

Border crossings, shame and (re-)narrating the past in the Ukrainian–Romanian borderlands

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In April 2008, I celebrated my birthday in the village of Diyalivtsi,¹ where I had been living since October 2007, while carrying out research on informal economic practices in the Ukrainian–Romanian borderlands. My host, Rodika, and I had spent some time preparing food and drink for visitors and the first to arrive were our good friends and neighbours Luchika and her daughter Zhenia. Luchika and her son-in-law Dima were both cross-border small traders of cigarettes to Romania, and until the birth of her son, Zhenia had also been involved in the trade. While we waited for others to arrive, Luchika entertained us all with stories about the Romanian border guards and customs officials from the nearby road crossing. One of the guards had been given the nickname King Kong, due to his size, and Luchika had us all laughing with her impressions of him asking how many cartons of cigarettes she had and sending her back to ‘try again’. This was not the first time I had heard such stories since I had moved to Diyalivtsi. In fact, the trading of cigarettes and other products to Romania was often present in village life; in conversations over the fence with neighbours, in performances for St Andrew’s feast day at the village school and during drinks and birthday celebrations in the village sauna. The significance of cross-border small trade in the village was not limited to its role in sustaining and reproducing local households,² but lay also in the way in which Diyalivtsyany³ infused discourses surrounding the trade with meaning and its influence on their changing perspectives of the past.

Nonetheless, whilst we laughed along with Luchika, different emotions often emerged when discussing border crossings in private. In fact, on another occasion Zhenia came to visit Rodika in tears after an argument with her husband, Dima. ‘Dima has gone back to his mother again. We had an argument. She said that we are a poor family and if he had married someone else he wouldn’t have to cross the border. She says we are below them ... their family don’t do this.’ The implication of the trade as being beneath Dima’s family, who had returned to the village after successful periods of migrant labour in Spain, reflected broader feelings of cross-border small trading as bringing shame upon a household. The specific dimensions of how

villagers expressed this shame within their local community will be explored in this chapter, through a focus on the relationship between these representations of the trade, its influence on how the past was narrated and the transtemporality of shame. Research into cross-border small trade rarely acknowledges the role of emotions other than the fear felt by traders in border crossings themselves (Konstantinov 1996). However, in other fields of research on transnationality, particularly migration, emotional aspects have emerged as a key area of research (Keough 2006). This book focuses on what it is people feel they have crossed and done when crossing borders and, in doing so, seeks to take an approach which not only acknowledges the importance of contextualisation of border crossings but also recognises an epistemological shift. This shift necessitates a methodological approach that combines observation at the border during crossings and interviews about border crossings with a grounded, situated approach that enables an understanding of narratives and representations of border crossing in everyday life away from borders themselves. In this chapter, I draw on 15 months of ethnographic fieldwork in the Ukrainian–Romanian borderlands, which included more than 6 months of participant observation in Diyalivtsi, a village in the Chernivets’ka region of Ukraine, just 4 km from the main road between the region’s two main urban centres – Chernivtsi and Suceava. I begin this discussion with a brief introduction to cross-border small trade (CBST) in the Ukrainian–Romanian borderlands. In the second section, I explore conceptualisations of shame drawing on literature from the humanities and social sciences. Finally, I complete my framing of shame and CBST in the Ukrainian–Romanian borderlands by considering memory and transtemporalities. The ensuing discussion in the final section of the chapter then moves to focus on the role of shame in shaping representations of CBST and narrations of the past in this region of Ukraine.

Cross-border small trading in the Ukrainian–Romanian borderlands

The Ukrainian–Romanian border can be seen to represent what classically has been termed the emergence of the ‘golden curtain’ (Allina-Pisano 2009) in Europe, i.e. the appearance of new inequalities between those post-socialist/post-Soviet countries, which have or have not achieved greater integration within the global economy primarily through membership of the European Union (EU). In the Ukrainian community of Diyalivtsi, which is only 1 km from the Romanian border and just 4 km from the region’s major road crossing with Romania, less than one person per household was in formal employment.⁴ In the years before 2007, when Romania joined the EU, the country saw a steady rise in consumer prices. These outstripped those of neighbouring Ukraine and led to opportunities for local people to replace migration, the solution to high unemployment from the mid-1990s, by cross-border small trading, particularly of cigarettes,⁵ to nearby settlements in Romania. Romania’s relatively late accession to the EU and higher levels of poverty

at the end of state socialism meant that these types of opportunity were much slower to develop in this region than in other parts of Ukraine or indeed the region as a whole. Therefore, whilst CBST was already observed to be in decline in much of post-socialist central Europe by the late 1990s (Sword 1999: 151), the trade has proven to be more resilient on the borders of the former Soviet Union, due to weak global economic integration (Williams and Balaz 2002). The proximity of the border in Diyalivtsi transformed the village and meant that by the time I moved there in 2007 for fieldwork, cross-border small trading was central not only to particular households, but to the village and regional economies as a whole. Very few households in the village possessed a family member who was not or had not been involved in this type of trading.

There has been a plethora of work exploring the emergence of this small trade across Europe's borders in the period since 1989/1991. Much of this work has focused on the trade itself and the unfolding of sets of practices within the crossing of the border. For example, whilst Williams and Balaz (2002) explore structures and power relations in the trade, Konstantinov (1996) links the trade to the now highly problematised concept of 'transition' in the region, and Polese (2006) uses CBST as a means to illustrate the weakness of post-Soviet states. Much of this work was based on observations of border crossings, where traders often feel under pressure and we do not get a sense of the broader meanings being ascribed to the trade and associated journeys. Long-term ethnographic work in Diyalivtsi enabled me to understand the ways in which traders not only reflect upon and discuss more openly their own experiences of the border, but also 'perform' aspects of these economic practices to their friends and neighbours. Only in such a context can a researcher gain insight into the emotional geographies of the trade, as they become displaced from the border itself and infused into the everyday life of the traders' homes and communities. In this chapter, I illustrate the depth that such an approach can bring to the understanding of emotions in the context of clandestine and covert activities by focusing on shame.

