults. Social constructionism influences further attempt for theoretical division between 'social' and 'biological', 'language' and 'infancy', 'sex' and 'gender. The relationship between the counterparts is an ongoing negotiation that has become central to many aspects of social science; policies of autonomy and dependency, governance and education are negotiated within hierarchy between "childhood" and "adulthood."

Narratology (the theory of narrative) is another aspect of theorizing childhood central to the work of studying childhood in this dissertation. Narratology understands narrative as a verbalized experience of selfhood.[23] Within the context of the study of children generally and the recollections of childhood gathered and recorded in this dissertation, the genesis and study of narratives about childhood is a question of whether or not children have the right to define their experiences for themselves as they grow older and gain important insight into their own lives. Consequently, narrative identity is the identity we perform in the process of self-narration, self-representation. Rooted in the body and one's personal experience, narrative is a way the self is both performed and remembered, whether or not it is depicted in accordance to accurately remembered historic events. Yet, narrative always consists of individual stories that are contextually situated. Autobiographical accounts are the core of these approaches aimed not to prove the "truth" of history but to demonstrate its fluidity and, combined with concerns over social mobility, its dispersed nature in the exploration of the creation of meaning within the social structure.

Studied primarily in the field of literature and film studies, narrative has been commonly defined as "the representation of events, consisting of story and narrative discourse, story is an event or sequence of events (the action), and narrative discourse is those events as

[23] Paul John Eakin, *Living Autobiographically: How We Create Identity in Narrative*. (Ithaca N.Y: Cornell University Press, 2008), 35.

represented."[24] At the core of narratology, there is "an implicit presumption that a story is separate from its rendering."[25]

Childhood and its experience are derived from narration in this dissertation. While recognizing the complexity of narrative and its dual relationship to the actual events (being their re-presentation), I rely on narrative here as a particular system of relationship with time, which in its turn is what creates a generation. Recoeur defined narrative as a language structure that "has temporality as its ultimate reference."[26] In narrative, temporality relates to the sphere of experience of a sequence of events and is crucial to the structure of narrative. Narration, moreover, is what gives the generation of children studied here its agency by describing the sphere of engagement that the children had with the adult world of social action, preserved in various activities from inventing a peculiar practice of play in the circumstances of a severe economic crisis to participation in governance of an emerging state of Independent Ukraine.

Relying on personal accounts of re-presentation, this childhood is fragmented. Along with the theorists of the post-1990s Childhood Studies, it emphasizes a still evident lack of children's means of participating in decision-making processes, ranging from adult-child power relations in families and households to the children's lack of political expression, generally in any social structure.[27] As a result, negativity of experience here becomes a way of accounting discursively for "the absence of children and childhood from almost any report, book or film on politics, economics, trade, armed conflict, housing, transport, climate change or any other major topic of

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[24] H. Porter Abbot, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002), 20-22.

[25] H. P. Abbott, "Story, Plot, and Narration" in D. Herman ed. *Cambridge Companion to Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007), 40.

[26] Paul Recoeur, "Narrative Time" qtd. in *Cambridge Companion to Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007), 165.

[27] See Allison James, *Childhood Identities: Self and Social Relationships in the Experience of the Child* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1993); Allison James, *Constructing Childhood: Theory, Policy, and Social Practice.* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); and A James, C. Jenks and A. Prout, *Theorizing Childhood* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998).

public concern."[28] What this means for the study of childhood narratives is that when confronted with the lack of words to describe the circumstances, experiences can be identified through their negative condition, through what they are not. The negativity of childhoods described is thus an important aspect of what defines children in this study.

4. Chapter Outline: Chornobyl, Play and Language

The childhood I am describing is a childhood that arose as a socially contested category during the fraught historical period of its focus. Despite efforts to historicize the fall of the Soviet Union and the cultural, political and economic project of Independent Ukraine, the lives and experiences of children from those years have remained largely silent and invisible to scholars and communities in the two decades since. The study of post Socialist children and the childhoods they belonged to is still at its beginning in Ukraine, especially as it concerns the transition from Soviet to post Soviet social conditions and constructions.

In Chapter One, "Theoretical Reflections on a Ukrainian Childhood," I present a personal memory of when, as a kindergarten student in Lozova, I realized that something had changed about the world I lived in as a child, something permanent and catastrophic. This change was the disappearance of the Soviet state, represented for me in the sudden and unannounced removal of what had been a permanent installation of dolls honoring the fifteen nations making up the Soviet Union on display in a special room at school. This memory sets up a reflection on the concepts of memory and history and their import for the present study of childhood. Starting from the standpoint that memory and its articulation is a social phenomenon, I explore the tension between individual and collective responsibilities for the reconstruction of the past

[28] Alderson, *Childhood,* 78.

through acts of remembrance. What is revealed is that the effort to remember engages the social actor in questions of continuity and discontinuity and the revelation that to articulate a sense of the past we are simultaneously engaged in the work of separating out that past from its own before and after.

Therefore, memory and the act of remembering are engaged in the construction of specific boundaries of space and time. The temporalities of human experience are manifested through the specificities of place and interaction. The ways we open or close, remember and forget times and places are key aspects of the mechanisms through which the social order is constructed. Central to the concerns raised in the memory of the disappearing dolls is the persistence of the room, however empty, in which they had been housed and presented. Giorgio Agamben's reflections on children and their position of antagonism within modern social formations in *Infancy and History* (1978) becomes a key touchstone for working through the negativity of the doll-room experience. Agamben's elucidation of infancy as a category that must be rendered absent in order to realize its social function is explored in relation to the imperative of childhood studies to remember and reclaim the experiences of children and the childhoods they belong to.

In reference to the interviews and children's periodicals which are the focus of this study, in Chapter Two, "Chornobyl Mysteries," I argue that the Chornobyl disaster is the discursive site where children and childhood in Ukraine both most easily register and conceptually disappear behind the mysterious nature of the catastrophe and its prevailing discourse. What this study proposes then is that the Chornobyl disaster is the event that defines the generation of children that make up the subject of this study. The event itself is so forceful that there is not only childhood "after" Chornobyl but also a "behind" the event that includes the deteriorating political and economic situation of Perestroika and the developing social constructions of Ukrainian independence. These social constructions include not least of all the rise to dominance of Ukrainian language in social spaces of all kinds, discussed in more detail in

chapter four. However, rather than seek to separate childhood during these years into late-Soviet and Ukrainian categories of experience my effort here is to demonstrate that the relative disappearance of the one is held internal to the development of the other.

The generation of children that *Childhood after Chornobyl* engages through recollection and historical research can be understood in terms of a non-unified whole. Whatever the politics of parents, family, and community, the destructive force of Chornobyl on multiple levels of generational experience (within and between groups of all ages) provides a determinant base for collective experience. Considering the impacts to human and environmental health and economic opportunity, this means that children across Ukraine experienced the years surrounding 1991 in relation to each other and relative conditions of hardship and confusion through which they emerged, or not, on the road to adulthood.

In Chapter Three, "The Work of Play," I examine the material and symbolic outcomes of early Ukrainian independence in the lives of the growing population, looking for what Bakhtin calls chronotopes – points in history when time and space unite most closely in the social. This chapter will look at how children's time was distributed between survival and play, and offer examples to how the absence of many necessities and innovations affected children's relations with themselves and the world. It will also explore some of the alternative 'sites of infancy' and childhood created in lieu of the absent designated places for children's play and socialization, e.g. a construction site. The legacy of Perestroika in Ukraine persists in a state of confusion, the absent needle behind much of today's tattered social garment. Yet, after thirty years of crisis, children dwell on the streets of Ukraine, the meaning of their experiences crouching in spaces that continue to be marked in the sand.

Attempting to get behind historical perspectives that rely on the state forms of age classification and organization that structured children's lives at school, chapter three explores the activities and ritual concerns of children at play. The Soviet House of Culture, an

organizational network that included dedicated community spaces in the form of halls and publications, comes to the fore here as a cultural force guiding the socialization of children through structured forms of play. In response to the examples of ad-hoc and inventive play documented in the interviews, I explore what the breakdown and disappearance of the House of Culture means for children struggling to negotiate a world of increasing social privation.

Chapter Four, "The Languages of Memory" will offer evidence and analysis of language changes and differences that affected the lives of children in the late 1980s – early 1990s. It aims to demonstrate how memories of fragmented time and space were narrated in an oftentimes 'broken' mixture of Ukrainian and Russian. One struggle that Ukraine faced with its independence was the implementation of strict language policy and linguistic nationalism.[29] Official language law was established in Ukraine in 1989, two years prior to independence and is presently active. The law regards Ukrainian language as a powerful and essential tool in the process of nation building. It emphasizes that Ukrainian language is one of the decisive factors of the "national distinctiveness of Ukrainian people."[30] However, in Ukraine language still carries "forces of competing symbolic value systems" – namely, Ukrainian and Russian.[31] As linguistic anthropologist Laada Bilaniuk notes, "Language quality, particularly perceived purity and correctness, was discursively linked to social legitimacy and authority" in Ukraine after independence.[32]

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[29] See Oleksandra Serbenska, *Antysurzhyk* (L'viv: Svit, 1994); and Larysa Masenko, *Mova* i *polityka*. Kyiv: Sonyashnyk, 1999).

[30] Laada Bilaniuk, "Criticism and Confidence. Reshaping the Linguistic Marketplace in Post-Soviet Ukraine" *Contemporary Ukraine on the Cultural Map of Europe*. Ed. Larissa M.L. Zaleska Onyshkevych and Maria G. Rewakowicz (NY: Sharp, 2009), 337.

[31] Ibid., 337.

[32] Ibid., 336.

To understand how children dealt with hardship and disorder to create a sense of coherence in their lives we have to consider that the culturally productive institutional change of the official language (from Russian to Ukrainian) was a complicated, disruptive process and important not only for the establishment of national identity but for the attempted reconstruction of the entire domain of everyday life. The switch from one language to another commonly included a long and difficult process of confusion and adaptation, especially for children, whose socialization depends intimately on the acquisition of language. Remarkably, in this period of extreme economic crisis, the language of children's realities – in books, textbooks, cartoons, and school curricula were unevenly distributed. Despite Ukrainian being the only official language of education in independent Ukraine, many classrooms remained Russian-speaking or bilingual simply because the newly updated Ukrainian-speaking textbooks were not available until the late 1990s (and, in some rural areas, even early 2000s).

An unforeseen outcome of this research was the languages that individuals chose to narrate the realities of their childhood. Several of the respondents, who identified themselves as Ukrainian-speaking Ukrainians, consistently used Russian or a mixture of Ukrainian and Russian called *surzhyk* to talk about certain aspects of their lives. "Pure" standard Ukrainian language is also present in the interviews as a self-conscious choice made to reference certain kinds of experiences. These were, for example, experiences relating to the sovereignty of Ukraine. To distinguish their support and belonging to the independent state of Ukraine, children (just as adults) often adopted their Ukrainian-speaking identity by speaking standard Ukrainian, its literary form, which commonly differs from spoken Ukrainian in different parts of Ukraine.

What emerges, in conclusion, from this investigation of private and public histories of childhood at this crucial historical conjuncture is that children had serious difficulty adapting to the post-Soviet system. The increasing absence of any organized, cultural conception of

childhood in early independent Ukraine and the traumatic period preceding it—in which the horror of Chornobyl opened onto the formal dissolution of Soviet society as such— only contributed to the further alienation of its growing population and its connection to the past. As per Paul Connerton,[33] forgetting is more than a temporal concept; it also necessarily involves the spatial aspects of labour, which are linked to the labour process in terms of the cultural work of consumption and production. In this study, childhood productivity comes to be defined by its negatives, namely the context of adult unemployment and the increasing absence of structures of play, including toys. Absence comes to the fore in this study through mechanisms and experiences of disappearance and loss. After Chornobyl, the loss of health, the death and relocation of peers and neighbours, and the constant need to restructure social relations links childhood with the concept and actuality of mortality.

The vulnerability of children during the time period becomes an overwhelming dimension of childhood. Often left without supervision, without a state to provide adequate education, health, and basic services, children's experience of the 1990s is limited in understanding due to the prevalence of confusion and misinformation. In fact, the unknowability and simultaneous ubiquity of 'Chornobyl for children is the contradiction that defines the generation that I suggest bears its name. Deemed intrinsically unhealthy, children were nevertheless burdened with the narratives of production and expectation. As such, in the recollections that constitute the remembering of childhood in this study, more often than not the perspective offered appears as that of the orphan. If place, as Robert Harrison convincingly argues, is a function of the domestication of space by time, what are we to make of the discontinuity and fragility that mark the territories of childhood in Ukraine? What arises from this investigation into the history of childhood after Chornobyl is a concern for a childhood that has had its own history, its past,

[33] Paul Connerton, *How Modernity Forgets* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2010).

intentionally removed from view. Whether or not this is to be seen as a productive success of Western dominated modernity is a question for future work.

Nevertheless, that there remains a childhood after Chornobyl to be remembered, gathered, told, laughed about and queried over points to the unquenchable reproductive capacity of the children who survived to speak to me about it. The relative 'freedom' of play in the period opens up the space-time of children's agency and some of the secrets to survival and fulfillment. Without the social force necessary to structure children's spaces and object-worlds, time itself is what becomes the thing to be played with and language becomes a primary mediator of that activity. As such, surzhyk becomes an important tool of narrative play, a way for my respondents to resist the tendencies of absolute ethnic-identification that they had to overcome on the road to adulthood. The productivity of surzhyk in the lives of Chornobyl children growing and grown up is itself perhaps the most significant argument against the hard testimony, however ironic in utterance, regarding the end of the world in Ukraine in the 1990s.

Chapter I.

Theoretical Reflections on a Ukrainian Childhood

[In] the face of adults who literally play dead and prefer to entrust their own phantoms to children and children to these phantoms, the shades of the past will come back to life to devour the children, or the children will destroy the signifiers of the past – which, in terms of the signifying function, History, amounts to the same thing.[34]

1. Introduction

The narrative discourses that comprise this study of Ukrainian childhood are all rooted in memories. The fact that we must remember in order to access both the past and the historical is the imperative of these further theoretical reflections. As such, the aim of this chapter is to theorize the relationship between personal memories and social history, setting the groundwork for establishing the study of narrative as the mediating force between individual agency and collective history. Narrative is what bridges memory and history and, in reference to the experience of children, allows us to grasp the socially constructed category of childhood. The collectivity that animates the concept of childhood is therefore historically specific and rooted in the confrontation between what is personal and what is common to the experience of a particular time and place. Childhood emerges as a concept in order to make sense of children's experience; emerging, that is, precisely at the point in narrative time and space where what is confronted in memory is outside the realm of the individual.

The positing, therefore, of a post-Chornobyl Ukrainian childhood, is not merely to argue that history, in the form of nuclear disaster, interrupts the continuum of Soviet childhoods so

[34] Giorgio Agamben, *Infancy and History: On the Destruction of Experience*. (London: Verso, 1993), 86.

drastically as to birth a unique generational source of social conflict. Rather, it is to acknowledge that for my respondents the concept of childhood itself is embedded in the crisis of Chornobyl as an organizing structure that mediates the space-time of the collapse of the Soviet world and the rise of Ukrainian Independence. Much of what is common in the lives of children in Ukraine post-Chornobyl is defined by negative pressures in the form of economic crisis, unemployment, family instability, interruptions of goods and services and a wholesale shift in cultural identity. This chapter explores the theoretical implications of constructing an image of Ukrainian childhood in part through personal narratives of children's experience within the context of extreme social pressures. Proceeding through a personal reflection on an experience I had while attending Kindergarten in 1991, the chapter examines the concepts of memory, history, space, and time and their function within the discourse of the narrative based study of childhood.

2. Communion of Dolls: A Recollection of "Deficits" and Childhood in Ukraine

1986 was the era of Gorbachev's Perestroika, a time of intense social confusion and instability throughout the Soviet Republics. Soviet forms of life were shaken and reshaped (or not) on the fly, as the distribution of all kinds of social goods, services and relations began to lapse or disappear completely. Shortages, or "deficits," (of everything from food and clothing to work and wages) began to restructure needs and activities.

Added onto this terminal process was the "fallout" from the nuclear disaster at Chornobyl April of the same year. Children were temporarily shielded from knowledge and understanding of the event. It registered through awkward silences and deeply troubled looks on the faces of adults, through rumors of some new kind of war. Some of the more high-profile consequences of that war, the diseases and disorders that would be identified in the population in the coming years, were still invisible to children, who, at this point, however, already knew about shortages

of food and clothes. They could, in fact, read about it in the children's press and witness it in the empty shelves of grocery stores. On top of these privations, Children were introduced to a vague concept of radiation, the ghost of which would haunt Ukrainian imaginations for at least another decade.

At the Kindergarten I attended in the Kharkiv oblast (region) in Ukraine, there was a room that was, in the context of an intensifying sense of social conflict, a source of solace for many children. The room resembled a hall. There were neither windows nor doors aside from an inviting entrance from the corridor. No activities were scheduled there, though it was never locked. Inside was a display of thirty immaculately kept dolls – fifteen pairs of new-looking childlike figures, dressed in bright and beautiful clothes, miniatures of the peoples of Soviet republics, standing on the shelves lining the wall in rows. They were positioned too high to be reached by children. Children were not allowed to handle the dolls. Here, in a state daycare, the dolls were exhibited to represent the unity of fifteen nations of the Soviet Union. Each pair had a male and female assigned doll, dressed (or rather decorated) in ethnic robes of 15 contributing republics. Dolls were meant as symbols of brotherhood and kinship of the Soviet nations; an acknowledgment of loyalty and strength, and through the magic of miniaturization they engaged a child's gaze in a play of unity. The display also included a red Soviet flag spread across the wall, and a state emblem – hammer, sickle over the globe, above the rising sun, with a golden star.

I tried to sneak into the doll room almost every day for a few moments, usually on the way in or out, coming back from a scheduled walk. What lured me there were both the dolls and something outside them, something seemingly experienced between them and me, a kind of relationship of ownership and mutual engagement in the reproduction of a utopian order of some kind, as I have come to realize much later. It was childhood and we were supposed to reproduce a sense of confidence and determination, the steadfastness of which was singularly on display in the doll room, 'given' to me to appropriate.

One day I went to the doll room to discover that the display was taken down. I recall having a dark feeling that something terribly wrong had occurred. It was a feeling that rang through the room that day and lingered among us, becoming progressively more familiar to children. The space remained empty for several months, and the absence of the dolls was not explained. Eventually the room was repainted in the blue and yellow of the new Ukraine with a new display – a communion of dolls wearing ethnic clothes was reduced to a single pair, and there was the flag and the emblem of Ukraine.

On the one hand, this was a doll room. It was admirable and attractive to children. On the other, the room was full of empty space. Access to it was limited and the dolls were not for play. The room was a spectacle, a trope called upon to represent symbolic features of children's play to children. The relationship with the dolls that a hypothetical child is supposed to engage in presents an explicit contradiction. A miniature museum of dolls in a kindergarten, during the Perestroika economic crisis, when toys were scarce, uses children's objects of play to commemorate and communicate the idea of organization of the Soviet state. Instead of play, the doll room offered space for praise and reflection on some idea of unity and belonging. At the same time, it signals the void around the already noticeable deficit of children's toys and play – everyday objects are put on display as if to prepare the public for their forthcoming transition into the realm of the imaginary.

3. Memory and History

Already in tension within this narrative of the doll room are the concepts of personal and collective memory. The interaction between personal memory and the historiographical codes through which narratives about personal experience take form is what produces collective memory. Specifically, at issue is the play of difference between the personal and the collective in narratives of children's experience, their inherent tendency toward the construction of

childhood in its historicized form. Childhood studies seeks to produce socially engaged constructions of childhood that are nevertheless fundamentally responsible to the experiences of children and the narratives through which they are shared. The goal of this study in this regard is to ground its construction of childhood on the subject of collective memory through the interplay and analysis of personal narratives, public discourses and historiography; and yet already at work in the personal memories documented in the proceedings chapters are the social interpretations, interruptions, categories and concerns working toward the becoming collective of their narratives.

In *How Societies Remember*, Paul Connerton addresses the always already socially informed nature of experience, suggesting that even before its representation in personal narrative, experience is shaped and conditioned by social recollection:

[I]n all modes of experience we always base our particular experiences on a prior context in order to ensure that they are intelligible at all; … prior to any single experience, our mind is already predisposed with a framework of outlines, of typical shapes of experienced objects. To perceive an object or act upon it is to locate it within this system of expectations. The world of the percipient, defined in terms of temporal experience, is an organized body of expectations based on recollection.[35]

What Connerton establishes here is the co-dependency of individual memory, which is always situated interactively between the store-house of collective memory and the material conditions in space and time in which the individual and group exist. This preconditioning of the "organized body of expectations" is no doubt at work in the world of children's experience; however, for the observing and acting child, "the framework of outlines" through which his or her activity emerges is often outside the available interpretive frame of reference.[36] Confronted

[35] Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009, [1989), 6.

[36] Ibid., 6.

with a system of expectations, children are propelled into the activity of play, which engages with expectations as a means of resisting them. What this means for the study of children and childhood is that the collectivizing force of children's experience tends toward the overthrow of the received system of organization toward the establishment of new systems of meaning. This meaning is in turn a function of recollection, however one that emerges spontaneously from seeing and doing and not simply as an expression of the pre-existent framework. As such, it is in the narratives of children's experience that the collective framework of childhood becomes available for analysis. Childhood is in this way a concept that offers a counter-recollection, an indispensable resource for the construction of history.

"Collective memory" as an object of scholarly inquiry emerged as recently as the early 20th century.[37] Hugo von Hofmannsthal used the phrase "collective memory" in 1902, and in 1925 Maurice Halbwachs's *The Social Frameworks of Memory* argued against Henri Bergson and Sigmund Freud, suggesting that memory is a specifically social phenomenon.[38] Halbwachs argues that individuals are able to "acquire," "localize" and recall their memories through their membership in a social group – kinship, religious and class affiliation.[39] For Halbwachs, as the individuals grow into wider circles of recollection, from domestic to political frameworks of memory, the growth of their civic identity takes place.[40] What is crucial in the relationship of individual and collective memory is its interactive nature – as most subjective and personal memories are at the same time accumulated in interaction with other people and their subjectivities.[41] The continuous creation and re-cr eation of memories necessary in order to

[37] Kerwin Lee Klein, "On the Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse," *Representation* No 69, Special Issue: Grounds for Remembering, (Winter 2000): 127-150, 127.

[38] Ibid. 127.

[39] As discussed in Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, 36.

[40] As per Constance DeVereaux and Martin Griffin, *Narrative, Identity, and the Map of Cultural Policy: Once Upon a Time in a Globalized World* (Surrey UK: Ashgate, 2013).

[41] Connerton, How Societies Remember, 123.

create “a deeper shared experience that lets individuals cluster into larger formations” is largely transmitted through narration, the structure of which is similar to and dependent on memory itself. Following Halbwachs, Martin Griffin and Constance DeVereaux point out that the nature of collectivity “holds the memories transgenerationally.”[42] Accordingly, although memory is also generationally structured, it presupposes interrelationality, which emphasizes its dynamic and fluid nature. While belonging to different generations according to biological categories of age, individuals sharing the same collective memory may belong to a sub or transgenerational categories according to the shared experience. Collective memory, in this way, is crucial to identity formation, as it links individuals and groups across social divides and is implicated in the work of creating social cohesion and stability.

Kerwin Lee Klein documents that scholarly interest in memory intensified with the arrival of the 1980s, marked by extensive studies of Holocaust remembrance and Pierre Nora’s investigation *Between Memory and History* (1984). Such studies drew attention to the history of oppressive institutionalization and “totalizing varieties of historicism” and re-introduced a metahistorical category of trauma.[43] The modern discourse of memory descended from psychoanalysis, and a new understanding of memory commonly rendered through the awareness of the ‘constructedness’ of subjectivity. The context of memory thus became increasingly more crucial for the understanding of modernity, which often drives towards the revisioning of history, relying not on objective knowable truth but on narrative representation of historical record.[44] According to Klein, the study of collective memory is the key to shaping personal and collective identity and develops a groundwork for collective history.[45]

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[42] Ibid. 124.

[43] Klein, “On the Emergence of Memory, 138.

[44] Paul Cobley, *Narrative*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2014), 29

[45] Klein, 135.

Congruent with Klein's contention that collective memory is integral to the establishment of collective history, White concludes that narrative (or both fictional and factual re-presentation of reality in tropes) facilitates human apprehension of the world.[46] The materialization of memory as a human desire for a moral representation and focused on a narrator has been marked by multiplicity, decentralization, and democratization. The constraints of memory have been more consistently delegated towards the individual, whose responsibility is "to remember and protect the trapping of identity." Memory "will not be anywhere," Nora urges, unless it is recaptured through individual means.[47] Recapturing through individual means presupposes imperfections and gaps in representation, as well as a multiplicity of voices.

Our relationship to the past, suggests Nora, reveals something radically different from what is expected of history; it no longer demonstrates a retrospective continuity but – "the illumination of discontinuity."[48] Discontinuity is necessary however for the very existence of memory – for there to be a sense of past there had to be a "before" and "after" – a gap that intervenes to separate the present from the past and the force behind the constant up-dating of the past and therefore present. The idea of continuity envisioned by the notion of modern progress in a sense has to be reassembled from fragments. Therefore, the collective consideration of these fragments, represented in the present study by the narratives offered by my respondents, must be engaged in the work of holding onto the disruptive, negative, and incomplete nature of individual memory even as it seeks to hold these discontinuities together in order to fashion a deep sense of the collective.

The present study is based on the adaptation of oral stories, their transcripts and interpretation, which from the moment of transcription aims to impose structure of grammar

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[46] White, *Metahistory* (1973), discussed in Cobley 2014, 30.

[47] Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire," *Representations* (Spring, 1989): 16

[48] Ibid.

and punctuation onto the oral sources. Working with transcripts, Alessandro Portelli once compared this to studying art from its reproductions in "On the Peculiarities of Oral History."[49] Stripped of the emotional function, of rhythms and pauses, gestures and intonation, the transcripts offered here present a secondary source despite representing, as far as they are presented in English, a third distillation of the interviewees; and yet they are a valuable source when it comes to studying the negative – the losses and absences, restructuring and transformation and most importantly, time itself. Oral sources are fundamentally narrative sources.[50] They mix historical and poetic, "truth" and "imagination," continuity and discontinuity, etc. This, therefore, is what defines oral history – it tells us more about the meaning of the events, than the events. The meaning, moreover, is found in the divergence of facts, "where imagination, symbolism, desire to break in."[51] What ties the meaning of the interviews together is their relationship to the immediate material circumstances that the individuals are re-experiencing and rationalizing.

4. Space and Time

VY: Do you remember your childhood?

Oksana: Vaguely… […] You know, I thought that I remembered myself since like grade 9, and then it turned out that there are some things that I recall from the age of

[49] Alessandro Portelli, "On the Peculiarities of Oral History." *History Workshop Journal* #12 (1981): 97.

[50] Ibid., 98.

[51] Ibid., 100.

> 3 or 2 years – I didn't know. Also, you know, everything mixes up between what your parents have told you and what you remember…

When considering the narratives of children's experience that are the concern of this study and that extend across this chasm between the collapse of the old and rise of something new, it is crucial to view them as testimonies to temporalities of lived experience and perspective historically rooted in places. The social world of this turbulent decade as it exists in narrative is our access now to a generation of children that are both and sometimes neither Soviet nor Ukrainian, and yet are crucially bound to a fragmented temporality that holds their narrative framework together.

Temporality is lived time: time that presupposes a human agent in body and consciousness; that is, temporality refers to lived time as social time, as time defined and reproduced by socio-economic forces arising within the culturally embedded forms of life experienced in collectivity. Along these lines, Paul Connerton defines temporality in terms of "institutionalized and organized time schedules which crucially structure a person's experience of time."[52] This concept of temporality as encompassing the organizing structure of the form of appearance of lived experience is especially resonant within the present study of childhood in Ukraine. As a system of appearances, temporality is necessarily and significantly a system of forgetting. The very category of "Ukraine" that informs its conception of childhood is something of a fluid and contested concept in reference to the period of relentless organizational adaptation with which this study is concerned. One of the key features of life in the decade in Ukraine from 1986 to 1996 is the constant changing of temporalities in response to constantly evolving uncertainty and crisis. Each of these multiple temporalities were comprised upon systems of forgetting if not also re-education. Ukraine's modern temporality, in the way more generally suggested by

[52] Connerton, *How Modernity Forgets*, 40.

Connerton, "entails an abbreviation of history and a corresponding form of cultural forgetting."[53]

At the same time, memory cuts across the temporalities with the question of "do you remember?" To remember is to journey through multiple temporalities in search of place, and along the way there are often many spaces that must be crossed. Oksana's response to the query "Do you remember your childhood" is ripe with awareness of conflicting temporalities and positions, but the question itself is already in the first place deserving of reflection. It is not in the beginning a simple question of "What do you remember" but always the question "do you remember—at all"—which is to acknowledge that memory is not itself something that pre-exists but rather is a work and a process, a product of several sources, decisions, commitments and not least of all traumas. As such, the work of memory is inflected in narrative, and Oksana's response is at once honest of this fact and the problem of what it means to remember and forget. There is also the specter of whose agenda these processes represent and how individual agency is tasked with negotiating these conditions in the formation of narrative memory which must always grasp hold of both the past and the present.

Oksana's immediate sense of childhood memory actually formalizes around the age of adolescence, and she is surprised, upon making the effort to see beyond and can recall memories from the age of two or three, and is confronted with a self-realization. This self-realization is however immediately confronted with the complexity of the experience of memory, which opens itself to the perspectives and expectations of others. In her case the "things my parents told me" are what arise first to complicate her ownership of childhood memory as such. This articulation is indicative to the task of remembering childhood, which is always, as we shall see repeatedly in the chapters that follow, an engagement in the work of narrating a connection across space and

[53] Ibid., 40.

time that establishes both a sense of individual agency and a sense of something shared and inherently collective, a concept we might call Childhood.

1991 was my last year in Kindergarten, which I entered at age three in 1987. The doll room in its Soviet form had been a steadfast part of my cultural landscape and a place of meditation for me that grounded my sense of belonging within the institutional formation of the Soviet state. There was never any verbal propaganda attached to the display, which was rather intended to impress and inspire while pointing to the Soviet social system of education and labour to which I was to fully enter as I aged. As such, the doll room not only orientated my present experience in a sense of past glory or unification but also toward a future in which my presence was somehow already accounted for. It was the sense of temporal continuity that the room offered that brought me back to it again and again—and it was the sudden, silent, and unexplained shattering of that continuity that left me in a state of shock the day I showed up to find the room empty. The months that followed were full of rumor and speculation amongst the children, and we were left wondering what was to disappear next. Was this a sign of war? There was no sense in those days that it was somehow a sign of a new peace for Ukraine. It wasn't long after they had finally placed in the room the few sparse emblems of the Ukrainian state that I left Kindergarten and the location of that doll room forever, moving to the larger school. The experience changed the sense of trust I had developed in my surroundings despite the fact that our family had always been working hard to take care of ourselves and the others around us. Our family was on a waiting list for a larger apartment expecting to move from a one-bedroom apartment to a three-bedroom one. The Ukrainian state canceled our relocation, and we grew-up and out-grew our apartment with the definite sense that opportunity had been taken away. The empty doll room continues to work through me as an experience, even today, as I trace back over my experience in the brutal and often tragic years that followed as Ukrainians of all ages tried to find security in the new conditions.

Human accounts with the "re-forming" economy of Perestroika provide us with data on how humans perceive and live through time. Full of rhetoric about time, "Perestroika," in the words of Katherine Verdery, "reversed Soviet ideas as to whose time-definition and rhythms were dominant and where dynamism lay: no longer within the socialist system but outside it."[54] A similar phenomenon is experienced when the dynamism of social relationship disappears into the time where "nothing happens," an experience most recently studied by Stef Jansen in his 2015 book *Yearnings in the Meantime*. Describing the reality of everyday life of post 1995 war Sarajevo and its surroundings, he develops a concept of "spatiotemporal entrapment,"[55] where memory becomes the source for reproduction of the everyday meaning of life, when "mis-remembered" or modified recollections are re-narrated to adjust the meaning of the social to explain the new norm of life, which had suddenly become unfamiliar. In Ukraine, the reforming of economy, politics and culture, in other words, extended its work to the daily work of remembering and forgetting that makes up social consciousness.

Places "shape" human experience through surrounding people with opportunities for profit, survival and entertainment – or shall I say humans engage with their surroundings and make them significant? Evidently, the relationship between the two is complex and dynamic. Basso prefers to call it the "sensing of place," which, just like language, is "neither biological imperative… nor means to group cohesiveness."[56] It is rather a cultural activity "a kind of imaginative experience, a species of involvement with the natural and social environment, a way of appropriating portions of earth."[57] Appropriating space and filling it with personal meaning

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[54] Katherine Verdery, *What was Socialism and What comes next?* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1996), 36.

[55] Stef Jansen, Y*earnings in the Meantime: 'Normal Lives' and the State in a Sarajevo Apartment Complex* (New York: Berghahn, 2015), 157.

[56] Keith Basso and Steven Feld, Eds. *Senses of Place*. (Sante Fe: School of American Research Press, 1996), 143.

[57] Ibid.

is what humans often do to try to establish a sense of coherence within their own life. Studying how space leads to country identification in the imagination of Australian indiginous people, Myers comes to conclusion that all such appropriations of space happen when a story becomes attached to an object, then "a habit of mind that looks behind objects to events and sees in objects of something else."[58] Such transformations, he asserts, are a matter of the "projection" or "reproduction" of determinate social actions and structures. "Country," then, is a system of significant places, a structure isomorphic with landscape of the country.[59] The phrase "in space and time" – Edward Casey summarizes – "is telling: the reproduction is in some preexisting medium."[60] Medium of sensing the place, in other words, is narration. Verbalized accounts with time and space are created upon narration and in recollection.

Another example of how social meaning of location is invented is offered by Paul Connerton in *How Societies Remember*. He acknowledges that much of spatial and temporal constructions are defined through opposition. Concepts of rural and urban, play and work are experienced by children not only in their spatial locations but also as certain way of life, a system of rituals and practices. Rituals and practices of childhood during the collapse of the Soviet Union and early independent Ukraine structured children's perception of space and time. What must be accounted for in understanding the construction of a concept of Ukrainian childhood for this period is that rituals and practices disappeared even as children continued to reproduce their existence in practices of all kinds that developed into what can be thought of as play-scapes, or

[58] Fred Myers, *Pintupi Country, Pintupi Self: Sentiment, Place, and Politics among Western Desert Aborigines* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1991), 67.

[59] Edward Casey, "How to get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time: Phenomenological Prologomena," *Senses of Place*, Ed. Keith Basso and Steven Feld (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1996), 15.

[60] Ibid.

the territorialisation of children's independence even as the symbolic and material ground upon which they existed shifted underfoot.

5. Specters of Infancy

1979 was proclaimed by UNESCO to be the International Year of the Child. The globalizing world had begun to pay more attention to the rights of children throughout the preceding decades. Both the 1956 Bill of Human Rights and Phillepe Aries's seminal history *Centuries of Childhood* (1960/trans Eng 1962)[61] were important events in terms of increasing both scholarly interest in and policy activity around children. UNESCO's efforts to put the rights of children on the global agenda was a major stepping stone toward the unveiling of the United Nations' *Convention on the Rights of the Child* in 1989, the establishment of which is intimately linked to the birth of the disciplinary study of children and childhood around the same time. 1989 in Ukraine was a turbulent year politically, as Nationalist protest groups put further pressure on Moscow for reform in the areas of both language and economy. For me in Ukraine, the UN's "Convention" was completely off the radar, as were respect for children's rights. During this time I can remember adults coming into our Kindergarten and asking the teacher to "loan" them some students to take to the store so they would be allotted more goods. Incidentally, my sister and I were frequently given out on loan, due to our propensity to not complain. While the *Convention* outlined the rights of children in the modern era, in Ukraine the opposite movement was equally at work. When I consider the experiences of children in Ukraine at this time in history, they appear as spectral figures alongside the United Nations' discourse on childhood and the burgeoning discipline of Childhood Studies, which would take another quarter of a century to reach Ukraine in the form of this study.

[61] Philippe Aries, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life* (New York: Knopf, 1970 [1962]).

Embedded in this sequence from the Bill of Rights to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, is Giorgio Agamben's provocative study *Infanzia e Storia* in 1978 (*Infancy and History,* trans. 1993) a series of arguments defining the concept of infancy in relation to human temporality and historical continuity.[62] In the essay "In Playland," Agamben argues that play is productive of a kind of counter-temporality, to a speeding up of time that he traces, through the work of Levi-Straus and others, to the social opposition of ritual and play through which human time proceeds in the negotiation of social continuity. Children's play takes on here a dynamic productive role in social reproduction through the profanation of the sacred and the creation of new and disruptive interpretative engagements with the adult world.

For Agamben, infancy is a category that exists before language, a mute site in human development and experience, or culture, where the categories of instability come into contact and are exchanged with signifiers of continuity. The work of infancy comes first in the form of "play," in which one "frees himself from sacred time and 'forgets' it in human time." [63] Children, as "humanity's little scrap-dealers," serve, through play, to both disrupt and displace signifiers of the "sacred" or "practical economic sphere" and to "[preserve] profane objects and behavior that have ceased to exist." As such, what is vital for Agamben's notion of infancy is precisely that its appearance is negated by the exchange of signifiers that defines its function: it must be made to disappear in order to be recognized functionally.

As a discourse, it is precisely the function of Childhood Studies to free the signifiers of infancy from the theoretical determinations of modernity, for modernity is the time when the strongest definitions of a child come into place – not in the sense of the invention of childhood but in the reification of the endeavor to separate childhood from adulthood that still comes back to us as never-ending generational communication breakdown. Agamban's discourse on infancy

[62] In Agamben, *Infancy and History*.

