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Negotiating Ukrainianness in Western Canada

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Article abstract

This article deals with the questions of identity negotiation in a transnational context, through an ethnographic examination of contemporary “Ukrainian practices” in Mundare, a small Ukrainian community, located in the heart of the Ukrainian bloc settlement in east central Alberta. The article focuses on performative language and practices of a *Zustreech* cultural society organized in this community by recent immigrants from Ukraine. While identity negotiation between the local Ukrainians and their old country counterparts is fraught with miscommunication in the domain of various public events staged by the *Zustreech* society, such events do succeed in fostering new experiences of Ukrainian-Canadian identity.

Zustreech or encounters of a transnational kind

Negotiating Ukrainianness in Western Canada

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> *Bogdan:* [1]*…*and then [regarding the name *Zustreech*, or "meeting"] I was thinking, we all met here, Ukrainians from Yugoslavia, their grandparents and great grandparents, their roots, are from Western Ukraine; Polish Ukrainians as well; even *korinni* ["native," here meaning local] Ukrainians started to come out. And we are from Ukraine ourselves…
>
> *Iryna:*… all the immigrants came together, those who still remember our collective *subbotniks* and with exclamations "hurrah" dived into work[2] (Pivovarchuk and Pivovarchuk 2001).

February 3, 1999. Another cozy evening at the Pivovarchuks, *Zustreech* headquarters. We are all around the kitchen table. This is the well known and debated Soviet, or Slavic, as argued by Ries (1997) ritual of connecting. The conversation is most relaxed when conducted in such a setting, and you feel welcomed to people's home. There are unwashed dishes in the sink, food on the table, coffee, tea. Bogdan, the host, makes sure all participants in this kitchen ritual attend to alcoholic beverages. There is *zakuska*, or appetizers, there is sausage. Iryna, the hostess, ensures we have enough food to go on. Mykhailo, a fellow villager from Ukraine on the (year long) visit to the Pivovarchuks, is preoccupied with his global travels from Ukraine, to Canada, and to the States, full of anxiety and fear to be rejected at the American

1. I use the Russian spelling of Bohdan's name for it is how it is written in his legal documents.
2. In the last line Iryna refers to ostensibly enthusiastic times of first communist public cleaning days, *subbotniks*, set up in the early days of the Soviet rule, when the Soviet population would come out and do a major spring cleaning of cities and towns. With Lenin's death in 1924, major *subbotniks* were held on or around April 22, Lenin's birthday. All conversations with the Pivovarchuks cited in this text were held in Ukrainian. Translation is mine.

consulate where he, Bogdan and Fred, a *Zustreech* member from Edmonton, travel tomorrow. Bill, a fifty year old local farmer, and Olena, a university educated school teacher from Ukraine visiting Canada with one of the Canadian NGOs (Non-Government Organizations), are in the midst of their own talk.

> *Bogdan (to me):* Look at this couple, Bill and Olena. She was about to leave the country and here Bill came into her life *(Bogdan happily exclaims*). They've got engaged yesterday. This is good. So, Olena can stay here now. This is good, too. We need fresh blood to build Ukraine here, right Bill? Look at them, they just have met, a month ago, at *Obzhynky*. See, our *Zustreech* (encounters) at work.

At some point struggling through the mix of languages, English, Ukrainian from Ukraine or rustic Ukrainian from a local prairie hamlet, through topics, voices, I reach Bill with the question: "Bill, do your neighbours and you yourself want to built Ukraine here?" Bill looks at me, slightly puzzled, in the effort to understand what exactly I want from him. To push the issue of "building Ukraine" in Canada, I repeat the question again. He still seems to be puzzled by what I mean. Bogdan comes in and reformulates my question: "Do you want that we will have Ukrainian culture here, language, songs, concerts, you know?" Bill responds to this translation of what I was asking and nods. "Of course we want to preserve our Ukrainian culture," and off he went, with the familiar "we-need-to-preserve-our-heritage-and-culture."

The original line of conversation was lost, but Bill's reaction to my question and what he had to say in response to it was meaningful and illustrative. To Bill, like to many other local Ukrainian Canadians living on the Canadian Prairies, Ukraine's culture and Ukrainian culture aren't necessarily synonymous things. And yet, the fascination of the "other's" Ukrainianness is there (fieldnotes Feb 4, 1999).

Ukrainians established their communities in Canada as early as the 1890s. Throughout the last hundred years, with many decades of building Western Canada and with many generations behind them, Ukrainian Canadians developed a strong sense of their identity and see themselves as proud Canadians who have built this nation together with other peoples. Mundare is one of the earliest Ukrainian Canadian settlements in the West, established in 1903. A community of about six hundred people, it houses many Ukrainian Canadian organizations; the Ukrainian Catholic church operates its own Ukrainian Museum, one of the best and professionally run Ukrainian museums in Canada.

The Ukrainian language may still be heard during various local functions. Community life centres around several important dates, most of which are major Christian celebrations, and seen locally as Ukrainian events.

The sense of Ukrainianness in this locality is strong, well rooted in the history of Ukrainian immigration to Canada, the Canadian nation building on the prairies, and in the absence of a Ukrainian state on the world stage until the end of the twentieth century.

Yet, ironically, though unrealized as a nation-state, Ukraine, or rather imagination of and the attitudes towards Ukraine and Ukrainians among Ukrainian Canadians, played a significant role in the formation and development of the specific Ukrainian Canadian worldview, discourse, and practices throughout the last century. Like any other Ukrainian Canadian community, Mundare has been for a long time involved in networks and practices originating in or linked to Ukraine. These networks have facilitated recent weddings between Canadian farmers of Ukrainian background and women from Ukraine (as in the case of Olena and Bill), as well as the transplantation of a whole spectrum of cultural practices and processes.

The term "transnational" appeared in academia in the 1980s to describe a broad variety of cultural and social phenomena emerging in response to the changing nature of the world's social and cultural order experienced in the twentieth century. On a broad scale, it refers to those kinds of organization of human experience that transcend national borders. While transnational connections have been known among various groups of people prior to the twentieth century, nowadays "transnationalism" is most often associated with corporate organization of work and leisure, mass culture, international political organizations, and all other types of deterritorialized cultural processes that do not remain confined to a nation state. What Anthony Smith calls transnational culture — "mass commodities, a patchwork of folk or ethnic styles and motifs stripped of their context, some general ideological discourses concerned with 'human rights and values,' standardized language of communication, all underpinned by new communication technologies" (Smith 1991: 157) — has little connection to any national project or national cultural domain, for all these mass commodities, real or virtual, move easily across national borders. The discussion of transnational next moved to *transnational communities*, of cosmopolitans (Clifford 1997: 36), of corporate workers

(Ohmae 1990), of environmental movements (Robertson 1992), of religious communities and many others (Hannerz 1996: 91-93).