On shame

Before entering into more detailed discussion of shame in Diyalivtsi, I consider some of the key themes in the existing literature. I begin by reiterating Probyn's (2005) point that what shames us is absolutely central to our thinking about who we are and how we represent ourselves. As such, when trying to understand Ukrainian cross-border small traders' representations of their border crossings, we need to explore if and how shame plays a role in these crossings. In the following section, I will elucidate how repetitious encounters that lead to feelings of shame across much of a particular community undoubtedly have the potential to become highly meaningful in how that community constructs a collective sense and/or understanding of its place in the world. This means that I will also be engaging in

another prominent area of discussion in the literature on shame (Probyn 2005; Ahmed 2014) by exploring the relationship between individual and collective shame, which necessitates consideration of the power relations shaping encounters that lead to shame. Our interactions with others cannot be seen to be free but take place within a framework of limitations and constraints, as I will illustrate later. Ahmed (2014: 102) has explored the relationship between collective and individual shame in her analysis of colonial pasts and the process of nation-building (see also Probyn 2005: xiii). However, this coming to terms with a shameful collective past through acknowledgement contrasts starkly with the situation for the Ukrainians, whose experiences I draw upon here. In this context, I emphasise how shame in the present can lead to re-engagement with the past and displaced re-enactment of the present in a way that seeks to challenge rather than acknowledge that shame. In the ethnographic material that follows, I will describe how this is a collective narrative action of the traders and the communities in which they live, rather than the political appropriation that Ahmed describes.

Whilst Probyn acknowledges that there will always be multi-scalar effects arising from shame, it is important to note the relationships between these scales and how these shift and change over time. Although we may consider, as Probyn does, that there is an immediate reflexivity to shame, which she argues can be transformative if acknowledged, in the example I explore here there is a longer-term reflexivity to shame, which is forced by the repetition of shaming acts over a period of months and years. In exploring this, I will nuance the assertion that admitting shame is in itself shaming. As the narratives employed by the traders of Dyalivtsi and Chernivets'ka oblast (administrative division) will show, in retelling their experiences of the border, they can admit shameful actions in context of a broader narrative, which brings no shame to themselves. Rather than making the traders 'feel small and somehow undone' (Probyn 2005: 2), the ways of retelling these shameful acts actually empower them to redefine what is happening in their border crossings. So whilst shame may not be talked about in most societies, its prominence in the everyday life of Dyalivtsi and other parts of the region engenders and perhaps even necessitates a need to find a way to talk about it. Yet, I do not go so far as to suggest that this removes lingering shame within the traders (Johnston 2007: 32). In fact, the ongoing repetition of the narratives that arise from the shameful acts of trading would suggest that this remains and needs to be expressed in order to be borne.

Central to any consideration of shame has to be the notion of interest and the ways in which shame 'highlights different levels of interest' (Probyn 2005: x). In short, we cannot be shamed if we are not interested in someone or in eliciting some form of interest or reaction from a person. This is one of the key themes of the following section, where I emphasise the complexity of this notion in CBST. I will argue here, in order to problematise some of Probyn's assumptions, that we are not always free to determine or decide in whom we show interest and that interest, to

some extent, can also be feigned. Nonetheless, this interest is still about a desire for connection or communication and is therefore bound up, at least in the moment of its expression, in mutuality and reciprocity. I will explore what this means for understanding shame as an involuntary affect and the implications for any resultant non-reciprocity. In terms of temporality, we can also see shame as being connected not solely to the past, but also to a fear of regretful futures (Sykes 2002: 22). It is a shame relating to the fear of not using our own potential agency to shape a still unformed future. There is an inherent tension in such a proposition, as it posits the burden for such a future on the individual. However, we need to reflect on the differing potential for individuals to affect a meaningful influence over their own individual and collective futures.

If shame gives us this insight into our relations with others (Probyn 2005: 35), then in Diyalivtsi narratives of the shameful acts of border crossing can be seen as a collective acknowledgement of the shame of others in creating conditions for the shameful interactions present in border crossings. The feeling of shame does not reveal the 'truth' behind these relations; instead we learn only from the ways in which shame emerges in the need to create such discourses. There is an active agency to deny the evident shame in the crossing and to reposition it at a different level and on a different body – the body politic. This consideration of the body politic is also evident in Ahmed's work on shame. Ahmed theorises how the nation is shamed both through the behaviour of those subjects who do not live up to the national social ideal, but also in its treatment of others. However, I argue here that the nation can also be shamed by its own subjects for its treatment of them – the failure of the political elite to live up to a social ideal.

In order for shame to arise there has to be a sense of oneself within the interlocution in which it arises. So, whilst we can feel guilty about the things we do – perhaps eating or drinking too much, or overreacting to a particular situation – the experience of shame happens only in a scenario in which we are invested. The shame itself will bring into our consciousness this compromising of self. In fact, we may not know this part of ourselves until shame appears, signifying a development in our self-understanding. We will have knowledge of where it has arisen in the past, and if we have followed Probyn's advice we may have reflected on it, coming to understand, at least in part, why it has emerged. Armed with such knowledge we may think we can avoid shameful situations in the future, but inevitably we have more to learn as the self develops, and as opportunities arise for us to encounter shame in new spaces. Kosofsky Sedgwick (2003) powerfully argues that it is in our communication with others in failing to elicit the positive note we were hoping for that we find our blushes return. Given this changing nature of shame within ourselves, we can see how such an affect could be viewed as differentiated across people and cultures. Shame, as such, is therefore situated in our knowledge, imagination and social positioning.

