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**FINDING THE NEEDLE: THE MNEMONIC ROLE OF VERNACULAR TEXTILE
CRAFTING IN ETHNIC IDENTITY SOLIDIFICATION AND MAINTENANCE**

Master's Project

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Introduction

My maternal grandmother, a postwar refugee from Sniatyn¹ in Western Ukraine, made a point of carrying on the textile crafting skill from her culture to her diasporic family. Her material cultural trappings had been lost, abandoned due to the difficulties inherent in escaping the Soviet occupation. Alongside these, however, she left her language, refusing to speak Ukrainian after the trauma and shame she had faced in her homeland. Instead, she carried her crafting, the stitches that had worn their way into her memory and identity deeper than all other markers of her Ukrainianness. This valuation of textile crafting became the lynchpin of my own identity as a member of the Ukrainian diaspora.

This lynchpin was thrown into doubt when I personally encountered linguistic nationalism in other postwar Eastern European diasporas, making language a requirement for ethnic identity in practice (Ramonienė and Ramonaitė 2021). I continued to notice this attitude in the Eastern European studies field.² While language is indeed a powerful instrument for nation-building (Fleming and Ansaldo 2019), its practical applications among diasporas as well as post/colonial³ communities raised questions. Finno-Ugric studies, for example, links linguistic nationalism to the existence of ethnic communities, at times even bordering on conflation between language and identity (Grünthal and Kovács 2011; Simoncsics 1998). This directly conflicts with what I have learned from the Ukrainian community: identity is upheld by so many more pillars beyond just language (Bureiko and Moga 2021). With careful consideration toward the similarities and differences between diasporas and post/colonial communities (Hayes 2015), I have drawn on my diasporic experiences to formulate my research

¹ The Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine's 2010 resolution on transliterating Ukrainian Cyrillic to the Latin alphabet has been referred to for this project: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/55-2010-%D0%BF#Text>.

² Patten (2006) provides a comprehensive overview of the long history of linguistic nationalism in academia.

³ This paper uses Rostok's (2011) "post/colonial" to acknowledge both postcolonial and colonial communities. It is also an apt fit considering Ukraine's currently situation as a postcolonial, independent state that has been recently invaded, occupied, and threatened with Russian settler colonialism and a cultural genocide.

question: How might academia utilize a more holistic approach to identity maintenance when addressing post/colonial communities that have faced linguistic erosion?

More broadly, my project aims to formulate a preliminary model through which humanities research may begin to taxonomize and create research frameworks applicable to post/colonial communities that cannot fit into the parameters of linguistic nationalism, wherein language is a requirement for communal identity. Ideally, a holistic approach is applied in practice, but for this limited project, I have necessarily downscaled to focus on just one of many potential pillars that play a role in identity maintenance: textile crafting. I will present textile crafting as a mnemonic practice through which a community's identity may be stored and transmitted, in turn making it a potential pillar in the process of ethnic identity solidification (Assmann and Czaplicka 1995; Rigney 2016: 67-68) and a potential tool for self-recognition (Fanon 2005 [1961]). While the specific case study for this project is Ukrainian textile crafting, knowledge from other cultures is invoked where relevant and the hope remains that this model may be utilized for a more holistic system beyond just the Ukrainian context and textile craft.

This claim is demonstrated through my theoretical framework, methodology, and project components. My theoretical framework lies at the intersections of vernacular practices and knowledge (Gradén 2021; Reitan 2017; Valk 2022), cultural memory studies (Assmann and Czaplicka 1995; Brown et al. 2012; Rigney 2016), heritage studies (Jones 2007; Sennett 2008), and postcolonial theory (Fanon 2005 [1961]; Coulthard 2014). This theoretical framework is applied through interpretive performance autoethnography (Denzin 2013; Shadrack 2021). My methodology has been further supported by research on Ukrainian vernacular textile crafting (Bohodysta 2014; Nikolayeva 1996), fieldwork personally undertaken in Western Ukraine in July 2023, and digital surveys conducted in Spring 2024. The acquired knowledge is applied to the first part of my project, the vernacular design and crafting of Sniatyn-based garments,⁴ including an embroidered blouse (*vyshyvanka*), wrap skirt (*opynka*), and beaded necklace (*silyanka*). The second part, performative writing, documents my interpretive performance autoethnography, such as the crafting process, and makes the resulting reflective essays available for public access online (<https://vyshyvannya.art/>).

⁴ While “folk dress” tends to be the more common word here, for the purposes of this project, the term “vernacular” is used to describe non-institutional knowledge and practices (e.g., vernacular crafting, garments, clothing, dress, etc.). I draw on vernacular studies and works like Reitan (2017) to inform my own utilization of this term. Please refer to Chapter 1 for further information.

This corresponding written component is divided into three chapters, which document my project in successive steps. The first chapter presents my theoretical foundations, methodology, and structure of my project. Preparation for this project is detailed in the second chapter, including my research, fieldwork in Ukraine, structure of the digital surveys, collection of survey responses, and formation of the website. This acquired knowledge is then applied in the third chapter, wherein I recount my processes of vernacular crafting and reflective writing, analyze the survey responses, and assess the final outcome within the context of my theory. Finally, my conclusion reflects on this project's significance and offers suggestions as to how it may be utilized going forward, especially for those interested in cultural maintenance and decolonization within and beyond academia. Three annexes are included, which outline my project's timeline, list information of the budget used for the crafting of the garments, and provide the complete survey responses and follow-up discussion.

Chapter 1. Starting Points

1.1. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundation upon which my model is built is inherently holistic and cyclical, wherein each core concept must be considered as they work repetitively in tandem to give researchers the toolkit to approach a given community. It is important to note upfront that I define community by Benedict Anderson's (2016 [1983]) concept of imagined communities: a community is socially constructed by people who perceive themselves and specified others to be a part of the group, including the dead and unborn (p. 22).

As previously mentioned, this project utilizes the vernacular to define textile crafting. The vernacular is understood here through Ülo Valk's (2022: 8-9) work: it refers to the expressions of knowledge, practices, beliefs, etc. that are resilient to institutional control, but remain in dialogue with the institution regardless. Moreover, the vernacular is constantly adapting to its wider contexts and to the expressions of its individual members. It is used here precisely because the vernacular cannot be institutionally controlled and works for the empowerment of the public (Goldstein 2015; Valk 2022), which complements this project's consideration toward academic decolonization. Additionally, the vernacular has such a broad definition that it seems well-poised to challenge historical connotations carried with the word "folk," such as the expectation of folk dress to be authentic, as briefly discussed in Chapter 3.

For the purposes of this project, I will invoke previous intersections between vernacular knowledge and textile crafting. It is useful to define crafting here as "a quality or state of being; an almost indefinable knowledge or wisdom" (Langlands 2017: 17), connecting crafting with a community's vernacular knowledge and sense of self. More specifically, vernacular crafting is a voluntary and informal practice that helps develop communal identity, ways of life, and

understanding through “reach[ing] cumulative bodies of knowledge, developed, changed, and renewed over generations” (Gradén 2021: 2). Vernacular design has also been applied to textiles and works in tandem with vernacular crafting (Reitan 2007). Finally, the culmination of vernacular design and crafting is referred to here as vernacular clothing or garments (Reitan 2017), depending on the context. I will note here that I switch to “folk” within the survey questions and reflective essays; while the semantics of “vernacular” are important for the academic understanding of my theory, the fact remains that “folk” is the older and more readily recognized term for the public and in some other languages (Valk 2023: 4).

At this juncture, the vernacular may be placed in dialogue with cultural memory and identity. Cultural memory here refers to a form of collective memory that guides members’ perceptions of experiences and their interactions within society (Assmann and Czaplicka 1995: 126). I will note here that, while this section focuses on communal identity, individuals hold a complex role in this system, both forming their own identities during interactions with collective memory and taking up actor roles in affecting collective memory and identity (Anders et al. 2020: xx-xxxv; Brown et al. 2012: 3). It has been previously posited that identity may be solidified and maintained when a community invokes its cultural memory to recognize its own self-image (Assmann and Czaplicka 1995; Brown et al. 2012). More simply, the community recognizes itself through the shared experiences and perspectives that bind members together, thus leading to a communal identity. Within this framework, vernacular knowledge and practices are the recognizable manifestations of a community’s cultural memory and are responsible for forming the community’s self-image (Assmann and Czaplicka 1995).

Christoffer Kølvråa (2015) outlines a more accessible framework for finding the nexus of the vernacular, cultural memory, and identity formation: narrative. As time passes, significant shared experiences are collected and form a unique narrative, which help form the initial communal identity. Methods must then be developed to transmit this narrative over many generations. Cultural memory answers through vernacular knowledge and practices, as they transmit collective experiences, perspectives, and meanings on behalf of the community. The vernacular is then renegotiated over time to reflect new circumstances and understandings of the narrative (Assmann and Czaplicka 1995: 130). Cultural memory may then act twofold as a catalyst for communal identity: (1) it holds the unique values and knowledge from which a community derives its recognized self-image and identity, and (2) it sustains the community’s

narrative and corresponding identity. In both cases, the vernacular is called upon as a mnemonic practice (Rigney 2016: 68) to uphold and transmit communal identity. In the context of cultural memory, the vernacular is most recognizable in the forms of material culture and vernacular ritual (Assmann and Czaplicka 1995), both of which may be considered for vernacular crafting.

First, people and material culture work in tandem to transmit knowledge and identity. Community members craft items with significance pertaining to their lives and perceptions, which subsequent generations may then discard, keep uncritically, or adapt to remain relevant across time. Material culture may be continuously imbued with significance and relevancy and can thereby carry the community's self-image (Steiner 2016: 91-92). It is worth noting that crafted items themselves may also play a role by breaking the Western notion of the separation between humans and the physical world (Jones 2007: 2-13). Material culture has the potential to act as an agent that sensually communicates with humans, enabling interaction with the past during which the item was crafted and has survived. By communicating the past, material culture is transformed into a mnemonic device through which an individual can understand their place in narratives, their own personhood and life history, and their relation to others (Jones 2007). Crafted items, such as handcrafted textiles, may then contribute to both individual and communal identity by helping to maintain both self-image and narratives.