I use the term "transnational" in a narrower sense though, more closely linked to Linda Basch and others' understanding of diaspora/homeland interaction (Basch et al. 1994; Schiller *et al.* 1992).[3] "Transnational" here refers to cultural processes emerging from the mass movement of large segments of populations across national borders and their interactions with homelands. Such populations, upon settling in different nations, establish themselves as distinct cultural groups while often maintaining connections with their original homelands. Their participation in the national projects of homelands, and their private involvement with the kin left behind, foster different kinds of transnationalism.

Much of scholarship on transnationalism promotes the idea that to understand national projects in times of late modernity, one needs to move beyond the framework of the "national." As Safran points out, in an age of globalization marked by population movements, ever more accessible communication, and cultural exchanges, it becomes plausible to argue that the "nation-state" is an oddity; that "the notion of the fixity of cultures is an illusion; and that the fashioning of homogenous societies is unrealizable, if not undesirable" (1999: 255). Hannerz, an anthropologist from Sweden, emphasizes that today's peoples increasingly operate outside nationally defined boundaries and interests and they have long been immersed in a variety of cultural flows that circulate globally (1996). Further, with the ongoing development of corporate capitalism and the creation of new electronic media, communication, and transportation technologies, the national projects of those countries with significant expatriate diasporas become more and more influenced by their transnational connections.

Conversely, to understand the projects of ethnic groups living outside of their historical homelands, one should also move beyond considering ethnicity within the context of the group's host land. Despite the compartmentalization of Ukrainian culture into Ukrainian-American,

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3. The recent interest that has developed in North American academic discourse in diasporic transnational spaces has produced a number of fine scholarly explorations. Works by Gilroy (1993), Tololyan (1991, 1996), and Safran (1991, 1999), among others, have helped to create a burgeoning field of intellectual enquiry in diaspora and diasporic transnational studies.

Ukrainian-Canadian, Ukrainian-Argentinean, and so on, Ukrainians throughout the world, burdened until 1991 by the absence of their own nation-state, have long been involved in constructing and maintaining social and cultural practices that transcended the national borders of their countries. With the demise of the Soviet system and Ukraine's independence, there have been many new economic, political, cultural, and intellectual networks developed, this time also embracing Ukrainians in Ukraine. The establishment of those new networks promotes a new sense of Ukrainian identity as one that knows no borders and whose major cultural (and political) centres are located simultaneously in a multitude of places, Kyiv, Lviv, Washington, Toronto, New York, Sydney, Munich, and so on.

But what about Ukrainians on the Canadian prairies? While Ukrainian transnationalism broadens its span at the level of institutionalized culture, what can be said about rural Ukrainian communities, such as Mundare, located far away from the urban centres where Ukrainian official culture unfolds? What are the responses of such communities to this ongoing revitalization of global Ukrainian connections?

I have been arguing that Mundare has been part of transnational Ukrainian interactions for a long time, whether the Mundarites have been reflecting upon this or not (Shostak 2001). On one hand, its very establishment, along with many other frontier settlements in the Americas, marked the beginnings of a new kind of Ukrainianness, defined globally. The Ukrainian Catholic communities of Basilians and Sister Servants of Mundare have been actively transnational for nearly a century. Both organizations were central to the establishment of the Ukrainian Catholic presence in Canada and Western Canada specifically. Because Mundare was home to these organizations, the town was often visited by the highest ranking Ukrainian Catholic clergy and held major Ukrainian celebrations (such as the 950th anniversary of Christianity in Ukraine in 1938, fiftieth anniversary of Ukrainian settlement in Canada in 1951, and others). Mundare Basilians expanded their community by bringing in new students recruited from other Ukrainian communities nationwide and even worldwide. The Basilians' local Ukrainian museum has become a well respected institution and has attracted many visitors to Mundare including dignitaries from Ukraine, representatives of various Ukrainian organizations worldwide, and ordinary people. This kind of participation of Mundare Ukrainians

in transnational Ukrainian networks is an example of an institutional, religious in this case, network in which this locality is involved.

On the other hand, apart from the Ukrainian institutional transnationalism at work in this community, there is also another kind of transnational interaction, which I call "grassroots transnationalism." It brings together ordinary people from Mundare and the old country, at times only symbolically but sometimes literally. Grassroots transnationalism relies heavily on kinship links between the two groups of people. Though conceived differently on both continents, the kinship connections to the overseas Ukrainians underline much transnational activity in Mundare.

With the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the reemergence of the global Ukrainian migration flows, Mundare has become home to several individuals and families who have come to Canada from Ukraine in the 1990s, having utilized their kin connections to the locality. In 2000, I counted ten persons (families and women married to local farmers) who had immigrated from Ukraine and who were living in the area. Recent immigrants from Ukraine find their own version of Ukrainianness notably contrasting local Ukrainianness. Mundare Ukrainianness is different than anything they experienced in their homeland. While various outsiders of non-Ukrainian background who move into town these days present a challenge to the integrity and continuity of local Mundare community, they are not seen by Mundarites as people who could challenge their own Ukrainianness. The picture is different when Ukrainians from Ukraine are concerned. Non-Ukrainians moving to the town cannot question what local Ukrainianness is, they have to accept it as is, while Ukrainians from Ukraine can and do so very actively.

The Pivovarchuks: New Agency

It happened that among many other newcomers from Ukraine to the Ukrainian bloc, the Pivovarchuks, a family of four, settled down in Mundare permanently, while others did the same elsewhere in the bloc.[4] The Pivovarchuks' story is illustrative of how Ukrainians from Ukraine

4. There were at least two other attempts to settle in Mundare made by two Ukrainian families. A limited job market pushed them out. There are families, individuals, and wives who emigrated from Ukraine practically in every other town in the bloc.

exercise in Canada their own understandings and visions of what "true" Ukrainianness should be.

Bogdan and Iryna are overwhelmingly hospitable, social, open, energetic, loyal to their homeland Ukraine and her culture, and nostalgic for "things done the way they are done in Ukraine" as Iryna repeats from time to time. Their personalities, among other things, have played a crucial role in determining the direction, content, activities, and the spirit of the cultural organization *Zustreech* they set up in Mundare in 1994, two years after settling in town. *Zustreech* [meeting, encounter] was intended to bring together people who, like the Pivovarchuks, were detached from their own culture and their own circles of friends and family back in Ukraine. It was meant, originally (although this is not the official statement that later repeats itself from one pamphlet to another), to provide such people with the venue to practice their own culture. The Pivovarchuks provided themselves with new meaning for their life in their new home. As Iryna would repeat, "we started it [the society] in order not to die out of boredom."