Remembering and transtemporality

In considering some of the literature on shame, it is clear that questions of time and transtemporality are particularly important. Shame is inherently linked to our presents, pasts and futures and their mutual co-construction. In the section that follows, I focus on how border crossings are remembered and represented within the context of village life in Diyalivtsi. The narratives of border crossing, which emerged during my time in Diyalivtsi, clearly became linked not only to the actual crossings themselves but to the ways in which the villagers understood their own recent history and shaped their understanding of their current situation. As Lambek and Antze (1996: xii) have suggested, memory is spatial as well as temporal in the sense that space is created between the border crosser and their memory of the crossing. In gazing on this space, the memory itself becomes distinct from the context in which it was created. It is this gaze and the remaking of it within the social context of Diyalivtsi that will be explored later. Therefore, just as memory might be imagined as a practice (Lambek and Antze 1996), so might we consider how this process of retelling by Ukrainian traders shapes the object (the border crossing) itself.

As with the discussion of shame, the consideration of this process brings us into the heart of exploring the mutually constituted relationship between individual and collective. The people of Diyalivtsi draw heavily not only on collective representations of the past, but also on existing collective narrative forms to explore the events they describe. In doing so, whilst the traders do speak of events passed, they also engage in the construction of future objects, as there will be more crossings within the next few days for almost all of them. This is different, then, from the process of loss analysed by Lambek and Antze, since border crossings for the Ukrainian traders cannot be envisaged as 'definitively past' (1996: xiii).

To understand fully the relationship between the individual and collective in memory, we must pay attention to the social relations and discursive spaces shaping the production of these memories (Hacking 1995), which is the focus of the ethnographic material presented below. In fact, what we see is that a fundamental shift in institutional forms (after 1991) leads to a radical transformation in memories of the Soviet period, or as Foucault (1997) would see this, the discursive production of the subjects themselves, the Diyalivtsyany. In this way, we see how the process of border crossing dislocates earlier narratives of the Soviet period and creates the space for new and emergent memories. So, in the material which follows, we will see all three of the elements of the process with which Lambek and Antze are concerned: the production of memory in discourses; its further invocation within broader discourses; and the narrative organisation of memory within its expressional form (1996: xv).

Yet whilst Lambek and Antze posit that memory should support identity while its gaps or uncertainties undermine it (1996: xvi), what is explored here is how the present undermines identity and how this necessitates the creation of a space

for alternative narrations of the past and present that can serve to reinforce existing views of identity. In any case, memory (after Nora 1989) becomes objectified through differing cultural forms, and as we shall see in the case of Dyalivtsi, the use of anecdotes, in particular, is central to any understanding of memory. Such narratives are not shaped within a lone voice but as a multi-dialogical process between the teller and the institutional and collective context to this retelling. Our gaze on the past is, therefore, situated (Stoetzler and Yuval-Davis 2002) and organised around a subject (Lambek and Antze 1996). At the same time, it is also possible to think of the self, that subject, as emerging through these stories and narrations. As such, narratives of the past must make space for the differentiated individual, so that all meaning and sense of identification is not lost.

The view that memory is therefore a focus for struggle centred around power will evidently be seen, as the villagers of Dyalivtsi use narratives of border crossing not only to re-engage with the past, but also to construct views of it which challenge those produced on a national level in Ukraine since 1991. In a sense, such a challenge strikes at the very heart of this 'nation-building process', also referenced by Ahmed in relation to shame. For the Ukrainian state, this has predominantly involved a view of the Soviet period as one of occupation or oppression by Russia, devoid of positive outcomes and experiences. The relationship with the Soviet past, which emerges in the narratives of the villagers of Dyalivtsi, in contrast to that of the official level, is much closer to Hirsch and Spitzer's view of nostalgia, i.e. the loss of something positive, 'in which the absent/gone is valued as somehow better, simpler, less fragmented, more comprehensible, than its existent alternative in the present' (2003: 82).

So work on memory can be seen to have challenged the very notion of the linearity of past, present and future. Feminist theorists (Grosz 1999; Radstone 2007) have also been at the forefront of critiques of linear assumptions of time, which are central here to understanding transtemporality in everyday experiences of the border. Radstone suggests that her exploration challenges the underlying linearity in accounts of cultural periodisation. I employ Radstone's view to explore the narrative accounts of CBST in Dyalivtsi. What emerges, as Radstone suggests, are not additive cause-and-effect relationships but contextually framed intertwinings of past and present. In considering transtemporality within the bordering context, it is also useful to draw upon Green's (2009) insights in her discussion of the relationship between borders, lines and time. In attempting to grasp the transtemporality of state borders, she makes particular use of the work of Jacques Derrida on traces. Unlike other theorists who have abandoned 'linear concepts' altogether, Green contends:

I will tentatively suggest that some sense of line – denaturalised, made multiple, non-dichotomous, formed in trajectories and historically contingent – is still important for understanding a sense of borderli-ness. However, it is crucial that this sense of line not only evokes spatial location, but also time: one of the problems with line is that it appears to be a static entity, fixed in place, without time. (Green 2009: 3)

The contention that a trace, according to Derrida, could be seen to invoke something that never existed, i.e. has been imagined, in order to make sense of the present, is particularly useful and evident in the final section of this chapter. The Diyaliivtsiany construct particular views of the Soviet period to make sense of their own actions in CBST. In doing so, however (and this is particularly pertinent to narrative analysis), such an invocation can also give meaning and understanding to pasts and futures. Green, therefore, concludes that 'Borders are replete with the traces of entities that have never existed. One could easily argue that the concept of nation is classically one of those entities' (Green 2009: 13).

If borders are replete with such traces, it seems clear that in processes of bordering, which are embedded in everyday experiences, we can also uncover traces of these imagined entities. The concepts of time and temporality are thus captured in these ideas of lines and traces. We can also look to Massey's work on space to understand the 'timeliness' of borders. Where Massey's work is particularly useful to our approach to situated, everyday bordering is in exploring the multiplicity which we have highlighted in our discussion of situatedness and in incorporating a sense of dynamism and change. Whilst Derrida sees spaces as 'dead time' (1997: 68), or in which time is stopped, Massey argues that space is entirely lively, constituting a 'simultaneity of stories so far' (Massey 2005: 12). Thus, space is the outcome of multiple relations, unpredictable happenings and everyday activities. This is because, Massey argues, the mere fact of being positioned means a difference from being positioned elsewhere.