[63] Ibid., 70

is not an attempt to "free infancy" but rather a critique of the modernity that limits and preys upon its reproductive capacities. I introduce Agamben here in order to establish a relationship between children's play and its material condition and the reproduction of history through the production of narrative memory. The childhood I picture in this work is the childhood of the "nots," of deprivation and lack, deficit and loss. Negativity, however, does not make it any less worthy of positivist explorations, for it is often the world of negation that is missing from the complete puzzle of children's absent experiences.

Through the work of play, Agamben shifts the site of infancy from subject to object, where it is possible for him to see infancy as pure functionality. Even as children enter Agamben's discourse, they are displaced by the objects that occupy their time. Furthermore, these objects and the activity of play that engage them are predetermined as the sacred property of a paternal culture. Such exclusion is not incidental but the function of his modernity's expropriation, in advance, of all experience including that of infancy. Agamben's intuitive movement toward the 'gap' and 'discontinuity' is what defines the relationship of a child confronting the disappearance of dolls – the objects of play essential to childhood.

Agamben's insights into the socially spectral nature of childhood—not only its ghostly character but childhood's special relationship to what has passed away adds to the discourse of Childhood Studies an awareness to the negativity of children's relations to the social. This theorization of children's productive spectrality provides me a necessary tool for understanding the question of what disappeared along with those dolls, and what remained – of them, of childhood — in their absence. This question necessarily takes shape through memory and as such the human time on display throughout this study is a function of what can be thought of as narrative play. As the medium through which childhood is accessed, narrative arises as a productive force capable of confronting childhood experience and speaking into the regions that were unavailable to us as children. Narrative, like the toy and child's play that animates it, enters

into the differential margin of the "once upon a time" and "no longer" and plays with our sense of time, distorting our past but also making it available to each other and ourselves in a new way. The doll room at my Kindergarten embodies for me a point of tension in my childhood that goes beyond my personal sense of confusion, fear and disappointment. Its sudden disappearance is an event that structures my narrative entry into childhood, back into the space-time of this study.

Likewise, Andrii, to whom I spoke in the presence of his two friends, starts his narration with a series of images surrounding the death of Secretary General Brezhnev in 1982, which he observed on his way to kindergarten. This recollection of a seemingly routine walk is, unpredictably, followed by another memory of an incomprehensible new practice – children were taught to always cover their head when it was raining. The memory can be pinpointed in the post-Chornobyl time period, when rain was commonly considered radioactive and harmful to skin, hair and the body in general. In recollection, the weight of a historical moment disrupts both Andrii's and Vasyl's child consciousness and marks the beginning of their childhood recollections:

> Andrii: I remember very accurately from around 3 years old – when Brezhnev died, that's when I had a strong impression. My mom was walking me to the kindergarten, there were portraits [of Brezhnev] with black ribbons. That time I had actually realized for the first time where I was going, to the kindergarten… Perhaps, that entire context influenced me so much, and then…
>
> Vasyl: I remember 1986, when children were not allowed to go outside without a hat … because some war had started…
>
> VY: What war?
>
> Everybody: Chornobyl…

Andrii: Well, it was thought so; there were rumors that a war had started…

Vasyl: And not to get into the rain…

The significance of these narrative events is that they situate their narrators in confrontation with historical forces that nonetheless accentuate their individual experience and awareness. The spectacle of the mourning ritual for Brezhnev leads to a new awareness of the social function of school; the social anxiety and confusion over Chornobyl registers in the disruptive imperative to keep one's head out of the rain. Forgotten memories are parts of remembering that, as Luisa Passerini argues, are often triggered by social upheavals, such as the collapse of the Berlin wall, or Holocaust reconciliation debates.[64] The silence that often occupies the space of childhood memories is often a sign of misplaced memory, its existence, and its negative source. Silence, she asserts, is one of the ways of remembering, it makes it possible to distance oneself from the past without necessarily forgetting it and in the public sphere forgetting can have a positive meaning.

When I think of the doll room and how it anchors my own childhood narrative, there is a way in which my whole childhood sometimes seems to exist there, in the months the room was left empty in between Soviet and Ukrainian space-times. The meaning of that emptiness however is something that can only be approached collectively, through an archaeology of narratives testifying to what is no longer there of the transitional and generationally specific experience of being children through the collapse and rise of opposing state and culture systems in the wake of a national disaster. The disappearance of the dolls, first from the hands of children, and later – from the display, represents a moment of change, a *perestroika* or restructuring at the level of children's experience. This dissertation is an attempt to capture and explore the realities and meaning(s) of children's lives around the moment when the dolls

[64] Louisa Passerini, "Memories Between Silence and Oblivion, Contested Pasts." *The Politics of Memory*, Hodgkin Katharine, Radstone Susannah Eds (New York: Transaction, 2003), 238 – 252.

disappeared from day cares and stores, and sometimes the imagination of children in Ukraine circa 1991. Often times, we, the children of Chornobyl, lived like ghosts in the parts of our worlds increasingly neglected and forgotten. With my mind cast back to the doll room in the empty time between, Agamben's analysis of childhood's spectral nature, as attested in the epigraph to this chapter, resonates in the dark silence of that time.

Chapter II

Chornobyl Mysteries: Defining a Generation through Absence

1. Introduction

'News' of the accident of April 26, 1986,[65] did not reach the people of Ukraine for nearly three weeks; and when 'it' arrived through television and radio it proved impossible to comprehend, a fragmented discourse of danger and catastrophe trying to grope at the meaning of nuclear technology and radioactive particles. It took the Soviet government 18 days to acknowledge that anything out of the ordinary had happened. The very accident was not a brief moment either. The initial explosion caused the reactor core to melt down completely. Explosive fire blazed for over ten days, releasing fatal doses of radiation over the North-East of Europe. Early in the 1990s, impact of the disaster was compared to the equivalent of 1,000 Hiroshima bombs, but was later downgraded to 400 Hiroshima events in 2005. All this spectacle, packaged repeatedly for Western audiences via media sponsored documentary films over the decades since, would remain invisible within Ukraine to virtually all but the approximately 600, 000 volunteers who served as 'liquidators' of the 10-day fire and the at least 200,000 clean-up workers who, according to scarce and poorly documented statistics, absorbed "6 to 8 times the lethal dose of radiation" and did not survive to make sense of what they had done and why, let alone pass such insights on to friends and family.[66]

Damage to the immune system and the genetic structure of the Ukrainian population, caused by the unprecedented exposure to radioactive elements, was massive. Rare, catastrophic illnesses were widely documented. The damage to Ukraine's fragile social relations, however,

[65] When one of four nuclear reactors at the Chornobyl' Nuclear Power Station in the Ukrainian town of Prypiat overheated and exploded.

[66] Adrianna Petryna, "Nuclear Payouts: Knowledge and Compensation in the Chernobyl Aftermath." *Anthropology Now*, Special Atomic Issue Vol.1, No. 2 (2009): 30-39; 32-33.

was even greater and this aspect of the 'disaster,' the silent unravelling of social confusion and crisis intertwined with the uneven outpourings of the disaster itself, is the Chornobyl of the children at that time and the one revealed and explored in this chapter.

For example, letters from grade five and seven students published in *Soniashnyk* #3, 1991 reflect children's concerns about the environment; it quotes letters to the magazine from grade five students from Loznytsia in Zhytomyr oblast, in Northern Ukraine that was part of the Chornobyl zone:

> My grandpa used to live in the village Nozdryshche. How wonderful it used to be for me to go visit him. But now the village had been evacuated, and it hurts me to look at the broken well rod that my grandpa used to take water from. There is no way to enter the village now. It had been surrounded by the barbed wire. I climbed the fence and ran fast to the house. I was calling out for grandpa, but there was no sound to hear. Only a young tree grew by the house. I tore a tiny branch off it and squeezed it close to my heart. It smelled like grandpa.

Another letter follows:

> We often hear that in our country all the best is for children. We don't feel it however. Our village Loznytsja belongs to the sites most polluted by radionuclides. But we have been living here for 5 years already. It hurts to imagine that in a few years we might leave our native Loznytsja forever. It is hard to believe that there will be no longer an opportunity to step barefoot on the native soil of your village, play in the sand or swim in a river. We cannot understand how the grass and flowers have become our enemies. [67]

The disaster of Chornobyl frequently in what follows brings up the fear of displacement, of "exile" in a home country. *Soniashnyk,* the only-of-its-kind illustrated Ukrainian magazine for

[67] See Appendix 1. Figure 3.

children offers children sympathy, lament, and tales of sorrow and suffering – but almost none of the popular press for children speaks about the actual events and outcomes of Chornobyl. There are no real stories of actual 'victims' – disabled persons, orphans, cancer survivors, or children who like my respondent Liudmyla spent hours crying about her usual summer trip to grandma's being canceled; neither are there any stories of happy receivers of the much fetishized foreign humanitarian aid, no complaints or experiences associated with going to a sanatorium or summer camp with or as "privileged" children etc. in these pages. There was no information about real risks of radiation either. Nobody is sending children for a blood test, thyroid checkup, or recommending taking iodine supplements. The disaster is spoken about in a poetic language of lament, encouraging myriad messianic prophecies of a recuperation that seems forever absent and only further alienating children from their own experience of loss. The loss is an elephant in the room that everyone is silent about. Information 'gap' or 'vacuum,' commonly assigned to the very way of Soviet management, after having been supposedly unmasked by Gorbachev's *Glasnost*, was filled with information about Ukraine and its great history full of suffering, providing no comfort to children. There seems to be no explanation to losses and absences that children face every day in any of the children's magazines. Not even adults are able to explain or comprehend the reasons. What children's magazines in the period of *Glasnost* truly demonstrate is the absence of any reasoning or solution coming from the adult world.

Published by diaspora and available in Ukraine throughout the 1980-1990s, the Plast organization magazine (Ukrainian equivalent of Scouts and Guides for both boys and girls) called *Iunak* ("young man" in Ukr.) devotes special attention to reporting news about the Chornobyl disaster among Ukrainians overseas, especially children, and encourages communication between Ukrainian youth and its foreign peers. The magazine's rhetorical undertone pointed at "the communists' crime and conspiracy" also fails to deliver necessary coherence. One of many reports on "How the youth experiences the Chornobyl disaster"

summarizes the discussions that diaspora youth had at a Plast scout meeting. The article reports:

> There were many talks, advising on how to help children in need – victims of the Chornobyl tragedy. Their contributions were not realistic, however. Thus, taking advice from the friend Iurii, all decided to ask parents, teachers and other adults for the advice on how to make the projects real. The meeting was adjured with a regular prayer to the Lord for the faith of Ukraine.[68]

As if to emphasize the apparent disconnect between children's experience and its utopian form of appearance, on the same page below, under the rubric "We ought to know," follows an article about the legendary American Oreo cookie and its long, delicious history since 1911.[69]

Before investigating the discourse relating to Chornobyl circulating in the children's press, the following part of this chapter is comprised of interview responses to a single prompt regarding childhood awareness of "Chornobyl." Truly, all we know about Chornobyl must be learned retrospectively; and this work of recollection, as the responses below make clear, is akin to making something (appear) out of nothing. As such, the following interviews document a sense of surprise: the realization that, within the generalized absence of the event itself from both culture and language there nevertheless emerges a keen and complicated awareness of

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[68] See Appendix 1. Figure 1; *Yunak* #11 (1986): 3.

[69] Our readers in North America must all know well one of the most popular treats called "Oreo" and is made by popular American firm "Nabisco." According to the Guinness book of records for 1985, "Oreo" cookie was the most popular and most often bought around the world. For examples, in 1982 there were 6 billion of "Oreo" cookies sold just in the USA and Canada.

First "Oreo" cookie made by Nabisco was sold in a grocery store in Hoboken, New Jersey on March 6, 1912; however, the cookie was being produced since June 1911 when they were first called "Oreo". Nowadays, they are produced by automatic machinery 2 thousand cookies per minute. Even though the production has been automatized, it did not influence the taste of "Oreo" ; and it could be said that everyone consumes these cookies with pleasure" ("75th Anniversary of the Oreo Cookie", *Yunak* #11 (1986): 3).

"chornobyltsi" – the children of Chornobyl – which appears here not only as a biological category but as a concept twisted into a new and indispensable social relation.

2. Recollections

(The following excerpts are translation from interviews conducted by the author. The original transcript has been provided in the notes to preserve the slippages between Ukrainian, Russian, and surzhyk that exist in the original conversations and their transcripts)

Liudmyla (1978) grew up in L'viv, L'viv obl., and Ovruch, Zhytomyrs'ka obl.

VY: Do you remember anything about Chornobyl?

Liudmyla: Yeah-ha-ha. Ovruch, at grandma's, where I lived; it was [in the] Chornobyl zone. For me, it was an ugly psycho-trauma… There all children were evacuated. Right away, to pioneer camps.

VY: You, too?

Liudmyla: Not me. I was already in school, in grade one [in L'viv, Ukraine]; and I was told at school, teachers came and said that children must not go outside; and that they would come around and check whether children were at home. Not to leave the house, in short. But every summer I went to Ovruch! And now dad tells me I am not going nowhere! I cried like a beluga whale. Yeah. But grandma found a way. My grandma – Ovruch is a military town – lived not far away from KPP (Border checkpoint at the military base – VY) and often hosted soldiers' wives that came to visit, or soldiers' mothers. And one of those mothers – she lived in Chernovtsy oblast; they became friends. Well, and she [the friend] wrote to her about Chornobyl and stuff,

and invited her to come with her grandchildren. My brother and I went there for three months, to that village. There was also lots of stuff. [70]

VY: Tell me more about Chornobyl, please. You were saying there were children considered to be the victims of Chornobyl?

Liudmyla: That's right. At our school, for instance – here, in the Sykhiv [municipal district], in L'viv school – nearly a half of all children… It was a new district and the state gave many apartments to the chornobyltsi. In our Sykhiv school, 'the children of Chornobyl had also studied, and were treated specially; that's why we didn't like these kids much. [71]

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[70]VY Ой! Чорнобиль ще! Пам'ятаєш щось про Чорнобиль?

Liudmyla (in Ukrainian, code-switching to Russian at times): Та-та-та. Оскільки Овруч, там де я у бабушки жила, це – Чорнобильська зона. Для мене це була страшна псіхотравма… Там всіх дітей вивезли звідти. Зразу ж, в лагеря піонерські. […]

VY: Тебе тоже?

Liudmyla: Мене – нє, тому що я вже у першому класі вчилася і мені сказали в школі, прийшли вчителі і сказали, щоби дети из дома летом не выходили – мы будем ходить по домам и проверять, сидят ли дома дети, короче не выходить из дома. І я ж тіпа кажне літо іду в Овруч, а тут тато каже, що нє поєдеш в Овруч. Я ридала як білуга. От. Но бабушка нашла выход. А бабушка, Овруч, такий воєнний городок, вона жила якраз біля КПП і часто в себе приймала солдатських жон, які приїжджали до солдатів, або матєрєй солдатських. І одна з таких солдатських матєрєй, вона в Чєрновицкой області жила і вони так здружилися, ну і та їй написала – от Чорнобиль, всі дєла, приїжджай з внуками… И мы с братом поехали на три месяцы туда, в те село. І там тоже було всяке разне.

[71] VY: Розкажи більше про Чорнобиль… Ти казала, що був якийсь поділ: діти, які вважалися жертвами Чорнобиля…

Liudmyla (in Ukrainian): Та-та… Наприклад, у нас в школі – тут на Сихові у Львові в школі – в нас половина дітей, оскільки це був новий район, то государство видало там чорнобильцям дуже багато квартир. І в нас в школі Сихівській вчилися дети Чернобыля, і до них було ставлення особливе, тому ми цих дітей не любили дуже. Їм давали дуже круті квартири, тіпа, трьохкімнатні, в них у всіх були машини, вони вдягнуті були краще, ніж ми, якось так забезпеченіші. От. Ну і ставлення до них було соотвєтственно особенне. Навіть як якійсь там дєвочці сказали, що ти така-сяка, родину бросила, уехала – то вона ридала півдня в школі і ми – нам потім вчителька читала лєкцію, о том, как мы могли! У них родина, понимаешь ли, мирным атомом… Взагалі якісь добрі в нас діти були. Вони завжди запрошували до себе на хату, … в них була куча всяких ігрушек, вони всє ходили на роялі, на піаніно кудись… Ми цього всього не мали.

At this point, ***Andrii****, who was sitting by Liudmyla, added*: "Chornobyl hedgehog – this is what children-Chornobyltsi were called." *He had learnt this word while visiting relatives in Tallinn, capital city of Estonia, where some affected by the disaster were relocated.*[72]

Liudmyla continues: They were given cool apartments, like three-bedroom ones, they all had vehicles; they wore better clothes than us – somewhat better provided for there. Thus, they were treated differently. Once someone told some girl that she was this and that, because she had betrayed her motherland, [she] went away; so that girl bawled at school half of the day; and we got a lecture from the teacher about 'how could we!!' Their land, if you could understand, was [destroyed] by the peaceful atom…In general, kids were kind somehow. They [Chornobyl kids] used to always invite us over… they had lots of toys; they all went to piano [lessons] somewhere… We didn't have any of this. [73]

VY: What do you mean by 'Chornobyl children'?

Liudmyla: Well, I went there [to the camp] [as the one] from Ovruch; and there were tons of Chornobyl children, well, all children – [were] Chornobyls'kyi; and I went because the aunt of Alinochka's (close friend) neighbor worked at school; and she somehow put Alinochka and I on the list, with a big *blat,*[74] to go to those camps. And, understandably, the camps for Chornobyltsi were much cooler than the ones for the ordinary mortals, the ones I used to go before. […]

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[72] "Chornobyl's'kyi jozhyk" – term also discussed by Bodrunova in relation to the cartoon "Hedgehog in the Fog."

[73] Liudmyla (in Ukrainian): Їм давали дуже круті квартири, тіпа, трьохкімнатні, в них у всіх були машини, вони вдягнуті були краще, ніж ми, якось так забезпеченіші. От. Ну і ставлення до них було соотвєтственно особенне. Навіть як якійсь там дєвочці сказали, що ти така-сяка, родину бросила, уехала – то вона ридала півдня в школі і ми – нам потім вчителька читала лєкцію, о том, как мы могли! У них родина, понимаешь ли, мирным атомом… Взагалі якісь добрі в нас діти були. Вони завжди запрошували до себе на хату, … в них була куча всяких ігрушек, вони всє ходили на роялі, на піаніно кудись… Ми цього всього не мали.

[74] Blat – practice of favor economies; exchange of goods and services based on personal connections, common after the collapse of the Soviet Union. See, Ledeneva, Alena. *Russia's Economy of Favours: Blat, Networking and Informal Exchange*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

There also was a dreadful moment, regarding a boy I knew that died of cancer. He was born in the year of Chornobyl. He was younger than me some six years or so; and he spent all his young years terribly and was dying terribly. It was the first death of someone I knew in my life … He was just about to go to school; I had already been attending grade four or five. We were acquainted. There was some difference in age between us, but he used to come play with us; a nice boy he was; and his parents, when he was five, had moved to Moscow. His step-father was in the military, and that's why they moved to Moscow. And there, within some half a year, he was diagnosed with that cancer, and then to die he had come to Ovruch, to grandma's…Understandably, all children [can] get sick, and Chornobyl, and there we are… [75]

Viktor, born in 1981, grew up in Zdolbuniv, Rivnens'ka oblast' and L'viv, Western Ukraine.

In my interview with Viktor he discovers a connection between toys and the victims of Chornobyl in his childhood almost surprisingly for himself. He pauses and laughs in astonishment having realized the source of his most cherished moments.

Viktor: Most emotional excitements [related to toys] were around 'models' [toy cars, collectables] when they appeared – it was already in 1989-90s – parents started bringing them

[75] VY: Хто такі Чорнобильці?

Liudmyla (in Ukrainian, mostly): Ну, я ж з Овруча їздила, а там була куча Чорнобильських дітей, та всі діти – Чорнобильські, а я їздила, бо Аліночки сусідки тьотя працювала в школі, і вона нас з Аліночкою якось вписувала по большому блату в эти лагеря. Ну, и понятно, що ці лягеря для Чорнобильців були набагато кращі, ніж тіпа для простих смертних, в які я раніше їздила… […] Такий ще ужасний момент був, пов'язаний з тим, що хлопчик, мій знайомий, помер від раку. Він народився якраз в Чорнобильський рік. Він був младший за мене, десь на шість років, але він типу провів усі свої прекрасні малі роки і ужасно помирав. Це така перша смерть знайомого в мому житті… Він якраз в школу збирався йти. … я вже десь в червертому чи пятому класі вчилася. Він наш знайомий був. В нас різниця була у віці, але він приходив до нас гратися, хороший мальчік був, і батьки його, коли йому було десь пять років, вони виїхали в Москву. Оскільки отчим його був військовий, вони типу перебралися в Москву, ну але там за півроку йому діагностували той рак і він помирати вже приїхав в Овруч, до бабушкі… Ну, понятно, що діти хворіють, і Чорнобиль, і всі діла.

from Poland [traveling from L'viv, western Ukraine]; actually, Poles used to travel over here too. And Germany (he pauses, and then continues surprised by a discovery). Listen, it was … 'chornobyltsi'!!! They were the ones who received most… Germany sent them humanitarian aid; and our building was half populated by 'chornobyltsi'. […] They started moving in right after the disaster in 1986-87; and we have already been actively hanging out. My neighbors from upstairs, under stairs, and sides [in the apartment building] were 'Chornobyltsi' and children… They opened a whole world to us. I mean German aid, chocolates, chewing gum – even before it had started arriving from Poland. We were happy that the neighbor kids had it; we shared access, hung out. [76]

Viktor called neighborhood Chornobyl children "resource" children, children with access to the distribution of good and services that were considered to be a privilege in the eyes of their peers. Deflated, money was not of much interest to children. Children joked about being a millionaire who can barely afford a car at the time; about a loaf of bread priced in thousands of local money – kupony, coupons, denomination starting with a 100 bill – and not being able to possess, own or purchase anything. What brings children feeling of joy or power is a social relationship that offers a gift of sharing access to privileges.

Resource children were usually children of parents who travelled for work – the most appraised parents. A new resource—a broken social scheme where the "source" of welfare

[76] Viktor (in Ukrainian): Найбільші емоційні сплески були, коли вже з'явилися модельки - це вже 89-тий, 90-тий… почали привозити або з Польщі батьки, або навіть… я не думаю, поляки самі до нас їхали…. З Німеччини… Слухай, - "чорнобильці"! От, хто найбільше їх отримував. Німеччина слала їм гуманітарну допомогу. А наш будинок був на половину "чорнобильцями" заселений. Вони переїхали одразу після аварії, 86-87-ий, вони заселялися, і ми вже з ними дуже активно спілкувалися. Наші сусіди зверху, знизу, з боків - то "чорнобильці", і дітлахи їх теж … І вони відкривали нам весь світ. Це - допомога від Німеччини, це чоколяди, жуйки - ще поляки того не везли, як вони з Німеччини те все отримували. І ми дуже тішилися, що ми мали, діти сусідські мали - ми були у спільному доступі, бавилися…

comes only to the receivers of humanitarian aid, one of the most marginal(ised) groups of children – those from the "zone" of Chornobyl (radius), most affected by the explosion.

Iryna, born in 1984, grew up in L'viv, Western Ukraine.

VY: Do you remember anything about Chornobyl?

Iryna replies confidently at first: "Remember nothing. I was one year old".

Then she pauses. Takes a sip of water, and picks up on what at first seems like switching the topic:

Iryna: Mom and I used to go to Morshyn (spring water sanatorium in L'viv oblast), and there always were some Chornobyltsi, who would get everything (treatment) free of charge. I also remember my neighbors, medical doctors who were liquidators [of the disaster's aftermath in the zone], and their faces became black. It was present all the time – all these talks, everybody was scared. When my mom was on maternity leave with me – we were having a great time. Then, [people] began to talk – suggesting stretching a wet cloth over the window frame [to protect from radiation] – foolish things that are funny to even talk about… [Someone] brings over something large, like a huge cucumber – meaning it was Chornobyls'kyi ("from Chornobyl"). We used to joke like that, but I surely had no idea what it meant, "Chornobyl"…[77]

[77] VY: Помнишь Чернобыль?

Iryna (in Russian): … Ничего не помню – мне был один год… […] Мы с мамой ездили в Моршин [spring water sanatorium in L'viv oblast] и там всегда были какие-то чернобыльцы, у которых все было бесплатно. И еще помню – у меня соседи, они врачи и работали ликвидаторами; и их лица черного цвета стали… Это присутствовало все время – эти разговоры, все боялись. Мама была в декрете со мной, мы отлично проводили время. Потом стали говорить – вешайте мокрую тряпочку на окно – какие-то такие глупости, что говорить о них смешно… Привезут что-то большое, какой-то большой огурец – значит он чернобыльский. Как-то мы так шутили, но я, конечно, понятия не имела, что это значит – «Чернобыль»…]

Natasha, born in 1984, grew up in Lozova, Kharkivska oblast', North-East Ukraine

VY Do you remember hearing about Chornobyl for the first time?

Natasha: No. Definitely not.

VY: I think there was something at school about it… Remembrance day…

Natasha: That's right, at school. Yeah. But we did not understand what it was and why… We used to go to [public events, parades] on May 9 (WWII Victory Day), May 1, May 2 – you understood that it was about the War, but with Chornobyl… back then I didn't even know that Chornobyl was a town; or – what was it called? – Prypiat. We had no idea who the flowers were laid for and why? It was incomprehensible – why did they die and how? Then, later already, the talking began, at school. Remember such topics, don't you? With Galina Anatolievna (geography teacher), we were in grade 5, and there were social studies where we were informed that it had happened – that's it – yes. But to hear about it (Chornobyl) from parents – no. I don't recall hearing anything about Chornobyl from parents. Although at school, it was delivered. Art classes. He showed us images, *Olivchik* [*Pencil* in Ukrainian, a nicknamed for an art class teacher].[78]

[78] VY: А как ты первый раз услывала про Чернобыль, помнишь?

Natasha (in Russian, mostly): Нет. Точно нет.

VY: Мне кажется, что я впервые узнала, когда мы уже были в школе… И там в этот день мы куда-то ходилию…

Natasha: В школе точно. Да. Да. Но мы не понимали, что это и почему, что такое… […] Мы ходили на 9-е мая, да, там, первое, второе, на девятое мая мы ходили – ты понимал, что это война, там, а когда Чернобыль – я тогда даже не понимала, что Чернобыль – это город… Ну не город, как он там назывался – Прыпять. Даже не соображали, кому мы несем цветы, за что – непонятно, чего они там умерли, как? А потом уже дальше начали рассказывать, на предметах. Были же темы такие, помнишь? Когда Галина Анатольевна у нас вела, это пятый класс и были темы просто развивающие, и чтобы мы были в курсе, что такое было – вот это – да. Но чтобы так услышать от родителей за это – нет. Я не помню, чтобы я слышала от

Andrii, born in 1978 p, grew up in L'viv, Western Ukraine

I talked to Andrii in the presence of other people, who all agreed to see how the process looks like and reserved a right to join at any point if they felt like it. They all contributed. To a question on whether he recalls any special events about Chornobyl he replies:

Andrii: I remember '86, when it was forbidden to all children to go outside without a hat, because some war had started…

VY: What war…!?

Everybody: Chornobyl!

Andrii: I mean, so we were told. There were rumors and some said that the war had started…

Vasyl [Andrii's friend adds]: And not to get in the rain.[79]

Andrii picks up few minutes later.

Andrii: Actually, one of my earliest memories from kindergarten… is that the Americans are about to throw a bomb. That's why, usually, when there was a plane in the air, and we heard noises, eee-u-u-u-u, we all used to freeze, every time we thought that it could have been a bomb.

родителей за Чернобыль. А вот в школе уже начали доносить… На рисовании… Картинки же выставлял, показывал, Оливчик.

[79] Andrii (in Ukrainian): Я пам'ятаю 86-тий рік, коли заборонили всім дітям вибігати без шапочок на вулицю тому, що почалась якась війна…

VY: Яка війна?

Всі: Чорнобиль…

Андрій: Нє, ну так говорили, слухи ходили різні, казали, там, війна почалася…

Василь: І під дощ не попадати…

It's not funny, it is scary actually, to think something like that all the time – that it is about to blow up; especially after all those films.[80]

3. Chornobyl Revelations: The Crisis as Documented by the Children's Press

Chornobyl happened one month after Gorbachev's politics of openness was instituted. *Glasnost,* as the new 'transparency' was termed, was to usher in a new era of information freedom. Although *Glasnost* did lead to improvement in the quality and quantity of data provided[81] (particularly welcome was a more rigorous approach to definition and an attempt to secure greater international comparability), the media itself struggled to manage increasingly overwhelming amounts of "bad news" excreting from the "bad luck" administration. As Bruce Grant proves it, *Glasnost* was supported mostly by intellectuals, and less so by the workers, who depend on media not just for entertainment but also some sense of ground.

Glasnost was not 'to the taste' of the party either. State officials at all levels complained of "sensationalism" and "irresponsibility" – some of whom pressed for journalists to be made legally responsible for the accuracy of their stories.[82] Gorbachev himself accused the media of abuse of *Glasnost* for the purpose of incitement and even called for the suspension of the law on

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[80] Andrii (in Ukrainian): Взагалі, ще одні з моїх ранніх спогадів, коли я в дитсадок ходив, то там, в дитсадку…[…] про то, що американці можуть бомбу скинути, причому ось-ось… Тому коли летів літак, десь ввечері, як правило, і чулись такі звуки іііуууу, то одразу всі завмирали, і думали, що, може, це якраз американці кинули бомбу. І то не смішно, то дійсно страшно, бо кожного разу так думати, що от зараз вона зірветься, ще після тих всяких фільмів…

[81] The handbook on population, for instance, contained the first-ever systematic data on abortions in the USSR. … [For every 5.6 million birth per year there were 6.8 million abortions. […] The first figures on suicide for many decades appeared in early 1989, so did new figures on Soviet crime. Previously all but closed to public discussion, the data, drawn from the files of the Ministry of International Affairs, were the first of their kind to appear since 1920s" (White 1993, 84). As well as prostitution, AIDS and drugs (85-86). The annual handbooks in the late 1980s, for instance, again contained a series of sectorial volumes dealing with population, labour, industry etc., which had not been reported since the 1920s.

[82] White, *After Gorbachev,* 99.

the press adopted in January 1991 that established the right of all Soviet citizens to "express opinions and beliefs [and] to seek, select, receive and disseminate information and ideas in any form."[83] Uncovering troubles of the recent past for the first time [again], contributed to the general disappointment within the public, while reasonably open report of worsening everyday news put emphasis on the end of the Soviet project during *Glasnost*.

Children's Periodicals during this period are suddenly rife with tabloid-style speculations that frequently overwhelm not only the conventional, but the terrestrial. In *Rovesnik* ("Peer") #1 (1991), there is an article of a French journalist, "UFO on a detector screen," an interview with a military general about information that had been recently released to the public – military records of detecting inexplicable UFOs, very much believed to be related to "another life" and visitors from "outer space." To the journalist's question, "why this information had been withheld for so long," the general replies: "Because we are living in the epoch of *Glasnost*. After the Berlin wall, the walls of silence began to degrade." *Glasnost* contained the idea of actively exercising freedom of speech and defined a mode of engagement with the world. Pitched as a politics of openness between the government and its people, *Glasnost* encourages events and thoughts to be verbalized and shared.

In the children's press, the combination of Chornobyl and *glasnost* resulted in the sudden appearance of a range of topics venturing into the paranormal. For example, revelations regarding the space craft evidence in the Bible[84] as described by the prophets; alien visits from other planets and instances of seeing a UFO and many other incomprehensible spiritual experiences are common themes for *The Young Technician*.

Youth #12 (1991) presents an article "Spacecraft in the Bible," – "The Bible is the most mysterious and wonderful artefact from the past. Not only is a source of wisdom and spirit, it is

[83] Ibid.

also a collection of secrets the answers to which still lay in front of us." The article explores the visions of the Old Testament prophet Ezekiel, which are interpreted as some unidentified flying objects: "We want to believe that this brief guide into the secret visions of the prophet Ezekiel will, in some way, shed some light onto the most romantic hypothesis in the world about the extraterrestrial visits to our planet."

Cover of *The Young Technician* #7 (1991) reads: "And saw I as if a glittering metal," an article about "the supernatural events that had took place recently." New rubrics like "XYZ Club," devoted to answering disturbing questions of biological corruption and mutation started in 1986 in the absence of any scientific discourse to structure fears of radiation. This tension is evident in the claim, "There is not a single person in our country [USSR] who would not know about what had happened around Chornobyl. … [The disaster] had taught us a lesson on how dangerous can be the peaceful atom." The mystification 'learned' here regarding the 'peaceful atom' and its dangers reads as an admission of ignorance — a comprehensive vacuum of understanding into which flooded all manner of paranormal images.

The Young Technician #5 (1991) presents its research into the topic of magnetism and magnetic people. The rubric, '*The Young Technician*-Magic', started in 1991, tells about "magnetic people," reporting that "most commonly "magnetic" people live in the areas where ecology is far beyond normal. Those are regions of Belarus and Ukraine that have been reached by the disaster of Chornobyl; and industrial zones where nuclear polygons are located." "Magnetic" people exhibit bizarre electro-magnetic powers that allow them, for instance, to move appliances, lift spoons. "Extrasensory mediums" are commonly invited to comment on the material changes of life not only on TV but also in the children's press.

Conflict between the communist authorities and religious groups continued until the late 1980s, when, as a consequence of Gorbachev's reforms, religious groups were accorded new freedoms.[85] Researching post-Soviet Russian oral culture during *Perestroika,* Nancy Ries finds:

> alongside litanies and laments about the intense tragedy of the Soviet people, narratives and jokes about the surrealism of Soviet history and the absurdities and horrors of Russian life began to stream from private into public discourse. Because *Glasnost* stimulated the airing of these stories, illusion and absurdism began to seem even more the primary context of Russian experience; … became a key theme of media … and talk.[86]

Losses, disappointment and chaos arising from *Perestroika* filled media and brought about new forms of folklore, including the media for children.[87] Among the existential standpoints in the press for children and youth there arose a familiar mystification of poverty and messianic suffering that is supported by expectation of a reward, granted by the cathartic nature of loss. Aligned with deep roots of Eastern Christianity, narratives of poverty and illness became more ordinary every day.

In her autobiographic article, Inna, born in 1984 in town of Tomakivka in Dnipropetrovsk oblast, recalls a peculiar experience from her childhood – an interaction with a group of missionary women on the street when she was around eight or nine years old. Women were there to preach to children the good news of a new kind of savior having been born, which interested Inna enough to come back with an investigation later, in 2008, while working as a

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[85] Zoe Knox, "Preaching the Kingdom Message: The Jehovah's Witnesses and Soviet Secularization," *State Secularism and Lived Religion in Soviet Russian and Ukraine*, Ed. Catherine Wanner (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 245.

[86] Nancy Ries, *Russian Talk: Culture and Conversation during Perestroika* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1997), 169.

[87] Ibid., 171.

journalist in a prestigious magazine of liberal political criticism in Kyiv, *Tyzhden*. ('The Week', in Ukrainian) Inna travelled around Ukraine and even talked to foreign experts in her investigation of the White Brotherhood, a religious sect that originated in Kyiv around 1990-91, which members she first encountered in 1993. She writes:

> I am a student; running to get ice cream with girlfriends (after school, grade two). Half way there we are stopped by some smiling women; [they] give us posters and leaflets titled "Iusmalos," and announce the good news: "Children, God has been embodied on Earth, and he is a Woman – Maria Devi Khrystos." And then they add: "You can take these papers for free, or you can pay whatever you have; all money will go towards flowers for the Living God, Maria Devi Khrystos!" (Khrystos – 'Christ' in Ukr.) We gave up all our koupony-karbovantsi[88] that had been put aside for ice-cream, take the posters and go tell it all to our parents at home – that there is going to be the end of the world, soon, in November already.[89]

A pyramid structured religious organization founded by a couple of unemployed people had dozens of hundreds of followers and a web-site with the requisites of a bank account for donations. The web-site exclaims:

> People of the planet Earth,
> Accept the God-Creator-Maria Devi Khrystos
> Believe; call the name of God, repent and will be saved!"
> Good word

[88] Refers to the changing names of currency – karbovantsi. Soviet rubles; and then – koupons, devaluated currency of the 1990s crisis.

[89] "Я школярка, біжу з подругами по морозиво. На півдорозі нас переймають якісь усміхнені жіночки, дають плакати, газети під назвою «Юсмалос» і повідомляють радісну звістку: «Діти, на землі воплотився Бог, і він Жінка – це Марія Деві Христос». А далі кажуть: «Можете взяти ці газети безкоштовно, а можете заплатити, скільки є, всі гроші підуть на квіти для Бога Живого Марії Деві Христос». Ми віддаємо наші купоно-карбованці, ті, що були на морозиво, забираємо плакати й удома переказуємо батькам – буде кінець світу, вже незабаром, в листопаді". (Zavhorodnia Inna. "Бренд Богині" In *Tyzhden* № 45 (54) (2008).

About the coming on Earth

Of the God – World's Savior!

Good news about the birth of the seven Christs![90]

News of redemption of the 12, 72 disciples and 144000 saints

into the Seventh Race![91]

News of the embodiment of the 12, 72 disciples and 144000 saints

To take part in the IUSMALOS [«ЮСМАЛОС»]

program of salvation for the Earth!

News about the training of the 1/3 of humanity

To cross into the Sixth Race!

News about the soon resurrection of

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[90] БЛАГА ЗВІСТКА

ПРО ПРИШЕСТЯ НА ЗЕМЛЮ

ГОСПОДА БОГА – СПАСИТЕЛЯ СВІТУ!