However, their personalities are not solely responsible for later reverberations within Mundare with regard to the Ukrainian Cultural Society *Zustreech*. When the Pivovarchuks arrived in Mundare they brought with them a distinct mentality they lived by while in Western Ukraine during the time of Soviet rule.[5] Their values, their understandings of how to live one's life, how to interact with others, and how to promote their own culture which they value and cherish, have been formed at the intersection of several historical conjunctures.

First, being of village background, both have been exposed to the vitality of traditional values as still practiced in rural Ukraine: respect for family and kin, respect for hard physical work, the distribution of gender roles, love for singing, and so on. Second, coming of age in Soviet Ukraine, both have learned to live with the "double talk" of Soviet ideologists and have become antiauthoritarian in general. During Soviet times, they continued to practice their Ukrainianness in their own way, often contrary to the norms of the officially imposed Soviet nationalism. This love for folk culture they would bring with them to Canada.

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5. I deliberately avoid labeling, one way or another, their predispositions, values, and orientations as "Soviet Ukrainian," though for the convenience of communication some kind of titling is needed.

At the same time the exposure to the means Soviet ideologists used to promote their Soviet cause (public rituals, staged celebrations, and organized cultural festivities) left its mark on the Pivovarchuks' understanding of how to assert their own Ukrainian culture. The results of such exposure will be played out later, in the means they would choose to assert their Ukrainian culture in Canada.

Third, willingly or not, the Pivovarchuks, who had their own kin in Canada going back to the beginning of the century, seemed to be always engaged in transnational imaginations of Ukrainians overseas. This was the case when Soviet ideology promoted the international brotherhood of Ukrainians worldwide in terms of a proletarian brotherhood. This remained the case when pro-national leaders in perestroika Ukraine (and later leaders in independent Ukraine) began redefining this proletarian brotherhood in terms of the *national* unity of all the Ukrainians in the world. With the understanding that Ukrainians in the world are as much Ukrainians as they were in Ukraine, the Pivovarchuks entered the local cultural scape of Mundare Ukrainianness.

In what follows I address how these understandings are lived and played out in the organizational work of the *Zustreech* society. Through analyzing the *Zustreech* agenda diachronically I seek to understand the interaction between local Ukrainianness and homeland Ukrainianness as promoted by *Zustreech* in 1997-1999.[6] Did *Zustreech* Ukrainianness, or Ukrainianness from Ukraine, have any affect on local understandings and practices of Ukrainianness? Has this encounter of two cultures with the same name been producing some kind of a fused common sense of Ukrainianness on local grounds, or not? To address these questions I discuss *Zustreech*'s beginnings and look at how, over the course of three years, they have promoted a particular cultural event, *Obzhynky*, which they introduced into the local calendar of cultural events and which is seen by many as their trademark. Interspersed throughout my discussion are the voices of Bogdan and Iryna. Much of our communication remains

6. Any negotiation of identities and cultures is a process unfolding in time and space that therefore needs to be accounted for over the long term. I have been lucky to be involved with *Zustreech* from 1997 through to 2001. The time span of my involvement with the Pivovarchuks and their society, or *soosietee* as they say in their Ukrainian, provides my understandings of their life and work with a temporal perspective.

our private affair, but some conversations were officially interviews, and excerpts from those accompany my own writing.[7]

Zustreech *Beginnings*

Bogdan: You're asking how did it all begin? When [some] Yugoslavs arrived, I mean Ukrainians from Yugoslavia, when there was the war in Bosnia there, so they were all looking for…

Iryna:…those were people from the village, they needed to stick together somehow. So, they wanted somehow, to meet, to celebrate birthdays, and simply to hang out together. They once came to Mundare and saw *Ukraina* park, which is a nice place, so we began to meet there.

Natalia: I see… so… when was that?

Bogdan: Eh, it was 1993, 1994. So, we started those meetings in the park, so to speak, just like that.

Iryna: Everybody was coming with his/her own *baniak*, jar of food.

Bogdan: Everybody was bringing something of their own. We used to buy a pig, bake it right there, one huge pig for *barbeekiu*, rotated it on the fire, we ate, then danced. Those boys, they were *Haidamaky* band, played, we all had fun. It was always a good time for us then. Everybody was happy… we would hang out until the next morning… But it was always like, Bogdan, you organize this, you set it up, you get this, you get that.

Iryna: Because you are here!

Bogdan: ... you make arrangements with the park, you get this. So I see, that everything practically becomes my responsibility.

Iryna: So it all began from there. And also, we began to hear some complaining that we are making money out of these meetings and getting rich.

Bogdan: …and then…

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7. With Iryna and Bogdan we always converse in Ukrainian, yet, some English words made their way into their Ukrainian and became part of their repertoire. In such case I transliterate them to reflect Bogdan and Iryna's way of using these words in their Ukrainian.

> *Iryna:* …then he officially registered this [society]… (Pivovarchuk and Pivovarchuk 2001)

Of course, in their official publications *Zustreech* referred to their beginnings in a different, more reflected, way. In their early public statements, they acknowledge: "*Zustreech*… is interested in preserving and creating a greater cultural awareness of Ukrainian traditions, and celebrations (particularly in song, dance, traditional Ukrainian instruments, theatrical plays, literature, and language)."[8] The early years were the years of high enthusiasm, as Iryna puts it. Bogdan was seriously thinking of setting up a school of Ukrainian folk arts for local children. Other intentions included short term plans "to create a cultural awareness about our heritage, traditions, celebrations, i.e. hosting popular celebrations and events such as a Shevchenko celebration, Christmas/Easter celebrations, Independence of Ukraine, *Obzhynky* etc." (*Zustreech* 1997a: 1).

Despite the fact that originally newcomers saw Ukrainian Canadians as the same Ukrainians they themselves were, the Pivovarchuks were convinced that "true" Ukrainian culture had died out in the town. The two of us spent hours discussing this issue in 1998 (Pivovarchuk 1998a, c). Notice Bogdan's usage of "people," or "everybody" (meaning Ukrainians), "they" (meaning local Ukrainians), churches (meaning Ukrainian churches), etc.:.

> *Bogdan:* In larger cities, such as Edmonton, people [Ukrainians] have some cultural programs, some contacts [with each other]. And here in our area everything is still. They only know, in terms of religion, yes they will go to their churches. Religious life is sort of going on here, so-so. But still, the youth keeps away, they don't understand anything Ukrainian anymore. So our organization, *Zustreech*, we don't distinguish… we have members, [among others] Jehovah witnesses… we don't care of what kind of [religious] faith people are. They could believe in what they want, but important thing is that they should believe in our tradition, *narodna tradytsiia*, folk tradition. […] Everybody celebrates Christmas, right? Everybody celebrates Easter, be they Catholics or Orthodox, so we don't emphasize. […] Though in Mundare, because I am an Orthodox, they look at me a bit differently, through some kind of a prism. I don't say it makes a big difference, but there is such a thing. […] This boundary exists, I mean confessional boundaries.

