

BRIEF REPORT

Phenomenological Perspective in Researching Immigrant Children's Experience

Authors' Contribution:Batuchina A.^{1 ABDF}, Straksiene G.^{1 EFG}

A – Study design;

B – Data collection;

C – Statistical analysis;

D – Data interpretation;

E – Manuscript preparation;

F – Literature search;

G – Funds collection

¹ Klaipeda University, Lithuania**Received:** 29.10.2019; **Accepted:** 20.11.2019; **Published:** 30.11.2019**Background and
Aim of Study:****Abstract**

Migration is a complicated and complex social phenomenon. Arriving in a new country, immigrants find themselves in a strange, unfamiliar environment; simultaneously they may have left behind almost everything that they had in their home country. Such a life event changes the relationship between a person and their things: immigrants lose their connection with the things left behind, while new connections with the things of the host country have yet to be forged. This is a natural process of an adult's migration. But what is it like for a child?

The aim of the study: to reflect the experiences of immigrant children and their changing relationship with things in phenomenological methodology approach.

Material and Methods:

The article is based on hermeneutic phenomenology, when children migrating is analysed as a phenomenon. In order to investigate such phenomena phenomenology as a research strategy is applied. Its data were collected using several methods. The main method was the unstructured phenomenological interview with children and adults who due to economic reasons left their home country and came to live in another while being children together with their parents (or one of them). Having changed the country, they had also to change schools.

Results:

Show the uniqueness of the children migration experience and reflects it in the phenomenological matter.

Conclusions:

Children migration experience is often underestimated from the position of grown-ups, while children view migration differently, as they see things, objects and space around them differently (they see, feel and imagine world in a totally unique manner). That is why children taken out of their usual and normal lifestyle, home space facing totally different world, with strange and unfamiliar things, facing the world of unpredictability, temporality and eternity, fantasy and dreams, where misunderstood, or unnoticed are left alone, even while being surrounded by people.

Keywords:

migration, phenomenology, children, qualitative research, things.

Copyright:

© 2019 Batuchina A., Straksiene G. Published by Archives of International Journal of Science Annals

DOI and UDC

DOI 10.26697/ijsa.2019.1-2.04; UDC 159.9.018.7:314.151.3-053.2/5

Conflict of interests:

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interests

Peer review:

Double-blind review

Source of support:

Departmental sources

**Information about
the authors:**

Batuchina Aleksandra (Corresponding Author) – <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0012-9421>; aleksandra.ro@gmail.com; Doctor of Philosophy in Education, Lecturer, Center for Social Geography and Regional Studies; Klaipeda University; Klaipeda, Lithuania.

Strakšienė Giedre – <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8533-0276>; Doctor of Philosophy in Education, Senior Researcher, Social Change Study Centre; Klaipeda University; Klaipeda, Lithuania.

Introduction

Why should child migration be analyzed phenomenologically? There will be no surprise if I say that migration itself is a very complicated life event for a person: you have to leave your country, your friends, even your culture, everything you know, and then move yourself and belongings to a place which is strange and alien. For grown-ups, such a move might be decided by the promise of improved living conditions, economic and social benefits. But for a child, such decisions are often made without them, or without an understanding of such adult concerns. At the same time children experiences of migration, perhaps due to their status as dependents, may be underestimated, and thus they may be left alone with it. Grynberg's (2012) dissertation, *Disjunctions and Contradictions: An Exploration of My Childhood Migration Experience through Visual Art*, provides a powerful example of how some may the minimize the meaning of migration for a child.

All around us is the tinkle of china and the reassuring murmur of people politely conversing. I turn around to look at the man I've been seated next to at this conference dinner. We acknowledge each other with a smile, and anxiously wonder how to begin the conversation.

"Hello, my name is Jonathan."

"Pleased to meet you, I'm Carmella, I respond."

I watch as his eyes register this information: "That's an unusual name. Are you from an Italian background?"

"No, actually Carmella is also an Israeli name, I was born there."

A small frown now appears between his eyes as his gaze moves somewhat furtively over my hair, clothes and jewelry.

"Really! I never would have picked you as a migrant, you don't even have a hint of a foreign accent."