I additionally propose here that vernacular crafting has the potential to be ritualized. Ritualization may be defined as “a particular cultural strategy of differentiation linked to particular social effects and rooted in a distinctive interplay of a socialized body and the environment it structures” (Bell 2009 [1992]: 7-8). Ritualized action functions “by focusing agencies or forces of another sort upon whatever is to be affected” (Rappaport 1999: 48). Crafting may already be linked to some of these criteria; crafting establishes human-environment interaction (Ingold 2010), while sociality is required for enskilment and transmission of crafting skills and behaviors (Gowlland 2018). Moreover, crafters utilize their work to direct their perceptions and messages to the wider community to enact social effects (Sennett 2008). Ukrainian textile crafting, especially embroidering, satisfies Roy Rappaport's (1999) requirement through its context in vernacular religion (Primiano 1995). Defined as “prayer without words,” Ukrainian embroidering involves the crafter focusing her best-intentioned thoughts and wishes while crafting so as to manifest a safe and happy future for the wearer (Bohodysta 2014; Nizhenets' 2014). It is only through these vernacular practices that

embroidery can function as a talisman, safeguarding the wearer from evil forces and spirits, and play a role in other vernacular beliefs, such as regarding the afterlife (Bohodysta 2014). As a part of the vernacular religion, these practices may naturally change over time (Primiano 1995: 51), though textile crafting in the Ukrainian context has continued to be ritualized. As such, vernacular crafting in certain communities is a ritualized action that carries communal perceptions of the world and associated narratives that reinforce cultural memory.⁵

At this point, I would like to return to my aforementioned preliminary model and its potential usage. This model began with my initial rejection of the pervasive linguistic nationalism in Western academia (Fleming and Ansaldo 2019; Patten 2006). I repeatedly found this notion in identity theory, including in my own sources: “Languages thus appear rooted beyond almost anything else in contemporary societies. At the same time, nothing connects us affectively to the dead more than language” (Anderson 2016 [1983]: 140). Considering the reality of vernacular crafting’s and undoubtedly many other practices’ role in many communities, the repeated undervaluation of mnemonic practices beyond language in identity theory was troubling, especially due to its potentially harmful impact on post/colonial communities. After all, when the Kamassian language expired in 1989, the entire ethnic group was struck from the list of surviving Finno-Ugric communities without any further inquiry (Simoncsics 1998). Linguistic nationalism, moreover, defies the attitudes of many post/colonial communities; the Livonian community, for example, has made strides in revitalizing its vernacular practices and identity despite the loss of linguistic fluency (Ozoliņa et al. 2022). In such cases, the community survives through other pillars while the language is dormant.

If linguistic nationalism is not equipped to recognize post/colonial communities, then what framework could enable this? Postcolonial theory provides two paths toward an answer. First, when a community restores its conscious identity, it is obliged to rely on its adaptable vernacular knowledge and practices, from pottery to music to folklore (Fanon 2005 [1961]: 193). That is, a holistic approach is a strong path for developing communities, wherein each vernacular practice has the potential to support communal identity solidification and maintenance. Second, self-recognition is a powerful route for post/colonial communities as they

⁵ While under-utilized in this project, Ann-Elise Lewallen’s (2018) work with Ainu textile crafters in creating their identity in the settler colonial context is a phenomenal additional insight here. I would argue that vernacular crafting is ritualized in this context as well by enacting resistance and self-recognition against colonizing forces by the practice of creation and contemporary adaptation of heritage.

work to recognize, determine, and develop their cultural memory and identity on their own terms (Coulthard 2014: 131-149). A given community may therefore find the tools to define its own identity and maintain it through a variety of available and desirable vernacular practices. While this approach may not prioritize language, especially within the context of settler colonialism, the community can focus on utilizing other practices to define their identity and find a potential method for communal survival in the given situation (Krmpotich 2010). Such an approach may be an optimistic way forward considering the continued threats towards Indigenous languages today, including globalism and imperialism (Phillipson 2018).

In recognition of post/colonial realities, I propose here that vernacular practices, in their various forms, are initially equal. A given community may invoke and imbue certain practices with a significance that transforms them into mnemonic practices for the purposes of solidifying and maintaining communal identity. Over time, these vernacular practices will naturally be renegotiated for the sake of the broader self-image and narrative of the community. While textile crafting is utilized here as an example of only one such pillar, this model is meant to be applicable more broadly to any invoked mnemonic practice and its community. It thereby enables researchers to recognize significant practices that may have previously been undervalued within academia and, in turn, to provide a means of fully recognizing communities that have adapted to survive through a variety of different mnemonic practices.

1.2. Methodology

To work in conjunction with my theoretical foundations, I required a methodology that fit several defining requirements: it should allow subjectivity to correspond with the personal nature of identity; it should be flexible to allow for crafting as a method; and it should ideally be rooted in the narrative turn to follow the logic of my theoretical concepts. To this end, I decided to utilize Norman Denzin's (2013) interpretive performance autoethnography for this project. In addition to Denzin, I relied on Jasmine Shadrack's (2021) work with interpretive performance autoethnography to inform my own research.

Autoethnography was preferable here for the purpose of reconstructing and analyzing identity solidification at a practical level, the individual. Within the context of this project, autoethnography is "the process of identifying subjective experiences and placing them within

the socio-cultural frames of the time in order to expose the truth of those experiences” (Shadrack 2021: 2). Autoethnography provided a framework in which to conduct reflexivity, wherein I negotiated between my own experiences and subjectivity, my interaction with the Ukrainian context, and the integrity of my research (Huang 2015). In order to fully act on this reflexivity, other facets of my identity, experiences, and narratives that intersect with my Ukrainian identity have been considered within my reflections (Denzin 2013: 39).

Interpretive performance autoethnography uses several stages to find how people assign significance to their lives and act on the perceived significance (Denzin 2013: xi). First, the subject experiences a series of life-defining moments. Second, the subject interrogates the factors, such as historical or cultural context, that led to these moments and their significance. Third, the subject interprets this collected analysis and forms a narrative and conclusion for these defining moments. Finally, the subject, having gained realizations and a solidified sense of self, now responds to this narrative with performance, which may be expressed through any chosen medium important for the subject’s self-expression. Performance, in this case, refers to the subject performing cultural expressions, either alone or with others, which is then analyzed within the autoethnographical context (Shadrack 2021: 13). Performance concludes the narrative on the subject’s terms; that is, the subject disrupts their daily life to perform and conclude their realizations regarding their own narrative (Shadrack 2021: 16). By encouraging the contextualization of my own turning points, self-defined narratives, and inherited crafting practice (performance), interpretive performance autoethnography has structured my method of actively solidifying my Ukrainian identity.

Further methods were applied to my interpretive performance autoethnography in order to inform my integration of prior and recent defining moments within their sociocultural or historical contexts as well as aid me in my selected performance of vernacular crafting. At the forefront of this was research regarding memory studies, heritage studies, post/colonial theory, Western Ukrainian history and material culture, and my own family history. The second method was the aforementioned fieldwork trip to Western Ukraine in July 2023, during which I examined regional textile collections, spoke with local experts, and rekindled my family’s connections. Third, I conducted digital surveys with Ukrainian embroiders, whose viewpoints contributed to linking textile crafting and identity while inspiring my own continued process.

While textile crafting is the relevant performance in this project, I also undertook performative writing so as to communicate my process to others (Pelias 2018). This entailed subjectively writing about my defining moments, interpretations, and crafting process and explaining the associated significance. Both Shadrack (2021) and Billy Ehn (2011) were referred to as guides in writing my autoethnography in a personally meaningful yet externally accessible way. These informal reflections, in both text and photo formats, have been collected and organized on this project's website. The result is documentation that allows others to follow the project's development and possibly gain relevant inspiration, while also providing me the space to reflect on this process and its personal significance through performative writing.

1.3. Defining the Project

After the above considerations, I had firmly decided on two parts for this project, beyond the written component: crafting Sniatyn-based vernacular clothing and reflective writing entries that would be posted on a website. While producing these two parts will be detailed in chapters two and three, for now, I will briefly explain why I designed my project in this exact manner.

As mentioned before, this project builds upon the individual to reflect on collective memory and identity. This is done in the interest of demonstrating my theoretical model in detail within the time and resource constraints of a master's program. Interpretive performance autoethnography then provides the framework for my own reflexive work as the researcher. The resulting project focuses on Ukrainian textile crafting, a deeply personal subject for me. Exploring my maternal family's Sniatyn heritage offered me access to a particular vernacular knowledge and related self-reflection for the project. I was already building a familial narrative of textile crafters consisting of my mother and grandmother's devotion to needlework and their advocacy for its continuance as an inherited skill, art, and use in mental well-being. Much of my life has been bound to textiles, and even in this academic pursuit, I felt pulled towards needlework once again. It is this narrative that persuaded me to pursue Sniatyn-based vernacular crafting as a way to explore the nexus between crafting and my Ukrainian identity.

Further research over the past several years has reaffirmed that vernacular Ukrainian textile crafting would provide a stable foundation to test my theoretical model. There is, after all, a growing body of scholarly works linking textiles and Ukrainian identity (Bohodysta 2014;

Melnyk 2019; Greet 2024). Moreover, I had personally observed the lasting significance of Ukrainian textiles; I had seen the prevalence of embroidered textiles at Ukrainian gatherings in the United States and Estonia from 2017 through 2024, and witnessed the popularity of the *vyshyvanka* in the streets of Lviv in July 2023. This constant presence of Ukrainian textiles is undoubtedly upheld through the efforts of many individuals and their familial or social narratives. That is, behind the enskilment and experience of the individual was a deeper network with the imagined community, strengthening the tie between vernacular crafting and identity. Above all, Ukrainian identity itself has proven to be a strong case study for this project due to Ukraine being a post/colonial state that has continuously practiced self-recognition. Ukrainian textile crafting thus offered a strong path forward for applying my theory.