ДОБРА НОВИНА ПРО НАРОДЖЕННЯ СЕМИ ХРИСТІВ!

ПОВІДОМЛЕННЯ ПРО ЗДІЙСНЕННЯ

12, 72 АПОСТОЛІВ І 144000 СВЯТИХ В СЬОМУ РАСУ!

СВИДОЦТВО ПРО ВТІЛЕННЯ

12, 72 АПОСТОЛІВ І 144000 СВЯТИХ

ДЛЯ УЧАСТИ В ПРОГРАММІ СПАСІННЯ ЗЕМЛІ «ЮСМАЛОС»!

ПОВІДОМЛЕННЯ ПРО ПІДГОТОВКУ 1/3 ЛЮДСТВА

ДЛЯ ПЕРЕХОДУ В ШОСТУ РАСУ!

ВІСТІ ПРО МАЙБУТНЄ ВОЗНЕСІННЯ

БОГА І СЕМИ ХРИСТІВ В ДУХОВНИЙ СВІТ!

ПРО ВОЗНЕСІННЯ СЬОМОЇ РАСИ ДО НЕБЕСНОГО НОВОГО ЄРУСАЛИМУ!

ПРО ПЕРЕВЕДЕННЯ ШОСТОЇ РАСИ

РАЗОМ З ПЛАНЕТАМИ ЗЕМНОЇ СИСТЕМИ В ЧЕТВЕРТЕ ВИМІРЮВАННЯ

(У ВОГНЕННИЙ СВІТ АБО В ЦАРСТВО НЕБЕСНЕ)!

ВИКОНАННЯ ПРОРОЦТВ ВСІХ СВЯЩЕННИХ ПИСАНЬ СВІТУ,

ОСОБЛИВО БІБЛІЇ!

[91] "Race" in the 1990s becomes an important synonym to a superior stage of development, commonly used in the Ukrainian nationalist press.

God and the Seven Christs into spiritual world!
About resurrection of the Seventh race to the new Heaven's Jerusalem!
And transition of the Sixth Race,
Together with solar system, into the fourth dimension
(Burning World or the Kingdom of Heaven)!
True revelation of prophesies of all sacred scripts in the world,
Especially, the Bible.[92]

Eclectic esoteric reading became common pass-time for Inna and her girlfriends. Various leaflets, books and brochures wildly distributed by Christian missionaries and available freely by subscription throughout the 1990s constitute another fragment of history experienced by children.

Another researcher pins down similar tendencies in a study of religion in Russia. Vitaliy Bezrogov studies religious socialization in the 20 century Russia. According to his historiography of the recordered memories of childhood, in the second half of the 1980s – early 1990s "serious changes" overtook previous patterns of religious socialization (generational struggle between the persisting atheism and Russian Orthodox denomination).[93] "As a result of the increasing flabbiness of the anti-religious policies of the previous five years, a kaleidoscope of new spiritual orientations emerged" that varied from occultism to traditional religion.[94] Starting in the late Brezhnev era, there had been increasing interest in astrology, parapsychology, bioenergetics and "everything to do with the East" – Chinese medicine, yoga,

[92] "Site-testament of the remaining Universal Church "Great White Brotherhood" (Iusmalos)", says the web-site [САЙТ–СВІДОЦТВО ЗАЛИШКУ ВСЕЛЕНСЬКОЇ ЦЕРКВИ «ВЕЛИКЕ БІЛЕ БРАТСТВО» (ЮСМАЛОС)] www.vbb-usmalos.org.ua

[93] Vitaly Bezrogov, "Between Stalin and Christ the religious socialization of Children in Soviet and post-Soviet Russia (based on materials about memories of childhood)" *History of Education and Children's Literature*. Ed. by Roberto Sani (Italy: University of Macerata Press, 2007): 239-267; 263.

[94] Ibid.

and of course UFO sightings. Bezrogov also points out that the 1980s were "dominated" by spiritual searches. The positive role that religion can play in education became a "new tendency among some pedagogues." In addition, the missionary and educational activities of the Western Christian churches, especially Protestant ones including those with roots in Russia, "exercised a major influence on children at the start of the 1990s."[95] Through the economically fraught 1980s to Independence in 1991 and after, economic insecurity and social and political pressures opened up a space in the Soviet State and the Republic of Ukraine for discourses emphasizing the para- and supernatural, pressures compounded by the extensive disaster at Chornobyl, that not only shook the state at a time of extreme vulnerability but also added the impressive, terrifying and confusing lexicon of radioactivity to the *Glasnost* imagination.

4. Chornobyl Memories: Missing, Lost and Re-Collected

The absence of the event "Chornobyl" here is a symptom of intense historical density — an over-loading of both the individual and collective capacity to abstract lived experience into language and engage in it through discourse. Here *Perestroika's* political project begins to bear its material consequences — the uneven yet generalized conditions of economic and social collapse, even as 'Chornobyl suddenly enters the national and, indeed, international discourse regarding the crisis of Communism.[96] As a result, the actual event of Chornobyl becomes displaced by contextual signifiers. From various concepts newly introduced to children by *Glasnost* and *Perestroika*, the closest one to depict children's reality is "the war." Within Ukrainian culture, therefore, the disaster signifies not so much a place and even less an event but rather comes to offer a name to "the crisis" in its general sense.

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[95] Ibid.

[96] Sovietology as a discipline emerges; National-Geographic-type documentaries about the Soviet world etc.

"Chornobyltsi" then has very little to do with the wretched subjects of the abject documentaries of the Chornobyl disaster, the children seemingly singled out historically for a new and terrible misery. Rather, Chornobyltsi is the subjective site where international aid is 'exchanged' for national scorn. Chornobyl children were in some instances referred to as 'resource children' by their peers, with neither surprise nor exaggeration. This economization of children's subjectivity and suffering is activated in the form of labour-power's negative that constitutes itself in illness, disability, and death – even as it turns against itself in the form of the 'child plunderer,' the children preying upon their "advantaged peers," perhaps capitalism's first born child in Ukraine.

Anthropologist Svetlana Bodrunova, who herself was a "Chornobyl child," was evacuated from Gomel, Belarus to St. Petersburg, Russia when she was thirteen.[97] Remembering her five "health trips" to Germany, France and Italy, she writes about the corruption within the networks of charity for Chornobyl children and their families. Among the host families in European countries had "gradually formed a tradition of buying presents for "Chornobyl" children and their families: jewelry, clothing, shoes and perfume as the most frequent choice. This created a sort of competition among Gomel families for "a better (host) family" in Europe: one that would invest most into the arriving kid."[98] She remembers a "distressing moment in France," when her host took her to several perfume shops where he asked for samples to be donated for the child and her family. She remembers choosing to pretend that she did not understand in order to avoid "behaving like a beggar."[99] "My family could afford cosmetics, and even if not, being perceived as poor was terrible. I would prefer not to have any presents if it meant begging for them, but I was not given a choice," writes Bodrunova. She speaks about "evident changes" in

[97]Svetlana Bodrunova, 'Chornobyl' in the eyes: mythology as a basis of individual memories and social imaginaries of a "Chornobyl' child." *Anthropology of East Europe Review*, 30 (1): 2012.

[98] Ibid., 19.

[99] Ibid.

the very look of her hometown depending on the distribution of the humanitarian aid from Western Europe that became "help for the hard times of *Perestroika*."[100] In the absence of quality, colourful clothes, children with access to the second-hand clothing from *gumanitarka* or brought from the "health trips" abroad, differed from their classmates. Such differences sometimes provoked conflicts at schools, including between schoolteachers and parents, especially in rural areas, where uneven distribution of goods was even more noticeable:[101]

"Chornobyl children" were not a homogeneous group either. Bodrunova recalls:

> Getting on the list [for trips and services] was a half-opaque procedure as well. Having gone on six trips of various sorts, I can remember that groups consisted of several sub-groups that were informal but naturally formed within the big one. One consisted of children from the most polluted villages of the Gomel region who passed for the "real Chornobyl kids"; another contained kids from Gomel who got on the list more or less via their parents' connections. The matter of illness did not seem to play a major role, even though I remember several children with serious illnesses, like diabetes, one or two per group. Sometimes there was one more sub-group where the kids could perform some sort of arts, like singing or dancing folklore dances. Such kids took part in various events in the hosting country to help raise awareness and funds as they provoked sympathy to the poor but very talented nation. Rather than having fun abroad, they were having, say, a performance tour. Usually, there were 6 to 10 such kids in a group of 30 to 40 "Chornobyl" children.[102]

In the place where every child feels like a victim, 'equally' deprived of basic social needs and 'entitled' to a sort of compensation, the actual Chornobyl children find themselves forced to take

[100] Ibid., 15.

[101] Ibid.

[102] Ibid., 16.

on the role of the other. Confronting the lack of any alternative possibility, and going under the status of a Chornobyl child, for some children, meant access to services or facilities otherwise out of reach for the 'regular' children. Liudmyla, for instance, accepted her Chornobyl identity as part of her experience growing up and spending each summer at her beloved grandmother's – in town, located in the Chornobyl zone, as opposed to the city where her parents lived at that time and where she went to school. She, however, had always remained aware of the difference of being able to choose between going to the Chornobyl zone for a vacation and going there to die, as it was for her childhood pal.

As two main generators of the continuity of memory Connerton identifies "a stable system of places," and "the human body."[103] Rooted in human finitude and framed by temporal dimension, memory becomes open to forgetting and absences, reflected in selective nature of memory. Coherence around the events of Chornobyl in Ukraine is deeply rooted in understanding of the body and its experience, collectively created in relation to time and influenced by the catastrophe's immediate damage to health. Among other things, *Glasnost* exposed illnesses of the social body at the time, focusing much attention around a young ill body. As noted in the introduction, around 1989[104], periodicals unanimously introduce the topic of sexual education to children and youth. Overdue "sexual education" aimed to address rapidly spreading HIV, addiction, teen pregnancies, abortions, and later, suicide. New rubrics pop up in every issue, addressing "new" problems, and articulating them out loud for children, as massive campaign against alcohol and drug addiction and first information about AIDS.

In 1989, *Young Communist*, a monthly magazine with broad readership targeting teens and youth, published an editorial titled, "An open letter to the newly married," which addresses the

[103] Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, 6.

[104] Cover of *Rovesnik* #3 (1991) publishes a picture of a kissing couple of teenagers, opens a new stage of relationship with readership for the first time.

'young contemporaries,' speaking of reproduction as the obligation of youth to create new life and a new future; responsibility that must come to parents and the Fatherland; responsibility that comes "in the appearance of your own children, for whom [we] all live and work hard."[105] "Your children," – claims the author – "are the hope of nation and the state. Our hope, our future. It is not a private matter. It is something that concerns all of us. That is why I am writing this letter."[106] Because society relies on children in building the sacred collective future, children are very much *expected* to be able and available to build the future.

According to the author, children unfit to complete the task of living according to expectation are the direct outcome of moral degradation and social deviance. While the author points out the lack of information about reproductive health and harm of addiction, he also makes some incredibly bold and misleading conclusions about hypothetically affected children:

> If you only knew how hard it was to look at these unfortunate children deprived of not only childhood but the future. They will never be cured. These faces are, in fact, deprived of personality. And this [disability], as life shows, is majorly the fault of parents. Who cannot be excused just because they did not know about the fetal alcohol problem… Care for the future generations is the law for every one of us. We are ought to know everything what means to care for children.[107]

Along with more or less relevant information about risks of prenatal alcohol and nicotine abuse (e.g. higher infant mortality, neurological damage etc.), disability in children, the responsibility for which is solemnly put on the shoulders of "deviant" young parents is misleadingly presented as irreversible harm to the welfare of present and future generations. One of the examples of such punishment is a story of an alcoholic mechanic, father to several

[105] "An Open Letter," *Young Communist*, (1989): 75.

[106] Ibid.

[107] Ibid.

disabled children, who hanged himself "in sorrow": "He had thought that god himself must have been against him to send such children in punishment," – explains the author in the words of the mechanic's widowed wife.[108]

This article is exemplary of many. It conveys ambiguity and panic about disability whether it is environmentally caused or is a punishment from the "above" for "wrong" moral decisions. The guilt raised by moral misconceptions of deviance while society confronted violence, addiction and disease makes the Chornobyl catastrophe almost 'fit' the experience of everyday life during this decade of instability. In this context, Chornobyl children were repeatedly victimized and sacrificed in the media – supposedly, for the future itself. Although since 1991, the habits of the "Soviet Man" and particularly children have been granted some attention by western scholars, [109] not much, however, still pertains to the meaning of health and body to children themselves in the post-Socialist bloc.

Child martyrdom has served before as an important aspect of the heroic ethos of the Soviet man. Catriona Kelly, an Oxford based specialists on Russian culture, looked into the imagery of the pioneer hero children, particularly Pavlik Morozov, a pioneer who, according to his mythic identity, was a "fearless denouncer of his father to the Soviet authorities, the boy who placed allegiance to Party and country above family ties."[110] Kelly traces a tradition of appropriating child saints within the discourse of the national identity formation that goes as far as medieval era.[111] Most importantly, Pavlik Morozov and other children martyrs are to be seen as national

[108] Ibid.

[109] See, for example, Catriona Kelly, *Children's World: Growing Up in Russia, 1890-1991. (*London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007); J Zajda, *Education in the USSR*. Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1980; Urie Bronfenbrenner, *Two World of Childhood: US and USSR* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1972).

[110] Catriona Kelly, *The Little Citizens of a Big Country: Childhood and International Relations in the Soviet Union* (Norwegian University of Science and Technology, 2002), 16.

[111] Ibid., 37.

heroes – part of a larger "shift from a 'supremacist internationalist' to a national supremacist view of childhood" that expresses itself in the Soviet policy past 1932, "when national pride became rampant, and children were encouraged to prepare for the likelihood of aggressive invasion and penetration of the motherland by sinister foreign agents" and which lasted until around 1956,[112] which represented another temporary wave of "a return to early Soviet internationalism."[113]

5. Conclusion

The fragmented spirituality that bursts out of children's media in the 1990s is symptomatic of a broken balance between the relationships of time – present, past and future. When the immediate condition is limited, temporal and special attention of being switches to the transcendental, which also explains messianic interpretation of the Chornobyl disaster delivered to children in the media. Motifs of sacrifice and recuperation are omnipresent in the media during the collapse. The relationship between the diachronic and synchronic has a potential for inversion, when ritual and play coincide in a singular proximity. An example of such inversion is, for example, a funeral service.[114] Mourning narratives of Chornobyl is an example of the same social process. They serve as an activity in restructuring the very understating and relationship to the time and space cultivated by human beings. "Playing with the dead," while re-conceptualising origins and heritage is the process that characterises the birth of a modern Ukrainian nation. Talking about the play with the dead, Agamben quotes Bachofen, stating that "the *meta* is always a tombstone… and it is to this religious significance that games owe their

[112] Ibid., 17.

[113] Ibid., 31.

[114] Agamben, *Infancy and History*, 80.

presence in the world of tombs, whether on the wall frescoes … or on sarcophagus reliefs," calling the tombstones the most ancient example of minituarization, a cipher of toy.[115] While toys and play become a ritual, ritual becomes a play. Ritual of commemoration of Chornobyl in collective consciousness, hence, serves a purpose of play with the meaning, while (re)defining the place of origin. Adriana Petryna calls this phenomenon "biological citizenship."[116] "In Ukraine, where an emergent democracy is yoked to a harsh market transition, the damaged biology of a population has become the grounds for social membership and the basis for staking citizenship claims," – she writes.[117] Chornobyl citizenship is distributed via complex membership in social institutions, designed for democratization of vulnerabilities and their governance – uneven and corrupt.[118] In a way, Chornobyl marks the transition of modernity in what Bauman had theorized as liquid modernity – "civilization of excess, redundancy, waste and waste disposal" – culture, whose survival mechanism is to somehow "recast the horror of death into a moving force of life," which "kneads the meaningfulness of life out of death's absurdity."[119] Chornobyl, however incomprehensible (especially to children) reveals a critical scale of imaginary well-being – even children who considered themselves disadvantaged, while measuring their success or health on the scale of Chornobyl aftermath, find comfort in comparing themselves to the ill as opposed to the healthy norm. Temporality of being in post-Chornobyl Ukraine, in other words, is defined by human mortality. Moreover, mortality here transcends the eternity. Eternity – as Bauman reminds us – is a work of imagination, which starts "from the experience of the 'long term' – of a long, long time ahead, with the end nowhere

[115] Ibid., 81.

[116] Adriana Petryna, *Life Exposed: Biological Citizens after Chernobyl* (Princeton: University Of Chicago Press, 2002), 5.

[117] Ibid.

[118] Sarah Phillips, "Chernobyl Forever," *Somatosphere: Science, Medicine, and Anthropology*, (April 25, 2011): 97.

[119] Ibid.

in sight, … from an endlessly, monotonously repeated experience."[120] In the condition of acute and prolonged economic crisis, the imagination of eternity takes a different turn, directing its flow to the past as opposed to the future; eternity imagined through the lens of mortality and finitude, which explains the massive revival of "lived religions" (as opposed to state religions as theorized by Wanner), 'secular' religious practices that serve the everyday coherence more than spirituality.

Adriana Petryna, anthropologist of the Chornobyl event, validly concludes that mix-matched memories of Chornobyl "rupture the possibility of a linear comprehension of history, destabilizing the projects of history-making itself through spasms, through lived experience. After Chornobyl, mortality escapes its bounds in time to pervade a national imagination."[121] Chornobyl, in other words, is a rupture of time itself, of its perception and experience. For the respondents of this study, the catastrophe of nuclear disaster, which had been only understood in recollection, marked the beginning of the end of childhood and set these individuals self-conciously on the journey toward death.

Chornobyls disappearance into the collapsing social relations of the Soviet Union marks its possession of childhood in Ukraine in a deep and unknowable way. A "foggy gaze" and an "unnatural smile" in children are viewed as symptoms of debilitating illness, which, in general is explained as a result of bad morals, wrong sexual behavior, punishment for the sins, or caused by mutation, and degradation of gens, heavily influenced by radiation. Children aware of radiation damage are expected to be fearful of death and illness, as much as disfiguration or marginalization. After Chornobyl, for instance, all school children were subjected to annual hormone screening – physical examinations arranged right at school, in the gym, for example, where all children (up to grade seven) are gathered together, undressed, and assessed. Such

[120] Zygmunt Bauman, *Wasted Lives: Modernity and its Outcast*, (Cambridge: Polity, 2004), 105.

[121] Petryna, *Life Exposed*, 214.

humiliating practices were somehow legitimized by the 'care' for future generations. Chornobyl became productive of "deviations" and "abnormalities" that children feared but also shared. It is in this sense that all these young people can be called 'Chornobyltsi' — all suddenly exiled from their bodies, each other and the land.

Places are felt and made sense of through the body. Moreover, the bodily experience is crucial for remembering. Henri Bergson says in *Matter and Memory*, that "there is no perception which is not full of memories. With the immediate and present data of our senses, we mingle a thousand details out of our past experience."[122] This bodily knowledge is a part of our everyday experience of space and time that forms memory and imagination. Paul Connerton argues that bodily memory is an essential aspect of social memory that is as powerful as commemorative ceremonies for the community. He claims that our body is a way to preserve the past deliberately, without explicitly re-presenting it in words and images, which is often neglected in memory studies.[123]

The logic of a habit that makes it powerful is that each event of such appears to offer itself without any alternative, without reference to the conscious will.[124] Habit is a cognitive model, a knowledge and a remembering in the hand and in the body; and in the cultivation of habits it is our body which 'understands'. I think it is particularly interesting to look at two kinds of this knowledge that Connerton points out. According to him, we can distinguish incorporating and inscribing bodily practices, where the incorporating practice such as a smile or a handshake, is an example of mostly intentionally conveyed cognitive information, characterized by a lesser

[122] Qtd. in Steven Feld, *Sounds and Sentiments: Birds, Weeping, Poetics, and Song in Kaluli Expression* (Philadelphia: University of Pensylvania Press, 1982).

[123] Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, 72.

[124] Ibid., 101.

degree of formality, whereas often unintentional practice that our body 'traps and holds' at the level of everyday culture is called inscribing.

Analyzing habitual experience of the body, Connerton notices a condition of unease, "a perpetual source of awkwardness, as the all too tangible occasion for experiencing a fissure between the body one might wish to have and the body one sees in the mirror [...]."[125] The image of the ill body is what most commonly defines imagination of children's collective body of the post-Chornobyl temporality.

For Ukraine, the collapse of the Soviet economy with its "widespread socioeconomic dislocation within virtually all strata of the population and serious strains on the social fabric," was the time of its independence, which ever since has been "in a state of more or less permanent economic crisis" (Solchanyk 2001, 80). [126] The crisis, in fact, was so prolonged that it had changed human social relations and even perception of time and space. Repeatedly, while recollecting their own experience, these individuals found themselves unaccountable to the flow of history. Trying to acknowledge temporality of their experience, Natasha, Iryna, and Liudmyla found themselves missing almost a decade of time – what seemed to have happened in the 1990s, appeared to be placed within the years after 2000; and vice versa. When I asked Natasha

[125] Ibid., 91.

[126] From Solchanyk, *From Chernobyl to Sovereignty*, 113: "At the end of 1998, the average monthly wage in Ukraine, if it was paid, stood at $50. In 1999, according to the International Labour Organization, average monthly per capita income had dropped to $25 from $37 the previous year. In August-September 1998, the national currency was devalued 40 percent. After seven years of independence, Ukraine's GDP is estimated to have plummeted by two thirds. [...] Official figures do not tell the full story, if only because they cannot take the so-called shadow economy into account." Semiofficial report on the state of Ukraine's national security in 1994-96 identifies significant declines in incomes, and volume of production, the energy crisis, and what was described by the authors as "growth of social tension and popular dissatisfaction" that are feeding nostalgia for the times of the former Soviet Union. Against the background of economic crisis, Ukraine was experiencing, what Solchanyk calls "the criminalization of society, a high degree of corruption of various levels of the State administration, and a decline in people's spiritual and moral values."

how she relates to Ukraine as her home country as opposed to her experience in the Soviet Union, she said the following:

> You know, I [am] a Ukrainian. […] Now I consider myself a Ukrainian probably because I have lived longer in Ukraine than in the Soviet Union – everything somehow merges, and does get forgotten either way. [Pauses, attends to her child.] In principle, our school time – it's [during] Ukraine already… And that's why… – have lived for 12 years in Ukraine, in comparison with 6 years in the Soviet Union, – they subdue… No, [it is] recollected, once you start remembering.
>
> *VY*: 6 plus 12 equals 18!
>
> *Natasha:* Awe! [I mean] 22! 22 years! Imaging!!! [Laughing] [127]

Natasha did not realize at first that it has been 22 years since Ukraine became independent, not 12 like she said at first. Once she realized her mistake, she is stunned for a moment and then she starts laughing. Her wise claim is that the experience can indeed be re-collected; re-gained, re-claimed back once the memory has been engaged. Where did a decade of her life go in this one very moment? There are no simple answers. That's why she laughs it off.

In his 'Critique of the Piagetian Approach to Time Cognition," anthropologist of time Alfred Gell shares pervasive reflections on flaws in Piaget's approach to the emergence of the concept of time in children, which psychologist interpreted as three linear phases of development. Cognitive time, however, is not unitary, and – as Gell emphasizes – "remarkably diverse and

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[127] *Natasha* (in Russian): Ну да. Знаешь, я – украинка. (…) Сейчас я считаю себя украинкой, наверное, больше, потому что я прожила больше уже в Украине, чем при Советском Союзе – как-то оно все затупляется и забывается все равно. Пауза. Говорит к ребенку.] В принципе да – школа у нас – это же уже Украина… И поэтому – ну, уже прожив 12 лет в Украине, в сравнении с шестью в Советском Союзе, – они перекрывают… Нет, помниться, когда начинаешь вспоминать…

VY: 6 плюс 12 сколько? 18!

Natasha: А! 22! 22 года! Представь! (Смеется)

context-sensitive."[128] Despite Piaget's failure to acknowledge that to program the biology of mental development is a task next to impossible, the psychologist deserves the credit for developing ideas on cognitive growth – "his recognition that earlier stages in intellectual development do not simply vanish once they are superseded by the later ones, but continue to exist."[129] A decade of time in Natasha's memory did not just disappear. What seemed to have disappeared instead was Natasha's memory of her own experience. Pushed into the margins of oblivion by constantly renewed information, upon recollection, time as it had been once experienced, comes back in stunning déjà vu. Unpacked and re-collected from the oblivion, the memories of childhood largely form what we know as a concept of childhood.

Another valuable revelation about the nature of time recollected comes from Iryna.

> *Iryna*: 1991 I entered school, and there was no dad… because the dad was in Poland at that time… he had to earn [money] for us; it all happened at lightning speed. He [was] an engineer!! He used to work at the telegraphic equipment plant, a profession engineer; he imagined his future completely differently.
>
> I remember very well [seeing] my dad used go to work always wearing a suit, and then for some reason he stopped wearing a suit – because he stopped going to work; everything there [at the work place] was slowly falling apart; money stopped being paid, and we had grown up – and there … We had to go to school on the 1st of September, and my mom was overjoyed than he had managed to go there (to Poland for work); and bring Lilka (sister) and I the terribly fashionable denim skirts. Lilka [got] a *lambada* one, and I – a different, also wicked, one, and sandals. The sandals he did't guess – they were

[128] Gell, Alfred. *The Anthropology of Time*. Oxford, (Washington: BERG, 2001 [1992]), 104.

[129] Ibid.

couple sizes too big, but I still wore them!! [Laughing.] And then, he used to regularly go there, to Poland… […]

Mom used to go to work, Lilia – to tennis, and I, I didn't go anywhere. [Laughs.] I used to go to the courtyard! […] Then, later, I used to attend aerobics classes, in some more or less conscious age, went by myself… This – there is no such place anymore – Palace for the Children and Youth Creation… (Place of Culture equivalent – VY) And there were various 'circles'. Various! Some – are sewing, some – are singing, some are constructing; and there was a gym, where we exercised aerobics. It didn't cost anything; it all was for children… In fact, it all did not happen over a day; it has not happened for a long time!! I mean, the 1990s – it was still a Soviet Union. [130]

Both official sources and recorded memories from this time witness people looking back at the past as if it was better than the present. Ukraine since *Perestroika*[131] (both its image and

[130] *Iryna* (in Russian): 1991 год, я шла в школу, и папы не было … потому что папа в это время был в Польше… ему на нас надо было зарабатывать; все случилось молниеносно. Он – инженер! Он работал на заводе телеграфной аппаратуры, очень профессиональный инженер; он свое будущее видел совершенно иначе. Я помню отлично, как папа ходил в костюме все время, а потом почему-то перестал этот костюм носить, потому что перестал ходить на работу – у них там все медленно разваливалось; деньги перестали платить, а мы подросли – и вот… Мы еще шли 1го сентября в школу, мама ужасно радовалась, что он смог туда поехать и привести нам с Лилькой ужасно модные джинсовые юбки. Лильке – «ламбаду», … а мне – такую, другую, тоже классную и сандали. Сандали он мне привез, не расчитал – размера на 2 больше – вот, я в них все равно шла! (Смеется.) … И потом папа постоянно стал ездить туда, в Польшу… […] Мама ходила на работу, моя Лиля ходила на тенис, а я, я никуда не ходила. (Смеется.) Я ходила во двор. … Потом я ходила на аэробику, в каком-то там более ли менее сознательном (возрасте), сама пошла. … Этот – сейчас такого уже нет – Дім дитячої та юнацької творчості… И там разные кружки. Разные! Эти – шьют, эти – поют … конструируют, а у нас был свой зал, и мы там аэробикой занимались. И это ничего не стоило; это все было для детей… На самом деле, это не произошло в один день, это долго еще не произошло! Тоесть, 90-ые годы – еще были Советский Союз.

[131] According to a SOCIS-Gallup poll reported at the beginning of 1998, the overwhelming majority (79%) of people felt that they had a better life in the period before 1985—that is, before Gorbachev; only 4% said they were better off now; and 9% thought their situation had not changed. At the end of 1999, as much as 83% said they were better off before *Perestroika*." (Solchanyk 2001, 114) (Solchanyk notes: Unless otherwise stated, all data is taken from two sources: Ukrainian Society 1994-1998. Kyiv: Democratic Initiative Foundation, 1998 and Ferguson, Gary. Public Opinion in Ukraine, 1998. Washington D.C.:

material condition) has been going onward more in recollection than actuality. In reality, there is at least a 10-year gap of experience and knowledge than had been lost to the condition of uncertainty. Talking about the 1990s in recollection, from the perspective of 2015, the interviewers talked about the collapse of the Soviet Union as if it happened about 10 years ago or so, whereas, in fact, it has been more than 20. The 1990s, economically and therefore culturally had lasted, in some places, for much longer than a decade. And in some places, it seems that the time had stopped in the 1990s forever.

Fears and losses, which are many, dispersed between outside and inside the home, had created new relationship to space and time for the children. Their sense of belonging had been broken, and then, possibly, rejuvenated by new meaning, often produced in recollection. If *Perestroika* is a "representation of dialectics at a standstill," the way Bruce Grant imagined in the vein of Walter Benjamin,[132] then, in Ukraine during *Perestroika*, it could be said, experiences would have to be represented through the negative, many negatives. At a standstill, moreover, there is a gap, an absence still unaccounted for. Chornobyl disaster belongs to the events that mark the 'gaps' in history – stretches of time that have not been yet accounted for and therefore re-collected. Chornobyl has become a representation of a certain childhood – not only in Ukraine, but Belarus, Scandinavia and much of the rest of Europe.[133] The search for the meaning of this childhood continues even as contemporary politics in Ukraine make such remembering more and more difficult all the time.

International Foundation for Election Systems, 1998. And Den' newspaper 22 December, 1998; Den Jan 16, 1998 etc.) (133)

[132] Grant, *In the Soviet House of Culture, 1995.*

[133] S. Bodrunova, "Chernobyl in the Eyes: Mythology as a basis of Individual memories and social imaginaries of a "Chernobyl Child." *Anthropology of East Europe Review* 30, No. 1 (2012): 1-12.

Chapter III

The Work of Play

A look at the world of toys shows that children, humanity's little scrap-dealers, will play with whatever junk comes their way, and that play thereby preserves profane objects and behavior that have ceased to exist.

Giorgio Agamben[134]

1. Introduction

The policy initiative *Perestroika* began in June 1985, when a number of political and economic reforms were introduced by the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.[135] Stephen White's careful historic study *After Gorbachev* illustrates that *Perestroika* leadership raised hopes for "a departure from socialism in favour of a market economy, ideological pluralism, and western-style democracy."[136] It promised to establish a kind of "social market" and lead the economy away from much criticized "Marxist-Leninist 'utopia'" as well as to "call for an 'up-to-date conception of socialism'" within the public.[137] The project, however, was far from easy to execute. In 1989, one of the scarce "reasonably representative" all-union surveys , conducted by the Public Opinion Research Centre (VTsIOM), found that "the environment was the most urgent priority for political action in the view of 87 per cent of respondents: it was followed by the food supply (82 per cent), housing (79 per cent), consumer goods (74 per cent), the abuse of power and unfair distribution of goods and services (73 per cent), low pay and high prices (76

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[134] Agamben, *Infancy and History,* 70.

[135] In Russian, noun *Perestroika* '*Перестройка'* consists of a prefix '*пере'* meaningg "re", "over" conjoined with a verb '*строить'* – "to build," "to construct." *Perestroka*, thus, stands to represent a project of restructuring – reform of the Soviet political and economic system, notable for synthesis of vestiges and innovations.

[136] Stephen White, *After Gorbachev* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993), 234.

[137] Ibid., 221.

per cent), and the educational and health services (both 67 per cent)."[138] Housing was regarded as the most serious problem in the entire country, while shortages of most basic consumer goods was considered to have affected families most directly.[139]

David Marples documents various examples of the severe economic crisis unfolding in Ukraine as well.[140] In August of 1985, the Communist party of the Soviet Union issued a decree, according to which "selected enterprises throughout the USSR would be permitted to use their own profits to update equipment";[141] during the 1986-90 period, enterprise funds were to be used to build residences and recreational facilities. The economic experiment did not work however. One of the characteristics of Ukraine's economy in the period since 1985 – he writes in 1991 – "has been its almost total failure to adjust to the new conditions of life, such as self-accounting and self-financing at the factory level."[142] Output of coal, and consequently electric power had fallen, in some instances, to "the lowest total for several decades."[143] Heavy industry was in crisis, inefficient and outdated and was a main contributor to rising pollution in the cities.

In the crisis of reforming the planned economy, one of the responses of the enterprises, was to reduce or discontinue the production of cheaper and less profitable items and to concentrate on other products, which led to severe shortages of goods, and to "a real but unrecorded increase in the cost of living." Children's goods were one of the first items to be sacrificed to the deficit. The output of children's foods had been falling progressively since 1988. As White

[138] Ibid. 241.

[139] Ibid., 242

[140] David Marples, *Ukraine under Perestroika. Ecology, Economic and the Workers' Revolt* (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 1991).

[141] Ibid., 3.

[142] Ibid.

[143] Ibid., 9.

documents, school books were in shortage as well. Simple hygiene products like soap, toothpaste, matches, pencils, batteries, needles, razor blades, zip fasteners, as well as electric irons, teapots, shoes and many other commodities had all but disappeared from retail sale. In late 1990 Ukraine introduced a system by which 70% of earnings were received in the form of tokens that could be exchanged for goods.[144]

The most detailed study of the decline in living standards among the population of Ukraine, published by the main economic journal early in 1990,[145] revealed that "Ukraine had a substantial impoverished sector whose wages or pensions had failed to keep pace with rising prices… and all were affected by the shortages of basic foods, especially meat and meat products."[146] The two fundamental problems that had brought Ukraine to the verge of crisis were the malnutrition and the poverty of its population.[147] Stores around Ukraine had no flour, milk, oil, fish, salt, or even potatoes, revealing a significant decay in agriculture.

At the beginning of 1990, some 2.4 million families (14% of population) were "in 'extreme' need of housing. As part of the overall plan known as "Housing 2000," according to which every Soviet family was supposed to be provided with an apartment by the end of the century, a total of 105.1 million square meters of housing was scheduled to be built in 1990."[148] This and many others utopian projects were never completed. Rather, in such conditions a dystopian mode of reproduction of the social becomes omnipresent, even to children. Crisis surrounds and re-structures children's everyday lives: many of the favorite activities and attractions are not

[144] White, *After Gorbachev*, 136-137.

[145] Summarised from the report by O. Moskvin, "Analiz tendentsii zminy rivnia zhyttia naselennia USSR", Ekonomika Radians'koji Ukrajiny, No 2, 1990. 13-21, as appearing in Marples, *Ukraine under Perestroika*.

[146] Marples, *Ukraine Under Perestroika*, 12.

[147] Ibid., 3.

[148] Ibid., 9.

available to children any more, as well as services, housing, and often – food. High unemployment rates combined with withdrawal of state infrastructure (social security, banking system, education, healthcare, and childcare) began to negatively interfere with the lives of Ukraine's children, who correspondingly adopted new forms of awareness and caution.

Natasha, born in 1984, grew up in Lozova, Kharkiv obl., Ukraine. She and her family belonged to the population on the list for housing, and like many children her age, she observed the construction of every single apartment building with great hope for the new private quarters. Some of these families did receive the housing, although for other the dream never became true. Now (2016), Natasha is 31, and has a daughter attending the same kindergarten as she once did. Remembering her everyday life at 6-7 years old, she told me:

Natasha: I remember very well when the house was being built… (A new apartment building in the neighbourhood built around 1986-7 – VY) Even Nina said that she had played there with M. [another friend] and her brother, too; and that she lost a doll at that construction site or something, but I had never been to that construction site. It seemed scary to me, if we were to get caught by a watchman and he'd be yelling at us and that would be embarrassing; and then he might go talk to my parents; I was embarrassed to get caught. I wasn't very adventurous (laughs). […] But in general, it is very interesting to see a building being built before your eyes, and new floors are rising – something completely absent nowadays. By the way, I experienced a similar feeling when the yellow building was finally completed! […] Say, you are walking by and looking at the construction – they build and build; and it is fascinating to see one more building appear in town… Some kind of déjà vu occurs.[149]

[149] Natasha (in Russian): Помню, кстати, очень хорошо, когда строился дом… даже Наташка говорила, они лазили там с М., там это, она там куклу потеряла, все такое, с братом лазила, а я вот на этой стройке ни разу не была. Меня пугало то, что если нас увидит охранник-дядя, то он наругает и мне будет стыдно и, если еще к родителям он приведет меня, тоесть мне было стыдно осознавать это, что я поймаюсь. И я была в детстве такая, не рискованная, по большей части… А, вообще, интересно, конечно смотреть, как у тебя на глазах строиться дом, там появляются этажи – чего в данный момент нет. Кстати, вот это чувство я испытала, когда достраивали желтый дом! ты идешь и смотришь, как его делают, и делают, и как-то чудно, что в городе сделается еще один дом… Какие-то дежа вю происходят.

Natasha recalls that the children she played with often used abandoned construction sites as playgrounds, places of adventure she was too scared to go though her best pals came back and forth. In her home town of Lozova, one such construction project left unfinished by the Soviet state and abandoned for nearly thirty years, was finally completed by a private firm in the mid-2000s. The newly renovated high-rise apartment building was painted yellow. Like many of her generation, observing a construction site brings up memories from childhood, memories of hope and also the absence of many experiences of simple urban life commonly taken for granted. These memories feel distant and vague, almost unrecognizable fragments of personal experience that are difficult to re-appropriate. This warm feeling of a déjà vu is momentarily swallowed by time, turning into a helpless attempt to appropriate the identified image, a struggle to place it or incorporate it into memory. The experiences that Natasha describes feel to her like somebody else's memory or a trace of previously learnt information that had been forgotten, rather than a memory of a personal experience. Narratives of the 1990s in Ukraine are filled with such memories alienated from their subjects and vice versa.