I smile, and think that he is too polite to add, "and you don't look like you come from anywhere else."

I decide to offer some more information: "Well, I arrived in Melbourne when I was eight years old."

"Oh," he sighs, the furrows between his eyes softening, "then you are not a real migrant, you were just a child." (Grynberg, 2012, p. 1).

Jonathan discounts Carmella's migrant experience as less than real, since she was but a child when she moved. So while the adult experience of migration may be recognized as an event of significance and thus worthy of attention, the uniqueness of the same event for a child may be overlooked. Indeed, despite the abundance of research on migration, child migration has been given little analysis from a pedagogical perspective. Where it has been investigated, some researchers have turned to hermeneutic phenomenology to provide insight to this often memorable event for a child. Topics have included: longing for home (Winning, 1990), speaking of home (Winning, 1991), physical self-awareness of a child-migrant (Kirova & Emme, 2008), the child's perception of home when away from home (Dachyshyn, 2013), the experience of studying in a foreign language (Lee, 2005), and what home is when we have left it (Norris, 1990).

The aim of the study. To reflect the experiences of immigrant children and their changing relationship with things in phenomenological methodology approach.

Materials and Methods

For the current study, data were collected using several methods. The main method was the unstructured phenomenological interview with 17 children and adults who have or used to have the experience as a child of leaving their home country and coming to live in another one together with their parents (or care-givers, however in this research there were no such participants) legally and voluntarily. Changing of a country means that they had also to change schools. Various additional data on children's migrating were collected from the published material including autobiographies, publicly available online sources, essays written specially for the current investigation, and phenomenological literature. The article presents only a small part of the research results; they reflect the migrant child's experiences when facing new things in a new country and a school upon arrival at a new country. The data were analyzed following van Manen's (2014) recommendations. The data collection focused on concrete lived experience descriptions of migrant children, referring to which the anecdotes were written, in order to recreate the lived experiences of migrant children, but now in a "transcended form" (van Manen, 2014, p. 250).

Results and Discussion

Things and Migration

A person is closely related to the things that surround him or her. Merleau-Ponty (2004) shows that people are honeyed together with things. Such bonding denotes the relationship between the object and us and reveals that we are surrounded by things or forced to treat and see them only in a certain way. A thing has a certain peculiarity to allure, to attract, or to stimulate interest of those standing before it. The things of our world are not simply neutral objects that are in front of us or that are designed to fill our field of vision. Each of them symbolizes or imposes a certain way of being or doing, and provoking reactions that may be positive, negative, or otherwise. People's tastes, lifestyle, attitudes, and the world are reflected in the things that are chosen to surround him.

Our relationship with things is not distant: each thing affects our bodies and the way we live (Merleau-Ponty, 2004). As van den Berg (1972, p. 32) declares, "who wants to become acquainted with man, should listen to the language spoken by the things in his experience". In other words, a person does not live on an empty planet, but is always around things, and these things show up differently depending on who that person is, where he lives, what he likes and prefers. Heidegger also presents the idea of the significance of a thing in human's life. According to Heidegger (1971), "being human is dwelling, that is, staying with and among things" (p. 157). The life of a human being is not possible without things. Following this idea, a human is always surrounded by things that create his or her life or things are "chosen" according to one's life.

In the context of migration, and especially in the context of child migration, things can have a particular significance. The significance of things becomes especially relevant in the moments of departure from the native country and arrival at a new country. Things that are important to a child may be left when they are leaving the home country. Maybe the child had certain memories related to them or they might have also created his or her routine and daily life. They were used by the child, had lain nearby, were constantly available and therefore were taken for granted, such things could be a favorite book from the library to read before bed, old sneakers to play on the wet grass, a tree house to hide from the parents, even an old bench in the backyard, where the first cigarette was tried. All these things were always nearby and always “available”. When leaving the home country, things, their shape, volume, functionality, and even the human relationship with them receive a different meaning. Things and everything that is associated with them are again evaluated by the child; they are no longer taken for granted: the book is left at the hometown library – there is nothing to read before bed, old sneakers are thrown away – you cannot play on the wet grass with the new ones, the tree house is sold together with the house, where the bench is placed. All these things are left at the home country, and only a few are taken with me and I need to decide which ones.