Shame and crossing borders between Ukraine and Romania

I turn now to the ethnographic material from my research in the Ukrainian–Romanian borderlands to explore the transtemporality of shame. It is important to establish that Diyaliivtsiany did express shame surrounding their engagement in the trade and particularly relating to their behaviours and use of female bodies to attract attention from Romanian border and customs officials during border crossings. Within public spaces, border-crossing narratives rarely recognised this feeling, thus opportunities for insight into expressions of shame generally came in smaller group conversations or within villagers' homes, such as the situation described in the introduction in relation to Zhenia's tears following her argument with Dima. Zhenia spoke to me on a number of occasions of the discomfort she had felt in trading across the border and the relief of being able to stay at home once she had become pregnant with the couple's son. Sveta, a woman in her late thirties who lived in Diyaliivtsi, showed more visible signs of shame one day when Luchika and I talked to her about trading at her courtyard gate. As Sveta stood there, Luchika explained to me how her friend was very popular with the male border officials because of her buxom figure, at which Sveta blushed, looked down at the ground and tried to move the conversation on to the forthcoming show at the village hall. Whilst

Zhenia's mother-in-law had seen the cross-border small trading as a whole to be shameful, reflecting poor economic status, Sveta's blushes appeared to relate to the description of her behaviour during the border crossing. There was also a sense that trading was shameful not only because it highlighted the poor economic status of particular families in the village, but also because it evidenced on a day-to-day basis Ukraine's own reduced economic conditions in relation to neighbouring Romania. I thus seek to explore shame as relational across these scales, as well as temporally in relation to Diyalivtsyany narratives of pasts, presents and futures. Consequently, I have divided this discussion into three sub-sections. The first explores shame surrounding the sexualised performances of female bodies, which formed the basis of many crossings and to which Luchika referred in her discussion of Sveta's success. This section seeks to explore how shame is complexly bound up in these attempts to attract sexual attention from Romanian border guards and customs officials. The second section focuses on the phenomenon evident in Zhenia's account of her relationship with her mother-in-law and the view that trading across the border in itself is shameful to the individual as it highlights a low economic status and lack of other employment/income opportunities. Here, I explore how this relates to narratives of and encounters with politics and power. The final sub-section is concerned with how this process of shame-driven present narrative construction necessitates revisions to how the Diyalivtsyany talk about and construct a shared understanding of the Soviet period.

Shame and the everyday sexualised performance of CBST

The sexualised performance involved in CBST at the Ukrainian–Romanian border can be seen to be part of a wider 'sexuality of organisations' (Hearn and Parkin 1987: 3). As in other workplaces, male and female bodies are controlled to (re) produce (in this case primarily Romanian) gendered power relations. According to Hearn and Parkin, this process is evidenced through 'a mass of sexual displays, feelings, fantasies and innuendoes, as part of everyday organizational life' (1987: 3). Therefore, after Crang (1994), the informal spaces of CBST at the Ukrainian–Romanian border reflect other workplaces, in that they are sexualised through the adoption of sexualised work roles. I have previously written about the role of gender in cross-border small trade (Cassidy 2013), focusing on this sexualised performance of the female body and the creation of gendered spaces that prevent female traders from expanding their endeavours and lead to higher profitability for male traders. In this chapter, I want to take a slightly different look at this sexualised performance and consider how it generates shame in both the male and female traders who participate in it. For the people of Diyalivtsi, arousing the sexual desire or interest of the male Romanian border and customs officials lay at the heart of their endeavours. This meant that female border and customs officials were always to be avoided and were often depicted as outsiders in narratives of border crossing, as Luchika explained: 'You can always rely on Adi; I try to go to him. I never go to

that woman, what's her name? She is really strange and she's always reporting us, as well as her colleagues.'

This arousal of interest is central to Probyn's analysis, as well as the ways in which shame 'highlights different levels of interest' (Probyn 2005: x). I suggest that the feigning of interest by Ukrainian traders offers a challenge to understanding the production of shame as the 'firing up' of affect (Tomkins, cited in Kosofsky Sedgwick and Frank 1995: 5). Such an affect would be involuntary, and in this understanding, it helps us to prioritise and determine where to focus our attentions. So in cross-border small trading the feigning of such interest does not have this prerequisite affect and it is the rational mind which dictates the process, as a conversation I overheard in Diyalivtsi between Luchika and Rodika, my host, demonstrates. Luchika was trying to persuade Rodika to start trading cigarettes across the border to generate much-needed income in her single-parent household:

You've got large breasts. You'll have no trouble getting through the border. They like that, the men at the border. You know Sveta? She's just like you. When she started at the border she kept making mistakes, as she didn't know what she was doing. But she was bending down to pack her bag and one of the men noticed her breasts and he helped her. Now she uses them all the time and she has no problems at customs.

This being the case, then why would Diyalivtsyany feel any shame resulting from a spurning of their feigned interests? The answer, of course, lies in the complex social relations and norms, which govern such performances of interest (after Epstein 1984: 48), and also the intersection with the overall activity of trading. Or, perhaps, as Probyn has suggested, this is one of the many forms that interest could take (2005: 15). Whilst the interest in terms of seeking sexual relations with the border official may be feigned, the interest in gaining a 'real' response to the performance is genuine. We have to question whether this differs from an openly flirtatious individual, who frequently seeks the reciprocity of others' interest more out of habit than as a step to establishing relations with the other.