8. As an example, in 1997, their advertisement appeared in ACUA VITAE, a bi-annual publication of the *Alberta Council for the Ukrainian Arts* 6 (1): 7.

Natalia: I see.

Bogdan: And secondly, they don't know… first they were coming… they don't know what they play themselves… If you'd be singing the song, the song which is not "born" in Canada, but was born in Ukraine, the folksong I mean, and it is not sung here, they will be looking at you and would tell you "this is *ne nasha* song, not our song" [Bogdan's interpretation of this *ne nasha*, appears to mean to him more than just "not ours," but almost like not Ukrainian, for he is visibly unsettled by this while speaking].

And also, often they ask us, OK, they have already seen *bandura* [a musical instrument] and how we [*Zustreech* performers] play it. But as for violin, not once they were asking, young ones, do you people play these instruments back home? They didn't even know that the violin and *tsymbaly* [Ukrainian musical instrument] have originated in Ukraine. They don't know that these [instruments] their grandfathers and great grandfathers brought over here from Ukraine. And therefore, our task… youth doesn't know that *tsymbaly* and violin are Ukrainian *narodni*, folk instruments. In all the area here, in Smoky Lake, Saint Paul, Myrnam no child is playing these instruments! [Bogdan raises his voice considerably, showing his surprise over such a state of things]… Now they hear more about Ukraine, but still they have no idea about Ukraine and how it is like there. Those Ukrainians in Ukraine, and those here in Canada should be one whole, but they are like scattered glass. They, Ukrainians in Canada, tell me, this is us who are Ukrainians, you, over there, are no more… (Pivovarchuk 1998a).

Bogdan's dreams, based on his imagining Mundare people as a part of a larger whole, have not been realized. As well, his intentions to establish a school that would instruct local children in Ukrainian music, culture, history, and tutoring in folk instruments failed. Four years later (in 2000) I heard nothing about the *narodna shkola* from Bogdan.

In addition to nurturing plans to teach local kids "everything about Ukraine" during their initial years, *Zustreech* introduced into the local calendar of cultural events a number of events that were clearly a novelty to the area. These were: *Vertep*, a tradition of Christmas theatrical performance, or a puppet theater (held in 1997, 1998); Shevchenko days, celebrating the "spirit of the greatest son of our Land, the poet who gave his life for the freedom of the Ukrainian people" (held in 1997);[9] *Maiivka*, or *Vesnivka*, or spring celebrations rooted in the pagan

9. From Bogdan Pivovarchuk's speech, *Zustreech* Annual Meeting, March 7, 1998.

mythology of Ukrainians (1997, 1999); *Ivana Kupala*, summer solstice celebrations (1997); Ukraine's Independence Day, celebrating post-Soviet Ukraine and her status of an independent country as of August 1991 (1995, 1997); *Obzhynky*, harvest celebrations (1996, 1997, 1998, 1999); and St. Mykolai's day, celebrating the arriving of the Ukrainian version of Santa Claus (1997). Some of those events attracted more than three hundred guests, others were attended by no more than fifty participants. But even if they were not widely attended, these events clearly entered the local cultural scape as yet another possibility for locals to go out and socialize.

Not only the content of these events was new to the communities in the Ukrainian bloc.[10] They were new in form as well. From the beginning these events were organized in the form of a concert, with a Master of Ceremonies, a comprehensive cultural program involving theatrical improvisations, performances addressing the subject of each event, group and individual singing, poetry recitations, and even some audience participation. It was self-understood to *Zustreech* organizers that all the events were to be conducted in Ukrainian, for "wherever you look, in Andrew, here in Mundare, Smoky Lake, Vegreville, these are all Ukrainians here!" (Pivovarchuk 1998b).

The organizers not only meant to reintroduce "real" Ukrainian culture into Mundare ("they are not *spravzhni*, or real, Ukrainians here anymore!"), but they also attempted to install on local grounds quite a distinct *style* and *performative language* of celebrating Ukrainian culture. The style and the performative language were those they were themselves familiar with, and thus the only ones available to them for promoting their cultural agenda. Both the style and the performative language depended on utilizing special folk celebration scripts, or *narodni stsenarii*, written by professional celebration script writers. Someone like myself, who also lived through Soviet times, recognizes the style as a very familiar cultural practice, as something practiced back "home" when Ukraine and Ukrainians were experiencing a brief renaissance of Ukrainian culture and national consciousness in the 1980s, in times of perestroika and earlier.

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10. Local old timers, like Marsha Weleschuk (2000), recollect similar kinds of activities back in the 1940s and earlier, finding some similarity between what *Zustreech* does and what their Ukrainian choirs and theatre groups did generations ago.

This returns the discussion to my observation above that the Pivovarchuks' personal agency stems from their experiencing a variety of historical processes, mentalities and ideologies produced by these processes within Ukrainian, and particularly Western Ukrainian, society prior to their arrival in Canada.

The Roots of *Zustreech'* Cultural Practices

The Pivovarchuks, the early ideologues of *Zustreech*, most likely do not realize how much their ways of promoting Ukrainian culture are rooted in the variety of cultural and ideological traditions of their homeland, and the region they are originally from. On the one hand, being born Ukrainians in Western Ukraine (which was never a part of the Russian Empire and was among the last territories to join the Soviet Union, and therefore the least subjected to Russification and Sovietization politics), they were privileged over other Ukrainians to have a "better" memory of their "national" heritage, that is folk culture and the national idea in general. On the other hand, while they saw the Ukrainian folk and national, *narodna*, culture as oppressed by Soviet rule, they do not escape Soviet influence in their ways of promoting this culture. This was true still in Soviet Ukraine, and also later in Canada.

To some extent, Soviet ideologues treated the folklore of various peoples within the country's borders with some respect, seeing it not so much as a product of national cultures, but as the means for constructing a new, Soviet nation (Shostak 1999). Folklore, seen as a product of the working masses, was given much room in Soviet propaganda. As early as the 1930s (and for Western Ukraine, with its annexation to the USSR, since 1945), folk traditions were appropriated by *agitcult* brigades (special "propagating cultural brigades," groups staging amateur political art) who developed new, uniquely Soviet kinds of propaganda. As a result, within the former Soviet republics, some village rituals were sanctioned to survive as officially-staged Soviet rituals, while others were obliterated. New institutions of higher education were established, i.e. institutes of culture, where students were trained to become *kerivnyky khudozhn'oi samodiial'nosti* [leaders of amateur arts and performance]. Upon their graduation they would be assigned to work in Soviet halls of amateur art. These halls were established in almost every rural and urban community throughout the Soviet Union. Their activities first paralleled

the traditional non-staged folk culture within the local contexts, and later in many cases superceded them.