Leaving a country people ask themselves: will I need or use this thing? What does it mean to me? Does it bring me important memories? In the reflections person “touches” each thing – asking himself whether he or she will be able to or should take it with him or her or not. And if one thing has material value (if its price is high – it cannot be left; if it is convenient and necessary – it will be useful in a new country), others have emotional value – remind of the connection with people who are left in the homeland; such case is described in the anecdote provided below:

In one box I have two little glass angels and two walnuts, sprayed with silver paint. I received them from my aunt and cousin for Christmas, and I have been putting them at a visible spot. I really can’t leave them, so I want to take them with me. I have a little sun drawn by my stepfather. When I was a teenager, I came up with a nickname for myself: “Little Sun”. He and my mother always knew how to make fun of me and when it was my birthday, he drew a little sun on a small piece of paper – but it’s me, really. He drew an upturned nose, this dimple on the chin; he drew big thick eyebrows, protruding ears. That’s me. I will never throw it away (Agne).

Agne tells about some things, some bagatelles that she has brought from her home country. For many, these things may appear with no value; but to her, who has left not only her home country but also her friends and relatives; these things have meaning provided by memories and relations with the left ones. Each thing has its own story and is related to a certain event in her life moment. A child sees in those things not a bunch of rubbish, she sees memories, faces of her friends, and she sees her old life in them: she is examining the things one by one, and she is making decisions on each piece, like

selecting and choosing memories from her home country to take with her. And those memories are put in a thing, which she is able to carry with her through out her journey to the new country, the country, with no old friends, no relatives and no memories, she used to have. Meanwhile, the things that are left behind and cannot be taken away may be still in connection with the child even after one’s departure. On the one hand, the things left behind become alienated; they are considered no longer belonging to the person. However, such alienation occurs not immediately, or may not appear at all. The left things still have an intimate connection that does not disappear in one day or just after leaving the things: my former house, my bed, my wardrobe and my desk. The thing is called “My” even if it no longer officially belongs to me, but may belong to another person now. From my own perspective, I spent my childhood and teenage years in an apartment uptown, and even though it is already 15 years since I have lived there, every time I have a chance to drive through that neighbourhood, I am trying to see how my old room’s window looks like, repeating in my head “my room”. A similar connection between a thing and a child can be seen in the following anecdote. Roma, a migrant girl shared how much she misses her bed, thus, revealing how important this left thing was to her.

Most of all I miss my bed. I have a new bed in my new country, but I can’t sleep in it. I can’t sleep deeply: when you close your eyes and it’s already morning. In my bed I always slept like this, I knew how to. Now I don’t (Roma).

Roma describes the connection between her, as a human, and a bed, as a thing. While living in another country and using other things she remembers how important the things are that were left in her homeland. In other words, the left thing no longer belongs to a child but the connection with it remains even after losing it. Heidegger (1971) pointed out aptly that a person may appreciate home (the home world) more when he or she loses it: perhaps then he or she becomes fully aware of what home is and means in his or her life. A child who has just lost or intends to lose things reflects on their meaning, and in such a way discovers them anew and the thing is no longer taken for granted.

All in all, upon arrival at another country, new things may yet have a different meaning. New things may be inevitably “discovered” in a new country in the course of migration. They force us to reconsider our place in the new space and to recall memories; they make us nostalgic, fearful, or even remorseful. Things become symbols that show the former life and future opportunities and reflect the current emotional and existential state. In this context, a question arises – how a migrant child experiences things when he or she has just arrived at the new country?

Things without Connection: Strangeness

Having left one’s native country, in a new country, the migrant child may face new things. These things have to replace the usual (old) things in their purpose and function. The first encounter with some new things may make a child feel confused or even uncomfortable. However, the question is what does a child experience when acquainting with new things in a new country? In

the anecdote provided below a migrant girl describes her surprise on the first day at school. She seems surprised by the seen things.