In his portrayal of the "two worlds of childhood" – the USSR and US – Urie Bronfenbrenner lays out the "Techniques of Upbringing in Preschool Centers" in the Soviet Union.[150] Based on a great amount of primary sources, his summary of early childhood experience in the wide-spread Soviet Union appears rigidly structured, uniformed and straightforward. What it provides is a detailed description of State engagement with children that would be gradually undone by the political economic situation of the becoming independent of Ukraine from 1986-1996, by which time the Soviet structure had been, as will be revealed below, discarded or recycled, including the existence of Soviet literature and print culture as such.

[150] Urie Bronfenbrenner, *Two Worlds of Childhood Two Worlds of Childhood* (Russel Sage Foundation, 1970).

According to Bronfenbrenner's record, training in the first year of life involves two major features. The first is early experience in collective living. The infants are placed in group playpens with six to eight children in each. To permit face-to-face interaction between staff members and children the pens are raised on legs, the one for the 3 to 6 month olds being higher than that for the near-toddlers. At these age levels, there is one "upbringer' for every 4 charges:

> The second core principle of upbringing is the so-called regime. Each child is on what a Western psychologist would view as a series of reinforcement schedules; that is, the upbringer spends a specified amount of time stimulating and training sensory-motor functions. …
>
> From the very beginning, considerable emphasis is given to the development of self-reliance, so that by 18 months of age the children are expected to have completed toilet training and … are learning more complex skills such as dressing themselves. Physical activity outdoors is encouraged and it usually followed by rest.[151]

The subsection that follows is titled "Upbringing in Soviet Schools and opens with the sentence: "In the Soviet Union, children enter school proper at the age of seven."[152] Entering the school, children were to become part of the state youth organization. Children between 7 and 9 years old were called Oktobrists. Named after the children of October revolution, born around 1917, they were grade 1 to 3 students. [153] They all wore a five-pointed star pin with portrait of Lenin as a child, which was more or less their only symbolic identity – little stars getting ready for their future service to the people and the Motherland. Based on good academic standing and proper behavior, Oktobrists would usually join the Young Pioneer organization after the age of nine, in grade 3. In fact, they were rather accepted into the organization. Accompanied as it was by public celebration and recognition, the ritual was very attracting to youngsters. In high school,

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[151] Ibid., 19.

[152] Ibid., 25.

[153] Kelly, Catriona. *Children's World: Growing Up in Russia, 1890-1991*. Yale University Press, 2007.

teenagers belonged to Komsomol (Russian acronym for the Communist Union of Youth in Russian), which was also the youth division of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and a political party of the Soviet Union represented in the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union.

Each stage of life of a child in the Soviet society had been broken down into categories and language and written on paper, as it was supposed to be happening according to the socio-economic ratio of the Soviet state. Children grow into youth, and youth – high school teenagers – belonging to Komsomol or not, were all educated and significantly provided for by the state. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union was listed as the body behind publication of all press for children and youth, in many places continuously for up to 5-7 decades.

The routine of being a Soviet citizen was more or less to start around the age of 7, after entering grade 1, and until then, according to the sources Bronfenbrenner relies on, child's time, from the first years of life, and through the organized system of up-bringing, namely state daycare, various hobby groups, clubs etc., was devoted to "language training", and "development of speech." [154] [...] More precisely, "beginning in the second year of nursery and continuing through kindergarten, children are expected to take on ever-increasing communal responsibilities, such as helping others, serving at table, cleaning up, gardening, caring for animals, and shoveling snow." [155] He reports that these socializing experiences are reflected in the youngster's behavior, with many children giving an impression of self-confidence, competence, and camaraderie.

Studies of childhood in the Soviet Union have covered some topics extensively, commonly aligned with the studies of ideology, and how the authoritarian spirit of Communism had

[154] *Lenin Youth, Young Communist, Young Technician, Young Naturalist*, and all the other dozens of publications for children and youth were "organs" – namely, the official sources produced by the All-Soviet Committee for the Lenin-Communist Youth (ЦК ВЛКСМ).

[155] Bronfenbrenner, Two *Worlds*, 25.

influenced children's life, even at the levels of architecture and art.[156] Connections are to be drawn between the organization of state welfare and family or education, for instance. In other words, it has become somewhat an academic tradition to unquestionably interpret children's position as predetermined by the state, even more so in a so called socialist state, while the actual material lives of children remain in a blind spot of theory, especially in the post-modern condition, where the material lives of children often do not match a single theoretical vocabulary.

In the following section I present the memories of play discussed by my respondents. What they reveal are forms of activity that often start in the shadows and extend through cracks in the social-material condition of the country. Often unpredictable, their narratives also are full of self-conscience surprise at the images and situations that surface from the past.

2. Recollections

Andrii (1978) and Vasyl (1978), grew up in L'viv

VY: How did you play? How late were you allowed to play outside?

Andrii: It all depends on the parents… I, for instance, was out until 11… (p.m.)

Vasyl: Around 8 pm, before "The Goodnight Tale" show has started… []

[156] See, for instance, Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2005; David Crowley and Susan Reid, Ed. *Socialist Spaces: Sites of Everyday Life in the Eastern Bloc* (New York: Berg, 2002); Fitzpatrick, *Education and Social Mobility in the Soviet Union, 1921-1934* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1979); In Russian – Shteiner, Evgeny. Stories for Little Comrades: Revolutionary Artists and the Making of Early Soviet Books, trans. J.A. Miller. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999: Гюнтер, Ханс, Добренко, Євгений Ред. *Соцреалистический канон.* Санкт-Петербург: Академический проект, 2000; Штейнер, Евгений. *Искусство советской детской книги 1920 годов. Авангард и построение нового человека*. Москва: Новое литературное обозрение, 2002.

VY: What did you play? What were the games?

Vasyl: "Voinushki" – played the War … By the way, I remember once we were playing the War and I was supposed to be in the battalion that attacked… So we dug a trench, and some [kids] hid in the ditch and we were making arrows out of…

Andrii adds: Swamp grass.

Vasyl: Yeah, something like that. – [continues his story] – And some [kids] attacked. I was one of the attackers. And then someone, along with sticks, threw an empty champaign bottle… I still have a mark – a cut here. (*Shows a scar on his ankle. Everyone is laughing*.)

Andrii: Somebody shouted out of the trench.

Vasyl: Yes. From the trench.

Andrii: [What a] Hero! Games used to be simple, until around some year in the1980s, when the Robin Hood show was out. Before that – [there were] the "red", and "white" [Soviet and Russian Imperial Army], and the "fascist".

Vasyl: In the War, I mean.

Andrii: Yeah.[157]

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[157] *VY:* До котрої години вам дозволено було гуляти?

Андрій: Ну, то залежить від батьків… Я, наприклад, гуляв до одинадцятої…

Василь: Десь, година восьма, ну, поки вечірні казка не почалася…

VY: А в що бавилися?

Василь: В «войнушки» бавилися… До речі, пригадую момент, коли ми бавилися в «войнушки» і я попав в бригаду, яка мала наступати… Ми рили якусь канаву, і одні сідали в канаві, і робили якісь там стріли з якихось там, з якогось…

Андрій: З комишів…

Василь: Ну щось типу того… А другі нападали, ось… Я пригадую, я був нападаючий… Але хтось, крім тих патичків, ще десь дістав пляшку шампанського… І кинув проти піхоти, так би мовити, важку артилерію … В мене й досі є такий значок – от розріз (показує шрам на нозі) (всі сміються)

Iryna, born in 1984, grew up in L'viv, Western Ukraine.

VY: How did you play? What were the games?

Iryna: I don't have as many memories about school from that time, as from the courtyard! Especially in summer! If someone didn't come outside, it meant we had to go investigate why… In every yard, there were different laws, different rules – you can't just go into somebody else's yard to swing on somebody's swings; – you can't! You will be chased away! Different hierarchies existed in each yard, different forms of play. And this [was] companionship, companionship, companionship. There were many things that children don't have now. They don't know each other, […] whereas we interacted, we won our authority… […]

Games… I used to be a mother [leader role play character]; I managed a decent grocery store, and on the side – diamonds – various stones, – explains laughing… [We were into] trades. Arranging different plants on the display… [Laughs.] [I had] several dolls. Minimum. Just a few… Whoever was a brat – was out. Nobody likes them. All these games were imaginary; often there were not many material things. Say, a ball… rubber ball [volleyball, football] – it was a separate story, how everyone used to gather to play! … And at school, during the recess time we played, too. [Usual breaks at school are 5 min., every 45 min.]

[…]

Андрій: З окопа хтось кинув.

Василь: Та, з окопа.

Андрій: Герой! Нє, ігри були до якогось там 80-го року, поки не показали серіал про Робін Гуда, то ігри були прості, там, «біляки» – «фашисти».

Василь: Ну «Войнушкі».

Андрій: Так.

The boys… Surely, there were boys! When we were younger – we fought, surely… [Used to] fall in love, at like… 5 years old! (Laughing)[158]

Liudmyla (1978) grew up in L'viv, L'viv obl., and Ovruch, Zhytomyrs'ka obl.

Liudmyla: We went outside in the morning; gathered together and, or set up headquarters in barns – in the barn, we created sort of little homes; my grandma would even bring me borshch for lunch there; so I could stay outside all day. […] There were not many limits. We could go anywhere we wanted to. For example, since around 5 years old I could go [search] for swings and amusements, with friends… We didn't go beyond the town borders, which are pretty small, but anything else… […] Say, there were headquarters, like a bunch of KPP (military command base). […] [Ovruch] – was an 'exemplary' little town, because of these KPPs. […] There were 4 of them – and that's a lot. It was a military town. All inhabited by the military families. Its 'intelligentsia' consisted of military and Jews that had remained.

VY: Did it influence your games?

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[158] VY: Как вы играли? В какие игры?

Iryna: С тех пор, у меня не так много воспоминаний про школу, как про двор! Летом – так это вообще! Если кто-то не выходил гулять, значит – надо было пойти выяснить почему… В каждом дроре – свои законы, свои правила – ты просто так не можешь в чужой двор ходить; на качели чужие – ты что! – выгонят! И существовала какая-то своя иерархия во дворе; свои игры. И это – общение, общение, общение. И его было очень много – того, чего сейчас у детей нет. Они не знакомы друг с другом. Мы общались, завоевывали авторитет… Игры… Я была маман; и держала хороший овощной магазин, а рядом – магазин с бриллиантами – это камешки всякие … Подторговывали. Выкладывали на витрину разные травки… Я непомню каких-то кукол. Минимально. У меня было несколько… Кто выпендривался – вылетал. Их не любили. Все эти игры придуманные, в них очень часто не было материальных вещей. Там, мяч … резиновый – это вообще отдельная история, как люди собирались, играли! … И в школе на переменках, мы тоже играли.

VY: Мальчики – девочки?

Iryna: Мальчика – да! Были мальчики. Меньше были – там, дрались, канечно… Влюблялись там в кого-то, чуть ли не с 5ти лет!

Liudmyla: Most definitely! We used to go to the headquarters, and trade all sorts of cookies-and-jams for bullets from the soldiers; and pins – I, II, V level…

VY: They must have been hungry… Perestroika…

Liudmyla: Yeah, yeah. We brought them stuff, like buns; later they asked to get them cigarettes and for that they awarded us with items of the military pride.

VY: Which were… bullets?

Liudmyla: Well, yeah.

VY: And how did you play with them?

Liudmyla: We collected them, exchanged, we <u>owned</u> them (emphasis original; in Russian).

[…]

Liudmyla: There was only one boy [in the group], the rest were girls. The boy was my closest neighbor and best friend. We used to often, not only trade for bullets and planchettes [], which were the most [prestigious] … Do you know what the planchettes are? – It was a triangular leather purse, soldiers'; when you open it – there were pockets for bullets and stuff… [field bags, designed for the military commanders]

VY: Did you have one?

Liudmyla: I had one, and Vit'ka [boy, best friend] had one. We also used to make bow and arrows, shoot them, go swinging on the swings. Sometimes, [we] collected [cigarette] butts around KPP, and smoked them. Video salons used to be in fashion then – had been already opened. Obviously, we didn't have any money for the movie salons, but we could go sit on top of the KPP fence and watch movies through an open window, free of charge. It was a spot (laughs.)

VY: What did you watch?

Liudmyla: Well, *Red heat*, Schwarzenegger's. Action movies. After those, we used to exercise at martial arts excessively. We had bars in the court yard; and there was a boy, he came over rarely [to town], he was older and used to show us different tricks (exercises on the bars). I remember I used to be able to do 'pull and front flip' 14 times […]

Another 'innocent' entertainment [was] to catch butterflies and fry them on carbide. (Aluminum carbide –VY) Carbide was also supplied by the soldiers. [159]

Oksana and Taras

Oksana, 1984, grew up in Nadvirna, Ivano-Frankivsk obl.

Taras, 1983, grew up in Zolochiv, L'viv obl.

Oksana: It was a big joy when someone had younger sisters or brothers… Say, a couple years younger… That we had to play with them… She exclaims a minute later: Oh! The best gig for us in childhood were trips to the "end of the world"! Every day we used to gather and go, say, on the streets we didn't know – our town is tiny, and if you keep walking, there is a bunch of

[159] Liudmyla (in Ukrainian): У нас був один хлопчик, а решта були дівчатка. Хлопчик був мій сусід найближчий, мій найкращий друг. Ми з ним часто, крім того, що вимінювали патрони і планшети (планшети – це була вишка)… Знаєш, що таке планшети? Треугольник такий, сумочка, така шкіряна сумочка солдатська.., і там розкриваєш – а там місця для патронів, для всякого такого…

VY: В тебе був такий?

Liudmyla (in Ukr.): В мене був такий і у Вітьки. І ми ше робили лукі со стрєлами, ходили стріляли, на качелі-каруселі. Деколи збирали бички під КПП – розкурювали. А ще тоді були модні відеосалони – повідкривалися. Ясно, що в нас не було грошей на відеосалони, але ми могли сісти на забор КПП і в відкрите вікно дивитися кіно безплатно. Така точка була. (Сміх.)

VY: І що ви там дивилися?

Liudmyla (in Ukr. Mostly): Ну, «Красную жару», Швартценегер, (про захоплення росіянами Америки – АВ) […] Були боєвики. Після боєвиків, ми долго упражнялися в бойових іскусствах. В нас у дворі висів турнік і один хлопчик, він дуже рідко приїжджав, він старший був, він показував нам всякі штукі-дрюкі на цих турніках. Я памятаю, що я тоді могла робити подйом-пєрєворот 14 разів. […] І ще таке нєвінноє развлєчєніє, як ловити бабочок, а потім на карбіді їх смажити. Карбід нам постачали так само солдати.

cottages, unpaved streets, and that's what it was to go to the end of the world… – Continues laughing, – And [we] always brought something, like a cucumber or tomato – nothing special was around – and that's how we went. The most important thing was – the next day to go farther… [160] […] We climbed trees all the time – we had different spots on the trees. Also, there is a river running through our whole town, I mean, it's not really a river, more like a canal, by now it's more like a swamp… […] We [children] used to explore Fliakomyjka, the river. We went into all puddles, in the water – that was the best during floods, when a bunch of trees had fallen; then we wore rubber boots. To us, it felt like the entire universe, we walked through the seas and oceans…"[161]

Taras: I had lots of toys. My dad used to travel on assignments – Vladivostok (located at the head of the Golden Horn Bay, not far from Russia's borders with China and North Korea), Vladikavkas (southeast Russia, at the foothills of the Caucasus Mountains) … and I had the fanciest toys on the entire street, probably![162]

There was a moment when we were bumping around dumpsters… We were searching there for different things… Once my friend, who later immigrated to Canada, found a red purse, and we had a fight because of it. I saw it first, but he was first to grab it… (laughing) […] When I

[160] Oksana (in Ukr.): Ще в нас була така велика радість, якщо хтось мав братів або сестер молодших… Там, на два роки молодше… Бавитися, там, з ними треба було… […] О! … В нас найбільша фішка дитинства була – це, типу, походи на край світу! От, ми кожен день збиралися і ходили, там, на ті вулиці, які ми не знали, – в нас це ж малесеньке містечко, там пройдеш, пройдеш – купа там особняків, без асфальту вулиці, і ми ходили на край світу… І постійно брали з собою або помідор, або огірок – більше нічого, там, в хаті такого особливого не було, і ми, так от ходили. І головне – на наступний день треба було піти дальше…

[161] Oksana (in Ukr.): І ми постійно по деревах лазили – в нас на деревах якісь були точки. І ще – через все місто в нас проходить, ну, то не річка, типу, канал, вже майже болітце – Флякомийка… Ми ходили і досліджували ту Флякомийку. Ми ходили по всіх канавах, по воді – то по воді, і ще найкраще було – це коли була повінь, і повністю все затопило, купу дерев повалило, то ми одягали гумові чоботи, і в нас це було як вся земна куля, ми ходили по морях, по океанах…

[162] Taras (in Ukr.): … А ще в мене було дуже багато іграшок… Мій тато в командировки їздив – Владивосток, Владикавказ… І в мене були самі модні іграшки напевно на всю вулицю…

went to grandmas at the village [in summertime], there we also used to bump around dumpsters. Once, remember, I found a giant German eagle [memorabilia] with a swastika underneath it. I brought it home and everybody was shocked and [wondering] where would I get it. I was 7 maybe. It was taken from me right away, they told me it was antique, and then must have thrown it away.[163]

Oksana: We used to go around collecting old [car] accumulators and melt lead [from the lead-acid battery] and tin [*Sn* metal, stannum]… We went to the roofs and looked out for accumulators. You take a tin can, tie it to a stick, melt [metal], and pour into shapes… […]

Taras: We used to invent different adventures… We spent lots of time sitting in the basement [of the apartment building]. There were two basements, one was a bomb shelter. At first we were scared to go there but once we understood that nothing was there someone brought a tennis table there and it became a spot; all walls there were covered with posters… [of] Rambo… say […] Tennis underground – it was grade 3-4…

Oksana: Our town, as it was usual, was devided into districts. There was "India" [an urban district] ect. Different districts had different street groups [of youngsters] and different spots under ground – the 'gangs' used to hang out there. And even if you did not go under ground – cause obedient kids don't go under ground – you still knew about it: everybody drunk and smoked there… and we knew about all these fights, like "India" had confronted "Lomonosova"; "Lomonosova" approached "India", downtown – something else… Like an under ground life…[164]

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[163] *Taras* (in Ukr.): В нас в дитинстві був такий етап, що ми по смітниках лазили… Ми там шукали всякі штуки… одного разу В., той, що в Канаду виїхав, знайшов червону косметичку… і ми з ним так побилися за ту штуку – я її перший побачив, а він її перший підняв… Я їхав в село до бабульки, то ми там теж по смітниках шарилися. Одного разу я пам'ятаю знайшов такий великий німецький орел, а під ним – свастика, і я приніс додому і всі були в шоці, де я то взяв, а це десь мені було, може, сім років, я приніс, в мене то забрали, сказали, що то антика, а потім викинули.

[164] *Oksana* (in Ukr.): … В нас все місто, як завжди, на райони поділялося. В нас були «Індія», і так далі, всякі такі райони, і в кожному були дворові компанії, і вони мали свої підвали, всі банди були в цих підвалах, і навіть, якщо ти не ходив в ці підвали, бо чемні діти не ходили в підвали – там всі

Taras: I have visited all Young Technician's stations[165]. There was a YT station [around our place], and there I started with pottery – made my dad an ashtray, and a pipe that you couldn't blow through, and a cheburashka [fictional cartoon character]… Clay was delivered, we worked with it, modelled; there was also an oven and we fired it, and glazed… It was amazing. Later I switched from pottery to mechanics. Candle holders. For some reason, my variety was limited to candle holders… of different shapes. After, I went to radiotechnics, where we had an ancient radio that we constantly took apart, soldered, and put it back together again, for unknown reasons. […] Then, I went to carting [racing], but was not welcomed for some reason… They gave me [an opportunity] to drive right after the rain – all yard was dirty and we were circling in a puddle. My mom gave me a lecture after and that was the end to my carting. I signed up for the rocket modelling after, where we modelled out of paper-mache…

VY: You liked that, didn't you?

Taras: You bet! It was great! We raced there, right after school. [You] grab something to eat and – [go] there. [166]

курили, пили, то все одно ти знав про ці підвали… і знав, хто там з ким б'ється… як там Індія ходила на Ломоносова, Ломоносова – на Індію, а центр там ще на когось… це таке підвальне життя.

[165] *Young Technician*, as well as *Young Naturalist* are hobby groups for children interested in nature, science, engineering, and such; free, provided by the state. Such institutions had their own media; magazines with relatively affordable subscription were available throughout the entire Soviet Union for 50-70 years and longer.

[166] *Taras* (in Ukr.): Я всі станції юних техніків обходив. В нас була станція юних техніків, і я там починав з кераміки, я там ліпив попільничку татові, таку люльку, яка не продувалась чомусь, такого чебурашку зліпив… Нам привозили глину, ми її там місили, ліпили, в нас були пічки, ми її там випалювали, потім лакували… Супер було. А потім я перейшов з кераміки на станки, там, типу, точити підсвічники, в мене весь асортимент обмежувався одними підсвічниками, різних форм, потім я з того пішов на радіотехнічний гурток, там ми мали таке велике радіо старовинне, ми його постійно розбирали, випаювали різні детальні, невідомо для чого, складали до купи. […] Потім з того я пішов на картинг, але мене там щось не хотіли брати … І мені дали поїхати, а то якраз після дощу було, і все подвір'я було брудне, і ми по колу ганяли всі в болоті, а потім мене мама висварила, і на тому мій картинг закінчився. Потім я ще записався на ракетомодельний, і ми там ракету ліпили із пап'є маше… […] Та ти що, то так класно було! Ми всі туди так бігли, після школи одразу, тільки поїв і туди…

Oksana: I remember there was a Young Naturalists' station near by our house… But I have a general impression that everything was falling apart. There was a billiard table and we played billiard. Instead I remember how we went signing up to a library… it was [like] a holiday. There was a library by my house. You would want to borrow millions of books, but were never allowed… and sometimes you would come back couple times per week to change a book.[167]

Taras: We had this, too! Around grade 2. I had a week reading marathon. I would come to the library, pick two books, like 10 page long, you know; then I'd go outside the library, like, on the porch – sit on the stairs and read, and then run back to return it again… Then she [the librarian] gave me this thick book "Fairytales of the USSR nations"; and I read it like for a month…and that was it of my library [experience].[168]

Oksana: It used to be definitely… cool to go to the library… and to the bookstore, too… There were all these cards for 3 kopijkas – we used to get all the stock… – Laughing.

I do remember, however, that it all ended sadly – such moment came when there were no books at all. There was like one book, maybe two… One such book, I remember, had a standard picture of evolution – some dumb book; or another one – "Where did I come from?" it was interesting to flip it through for a couple of days, and then this one was gone too, that's it – not a single book!

[Sometimes] there used to be a lottery in a books store – you could win like a ruble, but it all ended into us taking the books… [There was nothing else to pick from, lottery was more of a

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[167] *Oksana* (in Ukr.): … Я пам'ятаю, в нас одразу біля хати була якась там станція Юного натураліста … Але в мене взагалі таке враження, що тоді вже все розвалювалося… Там стояв більярдний стіл, і ми там в більярд бавилися. […] Зате я пам'ятаю, як ми ходили в бібліотеку записуватися – це таке свято було. В мене бібліотека – одразу біля хати. І ти хотів набрати мільярд книжок, і тобі дозволяли … і ти інколи по два рази на день ходив міняв.

[168] *Taras* (in Ukr.): В мене теж таке було! Це було десь в другому класі. В мене був десь тиждень такий прорив в читання. Я приходив, брав дві книжки, на десять сторінок, знаєш, потім виходив на подвір'я бібліотеки, сідав на сходах, читав, і біг одразу здавав… Потім вона мені дала таку грубу книжку «Казки народів СРСР», і я її щось місяць читав… і на тому теж моя бібліотека закінчилася.

fundraiser for a closing library] We would walk out with stacks of that … *makulatura* ["recycling paper"[169]] …[170]

Oksana: It seems to me that a half of our childhood was spent in a queue… When parents sent us to get bread… Really, I remember being really little; and it was winter around 6 pm already, it was dark already and we stood [in line]… I mean parents stood in line, and we went out, there always was a bunch of little kinds – popped on the street. Then, we built sliding spots right by the store. Then, when we were older and went to buy bread, we always had some coins for a treat… [allowed to spend change on a candy – VY]. We used to stand in queues all the time. I remember this store – "Jubilee" [department store] – quite far from home, relatively, and we used to stand there for 2-3 hours.[171] [172]

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[169] MAKULATURA is a term for paper recycling in the Soviet Union, which was accepted by the state at specials locations for money returns per wait. In the 1990s, it became a common and one of the only possible ways for schools and individuals to raise some funds. Soviet-time published books and press were commonly to be considered "makulatura" in the post-Soviet Ukraine.

[170] *Oksana* (in Ukr.): … Але це було дійсно… в бібліотеку було ходити модно … і ще в книжковий магазин, і там ці відкритки за три копійки, і ми там скуповували весь асортимент… Але я пам'ятаю, то якось все так плачевно закінчувалося – прийшов такий момент, що взагалі книжок не було. Була тільки одна книжка, ні – дві… Одна книжка, я пам'ятаю, цей такий стандартний малюнок, як людина від мавпи пішла, книжка така сама дурна, а друга – «Звідки я знайшовся», і спочатку кілька днів було цікаво її погортати, а потім і вона лишилась – все – жодної книжки…

І була лотерея в книжковому магазині. Ти там міг і рубель виграти, але все закінчувалося тим, що ти мав книжки брати… і ми виходили зі стосами тої … тої людини, яка походить від мавпи – не пам'ятаю назви – ну тої макулатури…

[171] *Oksana* (in Ukr.): А мені ще здається, що пів нашого дитинства в чергах пройшло…Як батьки посилали по хліб… От дійсно, я пригадую, я була ще зовсім маленька, і це була зима, і вже шоста година, вже було темно, і ми стояли… тобто батьки стояли, а ми виходили, і там завжди купа малих дітей якихось утворювалася на вулиці, там ми вже совганки робили біля магазинів, а потім, коли старші стали, ходили по хліб, і завжди мали, там, три копійки, … може, п'ять – на якийсь смаколик… Ми постійно стояли в чергах. Я пам'ятаю такий магазин – «Ювілейний» - досить далеко від хати, ну, порівняно, і ми в тому магазині дві години, три години в черзі стояли.

[172] "In the crisis of reforming the planned economy, one of the responses of the enterprises, was to reduce or discontinue the production of cheaper and less profitable items and to concentrate on other products", which led to severe shortages of goods, and to "a real but unrecorded increase in the cost of living." Children's goods were one of the first items to be sacrificed to the deficit. The output of children's foods had been falling progressively since 1988. School books were in shortage. (White 1993, 125) Simple hygiene products like soap, toothpaste, matches, pencils, batteries, needles, razor blades, zip fasteners, as

Hearing about makulatura, Taras exclaims: Aww! *Makulatura!* I remember this thing; we used to collect *makulatura* at school all the time, and the best thing was when you were on duty. [A different student or two are appointed each day, a leader group tasked with cleaning and small errands, e.g. get chalk for the blackboard, which was commonly kept in storage, and assisting the teacher to maintain the discipline, e.g. reporting on who is absent, or who is on cleaning duty for the day – VY.] In our school, *makulatura* was collected at the coat check; and it was the coolest when our class was on duty while *makulatura* was collected. Everybody drops it off into a stack, and when no one is looking, you can pick through the stack and look for a good book. Once we found a book from 1924, about a tractor… Man, to dig through *makulatura* was the biggest joy to me! Then, a truck comes to pick it up, once in a while; it was the coolest to collect the most. Our class teacher helped us out, – laughing – she had a million of old schoolbook somewhere at the balcony; she gave us like 40 kg of those notebooks; and we carried these big stacks – she lived on the opposite end of town. We dragged it all; we were excused of a physical exercise class, like 30 people running to her place… – Laughs.[173]

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well as electric irons, teapots, shoes and many other commodities had all but disappeared from retail sale. (White 1993, 126-127; 136) In late 1990 Ukraine introduced a system, by which 70% of earnings were received in the form of tokens that could be exchanged for goods." (White 1993, 137)

[173] *Taras* (in Ukr.): О! Макулатура! Я пам'ятаю таку штуку, як ми макулатуру в школі збирали. Та круто було, а та найкрутіше було тому класу, який дижурив. В нас там макулатуру збирали в гардеробі, і найкрутіше було, якщо наш клас мав дижурити, коли макулатуру збирали. І всі на кучу туди зносять, а ти, щоб ніхто не бачив, риєшся в тій кучі, і шукаєш якусь класну книжку. Одного разу ми знайшли якусь там 24-го року книжку про якийсь залізний трактор… Та ну, переритись в макулатурі – це було найбільше щастя по-моєму! Потім грузова машина приїжджала кілька разів, і забирала цю макулатуру, там, типу, який клас більше макулатури здасть, то так було, дуже круто. І нам керівничка помогла – в неї було мільйон зошитів десь там, знаєш, на балконі, старих, і вона нам, там, десь 40 кілограм зошитів дала, і ми носили, такими стосами, а вона жила в другому кінці міста, і ми то все тарабанили, нас, типу, відпустили з уроку фізкультури, і ми бігали до неї – там тридцять чоловік… **[…]** А ми ще собі всілякі пригоди придумували, там всякі… Ми дуже багато часу в підвалі сиділи, в нас там були три під'їзди, під двома були підвали, а під першим під'їздом було велике бомбосховище. Спочатку ми боялися туди лазити, а потім, коли ми зрозуміли, що там нічого нема, хтось притягнув туди тенісний стіл, там була точка, і там всі стіни були обклеєні плакатами … Рембо… там **[…]** Ні, в нас були підвали з тенісом – це десь клас третій-четвертий…

Oksana: … Well, we had it later, in highschool. Once, we had to collect metalolom [metal scraps] and my mom, who worked at an autobase [automobile parts repair and retail], donated us some 300 kg parts that they didn't need. Thus, when *makulatura* was collected, – my parents used to buy all this banned literature [anticommunist] that had already started to be available; they used to buy it out. Well, and then me, an obedient child, took all of those thick editions that used to be popular, and donated it for makulatura, almost all. We had lots of books in the basement… My parents still remember… They say: "See, you are buying books now, and one day your child will take all of them to *makulatura*!" We won first place in that contest [of which class donates more recycling paper]; and went on an excursion – all by the cause of the Soviet forbidden literature. Fortunately, I din't donate "Archipelag Gulag" by Solzhenitsyn – that would have been the last drop… […] It was around 1998, but the literature was Soviet published…[174]

VY: Did you read any magazines? Did you subscribe to any?[175]

Taras: Oh! There were magazines: *Pioneeria*… And then in 1991-92 the coolest magazine was *Sonyashnyk* ["Sunflower"]. […] *Peretz* ["Pepper" illustrated satirical journal], *Krokodyl* ["Crocodile"], some *Zirka* ["Star"]…

[174] *Oksana* (in Ukr.): Ну, а в нас це було вже в старших класах. Як ми металолом збирали, то моя мама, вона працює на автобазі, і вона привезла нам кілограм на 300 всяких там деталей, які їм не потрібно було. А коли ми макулатуру здавали, то… мої батьки ось цю всю заборонену літератур, яка потім почала бути доступною, -– вони все скуповували, ну і в результаті чемна дитина, ці всі товсті журнали, які були популярні, -– я здала все на макулатуру, майже. Там в підвалі купа книжок було… І батьки досі згадують… Кажуть: от ти зараз книжки купуєш, а твої діти все на макулатуру здадуть. І ми виграли перше місце, і поїхали на екскурсію, але це все – за рахунок всієї літератури забороненої, радянської. На щастя, я не здала, там, Солженіцина «Архіпелаг ГУЛАГ» -– то би вже була остання крапля… […] Та то вже був рік десь 98-ий… Але література була радянська…

[175] *Pioneer Truth* was a centralized newspaper of the Lenin Union Pioneer Organization for the youngest readers – pupils of the earliest grades. It was bilingual, published in both Russian and Ukrainian ("Pioneer Press in Languages of the USSR" ["Піонерська преса різними мовами СРСР"]. *Ukrajinska Pravda* http://www.istpravda.com.ua from April 28, 2015.

Oksana adds: These were magazines of the independence already; there were lots of such much very beautiful diaspora fairytales – everything [was in] such Ukrainian language, so blue-and-yellow, everything [was] so pretty…[176] […] Me, you know, perhaps because I didn't read all those magazines, ideology did not influence me at all, honestly! From all those Soviet tricks, I remember this agitated sense of moral [judgement]. Say, I remember, a fairytale about the three mothers that were praising their sons. One said – my son can dance beautifully; the other said her son could sing beautifully… But the third one remained silent. And then they notice that their sons are playing around… while the other one is carrying buckets of water, helping his mother… Such moral tales I remember… You see, we didn't become Pioneers. Thus, it all passed us. Say, in 1990 we had already gone to school [grade 1 of public school]; and it was Perestroika already…

3. The Soviet Palace of Culture and Periodical Press

Soviet culture was eagerly engaged in the production of culture and tradition. When it came to institutions for children there was no shortage of bureaucratic interest. Bruce Grant points out the importance of the rituals of culture for "the invention of tradition" as it has been

[176] *Taras* (in Ukr.): О! Були журнали «Піоне рія», а потім самий модний журнал, десь в 91-92, був «Соняшник». […] «Піонерія», «Перець», «Крокодил»… Якась там «Зірка».

Oksana (in Ukr.)**:** Але це вже був журнал незалежності, і там було дуже багато таких вже дуже діаспорних казок – дуже вже все таке україномовне, жовто-блакитне, все таке дуже гарне… **[…]** На мене, ти знаєш, може тому, що я не читала всі ті журнали, ідеологія ну ніяк не вплинула, от чесно! Я пригадую з тих всіх радянських штук – от, знаєш, в них таке було дуже загострене відчуття моралі. От я там казку пам'ятаю про трьох матерів, які сиділи і хвалилися своїми синами. Одна казала: от, мій син вміє дуже гарно танцювати, … друга каже: а мій так гарно співає… А третя промовчала… І дивляться – ті сини, там, гуляють, а той – несе два відра з водою, там, мамі помагає… Ось ці такі всякі моральні приколи я пам'ятаю, але щоб…

Розумієш, жовтенятами ми не стали… піонерами – зрозуміло, що не стали… Відповідно, то все якось оминуло. Рахуй, в 90-ому році ми пішли до школи, то вже була перебудова…

theorized by Hobsbawm and Ragner (1983).[177] What is distinct regarding Soviet society is the attempt to develop a uniformed field of references, available to each citizen via education, which came to be known as "culturedness" or *kul'turnost'*, a concept propagated in the Soviet Union since the mid-1930s and commonly applied also in pedagogy and intellectual debates alike. The House of Culture, he explains, is an institution which is designed to facilitate "proper" cultivation of self via uniformed signifiers in the media and education; it becomes both literally and metaphorically "a single cultural project under one roof" supported by "hundreds of efforts large and small to foster shared sensibilities across eleven time zones, some fifteen national republics, and at least two hundred active language communities."[178]

"Work on oneself" in the Soviet society was supposed to start in early childhood, as observed by Bronfenbrenner in 1972. Public state care for the child often extended from entering kindergarten as early as 1 year of age and ended with graduating high school, which is coincidentally when childhood had already passed away. Children were to fill in the space-time of the House of Culture as an institution. Children are the ones to reproduce the culture, the primary audience of the House of Culture.[179] The Pioneer Place, specially dedicated to services to children, has been also given some revisionist attention in works of Susan Reid and David Crowley. [180]

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[177] Grant, Bruce. "Recognizing Soviet Culture", in *Reconstructing the House of Culture: Community, Self, and the Makings of Culture in Russia and Beyond*. Eds. Brian Donahoe and Joachim Otto Habeck (Berghahn Books, 2011). 266.

[178] Ibid., 269; 272.

[179] Eugenics is the counterpart to such force. For ethnographic evidence, see, for example, Joanne Faulkner, *The Importance of Being Innocent: Why We worry about Children* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2011); Jana Grekul, Harvey Krahn, and David Odynak, "Sterilizing the 'Feeble-minded': Eugenics in Alberta, Canada, 1929-1972." *Journal of Historical Sociology,* 17 (2004): 358-384; Adrienne Asch, "Disability Equality and Prenatal Testing: Contradictory or Compatible?" *Florida State University Law Review*, 30 (2) (2003): 315-342.

[180] Crowley and Reid, *Socialist Spaces*

The Soviet ideal of collective life was structured around both space, "embodying the inexorable force of history," and time – shaping "the spectacles associated with the red-letter days of the Soviet calendar."[181] Space, a subject to political interest, is in constant mutually inclusive relation with the social. Soviet space, it has been studied, was designed according to the utopian belief. Commonly polarized notions of "utopia" and the "ordinary" are synthesized in the Soviet *space-time*, and therefore the social.[182] That is why the mostly imaginary unified structure of the Palace of Culture is not to be regarded as homogeneous. [183] Catriona Kelly extensively studied socialization of children within the ethos of "the Soviet Man" extensively. She demonstrates that the history of children's politics in the Soviet Union was not always the same, and constantly varied under the simultaneous processes of nationalization and globalization. She also emphasizes that the very idea of the "Soviet Man" exposes itself as breaking down, with different force throughout history, not long after the death of Stalin.[184]

Young Technician and Young Naturalist "stations" (also called "clubs" or "circles") were part of the House of Culture network of the organized leisure for children provided by the Soviet Union and designed to provide space for interaction and education to its main target audience – children readership of the *Young Technician* and *Young Naturalist* journals, which had existed in print for over 50 years and belonged to the industries working at the idea of "The Remaking of Man."[185] During *Perestroika* times and afterwards, the labour of "cultivation of self",

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[181] Crowley and Reid, *Socialist Spaces*, 2.