Within this context a Soviet tradition was born, that of composing new scripts for numerous public holidays and folk-like calendric celebrations. These scripts, also known as *stsenarii narodnykh sviat* [folk holidays scripts], were written by professionals specially trained "in culture" who would use their poetic skills to put together ideologized stanzas aimed at propagating various aspects of Soviet culture. These scripts were published in a large variety and were available from Soviet bookstores. Whenever a school or local artistic group was to set up a performance related to any holiday, they would get such a *stsenarii* and stage it. If some wanted to be more creative, they could "create" their own script by poetry, rhymed lyrical philosophizing composed on the subject matter, citations from famous individuals, or songs, and organize them into a new script. Much of what was included into such official holiday scripts was recited in a poetic form, with rhyming lines, which made the script easier to memorize. The first such *stsenarii* were launched in the 1930s. The tradition of staging *narodni sviata* [people's holidays], as well as the production of such *stsenarii* were well established throughout the republics in Soviet times, with the large network of peoples' halls of amateur arts utilizing these scripts in their own artistic work.

Ironically, this Soviet practice of promoting Soviet culture survived the Soviet Union's demise in Ukraine, and was even revitalized when Soviet ideology was giving way to the rising spirit of Ukrainian nationalism. In the mid-1980s with Gorbachev's perestroika, folklorists and other specialists of Ukrainian culture began to develop a new series of publications of "people's holiday scripts." This time however, such publications were clearly pro-Ukrainian and nationalist. The scripts of exclusively Soviet holidays became obsolete. New scripts, now promoting earlier unsanctioned celebrations, such as Christmas, *Malanka*, *Jordan* [Epiphany], and other folk rituals (still remembered in the villages), were hastily composed. Other holiday scripts such as those for *Obzhynky*, or Harvest celebrations, were promptly upgraded to suit the new national spirit. Yet, while open references to Sovietness, Lenin, the international proletarian brotherhood, the struggle for peace in the whole world, and other cliches typical of Soviet propaganda discourse were taken out, the formulas, the structure of most of these celebrations, the language, and the style of pathos, remained the same as it had been practiced in Soviet Ukraine.

It is not surprising that the Pivovarchuks' prolonged exposure to the Soviet style of discursive ideological methods left its mark on their understanding of how to assert their Ukrainian culture in Canada. Theirs was clearly a different vision of how culture is to be promoted compared to local celebratory traditions.

Obzhynky

During the first five years of *Zustreech* activities most festivities, those that were originally sought as representations of "true Ukrainian culture," were crossed out from the calendar. While Bogdan, an idealist, still thinks that they can afford to host most of their "national" performances (which includes celebrations of Ukraine's independence), others do not share his vision anymore. The future is debated intensely. During the annual meeting in 2001, Bogdan worked hard to convince the rest of the members to celebrate the tenth anniversary of Ukraine's independence, but unsuccessfully. "I thought, please we have to do it, this is the tenth anniversary, and this park *Ukraina*, with such a name, we have to do it, but they didn't want, I don't understand it!" (Bogdan Pivovarchuk, in Pivovarchuk and Pivovarchuk 2001). Another national celebration, Shevchenko day, has not been discussed since 1998.

Most folkloric celebrations are also seen by the *Zustreech* organizers as doomed. Spring arrival celebrations, *Maiivka*, or *Vesnivka*, are hard to promote. Farming season completely takes over people's lives in May and June. *Vertep*, *Malanka*, *Mykolai*, and other staged performances are also "lost causes," in Iryna's eyes. The Society cannot steadily rely on visiting Ukrainians from Ukraine to produce and rehearse these plays based on *stsenarii.* "Canadians [that is, Canadian Ukrainians] are not capable of doing anything like that themselves" (Iryna Pivovrachuk 03.17.01). At stake here is not just knowledge of Ukrainian language, but knowledge of Ukrainian folk culture, and the knowledge of performative language. All these qualities are lacking in native Canadian Ukrainians according to *Zustreech* ideologues.

> *Iryna:* Bogdan, for this organization to survive, it should have one Ukrainian event, may be *zabava* [social dance], may be *vertep*. But it should be only one Ukrainian event! [her voice is high]. All came to the point, that all those *Malankas*… there are too many of them around. *Vertep* — we won't be able to pull it out, people [Ukrainians from Ukraine] are leaving [the area], and so it is. And as for *Obzhynky*, this is like that, they [the event] can be organized by Ukrainians, and by

> Canadians, by whoever. So, we decided to pick *Obzhynky*, it also costs less, that that *Vertep* for example… (Pivovarchuk and Pivovarchuk 2001)

Thus, only one cultural (folkloric) event, and not a political (national) one, has been allowed to "survive." *Obzhynky*, fitting the local cultural context more than any other of *Zustreech* original celebrations, became the staple production of the society.

Obzhynky has not only become seen as fitting the local cultural scape — celebrated in the fall, *Zustreech Obzhynky* is perceived locally to be the "Ukrainian Thanksgiving." These events continue to promote a kind of Ukrainianness that relies on mythology and metaphors unknown in this locale. In doing so the event survives and at the same time enables negotiations between local and homeland Ukrainianness. In this respect *Obzhynky* emerges as what Sally Moore dubs as a "diagnostic event." On one hand, diagnostic events speak of how current practices are organized by the existing social structures and the existing understandings of what is local Ukrainianness. On the other hand, they also speak of how current practices alter the established rules and the established understandings. Moore suggests that ethnographers dealing with a historically defined present should discuss those events that are "diagnostic." These are "the events that reveal ongoing contests, competitions, conflicts, and the efforts to prevent, suppress and repress these" (Moore 1994: 730). In *Obzhynky* celebrations one can trace not only the changing agenda of a small organization but also how two worlds and two kinds of Ukrainianness meet, challenge, and alter each other. As diagnostic events *Obzhynky* best illustrate the actuality of continuing juxtapositions of local and homeland visions of Ukrainianness. This is especially revealed in the content of the staged performances and in the choice of metaphors and cultural symbols propagated by *Zustreech* from the stage.

Obzhynky[11] comes from *obzhynaty*, the verb that refers to threshing and winnowing. As a particular agricultural ritual, *Obzhynky* refers to traditional agricultural celebrations of the end of the harvest season. In pre-collectivized Ukrainian peasant society, *Obzhynky* were an important

11. The following discussion is based on my observations and participation in two *Obzhynky* events, my numerous encounters with performers involved in such presentations, and on two video recordings of *Obzhynky* I didn't attend. Iryna later provided me with three different *stsenarii* which were used for these events in different years.

part of the calendric ritual cycle and major seasonal celebrations of the family and to some degree of the village community. With the imposition of collective farms, Soviet ideologues incorporated this ritual into the public calendar and actively promoted it. The ritual was modified to fit the Soviet cultural agenda. Collective farm labour and farmers' contributions to Soviet economy needed to be aggressively promoted and idealized in order to stimulate Soviet agricultural production and, overall, people's loyalty to the Soviet principles of life. It is in these celebrations that much of the Soviet mythology was born promoting new Soviet cultural values. In independent Ukraine, Soviet *stsenarii* written for *Obzhynky* were reshaped by the new cohort of post-Soviet Ukrainian scriptwriters. In such rewriting, even if the content of *Obzhynky stsenarii* was modified, the style, the rhetoric, and the metaphoric and symbolic language were not significantly altered.