Everything is so strange, the doors of the rooms are with windows, so everyone could look at our class, the tables are round and they are standing in the middle of the class, not facing the board. In my school we have desks for two. The teacher stands in front and turns to the desks. When I went to my first English class I was amused, in an English classroom there were three old posters of the Harry Potter movie, while in a French class the poster from the book *Les Misérables*, the face of a girl. In Spanish, there were posters of a cat Garfield and a picture of a Buddha. When I saw all this I've lost my voice, I could not speak. I was staring at this poster during the entire lecture. I was panicking (Darja).

Darja tells how surprising she finds the arrangement of things in the school. Surrounded by new things she feels unusual. Their arrangement and even their presence in a school classroom are not acceptable and strange to her. What lies behind the strangeness of the things? How does a child experience that strangeness of things? Maybe a child sees strangeness as something unknown? Or something that might appear as unusual, since have never been seen? Let's look at the etiological meanings of the word strange.

The English word strange (adj.) means "from elsewhere, foreign, unknown, and unfamiliar". Clear relation can be seen with the term alien which has similar meanings – strange, foreign; an alien, stranger, foreigner. Another term that has a similar meaning is unusual, which is composed of a negative particle un and the verb use, and embraces such meanings as use, custom, practice, employment, skill, and habit. If something is unusual, we cannot or we do not know how to use it at first. At the same time, if something is strange it is usually not mine, and as a result, when we talk about something what is strange it is important to consider the meaning of the word own (mine, our, yours), since what is not mine, what does not belong to me, might be someone else's, stranger's. Analyzing the word own etymologically, it is clear that it is associated with the words to possess, have; rule, be in command of; have authority over. Of these synonyms it is seen that a thing to which we are accustomed to is as if under our control, we own it and use it. In other words, when we say, it is mine (my house, my pen, my school), we mean some certain personal relation with this object: this is a house I grew up in, or this is the pen I bought today, or this is a school I went to; the purpose, use, function, and occupied place of these things – all are familiar to us. Whereas things which we are not accustomed to are strange, foreign, unknown, and with no connection, since we have nothing in common with these things.

In migration terms strange and own actualize and their meanings become especially prevalent. Everything what is associated with the homeland is familiar, while new things of the immigration country become strange. Upon arrival in a new country, the old thinking – usual things and the awareness of their purpose, location and the need to use them – distorts; a child does not know what to do with things (how to behave with them) in a new world, what place in this world a certain thing occupies, what

is its purpose, peculiarity. Even though a child sees usual things: a table, chairs, a desk, all the things which were in his or her home country, but the child does not see himself or herself in, among or using these things. The child does not understand his or her relation with the thing.

A similar point is represented in Schutz's (1945) work "The Stranger". The author states that the discovery that things in the strangers' new surroundings look quite different from what he or she expected them to be at home is frequently the first shock to the stranger's confidence in the validity of his or her habitual "thinking as usual" (Schutz, 1945, p. 501). Interpreting this Schutz's theme of "thinking as usual" within the materialistic meaning, it can be seen that a migrant person finds himself or herself near things that he or she does not know, they seem strange, alien, not "my own": the usual perception of the world seems broken, and the vision of the new world is yet vague and unclear. Such word perception might be similar for children. As Langeveld (1984, p. 216) writes "the child lives in a world which provides him or her with a ready-made structure of qualities that offers security". He also says (Langevel, 1984, p. 220): "child's recognition of the world and her knowledge of the world are largely dependent on the help or influence of others". It means if a child raised in a world of things (in the contexts of migration, world means home country), which he or she knew (learning from his or her birth and in the following life), appears in a new ready-made world of things, but which he or she knows nothing of and has problems acquainting with it, especially without other people around, the child loses his or her security, the child remains helpless. If a grown up person, due to his or her longer and richer life experience, might foreknow what one or another thing has in it, a child needs help to restore his or her "thinking as usual" state. Meanwhile, upon arrival in a new country, the child's "thinking as usual" is broken, since his or her perception of the world still relies on his or her native country and the country's values, while the new world is somewhat unknown to him or her, therefore, seemingly unpredictable.