Accompanying the crafting process is the performative writing that culminates in my interpretations and conclusions between vernacular crafting and Ukrainian identity. Performative writing translates my needlework performance and reflections for external readers. The resulting essay collection is then presented in an order that is negotiated between my understanding of the methodology and the external accessibility of the work. The subject matter is relatively expansive, covering my relevant family history, intersections between different facets of my identity, and the crafting process itself. Reflective writing serves as a means of interpreting and expressing the significance of vernacular crafting in relation to my Ukrainian identity. The accompanying website is then intended to lead readers through the narrative of my project: my defining moments, interpretations, crafting process as a mnemonic practice, and active effort towards strengthening my Ukrainian identity.

These resulting essays are written informally due to the subjective nature of the project. I have two intended audiences for my essays: (1) researchers who are interested in identity, cultural memory, post/colonial theory, diaspora, and related concepts as well as the practical application of my theoretical model, and (2) those outside academia who are interested in Ukrainian crafting and garments or who are members of subaltern communities and are looking for routes toward self-recognition. As such, care has been taken to explain theoretical concepts in layman terms for passersby and to not overwhelm scholars looking for the reflective portions with crafting instructions. Together, my essays aim to explore a detailed application of my theoretical model. These two components, vernacular textile crafting and performative writing, will be the subject of the following two chapters.

Chapter 2. Preparation for the Project

2.1. Planning and Research

To effectively demonstrate my theoretical model, I planned to work on a tangible project from the outset. I chose a topic that was already familiar to me, but which has been largely underrepresented in traditional academia: the skill and act of textile crafting. My goal has been to actively experiment and reflect upon the theory that I already pieced together in the first chapter and enhance it even further. From there, it was an easy decision to embark on a project that would enable me to enable me to consciously solidify my Ukrainian identity.

Before starting this project, I had a fair understanding of vernacular Ukrainian textile crafting. I had already spent several years researching Sniatyn textiles. I also started the project with the majority of the skills that I would need to accomplish this project, namely sewing and embroidering, as I had started learning them from my mother in my childhood. I knew I wanted to try my hand at making the most well-known Ukrainian textile, the *vyshyvanka*. I then decided to expand to a full ensemble so that I could gain further knowledge and experience with other components beyond the *vyshyvanka*. Of course, more research and decisions would need to be completed before successfully crafting Sniatyn-based vernacular garments.

Besides the academic research required to form my theoretical model, as outlined in Annex 1, I also consulted several sources for approaching the crafting process. My initial research on Ukrainian textiles, especially within the Ivano-Frankivsk oblast, primarily came from various books on Ukrainian historical dress (Bohodysta 2014; Kmit et al. 1979; Nikolayeva 1996; Shandro 2022; Sviontek 2018). These sources, however, offer little information on Sniatyn specifically, at which point I consulted Roman Kozakand's blog on historical dress. Kozakand previously wrote two blog posts about Sniatyn's embroidery and has provided numerous photos of the garments (Kozakand 2013a; Kozakand 2013b). After having

gained a basic understanding of the Sniatyn vernacular garments from Kozakand and identifying remaining gaps in my knowledge, I was ready to conduct fieldwork.

2.2. Fieldwork

As mentioned, preparation for this project also entailed conducting fieldwork in early-mid July 2023 in Western Ukraine, primarily in the Ivano-Frankivsk oblast. My primary goal for this fieldwork was to learn more about the regional textiles by touring museums and speaking with cultural experts. Before traveling, I contacted Vita Boichuk, head of department and tour guide at the Yosafat Kobrynskyi National Museum of Hutsulshchyna and Pokuttia Folk Art in Kolomyia. Boichuk guided me through the National Museum and coordinated my additional contacts in Sniatyn and Kosiv. My first new contact was Ivanna Stef'yuk, the ethnographic curator of the Marko Cheremshyna Literature and Memory Museum in Sniatyn, who introduced me to Sniatyn's ethnographic collection and answered my questions about Sniatyn's culture and textiles. I made additional, unguided visits to Kolomyia's Pysanka Museum and the Museum of Regional Ethnography in nearby Chernivtsi to further add to my examination of textiles around the Sniatyn region. During museum visits, I was able to take several photographs of the displayed textiles for later pattern and technique reference.

My second contact through Boichuk was Bohdana Drohomirets'ka, a weaver in Kosiv. During my time with Drohomirets'ka, we secured a guided tour of Kosiv's Museum of Hutsul Folk Art and Way of Life. She also guided me through the Gushka traditional weaving studio, where she works, and the Kosiv Institute of Applied and Decorative Arts of Lviv National Academy of Arts, where she has studied. During my visit to the institute, I had the opportunity to speak with master embroiderer Nina Stef'yuk about local embroidery patterns, view several textile books that are difficult to access outside of Ukraine, tour the students' embroidery and weaving studios, and see the historical textile reconstructions and vernacular designs of the institute's students. In addition to these visits, Drohomirets'ka taught me how to weave a Kosiv-based pattern on her tapestry loom, introduced me to popular places and common cuisine in Kosiv, and spoke extensively with me about her life as a weaver and as a Ukrainian during wartime. I cannot emphasize enough how insightful Drohomirets'ka was regarding life, culture, and the surviving weaving tradition in the Ivano-Frankivsk oblast.

While ethnographic museum visits were my top priority during my fieldwork, my visit to my family's homeland also contributed to my autoethnographic process. A fuller understanding of Western Ukraine was gained through visits to Lviv, Chernivtsi, and Ivano-Frankivsk, where I was able to visit the pre-Second World War address of my family. As to be expected, my most personally significant experience happened during my visit to Sniatyn. After meeting with Ivanna Stef'yuk and touring the museum's ethnographic collection, the director of the museum, Petro Kireev, showed me Sniatyn's historic sites, told me stories about his time living there, and did everything in his power to introduce me to my remaining relatives in Sniatyn. It is thanks to Kireev's kindness that the crowning achievement of this project has been my rekindling of family ties that had been severed since the mid-20th century.

The benefits of my fieldwork in Western Ukraine were thus twofold. The first is that I gathered the necessary knowledge and patterns that I needed to design Sniatyn-based garments. In this sense, my major goal for this fieldwork was fulfilled, and I was able to start crafting upon my return. Yet the contribution it made to my autoethnographic process was beyond anything I had hoped. Since this fieldwork trip, two facts have particularly stayed with me: I was the first to visit Ukraine since my family was forced to emigrate, and I was connected with my Ukrainian relatives just by touring the ethnographic exhibit. Both realizations are part of a process that I had hitherto failed to acknowledge but, as explained in the third chapter, would soon accompany my entire crafting process: the mending of intergenerational trauma.

2.3. *Surveys*

I began working on my final part of this project, collecting surveys, in March 2024. By then, I had had adequate time to form my own thoughts regarding the crafting process within the autoethnographical context, without direct external influence. I felt it was necessary to include a few reflections from other vernacular embroiderers so as to demonstrate that this specific community's experiences and perspectives may converge or diverge at different points. In other words, I wanted to emphasize that my narrative is not the only one and to give space to possible disagreements. To acknowledge this was important for the sake of this project's transparency. Both Ukrainian nationals and diaspora members were included to ensure a variety

of viewpoints. My surveys were targeted at amateur embroiderers so as to gain the perspective of contemporary vernacular embroiderers in particular.

My surveys were conducted via Google Forms. Two versions of the survey were written, one in English and another in Ukrainian, which respondents could choose between. These surveys did not ask for identifying information, except for one optional question requesting respondents' contact information for possible follow-up questions. Respondents were obliged to consent to their responses being incorporated into this project. My questions were qualitative, prompting respondents to answer in paragraph format. The survey asked for general information about the respondents' family history, how they learned to embroider, how they chose embroidery patterns, and whether they felt that embroidering was significant to Ukrainian identity and culture. The surveys are nearly identical, though the English-language survey had an additional question regarding the retention and loss of other Ukrainian cultural aspects within diasporic families to see how embroidery fared in comparison to, say, language or cuisine. Care was taken to ensure that these questions were not leading but still clear enough for respondents to answer questions relevant to my project.

A final consideration during this initial process was to request responses from outside of my existing contact network. This was to ensure that respondents felt comfortable disagreeing with my claims about embroidering and to collect responses from vernacular embroiderers outside of the related academic fields. As such, I posted a call for respondents through the Reddit forum [r/ukraina](#), which focuses on Ukrainian culture. This forum was chosen due to their higher chance of drawing Ukrainian respondents specifically, whereas needlework-focused forums tend to have a lower Ukrainian engagement and a higher risk of irrelevant responses. The exception to this is one respondent who I reached out to through a Ukrainian diaspora Facebook group, as he had posted photos of his progress learning Ukrainian embroidery and was willing to participate in my project. In total, I received four responses for the English-language survey and another seven for the Ukrainian-language survey. The latter responses were translated into English by a professional translator, Yelyzaveta Farafonova.

After reviewing the responses, I tried reaching out to three of the English-language respondents to ask follow-up questions. These respondents were chosen due to a diverse range of opinions regarding the significance of embroidery patterns versus the act of embroidering compared to their Ukrainian-language counterparts. Communication was handled over email to

allow respondents ample time to answer. Follow-up questions focused on Ukrainian identity, embroidering, and preference of embroidery patterns. Of the three, Respondent B answered my email and kindly provided further clarification to her initial survey response. The survey responses and Respondent B's answers have been listed in Annex 3 and on the website. These will be further discussed in Chapter 3.

2.4. Building the Website

The last preparatory step I undertook for this project was to build a website for my self-reflections. I considered various ways of building and hosting this personal and education-oriented website appropriately. To this end, I prioritized two concerns: maintaining control over my data and blocking any chances for it to be monetized by a third party. This meant that popular options, such as WordPress,⁶ would not meet my standards. After researching different solutions, assessing my own coding skills, and consulting with more technologically adept colleagues, I opted to use Hugo, an open-source static site generator, and Neocities, an open-source hosting service, to build my website.⁷ With this choice made, I felt secure moving forward with posting my process online.