In *Obzhynky* held in Mundare much of this post-Soviet and Soviet Ukrainian mythology was directly brought out onto the stage. The culture program was staged according to a same scripts, written in post-Soviet Ukraine. "*Stsenarii* were provided by Lesia Sudeiko (who was visiting Canada in 1997-1998)... because she had a sister who worked as *zavklubom* (the head of a local centre of amateur arts), she would send those *stsenarii* from Ukraine to us. Then whoever would be coming from Ukraine, would bring us other *stsenarii*, if we would ask. Some brought literature with children's material. So we are all set here" (Iryna Pivovarchuk in Pivovarchuk and Pivovarchuk 2001).

Like the rest of the *Zustreech* agenda, over the course of years (1997-1999) the style of presenting *Obzhynky* changed. Firstly, Ukrainian-Canadian members became more involved in these performances, translating for the audience some parts of what was recited on stage. "We have to remind [the audience] that in Ukrainian gold does not refer to money, but to bread" (Rosaline Rudiak 1999). Secondly, similarly to other local events, local authorities have been invited to open up the evening. And thirdly, the staged performance has significantly shortened. And for good reason:

> *Iryna:* No one will come for just the cultural program [Iryna makes a comparison with Ukraine, where cultural performances staged by amateurs have been familiar public events conceived as concerts and plays]. Unless you feed them. First you have to feed them all and then give them dances.

> *Bogdan:* We had to adapt to the local ways, you see...
>
> *Iryna:*... but we could have done more, we could do *shos' naukovo-populiarne*, some scholarly/popular stuff, some lectures, some concerts… but no one pays attention. OK, when we made *vertep* they sort of followed, as if overcoming some sort of difficulties… Wherever we are invited to stage some cultural program, they ask us, no more than half an hour. And then dances. As for offering some lectures, this is hardly realistic [she emotionally waves her hand down] (Pivovarchuk and Pivovarchuk 2001).

Yet, even if significantly shortened, the cultural performance continued to be based on Ukraine's *stsenarii*, and correspondingly on post-Soviet (and Soviet) metaphors which they advanced. Iryna's reference to the difficulties which the audience experienced in attempting to follow what was unfolding on the stage points out not merely linguistic barriers between the presenters and the presented. There is more to this miscommunication than just the language, the rhetoric with which presenters address the audience, the speeches that promote unknown metaphors which the locals are encouraged to live by, the unfamiliar pathos. All this is as alienating as the Ukrainian language itself, which does not remind the locals of the prairie Ukrainian they grew up with. To ground this claim, let me bring in here some excerpts from *Obzhynky* performances which I recorded in 1997 and 1998. As the excerpts will show, these performances unintentionally promote these post-Soviet, and even Soviet, myths and cultural values.

The cultural program began with the "Welcome" during which the hostess along with other female participants bowed and presented the audience with *korovai*, ritual bread. The program included poetry recitations, songs, "lyrical philosophizing" all promoting quite a unique — for this Western Canadian locality — set of symbols and metaphors. Usually at the very beginning and at the end, modifications of the scripts were made to connect what followed with the local context. In 1998 the opening remarks reasoned this connection by referring to kinship links between local Ukrainians and those in Ukraine. The master of ceremonies addressed the audience as follows:

> Glory to Jesus Christ, dear family! It will not be mistaken to say [family], for I believe today's celebrations are one more step towards our reunification, kin's reunion. We [the performers] were born in those lands where your great grandfathers and grandfathers lived, where are the roots of our united Ukrainian kin. Wherever we would be, we

> would always sense the call of a native land… In whichever lands the life path would bring a person, over the mountains and the hills, over the oceans and the seas, he would always remember that land where the roots of his kin are, where he saw the sky above his head for the first time...[12]

After attempting to connect the content of the script with the local context the performance would progress according to the script with some slight alterations. Much of the non-local rhetoric remains in the text pointing to the rootedness of *Zustreech Obzhynky* in Soviet ideology and its symbolism. The order of citations below reflects the order in which *Obzhynky* symbols and metaphors appeared during cultural programs. First, harvest celebrations are commonly proclaimed to be of *national* importance:

> *Slukhaite, liudy, slukhaite, liudy*
> *Sviato vrozhaiu nyni v nas bude*
> *Prykhod'te, liudy, rodynu klychte*
> *Na vsenarodne sviato velychne.*
>
> [Listen people, listen people
> Today we will celebrate the harvest
> Come people, call your families
> Come to our all-national solemn holiday].
> (*Zustreech* 1997b)

Second, throughout the presentation, much attention is given to glorification of bread making, bread-makers, the earth, the stalks of grain, the sheaf, and the bread. There would be recitations glorifying "workers of land, bread growers." They appear as tireless:

> *Den' s'ohodni ves' azh siaie, tak vid sontsia vin rozkviv!*
> *Tse s'ohodni den' vrozhaiu, den nevtomnykh trudariv.*
> [Even the day is shining so it has bloomed under the sun!
> It is the Harvest Day, the day of tireless workers].
> (*Zustreech* 1998)

They are attested to be the "best people":

> *I s'ohodni do nas na sviato zavitaly*
> *krashchi liudy, trudivnyky — khliboroby kanads'kykh zemel'.*

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12. All translations of *Obzhynky* performance scripts are mine. The two scripts were created by *Zustreech* for their 1997 and 1998 performances.

[To attend our holiday today came the best people, the workers, the breadmakers of the Canadian fields].
(*Zustreech* 1998)

Chest' i slava khliborobam, shcho zhyvut' na tsii zemli…
Na rukakh u nykh buvaie pyl, zemlia, ta tse darma —
Kozhen skazhe, kozhen znaie, krashchykh ruk, iak tsi — nema!

[Greetings and glory to the breadmakers, who live on this land.
On their hands one can see dust, dirt, so what —
Everyone will tell [you], everyone knows, that there are no better hands than theirs!]
(*Zustreech* 1997b)

Nekhai z roku v rik, iz rodu v rid
Ne bude khliborobam perevodu
Khai slava iikhnia vichno ne zakhodyt'
Azh doky sontse llie na zemliu svit.