In a collection of poems "No Return Address: A Collection of Poems", Waters (2015) dwells on migration experiences. In "No return address", the author is grateful for the memories of his former life, for the world before emigration, which he had, which was known to him, and which was predictable:

"Bob, I am grateful for your

Three letter name.

It's another reminder of home

Of a world predictable

Of a life I had".

The former world is presented as predictable, and its things are known, they remind of home where a person can feel like in a homeland. Meanwhile, the world of migration is unpredictable: unknown things do not allow predicting what will happen, and therefore, things may force the person to be always prepared or even fearful. For children, when seeing unusual things that do not meet the perception of their world, they cannot predict and foresee what their life will be in a new country, in a new school. The vision for the future, which is based on

conventional thinking of the native country, does not match the seen things and their position, their need or function in the new country, and restoration of such vision requires effort and even help of the others.

Things without Connection: Temporality

New things however, do not immediately become one's own. As it is described above, new things are strange, can be intimidating because of their unpredictability or may force to imagine a different life, which will be in a new country, and/or force to be aware of where he or she is, as describe in the following anecdote:

Our new house is an old building with several floors. The flooring on the second floor is unstable, squeaking. We go to the toilet or shower on the second floor in groups so it isn't so scary because we have someone to hold hands. All children slept in one room, the small children slept in one bed, the older on the floor. The house seemed so dark, like those haunted houses in movies. We can't get used to it. It seemed to me like a ghost (Gabriele).

Gabriele was 11 years old when her family and she moved to another country. She describes her memories about the first family house in the new country; the memories of that house are very vague, as if through a mist. Her recollection is of an old, unstable structure: it seems that the house could have collapsed at any time. The family lived there for more than 2 years, quite a long time to get used to this place and get familiar with it. But for Gabriele, this new house never became a home, for all that time the girl had imagined it as a temporal shelter – a place where she is just sleeping over for a few nights before some permanent place is going to be found. But what is really behind that temporality? By the term temporality I mean state of being for the short or long period of time and this period has a certain moment of ending, while something that lasts forever or always does not have an ending, speaking without any philosophical reasoning.

From the theoretical point of view migration can be defined as three types: short-term, long-term and circular immigration (Europos Migracijos Tinklas, 2010). The short-term immigration is defined as the migration with a particular motive or purpose (work, study, family reunion, etc.), after which people return to the country of origin or move further to another country (Europos Migracijos Tinklas, 2010). Meanwhile, long-term (permanent) migration is migration with the goal to stay permanently in the target country. Circular migration in general can be understood as a cycle of migration which is comprised of a migrant person's departure from his or her country of origin, stay for some time in another country, return to his or her country of origin and repeated departure to a foreign country (Europos Migracijos Tinklas, 2010). Long-term and circular migrations are different from short-term migration in the length of the period of departure. However, from the phenomenological point of view, each migration, regardless of its purpose and the planned time of departure, especially at the beginning of migration stage, might be seen as temporal, in other words, a person might feel that this period of migration might end one day and he or she will go back home. Such temporality lies within the feelings of the human

being, his or her seen environment and surrounding things.

In terms of things, as van Manen (2014, p. 306–307) writes, “materiality may guide our reflection to ask how things are experienced. The things are our world in its material thing like reality.” Thus, things are a world that reflects our vision and point of view we might say our inner state. To the contrary, a relation with the things may depend on our point of views and experiences. Gabriele felt that the house she and her family stayed in was not inhabited, there were none of the girl's things, no scent of a family, and no common home intimacy. She felt that she would not live in this house for the whole time, even though that was the first plan. In his essay on the “Hotel Room”, van Lennep (1987) describes how much intimate relations are in one or another person's home. Things, walls, the whole house is filled with the scent, feelings, emotions that reflect the life of a person living there. Van Lennep (1987) writes: We always enter someone's living room for the first time with a certain hesitation or embarrassment, that is into the room he “inhabits,” not because this room is an expression of himself, but because this dwelling refers to a much more intimate relation than any expression by him could ever be (p. 210).

