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*Literature as a form of national therapy. Oh, not  
a bad idea. It's a pity that we don't actually have literature.*

*O. Zabuzhko "Field studies of Ukrainian sex"*

*Let me make it clearer. Does the past exist concretely, in space?  
Is there such a place, such a world of physical objects, where the past still happens?*

*J. Orwell. "1984"*

Philosophy operates with notions like concepts, while literature operates with stories, but both are input products of society, which is the third and indispensable element for the occurrence of another Big Bang. Which forces us to start all over again, but even the word "again" implies the presence of the past (the presence of the past it is!), from which we push ourselves into the "now" (or future). And in order to calculate the weight of the mountain or the depth of the pit into which you jump, you need information about the initial (in the sense of "preliminary") coordinates.

Society - idea - concept; no, idea- concept-society; can also be: concept - society - idea (and what came first: the chicken or the egg?). Everything functions according to its own algorithm and regularity, brings one another into ACTION and flows into one another, so now you can't say which of these concepts was the first because everything is a circle, the only question is which according to Dante?

But the fact is that each of them pushes back from its past, so the idea2 is such only because it either is based on, expands, or opposes idea1, which (perhaps) grows into a concept2 and creates a society2 (this is only a variation of a possible sequence of these concepts ). *So does the past exist concretely, in space?* - you ask.

I understand the concept of "crisis" as follows: it is a "now" moment in which the rules and principles of the past no longer work, or are not known/not understood/not available to us, but new, future principles, are still not fully (or widely) formed: sometimes only on the tips of the tongues of new thinkers, but still inside a closed mouth, because of that the future feels so uncertain, abrupt, im- po-ss-ib-le.

We feel the mood of the masses in everyday habits and rituals (for example, people save money and bread for a "dark day" in some post-Soviet countries, people don't ask about distant relatives in post-Yugoslavian countries) which happens ultimately naturally and automatically, like a reflex to withdraw a hand from a flaming tile. However, only the described and reflected events can give to anyone who asks a deep question WHY we ended up here - the answer.

Literature, particularly great literature, is a changing, influencing, formative tool for predicting, depicting, or reflecting reality and its changes. By articulating, prescribing, NAMED stories (read ideas), we (or not), like Fortinbras, become the only guarantors of their impartial existence. And then, literature is one of the few proofs that there was something before us, and even more, that we were somewhere. It was for a reason that the public burning of books was a frequent practice, as a symbol of the new reality - reality without prosperous, miserable, cultural, barbaric, like that and like this, any, any, but and probably at-one-point-EXISTING (not-yet-dead or at-that-second-dead or immortal?) past.

After all, of course, everything exists even in the air we breathe, only, for example, the permeated with shackle and lead totalitarian wind from the east, south, or west, which can sometimes settle (since once it did) with an iron dome on, let's say, the state (the so-called wind of change), did not bring any information from the past at all. Rather, coming, this wind tried to destroy it: that historical, literary, genetic memory, which somehow, floating in the air, strengthened forever in us (and to whom and how would you prove it??), but if that is the aim and it comes to destroy this - then the wind has to destroy the people themselves-carriers of still not completely proceed by blood oxygen from the past. While "just walking along the Moskva River", Scorpions' vocalist Klaus Maine felt, and then depicted in a song, the eternal problem of every historical arena, new regime, crisis of self-identification, and global vice. He sang: "distant memories are buried in the past, forever." *But does the past exist concretely, in space?* And if the answer is yes, then, maybe the past is us in yesterday, who still exist today in this space, in this country, in this house; if so - then killing, burying, silencing the past is killing, burying, silencing ourselves, which means breaking and translating ourselves into a state of nothingness; means: stop existing.

And if the answer is no, then why, in this case, do we live the past again and again (in its various variations), remembering and reviving centuries-old conflicts, calling places that no longer exist on the map our homeland. It turns out that the space for the existence of the past is us.