The exact structure of my website was my next concern. This website was to serve as both a journal and an introduction for people interested in Ukrainian vernacular dress, so I prioritized features like easy navigation and organization of pages and allowance for both text and photos. I settled on the theme Relearn, which offers an easily navigable organization and an uncluttered layout, and had a light/dark accessibility feature added. I began building the website in November 2023 and deployed it through Neocities for public access. The website is live at vyshyvannya.art (<https://vyshyvannya.art/>),⁸ thus allowing full access to the process of my project and autoethnography.

⁶ This decision was based on WordPress's Terms of Service: <https://wordpress.com/tos/>.

⁷ These services may be found at <https://gohugo.io/> and <https://neocities.org/> at the time of writing.

⁸ *Vyshyvannya* (вишивання) is the noun form of the word “embroidery” or “needlework” in Ukrainian.

Chapter 3. Execution of the Project

3.1. Preliminary Reflections

After the preparatory steps, I could begin to execute the project. This portion of the project consisted of utilizing the research, fieldwork, and surveys that I had conducted by performing the textile crafting, analyzing the responses received from Ukrainian crafters, and documenting my interpretive and crafting processes for the website. At this juncture, I will acknowledge that past works on vernacular dress have often focused on the importance of the clothing itself, its functions within society, and the symbology of the patterns embroidered (e.g., Bogatyrev 1971). However, my core argument remains that vernacular crafting in particular can play a vital role for the solidification and maintenance of identity.

With that said, I will address a point of contention that was brought to my attention during this project: the claim that my dress can only be authentic if it is historically accurate. While authenticity may be positively defined as negotiations between the folk (Jones 2010), I argue that the requirement of authenticity should be disregarded in this project because of its colonialist connotation. Post/colonial communities change vernacular practices in reaction to the colonization's societal changes. Academia may try to preserve the historical form in the name of authenticity, but vernacular practices must change if the culture hopes to support the community's self-recognition (Fanon 2005 [1961]: 242-246). Moreover, to demand authenticity may even cause the "denigration of cultural expressions that are deemed not authentic enough" (Theodossopoulos 2013: 355). Ukraine, which has a long history of colonization, has naturally changed its vernacular practices over time so that it could survive oppressive conditions. In this case, holding Ukrainian crafters to authenticity would undermine their knowledge and decisions and cause dissonance with Ukraine's post/colonial reality, so I do not use authenticity here.

Despite this refutation, there are some theories regarding authenticity that are insightful. A prime example here discusses how some individuals return to historical form “to work out genuine or truthful relationships between objects, people and places” (Jones 2010: 198). Members of the diaspora, for example, may return to the historical form in order to learn more about the wider culture and to solidify their identity. These individuals may feel a need to establish a relationship with the craft, its origins, and the crafters in their ancestry, which has been intensified by their “dislocation and displacement” from the original homeland (Jones 2010: 198). Returning to historical form may then positively help these individuals negotiate their relationship with the imagined community, culture, and own identity.

I end here by echoing the idea that vernacular practices change in reaction to societal conditions and adding that progress over time also enacts change. In some communities, adapting heritage craft to the modern day even acts as a form of empowerment (Lewallen 2018; Reitan 2007), which may well hold true among Ukrainian crafters. Ukrainian crafters generally do not want their crafts to remain stagnant, shackled to one method or aesthetic. Cultural value is added when *Petrykivka* painters use historical skills to create new patterns (Voloshyna 2019) and when *sopilka* carvers enhance the historical design and crafting method (UATV 2018). The same has long been true for Ukrainian textile crafting, wherein dressmakers are encouraged to personalize patterns for the wearer, and the use of modern embroidery patterns is perceived as the natural continuation of the historical practice (Bohodysta 2014). Development and creativity are a celebrated part of Ukrainian intangible heritage and are recognized as necessities for the sustainability of vernacular practices throughout societal changes. I advise readers to keep this Ukrainian context in mind while reading the next two sections.

3.2. *Vernacular Crafting*

At this stage, we may now delve into the performance part of my interpretive performance autoethnography, the crafting my Sniatyn-based garments, which began in the summer of 2023 and concluded in the spring of 2024. Fieldwork in the Ivano-Frankivsk oblast and additional research had prepared me for designing and crafting. This subsection will begin by visiting the components that I crafted, which include a woolen wrap skirt (*opynka*), an embroidered linen blouse (*vyshyvanka*), and a beaded necklace (*silyanka*). I will also address

the accessories that I obtained from other Ukrainian crafters to complete my garments. Finally, I will reflect on my reasons and the benefits of crafting a Sniatyn-based dress for this project.

The design used for my dress is based on the late 19th and 20th-century dresses exhibited in the M. Cheremshyna Literature and Memory Museum in Sniatyn and posted on Roman K.'s website (Kozakand 2013b). Due to the complicated history of Ukrainian ethnography, this is the only historical period that Ukrainian crafters can reliably turn to for reference (Nikolayeva 1996). I reiterate here that my dress is not a historical reproduction, but the result of my following the vernacular knowledge of Sniatyn. As such, I have designed it with contemporary Sniatyn trends in mind. Moreover, since this vernacular crafting demands that each design is unique to the wearer (Bohodysta 2014: 169), I have drawn on and personalized the historical patterns in order to make a dress that identifies me as the wearer specifically.

The first item that I started crafting was the *opynka*, the wrap skirt. In technical terms, it was the easiest component to assemble. However, research needed to craft the *opynka* was extensive, as documentation is not comprehensive, and they are rarely worn today. The local weaving tradition died out decades ago, meaning that the specific fabric meant for the historical *opynka* is no longer produced. Instead of historical accuracy, I was relegated to follow the same path as many other contemporary Sniatyn-based crafters: adapt (e.g., Kozakand 2013a). My own *opynka* is made from a thinner woolen fabric obtained in Estonia that matches the dark red color of the historical fabric and designed to mimic the drape of the *opynka*. In the process of research and crafting, I reached the following conclusion: in light of the eradicated weaving tradition, it is the homage that contemporary Sniatyn crafters pay to this heritage through creative adaptations that should be valued in my own vernacular dress.

Much more time and effort was spent on crafting the *vyshyvanka*, the linen blouse decorated with embroidery. I finalized the embroidery patterns for my *vyshyvanka* in August 2023, after examining my photos from the literary museum and utilizing Sniatyn vernacular knowledge to design my own unique patterns. Throughout the process, I found that crafting the *vyshyvanka* was the most significant aspect for me. For reference, embroidering alone took approximately 200 hours. This time required dedication to the attached intangible heritage, such as approaching my embroidery with good intentions for the future, and allowed for plenty of self-reflection. Practicing the associated vernacular knowledge and act of embroidering connected me with the imagined Ukrainian community, securing my place in carrying on this

centuries-old ritual of self-expression among Ukrainian women. Embroidering thus provided a tangible and intangible space for me to directly participate in observing and crafting a part of my Sniatyn heritage and, thereby, strengthening my Ukrainian identity.

An unexpected part of the dress that I crafted was the *silyanka*, the beaded necklace. Despite their popularity in Western Ukraine, the beaded necklaces are remembered sporadically in the diaspora. During my fieldwork, I was able to examine the necklaces from Sniatyn on display and meet women who craft these necklaces, thus informing me of their significance within the vernacular dress. After researching Ukrainian bead threading and bead weaving, I acquired the necessary tools and learned to bead weave from Ukrainian crafters on YouTube. My resulting *silyanka* is based on one in the Sniatyn museum, with some adjustments to account for my limited supplies. This enskilment has contributed to my growth as a Ukrainian vernacular crafter, as I broaden my experience with different crafts from Ukrainian cultural heritage. Moreover, crafting the Sniatyn-based *silyanka* has contributed to strengthening my personal connection, both intangibly and tangibly, to my family's home region.

The final component of my dress consists of the accessories that I did not have the skills, time, and resources to craft myself. These components include coral necklaces, a woven belt, and a crown, all of which complete the Sniatyn vernacular dress. The incorporation of these accessories led to additional considerations. First, these accessories originate from Western Ukraine so as to follow the contemporary practice of supporting other Ukrainian crafters in my own crafting process. Second, this project was limited to my own student budget, so each purchase was carefully evaluated before purchase, as explained in Appendix 2. Finally, I want to reaffirm the value here of choosing and collecting cultural items for oneself, with two particular approaches being particularly relevant: (1) objects are one way that people define and narrate their life histories, and (2) obtaining cultural objects is a means of integrating into a given culture (Löfgren 2012). So, while this project emphasizes the significance of crafting, these collected cultural items also add value to my dress.

During my crafting process, I began reflecting on my motivation for crafting this dress. After speaking with Respondent B, I reached a pivotal realization: I felt a similar sense of Ukrainianness when embroidering both modern and historical patterns. So, why did I find it important to turn to the patterns of my foremothers? Echoing my preliminary reflections, some

individuals, such as diaspora members, feel the necessity to return to the historical craft to solidify their ties and identity (Jones 2010: 198). This helped me articulate my own reason.

Choosing to craft a Sniatyn-based dress provided a visceral way to process my family's intergenerational trauma. To be brief, my grandmother never returned to Ukraine after violently losing half of her immediate family and being deported during the Second World War. In the aftermath, she was secretive about her Ukrainian heritage, a reaction to the shame and trauma that comes with settler colonialism. For her descendants, this meant a painful break in our identity. This project is one way to help me learn more about Ukrainian, and especially Sniatyn, culture. But even more importantly, it has helped me address the lingering intergenerational trauma by symbolically returning me to a historical point that both my foremothers and I could recognize in Ukrainian culture. My inherited crafting skills, particularly embroidery, have enabled me to find some of the closure that my family has needed since losing our homeland and, thereby, to reclaim my own Ukrainian heritage and identity more effectively.