Like to a guest, to another person who gets into a new place, this place, even if it is called one's own (mine), has so “little” in itself (p. 212) of what can be called one's own (my) room. No human being belongs here: it does not have his or her scent, nor chosen things. This relation with the house shows the girl's relation with her migration. She sees herself as a temporal guest in the new world of the new country. She does not recognize herself in this world, since there is no relation with this country. A new house, new things in this house are the symbols of her being new in this country.

Meanwhile, van Lennep (1987) writes that even a tourist coming to a new city and living in a hotel room after a long day spent in the city comes back to the room to rest and calls it “my room”. As the author writes, the pronoun “my” in the expression “my room” does not express my possession of it, but precisely a relation between me and the room. On the very first moment a person enters a new room, he or she begins “the process of inhabiting the room” (p. 212). And after some time in the course of inhabiting “the relation of intimacy has been created between this room and me” (p. 212). Van Lennep (1987) writes about experiences of grown-up people who, after a certain period of time in a new place, assume control over things, they become dependent on him or her, and in this way become more and more “his” or “hers”. And maybe with time such “dependency” replaces a sense of temporality, and an immigrant becomes more and more integrated into the new life.

The Imagined Value of Things

New things may bring the opposite feelings, create the illusion of a better life, and a vision for the future that soon may appear to be incorrect. Such a situation is described in an anecdote from Grynberg's (2012) dissertation:

My father and uncle were waiting for us at Essendon airport. My uncle drove us to the flat my father had rented for us. It was on the ground floor located in a

large building which faced St Kilda Road, a wide, leafy boulevard leading into the central business district of Melbourne. The block of flats consisted of three floors and had a number of exterior art decor features, such as faceted forms of decoration around its entrances and rounded corners on the upper storey verandas. It represented a stark contrast to the rectangular unadorned building which had been my home in Israel. When I entered the flat for the first time my interest centred around a black telephone which sat on a little ledge in the hallway. Although the telephone was not connected, I was overwhelmed by the idea that we were in possession of such an instrument which, until then, I had rarely seen in a private home. Its presence signified to me that Australia was a place of untold possible luxury. The reality of our life in Melbourne, however, proved to be somewhat different (Grynberg, 2012, pp. 24-25).

Children tend to imagine. Our imagination allows our mind to create a new image in the head. Imagination helps us to create, work, think, even feel, smell and taste things without these things being in front of us. There will be nothing surprising if I say that imagination is an important ability of our mind. Also, children use their imagination differently from grown-ups: they imagine, dream even create fantasies in their head more often. As Welsh (2013, p. 18) writes: "in dreaming children do not assume that the dream in contrast to waking reality is not real. They haven't yet learned to assume that their intimate experiences are "unreal" whereas the extended matter is "real". As a result, children create views in their head they start to believe in. Consequently, things, which were previously not seen very often and are the symbols of prosperity in the home country, in a child's mind move him or her into a richer world. Children, in comparison to grown-ups, have not yet learned to distinguish between a hidden meaning, direct meaning. Children are straight forward. If he or she sees a phone or other things, which he or she believes is a symbol of wealth, it means for a child that he or she is rich, even if the reality is proving different. The phone symbolises future life, which is better, richer and, perhaps, happier. As Merleau-Ponty (2005, p. 413) suggests, "The perception of other people and the intersubjective world is problematic only for adults. The child lives in a world which he unhesitatingly believes accessible to all around him... he subjects neither his thoughts, in which he believes as they present themselves, to any sort of criticism. He has no knowledge of points of view. For him men are empty heads turned towards one single, self-evident world where everything takes place, even dreams, which are, he thinks, in his room, and even thinking, since it is not distinct from words." Upon arrival at a new country and seeing new things, migrant children can create images of a better life in the future. This is especially true if the things and their "value" are very different from the life in the home country. Thus, migration as the end of problems, hardships or other challenges of the old life (associated with the finances received) is associated with "different" things. However things might bring not only projections of a better life, but also force a child to get lost in his or her own mind:

The first stop after our flight was in Stockholm and it took about one hour. My younger brother as usual had to visit one place. He does this everywhere he sees the toilet sign. I watched him and directed him to the right door with my eyes. However, just after 20 seconds, he ran out of the toilet as if he was scolded. He began to mumble nervously: "There are so many things hanging around, I don't know how to use them". I stood up and I went with him. I was used to Soviet toilets, so there's no surprise to me.