[182] Ibid., 7.

[183] Yurchak provides more evidence on this "paradox" in *Everything was Forever until It was no more: Last Soviet Generation*. Princeton University Press, 2005.

[184] Kelly, *The Little Citizens of a Big Country*, 4.

[185] "The idea that men could be remade was very important in the Soviet worldview. It was associated, in the first place, with the belief that crime was a social disease, the result of a harmful environment,"– explains Fitzpatrick, analyzing everyday life under Stalinism. Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times* (Oxford, Oxford UP, 2001), 75.

scattered again by the brutal economic conditions, is pushed to the edge, the shaken margins of the social sphere, the land of the unknown. The testimony of childhood memory in this chapter is a selection of the perestroika of childhood memories, talking about their engagement with the culture they were brought up into. This culture is not yet written in books or magazines and it surely was not explained to anyone as a child; full of edges, blind spots, ambiguities, contradictions and all the uncertainty that it brings about. The time and place of the cultivation of self is dispersed between a sand box and garbage bins, lost in urban landscapes and their rituals, such as endless queues for the most basic supplies, and shaping little toys out of melted poisonous metal or playing with bullets in the time of no wars, except for the ones unseen, of course. Resembling a shop class, they were designed to provide alternative leisure practices to children under the state economy. They provided space and supervision, opportunity for children to learn about the privilege in belong to the Party and the State, bureaucracy in *loco parentis*.[186] Most importantly, access to the state network of organized leisure for children was provided free of charge – exercising what Bruce Grant calls "a robust rule of civil society taken to perhaps its greatest historical limit by the Communist Party," "profoundly public culture invested in articulating its centrality to the fullest."[187] Houses of Culture were a crucial site of social reproduction and performance.

In his earlier book, *In the Soviet House of Culture: A Century of Perestroikas* (1995) on Nivkhi, a Siberian indigenous culture of North Sakhalin, Russia, Bruce Grant studies how Nivkhi negotiated their identity over the last seventy years between "the variously manifested dialectics of tradition and modernity." Perestroika to him – borrowing Walter Benjamin's phrase, – is "representation of dialectics at a standstill."[188] It is in the narratives of loss, where

[186] See

[187] Bruce Grant, "Recognizing Soviet Culture," 273.

[188] Bruce Grant, *In the Soviet House of Culture,* 17.

new, re-negotiated definitions of self emerge – he states – however morally compromised by the past and haunted by uncertainty.[189] He describes modern history for the Nivkhi as an entire century of *perestroikas,* a bricolage modernity project – one after another.

Analyzing complex state infrastructure of the Soviet Palace of Culture, Grant suggests that for the post-Soviet communities *perestroit*' 'to reconstruct' institutions [e.g. the House of Culture] was as much as to, *obustroit'* them 'to refit' them for the new times."[190] He means that along with the immediate impulse to accommodate the reality of persistent economic crisis lies the need to accommodate the self, according to the conditions of the aftermath – to make the environment 'manageable' by the human social often implies a change. That is why to understand the notion of childhood in critical condition is to negate the utopian social function of it, which is to reproduce the powerful world of – eventually – adult life.

In the children's press that was intimately linked to the house of culture, the period of the 80s and 90s is one of slow decline and swift changes. In the early 1980s the pages of one of the most popular and most widely read youth magazine, *Rovesnik* ("Peer")[191] were filled with a mixture of Leninist slogans, post-war heroic narrative and sheer encouragement of progress and youth. Pages of periodicals, almost exclusively in Russian, were overwhelmed with the presence of positive descriptive adjectives used to portrait the benefits of Soviet life, which was described as beautiful, wealthy, successful and possibly free.[192] Merely 2-3 years before *Perestroika*, pages

[189] Ibid.

[190] Grant, "Recognising," 272.

[191] *Rovesnik* ('Ровесник', *Peer*) – monthly "socio-political" magazine, produced by the Central Committee of the All-Union Lenin-Communist Union of Youth ('ЦК ВЛКСМ') and The USSR Youth Committee.

[192] E.g. The following quote from an interview with soldiers published in 1982. "What do you do with these fertile fields? … – We mow the grass ourselves and then give it to the neighbour farmers. – You mean, sell? … – Why sell? We give it away. – Is this a common practice in military bases? – Sure thing!" Or, "Is it true that Kugel was paid a million dollars? … – True… – What about Winter? – He received the order of Lenin. – And money? – He is a party member; he refused the honorarium". – Remarkably, in early 1980s, symbolic value of the Order of Lenin is still depicted as powerful as a "million dollars". Its appeal to honesty, heroism, patriotism and hardworking nature of a soviet man emphasizes the belief in human

of children's journals were almost convincing at depicting the massive and strong Soviet planet that shares boarders with "space" itself rather than other states. Stories of borders and limits, struggles and disappointment will become more and more common among the topics of periodicals as issues approach Gorbachev's reforms and the tragedy of 1986. Until then, almost 90% of some journals, *Rovesnik*, for instance, will consist of foreign publications translated and reprinted. Compilations of news and articles were mostly selected from American and European sources.[193] For the most part, reprints consist of show-business news in all kinds of compilations – music and musicians, singers and actresses, 'Hollywood', 'California', topics of subcultures, sexualities and much more enters the youth's vocabulary. New rubrics pop up in every issue; to address "new" problems, articulate them out loud for children, as in a massive campaign against alcohol and drug addiction or the first information about AIDS. [194] Topics of subcultures,[195] bikers and hippies[196] and rock music[197] appear as legitimate for the first time, as do comics and anecdotes,[198] often foreign and translated, too. In 1991 *Rovesnik* starts rubrics of crafts and design; tourism for entertainment's sake as opposed to work trips or training or survival

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nobility that can be cultivated within society, which is still very much encouraged in children, appears to be less and less adequate in these pages. Lenin's commandments serve as more a distraction from the actual than its application. They coexist with many compilations from filtered foreign sources, which seem to take over the voice of praise for the Soviet civilization.

[193] The Soviet everyday if often depicted as though in the eye of a traveler passing through, someone from the United States, Spain, Chekoslovakia, etc.

[194] Story of a little Rayan, who was suspended from school because of the HIV in *Rovesnik* # 8 (1989).

[195] *Rovesnik* # 7 (1989), article about bikers titled "Illusion of freedom on a high way", ironically depicting the subculture as "house on wheels that had turned a jail."

[196] Ibid. Report about Woodstock.

[197] Ibid. Among new rubrics – "*Rovesnik*'s Rock Enciclopedia" writes among many about musicians of the "A-HA" band, Jimmy Hendriks, Rod Stuart, etc. Another one – "Biography of the Masterpieces" "re-introduces" selected foreign authors, e.g. Ernest Hemingway.

[198] Ibid. reprints of French graphic novels and anecdotes, rubric "Press-Citron".

becomes prestigious to practice; gardening and needlework topics are aimed to attract "more girls into readership."[199]

Around 1989, periodicals massively introduce the topic of sexual education to children and youth. Overdue "sexual education", this "survival kit" for youth[200] is a symptom of a massive disease. Anxiety breaks through all magazines for children as youth in the face of rapidly spreading HIV, addiction, teen pregnancies, abortions, and later – suicide. At the same time, the new materiality of the market economy arriving from the West becomes more apparent. Magazines, for instance, introduce more contests with precious and otherwise almost completely inaccessible prizes for the winners, like a Tetris game or a pocket turntable.[201] Media attention more vividly switches into explorations of the "sacred and transcendental"; it also encourages a "search for the sense of being" and the necessity of catharsis that had been overdue since the WWII. Gifts of 'spirituality,' 'sacredness,' the 'forbidden' and the 'eternal' in the early 1990s, however, were commonly found in religion and Soviet avant-garde – namely, that which was marginalized or dead.

4. Conclusion

Historian Serhy Yekelchyk depicts many difficulties of a fragile developing economy in his book *Ukraine: A Birth of Nation, Modern History of Ukraine*. He writes:

> Overall… the standard of life in Ukraine plummeted during the early 1990s. With their savings wiped out by hyperinflation, salaries not catching up with rising prices, and

[199] *The Young Technician* # 8 (1991) re-introduces itself to the readership as a magazine "for girls," too.

[200] *Rovesnik* #4 (1989) In the rubric "Private Life at 16 and Older" introduces a series of reprints "Survival kit for teens" by Dee Snider.

[201] *The Young Technician* had started a contest, where the winner gets a piece of electronics – a tetris game "Elektronika" or "The secrets of ocean", or "A cheerful cook" or a pocket turntable Druzhok "Little Buddy" or even an electronic step counter. In The Youth in 1991, commercial space was devoted to advertisement.

> goods simply not being available for purchase, much of the population retreated to a subsistence economy in which a primitive barter system of goods and services, as well as cultivation of small garden plots in the countryside ensured survival. During the early to mid-1990s, an estimated three quarters of Ukrainians lived below the poverty level.[202]

Among the struggles which Ukrainians had to go through he lists the decline of state welfare and health systems, followed by dropping rates of births, life-expectancy and the overall size of the population.

Many contributing factors such as emigration and massive wave of unemployment, crafted a routine of extreme poverty and negligence, alcohol and drug abuse, violence and destruction that people, and most importantly here – children, confronted every single day. The crisis was omnipresent. The entire Ukraine was affected by it, as well as Russia and other former Soviet states. Ukrainians, as former Soviet citizens, commonly had relatives living in Russian, Kazakhstan or Belarus. The entire socio-economic infrastructure was shaken. In his *After Gorbachev* book, though focusing mostly on Russia, Stephen White provides many relevant sketches of everyday reality also applicable to Ukraine,

For all the inadequacy of the statistics, several trends were reasonably clear. One of them was deepening crisis of poverty and deprivation. There were cases of elderly men dying in queues, and of students fainting of malnutrition while taking part in demonstrations against their inadequate stipends. […] … About half of the Russian population in the summer of 1992 was living below subsistence level; according to other figures, as many as 90 per cent of the population were living below this level, and 50 million were on the starvation minimum.[203]

Children also felt starved for information as well as food and even water. World literature classics in either Ukrainian or Russian language or translation were scarcely but periodically available, stacks of full subscriptions of old issues of the Soviet newspapers and magazines had been read and reread many times while children's media and entertainment was out of

[202] Yekelchyk, *Birth of a Modern Nation*, 198.

[203] White, *After Gorbachev*, 273.

production anywhere from 10 to 20 years in Ukraine. The value of the great literary classics was shuttered by economic limitations and became redeemable only in a form of money exchange generated by returning the books as recycling paper. Holding back books as possible cultural capital did not meet the prospects of the future. [204]

In the attempt of independent Ukraine to establish itself as a strong nation-state, the destruction of ties with the Soviet past was encouraged at many levels – demolition of monuments, renaming the streets and, apparently, even 'recycling' of cultural heritage, re-appropriating it to fit new realities. Oksana, an obedient child from a Ukrainian-speaking family, who donates her parents' collection of rare "banned literature" [anticommunist, 'bourgeois' or any rare edition, books in Ukrainian] to the common cause of recycling paper in 1998, later becomes a historian much educated in cultural heritage. She acknowledges the contradiction between hers and her parent's values with a smile, understanding that she might confront a similar negation one day. At the same time, the very "recycling literature" becomes a joyful and privileged reading exercise when placed at the margins, for instance, legitimately skipping classes as it happened to Taras. Disregard for literature in these stories does not suggest devaluation of cultural heritage – on the contrary, post-perestroika generation is defined by the relationship to its material conditions which are of a different kind than ever before. Children cherish material that can be utilized with maximum advantage, so crucial under extreme economic crisis. Having not yet cultivated appreciation for the symbolic capital

[204] Remarkably, Maryna Biloholova, director of a Kind Market Consulting firm in Ukraine, in the *Comments* edition of *Kyiv Weekly*, summarizes that children's consumer interest (as well as parents' purchasing power) has been increasingly more invested into electronics and information technology gadgets compared to items of athletics and outdoor socialization. The tendency is "starting of the age 13, teens tend to perceive a bike as a useless present." Such tendency is logical when put in the context of stable stagnation of the infrastructure of leisure and sport facilities in the post-Soviet Ukraine. Outdoor play in Ukraine, especially without parental supervision, has come to be regarded as increasingly more dangerous for children, whereas recreational facilities, while increasing in numbers in 15 times within the past 12 years, have become privatized and much less affordable to the family's budget – the article summarizes in 2013. ("Camps can be Different" In *Comments* ('Коментарі') #21 (May 31 2013): 8.

of sharing certain moral values, children re-appropriate literature for recycling in order to generate some profit necessary to maintain the privilege of play and spare time: children turning in books to be destroyed for the money to buy an opportunity to play.

Among oral tales invented and retold by children in the 1990s was a series of scary stories about new inhabitants moving into a new location, most commonly a small apartment. Some of the stories had more than one version and circulated like stories about 'the yellow stain', or 'the black hand', 'the black house on small wheels' etc. Oksana and Taras recall one such story:

Oksana: I remember one about the yellow stain… It's about a family that moves into a flat, I mean, there are different versions… And it used to be a normal flat, but there was this yellow stain on one wall… And, after they have lived there for a while, the stain grew bigger, and bigger… And the child died, and then another one died, and then the third one got hit by a car, and they moved out. And then it goes on about different families, but the stain just gets bigger and bigger… It was a very scary story, because it didn't have an end… Families change, and the stain simply grows… Such ambiguity was very frightening."

Taras, (*continues topic of fears)*: …I just remembered that there also was some old scary man, homeless, maybe, I don't know, he always looked worn-out and had an old fur hat with ear-flaps… and a metal stick with a wire attached to it, he seemingly used it to trap street dogs, which he traded for pelts; we were afraid of the guy very much…

Later, reflection on general fears of her childhood, Oskana said: "I don't remember us being scared of anything much at all. Well, we must have feared something…" And then she continues.

Oksana: You know, Taras just reminded me… I've always sort of thought that there must be some scary man in each childhood, like a bum or a crazy person on a street that is both scary and funny… We also had such a lady… We chased her sometimes, and she threw stones at kids mostly… And there was a scary watchman at the kindergarten, and we were afraid of him. There was a high wall, and if we tried to climb the wall, he hit us on the fingers with a stick; and even when he didn't hit, it was still scary! We used to go play there, and a watchman was considered frightening.

It is only in the perspective of adult recollection that a constant absence of sand in the sandbox can come to signify the epoch of shortages, a state system of privileges as well as

specific exchange of "favours of access" common in the 1980s.[205] For the Ukrainian childhood on display here, however, all such absences are part of actuality. As a result of the necessary imaginary rebuilding of space that children had to do, roofs, cellars, basements, storages and garbage bins were adapted by children for play. Playing with gun powder and smoking cigarette butts are practices that constitute a legitimate part of socialization and growing up that, in recollection, is seemingly legitimized by the presence of necessity. In fact, none of the interviewees whom I spoke to had exclusively 'urban' experience of childhood, even though they all were born and spent the majority of their time in urban centers. Instead, the "rural" space, regularly accessible with trips to grandparents, or even escaping to suburban, less developed parts of town, was crucial for their socialization and much experience that had been gained in the country was brought to the city.

The boundaries of children's space widened in the countryside, which was less associated with traffic, danger and crimes. "[Village] – explains Vasyl, – it's freedom! There I learnt how to swear, tried to smoke and drink alcohol… there were no parents… and it all happened because there were many children from everywhere…" Just as it is with time, the space of childhood is not homogeneous either. Time is inseparable from space in recollection and therefore in narration. The world of childhood we as a society have come to claim is available to us in narration. Childhood that exists for adults is the childhood recollected, for when one is a child, the experience of childhood is different. It is similar to an adult speaking to a child about childhood – these are two different childhoods. Children, "humanity's little scrap-dealers," – as Agamben puts it, – playing with "whatever junk comes their way," do not merely "preserve profane objects and behavior that have ceased to exist," but *reproduce* their meaning; children *set* the *space-time of* childhood through the work of play, which however is always left

[205] Taras (in Ukr.): "There was a yard, a pavilion … a slide, sometimes – a rocket. [There] was a swing, and a sandpit… without sand… Majority of families in our neighborhood would say – play on the street, you've got that sandpit, that square… Don't go far, so we can see you through the window.

unfinished, extending beyond childhood to the future space of recollection where those meanings are rebirthed and explored through narrative.

Childhood, profoundly infantilized, miniaturized and marginalized, built on fantasy, located in the land of play- time and fairytale fails to realize that such *space-time* remains out of conscious reach for the majority of children. It is in the mystery of children's existences and their encounters with historical reproduction, existences which do and do not exist at the same time, that, for Agamben, human temporality is continually reborn. In a corresponding turn, true historical continuity, I argue here, can be only found while 'playing' with the signifiers of discontinuity, of what is missing. Trauma disrupts the continuity, and the gaps in history persist where it happened. To restore a sense of historic continuity, hence, is to come to awareness of the gap and its function. "Otherwise, in the face of adults who literally play dead and prefer to entrust their own phantoms to children and children to these phantoms, the shades of the past will come back to life to devour the children, or the children will destroy the signifiers of the past."[206] To be able to sustain the reproduction of the social, adults, in other words, are responsible to provide 'space' for childhood to exist. When adults fail to facilitate the space-time of childhood children are forced to show the initiative. This pushes the activity of children's play literally and figuratively underground and transformed the experience of toys into categories of exception.

Viktor tells me a story of a fight that his classmates had in grade 1. Two classes initiated a battle in a playing corner by throwing toys at each other.

Viktor: I vividly remember, [while throwing] those toys, realizing that toys can be not only toys, but also tools of weapon and war. [Otherwise], toys as such [I] vaguely remember, because

[206] Agamben, *Infancy and History,* 95.

there weren't many quality [toys]. Most emotional upheavals were brought by [toy] soldiers. I could say, I used to be infantile [meaning – interested in playing with toys] probably until grade 8 or 9; whereas other boys were talking about some kind of sexual experience that they had already had, say, in [summer] camps, which is also an interesting topic [summer camps]. … I have also been into the Soviet [summer] camps. […] Since around grade 3 we liked to build. I mean, once we were out of the rooms [old enough to play outside], we used to go play somewhere farther away [from the court yard]; we were intimidated to go play in a sandbox – interesting, older kids were intimidated to go to the sandbox. So we used to go to a peat bog – area beside Levandivka (urban district of L'viv, where Viktor grew up); and we would build whole new constructions out of sand. Like a Lego-construction, sort of, we would do something similar and start playing. We had lots of models to start a big interaction, say, policemen, gangsters, fire fighters – a society projected onto the peat bog sands… We used to like that very much – these adult games.[207]

By 'adult' games, Viktor refers to role playing, imaginary games built on interaction; as opposed to children's games that occur in the environment structured for children's play by the adults, and directed by toys. Viktor's environment of play from the early ages of 9-10 years-old

[207] Viktor (in Ukrainian): І після того був "разбор польотів." Класні керівники були дуже здивовані – як це так, діти… І це добре пам'ятається з тими іграшками, я вперше усвідомив, що вони можуть бути не тільки іграшками, але й засобом зброї і війни. Іграшки як такі дуже бідно пам'ятаються, бо їх якісних як таких не було.

Найбільший емоційний сплеск, пов'язаний з іграшками, відбувався вже з солдатиками. Я можу сказати, що я був інфантильний десь до восьмого-дев'ятого класу, тобто, якщо хлопці у восьмому вже розказували, що вони вже десь там мали статеві відносити в межах табору, що теж є дуже цікавою темою, … я теж побував в радянських таборах. […]

Десь з третього класу – ми любили будувати. Тобто, якщо вже не в кімнатах, ми вибиралися десь далеко, тобто в пісочницю вже йти боялись – цікаво, вже старші діти в пісочницю йти боялися, і ми вибиралися на торфовище – це за Левандівкою, і ми вибудовували цілі комплекси з піску. Цей Лего-конструктор, щось такого, ми робили щось подібне і починали бавитись. Ми мали багато моделей того всього і починали велику інтеракцію, там, поліцейські, бандити, там, пожежні – суспільство, проектоване на торфовищному пісовиську… І ми це дуже любили – якісь такі дорослі ігри.

shifts over the borders of an apartment block's court yard to the still relatively empty fields of a growing urban landscape. Viktor and his friends invented civilizations in the labyrinths of decayed vegetation and sand. Children re-created aspects of the society they exist in, adjusting its reality to maintain cohesion, taking on roles of social status (policemen, gangsters etc.) Viktor confesses being interested in playing with toys until around 14 years old, which seems to him quite late, partially, because when he was younger there were no sophisticated toys to play with. Toys, as in the empty doll room, transform into a symbol of children's leisure rather than part of it, while overcoming deprivation becomes children's new occupation in the 1990s.

Elizabeth Zelensky, an anthropologist studying post-Soviet children's culture acknowledges that despite the tendency to perceive Soviet and post-Soviet childhood via "antihedonistic bias," as a Western scholar she finds herself astonished by the mismatch of her understanding of what a child's experience "should be and its material condition in the post-Soviet Russia."[208] Realization of her own limitations made the researcher pause in the middle of her fieldwork, and try to "reorient to a Russian perspective."[209] Zelensky finds it inexplicable at times to address different ways adults and children are coping with a 'wrenching period of transition' that popular children's culture reflects in the late 1990s. For example, her imaginary post-Soviet childhood experience did not involve the contradictions brought about by a fascinating mixture of what she calls "examples of innocence" – i.e. a dream to attend university, have a happy family life, help homeless animals, and other humanist ideas, – and what she describes as "contamination" by the market forces and globalization – universally popular Disney cartoons, and other media in translation, various consumer goods, etc.[210] She

[208] Elizabeth Zelensky, "Popular Children's Culture in Post-Perestroika Russia: Songs of Innocence and Experience Revised" in *Consuming Russia: Popular Culture, Sex, and Society since Gorbachev*, Ed. by Adele Marie Baker (London: Duke University Press, 1999) 138-160; 149.

[209] Ibid., 142.

[210] Ibid., 148.

reports that a majority of children, who she spoke to in different places in Russia, said that they had no heroes or heroines and "most wanted to be like themselves"; that children have lost some trust in adults, and that their "only admired adult personages were either long deceased, foreign, fictional or all of the above," – i.e. literary characters Jane Eyre and Tristan; both Western produced and Soviet-era TV characters and actors, played by Bruce Willis, Jean-Claude Van Damme, Marilyn Monroe; musicians like the Beatles, Nirvana, Michael Jackson, Mariah Carey etc.[211]

Along with appreciation for the first gifts of capitalism, children seem to be surprisingly aware of social anxieties and unraveling economic crisis.[212] Zelensky finds that "children, to an uncanny degree, mirror and even exaggerate the contradictions or unresolved dilemmas of the surrounding world, [...] first to express the effects of an imbalance within the social system."[213] Moreover, she observes a revival of the early-Soviet rhetoric of a fairy tale childhood in the narratives of the adults in the 1990s. "Pravo na skazku," which is translated as "right to a fairy-tale" in Russian, first became part of the official agenda for the Soviet children around Stalin's 1950. When in the 1990s, "the spiritual life of the country entered a new channel, that children affirm their right to the fairy-tale."[214] The adult desire to provide a "fairy-tale like life" to children, expressed by the parents that Elizabeth Zelensky talked to is continued in the narratives of parents among my interlocutors as well. Both Natasha and Liudmyla, who have children, told me about their strong desire to allow children to have material goods that they did not have, even if it involves sacrifice of household expanses or purchasing something that the mothers themselves would not have otherwise approved, if not for the sake of reproduction of the idea of play and fairy tale. Idea of a "fairy tale" life is driven not exclusively culturally; it is

[211] Ibid.

[212] Ibid., 149

[213] Ibid., 139.

[214] Chukovsky, Kornei. Ot dvukh do piati. Moscow: Prosveshchenie, 1966. Quoted in Ibid., 140.

distributed according to socio-economic stratification and is created in capital-labour relationship. A fairy tale, in other words, is an economic privilege, just like the toys that generally children during *Perestroika* did not possess in the work of play behind the birth of Ukraine and beyond.

Chapter IV

Languages of Memories: Remembering and the Politics of Language

1. Introduction: Ukraine's Linguistic Plurality

Present day Ukraine's subjectivity is split over the war with Russia in both political and cultural terms. What is often ignored in the cultural and linguistic conflicts in Ukraine today is that both of the dominant languages of Ukraine exist in dynamic multiplicity. Several forms of Ukrainian language coexist within what is accepted as standard Ukrainian. The degree of difference between the forms is often predetermined by the contact with other languages. Usages of Russian and its cultural counterpart, *suzhyk*, a mix of Russian and Ukrainian commonly practiced across Ukraine, are also a matter of complexity and particularity, further undermining the validity of a Ukrainian/Russian cultural-political divide in Ukraine.

At the background of today's language and cultural conflict there are centuries of turbulent history that extends in time and space far beyond the recent political binary of "Moscow' and "Kyiv." As an outcome of colonizing wars, historically, the territory of Ukraine has always been divided under various political regimes, ever since the downfall of Kyiv an Rus'.[215] The kingdom of Kyievan Rus' as the cradle of Ukraine's origin has been argued to be both uniquely Ukrainian and cosmopolitan. As far back as the 12th century, after Kyiv's wealth, population and territory shrank "until it ranked little higher than other principalities," Kyiv and "its surrounding lands became referred to as *zemlia,* the

[215] L. Bilaniuk and S. Melnyk, "A Tense and Shifting Balance: Bilingualism and Education in Ukraine." *Multilingualism in Post-Soviet Countries*, Ed. Pavlenko (Toronto: Multilingual Matters, 2008), 73.

land of Rus.'"[216] Burdened with political controversies and derived from "Rus'" the very name "*Ruskaia*" linguistically has come to represent both "Russian" and "Ukrainian."

The emergence of a literary language based on Old Church Slavonic (in its Bulgarian adaptation) in Ukraine dates back to 988.[217] Throughout history, Old Church Slavonic was modified and influenced by the geo-political restructuring of the territories and the emergence of new political elites.[218] A split between the "low" and "high" modes of language spoken over the territory of Ukraine existed already in 16-17 centuries – a vernacular *prostaia mova ("simple language")* was spoken along with institutionalized Church Slavonic.[219] Development of *prostaia mova* was "enhanced by the autonomous Cossack state east of Dnieper as Russian protectorate, whereas Right-Bank Ukraine remained under Poland after the second partition in 1667. Spoken language also included many dialects.[220]

Later, between the early 1800s and the Bolshevik revolution, the use of Ukrainian language in education and print was largely banned.[221] Given that ethnolinguistically Ukraine has been developing largely under "the rule of non-Ukrainian regimes," the issue of what is and is not Ukrainian arose with new force during the time of the emergence of modern nationalism in Europe the nineteenth century and after.

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[216] Subtelny, *Ukraine*, 38.

[217] George Shevelov, "Evolution of the Ukrainian Literary Language," *Rethinking Ukrainian History*, Eds. Ivan Lysiak Rudnytsky, John-Paul Himka (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1981), 217.

[218] Ibid., 218.

[219] Ibid., 222.

[220] Ibid.

[221] In 1804, the Ministry of Education comanded that all pupils used Russian language; in 1863 the Valuev circular proclaims Ukrainian as having 'never existed' as a language, but rather a dialect, and banns publication in Ukrainian languane; 1876 Ems Ukaz prohibits use of Ukrainian languange in public life (Subtelny 2000).

After the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, with exception of several short-lived attempts to assert political independence throughout 1917-1920, most of Ukraine was incorporated within the Soviet Union as the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. Early Soviet support for national minorities was quickly and severely reversed in the 1930s, followed by a large-scale project of russification[222] under the rule of Stalin, though many of these policies would later be rescinded or adapted by succeeding Soviet administrations.

The numbers of printed media publishing in Ukrainian reported as 90% of the newspapers and 85 % of the journals in 1931; this output had dropped to 70% and 45% by 1940.[223] In literature, great Russian classics such as Pushkin, Dostoevsky, and Tolstoy were presented to contrast the with development of Ukrainian literary canon within cultural interaction between Russia and Ukraine. In 1938, the study of Russian became obligatory for all pupils starting in grade 2. Despite the educational reform of 1958 that offered parents the choice of language of instruction in school, the reality of russification and Russian language being an official state language, presented as more prestigious, led to the decline of Ukrainian language schooling.[224] In 1987 more than half of Ukrainian pupils were taught in school with Russian language instruction.[225]

Importantly, Perestroika and the political road to independence was marked by yet another change of language – Ukraine's switch from Russian to Ukrainian as the official language.[226] In 1989, the project of the Language Law of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist

[222] Politics of Russian cultural assimilation of non-Russian cultures within the Soviet Union.

[223] Subtelny, 423.

[224] Bilaniuk, 74-75.

[225] Ibid.

[226] The Law on Languages in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic proposed in 1989 and acting since 1990 was Ukraine's main source of Language law until 2012. It sees the Ukrainian language not only as the only official language of Ukraine, but also as a tool in the process of national building. It emphasizes, that Ukrainian language is one of the decisive factors of national distinctiveness of Ukrainian people (See, The Language Law of Ukrainian SSR from 1989).

Republic proclaimed Ukrainian language as the sole official language of the state. In 1991, after political independence was proclaimed, Ukraine was to switch to Ukrainian in administration. Education was of course the main field to be reformed, along with the media and state bureaucracy. Even though with Independence the use of Ukrainian language increased dramatically, in 1991, only 45% of schools had Ukrainian as the language of instruction, while 54% had Russian.[227]

As such, the change of Law was not accompanied by many material adaptations to the switch. New textbooks in Ukrainian, for example, even for the officially Ukrainian language operating schools, did not arrive for another decade or so. Within the social sphere, including family, the split of languages became more apparent and has continued into Ukraine's present history. Most recent geopolitical events in Ukraine and interpretations of their meaning demonstrated that "national identities continue to be caught up in power struggles, leadership elections, legislative acts and in the state distribution of social goods,"[228] [229] and that the grounds for the language conflict in Ukraine have solidified even harder as "the ethnification or even rationalisation of identity politics" remains crucial to culture.[230] As Wanner argues, ethnic identification in contemporary Ukraine serves the reification of nationalism and has recently

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In 2012 it was replaced by the Law on the Sate Policy on Language Politics («Про засади державної мовної політики»). The new project was supposed to obligate state authorities to serve in the languages of minority as well as state Ukrainian (given that their population of a language minority exceeds 10%). This Language Law was challenged after the change of the political elite, in 2014, for its privileges to Russian, widely spoken around Ukraine. As of 2015, the 2012 Law had been proclaimed invalid, while its new redaction is in the process of completion.

[227] Subtelny, 17.

[228] "Borderland identities" have been studied in relation to post-colonialist understanding of the post-Soviet bloc. See, for example, Smith G., Law V. and others. *Nation-Building in the Post-Soviet Borderlands: The Politics of National Identity*. Cambridge University Press, 1998.

[229] Catherine Wanner, "Fraternal" Nations and Challenges to Sovereignty in Ukraine: The Politics of Linguistic and Religious Ties." *American Ethnologist* 41(3) (2014): 427-439.

[230] G. Smith, V. Law et al. *Nation-Building in the Post-Soviet Borderlands: The Politics of National Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998), 1.

become harmful to its sovereignty as the "polarizing, politicized categories based on supposedly identifiable cultural attributes inject a spurious precision into everyday practices (e.g. religion and speech), with the aim of redefining state sovereignty."[231] Such political attitudes discriminate against the new generation of speakers, who Wanner identifies, suggesting that "after 23 years of language policies targeting day care centers and universities as bookends of Ukrainian-language instruction, a new generation has arisen that is comfortable in both languages such that non-accommodation has become a norm."[232]

Both Russian and Ukrainian, in practice, include many regional and social varieties that borth differ and defer across the uneven space-time of current Ukraine. Recently, different forms of language practice have been studied and determined to be different within the public and private domain as well. Deconstructing the idealized constructs of either ethnic identity, the population in Ukraine is largely bilingual and exercises different language forms depending on social context. Most importantly, Russian-Ukrainian language interaction has recently emphasized a distinct form of "neither-spcifically Russian-nor-Ukrainian" language form called *suhrzk*, a language form common in the private sphere and increasing in the contemporary media.[233]

The interviews in this research, as well as the data collected, were necessarily documented in more than one language. Most of the stories were presented in Ukrainian and some in Russian. Notwithstanding of their ethnic self-identification, participants who spoke Ukrainian, code-switched to Russian occasionally, sometime switching entirely to another language. Russian-speaking interviewees used Ukrainian in a similar manner. Narrators, who contained their story within the boundaries of one language still

[231] Wanner, "Fraternal Nations," 427.

[232] Ibid., 432.

[233] See Bilaniuk, Contested *Tongues*; and Bilaniuk and Melnyk, "A Tense and Shifting Balance"

occasionally borrowed "foreign," in the sense of infrequently used, vocabulary to talk about the realities of their childhoods. Much of the simultaneous interaction between Russian and Ukrainian was maintained within the grammatical rules of the language. Occasionally, however, they mixed entirely, producing a modern language form of Russionized Ukrainian (or Ukrainianized Russian) already identified here as *surzhyk*. On the other end of the spectrum, non-accommodating bilingualism, is another language mode increasingly present in Ukraine, especially in the media, when "interlocutors speak both languages, each adhering to their preferred language."[234] I did not encounter this language mode while talking to the respondents, partially because I was willing to switch to either of the languages preferred by the interviewers and was happy to adapt as conversations developed and not least because my conversation partners to not present and hositility around the issue of the languanges we were using.

The matter of the languages of these interviews came up as an adhoc, inherent and self-conscious topic of interest. The language was not a research matter at the beginning: I had intended or rather assumed that stories would be told in a language without making language usage explicitly self-conscious. While working with the stories, it became apparent, however, that the linguistic practice is part of a larger project of existence that constituted itself in Independent Ukraine on the shifting ground of multilingual experiences at odds with official State policies.

[234] Bilaniuk, *Contested Tongues*, 175.

2. Recollections (Selection)

Liudmyla (1978) grew up in L'viv, L'viv obl., and Ovruch, Zhytomyrs'ka obl.

Liudmyla: My mom is from Russia, from Ufa,[235] and dad is from Polissia,[236] but he [was] a military[man], and cruised around some Kazakhstans, and Tajikistans,[237] and there was Russian [language]… […] I was sent to a Russian [language] school. I studied Ukrainian during the Ukrainian [language] lessons at a Russian language school; and then 'finished' my 'apparatus' at the University. I was at grandma's until the age of 7 – she took care of me, at Polissia, and then I entered school here, in L'viv.

VY: Why did you live at grandma's?

Liudmla: Because my dad travelled around some 'inhumane' conditions, in some Katokurgan, where winter lasts 10 month. I was little, so I was sent to grandma's, and for that I thank my parents.

VY: Why are you thankful?

Liudmyla: Because I had a wonderful childhood at grandma's! [238]

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[235] Ufa – capital city of Bashkortostan Republic.

[236] Polissia – a unique geographical and historical region of Eastern Europe; picturesque with forests and lakes, in Ukraine it aligns with the boarders of Rivne, Zhytomyr, Kyiv and Chernihiv oblasts; ironically – it is also largely the territory of the Chornobyl' zone.

[237] Purposely plural to emphasize the distance of the far away countries that her father used to go to, when Liudmyla was little.

[238] Liudmyla (in Ukrainian): Мама в мене з Росії, з Уфи, а тато – з Полісся, але він військовий. І оскільки він військовий і покатався, в усяких Казахстанах, Таджикістанах, то там російська була… А мене в російську школу віддали. Я навчилася і української на уроках української в російській школі, а добила вже свій апарат в університеті. Бабушка мене виховувала до семи років, на Поліссі, а потім в школу я вже сюди пішла, у Львові.

VY: А чому ти у бабушки жила?

Liudmyla: Бо тато мій їздив по всяких нечеловеческих условиях: в Катокургані, де зима 10 місяців, а я була маленька і мене туди відправили і я за це батькам дуже дякую.

VY: А чому дякуєш?

Liudmyla: Бо в мене прекрасне детство було у бабушки!

What year was it… 1991 – it was some grade 5 already, and completely dull[239] consciousnes. The only thing [was] that my girlfriend and I were overjoyed that we would have not some "Ukrainian Soviet Republic" but a simple "Ukraine"! What a beautiful name! Well, and my parents were joyful as well, even though at some point my dad used to belong to the party; but because he was a smart man he treated it all as 'imposed from above'…

My husband, for instance, followed all those revolutions, 'ГКЧП',[240] he sat at the dacha listening to the radio. [He] is 5 years older, and he experienced it somehow more consciously. For me, it was more about whether it sounds beautiful of not… And then the [curse] began. Terrible-terrible, because there were no wages, and these horrific cut-out coupons. Life became even worse, and we were starving. Lived on macaroni; my parents were not getting their wages paid off, and such horrors. And because my daddy used to be in the military, he was [treated] like a tsar and god, but after the revolution he became shit on a stick,[241] put down at every occasion, as some agent of the enemy's army, and stuff. We [were]; it was poor, and it was bad.[242]

Somehow I did not associate it with the collapse. Simply, somehow… there was no feeling of 'great injustice"! It was just apparent that to get some stinky sausage, they [parents] used to go unload at some merchant center Iskra [a warehouse], to work at night, and then get a pound of

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[239] More like "dumb" – should be read rather as 'confused', 'blind', 'naïve.' In grade 5 pupils were 12-13 years, which is considered to be an almost grown-up consciousness.

[240] 'ГКЧП' – State Committee on Emergency Situation, a body formed in late August 1991, against Perestroka reform and Gorbachev, which actions contributed to the final dissolution of the SU.