3.3. Analysis of Survey Responses

Insights gained throughout the crafting process were further enhanced by the 11 survey responses. The respondents are quite diverse, including five members of the diaspora (Respondents A, B, C, D, 3), and a range of Ukrainian regions are represented, spanning across Western, Central, and Eastern Ukraine. I will note here that only one respondent (C) identified as male. Key ideas were often similar across the different groups, with no discernible differences. Annex 3 lists each survey response for reference.

Among respondents, several similarities were expressed regarding embroidering's role in Ukrainian culture. First, several respondents mention learning embroidery from their family, with six Ukrainian speakers also identifying school and friends as further sources of transmission. Only one respondent (C) is an autodidact, possibly due to embroidering being a female-dominated craft in the Ukrainian context. Descendants in the diaspora noted textile craft as one of many Ukrainian practices that they learn within the family, including cuisine and dance, with the caveat that the language is not retained for very long. The majority of respondents continue to observe other practices, such as holidays and *pysanky* writing, thus placing embroidering as one of many important practices among Ukrainians.

In regard to embroidering itself, there is universal agreement that it is important to Ukrainian culture and nearly universal agreement that it contributes to Ukrainian identity. Several reasons were also identified for embroidering's importance: it is a calming hobby (6, 7), important historical art form (B, 2, 7), part of the holistic cultural context (A, C), way of connecting to ancestors and heritage specifically (B), method of addressing intergenerational trauma (D), and part of the feminine identity (B, 3). Most respondents source their patterns from the Internet, with several mentioning that they use modern patterns (B, 3, 5, 6). A few respondents explain that they choose patterns according to their aesthetic taste (B, C, 5, 6), while others participate in the personalization (7) and creation (D) of patterns. As Respondent B explained in our follow-up discussion, modern patterns may better suite the preferences and skill levels of contemporary embroiderers, but this choice does not hinder the vernacular practice's ability to connect embroiderers with the Ukrainian community, heritage, and identity.

The survey's final question allowed embroiderers to express their own thoughts. These comments included explanations that embroidery skills should be taught more in schools (3) and that historical patterns may still be valuable alongside crafting (D). It is noteworthy that Respondent 4 expressed mourning for a decline in vernacular crafting due to Russian colonization, while Respondent C, who became interested in his Ukrainian heritage during Euromaidan, felt that it is important to maintain Ukrainian culture in the context of colonization.

Overall, the respondents were immensely helpful in bringing other Ukrainian perspectives and knowledge to this project. For example, diaspora respondents confirmed that vernacular crafting may be an important reference point for reconnecting to Ukrainian heritage and plays a role in addressing intergenerational trauma. Responses from Respondents B, 4, and others have conveyed that vernacular crafting itself is a significant part of upholding Ukrainian heritage, community, and identity, even when decoupled from historical patterns. As mentioned in the above section, Respondent B's explanation that vernacular crafting itself is a strong mnemonic practice has helped me contextualize my own place as a contemporary Ukrainian embroiderer. It is additionally worth mentioning that a part of this process is the conscious knowledge that handcrafted items hold their own significance and place within the community, as expressed by Respondents 1 and 7. Finally, a measure of optimism is due here, as all respondents have assigned significance to embroidering's place in the Ukrainian context.

3.4. Performative Writing

To document my interpretive and crafting processes for my autoethnography, I wrote several reflective essays for the aforementioned website. My performative writing began after finishing my *opynka* and continued throughout the remainder of the project. The essays have been organized into three sections: (1) an introduction to my website structure and resources; (2) reflections on my interrogation of turning points that led me to this project and other intersections in my identity; and (3) recollections of my crafting process, with each essay introducing the individual components of my dress, how I crafted or collected them, and my final reflections. These three sections are intended to both effectively lead readers through the website and to organize my thoughts along the autoethnographic process. At the completion of this project, the website consists of 16 essays and approximately 58,000 words.

During the writing process, I faced two major challenges. The first was writing in an accessible manner for a broad audience, including those without textile crafting or academic backgrounds. Synthesizing complex concepts was an early obstacle, so I frequently referred to Ehn (2011) as a writing guide early on in the process. I also linked to further resources so as to not muddle my own writing with complex explanations. Secondly, I was eventually faced with removing a couple of my original essay ideas in order to avoid redundancies, such as one page that only served to repeat my methodology. So, my website structure was altered over time.

Of course, the benefits of performative writing outweighed the challenges. By then making my reflections accessible to others, I was encouraged to think through each step in my autoethnography and thoroughly tie them together. Echoing Shadrack (2021), actively writing out my autoethnographical reflections aided me in reflecting on my own place in this project. For example, writing essays on Sniatyn's vernacular crafting showed me how much I already understood about this process and instilled in me a sense of self-esteem in my role as a Ukrainian vernacular textile crafter that I had previously lacked. Ultimately, performative writing has allowed me the space to define and document this project, work through my own personal reflections and growth as a vernacular crafter, and convey this process to others who may be interested in heritage reclamation or Ukrainian textile crafting.

3.5. Assessment of Project

After executing this project, I am confident that it not only met my initial goals, but exceeded them. Vernacular crafting and performative writing have helped me reflect on the relationship with textile crafting and my Ukrainian identity, while analyzing the survey responses has furthered my understanding of the significance of vernacular textile crafting in the Ukrainian context. These realizations have enabled me to complete my interpretive performance autoethnography, thoroughly complete this project, and gain a better grasp on the personal implications of how vernacular knowledge, like crafting, solidifies identity.

Throughout these processes, it was clear that vernacular textile crafting plays a role in the cultural memory of the Ukrainian community, as skill transmission and practice continues within the community and connects crafters with their ancestors and living community. Furthermore, for some individuals in the diaspora, crafting plays a vital role in connecting them to their Ukrainian heritage and identity. For some families, such as my own, it even has a place in addressing and mending intergenerational trauma and reclaiming lost heritage and identity. It is, in other words, a potential entry point for Ukrainians to actively reclaim and participate in the community and, potentially, in the Ukrainian cultural memory.

Textile crafting thus works as a mnemonic practice for both previously integrated members of the community and for diaspora members looking to connect with their heritage. By playing a role in carrying Ukrainian cultural memory, vernacular crafting is currently a supporting pillar for Ukrainian identity. In turn, contemporary Ukrainian crafters who participate in and develop this practice aid in its survival, even in the face of ongoing Russian colonization, and may utilize it as one possible factor toward self-recognition (Fanon 2005 [1961]; Coulthard 2014). By participating in vernacular textile crafting and reflecting on its significance, Ukrainian crafters, such as myself, contribute to the cycle of maintaining Ukrainian culture and identity, with this method acting as one of many conduits to transmit Ukrainian identity for years to come. I take great pride in knowing that I have played a role in this process by crafting my Sniatyn-based dress and actively tying my skill to my Ukrainian heritage, just like the countless crafters before and alongside me today.

Conclusion

This project has, in essence, sought to demonstrate how vernacular textile crafting, in its various material cultural and ritualized forms, may serve as a method of transmitting cultural memory and identity within a given community. Through interpretive performance autoethnography, I have moved through the motions of contextualizing my experiences in the Ukrainian diaspora and wider community, designing and crafting vernacular garments based on Sniatyn textiles, broadening my perspectives through the survey responses of other Ukrainian embroiderers, and subsequently reflecting on this process through performative writing. Standing at the end of this long and multilayered process, I have no doubt that for many people, within the Ukrainian community and beyond, textile crafting serves as a strong practice that may be invoked to solidify and maintain ethnic identity. In proposing this model, I aim to encourage a holistic model wherein communities, especially those facing post/colonial realities, invoke relevant mnemonic practices for the purposes of identity and self-recognition, which are in turn recognized in academia. More simply, a wide and unbiased range of mnemonic practices, from textile crafting to festivals (Ozoliņa et al. 2022), should be recognized as the pillars of community so that academia may meet post/colonial communities on their own terms.

Before starting this program, I had originally planned to research my theoretical model in relation to the Finno-Ugric peoples in Russia, especially in response to Lauri Honko's (1995) assertion that new frameworks are necessary in the field. In light of the ongoing war in Ukraine, I decided to redirect to an autoethnography drawing on my own experiences in reconnecting to my Ukrainian heritage through textile craft. I cannot regret this decision, as this final project has provided a strong basis for my theoretical model and, moreover, has left me with a personally enriching experience. In response to this redirect, I can personally attest to this model as a member of the diaspora rekindling my heritage, and I hope that others may find it useful.

In the Ukrainian context, at least, I believe there is just cause to say that vernacular crafting is one significant supporting facet for identity solidification and maintenance.

I chose textile crafting for a few reasons. As explained above, I had already been embroidering and researching Sniatyn textiles for years beforehand. By the beginning of this project, it was clear to me that textile crafting holds a vital place in the Ukrainian context and identity and that this merited reflection. By all means, textile crafting was chosen because, for me and many other Ukrainians, it serves as an active mnemonic practice and pillar of Ukrainian identity. But I also chose it with the consideration that this mnemonic device is not unique to Ukrainians (e.g., Lewallen 2018), though it is often overlooked in academia. The words of Lennart Meri, when visiting different Finno-Ugric communities, were with me at the very outset of this project: “National costumes, and particularly embroidery, are the most lasting elements of national cultures” (Meri 1970: 30:00). While I naturally take issue with such generalization, it is still remarkable that Meri found such fervor in maintaining textile craft among the communities he visited that he felt comfortable making this assertion. In one fleeting moment, I witnessed the importance of a centuries-old practice to several identities.

I remain adamant in mentioning that the Finno-Ugric communities have been a motivating factor in proposing this theoretical model. After all, the similar historical and contemporary plights of the Ukrainian people and many Finno-Ugric communities in regard to Russian colonialism, especially settler and linguistic colonialism, have been increasingly acknowledged between communities (Chepurnyi 2021). If I were to propose methods of self-recognition through which the Ukrainian community has maintained its identity, it felt necessary to acknowledge that this theory may be applicable to other communities that have faced Russian colonialism, including many of the Finno-Ugric communities. In approaching these communities, I reassert here that academia should be mindful of internal decolonization, be willing to adapt to post/colonial realities, including linguistic declination and even extinction, and embrace the flexibility and potential of vernacular practices.