However, in my opinion, the past is a physical space that can be measured (I will say more: the common size of this wonderful space is 84×108 millimeters (you can even try to calculate the perimeter!)) and calculated in the physical world (and this essay is an attempt to learn more about measurements in the metaphysical world) is literature. *"Literature as a form of national therapy"* - wrote Zabuzhko. And I thought: how to concisely and correctly contextualize this quote, without retelling the literary work from which it is taken? And, I by expanding the sentence (albeit briefly), added: "Literature as a form of national therapy" - wrote Zabuzhko, a Ukrainian essayist, writer and, let's face it, a native of the Ukrainian SSR. Perhaps it is worth contextualizing the Ukrainian SSR as well. Let's try to use Wikipedia: "Vasyl Semenovych Stus is a Ukrainian poet in his sixties, translator, publicist, prose writer, thinker, literary critic, literary critic. He was repressed by the Soviet dictatorship for his belief in the need to preserve and develop Ukrainian culture, his work was banned and partially destroyed, and he himself was sentenced to a long stay in prison, where he died."(1)

His last work was never published, and its magical destruction (is it already destroyed, if I am still talking about ITS "non-existence"?) remains a mystery to this day.

So, when the Croatian writer Slavenka Drakulic, faced with a crisis of national (respectively, individual) identity after the breakup of Yugoslavia, wrote: "Growing up under

communism means always living in the present."(2), Oksana Zabuzhko, having conducted dialogues either with her or, rather, with herself, in turn, wrote: "I used to interpret this mysterious ability to "switch buttons" (delete!) as a specific product of totalitarian regimes that turn everyone socially from an active individual to an executor of a mystified collective will..."(3). Both works, by the way, were published in 1995.

Commenting on Drakulich, I consider it appropriate to note that communism, after all, is an idea based also on the constant expectation of an ephemeral "future" that is about to arrive (which also played a role in answering the question of why the "present" was so difficult), but the idea of the past, as "distant memory" which "are buried in the past, forever" is clearly a symptom of the regime.

So, returning to Ukrainian (the Ukrainian example is used as a pattern) history, at the time when Ukraine gained independence, a big and painful question arose: who are we? Due to the lack of evidence of *national therapy* (honest national literature), Ukrainians (according to general human nature, like all "born long before physical birth") found themselves thrown into a context with behavioral patterns, views, and means, literary and historically unexplained. Because of this so many Ukrainian philosophers, even now, interpret the national question not as "who are we?", but as "who are we not?", because when there is so little real evidence that Ukrainians are (or were) "somebody" in general due to the annihilation of the intelligence, literature, and culture, the solution is to push back from the statement "there are no Ukrainians"/"Ukrainians are nobody"/"Ukrainians are Russians"/"Ukrainians are Belarusians".

It is not for nothing that the Ministry of Truth carefully checked each publication, day by day cleaning up and shaping the news narrative, preventing the development of the analytical thinking of society, and after analyzing even 10 issues of the annual newspaper, it was possible to understand something about its essence (including as a whole and individually) and answer the question: who am I? who are we?

The crisis of self-identity is an international and important phenomenon, even if, in the course of political manipulations, self-identity even in democratic countries follows the so-called "set economic courses", because it is "not the time" to remind one's, say, partners, of the uncomfortable past. But the unarticulated, erased and perforated past is the one that dwells in us the deepest. Perhaps the Christian idea of "atonement" (read "naming", "confession") of sins (fortunately, they were never alone to be many) is about this. That is why the physical space of books and literature exists: for self-reflection, self-definition, and self-explanation.

Many countries, no: many people, in an announced or silenced state, experience a shred of self-identity from generation to generation. But after checking the Cambridge Dictionary(4), I found out that one of the definitions of "crisis" says that a crisis is "a moment during a serious illness when there is the possibility of suddenly getting either better or worse."

But it can get better only when the disease is detected and then, through attempts and failures, desire and struggle, it is possible to be cured. *So does the past exist concretely, in space?* Yes, and the space for it is us.

## Bibliography

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