However, when I write of the shaming sexualised performance of cross-border small trading, I am also reminded of Kosofsky Sedgwick's conclusion that shame is in itself performance (2003: 38). Through this performance the subject is somehow brought into being at the very moment of being seen and acknowledged by another. If we think of Luchika and her description of Sveta's border crossing, we see how it is in that acknowledgement of her breasts, this 'noticing' that we sense his interest and perhaps even imagine Sveta's blushes, or as Kosofsky Sedgwick would describe them, her 'blazons of shame' (2003: 36). Yet it is these very signs of shame that open up a bridge – a form of communication – to our interlocutor. So whilst no sexual acts took place, flirtation on the part of female traders and discourses that drew attention to female companions on the part of male traders left them open to shame if their advances were not reciprocated and the necessary interest was not generated by their actions at the border. Whilst bribes were also often paid,

such sexualised performances could also serve to encourage the acceptance of the bribe and to smooth passage through the border. Although many traders appeared confident in these performances at the border, smiling with the officials, laughing and joking, their actions and comments away from the border often gave a different sense of how such encounters invoked shame and made them feel uncomfortable.

This process raises questions concerning the visibility of shame; that is, an understanding which extends beyond the initial blush of shame to incorporate Probyn's suggestion of how we acknowledge and reflect on shame (2005). In fact, what was apparent from how experiences of CBST entered into popular narrative in Diyalivtsi was that little of this type of reflection had in fact taken place and the emergent stories told as jokes/humorous tales within the village generally failed to reflect at all on what brought this shame, but instead constructed a particular version of events that sought to reinforce the inferiority of the Romanian border guards and officials involved. This process was also reflected in how shame shaped narratives of the past. In almost all of these narratives, the Romanian officials become comic, slow, ignorant individuals, duped by the quick wits or audacity of the Ukrainian traders. For example, the references to 'King Kong' reflect this tendency – King Kong is portrayed as big and powerful but easily distracted by the sexualised performance of the traders. Officials who try to obstruct the trade lack intelligence and are dehumanised and unnamed, whereas those who permit the relatively easy passage of traders and goods become 'good guys', like Adi, who is referred to by Luchika in the earlier quote. In fact, Adi was the only official whose real name I heard used in the time I spent in Diyalivtsi and Chernivtsi.

The final aspect of shame relating to sexualised performance referred to above was the involvement of male traders, which challenged normative gendered relations within the local community. This was illustrated by a conversation I had with Zhenia, Luchika's daughter, who until the birth of her son had crossed the border on a regular basis with her husband to trade cigarettes.

I used to cross the border as well, you know? There was one border guard there who really liked me. He knew I was married, as I used to cross with my husband, but he didn't seem to care. Dima encouraged him when he used to comment on me and he was always asking about me after I stopped crossing. I was glad after I had [my son] as I didn't have to cross any more. I didn't like how it felt.

I observed such practices on a number of occasions when travelling with Kostia, a trader from Chernivtsi. On one such trip in 2008, Kostia mentioned a young woman, who had been travelling in Kostia's minibus with her husband. When they reached the border, the customs official commented on the 'pretty girl' and Kostia encouraged the official to approach his minibus and inspect her more closely. The official did not speak to the young woman, but commented only to Kostia, who like many other drivers would seat younger women in the front of the minibus, whilst older women and men sat in the back. However, as with Zhenia's description, there was also an underlying shame, which was revealed by traders, such as Kostia, away

from the border, about their part in these encounters. Many tried to 'undo' their role in discussions afterwards, placing the responsibility for the encounters firmly on the Romanian officials: 'Did you see the way that man [customs official at the border] talked about you? These Romanians are always after Ukrainian girls. They are really terrible. They are all married but they just don't care.'

In his narration of the story, Kostia does not acknowledge his own role. In fact, he actively speaks only of the Romanian official and removes himself completely. The objective of such a comment is clearly to redefine what was observed, to place the emphasis on the official and to avoid feeling shameful himself. Kostia knows that his own behaviour has been witnessed, but in framing the encounter in such a way, he does not need to acknowledge or reflect on this. It is the action of the official which is shameful, and to emphasise this he refers to the man's marital status. Ahmed (2014) argues that on a national level an apology for past shameful actions is to be avoided, as it could be seen as a declaration of responsibility. We can also understand why the villagers in Diyalivtsi never apologise for their behaviour at the border in a similar manner, as a lack of admission of responsibility. The shame that was felt in the act did not need an apology within their society because they all understood that the structural conditions which had brought about the act were not of their own making. At the same time, this does not mean that they do not regret the things they have to do in border crossing, but as Spelman (1997: 104) points out, such regrets do not assume responsibility.

Clandestine and covert activities offer a unique context to Darwin's observation regarding hiding and turning away in shame (cited in Probyn 2005), as cross-border small traders are already hiding. So whilst they may feel the urge to turn away, run or hide even in their border crossings, many stand and willingly face the shame of their encounters with Romanian border and customs officials. Therefore, in uncovering themselves in the process of cross-border small trading, as Luchika describes, female traders become open to shame, but they hide or cover the goods they are carrying across the border. At the heart of shame lies a juxtaposition of self and other, in which shame is of myself but in relation to how I appear to others (Sartre 1956: 221–222). Ahmed extends this to suggest that shame is bound up in a sense of who we are and not what we have done. However, in CBST, the actions of traders are intended to portray a particular sense of who they are – for female traders this means sexually available, so shame arises in this misrepresentation, as most female traders are not actually sexually available. Far from acting as a deterrent in this case, then (Ahmed 2014: 106), subjects collectively break the social ideal within CBST in order to enable and improve their opportunities at the border.

The source of shame for the cross-border small traders in their sexualised performance is evident in both Kostia's and Zhenia's narratives, i.e. social norms of gender relations, particularly after marriage. For the people of Diyalivtsi, gender relations are dominated by heteronormative assumptions and could be seen as restrictive in terms of conversations, never mind flirtations or any kind of attempt

to demonstrate or gain the interest of a member of the opposite sex. As such, lone women were generally absent from social spaces within the village, such as the bar/restaurant or sauna, apart from during particular celebrations or events. Any man or woman who traversed these boundaries of restrictive gender relations would find themselves much gossiped about within the village in order to bring their behaviour back in line with these norms. This process of shaming was therefore also the basis of the shame when the traders sought the sexual attention and interest of the Romanian border officials in their crossings. Of course, the results of shaming for an individual or a community can be both stigmatising or reintegrative (Braithwaite 1989). However, in the case of cross-border small traders, within the local community and as a result of the re-narration of their border crossings, we could argue that the result is neither. The broader context to their shame means that they are able to avoid at least local-level stigmatisation to a certain extent, yet the need to continue to reproduce their households means they are not able to reintegrate into the norms of socio-economic life.