I end here with the note that following the Ukrainian path here has personally been empowering. It was only through the reflective vernacular crafting undertaken during this project that I came to understand the deep loss that has pervaded my diasporic family as a result of the Polish and Russian settler colonialist efforts that my grandmother faced. Shame took the place of the Ukrainian language and many vernacular practices, and even textile crafting

became decoupled from its original Ukrainian context over time. In trying to mend these tears in my family history, I found textile crafting to be a familiar companion that could help guide me to the reclamation of my Ukrainian heritage and identity. There is, additionally, a measure of significance in performing the reclamation process at a time when Ukraine again faces Russian colonialism and fights for a free Europe.

A holistic approach to reclamation is a monumental task, but in my own experience, vernacular crafting has been an effective way to begin addressing my family's intergenerational trauma and to contextualize my place in the Ukrainian community. While these diasporic experiences of reclamation cannot be directly transferred to post/colonial communities, they may still provide some insight into the process of identity solidification through surviving mnemonic practices when so much else has been impacted. I hope that models like this one may serve some use for post/colonial communities and the decolonization of related academic fields as we continue to face contemporary challenges.

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Resüme

Nõela leidmine: Rahvaliku tekstiili käsitöö mnemooniline roll etnilise identiteedi tugevdamisel ja säilitamisel

See magistriprojekt keskendub kultuurimälu ja rahvaliku tekstiilikäsitöö suhetele ning sellele, kuidas need koos moodustavad ühe võimaluse etnilise identiteedi tugevdamiseks ja säilitamiseks, eriti post/koloniaalkogukondade seas. Ukraina tekstiilikäsitöö on konkreetne juhtumianalüüs, mille kaudu seda suhet praktikas uurida. Projekt koosneb kolmest osast: (1) kirjalik osa; (2) autori valmistatud rahvuskleit, mis põhineb Lääne-Ukrainas Ivano-Frankivski oblastis asuva autori perekonna kodupiirkonna Sniatyni tekstiilide põhjal; ning (3) esseede kogumik, mis dokumenteerib autori meisterdamisprotsessi ja mõtisklusi. Lisaks viidi 2023. aasta juulis Ivano-Frankivski oblastis läbi välitööd, et toetada veelgi Sniatyni päritolu kleidi rahvalikku disaini ja meisterdamist. Lõpuks koguti ukraina tikkijatelt digitaalsete küsitluste vastused, et laiendada autori arusaamist erinevatest vaatenurkadest tekstiilikäsitöö rolli kohta Ukraina kultuuris ja identiteedis.

Selle projekti aluseks on eelnev akadeemiline töö. Teoreetiline osa lähtub mitmest õppevaldkonnast, sealhulgas venakulaarsete praktikate ja teadmiste erialad (Gradén 2021; Valk 2022), kultuurimälu (Assmann and Czaplicka 1995; Rigney 2016), pärandiuuringud (Jones 2007; Sennett 2008), ja postkoloniaalne teooria (Fanon 2005 [1961]; Coulthard 2014). Ametliku teabe saamiseks Sniatyni regiooni rahvakujunduse ja käsitöö kohta on konsulteeritud ukraina tekstiilide ekspertide (Bohodysta 2014; Nikolayeva 1996) edasiste uuringutega. Toetudes nendele allikatele ja autori külastustele tekstiilikogudesse Ivano-Frankivski oblastis, kujundati tööga kaasasolev kleit. Tõlgenduslik esitusautoetnograafia (Denzin 2013) oli meetoodika, mille kaudu selle projekti teoreetilist osa rakendada ja dokumenteerida. Selles meetoodikas tegi autor rahvuslikku käsitööd ja juurdles selle koha üle Ukraina kultuuri ja identiteedi säilitamise laiemas kontekstis. Selle projekti tulemuseks on demonstratsioon, kuidas rahvakäsitöö on üks näide mälestisest, mida kogukonnad saavad kasutada oma identiteedi säilitamiseks ja seeläbi enese äratundmise toetamiseks post/koloniaalses kontekstis.

Kirjalik osa koosneb kolmest peatükist. Esimeses peatükis on toodud ülalkirjeldatud teoreetilised alused ja meetoodika. Teises peatükis käsitletakse selle projekti ettevalmistamist,

sealhulgas autori välitööd Lääne-Ukrainas ja küsitluse vastuste kogumist. Viimases peatükis esitatakse üksikasjad selle projekti jaoks valmistatud rahvarõivaste, peegeldavate esseede kirjutamise ja küsitluse vastuste järelduste kohta. Siin on ka lühike märkus autentsuse kohta. Selle projektiga kaasasolev veebisait teeb need uurimis- ja meisterdamisprotsessi peegeldavad esseed ja fotod edasiseks viitamiseks avalikult kättesaadavaks.

See projekt võib pakkuda erilist huvi kultuuri ja identiteedi, postkoloniaalse enesetundmise teooria ja rahvakäsitöö uurijatele. Selle projektiga loodab autor anda oma panuse laiematesse aruteludesse mäluuuringute ja rahvateadmiste teemadel folkloori ja etnoloogia vallas, identiteedi aluste üle arutlemisel terviklikumate mudelite kasutamisele, ning akadeemilise ringkonna dekoloniseerimisele post/koloniaalkogukondadega töötamisel.

Анотація

У пошуках голки: Мнемонічна роль народного текстильного ремесла у зміцненні та підтримці етнічної ідентичності

Цей магістерський проєкт зосереджується на взаємозв'язку між культурною пам'яттю та народним текстильним ремеслом, а також на тому, як вони разом формують один із способів зміцнення та підтримки етнічної ідентичності, особливо серед пост/колоніальних спільнот. Українське текстильне ремесло виступає конкретним прикладом для вивчення цього взаємозв'язку на практиці. Цей проєкт складається з трьох частин: (1) цей письмовий компонент; (2) народна сукня, виготовлена авторкою на основі тканин з рідного регіону родини авторки - міста Снятин Івано-Франківської області, Західна Україна; та (3) збірка есеїв, які документують процес виготовлення сукні, разом із висновками авторки. Крім того, у липні 2023 року в Івано-Франківській області було проведено польові дослідження для подальшої підтримки народного дизайну та виготовлення сукні зі міста Снятин. Насамкінець, було проведено цифрове опитування українських вишивальниць, щоб розширити розуміння авторкою різних поглядів на роль текстильного ремесла в українській культурі та ідентичності.

В основу цього проєкту покладено попередні дослідження. Теоретична частина спирається на дослідження з різних галузей знань, зокрема з галузей народних практик і знань (Gradén 2021; Valk 2022), студій пам'яті (Assmann and Czaplicka 1995; Rigney 2016), студій спадщини (Jones 2007; Sennett 2008) та постколоніальної теорії (Fanon 2005 [1961]; Coulthard 2014). Подальші дослідження експертів з українського текстилю (Bohodysta 2014; Nikolayeva 1996) були використані для отримання офіційної інформації про народний дизайн і ремесло на Снятинщині. Ці джерела були використані в поєднанні з відвідуванням авторкою колекцій текстилю в Івано-Франківській області для розробки супровідної сукні. Автоетнографія інтерпретаційного перформансу (Denzin 2013) слугувала методологією, за допомогою якої була застосована та задокументована теоретична частина цього проєкту. За допомогою цієї методології авторка здійснила акт народної творчості та проаналізувала його місце в ширшому контексті підтримки української культури та ідентичності. Результатом цього проєкту є демонстрація того, як

народне ремесло є одним із прикладів мнемонічної практики, яку громади можуть використовувати для збереження своєї ідентичності і, таким чином, підтримувати своє самоусвідомлення в постколоніальному контексті.

Цей письмовий компонент складається з трьох розділів. У першому розділі викладено теоретичні засади та методологію, описані вище. Другий розділ обговорює підготовку до цього проєкту, включаючи польову роботу автора в Західній Україні та збір відповідей на опитування. Останній розділ містить детальну інформацію про народне вбрання, виготовлене для цього проєкту, написання есе та висновки з відповідей на опитування. У заключному розділі також міститься коротка довідка про автентичність. На супровідному веб-сайті проєкту ці рефлексивні есе та фотографії процесу дослідження і виготовлення є загальнодоступними для подальшого ознайомлення.

Цей проєкт може становити особливий інтерес для дослідників культури та ідентичності, постколоніальної теорії самоусвідомлення, а також народних ремесел. Цим проєктом авторка сподівається зробити внесок у ширші дискусії щодо врахування студій пам'яті та вернакулярних знань у фольклористиці та етнології, використання більш цілісних моделей при обговоренні основ ідентичності, а також деколонізації академічних кіл при роботі з пост/колоніальними спільнотами.

Annex 1. Project Timeline

The following Gantt chart provides a list of tasks and approximate dates for the courses, research, and tasks completed in order to execute this project.