[From year to year, from generation to generation,
breadmakers will continue their work
Let their glory be eternally high as long
as the sun spreads its light to earth].
(*Zustreech* 1997b and 1998)

They are seen as having mastered the world's oldest miracle (i.e., bread):

Na (zemli) rodyt' odne z naidavnishykh dyv svitu — tse khlib, iakomu liudstvo, zdaiet'sia jdosi ne sklalo tsiny. Mozhe cherez te zdavna taku povahu i shanu maly i maiut' tvortsi takoho dyva — khliboroby.

[One of the most ancient wonders is born on the land. This is bread, the price of which people, it seems, have not yet found. Perhaps, because of this, from ancient times, breadmakers, creators of this wonder, have been enjoying such respect and appreciation].
(*Zustreech* 1998)

Other people's happiness, and even their life, is claimed to depend on breadmakers:

Skil'ky khliborobs'koi mudrosti v tykh liudiakh, na chyikh rukakh trymaiet'sia nashe shchastia, zhyttia. I os' zavdiaky vashiy pratseliubnosti, vashym rukam, khlib s'ohodni ne mria, khlib s'ohodni na stoli u kozhnoi liudyny.

> [There is so much breadmaking wisdom in those people, in whose hands is our happiness, our life. It is thanks to your love for work, to your hands, that bread today is not a dream. Bread today is on the tables of every person].
> (*Zustreech* 1998)

To labour like a breadmaker is what constitutes human happiness:

> *Chy ie shche bil'she shchastia na zemli iak*
> *siiat' khlib, vyroshchuvat' dostatok?*
> [Is there more happiness on earth than the happiness
> of seeding the bread and growing wealth?]
> (*Zustreech* 1997b)

They appear as the masters of the land, who, by seeding the land until sunrise, father future bread (i.e., grain, metaphorically, stands in for bread). The following is an excerpt from the "Song of a Breadmaker":

> *Ia siiaty liubliu do svitankovykh zir.*
> *Viddat' iarin' zerna, shcho niby maty*
> *Zhyvytyme joho.*
> *Meni potriben myr*
> *Shchob zemliu vsiu zernom nevtomno zasivaty.*
>
> [I love seeding until the morning star
> [I love] giving away the kernel of the seed
> [to the land/earth] that will, like mother,
> nurture it. I demand peace [on earth],
> to be able to seed tirelessly the land/earth].
> (*Zustreech* 1997b)

Breadmakers are presented as aware that they feed the nation:

> *… na stil svoho narodu tebe kladu ia, vyplekanyi mii [khlib]*
> [I put you, my nurtured bread, on the table of my people].
> (*Zustreech* 1997b).

Other symbols of farmers' labour also appear. The earth, the land that bears bread emerges as mother, as a saint, and as a symbol of people's loyalty to this motherland and to their [spiritual and national] Motherland:

> *Zemlia — maty, zemlia — hoduval'nytsia! Spokonvikiv liudy nazyvaly zemliu nailaskavishymy, naisvitlishymy imenamy, porivniuvaly ii z obrazom materi. Spravdi, vona iak maty, shchyra, nizhna, kvitucha.*

[Earth/land is the mother, the earth/land is the feeder. From ancient times people named the earth/land with most tender and most heart lit names. They compared it with the image of mother. True, it — she in Ukrainian — is like mother, generous, tender, blossoming].
(*Zustreech* 1998)

Zemlia — to maty, to vsim bahata
Zemlia — kolyska nasha nazavzhdy…
Oi, iak zhe treba chesno zhyty
I zemliu tsiu sviatu liubyty…

[Land/earth — it is our mother, rich with everything.
Land/earth — it is our cradle forever...
How honestly we need to live
And to love this holy land/earth (of ours)]...
(*Zustreech* 1997b)

Bread, the product of earth, is also glorified:

Sviashchennoho braterstva khlib nesu
The holy brotherhood of bread I carry
nemov uzhymok z polia.
as the sheaf from the field.
(*Zustreech* 1997b)

Bread is described in metaphors of the mother/child relationship:

Khlib! V nim stepu dzvin na rizni holosy,
I nebokrai u veselkovim tsviti
Ioho kokhala nache nemovlia
Vesnoiu povna, radistiu bahata
Bahatoplidna, i bahatotsvitna,
Usezhyvliushcha matinka-zemlia.
Vin pyv vitry, solodki i p'ianki.
I sontse v n'oho shchedro ulylosia
Ta ioho vlyte zoriamy volossia
Vbyralo sylu z liuds'koii ruky.

[Bread! In this word one hears the buzz of the prairies
and many a voice, and sees the sky framed by the rainbow.
The mother Earth nurtured this bread as if it was a child.
It drank from sweet winds.
The sun was giving itself fully to the bread.
But bread's star covered stalks
gained their strength from a human hand].
(*Zustreech* 1997b)

Mothered by the earth, or motherland (in Ukrainian both words have one translation, *zemlia*), bread is inevitably seen as mothered by the Motherland:

> *Pryimai, narode, shchedrist' nashykh nyv*
> *U ts'omu dobrim khlibi Bat'kivshchyny,*
> *Zemli moiei ridnoi barvyny.*
>
> [People accept the bounty of our fields
> in this good bread of our fatherland,
> the colours of my native land].
> (*Zustreech* 1997b)

As for the audience, who are understood to represent the rest of the nation, people are to nurture pride in breadmakers:

> *Horzhusia rodom khliborobiv,*
> *Maistramy khliba i zemli,*
> *Shanuiu skromnyi ikh dorobok,*
> *Dila velyki i mali.*
>
> [I am proud of the breadmakers' kin,
> of these masters of bread and land/earth,
> I respect their modesty and their achievements,
> big and small].
> (*Zustreech* 1997b)

The texts of *Obzhynky* performances which I have provided are only short excerpts from much longer poems, songs, and other narratives. Such performances usually lasted more than an hour. At the end of each performance, local farmers would be directly addressed:

> *Svoi shchyri vitannia na vashe sviato shliut' khliboroby ukraiins'kykh poliv. Zychat' vam shchastia, zdorov'ia i nasnahy na mnohaia lita, na dovhi roky… lyne nasha pisnia horda i velychna, vil'na Ukraiina shle uklin velychnyi…*
>
> [The breadmakers of Ukrainian fields send you their sincere greetings on the occasion of your celebrations. They wish you happiness, health, and perseverance for many years. Our solemn and proud song goes into the world, and free Ukraine is sending her solemn greetings].
> (*Zustreech* 1998)

But the local farmers are also simultaneously presumed to be part of the same Ukrainian nation. Ukraine is also their mother:

I doky bude sonechko siiaty
Vichno bude zhyty Ukraina-maty
Samostiina, vil'na, doroha derzhava,
Slava Ukraini, i heroiam slava!