Shame and narratives surrounding the 'body politic'

As I began to suggest above, shame in the Diyalivtsi context was linked for a number of reasons to the local and wider political context. Evidently, shame implies some form of contact, and this is interesting in the Ukrainian–Romanian setting. After 1989, Romania's many years of isolation under Ceauşescu ended, and following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the border opened up for the first time in decades. Whilst initial contact was out of curiosity, for most Ukrainians it confirmed the narratives they had developed about the poor economic conditions in their neighbouring country: as Rodika said: 'People here don't live like poor people. Our way of life is not poor like it is there in Romania.' As this situation has changed in the two decades succeeding the collapse of socialism, so we have seen significant changes in the borderlands as a contact zone; in fact, a whole shifting of the zone itself. Border crossing in the 1990s and early 2000s did not involve shame for Ukrainians. By 2007, rather than being a curiosity, crossing had become a material imperative for the villagers. Tales of border crossing no longer centred on nights spent in local discos but instead focused on the difficulties of negotiating customs with cigarettes, as my neighbour Luchika explains: 'You know that sometimes they will send you back many times. I have to go and leave some cigarettes and try again. I always tell them I have three cartons and I pretend I don't speak Romanian if they ask anything else. Sometimes it can take six attempts, but I get through eventually.' If the narration of shame has the ability to disperse its effects across space to different places, then geographers need to consider this mobility of shame; its transcalarity and the ways in which it is displaced and the resulting relations of shame.

It is the broader understanding of CBST as a shameful occupation illustrated by Zhenia's narrative relating to her mother, which shaped the way in which villagers developed particular narratives surrounding their understanding of power relations

and politics. So whilst shameful acts of border crossing do not threaten the social relations of Dyalivtsi – i.e. they reflect the existing stigmatisation of poorer families, such as Zhenia's – what they do reveal is their centrality in forming a basis for a new set of relations that strengthens the collective identity of the numerous households involved in the trade. The articulation (Crimp 2002: 66) of these narratives creates borders in the local context not only between those who trade and those who do not but also between the villagers and the political elite, who are generally portrayed on the national level, and thus create a separation between who they are and what it is to be Ukrainian. As the political and social elite in Kyiv are discredited, so are their attempts at 'nation building'. Nonetheless, it is in this process that we see evidence of the particularity and generality of shame and how it can be moved from one to the other; transformed from the particular shameful act of individual traders to a broader shame of Ukraine's political elite and its corruption that has led the villagers of Dyalivtsi to such actions. As Probyn might suggest, evident here is 'shame's passage from the physiological level to the sphere in which it becomes political' (2005: 79). She argues for a shame that is felt in individual bodies but also in the body politic. However, what happens in the case of Ukrainian cross-border small traders is that even as a collective they do not have the power to bring about this affect in the body politic. In fact, the body politic can stand amongst them, unshamed, even in full knowledge of their individual shame. In discussing this, I am reminded of the visit of Yulia Tymoshenko to Chernivtsi in September 2008, following severe flooding in the region that had closed the city's large market and source of much income for the region. As she stood on her raised platform in the middle of the flooded market and asked the people what they would have her do to help them, it struck me that here was a body both her own and representationally the body politic that was untouched by the shame, which the Dyalivtsyany and others placed on her in their everyday lives.

The only time during fieldwork that I encountered anyone within the village setting onto whom such a view of politics was projected was when I was summoned one morning to visit a neighbour, 'the policeman', who was rarely seen within the village. He and his wife lived a few doors down on the opposite side of the road, and whilst she was often to be seen out and about in the village, grazing their cow, making purchases in the shop, I had only ever seen him emerge from their courtyard to go out in his car and travel further afield. It became clear when speaking to him that he had little regard for the other villagers. He had been a mid-level policeman in the region prior to his retirement and Maria was his second wife. He had moved to Dyalivtsi after they married. They had one of the village's few 'original' two-storey homes⁶ and on the Sunday I visited, I was informed of his views on Ukrainian politics. Dmitriy was a supporter of Yulia Tymoshenko, whose party at that time was called Bloc Tymoshenko, and he proudly showed me the notebooks and other branded stationery and pamphlets he had from the party. He was keen to impress upon me what an amazing woman and politician she was. However, more

important than Dmitriy's political views was the reaction of my host Rodika when I returned home after the meeting with Dmitriy. 'What did he have to say? Did he talk to you about politics? It's all right for him to occupy himself with politics. He was a policeman, you know? So he has a big pension. He doesn't have to fight for money.' What is interesting here is that those involved in politics are removed from the shame of the everyday border crossing experiences of many of the others in Diyalivtsi and trading in general. Dmitriy is not present in the village narrative-making about trade because he does not participate or feel the shame associated with it. He is free to develop his views of politics separately from the trading activities, which otherwise dominate village life.

Among the issues that repeatedly emerged in Diyalivtsi and beyond were narratives that reflected upon the limited opportunities to create stable futures within Ukraine. In the context of shame, we can understand this as the ways in which the traders may have used their shameful activities in the present to overcome the potential shame and regret of not having done more for the future (after Sykes 2002). A discussion I had with Kostia about his house and his son perhaps best reflects this process.

Yes, my house is outside Chernivtsi. I am building it. There are two floors and a large balcony ... I know there is only me, my wife and my son, but I have to build something for him as well. Who knows what there will be in the future? What if it is still the same? I want to be sure at least he has a house ... somewhere to live. I was always told that this was a safe thing to invest money in ... a house. Other things, I don't know ... I can't control, I suppose.