TASK TITLE	2022					2023					2024												
	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	
1 Theoretical & Practical Courses																							
1.1 Theoretical Conceptualizations of Folklore and Cultural Heritage (HVKU.04.006)																							
1.2 Methods of Data Collection and Analysis (HVKU.03.013)																							
1.3 Applied Crafts Research and Heritage of Crafts (HVVK.01.060)																							
1.4 The Politics of History and Memory (SHRG.02.005)																							
1.5 Describing Eastern Europe: A Research Seminar in Political Philosophy of Language (FLFI.04.099)																							
1.6 The Culture of Finno-Ugric Peoples (FLKU.03.020)																							
1.7 Project Management (P2VK.01.182)																							
2 Background Research																							
2.1 Reading on Sniatyn-Area Textiles																							
2.2 Planning Fieldwork with Museums																							
2.3 Researching + Planning Website Setup																							
3 Fieldwork																							
3.1 Fieldwork in Western Ukraine																							
3.1.2 Examination of Fieldwork Data																							
3.2 Conducting Surveys																							
3.2.2 Survey Analysis and Followup Questions																							
4 Execution of Project																							
4.1 Designing Dress and Patterns																							
4.2 Construction of Wrap Skirt																							
4.3 Construction of Bead Necklace																							
4.4 Embroidering Linen Shirt																							
4.5 Writing Reflections for Website																							

Annex 2. Project Budget

As noted in Chapter 3, a major concern for this project was the matter of budgeting. My budget reflects three years of working a job and saving money. Purchases were then executed sporadically over the two years of this MA program, depending on my situation. At the time of writing, I am a student, a nearly fulltime worker, and responsible for rent payments, utility bills, and two cats who change food preferences quite often. Much of my initial budget was also spent while conducting fieldwork in Ukraine, as travel and living costs added up quickly. There is a very definitive limit to my budget, and that had to be considered during this project. While I wish I could have done certain things, such as commission a weaver for my *opynka* or purchase a better bead loom, it simply was not realistic for me at this time. As it stands, I did my best to allot enough money to support certain aspects, such as obtaining a bead loom for making a *silyanka* and a handwoven belt from Kosiv. I was also very lucky to already have certain things, such as the red fabric for my *opynka* and my sewing machine. Considering my personal circumstances, I am rather satisfied with what I have accomplished for now.

For transparency's sake, I have included my budget for my vernacular dress specifically, including the materials and accessories that I invested in. The financial toll of crafting a dress is, of course, a barrier for many low-income people, so hopefully this breakdown of my own choices within the context of crafting with my limited budget may give some insight for others. Each culture and vernacular dress will be different, but identifying the most vital or visible components of the dress and choosing what to focus on is a dependable first step to achieving a vernacular dress. So, here is what I have identified as areas that I needed to focus on with my budget.

Description	cost (€)
Linen fabric for <i>vyshyvanka</i>	10
Embroidery floss	~15
Red fabric for <i>opynka</i>	0 (gift)
Bead loom kit (+ shipping)	40.30
Beads + clasps	~12
Handwoven belt from Kosiv	50.53
Red and black <i>koraly</i> necklace	5.85
Twine <i>koraly</i> necklace	8.18
Red and white beaded necklace	4.79
Fabric crown	11.69
Total	158.34

Annex 3. Survey Questions and Responses

4.1. English-Language Survey

This survey was aimed at members of the Ukrainian diaspora, who may not necessarily speak Ukrainian. It was opened in March 2024, during which four people responded. Only the first question was required, so that consent to participation in this project was ensured, while not placing pressure on respondents otherwise. Respondents learned about this survey through my post on the social media website Reddit, particularly /ukraina, and through the Facebook group BORSCHT TALK CANADA!! I have used an uppercase letter system to distinguish each respondent for this survey. These responses are copied directly from the Google form.

Survey Question	Responses
1. By selecting "yes" and completing this survey, you are consenting to your responses being used for this master's project. Do you consent to this? *Required	All 4/4 respondents selected "yes."
2. Do you know anything about your Ukrainian family history? This may include the region your family is from, when and why they left Ukraine, whether your branch of the family is still in contact with relatives in Ukraine, and other details you find relevant to your Ukrainian background / identity. Specific details (such as names and dates) are not required here, just a general overview.	<p><i>Respondent A:</i> Yes - Tirnopol, left between 30s-60s to come to Canada. Not in contact with relatives in Ukraine.</p> <p><i>Respondent B:</i> Yes - I was born in Ukraine myself and have an understanding of my family's history and location going back about two generations. I still have several members of my family living in Ukraine.</p> <p><i>Respondent C:</i> Im a 3rd generation Ukrainian American, I dont know what region my grandparents were from, but i know they left Europe during ww2.</p> <p><i>Respondent D:</i> Not very much, only that we were from a small village near Odessa. All of our family was forced to flee Ukraine. The ones that didn't escape ended up in camps in Siberia.</p>
3. Do you know if your family carried any particular traditions with them from Ukraine and if/when those traditions ended? For example: your ancestor from Ukraine embroidered and taught this to her daughter, but not to her grandchildren. Language, religion, or other	<p><i>Respondent A:</i> Yes - Ukrainian language until my mother, embroidery, food, community events</p> <p><i>Respondent B:</i> Yes, my grandmother did and does preserve many of the traditions of her upbringing, which are also important to her rural lifestyle (ie, subsistence farming and animal raising, pickling, etc). My grandmother passed on these skills to her daughter and because I was partially raised by my grandmother, she passed them on directly to me. Some skills, like recipes and food techniques, were passed onto me as well by my mother. Certain traditions have</p>

<p>handicrafts may also be may also be considered here, not just embroidery. If traditions skipped a generation and were rekindled later, this is also relevant here.</p>	<p>ended due to lack of necessity, for example, the sewing of clothing from scratch, as cheap clothing is easily obtained in the modern West. Embroidery was one of the skills my grandmother taught me that I carry on in my day to day life.</p> <p><i>Respondent C:</i> Sure, My Grandmother knew how to sew, make some traditional foods Holubchi, Verenky, Borschch, pyrozhki, paska etc and also made Pysanky. These things were handed down to my mom and aunties. But none of it was taught to my siblings or myself except for cooking some foods. We also didnt learn Ukrainian language.</p> <p><i>Respondent D:</i> I remember my Grandmother helping me to weave diamond patterns with yarn. I was also given painted wooden eggs by a cousin.</p>
<p>4. How did you learn to embroider - did a relative teach you, were you self-taught, etc.? - If from a relative, did you learn Ukrainian embroidery in particular, or was it more general? Did your relative explain any significance or reasoning for why they embroider? - If you learned outside the family, what inspired you to learn to embroider? Why did you decide to try Ukrainian embroidery in particular?</p>	<p><i>Respondent A:</i> From my grandmother, cross stitch in traditional patterns from Ternopol</p> <p><i>Respondent B:</i> My grandmother taught me to embroider when I was a little girl, and she frequently did it herself before her eyesight prevented her from continuing. Embroidery was an important way of maintaining the traditional aesthetic of embroidered clothing, towels, and pillows. I do not remember what specific styles I was taught, because it happened when I was very little. I picked the practice up again as a young adult after many years of not practicing, and my skills were bolstered by instruction from the internet. I was inspired to pick up the craft again partially because it is a traditional skill from my culture.</p> <p><i>Respondent C:</i> I taught myself.</p> <p><i>Respondent D:</i> I learned to cross stitch when I was young. When I lost my father, then the war began, I wanted Ukrainian traditions back. Since I knew how to cross stitch, I sought out traditional Ukrainian motifs and designs, and learned how to design mandalas that spelled out names and phrases in secret symbols.</p>

<p>5. Do you have any particular sources for your Ukrainian embroidery -- do you obtain patterns from family members, from your family's region, and/or from the internet or books?</p> <p>Do you have any other inspirations for your Ukrainian embroidery (such as for events, elements from other cultures, etc.)? How do you choose patterns?</p>	<p><i>Respondent A:</i> From existing clothing</p> <p><i>Respondent B:</i> I typically do not embroider traditional designs and materials (linens, for example). I usually embroider on commercially available aida cloth, on patterns from the internet. However, some of the designs I work on contain elements related to Ukraine generally, and many are designed by contemporary Ukrainian pattern designers, who have an active community on websites that sell patterns, particularly Etsy. I choose patterns based on what is workable for my skill level, and appeals to me aesthetically. I like nature scenes, copies of art work such as pop art, and maps.</p> <p><i>Respondent C:</i> I learned from internet and also from youtube. I mostly just pick patterns i like and think look nice.</p> <p><i>Respondent D:</i> I found motifs on the internet but then created my own designs that reflect my story, and my family's story.</p>
<p>6. More broadly, do you find the process of embroidery relevant to your Ukrainian identity? Or do you have any other thoughts about the importance of embroidery to Ukrainian culture and identity?</p>	<p><i>Respondent A:</i> Yes - we make the same patterns for dance clothes</p> <p><i>Respondent B:</i> Yes I do. It is meaningful for me to carry on the tradition of needle arts, which has been a core part of the artistic output of my Ukrainian ancestors, and especially of women. I resonate with their desire to beautify their spaces and clothes with embroidery. I feel that this hobby connects me to my heritage, even if my designs are more Westernized/contemporary than traditional embroidery styles.</p> <p><i>Respondent C:</i> I do very much, altho its perculiar because traditionally it is women that learn these traditions and i am a man. But ever since the 2014 Maidan in Ukraine, i have been becoming more and more interested in my Ukrainian culture. I also enjoy making art and doing crafts, so i thought it would be nice to express my culture thru atwork. So i began to learn about Pysanky, something ive wanted to learn since i was very little, luckily a Ukrainian friend of mine taught me how to write Pysanky. Eventually this evolved into me wanting to learn Ukrainian embroidery.</p> <p><i>Respondent D:</i> I'm working on a vyshyvanka and intend to make others. Stalin tried to destroy my family. The Cold War forced us to hide our origins. Now I want to wear it on my sleeves. Red and black, blood and grief, threads that tie us together.</p>

<p>7. Do you/your family still observe any other Ukrainian traditions, such as a specific religion, making pysanky, speaking Ukrainian, cooking Ukrainian foods, celebrating Ukrainian holidays, etc.?</p>	<p><i>Respondent A:</i> Yes - pysanky, food, holidays. My grandparents and older relatives speak Ukrainian at home.</p> <p><i>Respondent B:</i> Yes to most. While we are not personally religious, we still observe some of the traditional celebrations associated with religious holidays, in particular Svaty Vechir dinner and pysanky making for Easter. I regularly cook traditional Ukrainian dishes like borscht and try to maintain my language skills. I also try to mix in contemporary takes on traditions, like wearing vyshyvnyaky from contemporary fashion brands from Ukraine.</p> <p><i>Respondent C:</i> Yes I enjoy making Pysanky very much and cooking Ukrainian foods like Verenky and Holubchi.</p> <p><i>Respondent D:</i> I learned to make pysanky, varenyky, I made a Didukh for Christmas, I make Motanka dolls and I am learning to speak Ukrainian</p>
<p>8. Do you have any other thoughts to add regarding Ukrainian embroidery and/or identity? A response is not required here!</p>	<p><i>Respondent A:</i> [no response]</p> <p><i>Respondent B:</i> [no response]</p> <p><i>Respondent C:</i> I think its important to preserve these traditions, especially when Ukraine faces the existential crisis of cultural erasure. These artforms are intagiabile cultural artifacts that make Ukrainian culture distinct and unique.</p> <p><i>Respondent D:</i> I love the symbolism in it. Every motif has meaning that reaches through generations back in time. It feels like ancient magic.</p>
<p>9. Would you be willing to be interviewed further regarding your responses? If yes, please include an email address or other digital means of contact. Thank you in advance!</p>	<p>Respondents B, C, and D agreed to answer followup questions.</p>

4.2. Ukrainian-Language Survey

This survey was aimed at Ukrainians who grew up in Ukraine and speak Ukrainian. It was opened in March 2024, during which seven people responded. Only the first question was required, so that consent to participation in this project was ensured, while not placing pressure on respondents otherwise. Respondents learned about this survey through my post on the social media website Reddit, particularly on the subforum /ukraina. I have used a number system to distinguish each respondent for this survey.