[As long as there will be sun in the sky
Mother Ukraine will be eternally alive
Our independent, free, and dear state
Glory to Ukraine and glory to her heroes].
(*Zustreech* 1998)

As was usually done in Soviet and post-Soviet Ukraine, the evening would end with proclamations of long life to Ukraine, long life to people's labour, and long life to people's friendship:

V trudi i slava nasha i dolia i druzhby virnoi teplo
V nim shum dibrovy, homin polia
I pisni chyste dzherelo…

[Our glory, our fate, and the warmth of the true friendship are in labour
It has the clamor of the forest, the noises of the field.
It is the clear source of songs...]
(*Zustreech* 1998)

A teper vam pisnia shchyra khai lunaie na zemli:
Slava pratsi, slava myru, slava khlibu na stoli…

[And now let a sincere song for you spread around the earth:
Glory to Labour, Glory to Peace, Glory to Bread on the table].
(*Zustreech* 1998)

Do pobachennia, bud'te zdorovi, khai vam druzi u vs'omu shchastyt'!
Khai u kozhnomu vashomu domi pisnia druzhby krylata dzvenyt'!

[Until then, be happy, dear friends, let happiness be with you anytime!
Let the free song of friendship be heard in every home].
(*Zustreech* 1998)

These transcriptions from the *Obzhynky* performance convey forms of symbolism, metaphors, rhetoric, and poetic language that are new to today's Mundare community. This is also true of the body language of the presenters and the rhythm, tone, and cadence of the spoken Ukrainian used in the performance itself. The language used for

Obzhynky is highly ideological.Performers proclaim their memorized lines with all the seriousness suitable for the occasion. This solemnity is inherited from the Soviet era, when staged events of this kind were celebrations of significant issues of Soviet culture. Smiling was definitely not part of the presentational style.

Obzhynky performative language presents the mythic heroes, the breadmakers (originally, collective farmers in Soviet times, and later Ukraine's co-op farmers). The breadmakers are *national* heroes (originally, the heroes of the *Soviet* nation, and later the heroes of mother-Ukraine's nation). Their "struggle" for bread is the struggle for the nation's wellbeing. Thus, the breadmakers are directly responsible for the nation's happiness. The earth/land metaphor is interchangeable with "mother" and "motherland" and breadmakers, by seeding the land, are elevated to the status of fathers of bread, and symbolically fathers of the nation. This is a good example of status inversion in the ritual, when during the ritual, those with low status in real life are elevated to the highest position status. Soviet farmers worked for the system under worse conditions than any other social class. Yet, in Soviet rituals of harvest celebrations, they were assigned the symbolic role of fathers of the nation.

This mythology was re-created during *Obzhynky* in Mundare, with the hero of the narrative now being a Canadian farmer. The rest of the myth, as created and practiced in Soviet and later post-Soviet times in Ukraine, is delivered in Mundare virtually unedited.

The Contact Zone: Unachieved Communication

Neither used to nor interested in prolonged shows executed in an unfamiliar parlance (and for many, in an unfamiliar language), most of the Mundare audience lost their attention during *Obzhynky* presentations. The complicated formalized narrative escaped them, as it was revealed later in my conversations with the local Ukrainian attendees of the 1998 performance. Soviet-style Ukrainian cultural symbols and values were not understood by Ukrainian-Canadians. On the other hand, locals readily associated the décor and visual presentation of the program with *Zustreech* Ukrainianness.

The interaction between the two kinds of Ukrainianness is mediated via symbolic language, metaphors, and visual representations. The *didukh* and *korovai* presented during *Obzhynky* reminded people of

Christmas *didukhs* and wedding breads. What *Zustreech* did on the stage was to evoke personal memories of *local* Ukrainianness. "It is very nice that you are keeping up with the Ukrainian traditions. The songs and dance are very relaxing. Also it reminds me of my parents and grandparents. When I was a little girl, I remember my dido playing the violin and dancing old Ukrainian dances. Keep up with the good work" (Marsha Weleschuk 1997).

I understand this interaction to be primarily a miscommunication, however. In *Zustreech* official presentations, and their attempts to convey their myths and cultural values to the locals, the interaction between two kinds of Ukrainianness may be labeled as "unachieved communication." To the locals, symbols of Ukraine and metaphors from Ukraine do not convey the meanings Ukrainians in Ukraine invest them with. These symbols do not alter the local meanings of Ukrainianness, for local Ukrainianness in the Mundare locality is a long-established network of meanings and relationships developed in tandem with the emergence and consolidation of the Mundare community.

On the other hand, interaction between the two kinds of Ukrainianness continues outside its staged presentations. It is in the domain of everyday life, in the Pivovarchuk kitchen, in people's encounters of each other, in their ways of relating, socializing, growing their vegetables, singing their songs, and conversing that the two kinds of Ukrainianness are personally experienced, debated, contested, at times criticized, and at times complemented. It is in the domain of everyday life, in the domain of private encounters, that both kinds of Ukrainianness are truly contested and their values challenged.

Within the domains of staged culture and everyday life, it is too early to speak about a fusion or integration of the two kinds of Ukrainianness. True fusion would require a large pool of accumulated lived experiences of many individuals and groups in contact which would simultaneously experience both kinds as theirs. Contact between these two kinds of Ukrainianness, represented by the locals and immigrants, or by the locals and visitors from Ukraine, is however a very recent phenomenon. The local Ukrainianness of Mundare has become a truly grounded culture, with its own legitimate history and respected status within Canadian mainstream society; and for much of this development, there was little contact between it and its overseas counterpart in Ukraine. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union contact

has resumed, only to reveal that a gap has emerged between the two kinds of Ukrainianness despite their common roots. As a result there is a continuing contestation, and at times disagreements (in the private domain) and miscommunication (in public domain).

From local perspectives, this new kind of Ukrainianness comes from the outside and challenges local understandings of what Ukrainianness is all about. Yet, from the perspective of larger history, *Zustreech* practices indicate a new turn in the cultural phenomenon of diaspora/homeland interaction. Or, if the term "diaspora" is not exactly a suitable designator for the territorialized, localized Ukrainianness present in Western Canada, what is being indicated is a new turn in transnational interactions between the local, ethnic, Ukrainianness of a place like Mundare and the Ukrainianness of the "old country."

Zustreech practices are also a continuation of a long history of identity negotiation that has been unfolding in this locality for more than a century. Some negotiations over local Ukrainianness took place earlier in the twentieth century, with debates held by Galicians versus Bukovinians, Roman Catholics versus Greek Catholic versus Orthodox, and so on. Katherine Verdery, a cultural anthropologist studying contemporary rural worlds in Transylvania, Romania, made the appropriate comment that culture is not about shared meanings, it is a zone of disagreement and contest (Verdery 1994: 42). If seen this way, local Ukrainianness is just continuing its "journey" through a new kind of contestation, this time triggered by the consequences of global political change in the 1980s and 1990s and by a new wave of immigration from Ukraine.

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