Kostia's own wife was not involved in CBST and his comments also link to some of the broader gender relations shaping and being shaped by trading. Lehtinen (1998: 56) argues that shame is gender-specific, with women feeling shame inwardly and men outwardly. In the case of cross-border small trading, it is difficult to compare gendered aspects of shame, since the role of male and female traders is different. Women 'know' shame differently in border crossing, because their bodies become the sites of 'interest', so whilst men may engage in the performance, the shame they feel from failure to engage 'interest' in their female companions is not felt at an individual level to the same extent as that of female traders focusing on themselves, and their own bodies. Nonetheless, it could be argued that the broader shame of the act of crossing the border itself could be felt more acutely by male traders because of gendered social norms, which place an emphasis on their role as 'breadwinners'.

Interestingly, Tomkins (cited in Kosofsky Sedgwick and Frank 1995) posits that those who have earlier been an object of shame find it easier to re-experience this later in life. It is almost as if their connection to shame has been established and needs only to be tapped into at a later date. So, for men like Kostia, who had earlier experienced the shame of not being able to provide for his family in Ukraine, the

shame of CBST now forming their main occupation would be experienced more readily:

I used to work in construction with a guy here, but I got tired of working and receiving no pay. Sometimes we would get paid and at other times we wouldn't and I couldn't rely on them. The boss was no good, a drunk. I had to find a way to get money on my own and not to have to rely on people like him. The construction sector is full of them.

Later, Kostia had also struggled as a migrant construction worker in Portugal: 'Many of the Ukrainians there didn't behave themselves whilst we were there, drinking and ... you know. They had a bad reputation there. We tried to just get on with things and ignore them, because we didn't want people to think we were like them.' Shame in border crossing therefore reflected not only the shameful acts of sexualised performance but was relational to a broader shame of having to make such trips to Romania, 'the poorer neighbour'.

In the Ukrainian context we are dealing with a situation similar to that discussed by Blagg (1997) in his study of the Australian justice system's inability to employ reintegrative shaming with aborigines. The system's ability to shame is compromised by its own shameful past treatment of aborigines. Similarly, the shaming agency of the Ukrainian state is compromised by high-level corruption. But shame is not always to be feared. Perhaps the fear arises in the moments before the shaming activity and in the moments before the retelling of that activity, but its burden is lessened by repetition in cross-border small trading and by the reframing of what has been done in the narrative social settings of Diyalivtsi. In such a way, the possibilities for reproach are diminished and, therefore, become less feared. In answer to Probyn's question about how to voice shame without 'reshaming' the objects of shame (2005: 101), I am suggesting that anecdotes and storytelling enable such a 'non-shaming' voice. They are often very public, but fit in with existing oral tradition. This creates at least a normative format, even if the content of the narratives confirm shameful acts.

Through these narratives and anecdotes and also through their widespread collective experience, the fear of contempt associated with admitting shame (Piers 1971) can be alleviated at least within the immediate community. The failure of others to respond to the anecdotes or tales with a smile or laugh could lead to further social isolation (Johnston 2007: 37), but as Luchika's example demonstrates, this was not the case with traders in Diyalivtsi. These narratives had the sense of being well worn, and there was a confidence in the telling of these stories. This perhaps reflects the situation of others in the village who have not been involved in the trading, but may be prone to the shame of others (Kosofsky Sedgwick 2003: 14). 'But in interrupting identification, shame, too, makes identity. In fact, shame and identity remain in very dynamic relation to one another, at once deconstituting and foundational, because shame is both peculiarly contagious and peculiarly individuating' (Kosofsky Sedgwick 2003: 36).

However, unlike Kosofsky Sedgwick (2003: 37), I do not see the relationality emerging from shame as being entirely uncontrollable. The Ukrainian traders I encountered were able to gain some control over the impact of shame within their own communities, even if the impression left at the border was not the one they would have sought. There was a stigma that remained in place across the border, where the traders' ongoing activities fuelled stigmatising discourses about Ukrainians within Romania (Cassidy 2013). However, there was a relationship, which emerged in narratives concerning politics/power and the structural conditions leading to the proliferation of trading. In shifting the blame for trading onto 'the body politic', traders not only alleviated some of the social stigma associated with involvement in the trade locally but also began to link the trade to providing for more stable futures in the context of current instability. This gave a sense that addressing concerns and fears over their families' and communities' futures overshadowed the shame of trading. The economic benefits of the trade were of particular importance to male traders, as Kostia explained, who had struggled to meet the needs of their families through regular employment and migrant work overseas.

Shame and re-narrating the past in contemporary Ukraine

In this final section, I posit that the trade also formed the basis of nostalgia for the Soviet period in Diyalivtsi, which centred around people's ability to work and provide for their families. One day, I was watching a programme about furniture-making in the Soviet period with my host Rodika and she was keen that I understood the quality of the furniture produced at the time. 'Look! Such lovely furniture, and really good quality. I could afford to furnish my house in those days. I could afford everything I needed on my own salary.' Any problems associated with the Soviet period were seemingly under-communicated in Diyalivtsi. A conversation with Zhenia revealed her frustration with how the era is portrayed in the village: 'These people have just forgotten how bad it was. They have forgotten about all the beatings from the brigadier and how we couldn't do anything or go anywhere. All they remember is how much cheaper things were and how stable life was if you went to work, came home and didn't try and change anything.'

As we see in Zhenia's account, the creation of such memories involves having to split such positive aspects from the negative and traumatic elements of the period (Hirsch and Spitzer 2003: 84). For Hirsch and Spitzer, exile denoting temporal and geographical distance enables such a process. In Diyalivtsi, the present situation not only enables but also necessitates and demands that attention be given to the past. In fact, as border crossings continued in the present, such a need, for some, becomes urgent. In Hirsch and Spitzer's work they had to return to the physical location of their memories, a process which both authenticated and challenged the narrative. However, the villagers of Diyalivtsi still inhabit the same location they did during the Soviet period. Consequently, challenges to their narratives, such as Zhenia's, do not necessarily spell the demise of a dominant narrative, when the

need for it is deemed to be greater than these tensions and contradictions. In other words, Zhenia points out that such a positive view of the Soviet period is evidently false, and blames this on 'forgetting'. However, I am suggesting that it is the shame felt in present experiences, derived from cross-border small trading in particular, which not only shapes positive narratives of the past but makes them more important in alleviating shame in the present. This is not an act of 'forgetting' but a purposeful, collective 're-making' of the past.