[241] Reference to children's folklore of her childhood; "Little shit on a stick" was a derogatory nickname for a most pitied and powerless person.

[242] Liudmyla (in Ukr.): Який це був – 91 рік – це в мене був якийсь вже 5-й клас і совершенно тупое еще сознание. Єдине, що ми з подружкой дуже раділи, раділи дуже, що в нас тепер буде не Українська Советська Республіка, а просто Україна! Какое прекрасное название! Ну і батьки мої так само раділи, незважаючи на те, що мій тато там партійний колись був, але оскільки він – розумна людина, він то все сприймав як зверху насаджене (партію)….

В мене чоловік, наприклад, за тими революціями слідкував, ГКЧП, він сидів на дачі і радіо слухав. Старший на 5 років – він якось так свідомо це пережив, а я – тільки на рівні красіво-не красіво звучить… А потім почалася пизда. Тіпа ужасна-прєужасна, тому що зарплату не платили, оці всі ужасні купоны отрезные. Жить стало еще хуже и мы голодали… самі макарони жерли, батькам не виплачували зарплату моїм, і такі ужаси-ужаси. І оскільки татусь мій військовий раньше був царь і бог, після революції став гамно на палочке і його всі чмирили, казали, що ти, тіпа, ворожої армії солдат і там всі діла. Ми, тіпа, бідно було і погано."

sausage [...] Eternal standing in queues to get some banal butter. In Ovruch it didn't feel so bad. At grandma's, there was her own stock supply. Usually, it was in summer, during the break when I was there, and everything she had was so fresh and delicious. No marzipans nor pineapples, evidently, but potato with gravy, and such. [...] It was not just like some iron curtain had just fallen, and everybody started going everywhere. I mean, it was felt only some 10 years after...

Cultural life existed, because theaters worked; the Philharmonic hall worked. And, because my daddy [243]was an intelligent person, we used to go see a play every week, obligatory. Despite how little money we had, we used to go to a play, and after – to a café "Korova" ('Cow') for crepes with mushroom sauce... Still, in the 1990s. [...] Stratification started in school. Some had a Barbie, but I didn't have a Barbie my entire life, and I wanted a Barbie very much. I received one already when Bond went to Lublin; he bought me one with his first paycheque.[244] The same [regarding] some markers, crayons, and that patched up coat that I had to wear... and pupils were different, some – children of the generals... [245]

VY: There was a moment when everything switched to Ukrainian language, wasn't it? Was it apparent here (in L'viv)?

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[243] She insists on using poetic Ukrainian diminutive *tatus'* "daddy" while also speaking surzhyk

[244] A friend went abroad, to Poland, for post-graduate studies, and bought Liudmyla Barbie doll as a present, already in 2000s, when she was around 30.

[245] VY: Це тебе якось розчарувало?

Liudmyla (in Ukrainian): Ні, я якось про це... Я не поєднувала це з розвалом. Просто якось так... Не было у меня чувства несправедливости жестокой! – ну просто, типу бачила, що, щоб получити якусь вонючу ковбасу, вони з мамою йшли вночі на... розгружати якийсь ... в торговый центр «Искра», полночи его разгружали, чтобы потом – килограмм колбасы (...) Вічно стояли в якійсь черзі, щоб там банальне якесь масло купити. В Овручі це не відчувалося. У бабушки – своє хозяйство. Оскільки я там літом завжди була, на канікулах, в неї завжди все було, все таке смачненьке, свіженьке. Ну, понятно, что там – не марципаны и ананаси, але картошечка с подливкой... таке. [...] Тоді ще не було так, що железный занавес упал и все начали ездить везде. Тобто це відчулося тільки років десять тому... [...] Культурна жизнь была, бо працювали театри, працювала філармонія. І, оскільки мій татусь – інтелігентна людина, ми кожний тиждень ходили на якусь виставу обізатєльно. Незважаючи на те, що грошей дуже мало, ми ходили на виставу, а після вистави ходили в кафе «Корова» на блінчікі з грибною підливкою... Це в 90-х. [...] Расслоєніє началось в школі. В когось Барбі була, а в мене Барбі не було никогда в жизні, і мені дуже хотілося тої Барбі. А получила я її, коли Бонд в Люблін поїхав – на перву зарплату мені її купив. Ну, було там, всякі фломастери, олівці, а я ще ходила в тому пальто дошитому... а учні ж різні – там, і дєті генералов...

Liudmyla: Well, I studied in a Russian school, and my neighborhood was pretty 'moskalskyj.' [246] There used to be a political college in the neighborhood. And it was Russian-speaking, even after all the revolutionary years. And I also remember such crap, when we were going to school (by public transit), and I was carrying some text books in my arms, some "mathematics" and "Russian Language" – in the Russian language. And my classmate said to me – "flip it around," and that on such and such day there will be a "massacre of Russians"… It was said, "on September 22, there will be a purge of Russians"… I heard it and thought – yeah, a purge of Russians"; I was not scared, and there of course was no purge of Russian… (Laughs.)[247]

The only time when I got 'my hat hit' was when some drunk man was on his way out of the store, and ran into me, and I told him "not to hustle" and he responded that I was such and such 'moskalka' and, in general, he was gonna 'slice me' for my 'moskal' tongue. It was once; I was just a child, around 12. Such things. More such 'discriminations' I don't recall. I also remember that I wrote a final paper for one of the courses in Russian, in first year university, – *L'viv National University*! (Laughs.) And professor says that he was 'terribly sorry'! And then Ostapchyk (a friend) had to translate it for me. (Laughs.)[248]

VY: What would you consider yourself?

Hm, what would I call myself? Well, I am a Ukrainian, a Russian-speaking… Well, for instance, my "categorical-conceptual apparatus" is in Ukrainian – all these philosophical ideas, standards of thinking – they all are in my head; but my dissertation, for example, I could not

[246] "Moskal' – Derogatory for Russian-speaking or Russian person.

[247] VY: Був якийсь такий момент, коли всі переключилися на українську мову? Тут це, мабуть, не було так разюче…

Liudmyla: Ну, я вчилася в російській школі, і райончик у мене був такий москальський. Там політучилище було, у цьому районі. І політучилище, воно російськомовне було, навіть… після цих всіх революцій. От. Ну, але я пам'ятаю таку фігню, що ми їхали в школу, у мене в руках підручники – математика, русскій язик – російською мовою. І мені однокласниця каже: переверни, бо такого-то числа буде різня русскіх… Сказали там «22 сентября буде різня русскіх»… Я так послухала, подумала, що «ага, різня русскіх», ну, не злякалася, і не було ніякої… різні русскіх… (Сміється.)

[248] Liudmyla: Єдиний раз, коли я получила по шапкє – якийсь пяний мужичок виходив з магазіна, і він мене штовхнув, і я йому сказала, чтоб он не полкался, а він сказав, що я така москалька, і щас вопще тебе тут порешу за твою москальську мову. Це – єдиний випадок, причому, що я була дитина, мені десь було 12 років. Такоє. А так ущімлєній таких я не пам'ятаю. Ще пам'ятаю, що в університеті на першому курсі я написала курсову російською мовою, у Львівському університеті (Іронічно. Сміється), і мені професор сказав, що я діко ізвіняюсь! І Остапчик мені перекладав. (Сміється.)

defend in Russian… However, when I want to say something sincerely to someone, or yell at my child – I could not do it in Ukrainian…[249]

VY: And what about *surzhyk*? [250]

Liudmyla: *Surzhyk* is wonderful. We love it, we speak it. (Laughs). When you are at some kind of a meeting, I understand, then – it is all [in] beautiful Ukrainian language; but when I am with my friends I understand that speaking *surzhyk*, I am joking (or making fun of something)…. And, to a certain degree, it became my second "I". [251]

VY: So, it is a language form more associated with…

Liudmyla: Associated with my friends, who think the same way and use the same phrases – when we speak such phrases: we create a certain unity in the fact that we are aware of it. And when somebody who doesn't know "what?" and "what for"?" – means, [the person] is not in the same context as us, yet.[252]

Natasha (1984) grew up in Lozova, Kharkivs'ka obl.

[249] VY: А ти як себе асоціюєш? Як би ти себе назвала?

Liudmyla: Як би я себе назвала? Ну, я – українка, російськомовна. Тому що… Наприклад, категоріально-понятійний апарат – в мене український – все, що мені в університеті заклали в голову, всі ці філософські поняття, якісь такі стандарти мислення – знаєш, тобто, вони в мене в голові… А от, наприклад, дисертацію свою я не смогу на русском рассказать… А так от – коли я хочу щось щиро сказати комусь, або накричати на свою дитину українською мовою в мене не виходить…

[250] VY: А як на счет суржика? – I asked about surzhyk in surzhyk.

[251] Second "I" – second most used tool for self-expression.

[252] Liudmyla (in Ukrainian, code-switching): Суржик – це прекрасно. Мы его любим, мы на нем разговариваем. (Сміється.) Якщо, – я розумію – що я на якомусь засіданні, то там – це прекрасна українська мова; коли я зі своїми друзями – я розумію, що я прікалуюсь, говорячи на суржику… Але, певною мірою, він вже став моїм вторим «я».

ВЯ: Тобто це – мова, мовна форма, більш пов'язана з …

- Пов'язана з моїми друзями, які так само мислять і такі самі фразочки уживають – ми, говорячи цими фразочками, ми створюємо певну єдність таку, що от ми знаєм об этом. А хтось там не знає, шо таке? зачем?, – от той, значить, не в нашем контексте ещё.

VY: Natasha, do you realize that you were born and partially grew up in the Soviet Union?

Natasha: (Long pause). … Somehow it was sewn into us, that we were children of the Soviet Union. You know, you were accustomed to the idea that you have been born in the Soviet Union. But, in actuality… Now, when you are watching weather forecast, and you see [on the screen] "Ukraine" and the weather is forecasted, somehow before you didn't put much meaning [into the fact] that a not "correct" Ukraine was shown – Russia, Belarus… I didn't even think about this much, until you suggested to talk about this topic.

One thing – when you log in social media, there are all these interesting apps, and there is one "Children of the 1980-90s"; and there are these [pictures of] toys – metal trucks (ЗИЛ), cars, a roly-poly, and then later – "Vesna" ("Spring") stereo player… for tapes. And all these toys, objects of the past times that cannot be found anymore or bought – there is nothing even alike, you understand? An then you realize how ancient we are, and in what childhood we were born and brought up! (Laughing.)[253]

VY: How do you see your childhood, in comparison with childhood currently? (K. is Natasha's daughter, age 6 at the moment of the interview).

Natasha: In terms of material wealth, then – this childhood [current] is "better" (more advanced – VY), but in terms of spiritual – the other one [past]… With my child, I try to make it so she knows the cost of the things that she is bought… It used to be, September the 1st – how joyful were you to go to the market! [254] And if you are going to Kharkov's Barabashova (big market) – then, a note book! its cover's color! [Every small detail matters.] Now, there are

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[253] VY: Вот скажи мне, ты вообще это ощущаешь, что ты родилась, и выросла до какого-то периода в Советском Союзе?

Natasha (in Russian): (Длинная пауза). - Как-то оно пришилось к нам, то, что мы дети Советского Союза. Ты понимаешь, ты привык к этому, что ты в Советском Союзе родился. А вот так вот действительно… Если сейчас смотришь погоду, и там показано – Украина, и про погоду рассказывают, то раньше как-то не придавал этому значения, что показывают … не ту Украину – Россия, Беларуссия… Чего-то даже так сильно и не задумывалась до того, как ты предложила поговорить на эту тему. […] Единственное – когда заходишь в соц сети, и там есть всякие интересные ссылочки, и когда показываются «Дети 80-90х», и игрушки вот эти – железные ЗИЛы, машинки, неваляшка, потом вот эти – магнитофон «Весна»… для кассет. И там вот эти все игрушки, предметы, все из тех времен, что сейчас их уже не найдешь, не купишь – даже подобия таких нету, понимаешь? И понимаешь, какие мы древние, в каком детстве мы выросли, родились и выросли! (Смех.)

[254] Both "happy" and "lucky". Shopping before September the 1st – day of return to school after summer, was for many children the "Christmas shopping" equivalent, when children were bought new clothing and shoes, as well as school supplies. "Market" – is a "shopping mall" equivalent in post-Soviet urban Ukraine.

various designs, all sorts of things, but before – [there were limited options] a pink one, or a blue one, the main thing was that it said "Notebook", meaning it *was* a notebook. Not just empty lines… And if there were a multiplication table at the back! (Laughing.) [It was considered] incredible! […]

Now, you know, such value is disappearing…[255] Now I can see in K. (daughter) whether she is degrading or not in such terms… Say, I buy her something, and her eyes are just shining – she is happy that she got it! And I explain it to her. If it is a toy, for example, [I explain] how to play with it so it doesn't immediately break – because nobody's going to buy her another one! The toy costs money, and she [the daughter] has to understand that. Same thing with everything. With clothes we are still struggling, because there are falls, and scratched knees, and sandals… (Laughing.)[256] Nowadays, parents just *have* to; but it used to be such special happiness if you are bought a new skirt! And then you are walking to school wearing not an old, but a new one!

VY: How do you remember the language shift from Russian to Ukrainian?

Natasha: Tough. It was difficult, certainly. You know, they wanted everything at once, Ukrainian – and that's it! And the fact that the textbooks are already printed in Russian 5 years in advance – [was not taken into consideration] … We had everything until grade 11 printed in Russia – is it nothing? Is it normal? If you are so inclined, then, be so kind, remake all the texts then, to make it easier to follow. Otherwise, – you listen to it in Ukrainian (in lecture), and then read about it at home, in Russian, wondering whether it was the same concept that she [the

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[255] By "value" she means the privilege of the purchasing power, it appreciation that is undervalued in current times. It used to belong to the realm of "fate", "luck" whether you get new shoes or not, but now – it is something to be achieved.

[256] ВЯ: Как ты видишь свое детство, по сравнению с К., например?

- В плане, допустим, материальных ценностей, то – это детство, в плане духовных ценностей – то то детство… Ребенку я стараюсь делать так, чтобы она понимала ценность вещам, которые ей покупаются… Раньше, первое сентября – с какой радостью ты едешь на базар! А, если ты едешь в Харьков, на Барабашова, – тетрадка! Цвет обложки! Сейчас – разные рисунки, всевозможные, а раньше – или розовая, или синяя, и главное, что написано «Зошит» - что это тетрадь! Не просто там линии … А если там сзади еще и таблица умножения! (Смеется). Превосходно!! […] Понимаешь, вот сейчас у детей пропадает эта ценность… И я вот смотрю, (по) К. – деградирует она в этом плане или нет. Я вот покупаю ей какую-то вещь, у нее глаза горят – она рада, что у нее это появилось! И я ее объясняю. Если это игрушка – то как надо себя вести, чтобы не поломать, чтобы она быстро не сломалась, потому что новую никто не купит! … Она (игрушка) – дорогая, и надо это понимать. Точно также – и к вещам. К вещам – мы еще боремся, потому что – это падения, разбитые коленки, счесанные сандали… (Смеется) […] Сейчас – родители должны и все, а раньше – это такое счастье, когда тебе покупают новую юбку в школу, и ты идешь не в старой, и только в новой блузке…

teacher] used or not. (Laughs ironically.) Everything [was] depressing… And Ukraine [is] associated… (thanks to the school curriculum) with something worrisome, and sad… It [was] definitely thought. […] Cartoons, however, all these "Sponge Bob" – I don't show these to Karina… She watches "Once upon a dog" …[257] (Laughing.) All these cartoons[258] – or, say, "Morozko" ("Frosty", a Russian folk tale movie made in 1961.) Fairy tales, precisely, 'ours' – e.i. "Cinderella" from 1964, or something. The only [exceptions] are "Shrek", "Rapunzel", and "Madagascar". Hm… that's it! [259]

Viktor (1981) grew up in Zdolbuniv, Rivne obl.; Bakhmach, Chernihiv obl.; and L'viv.

Viktor: In the first year I was in a Russian class. Me, from a Ukrainian family, I couldn't get into a Ukrainian class because all Ukrainian classes were already full. It was more of a Russian-dominated school; Russian language; Russian literature. Russian meant 'career.' I went to the class where teaching was in Russian. From that moment, I started to socialize as a Russian. My

[257] "Once upon a dog" – an acclaimed cartoon after a Ukrainian folk tale, made in 1982.

[258] Kononenko, Natalie has studied *multiki*, Soviet cartoons as a genre in her article "The Politics of Innocence: Soviet and Post-Soviet Animation on Folklore Topics," which she had shared with me over e-mail in 2011.

[259] VY: Еще мне интересно про украинский язык. Помнишь, когда мы пошли в школу в 1991 году, мы должны были говорить на укранском языке… И мне интересно, как мы прижились.

Natasha (in Russian): Напряжно… Конечно, тяжело. Понимаешь, они хотели все сразу, украинский – и все. А то, что учебники на 5 лет вперед уже русские изданы … У нас даже по 11й класс все на русском языке – то это ничего, все нормально? Вы если уже так делаете, то, будьте добры, переделайте тогда и всю литературу, чтобы проще учиться. А так, когда ты слушаешь на украинском, а потом дома читаешь на русском и думаешь – это то слово, что она говорила на украинском, или не то, или другое… (Возмущенно. Смех.) …. Все угнетающие… И Украина ассоциируется … (благодаря школьной программе) с чем-то плохим, грустным… Это, конечно, жестко. […] Хотя, мультики, я тебе хочу сказать, я К. не показываю ни вот этих «Спонж Боб», таких, которые разговаривают… Она у меня смотрит «Жил был пес»… Потом… (Смеется) Все вот эти, наши. Мультик … или 61 года – «Морозко» - именно, мультик. Потом – сказки, тоже вот эти всякие, «Морозко» – именно, наши. Наши: «Золушка», вот эта, которая тоже 64 года, по-моему. Я все такое ей качаю. Вот это единственный мультик, что у нас … а, ну, «Шрек», потом вот это «Рапунсель», и … «Мадагаскар» и про … и все! И все! […]

second mother tongue is Russian; I communicated and thought in Russian, my friends were Russians.[260]

Already in the first class there was a major conflict. The events of 1987-88 were projected on us, children (this is how I reflect it today). "Who are we?" – was the question often asked. Those Russians are such and such, and we are different, we have to be separated. Independence… Children must have overheard these conversations and they had the word "moskal" [derogatory Ukrainian word for "Russian person"] in their vocabulary. At that time, they were able to call classes with teaching in Russian "moskals" – we heard it from them then.

What did I think of Lenin? Lenin, [the image of Lenin] it was in every primer. It was very quickly destroyed, [the image of] Shevchenko[261] has emerged. Everything is so vague, because my identity was indistinct as well… It's good I switched to the Ukrainian gymnasium [later]. I was simply re-socialized. [262]

Iryna (1984) L'viv, L'viv obl.

Iryna: As we were growing up, everything was becoming private. […] Another moment – school uniforms were not required anymore – unlike in the Union… [And then, it became apparent who wears what to school] – Who's still in the uniform, and who isn't and that was

[260] *Viktor (*in Ukrainian): В першому класі я був в російському класі. Я, з україномовної сім'ї, не міг потрапити в український клас, тому що всі українські класи були вже заповнені. Була більш російсько домінуюча школа – російська мова, російська література. Російська – тире – кар'єра. Я пішов в російський клас. І з того моменту я почав соціалізуватися як росіянин. До 9-го класу я був абсолютним росіянином. Моя друга рідна мова – російська, спілкувався і мислив я російською, друзі були росіяни.

[261] Taras Shevchenko – a famous Ukrainian writer, which has been on the rise in the early 1990s, and whose work is being seen as crucial element in the process of Ukrainian nation-building.

[262] *Viktor*: Вже в першому класі, я чому згадав ці іграшки, цей дитячий закуток, у нас відбувався конфлікт, на дітей (це я вже зараз так раціоналізую) відбулася проекція тих подій 87-88 року, коли почалися заворушення, а хто ми такі, а от росіян такі, а ми такі, нам треба бути окремо. Незалежність… Діти якось напевно вловлювали всі ці розмови, і слово "москаль" вже було в їхньому репертуарі – ми таке чули в свою сторону.

Як я сприйняв Леніна… Це букварик, і потім цей образ, якось його дуже швидко стерли, з'явився Шевченко… Все розмито, бо й ідентичність в мене була дуже розмита… Це добре, що я перейшов в українську гімназію. Мене просто пересоціалізували…

worse!.. It was felt who had access to what wealth, and it was unpleasant, some had just one dress, and some had many...[263]

[...]

Everything [that had recently been] accessible, was destroyed before us. [...]

We were in the first grade at school when Russian was cancelled. That's it – there became no Russian, it was not taught anymore. But my entire courtyard was Russian-speaking, and I spoke Russian since I was a child, I was used to [speaking in both languages]. Many of my classmates spoke [only] Ukrainian at home, and were simply incapable of speaking Russian, and for some it became a problem in their lifetime, because here – it is inseparable, well, necessary... I lacked it at the time [Russian lessons], terribly, because I could not write (meaning – did not know how to spell in Russian without errors)... My dad recommended I read books in Russian... And at home [however], we spoke only Ukrainian.[264]

VY: How did you know that you would be a Pioneer?

Iryna: First of all – it's from the photographs of my parents. For my mom – an Oktobrists is becoming a Pioneer. And that was something, something special! Also, the neck ties! Mom bought us those in advance. They were kept in the closet. And I would try it on, and admire how nicely it fit... (Laughing.)[265]

VY: How did it all seem to you?

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[263] Iryna (in Russian): Мы подростали и все становилось частное. [...] Еще момент – не заставляли уже носить форму – то, чего не могло быть в Союзе... Кто-то в форме, кто-то – без – и это плохо! ... Тут почувствовалось у кого какой был достаток, и это неприятно (у кого-то одно платье, а у кого-то сто).

[264] Iryna (in Russian): У нас на глазах рушилось то, что (недавно) было доступно. [...] Мы – первый набор, когда тут же отменили русский. Все – его не стало, не стали преподавать. И у меня – весь двор был русскоязычный, я с детства говорила (на русском), была привыкшая. У меня многие одноклассники общались дома на украинском, и просто не могли разговаривать по-русски. Для них потом в жизни это стало проблемой, потому что у нас это неразделимо, ну, – нужно. ... Мне потом этого страшно не хватало, потому что я не умела писать.... Мне папа посоветовал книжки читать на русском... Дома мы всегда говорили на украинском языке.

[265] VY: Откуда ты знала, что ты будешь пионером? Или не знала. Почему?

Iryna (in Russian): Во-первых, это – фотографии родителей. Мама – жовтенятко, маму посвящают в пионеры. И это что-то такое, такое, такое! Потом, мама купила нам эти галстуки! Зарание. И они лежали в антресоли. И я его примеряла: как мне в нем будет красиво... (Смеется.)

Iryna: Wonderful! I mean that way it was presented… (Laughing.) Also – children's movies!… Remember what they were [depicted] like, the Pioneers! In "Guest from the Future," how they built all these plans of survival – because they are Pioneers! […] Nowadays, ideology costs money, back then – ideology was used to live. Nowadays, there is no 'ideology' for children at all… […] In actuality, there were different people. You know? […] My [sister] Lilka was an Oktobrist, and in 1991 she was supposed to become a Pioneer, and did not become! That was a tragedy. (Laughs)

Svitlana, 1984, grew up in Gorlivka, Donets'k obl. and L'viv, L'viv obl.

VY: Do you remember your childhood?

Svitlana: Very little. Mostly from stories. What I remember is usually some parade moments. […] Earliest memory is I am 2 years old. [It is] May 1. Really, I remember very well – high blue sky, and we are walking to the parade, I am joyful because I have many balloons – such big balloons… I remember that I used to like parades for there was balloons and flowers. And everybody looked beautiful, cheerful and smiling. [266]

[…]

Svitlana: When I played by myself, I used to play by the creek, which is by the ravine – I rearranged rocks, rebuilding it… Occasionally, I played with my girlfriend by the staircase.[267] [268]

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[266] VY: Чи пам'ятаєш ти своє дитинство?

Svitlana: (in Ukr.): Дуже мало, більше з розповідей. Те, що пам'ятаю – це, як правило, якісь парадові моменти. […] Перше, що я пам'ятаю, це – мені два роки. Первоє Мая. Реально, дуже добре пам'ятаю – високе голубе небо і ми йдемо на парад, я дуже з того тішуся тому, що маю багато кульок – таких здорових, здорових… Я пам'ятаю, що я дуже любила паради, бо там були кульки і квіти. І всі були дуже гарні, дуже веселі, дуже усміхнені.

[267] Meaning – a neighbour living on the same floor of an apartment building. Soviet apartment buildings were commonly arranged in small sections with entrance and a staircase separated. Each section would have 3 to 6 apartments located on the same floor. These close neighbourhood connections were often crucial for children's' friendship-peer networks. To be a neighbour by the staircase means to life very close to each other.

[268] Svitlana (in Ukrainian): Як я бавилася сама, то я рилася в струмочку, той, що біля оврагу, я його перебудовувала, камінчики переставляла… Інколи я робила це зі своєю подругою по леснічной площадкє.

If I ran away, – say, across the railway tracks, or into ravine – it was also with her… We would climb over the tracks, and that was how we ran away from home. Who never ran away from home [was considered] a weenie, a coward… Well, first time I ran away from home I was about 7. I had some argument with my parent and, by the way, I ran away barefoot… In this huge grey concrete building – it was an epoch of crisis of communal wealth, had just started… So, I am barefoot, walking to Olia's across the staircase (across the floor), borrow her sandals – a terrible thing to do, by the way, because somebody else's shoes rub the feet unbelievably! And we were off with Olia. [We] wrote a note. I suggested that we left a note, because when you are leaving, you are supposed to leave a note, a good-bye note. So we wrote a good-bye note and took off. And we went across the railway tracks, through two 'posadkas' (patches of forest in generally prairie-like steppe parts of Ukraine). We decided to run off to Olia's grandma… They searched for us for an hour and a half… In the good-bye note, we informed that we had gone to grandma's, yet not knowing that one is supposed to run off into nowhere (laughs). I don't recall how exactly we were found. It's possible that walking in the sandals hurt our feet and we came back to change our footwear. We were punished severely; I stood on buckwheat grains in the corner. [269] That day I realized that an escape was a serious matter. [It was] something that I have done that was regarded as 'cool' afterwards (by peers). We were not allowed to go outside for a week! But we went afterwards, and everybody was ecstatic that we ran off. Next thing – all of the boys ran away, too (laughing.)[270]

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[269] Considered harmless, this 'didactic' punishment was commonly practice at home, and often – kindergarten. Punished child was supposed to kneel in the corner of a room, facing the wall, standing bare-knee on buckwheat or some other coarse grain; sometime for prolonged periods of time.

[270] Svitlana (in Russian mostly: Якщо я кудись втікала, то теж з нею – там, в овраг, за путя… І ми перелазили через ті путя, і так убегали из дома. Кто никогда не убегал из дома, тот вообще… малолетка, дебил. Ну, і я перший раз втікала з дому, мені було десь сім років. Я посварилася з батьками, причому я втікала боса… Цей сірий, здоровий будинок – це якраз була епоха кризи ЖЕКів, вона починалась тоді… Значит, я, боса, іду до Олі через лєснічну площадку, беру у нее сандали – очень страшная вещь, между прочим… Чужие же трут невероятно! И пошли мы с Олей… написали записку. Я сказала, что надо написать записку… знаю, что, когда уходишь, надо писать записку, прощальную. Ну мы и накатали прощальную записку, и ушли. И ушли мы за путя в другую сторону, через две посадки. Мы решили уйти к бабушке Олиной… Нас искали где-то полтора часа… А мы в прощальной записке, еще не зная, что уходить положено в никуда, написали, что мы ушли к бабушке… (Сміх.) Я вот не помню, как нас нашли. По-моему, нам обеим натерли наши сандалики, и мы вернулись переобуться… Лупили нас страшно, стояла на гречке, в углу… И я поняла, что побег – это важное дело. Это ж можно сделать, а потом будешь страшно крутая. Потом мы вишли во двор – неделю нам нельзя было гулять, а потом мы вышли во двор. Все конечно были в экстазе – мы с Олей сбежали из дому! (Сміх.) После того из дому сбежали все мальчики.

VY: Was it leadership?

Svitlana: Not some much leadership, but a way to show off. Father goes somewhere, and that's how he is cool. We wanted to go into some big world…[271]

Inna (1984), Tomakivka, and Novomoskovs'k, Dnipropetrovs'k obl.

While recalling spare time in the neighborhood court yard, Inna sung me a song that she still remembers. The song is a classic example of the "chanson" genre, a ballad of the social outcast:

> Inna: In a Moscow state garden / I have seen with my own eyes / A young girl on trial / Of the age of a child / And a black raven came down / And she was ordered to go out / And hold her arms behind her back / And not no look around. / She asked to speak / And the judges did not refuse / And she had started her story / While the audience was crying: / "I was in love with a young man / We were together thieves / And all the money I stolen / I gave him happily as gifts. / One day I came back home / And saw him drinking with his friends / Embracing a different girl / While he sent me out of the door, / And I decided upon vengeance: / The same night I made my revenge/ I stabbed him with a sharp knife / I did not betray him however." / I didn't see her having poison / I didn't see her taking it / Her mother and father rushed towards her / And kneeling they were begging her / "Wake up, my child, wake up to hear / The judges found you not guilty." / In a Moscow state garden / I have seen with my own eyes / A young girl buried / Of the age of a child.[272]

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[271] VY: Ось в чому проявлялося лідерство…

Svitlana (in Ukrainian, and then – Russian): Не те, що лідерство, а якісь страшні панти. Это ж папа куда-то уходить, значит, он крутой. И мы хотели выйти в какой-то большой мир…

[272] Inna (In Russian):

В Московском городском саду / Своими видел я глазами / Судили девушку одну / Она дитя была годами / И черный ворон подлетел / И ее сказали: выходите / Держите руки за спиной / По сторонам вы не глядите / Она просила слово дать / И судьи ей не отказали / И начала она рассказ – / И в зале зрители рыдали: / Любила парня одного / И воровать я с ним ходила / И деньги краденные мной / Я с торжеством ему дарила / (Однажды прихожу) домой / А он с друзьями выпивает / Сидит в объятиях другой / Меня за двери выставляет / И я решила отомстить / И той же ночью отомстила / Вонзила в спину острый нож, Но парню я не изменила. / И я не видел, как она кусочек яда вынимает / И не видел, как она кусочек яда принимает / К ней подбежал отец и мать / И на коленях умоляли / Очнись, дитя мое, очнись / Тебя ведь судьи оправдали / В

(Laughs).

It is a real 'court yard' song… I don't remember though whether it was from Tomakivka or Novomoskovs'k.[273] [274]

[…] (Continuing talking about her spare time, she remembers another music lesson):

Then I went to a music school (for children) to play bandura.[275] Because a new teacher arrived to school, Halyna Mykhajlivna. She came to school – all so beautiful, with long braids, these red ear clips – laughing – red lipstick – all so beautiful. And then she set down and played bandura – it was impossible to resist, well, it was my initiative, too. … Then I had to carry around this huge bandura… Somehow parents wanted to make sure we don't have much spare time (unsupervised time, rather – VY), I mean, that the spare time is [spent] in institutions. And it was great![276]

VY: Why?

Inna: To 'upload' as much as possible into children, so they would not go to waste.[277]

VY: What language did you speak?

Inna: Well, it was *surzhyk* – a normal language (laughing). … My grandma – and everyone else spoke this normal language, and then one day you discover that it was not much normal after all! I remember when I was in Novomoskovs'k, or hanging out with my cousin, we talked

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Московском городском саду /Своими видел я глазами / Хоронят девушку одну/ Она дитя была годами.

[273] Inna (In Ukrainian): Це – справжня дворова пісня… Я не знаю, чи це з Томаківки, чи з Новомосковська.

[274] Inna was born and lived with her parents in Tomakivka, a town in Dnipropetrovs'k oblast, that stands upon the territory of a Cossack settlement of the 16th century, South-East Ukraine. She also spent much time in Novomoskovs'k, a city with 10 times the population, where she had family. Novomoskovs'k.

[275] Bandura is a Ukrainian string folk instrument.

[276] Inna (in Ukrainian): Потім я пішла в музичну школу по класу бандури. Тому що до нас приїхала викладачка, Галина Михайлівна. І вона прийшла в школу – вся така гарна, з довгою косою, з кліпсами такими червоними (сміх), червона помада – така дуже гарна. І вона сіла заграла на бандурі – і просто не можна було встояти, ну, і це також була моя власна ініціатива. … Носила цю велику бандуру додому… Якось так батьки намагалися, щоб в нас не було вільного часу, тобто, щоб вільний час був – в інституціях. І це було класно!

[277] VY: Чому?

Inna (in Ukrainian): Щоб дітей якомога більше завантажити, щоб вони не зіпсувалися.

Russian with her. For me, it was a speech exercise, because I thought it was cool to be able to speak Russian. I remember, when I visited Novomoskovs'k, there was this other girl that also spoke *surzhyk*, but I spoke Russian there, and I thought I was cooler – a city [person]! (Laughs.) And she was …strange. It was a thing – that *surzhyk* and Ukrainian were [considered] village languages, and Russian – was a city language.

And there was also this incident – we went to Kyiv, in high school already, and we went on a train with other children from all over the oblast' (in a sleeping carriage, overnight), and some must have been running around or something, and I yelled at them in Ukrainian, and everyone was shocked – what? You speak Ukrainian? That is, among peers we spoke Russian, but barely awake I yeledl at them in Ukrainian! (Laughs.) [278]

3. *Surzhyk*

The term *surzhyk* has several meanings. Originally it meant "a mixture of wheat and rye flour, which was considered lower grade than pure wheat."[279] According to the pre-Soviet version of the Ukrainian language dictionary, *surzhyk* was also a diminutive used to signify a person of mixed race. [280]Etymologically, it is a diminishing, derogatory term to signify something of a 'lower grade.' In the post-Independence Ukrainian linguistics, as "characterized by purity and correctness language policy," it is used to describe a language

[278] VY: І якою мовою ви говорили?

Inna (in Ukrainian): Ну, це був суржик, така нормальна наша мова. (Сміх.) … Моя бабушка – і всі говорять такою нормальною мовою, а потім ти поступово дізнаєшся, що якась вона таки не зовсім нормальна! Я пам'ятаю, коли я була в Новомосковську, або зустрічалася зі своєю сестрою двоюрідною, з нею я говорила російською. Це для мене була така мовна вправа, тому що мені було прікольніше вміти російською говорити. Я пам'ятаю, коли я була в Новомосковську, і там була така дівчинка, яка також суржиком говорила, а я - російською, і мені здавалося, що я крутіша – міська! (Сміється.) А вона – якась така дивна. Якийсь такий прікол, що суржик або українська – це сільська мова, а російська – це мова міста. Ще був такий прікол, ми їздили в Київ, це вже було у старшому шкільному віці, і ми їхали в купе з іншими дітьми з області, і вони там бігали, чи щось, і я на них накричала українською, і всі були шоковані – ти що говориш українською?? Тобто ми там всі між собою російською говорили, а спросоння я на них українською накричала! (Сміється.)

[279] Podvesko 1962, quoted from Bilaniuk, *Contested Tongues*, 153.

[280] Hrinchenko, 1909. (Ukrainian Dictionary).

form – a mixture of Russian and Ukrainian, primarily negatively associated with the marginal social status of a peasant.[281] In literary work, *surzhyk* has been used to portray members of society of marginal education and status.[282] *Surzhyk* is characterized by nonstandard phonetics, mixed morphology (the gender of many nouns is different in Russian and Ukrainian, as well as number), having a lexicon where one of the languages can be used in the other, either consistently or sporadically, which also affects the syntax.[283]

Contemporary Ukrainian linguistics, inseparable from the nation politics, approaches *surzhyk* exclusively in terms of national ideology, national identity and nation-building, as "language pollution," undesired "hybridity," even moral disease.[284] It is commonly interpreted as a Russophonic language mode with a negative heritage from former Soviet times. Recently *surzhyk* has also been used as "a comical device" for a "specifically Ukrainian humor."[285]

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[281] Bilaniuk, *Contested Tongues*, 153.

[282] Ibid., 111.

[283] Ibid., 138-39.

[284] A point of view that "in a bilingual situation, it is the ability to differentiate between the two languages that determine the level of culturedness and education of an individual speaker" has been repeatedly conceptualized by the Ukrainian linguists (Trub 2000) As Besnsand documents, "Ukrainian linguists believe that the language contact is neutral whenever it does not dissolve the boundaries between the languages involved. However, *surzhyk,* they claim, does disintegrate, decompose the language system. This phenomenon is used to underline its negative influence" (Bernsand 2001, 44). For instance, Ukrainian linguist Oleksandra Serbenska in her book *Anty-Surzhyk* (1994) argues that *surzhyk* is an evidence of "moral degradation," a "half-lingual" language," "norm-breaking" language phenomenon, etc. Another example is linguist Larysa Masenko (Масенко, Лариса. Суржик: між Мовою і Язиком. Києво-Могилянська Академія, 2011), who in a recent book *Surzhyk*: between Mova and Yazyk ("Mova" is "language" in Ukrainian, whereas "Yazyk" is "language" in Russian), claims that *surzhyk* is a parasite form of Ukrainian that ruins the language norms and distorts it through unsystematic use of Russian language elements, "unhealthy" social practice that has to be legally forbidden (p. 82). She sees Russian language influence as a tool of "reduction of cultural level of population," and a medium for "degeneration and degradation of speech behavior" (p.85).

[285] See Bilaniuk 2005, Bernsand 2001, 2007.