While these responses were originally written in Ukrainian, I requested professional translator Yelyzaveta Farafonova to translate these responses into English for accessibility here. Please note that the italicized text in brackets indicate the Farafonova’s translator notes, which she has kindly provided for further context.

Survey Questions	Responses
<p>1. By selecting "yes" and completing this survey, you are consenting to your responses being used for this master's project. Do you consent to this? *Required</p>	<p>All 7/7 respondents responded “yes.”</p>
<p>2. Which oblast are you / your family from?</p>	<p><i>Respondent 1:</i> Kharkiv oblast</p> <p><i>Respondent 2:</i> Dnipropetrovsk</p> <p><i>Respondent 3:</i> Ivano-Frankivsk</p> <p><i>Respondent 4:</i> Volyn</p> <p><i>Respondent 5:</i> Zaporizka</p> <p><i>Respondent 6:</i> Kyiv</p> <p><i>Respondent 7:</i> Ternopil</p>
<p>3. How did you learn to embroider? With relatives, at school, by yourself...? Did you specifically study folk embroidery? If so, was it explained to you why embroidery is important? Were you motivated to learn to embroider?</p>	<p><i>Respondent 1:</i> My mother and grandmother taught me to embroider. At school, we also had lessons on different embroidery techniques. [<i>girls are often taught embroidery in school as part of Design and Technology classes</i>]. No one actually told me about the importance of embroidery, but I was motivated by the fact that women in my family have always embroidered. In my house, we still have towels, bedsheets, and pillowcases that my great-great-grandmothers embroidered. I was taught to treat them like treasures.</p> <p><i>Respondent 2:</i> I wasn't taught that. Modern families don't make clothes, they buy them in the store. So there is no motivation for me to learn embroidery.</p> <p><i>Respondent 3:</i> My mother taught me to embroider when I was a child. To create something beautiful and to calm my nerves.</p> <p><i>Respondent 4:</i> My relatives did embroidery, and I also had a few lessons on it at school</p> <p><i>Respondent 5:</i> I was taught to embroider at school and at home. I studied folk embroidery specifically at school and was taught the history of embroidery, what kind of embroidery is typical for which</p>

	<p>regions, and that embroidery is our identity. I was not very motivated and studied it simply out of curiosity.</p> <p><i>Respondent 6:</i> I learned it at school during Design and Technology classes and then at an art camp. No one among my close relatives embroidered. I didn't study folk embroidery specifically. Teachers at school and teachers at the camp did not explain why embroidery was important, except for general statements about the importance of preserving Ukrainian cultural traditions and heritage. My main motivation for learning embroidery was the desire to reach the same level of skill as my older female colleagues and more skilled classmates.</p> <p><i>Respondent 7:</i> In school and at home</p>
<p>4. Where do you find patterns for embroidery? In your family, in your area, or on the internet/books? Do you have other sources of inspiration? How do you choose patterns for embroidery?</p>	<p><i>Respondent 1:</i> I don't embroider now. When I did, I used to look for patterns on the Internet.</p> <p><i>Respondent 3:</i> Everywhere. I used to find them in a specialized store in Lviv, now you can find everything online. My mother still embroiders a lot (but she does embroidery on canvas now, not on shirts).</p> <p><i>Respondent 4:</i> The patterns are different in each region [<i>of Ukraine</i>], some are handed down [<i>from parents to their children</i>], some patterns were saved, some can be found as old photos on the Internet</p> <p><i>Respondent 5:</i> I found patterns for embroidery on the Internet and in school textbooks. My inspiration is usually nature and Ukraine. I don't have a specific strategy for choosing embroidery patterns, I just choose those that look aesthetically pleasing to me.</p> <p><i>Respondent 6:</i> I choose from the ones available in local shops based on which ones I find pretty.</p> <p><i>Respondent 7:</i> There are many patterns, sometimes you just take an old embroidery and embroider a copy of it with your own additions to fit a particular item.</p>
<p>5. Do you consider embroidery important for your Ukrainian identity? In your opinion, is embroidery an important component of Ukrainian identity and culture?</p>	<p><i>Respondent 1:</i> 100%</p> <p><i>Respondent 2:</i> Yes, it is important. It's kind of like "pixel art", but a local version of it. I like things that have local ornaments embroidered on them.</p> <p><i>Respondent 3:</i> Yes, of course. And it has even more special importance for Ukrainian women and girls.</p> <p><i>Respondent 4:</i> Embroidery seems to be not popular and has been actively destroyed, like everything else in my country... [<i>as a part of Ukrainian cultural genocides by USSR/Russia</i>]. I think it is important, but most people will choose to just buy a ready-made vyshyvanka</p> <p><i>Respondent 5:</i> Yes. Yes.</p>

	<p><i>Respondent 6:</i> I recognize the important place of embroidery in Ukrainian culture, but I do not associate it with my own national identity. For me, embroidery is primarily a pleasant hobby for relaxation.</p> <p><i>Respondent 7:</i> Yes, embroidery is a process of delicate manual labor, with a punishment for mistakes (needle prick) and a reward for patience (a beautiful finished product). It is a great tool for education, hobby, and art.</p>
<p>6. Do you practice other folk traditions (holidays, pysanky, etc.)?</p>	<p><i>Respondent 1:</i> Yes, definitely.</p> <p><i>Respondent 2:</i> No.</p> <p><i>Respondent 3:</i> For the most part, yes, although I have been living abroad for many years.</p> <p><i>Respondent 4:</i> Of course.</p> <p><i>Respondent 5:</i> Partially</p> <p><i>Respondent 6:</i> I don't practice any other traditions, except when I participate in Ukrainian cultural events abroad to advocate for Ukraine.</p> <p><i>Respondent 7:</i> Yes, of course</p>
<p>7. Do you have any other thoughts on this topic?</p>	<p><i>Respondent 3:</i> Embroidery should be included in the school curriculum, at least to learn it as a skill, but better for learning embroidery styles.</p> <p><i>Respondent 4:</i> I think embroidery will remain very unpopular, and it is difficult to popularize it when there is a war for survival, but vyshyvankas are still popular and will most likely be supported by people</p> <p><i>Respondent 7:</i> Children perceive cross-stitch as a game or a mosaic. When you get married, embroidery becomes much more important, especially if you receive something that was embroidered by a loved one specifically for you. Purchased embroidered objects are used mostly for casual decor. Objects that were embroidered by hand are used for big holidays or events [<i>e.g. putting a handmade embroidered tablecloth on the table for display during Christmas</i>]</p>
<p>8. Would you be willing to be interviewed further regarding your responses? If yes, please include an email address or other digital means of contact. Thank you in advance!</p>	<p>Respondents 3, 4, 5, and 7 agreed to follow-up questions.</p>

4.3. Correspondence with Respondent B

In early April 2024, I followed up with Respondent B regarding her responses. Respondent B provided the following insights, for which I am appreciative:

My Questions	Respondent B's Responses
<p>In the survey, you mention that you typically use modern embroidery patterns. You also place emphasis on the act of embroidering instead of the patterns: "I feel that this hobby connects me to my heritage, even if my designs are more Westernized/contemporary than traditional embroidery styles."</p> <p>I want to make sure that I would be correct in saying that, for you, it is embroidering (the act / skill) that is more closely tied to your Ukrainian identity than just the patterns? In other words, embroidering itself is a part of Ukrainian identity and culture, whether or not a Ukrainian woman uses traditional patterns?</p>	<p>Yes, that's correct.</p>
<p>You also added: "...tradition of needle arts, which has been a core part of the artistic output of my Ukrainian ancestors, and especially of women." From this excerpt, then, is it correct to say that you value embroidering because it's what your Ukrainian foremothers valued and did themselves? Does your own preference for modern patterns conflict with this statement in any way, or do you feel that the shared skill/act of embroidering is still more relevant to being Ukrainian than the patterns?</p>	<p>Part of the reason I value it is because of its connection to my culture, but I also just enjoy it as a hobby on its own and enjoy making things, no matter what. I do occasionally feel bad that I have never taken on a fully traditional design, such as an embroidered towel with a traditional pattern, but traditional designs are a lot more limited in color, subject, etc, so generally I am just more attracted to the contemporary designs.</p> <p>Generally speaking I'd say the connection to my culture through the act of embroidery/cross stitch of any kind just makes it a more meaningful hobby for me and gives me more pride in the things that I create. I do have some interest in exploring more traditional designs and techniques, which would be more challenging than what I typically do, so I would consider looking into that sometime in the future.</p> <p>One interesting detail that I don't recall if I mentioned or not but most of the designs I do, that are contemporary, are designed by Ukrainians on Etsy. In fact, I seek out Ukrainian pattern designers. So that is one more element of connection to Ukraine - a Ukrainian executing a design created by another Ukrainian.</p>

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