If ancestral shame can be transgenerational, then so a re-evaluation of a past that counters wider national shame can be reimagined in the present. If pasts take on new 'detail and color' (Probyn 2005: 110) when we explore them in terms of emotion, then we also need to consider that the emotions we feel in the present can shape these details and colour of the past, e.g. what once seemed very negative, something that at the time was to be escaped, can be reimagined as a past with at least some positive elements in the light of a compromised and shameful present. For Ukrainians, just as in colonial settings, this is possible given the recent Soviet past. Such an interpretation really begins to break down and challenge the focus on 'nostalgia' that has been ubiquitous in research on post-Soviet space (Nikolayenko 2008). Whilst such work has acknowledged that views of the Soviet period may have been shaped by economic difficulties associated with post-Soviet (and post-socialist) spaces, none has recognised the presence of shame in this reworking of the past; what we may consider to be a productive (after Warner 1999) outcome of the shame experience in border crossing.

However, the ways in which this narration then interlinks with views of the Soviet period create a much greater sense of how the narrator and the people of Dyalivtsi may become 'alienated tourists' of their pasts (Lambek and Antze 1996). What I posit here is that there is not one temporality to pasts, but many, and that in their narratives the traders and villagers of Dyalivtsi draw connections and move between these spaces within the context of everyday life. In some ways, this is part of Lambek and Antze's 'hermeneutic spiral of interpretation' (1996: xix), whereby one dominant view of the past is re-explored in the context of present events to be replaced by a new, emergent narrative. Away from the border and their trade, Dyalivtsyany are able to layer these past events into a narrative infused with meaning that shapes their consciousness of the present.

Part of this process of alienation links to the relationship with the Ukrainian state discussed in the section above. As Dima, a local shopkeeper, explained to me: 'These Ukrainians cannot run our country, they don't get anything right. I think we will probably just go back to how things were, you know? The East will go back to Russia, the West to Poland and us to Romania.' Therefore, as Blagg (1997) suggests in relation to the Australian state's ability to reintegrate aborigines, so the Ukrainian state's ability to rally its subjects behind an 'ideal' it creates is compromised as well through the shame that is displaced onto it in the narratives assigned by border traders. This does not mean that the desire for the ideal or pride in the nation is

diminished, but instead that the belief that the political elite are the people who can lead the nation to this ideal is questioned. Rather than apologise for the past, which is the colonial perspective from which Ahmed takes her position, Ukrainian traders simply seek to see this elite do better in the present. In spite of regime change in Ukraine – each promising to do better than the last – there is no shift in the material situation in Diyalivtsi, so the shame of border crossing continues. If, as Johnston suggests, pride and shame can be viewed as co-constructed (2007: 33), then we can also understand this co-construction to take place across time and space. Unlike Ahmed's analysis of shameful pasts being appropriated for prideful nationalistic presents, the Ukrainian situation I analyse can be seen to be a co-construction of a prideful past in the context of a shameful present. This can then be linked to feelings of shame and pride in relation to potential futures. The point here is that we cannot understand this process of co-construction outside temporal shifts and change.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that in order to understand the border crossings made by traders in the Ukrainian–Romanian borderlands, we need to consider both shame and transtemporality. I have argued that shame emerges from attempts to elicit sexual interest from Romanian officials by both male and female traders, even though the interest on the part of the traders is feigned and does not reflect real attractions to their interlocutors. However, in both cases, narratives emerge away from the border, which seek not to reflect on the shame of such activities, but to place them in broader political and economic contexts, which transfer the shame to the body politic. At the same time, the use of existing comedic narrative forms of storytelling, particularly anecdotes, helps to alleviate the shame of admitting the activities within the context of the local society, where such performances would usually lead the traders to be the subject of stigmatisation, as they go well beyond the boundaries of what are considered to be appropriate interlocations between men and women. Therefore, friends and neighbours, who could also become stigmatised on a broader level through the trade, are able to contribute to the repositioning of the activities through laughing along with the stories and agreeing with the emphasis and analysis given. Nonetheless, whilst this shifting of the individual to collective is successful on a local level, the traders and community of Diyalivtsi lack the power to impact on or give rise to shame in their intended targets – national-level politicians and 'the body politic' as a whole. However, as the shame becomes relational through narrative across the levels discussed above, so we can also gain insight into how this present shame shapes views of the past and links to the academic literature on memory. The Soviet period is reviewed in the context of the shame felt as subjects of a state, which does not acknowledge its role in creating the shame of every day in CBST. What emerges are narratives of the past that split the negative aspects of life in the Soviet Union from those which are considered to be positive. Such revisions do not go

unchallenged, as we have seen, but were still able to become dominant in Dyalivtsi because of the collective effort to displace and try to move away from the individual and collective shame arising from CBST.

Notes

- 1 Dyalivtsi is a pseudonym for the village in the Chernivets'ka region in which I carried out participant observation in 2007–8.
- 2 The economic importance of the trade was considerable, with almost all households having been touched to some extent either directly or indirectly by these activities (Cassidy 2013).
- 3 Inhabitants of Dyalivtsi.
- 4 According to statistics collected by the village council and dated August 2005.
- 5 In June 2008, cigarettes costed from as little as 30 cents (0.3 euro) per pack of twenty in Ukraine but retailed in Romanian shops across the border from around 1.5 euros per pack of twenty.
- 6 Most two-storey homes had been built after 1991, as a result of funds generated from migrant labour or CBST. The handful of older two-storey homes belonged to those who had occupied positions of authority/power during the Soviet period, such as the head of the collective farm.

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