Surzhyk makes reference to a conflict that pre-dates Soviet times.[286] It is an outcome of interaction between a long and planned politics of assimilation provided by both the Tsarist Empire and Soviet Union, and the politics of nationalization, lead by the same states. Interestingly, during *Perestroika* and after – a particular time of "in-between-ness" located at the crossroads of two states – the practice of *surzhyk* became eagerly re-appropriated. Despite the hostile attitudes towards *surzhyk* in official Ukrainian linguistics, it has become part of a vibrant informal private and public discourse, as well as sphere of entertainment, in ways that separate contemporary language practices from the long history of engagement between Ukrainian and Russian cultures.

The exact make-up and number of forms of surzhyk is both a source of interest and debate among Cyrillic or Slavic language scholars. In *Contested Tongues* (2005), Laada Bilaniuk proposes a 5 type categorization of *surzhyk*. Her typology sheds light on the historical continuity of this practice (Table 1). Likewise, in her recent doctoral dissertation on *surzhyk*, Kateryna Kent suggests that the main disagreement among scholars is the

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[286] "The modern concept of Ukrainian national identity gained strength in 19th century, galvanized in particular by the literary works of Taras Shevchenko" (Bilaniuk & Melnyk 74). Shevchenko (1814-1861), as it has been illustrated by the poet's diaries and prose, was himself largely bilingual. So was Mykola Hohol/Nikolai Gogol (1809-1852), another literary personality important to the formation of the Ukrainian identity, who also used *surzhyk* in his literary work. For more on Hohol's language identity, see Bojanowska, Edyta M. Nikolai Gogol: Between Ukrainian and Russian Nationalism. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007.

Among other writers whose literary oeuvre belongs to the post-Independence literature cannon Ivan Kotlyarevsky (1769-1838) used Ukrainian vernacular language of his time in his written work; Petro Hulak-Artemovsky (1790-1865) used the southeastern dialect spoken in the Poltava, Kharkiv and southern Kijivan regions of the Russian Empire. These form of Ukrainian, including dialects served as the basis of the Ukrainian literary language until it was developed by Taras Shevchenko and Panteleimon Kulish (1819-1897) in the mid-19th century. In order to raise its status from a dialect to language, various elements from folklore and traditional styles were added to it. (Shevelov, George. "*Evolution of the Ukrainian Literary Language*". In *Rethinking Ukrainian History,* Eds. Ivan Lysiak Rudnytsky, John-Paul Himka. Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, (1981). pp. 223–225). Philosopher Hryhorij Skovoroda (1722-1794) wrote in a mixture of Old Church Slavonic, Ukrainian and Russian; writer Ivan Kotliarevskyi (1769-1838) used mixed Russian-Ukrainian to portray certain characters (Bilaniuk, *Contested Tongues*, 106-107).

nature and number of *surzhyk(s)*. Some scholars agree that there is only one linguistic variety called *surzhyk* (Flier 1998, Stavytska & Trub 2007; Vakhtin, Zhironkina, Liskovets & Romanova 2003), Kent defines *surzhyk* as a colloquial variety that originated as a result of Russian-Ukrainian bilingualism with diglossic relationships, represented through *surzhyk* lexemes that are incorporated into Ukrainian nor Russian grammars. After studying *surzhyk* spoken in central Ukraine, Kent concluded that *surzhyk* is rather a fused lect than an example of code-switching because the respondents she talked to did not demonstrate command in both languages – Russian and Ukrainian – necessary for instigating the code-switching mode. Instead, *surzhyk* was basically the only language the respondents spoke: it was their actual speech. Within the Peter Auer's linguistic typology[287] invisioned as a continuum, which consists of three kinds of shifting: Code-switching and Fused Lects at either end of the continuum with Languange Mixing in between them.[288] Kent places *surzhyk* between Language Mixing and Fused Lects and far from Code-switching (Kent 2012).

Surzhyk on Auer's continuum (Kent 2013)

[287] Auer, Peter. "From Codswitching via Languange Mixing to Fused Lects: Towards a dynamic typology of bilingual speech. *International Journal of Bilingualism* 3.4 (1999): 309-332.

[288] Peter Auer, "From Codeswitching via language mixing to fused lects: towards a dynamic tyopology of blingual speech. *International Journal of Bilingualism* 3.4 (1999): 309-332.

Table 1: Surzhyk Prototypes (Bilaniuk 2005:126)

Types of surzhyk	Specific description	Rural-Urban context	Era	Direction of Influence	Auer's Continuum CS-LM-FL
Urbanized Peasant	Working-class Ukrainian peasant	Rural to Urban	19th century to present	Russian onto Ukrainian base	LM/FL
Rural dialect	Ukr. villagers in Contact with Russian-speaking media and administration	Rural	19th century to present	Primarily Russian onto Ukrainian base	LM/FL
Sovietized Ukrainian	Codified Ukrainian with planned Russian Influence	Urban (Institutional)	1930 to present	Russian onto Ukrainian	Planned FL
Urban bilingual's	Urban bilinguals with either native language	Urban	Soviet and Post-Soviet	Both directions	CS/LM
Post-Independence	Russophone urbanites newly using Ukrainian in public	Urban	Post-Soviet	Both directions	CS/LM

The practice of *surzhyk* encountered in my field work, according to Bilaniuk's classification, can clearly be described as urban bilinguals' type of *surzhyk*, which refers to both Soviet and post-Soviet era and is exercised by the urban (mostly) bilingual population in Ukraine. However, it has to be taken into account that retrospectively, their "urban" experience of childhood was often inseparable from their "rural" experiences. As children, the respondents had regularly travelled to different areas – a village, smaller

town or different urban and suburban districts – to visit their relatives, friends and grandparents, where they usually stayed for a prolonged period of time – over a school break or summer. Often, they spoke or interacted in different languages on their travels.

Neither this chapter, nor this study aims to identify the participants as either Russian or Ukrainian, nor does it look for the bases of their ethnic differences. On the contrary, it is the similarities in their experience that make them belong to the same collective body of a historical generation whose cultural dynamics need to be studied. As Paul Eakin put it, "Despite our illusions of autonomy and self-determination … we do not invent our identities out of the whole cloth. Instead, we draw on the resources of the cultures we inhabit to shape them."[289] Despite the centuries-long attempt to unify Ukrainian language and present it as a sole official language of an independent country, contemporary Ukrainian subjectivity continues to exist beyond the language norm. Prior to defining a norm, the complex heteroglossic nature of the Ukrainian language has to be acknowledged; just as before identity behind language can be studied, the collective consciousness within which the identity is developed has to be recognised and understood. Moreover, the social nature of speech aesthetics complicates the definition of a norm even further. Language of speech is part of a performed social status or condition, which meaning is always constructed and legitimized within the collective social. To understand why people speak *surzhyk* we have to understand the individuals and situations in which *surzhyk* is spoken. And that is not an easy assignment.

The most recent review of developments in linguistic anthropology (2014) demonstrates that languages and people who speak them are more increasingly regarded as fractured and partible, distributed, overlapping, fluid and interactive. The discipline has

[289] Eakin, *Living Autobiographically*, 22.

been animated by the process of dis- and reassembly across the main cluster of linguistic anthropology.[290] Graber points out that research is preoccupied with "(re)-building whole things out of those disregarded assembly line parts – indicating, perhaps, a post-Bakhtinian reemphasis on how our research subjects construct whole, discrete persons and societies out of fragmented pieces."[291] On the other hand linguistic nationalists may continue to believe that language communities are and/or should be "constitutive of nation-states and tied to discrete geographic territories, with the borders of the language community and its territory being perfectly contiguous."[292] Under such an approach, the expectations of an ideal nation-state are to have a unified ethnic identity and a national language. Ukraine, as it has been noted in the same review, discursively remains somewhere in-between, while suffering the repercussions of its exclusive linguistic policy of purism.

My respondents demonstrated sophisticated multilingual skills. Some of them speak Russian, some Ukrainian, occasionally code-switching between the two languages or even mixing them into a new form, while all of the subjects identified themselves as Ukrainians. These individuals are a cohort that represents part of the current collective consciousness of what is called "Ukrainian," and their linguistic identification is inseparable from the materiality of being a "Ukrainian" notwithstanding the language they speak. The materiality of their existence and its influence on language practices includes the cost and counter-tactics of growing up in a permanent condition of crisis.

Surzhyk-speaking entertainer Verka Serduchka's first TV show in the late 1990s was held in a setting of a train, in what is called *SV* – a sleeping carriage, where she was an

[290] Graber, 2015, American Ethnologist 41(3) (2014): 350.

[291] Ibid., 351.

[292] Ibid., 353.

attendant. As Joseph Crescente ironically put it, "It was never clear if the train is heading anywhere in particular, although each invited guest is listed as a "passenger."[293] To some degree, the respondents, the children of Perestroika, Chornobyl and Glasnost unrevelling the collapse of the Soviet Union, were also as if "passengers" on a train with no particular destination or schedule, in fact – both destination and schedule are under consideration, to be further determined by the forces of the "post" and the past, often propelling them to speak *surzhyk* for self-expression and realisation.

4. Narrative and the Language of Memory

Whereas telling stories about one's self is a method of creating and maintaining identity, to understand and justify themselves, humans require broad narrative contexts, within which they locate their identities (Linde 2009; Johnson, 1993). The past and its interpretation is what largely creates the ground for this broad narrative context. Negotiation between memory about one's past and one's self is crucial not only for gaining perspective on past events but also for the projection of the future:

> Narrative is the discourse unit that presents both what happened, that is, events in the past, and what they mean, that is, the evaluation or moral significance of these events. Taken together, this presentation of the past and its meaning make stories

[293] Joseph Crescente Crescente, "Performing Post-Sovietness: Verka Serduchka and the Hybridization of Post-Soviet Identity in Ukraine," *Ab Imperio* Issue 2 (2007): 405-429

> one of the primary means for proposing and negotiating identity, both individual and collective identities.[294]

Under the official nation-state linguistic politics ruling over Ukraine, *surzhyk's* very notion undermines language norms; it mixes several language systems ruining their purity. However, used with a stylistic purpose, *surzhyk* refers to a particular space-time, a certain language reality, as well as provides a narrative frame of reference commonly required for identification.

Exploring institutional memory, anthropologist Charlotte Linde emphasized the selective nature of memory, especially regarding "the acts of remembering, the practices of remembering, the ways in which people learn to remember as part of their identity events they did not themselves experience. Identity and memory are acts of construction."[295] When the participants have chosen to remember certain parts of their social reality, of their "narrative framework" (Mark Johnson's term), it has to be kept in mind that they were taught and encouraged to remember a certain past event in a certain way. It is especially relevant in relation to children. To be brought back from oblivion, childhood is remembered, and while it is re-collected, it is under the dialectic relationship to the present, the future, and the past. Even persons who did not receive a chance, for instance, to become a Pioneer in the Soviet Union, had a clear understanding and a memory of how it was expected to be felt, although direct contact, their actual "authentic" experience of the Soviet Union was limited to its almost mass-cultural manifestation. For them, being a Pioneer, in the late 1980s, came to no longer reproduce the Soviet ideology; instead it was an opportunity to be socially engaged at a young age – it was interpreted as fun and important, supported by the images of many popular children's heroes who were also

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[294] Charlotte Linde, *Life Stories: The Creation of Coherence* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1993), 221.

[295] Ibid., 222.

Pioneers. Growing up during Perestroika times, experiencing one of the most radical and chaotic periods in their lives, these individuals developed a sentimental feeling about the Soviet past without having much actual experience of it or having experienced it very briefly. Sentimental and almost nostalgic feelings about the Soviet times that some of the participants expressed are logical, given that some of the abrupt and radical transformations, which took place during the 1990s and have been presented in previous chapters and are still ongoing. Sometimes identifications stand for the opposite of what they represent. Here, for instance, identification with the Soviet past provides distance to a general deep sense of disappointment that children have experienced after the collapse. It serves as a tool for rebellion and irony against politically unified rhetoric which does not match the lived reality either economically or socially; as well as reaction to the loss of social status assigned to children within the Soviet Union through Pioneers, Komsomol etc.

5. Conclusion: *Surzhyk* and the Acknowledgement of Language and Cultural Multiplicity in Ukraine

Researchers who study *surzhyk* spoken by the language actors, and not just from linguistic textbooks, agree that *surzhyk* is a complex language form, full of socio-cultural references, the meaning of which is often out of reach for an outsider. Its complexity is derived from the social and is used by the speakers to define their social sphere. It is an intimate form of language which the participants reserve to create a sense of coherence while talking about the most difficult issues of their upbringing and current circumstance. Some of them switched to *surzhyk* in response to being asked a question in *surzhyk* or

about *surzhyk*. Some of them avoided *surzhyk* completely as it was important to them to maintain certain language identity – consistent and solid, which contradicts the use of *surzhyk*. In other words, even when *surzhyk* was not used, its presence within the culture was accounted for in its absence from narration. Hence, construction of a Ukrainian identity occurs through both the negation of the Soviet past and attempt to comprehend and come to terms with the past, omitted in the narration. Reference to the Soviet times in opposition to the current instability in Ukraine can be positively retrospective; used to underline the common cultural (Soviet) experience as well as to distance oneself from the nationalist and unrealistically optimistic rhetoric fused into the linguistics of official Ukranianian Language. [296] In fact, meaning in the interviews is created in the process of a language shift or under its pressure, not outside of it. *Surzhyk* is a tool that undermines the notions of authenticity and authority, which in Ukraine is commonly claimed to be achieved by speaking exclusively pure Ukrainian language. For the subjects in these interviews, *surzhyk* had come to signify language of the village in its most positive way. It was the language of freedom from the pressure of the imperfect social and associated with the relatively calm and sometimes almost idyllic images of rural life.

Throughout the 1990s children were divided into groups. Undoubtedly, their origin and language were crucial criteria of the division. Ethnic identification as a Ukrainian-speaking Ukrainian for some became a way to partial compensation for the loss of a prestigious status of a Pioneer or Komsomolets, through which children were included into the "adult life" during the Soviet times. The tuned mechanism of Soviet times was

[296] Ukrainian comedian Verka Serduchka is not the public figure to use surzhyk in her performance. Bard Les' Poderev'iansky, bands Skriabin and Braty Hadiukiny, or showmen DJ Tolia and Dzidzio etc. use *surzhyk* for stylistic effect as well – parody, sarcasm, exaggeration, but not only. See Niklas Bernsand's suggestion that "intermediate varieties [of languages – in this case – *surzhyk*] are thus often used as resources for performative acts, in which they function as tools for linguistic creativity…"(Bernsand 2007, 214)

already broken while the new one had not come into existence yet. At the same time, children were encouraged by the media to cultivate patriotism and service to the new for them Motherland above other social skills. Children found themselves confused, whereas being a Ukrainian was a way to legitimize or redeem their past – short-lived Soviet experience. While those who were born and grew up in the western part of Ukraine had no special need to declare and perform themselves as Ukrainians in the early 1990s, those born in other, historically more Russified parts of Ukraine had to make a conscious choice of language and identity to perform then and throughout their lives.

Viktor, for example, was born in 1981, and went to school in 1988 when he was 7 years old. He remembers that at that time Russian still meant "career." Until the end of its existence, the Soviet system nourished the centralized Russian-speaking culture, in the framework of which any career seemed to be easier and more accessible. However, just three years later the situation had changed radically.

Viktor describes a major conflict between children with Russian and Ukrainian self-identification. They fought; the "Russians" were derogatorally called "moskals." Childhood's traumatic experiences stand behind the feeling of gratitude for being "re-socialized" (as Viktor called it) later. Brief moments of a loss of coherence, a lack of clarity regarding what the individual had experienced, upon recollection, constitute the precise nature of human ontology by marking the points of intersection between the individual and collective – an integral part to development. "Modeling," "designing" by picking certain segments from the "raw" cultural material, i.e. accepting the image of Shevchenko (the national Ukrainian poet) instead of Lenin is the result of a process of self-

understanding which Mark Johnson describes as "narrative explanation… sanctioned by … community and culture."[297]

Iryna, in L'viv grew up speaking both Russian with her many neighbourhood friends and Ukrainian at home. For her, these languages were inseparable within the social sphere. That is why she could never understand why the studies of Russian at her school were discontinued. To compensate for the lack of Russian-culture references in her social, she started reading Russian classics in her spare time and at the time I met her, she could casually recite dozens of Russian-language poems without any rehearsal, while her family, education and professional life was maintained almost exclusively in Ukrainian.

Describing "the events of 1987-88 were projected on us, children," Viktor points out, "this is how I reflect on it today." Being 6-7 years old he did not understand what was going on. He was insulted (as "moskal," for studying in a Russian-speaking class), and confused, but did not know why. It took him many years to unpack the chain of "the events of 1987-88" (interestingly enough, the respondent became a historian). As Alessandro Portelli writes:

> Each mode [of memory] has a spatial correlative the national and international perspective, the town, and the home. Of course, no narrative is ever entirely consistent… identification of an event and of its meaning is, however, usually based on the network of sequential and simultaneous events… The collective, community mode would be the proper collocation, because here is where the event carries the most weight.[298]

[297] Mark Johnson, "The Narrative Context of Self and Action, and Moral Imagination," *Moral Imagination: Implications of Cognitive Science for Ethics* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993), 150-216; 155.

[298] Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (Albani: State University of New York Press, 1991), 21.

Hence, talking about their childhood, the respondents synthesizes several memory modes – private and collective, Russian- and Ukrainian-language version of reality – using his 'adult' knowledge to make their life-stories coherent.

Despite the desperate aspiration of Ukraine for the abolishment and destruction of all symbolic and material artifacts connected with Soviet past, "Lenin" was not just quickly demolished, as it seemed to Viktor. In fact, monumental and sentimental memorabilia of the Soviet past was apprehended in several waves following the national upheaval. One of the most recent attempts to clean up Ukraine of its Soviet heritage, which can be attributed as one of the most significant outcomes of the Maidan protests of 2013-2014, was rationalized as "nothing will save the idea whose time has passed." Lenin was metaphorically described as "horizontal," hence – abolished.[299] The rest of the markers of the Communist times are in the process of elimination. The recently passed Ukrainian law, "On Disapproval of the Communist and National-Socialist (Nazi) Totalitarian Regimes in Ukraine as well as their Propaganda" passed on April 9, 2015 has permanently banned public memorabilia of the Soviet era equating it to propaganda, including "any imagery of flags, emblems or any symbols, anthems or their fragments," as well as "monuments, memorial plaques or signs devoted to any persons that served to administration of the Communist party," etc.[300] The project of horizontalizing Lenin and re-arranging our collective history is contemporaneous to the establishment of the Donetsk People's

[299] "*Ніщо не збереже ідею, час якої пройшов*. Все минуле століття Україна провела з вертикальним Леніним, але його час пройшов. Тепер він горизонтальний. Повалення цього пам'ятника було тільки питанням часу - і ось цей час прийшов!" Anton Pavlushko."Ленин горизонтальный" [Lenin horizontal] at http://dynamo.kiev.ua/blog/163566.html From 2013-12-08 23:35

[300] http://zakon4.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/317-19

Закон України "Про засудження комуністичного та націонал-соціалістичного (нацистського) тоталітарних режимів в Україні та заборону пропаганди їхньої символіки"

Republic, separatist pro-Russian territory, fighting to exist against a culturally purist and nationalist administration in Ukraine. Evidently, while talking about contemporary Ukraine, one language is not enough to perceive the full picture. Similarly, narrating past experience of the post-Soviet and then post-Independence Ukraine, the narrators are faced with literally the lack of words to describe their feeling adequately. That is why, I suggest, that all existing language modes in Ukraine, including Russian, accommodating or non-accommodating bilingualism, code-switching, lexical borrowing, or a mixed lect *surzhyk*, and their interaction – are equally important to study in order to come closer to an understanding of present day social subjectivities in Ukraine; and it is vital for the Ukrainian government to accept the cultural multiplicity of Ukraine and its citizens, a multiplicity that must be supported and serviced by progressive policy measures and not simply redesigned through a process of "horizontalization."

Surzhyk, despite of its centuries long continuity, remains primarily an oral language mode, and is reserved to speech, with a few exceptions when *surzhyk* is used in written language. *Surzhyk's* aesthetic component (perceived as 'deviant' by the state institutions of literacy) is negotiated within a certain economy and system of stratified belonging – to the peasant class, rural or urbanized, displaced to the city in search of work in the time of Soviet modernisation; socially marginalized persons of inconsistent education; the Soviet working class, etc. Largely, *surzhyk's s*peaking subject is unemployed or in some other socially subordinated position. To speak *surzhyk* requires the re-negotiation of the position of aesthetic domination: it has been used as the only language that speakers had good commend of (Kent 2012), and as a stylistic tool, a choice by speakers with fluency in normative language (standardized by educational institutions), as Liudmyla, for instance, points out. She describes *surzhyk* as something that not everybody who has good command in one or both languages can understand and as a shared framework of cultural reference, sometimes accessible only to limited number of closely connected people.

Liudmyla, who has a PhD, a job in academic institution, and is fluent in both Russian and Ukrainian, speaks *surzhyk* for aesthetic and entertainment purposes. Natasha, who often speaks *surshyk* in everyday life, maintains her narration in Russian. Inna, who spoke Russian and Ukrainian interchangeably in childhood, switching to Ukrainian later in life, jokingly calls *surzhyk* "our normal language" meaning that it was the first language form she encountered growing up, and which was later corrected by public education. She speaks Ukrainian in everyday life and professionally (as a journalist), yet switches to *surzhyk* while conversing with grandma – a more sensible, and almost more authentic form of Ukrainian in the region where Inna comes from. *Surzhyk* defines the social status of its speakers in its relation to the hegemonic linguistics in Ukraine; and yet spoken selectively it undermines the notion of language purism in favour of multiplicity and flexibility from the idea of puristic or nationalistic norms.

Chapter V

The Time of Childhood and its Future in Ukraine: Conclusions

1. Forgetting and the Negative Space of Childhood

A lot has been said in this dissertation regarding the subject of remembering and the function of memory in the human social: specifically regarding our collective access to childhood, both our own and the one we share with all the others, always only available in a time out of sequence. Yet the ubiquitous field of memory studies has its own important negative: forgetting. The oblivion of memory has been studied and found to be an inherent part of the remembering machine. In the context of the childhood presented in these pages there can be no better name for that oblivion than Chornobyl. If we go along with Connerton in *How Societies Remeber*, where he identifies the two main generators of continuity of memory as "a stable system of places," and "the human body," then rooted in human finiteness and framed by an ecstatic temporality these features must also be understood to generate forgetting, that is, the selective nature of social memory. The widespread disruption and often extension of places and thegeographical multiplicity of their interdependence caused by the Chornobyl disaster and its consequences for the body and bodies of Ukraine is evidence of discontinuity and rupture at the heart of what remained of social cohesion. As such, the construction of memory is defined throughout this study as an essential activity even as the post-Chornobyl logic of forgetting is investigated and labored against in order to put the negativity of 1991 on display.

The fundamental transformative practice of human labour, diachronic in nature, as Connerton points out, is commonly misperceived as the "illusory synchronicity of value-exchange."[301] In the case of children, the diachronic nature of fragmented play (children's labor)

[301] Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, 43

is similarly misperceived as continuous and synchronic. As a result, the labour process is obscured. Post-modern Capitalist production, on the other hand, requires a certain degree of "memory loss." Connerton describes the process as cultural amnesia that human agency falls prey to within the social formation of "an organized structure of misrecognition," which blocks access to recollection of the past.[302] This cultural amnesia is undeniably present in the narratives recovered here of childhood in Ukraine in the 1990s. This time-period was dominated by the consequences of mass unemployment. One of the consequences is that economic pressures shifted children to the margins; as a result, the childhood under consideration is defined through its negative, through what it is not, and what is absent and omitted from narration and newspapers and the consciousness of parents and government. Some of the undeveloped or not even mentioned topics, for instance, were toys. Hardly anyone was able to describe their experience of play with the actual objects designed for children's play, e.g. dolls, puzzles, bicycles, construction sets or other toys. Awareness of lack overlays the childhood experiences of play described to me. Toys were rarified objects, either locally produced knock-offs or imported and scarce and too cherished to share or often even play with. The limited ownership of such scarce possessions promotes the fetishization of the objects of play, which implies that places and objects possess "causal powers independent of their creators."[303] For example, removed from the realm of play, and left merely to be admired, the display of dolls I described in the introduction becomes a memorial of childhood more than a site of its experience. The empty doll room in kindergarten is devoted to a metaphoric commemoration of childhood instead of its material presence; and yet its oblivion is a time and space that I remember and from which I can see the childhood I share with the others.

[302] Ibid.

[303] Ibid., 51.

Under the pressure of intense economic and political restructuring, the needs and activities of people began to change, affecting their relationships and movements significantly during the period studied. As an outcome of now almost thirty years of what has been theorized as "crisis," "transition," "transformation," "de-colonization," "post-Socialism" etc., new forms of social relationships were created along with their modes of reproduction. What links and will always lay silent among social relations are the scars of the social trauma caused by the Chornobyl disaster in its particularity and negativity as well as its amplification of political-economic conditions. The nature of the catastrophe and its depiction in the media, as manipulated by the state(s), was delayed deliberately and very inaccurate. Inside this vacuum, which I am suggesting still persists, a discourse of social para-normality was born, printed, recycled and repressed. As such, public reaction included mainly fear and much misinterpretation and forgetting. The lack of information and state support – the state at the time was also in transition – was fertile ground for promulgating myths of "magnetic men" while at the same time the population suffered the consequences of poverty, displacement, and death. The absence of narration during such experiences has left choppy historical perspectives with many gaps in the fabric of the history of independent Ukraine and the lives of its citizens. Every single generation in Ukraine and (the rest of the Chornobyl-zone) born after the disaster has been perceived as – and in fact has experienced life as – a diminished entity, "less healthy" compared to the idea and norm of "healthy" that preceded Chornobyl. More prone to "abnormalities," they are also the ones who had lost friends and neighbours at a young age and were exposed to the idea of mortality considerably very early – often earlier than could have been comprehended – and thus have to re-cover the meaning of the loss upon recollection as part of the labour of growing up. They are also the ones who often had to occupy themselves with minimal or no supervision and at times no or next to no means of subsistence.

Although childhood poverty and crisis periods are not novelties, and the Ukrainian childhood depicted here is familiar to the reader from studies of the post-War, Depression, or Victorian childhoods, I argue that it is unique, historically significant and that its circumstances have not yet been comprehensively studied, evidenced at the fact that eductated people around the globe remain unware that it continues, an after Chornobyl period of endless perestroika-like cycles of crisis and the unfilled dream of repair. The ever-changing political crisis in Ukraine, along with the instability of its economic infrastructure, has been so prolonged that it has produced a high tolerance for suffering caused by traumatic gaps in memory as well a vulnerability to injustice that is, without irony, characteristic of the subjectivities of childhood and infancy more generally. The vulnerable child whose growth can be traced alongside the rough birth and development of the state develops a peculiar relationship to that state. Independent Ukraine is approximately the same age as the individuals I had interviewed and, neither as an economy nor as a political entity, the Ukrainian state had not been able to assist its children with practically anything – quality education, social security or health care. Post-Independence subjectivity is marked by a peculiar relation to the state, a broken form of social interdependence. There is no unified conception of parenting in Ukraine either; parents were generally preoccupied with survival and immediate adaptation while being just as overwhelmed as the children. Guidelines that were presented to children in scarce media were vague and unpersuasive, often based on the reproduction of the myths of origin, which was an inherent part of growing up in the collective subjectivity of a newly established nation trying to establish an identity.

The contradiction persists that growing up this generation was aware of the Chornobyl aftermath and became self- identified in relation to the event *yet* were unable to reach or understand it, even when its consequences were suffered or witnessed. Whether through Chornobyl or by other means, children generally have experienced themselves in relation to the

rupture and stratification that took place socially and economically. Although the status of a Chornobyl child was that of a victim and often perceived as humiliating, it also presented paths to access some otherwise inaccessible goods or services, which created a broken form of economic exchange, discriminatory in nature, in which the transfer of wealth to a privileged form of victimhood was preyed at by others, adults as well as children. The body of collectively associated children, as portrayed in the scarce media of the time, is perceived as ill, and less healthy than before the accident. Paradoxically, this maturing young collective body is also perceived as an agent of reproduction, with great societal *expectations*, and is burdened by these unfulfilled expectations of health and productivity. This still young generation, while perceived as the builder of the future, is preoccupied with self-development without much assistance from the state - suppressed from entering political and and descision making institutions by a class of profiteers the age of or older than their parents - and thus continues to engage in a relationship of mutual disappointment and antagonism with it.

2. Time and Disappointment

Memory, as the material traces of human existence, affects our perception of time, which when perceived backwards, from the moments of absence or disappearance that structure our sense of continuity, becomes negative. The Chornobyl accident and the collapse of the Soviet Union in a general sense are there at the birth of independent Ukraine which has failed to honestly confront either phenomenon or their consequences. While independent Ukraine is reformatting its flow of time 'onwards,' distancing away from the Soviet past, the time freed from the reproduction of capital by the economic crisis literally stretches out and slows down. The emergence of a similar "enigmatic new temporality, the time of the desert of unemployment

so to speak," has been traced by Jameson and Sasha X (2014).[304] This mode of time has been theorized as permanent present. In his essay "On the Power of the Negative," Jameson most recently articulates a new type of temporal subjectivity emerging out of the dystopias produced out of the break-down of modern globalization:

> [T]he Sixties formed our idea of what a generation was, and has caused us to lose sight of the fact that what constitutes a generation, among other things, is a new idea of the generation itself, which is to say, of time.
>
> The concept of time that was already working its way out during the modernist period is what I will call retroactivity, its first full enunciation already reached by Freud in his notion of *Nachtraglichkeit* (or in other words how a later event like puberty could reach back into childhood experience and transform the latter into psychosis). Here the present rewrites the past or even constructs it as though for the first time (as in Proust, for example); and tradition becomes invented. The new concept of time I see emerging…is consistent with the displacement of the traditional conception of dystopia by what seems to me a new version of dystopian time. It is as if the past, having been "deconstructed" (into the positing of its own presuppositions), now slowly faded away, leaving only two dimensions of time behind it.
>
> It has, for one thing, no cause: it may be post-catastrophic, but the catastrophe is not registered, not even remembered or forgotten. … No future either, but not in Edelman's sense of the repudiation of Utopia and politics itself: rather, simply a lowering of Husserl's "protensions," a weakening of the time sense and the obsessive-compulsive worry

[304] Frederic Jameson. "On the Power of the Negative." Mediations 28.1 (Fall 2014) 71-74. www.mediationsjournal.org/articles/power-of-the-negative; Sasha X. "Occupy Nothing: Utopia, History, and the Common Abject." Mediations 28.1 (Fall 2014) 61-70. www.mediationsjournal.org/articles/occupy-nothing.

("Sorge"!) about what to do next, and what to do after that, and after that. This is truly a reduction to the present[.][305]

Jameson's articulation concerning the temporality of the "permanent present" taking hold over Western politics and imagination is twenty-five years late to Ukraine, the modernization of which simply stopped, in most cases, like the apartment blocks never finished in Lozova whose impressive brick frames remain boarded up for a quarter century. Studying the outcasts of modernity, Zygmunt Bauman emphasized that the prominent feature of the modern condition was to be on the move, tireless before the choice between to modernize or perish that frames modern history into the history of designing (and re-defining relationship to the material). He gestures towards "a museum/graveyard of designs tried, used up, rejected and abandoned in the ongoing war of conquest and/or attrition waged against nature."[306] The shadow of time heavily resting over the town of Prypiat and stretching over the entirety of Ukraine is a modern graveyard whose traumatic experience must serve as the general field of representation while remaining silent. Yet the same graveyard arises as an opportunity for re-defining and re-imagining the very place of origin, by laying down the ground for new awareness of the modern failure of progress and the post- ironic condition of culture, economy, and politics in Ukraine.

One more look at this temporality can be gained from two more quotes from Russian language magazines *Yunost* and *Yunnyi Naturalist*, both from 1990. The first is written in a sarcastic voice, warning readers of the end of everything; the second, however, is waiting for a new beginning and encourages children to do the same:

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[305] Fredric Jameson, "On the Power of the Negative." *Mediations,* Vol. 28 *Time and the Labour of the Negative,* #1 (2014): 73.

[306] Bauman, *Wasted Lives*, 23.

> Stop blaming Soviet power for everything. One cannot blame something that doesn't exist. And there is no use to be disappointed with socialism. The order of our existence hasn't been named yet. They say somebody had predicted the end of the world. And now everybody is waiting. When it comes. What is there to be waiting for? It has come already. It's just no one had thought of a possibility of the end of the world in a one single state.

The 'end of the world' is remarked as apparent and obvious to common sense and to children, whereas according to the authors of *Yunni Naturalist*, it can offer a beginning. Children are encouraged to wait and see:

> Here they come – the 1990s… Last decade of the XX century had begun. XXI century can be almost reached by a stretched arm. However, for an individual lifetime, 10 years is a long time, significant. Especially for you, our fellow young readers, – you will enter the epoch that opens the third millennium of the great history of humankind as adults… Your entire future as well as the future of the Earth depends on who you become, and what becomes of our society.

The split between the real and imaginable is apparent in these quotes in the disconnect between the present and the future. Children are explained that it is no longer possible to get into the future by living the present, instead, it is up to them to re-invent the way to save the future. On the margins of an empty doll room in a kindergarten, in the middle of absolute economic crisis, there is a subject, a child, who is offered a new beginning. That chance, however, completely depends on the child's abilities to invent the future for "the great history of humankind as adults."

3. *Surzhyk*, Irony, and After

The mixed aesthetics that *surzhyk* appeals to has been analyzed in terms of irony. "Culture always includes irony and … irony is always to a large degree a matter of culture, specific to individual cultures in all their uniqueness and idiosyncrasies."[307] To decode irony, we need to recognize the contradiction between what is said and what is meant that is necessary for its creation. Irony always makes itself understandable through the play of what is fixed in the society and what is "lacking," what is avoided or kept in silence. It always exists between the lines of prescriptive norms. As Paul Friedrich puts it, "irony always involves and implies … power."[308] Moreover, "politics, the art of power, is predicated on not saying what you really think."[309] The latter, makes the logic of irony similar to the logic of politics – "Irony is always a fact of politics, as when it becomes a component in a critical, antigovernment, even anarchist ideology."[310] It is precisely in a relationship between prescribed social norms that the meaning of irony in post-socialist territories can be decoded. Moreover, the "gap between the promise and reality" appeared to be not an exclusive feature of the socialist regime. The greatest disappointment, in fact, happened after the Socialist bloc collapsed, which was underlined by prolonged economic crisis, as well as the struggles of an emerging national identity disposing the Soviet one. However, while *surzhyk* engages in an ironic play of difference between two language norms, the material conditions of its speaking are no longer surprising and *surzhyk*'s immanent critique of Ukraine's internal conflicts are rather post-ironic.

This is not to suggest irony disappeared with the collapse, but transformed; and that the ironies of 1991 are growing up and that the negativity and lack that contemporary *surzhyk* draws

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[307] Friedrich, Paul. "Ironic Irony." *Irony in Action: Anthropology, Practice, and the Moral Imagination*. James Fernandez and Mary Taylor Huber eds. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001. 224-253; 231.

[308] Ibid., 229.

[309] Ibid.

[310] Ibid., 230.

on is too entrenched to be truly ironic. As Herzfeld describes it, "The very idea of irony entails a high degree of uncertainty, and cultures in which social status is … dependent on a willingness to take risks."[311] Uncertainty, anxiety, and instability are the features of post-socialist society that supply the meaning of ironic discourse. Furthermore, citing Linda Hutcheon, Michael Herzfeld states, "those cultures in which an awareness of the postmodern condition is cultivated may be more amenable than those in which authority has successfully imposed a legalistic understanding of the past."[312] Hence, reevaluation of the past, and "awareness of the postmodern condition" are among the factors that make the appreciation of, for example, the ironic performance of *surzhyk*-speaking Verka Serduchka possible. Serduchka's self-ironic type of humor is produced through a dismantled and confused "post"-self. It is either post-socialist, post-Soviet or some other kind of post-syndrome self, constructed, as a Russian pop-song says "from what was available."[313] Since, "language and speech imply or enable irony," and since "language is both performance and structure, [which] is always figurative and symbolic," in the case of *surzhyk*, language is what embodies irony and its overcoming.[314] *Surzhyk* undermines the existence of one true national identity. Moreover, it demonstrates its layered-ness, the clash between the surface and the content inside, the mismatch between public and private.

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[311] Herzfeld, Michael. "Irony and Power: Toward a politics of Mockery in Greece." *Irony in Action: Anthropology, Practice, and the Moral Imagination*. James Fernandez and Mary Taylor Huber eds. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001. 63-83; 63.

[312] Ibid.

[313] Alena Apina "A Knot" (Апина Алёна «Узелок») 1996;
Lyrics: Танич М. Music: Коржуков С.
"Полюбила парня да не угадала
Вовсе не такого я во сне видала
Я его слепила из того что было
А потом что было то и полюбила" (I fell in love with a guy, but did not guess/The right one who I have seen in dreams/I have made him out of what was available/And then fell in love with what there was.)

[314] Friedrich, "Ironic Irony," 235.

Bernsand claims, "While Serduchka did stimulate interest in *surzhyk* as the living language of many Ukrainians, she also confirmed for many Ukrainophones the traditional association of *surzhyk* with bad taste and marginality."[315] This split in the aesthetics of *surzhyk*, a phenomenon first and foremost associated with class – peasants, or their urbanized peers of minor education – needs to be understood socioeconomically. The continuity of *surzhyk* traced by Bilaniuk, for instance, goes back to the 19th century migration of Ukrainian-speaking peasants into Russian-speaking urban centers under pressure of modernization, whereas Shevelov demonstrates mutual interference of Russian and Ukrainian back to the split inside of the Old Church Slavonic in 16th century. A mixed form of Russian and Ukrainian languages, in other words, has been an inherent part of cultural exchange between the two cultures, under competing political powers, for some five centuries; brought out of the Soviet threshold, it refers to a particular kind of aesthetics developed by the mutual inter-negation that structures the relationship of Russian and Ukrainian states. To speak *surzhyk* is to engage in a process of negation of the place of origin and its temporality. Oral in its nature, this 'lect' plays with the norms of literacy itself. Its speakers share a pervasive frame of references to an incredibly spread-out culture, which they access by either passive or active knowledge of both Russian and Ukrainian languages.

Connerton explains the nature of social memory, theorized by Halbwachs, according to whom shared language is a source for shared memories:

> Every recollection, however personal it may be, even that of events of which we alone were the witnesses, even that of thoughts and sentiments that remain unexpressed, exist in relationship with a whole ensemble of notions which many others possess: with

[315] Niklas Bernsand, "A Language Variety on Trial: Surzhyk Prosecuted and Defended in Post-Soviet Ukrainophone Language Ideology," *From Sovietology to Postcoloniality: Poland and Ukraine from Postcolonial Perspective*. Ed. Janusz Korek (Sodertorn University, 2007): 193-227.

> persons, places, dates, words, forms of language, that is to say with the whole material and moral life of the societies of which we are part or which we have been part.[316]

Mental spaces that are created upon recollection always refer back to the material spaces occupied by a social group. *Surzhyk*, then, is a language to convey a special time of belonging and shared memories, kinship and community. However, it also constitutes itself when there is literally a lack, or even an absence of words to describe existence and experience, it persists at the border of the realm of the not verbalized, untold, incomprehensible, emerging out of the aesthetics of crisis (first and foremost unemployment), in application of which irony suddenly appears to be stripped of its humor. Switching to different languages during the narration of lived experience presents a trace of social ruptures and contradictions that go beyond language in their signification. Speaking *surzhyk* or Russian-Ukrainian bilingualism need not to be understood exclusively within linguistic or ideological domains. Instead, it contains references to the most actual collective consciousness and its relationship to its territory and condition, to the lived space-time of speakers. From this point of view, *surzhyk* is inversely a sign of a broken temporality, a broken social before the individual, developed in a condition of crisis that contains an inexhaustible amount of interrelation between more than one culture.

4. The Future of Childhood (Studies)

The childhood I have presented here is not absolute; it exists only in relation to its space-time coordinates, which makes it unique as much as any other childhood. Childhood as a concept, in fact, is most commonly created in retrospect, and by the time human consciousness

[316] Connerton, How Societies Remember, 36.

has developed to understand what it implies to be a child, the child is not a child anymore. Therefore, awareness of the temporality (and finitude) of childhood is characteristic of adult subjectivity. However, the fact that our infancy at times appears speechless does not limit its existence – in fact, the silence of infancy constitutes its presence. It can, however, be uncovered by the opening up of the narrative time of history. Similarly, the childhoods of post-collapse or even independent Ukraine persist significantly undocumented despite my attempt to dredge up the beginning of an overdue field of study. Contemporaneous to the major economic and political restructuring of the global world that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union, children's seemingly trivial everyday lives changed significantly on the level of culture. Moreover, the institution of the family depicted in these chapters crumbles under pressure of political-economic restructuring. Children, for example, are commonly separated from parents, who relocate on job assignments, while work is a privilege and priority, even in the absence of wages. Perestroika and afterwards is a time of re-defining the meaning of social relationships and the inversion of signifiers: Literature instantaneously becomes *Makulatura* and vice versa; forbidden hazardous objects become toys, and toys become hazardous – used as weapons or signifiers of social status (e.g. Chornobyl child), or ethnicity; even language norms become affected by social circumstances as evidenced in the split of language standards in rural and urban centers, migration, particular demands of a divided social space, etc.).

The archaeology of this knowledge nonetheless must become a matter of intensified study and consideration in the face of Ukraine's current crossroads: bankrupt and ripping apart on cultural, linguistic and politica-economic seams. For though capitalism has brought much superficial change to the Ukrainian economy and social relations more generally, Ukraine remains in the state of crisis upon which it was founded and currently offers no measures for the overcoming of its historical failings. Quite contrary to current cultural policy in Ukraine, which is once again waging a very material war on the pre-independence imaginary, now is the time in

Ukraine to remember: to remember not just who we were, but who we have become, and to ask ourselves if we are capable of collective change towards health and security, or somehow historically destined to watch our collective body crumble into dust from the inside out.

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допомоги.

Цього разу друг Юрій запропонував на закриття сходин заспівати гимн ,,Цвіт України і краса''. Коли скінчили співати, друг Юрій сказав: ,,А тепер помолимося словами: ,,Всемогучий Боже, захорони життя українських дітей і всього нашого народу''. Юнаки пам'ятаймо, що ,,людська молитва приємна Богові тоді, коли люди чинять Його волю'', і Бог, а за Богом і пластовий закон навчає чинити добро і любити ближнього. Пам'ятайте ці наші сходини.

Подруга Марта

Запитання:

1. Що запитав друг Юрій юнаків на курінних сходинах?
2. Як пояснювали хлопці те, що Чорнобильська трагедія є постійною темою в пресі, радіо та телебаченні, хоч вона сталася в квітні?
3. Що Советський Союз хотів осягнути Міжнародною нарадою спеціялістів у Відні? Чи це сталося?
4. Які аргументи подавали юнаки на те, що СРСР урядові добро людей не є вище понад інтереси держави?
5. Як закінчили свої курінні сходини юнаки зі своїм другом Юрієм?

ТРЕБА НАМ ЗНАТИ

75-річчя журналу ,,Бойс Лайф''

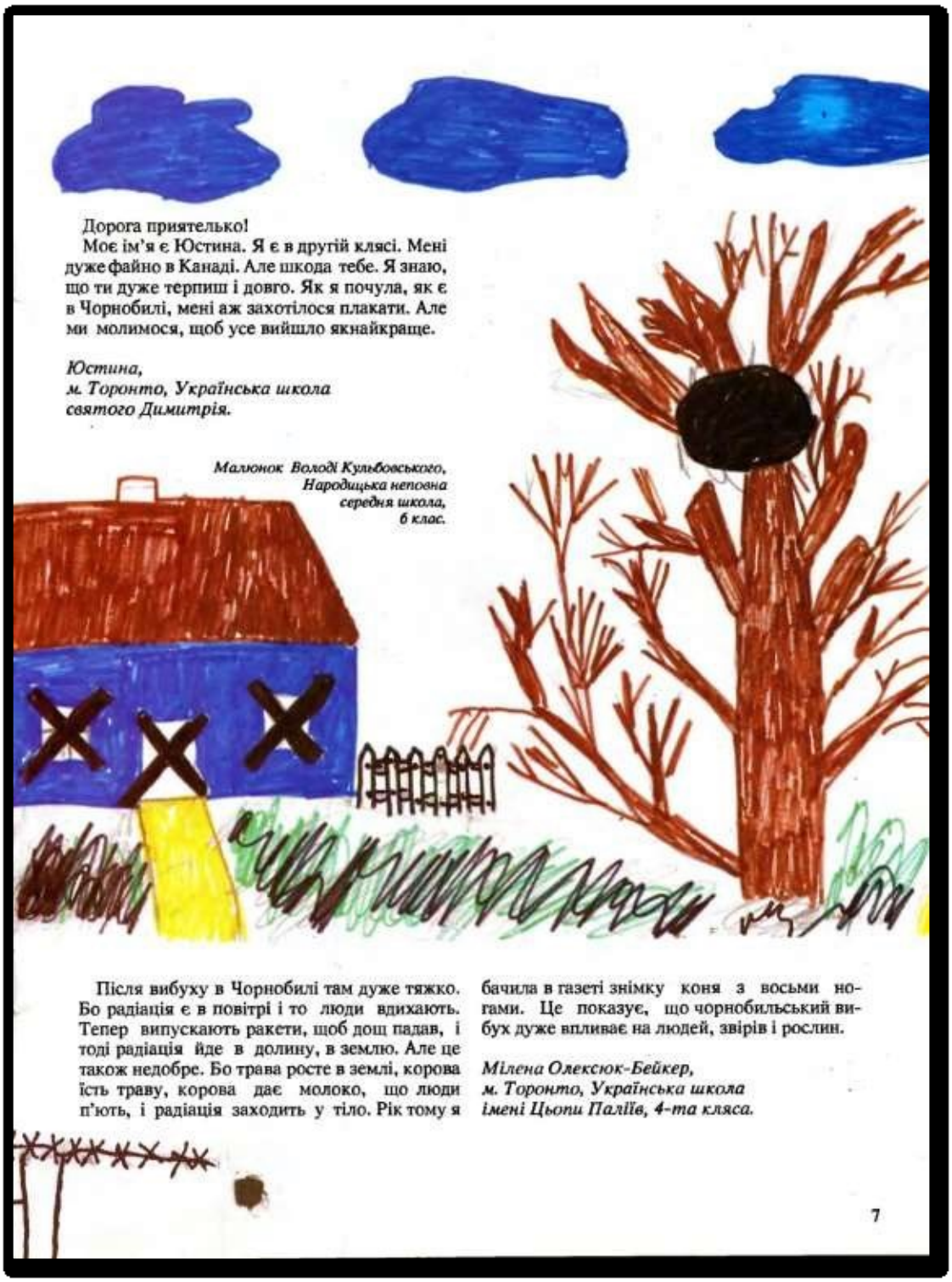
В тому році минає 75 років як в ЗСА почав виходити відомий журнал для американських скавтів п.н. ,,Бойс Лайф''. Коли його почали видавати в 1911 році один примірник коштував п'ять центів а передплатників було 6,100. Тепер після 75 років коштує в передплаті 13,20 дол. річно для не-скавтів і 6,60 для скавтів і має 1,5 мільйона передплатників. Найбільше передплатників журнал мав в році 1968 а це аж 2,65 мільйона. Тепер коли менше є американських скавтів і телевізія робить читанню велику конкуренцію число передплатників ,,Бойс Лайф'' зменшилося на більше як мільйон. З роками цей місячник змінив формат і думає ще його поменшити а також скоротив довжину статей на половину. Але все ще як давніше в журналі подають статті на тему ,,Скавт в дії'', про дійсні пригоди в житті хлопців, статті чи короткі оповідання знаних авторів, як також з ділянки спорту та різного майстрування.

75-річчя тістечка ,,Орео''

Наші читачі на терені Північної Америки напевно усі добре знають одне із найбільше популярних тістечок, що має назву ,,Орео'' та що його виробляє широко популярна американська фірма ,,Набіско''. На підставі видання книжки Гінеса зі світовими рекордами за 1985 рік, ,,Орео'' це тістечко, яке є найбільше популярне і найбільше його у світі продають. Ось н.пр. в 1982 році продано шість більйонів Орео і це не лише в ЗСА і Канаді але також в інших краях.

Перші тісточка ,,Орео'', що їх виробили у фірмі Набіско продано до крамниці з харчами в Гобокен, Ню Джерзі 6-го березня 1912 року, а самі тістечка почали виробляти від червня 1911 року і тоді дали їм назву ,,Орео''. Тепер їх виробляють 2,000 на мінуту спеціяльними машинами. Але хоча все відбувається машиновим способом смак ,,Орео'' на тому не потерпів і це може сказати кожний, що ці тістечка залюбки споживає.

Figure 1 Yunak #11, 1986. "We ought to know" about the Anniversity of Oreo cookie



Дорога приятелько!
Моє ім'я є Юстина. Я є в другій клясі. Мені дуже файно в Канаді. Але шкода тебе. Я знаю, що ти дуже терпиш і довго. Як я почула, як є в Чорнобилі, мені аж захотілося плакати. Але ми молимося, щоб усе вийшло якнайкраще.

Юстина,
м. Торонто, Українська школа святого Димитрія.

Малюнок Володі Кульбовського, Народицька неповна середня школа, 6 клас.

Після вибуху в Чорнобилі там дуже тяжко. Бо радіація є в повітрі і то люди вдихають. Тепер випускають ракети, щоб дощ падав, і тоді радіація йде в долину, в землю. Але це також недобре. Бо трава росте в землі, корова їсть траву, корова дає молоко, що люди п'ють, і радіація заходить у тіло. Рік тому я бачила в газеті знімку коня з восьми ногами. Це показує, що чорнобильський вибух дуже впливає на людей, звірів і рослин.

Мілена Олексюк-Бейкер,
м. Торонто, Українська школа імені Цьопи Палїїв, 4-та кляса.

7

Figure 2 Soniashnyk #1, 1991. Letter to Ukrainian Children from foreign peers: "Dear friend, my name is Justine, I am in grade 2. I am doing really well in Canada. But I pity you. When I heared what had happened in Chornobyl, I wanted to cry. We are praying..."

Мій дідусь проживав у селі Ноздрище. Як було приємно мені їздити до нього в гості. А зараз це село виселили, і мені дуже боляче дивитися на поламаний журавель над колодязем, з якого брав дідусь воду. А в село не можна заїхати. Бо село обгороджене колючим дротом. Але я переліз і бігом побіг до хати. Кликав діда, але ніде не було чути. Тільки біля хати виросло деревце. Я зламав гілочку і кріпко притис до грудей. Вона пахла дідом.

Валентин Аврамчук ,
учень 5 класу
Лозницької неповної середньої школи
Житомирської області.

Ми часто чуємо, що в нашій країні все найкраще - дітям. Але ми цього не відчуваємо. Наше село Лозниця належить до найбільш забруднених радіонуклідами сіл. А ми вже тут живемо п'ять років. Дуже боляче думати, що через рік-два ми назавжди покинемо рідну Лозницю. Не можемо повірити, що так ніколи в рідному селі не ступимо босою ногою на землю, не будемо гратися у піску, купатися в річці. Ми не можемо зрозуміти, що трава, квіти – наші вороги. П"ємо молоко і підраховуємо, скільки вживаємо радіонуклідів.

Василь Цвєтков,
учень 5 класу
Лозницької неповної середньої школи.

Як було добре в нашій Лозниці до Чорнобиля. Село наше з кожним роком прикрашалося новими будовами. Весело співали птахи. Люди посміхалися. Хвалили Бога за щасливе життя. А зараз так у нашому селі, як у творі Шевченка:

Чорніше чорної землі
Блукають люди; повсихали
Сади зелені, погнили
Біленькі хати, повалялись,
Стави бур"яном поросли...

Наталя Карась,
учениця 7 класу
Лозницької неповної середньої школи.

КВІТЕНЬ
26
П'ЯТНИЦЯ
Схід 6.44 Захід 21.09
Тривалість дня 14.25
Захід 5.19 Схід 18.49
Перша чверть 21 квітня

ЖУРАВЛІ

Летить під небом журавлиний клин –
Посланець із минулого століття.
Де взявся він серед димів і сміття,
Мов сирота, у просині один?
Старий вожак минає наш масив
І повертає в бік Пущі-Водиці...
Невже не знає бідолашна птиця,
Що там реактор трави оросив?
І ми злітаєм, мовби журавлі,
Хоч вже давно відбилися від клину,
Безсилі врятувати Україну –
Найкрасивішу часточку землі.

Віка Іванченко,
9 років, м. Київ.

Малюнок Віталія Хлуп'янця,
учня 5 класу
Народицької неповної середньої школи

ЗАБОРОНЕНА ЗОНА

Figure 3 Soniashnyk #1, 1991. Letters from Ukrainian children about their experience of Chornobyl disaster

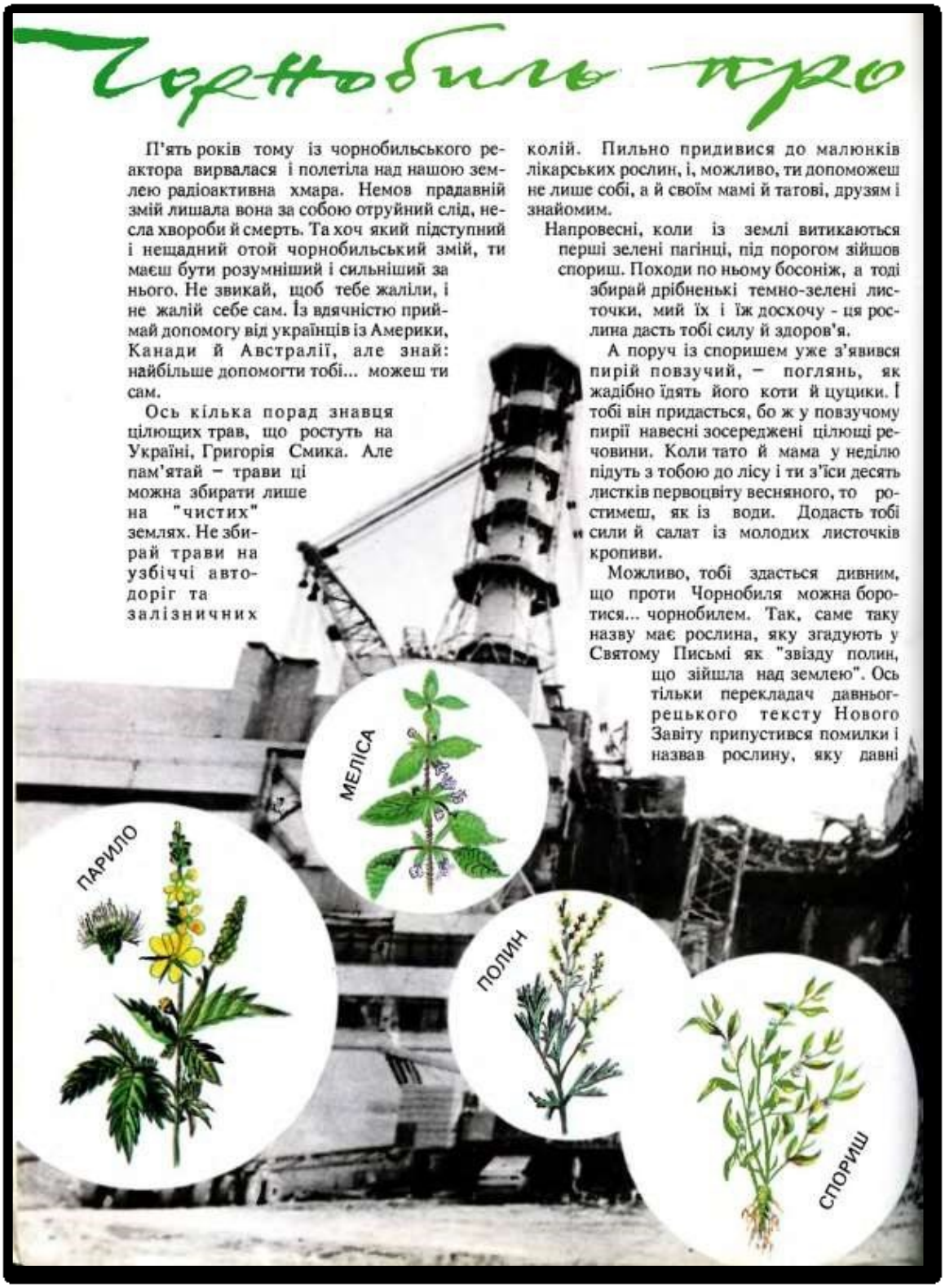


Figure 4 Soniashnyk #3, 1991. Article about medicinal herbs - good remedies from radiation, the 'poisonous Chorbobyl snake'

...та Чорнобиля

греки вживали у їжу і звали артемізією - полином. Насправді ж вона зветься чорнобилем, і коли ти будеш куштувати листки полину звичайного – чорнобилю — їсти щодня, то він виведе з твого організму радіонукліди.

Ти маєш запам'ятати, що врятувати своє здоров'я можна лише рятуючи печінку – цю хімічну лабораторію організму. Тому вживайте у їжу парило звичайне, мелісу та фенхель (солодкий корінь), зривай, мни у пальцях і нюхай листки любистку.

А ще є трава солодша від усяких цукерок, – то лакричний корінь. Колись росла ця трава на Україні у Дикому Полі – на Херсонщині та в Приазов'ї. Нині ж її можна знайти лише по берегах річок Амудар'ї та Сирдар'ї. До речі, її купують у нас і вивозять до Сполучених Штатів, аби лікувати американських солдатів, котрі обслуговують ракети з ядерними боєголовками, – адже лакричний корінь виводить з організму шкідливі радіонукліди.

Але повернімося до більш доступних рослин, тих, що ростуть на твоєму городі або продаються в овочевих магазинах та на базарі. Щодня жуй зелень кропу, їж пір'я молодої цибулі й часнику.

Є трава, яку ти знайдеш скрізь – це деревій звичайний. Його слід вживати вранці натще-серце і ввечері перед сном. А коли ще час від часу ти пожуєш корінь аїру (татарське зілля), то забудеш про біль у животі. Не забувай і про цілющу траву калган.

Коли ж у тебе виникнуть питання, які трави вживати, аби вилікуватися від тих чи тих хвороб, пиши мені на адресу "Соняшника" – я спробую відповісти на них.

Леся Воронина

СПОМИН ПРО ВЕСНУ 86-го РОКУ

Скрадлива чутка поповзла селом,
Із хати в хату, наче тінь зловісна.
"Біда в Чорнобилі... четвертий блок...
Рятуймось... Завтра може бути пізно..."
Та радіо мовчить. Газети поніміли.
По телевізору - концерти та кіно.
А ми по воду до криниць ходили,
Дітей поїли теплим молочком.
Город садили. Босими ногами
Збивали роси з ніжної трави.
Про радіацію не знали й не гадали,
І страх у душах ще не оселивсь.
Чому ж було так тоскно на душі,
Немов щось світле вмерло й не воскресне?
...Літак, що в небі креслив віражі,
Немов зумисне - сонце перекреслив!

Валентина Васьковець, вчителька,
село Любарка Народицького району
Житомирської області.

Figure5 Soniashnyk #3, 1991.

З цього номера "Соняшника" всесвітньовідома чаклунка пані Магія розпочинає свої знамениті оповідки про таємничі й забуті народні забобони. Перша розповідь пані Магії зацікавить тих, кому лелеки зовсім недавно принесли манюпусіньких братиків чи сестричок. Гадаємо, що ця сторінка сподобається також батькам. Отож:

Забобони пані Магії

ЗАБОБОНИ ДЛЯ НЕМОВЛЯТ

1-й. Перед тим, як уперше покласти дитину до колиски, спочатку туди кладуть кота - аби дитина краще спала.

2-й. Після заходу сонця купелі не можна вчливати надвір.

3-й. Пелюшки вивішують надвір лише через рік після народження немовляти, - аби воно не хворіло.

4-й. Стригти дитину можна лише через рік після народження. Зістрижене волосся кидали на воду - щоб дитина росла, як з води; або спалювали - хай іде за димом, щоб дитина горя не знала, щоб горе з димом ішло.

5-й. Зістрижене волосся ні в якому разі не можна викидати будь-де, бо горобці з воронами підберуть його на гніздо, і в дитини болітиме голівка. Окрім того, його можуть підібрати баби-чаклунки на ворожіння.

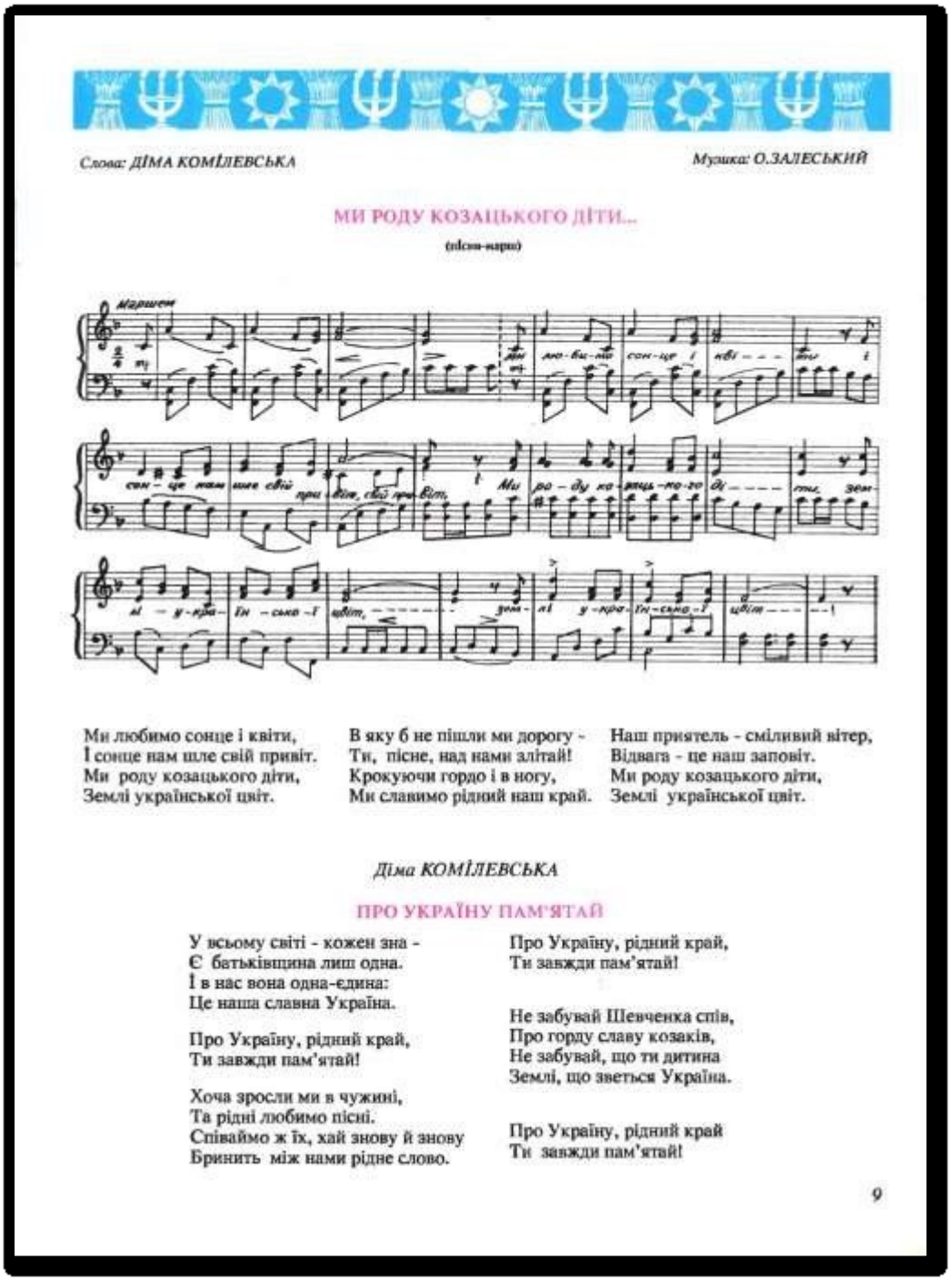
6-й. Ту першу сорочечку, що наділи на немовля, одягають на усіх дітей, що народжуються опісля - нехай повосять тиждень або хоч один день, - щоб діти любили одне одного й підтримували в біді.

7-й. Якщо уві сні дитинка закричить - то це її дражнять ангели, а якщо засміється - то це ангели її забавляють.

Підготувала Вікторія Ярош

Намалював Анатолій Твердий

Figure 6 Soniashnyk #2, 1991 Rubric of folklore information “Superstitions of Mrs. Magic”, this one is about newborns



Слова: ДІМА КОМІЛЕВСЬКА

Музика: О.ЗАЛЕСЬКИЙ

МИ РОДУ КОЗАЦЬКОГО ДІТИ...

(пісня-марш)

Маршем

Ми любимо сонце і квіти,
І сонце нам шле свій привіт.
Ми роду козацького діти,
Землі української цвіт.

В яку б не пішли ми дорогу -
Ти, пісне, над нами злітай!
Крокуючи гордо і в ногу,
Ми славимо рідний наш край.

Наш приятель - сміливий вітер,
Відвага - це наш заповіт.
Ми роду козацького діти,
Землі української цвіт.

Діма КОМІЛЕВСЬКА

ПРО УКРАЇНУ ПАМ'ЯТАЙ

У всьому світі - кожен зна -
Є батьківщина лиш одна.
І в нас вона одна-єдина:
Це наша славна Україна.

Про Україну, рідний край,
Ти завжди пам'ятай!

Хоча зросли ми в чужині,
Та рідні любимо пісні.
Співаймо ж їх, хай знову й знову
Бринить між нами рідне слово.

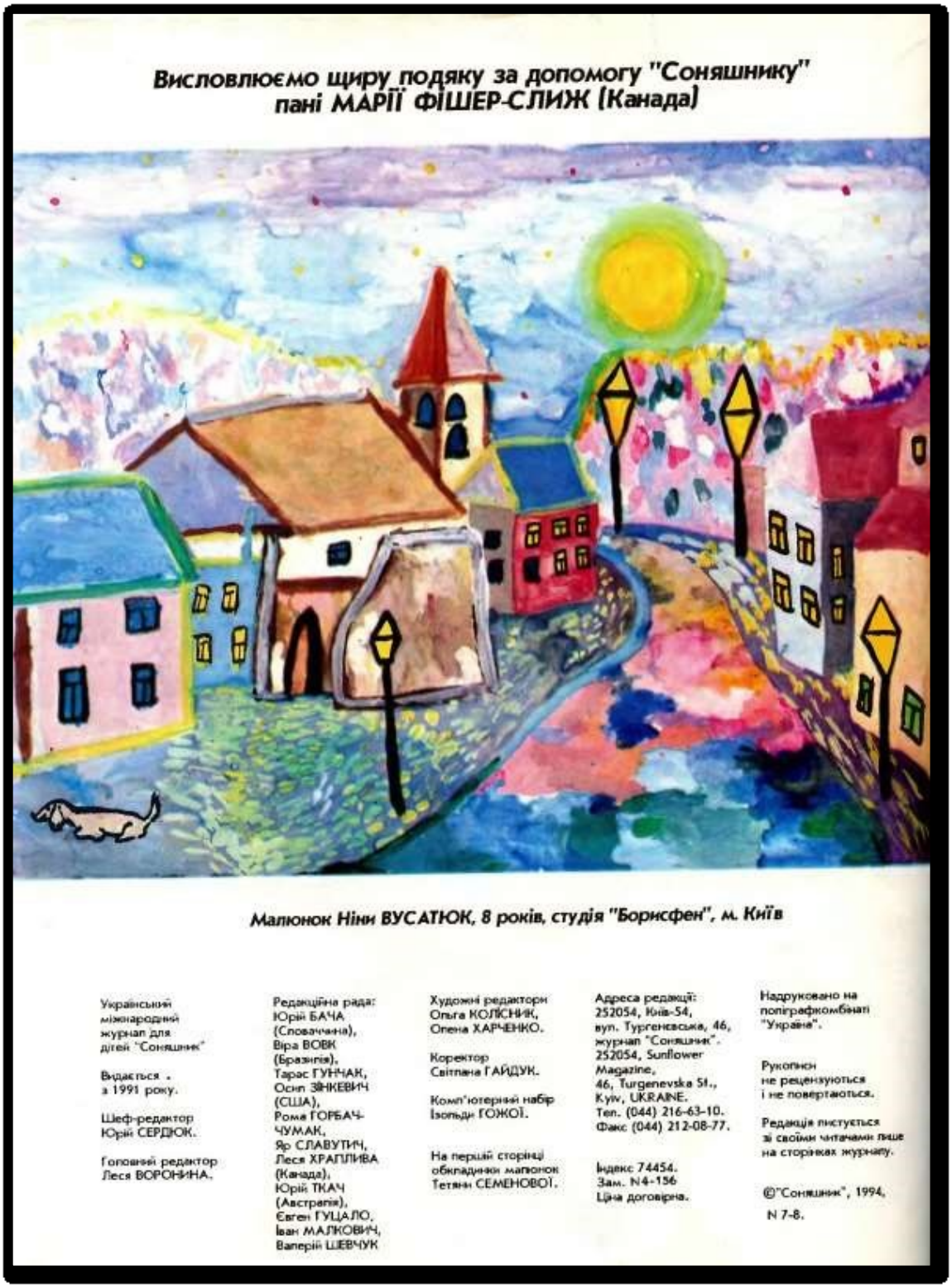
Про Україну, рідний край,
Ти завжди пам'ятай!

Не забувай Шевченка спів,
Про горду славу козаків,
Не забувай, що ти дитина
Землі, що зветься Україна.

Про Україну, рідний край
Ти завжди пам'ятай!

9

Figure 7 Soniashnyk #1, 1991 Music and lyrics to the song “We are of the Cossack origin”, and a poem “Remember about Ukraine



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Малюнок Ніни ВУСАТЮК, 8 років, студія "Борисфен", м. Київ

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N 7-8.

Figure 8 Soniashnyk #4, 1994 Cover back page with names of the editors and contributors, from Ukraine and abroad

Appendix II: Pictures of Toys

Figure 1 **Rare imported dolls, from Germany and the Baltics, 1990**

Figure 2 **Knit toys, 1992**

Figure 3 **Rubber toys, 1991**

Figure 4 **The Doll House**

ДОРОГОЙ ДРУГ!

Сегодня ты начинаешь свой путь в замечательную, необыкновенную страну — Страну знаний! Ты научишься читать и писать, впервые напишешь самые дорогие и близкие для всех нас слова: **мама, Родина, Ленин.**

Школа поможет тебе стать грамотным и трудолюбивым гражданином нашей великой Родины — Союза Советских Социалистических Республик.

Поздравляем тебя с началом учёбы и дарим первую школьную книгу — Букварь. Береги его! Он откроет тебе дверь в мир новых, интересных книг. Из него ты узнаешь, как велика и прекрасна наша Родина, как много делают советские люди, чтобы на всей Земле всегда был мир!..

Будь старательным и трудолюбивым.

В добрый путь, дорогой друг!

НАША РОДИНА — СССР

3

Figure 1 Primer from 1987: "Dear Friend! Today you start your journey into wonderful and incredible land - land of Knowledge! You will learn to read and write the most dear and intimate words: Mama, Motherland, Lenin" (p.2).

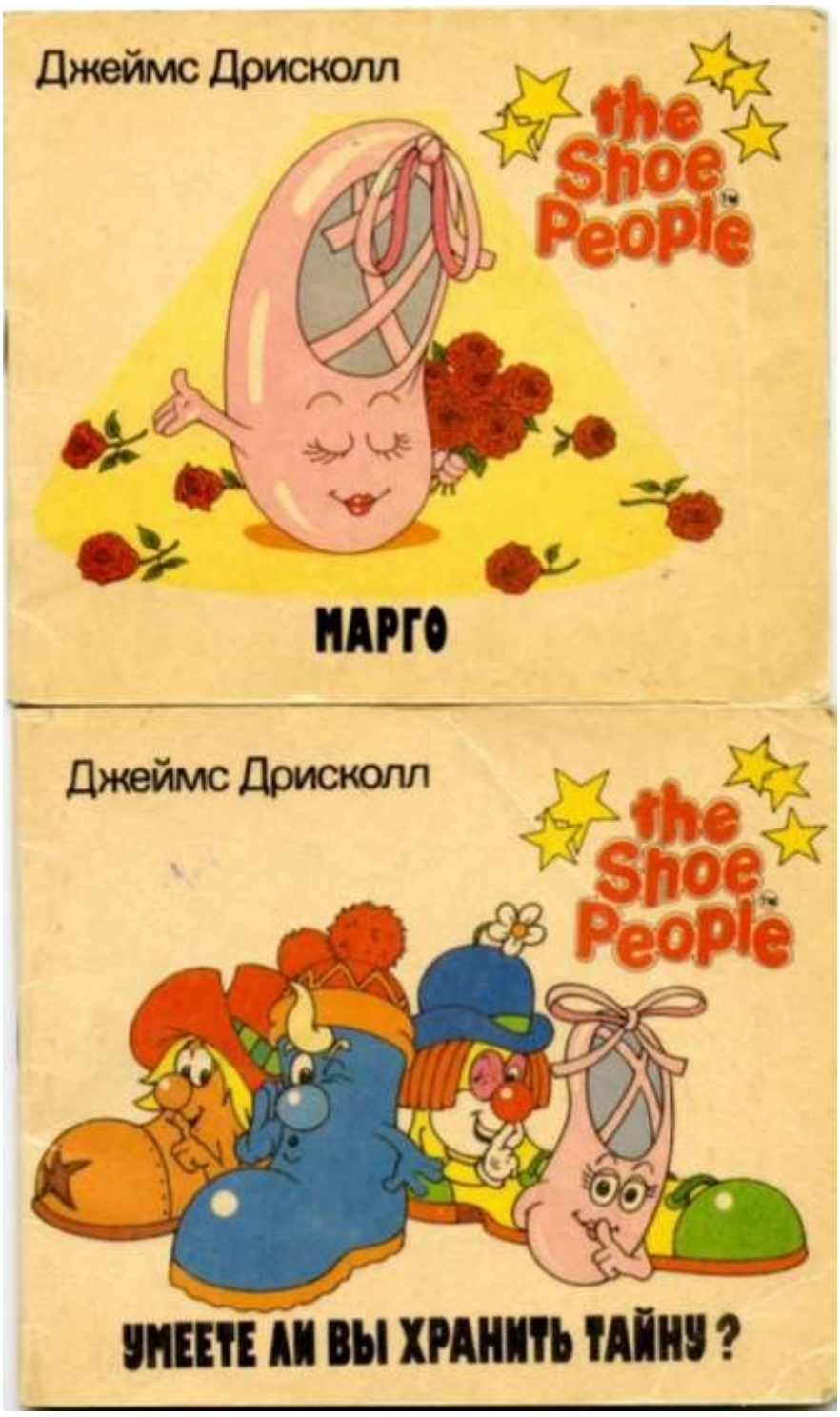

Figure 2 Children's books from 1990. (Driscoll, James. The Shoe People Series, 1986, in Russian translation); an example of western time of reading, that in the 1990s were more 'prestigious' to read, as opposed to the ones published in the USSR.