At first I thought that we went through the wrong door, and instead got into the plumbing museum of the twenty-first century. How? The walls were not drawn? On the floor there were no litter lying around? Seats were attached to the toilets, and next to them. Oh, my God! – Toilet paper. Shock therapy began there, where we had least expected it. (Michail)

Michail has lived his entire childhood and a great part of adolescence in the country which is radically different from the country to which he has emigrated. The boy and his family moved to the United States from the Soviet Union who had just collapsed. The new space that Michail saw unexpectedly stunned him by its distinctiveness, because it was very different from the space in his native country.

Michail leaves one country and comes to another, while each country is not only a political structure with geographical boundaries and its own history and traditions, but also a distinctive world, with a specific space, peculiar rules, and a way of life, and also specific things. These new things are the signs of the new world, showing that transition was made. A child without knowing these new signs is comparing with what he knew from the world he used to live in. The values he had through his short life are vanishing, replaced by the new cultural specifics. What is seen in the Michail's lived experience that a child starts to question why the surrounding which he expected to be absolutely inconspicuous brought amazement and misunderstandings in his own head the same time. He thought that a toilet without toilet paper, with painted in graffiti walls, and broken taps are normal and an ordinary thing, whereas an opposite situation, when toilets are clean and not broken, is a unique and even unreal. The things he saw blew up his old thinking, and understandings, and living standards he had, turned over his understanding of what is normal and abnormal, what is good and what is bad, forcing him to remember that he is really migrating.

Conclusions

The child moving from one country to another leaves his or her familiar world, and finds him or herself in a strange new world. The boundaries between these worlds are only partially drawn by the state border. Evidence of a different world lies in each new thing encountered, as a result every new thing is not taken for granted anymore. Thus, a child starts to question every new thing he or she sees, as he or she starts to question every meaning this thing brings. Those things become that new world the child has entered. Someone might say: "but this is the same for adults. Adults also question everything that they don't know". But we should not



forget how dependent children are and how complicated and unknown the new world appears to them. Same time children migration experience is often underestimated from the position of grown-ups, while children view migration differently, as they see things, objects and space around them differently. They do question world around them, while do not take it for granted, they see, feel and imagine world in a totally unique manner. That is why children taken out of their usual and normal lifestyle, home space facing totally different world, with strange and unfamiliar things, facing the world of unpredictability, temporality and eternity, fantasy and dreams, where misunderstood, or unnoticed are left alone, even while being surrounded by people.

References

- Child Migration Research Network. (n.d.) Migration with families. Retrieved from http://www.childmigration.net/Main_theme_home?selection=Migration_with_families
- Dachyshyn, D. M. (2013). Children dwelling in the absence of home. *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology*, 12(1), 1–10.
- Europos migracijos tinklas. (2010). *Apykaitinė ir laikinoji migracija* [Circular and temporary migration]. Retrieved from http://www.iom.lt/images/publikacijos/failai/1427788797_apykaitine_ir_laikinoji_migracija_nacionaline_studija_2011_lt.pdf [in Lithuanian]
- Grynberg, C. (2012). *Disjunctions and contradictions: An exploration of my childhood migration experience through visual art* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from <https://researchbank.rmit.edu.au/view/rmit:160307>
- Heidegger, M. (1971). Building dwelling thinking. In A. Hofstadter (Trans.), *Poetry, language, thought* (pp. 145–161). New York, NY: Harper & Row.
- Kirova, A., & Emme, M. (2008). Fotonovela as a research tool in image-based participatory research with immigrant children. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 7(2), 35–57.
- Langeveld, M. J. (1984). How does child experience the world of things? *Phenomenology and Pedagogy*, 2(3), 215–223.
- Lee, K. (2005). *A traveler's tale: The experience of study in a foreign language* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (2004). *The World of Perception*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (2005). *Phenomenology of perception*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Norris, C. (1990) Stories of paradise what is home when we have left it. *Phenomenology + Pedagogy*, 8, 237–244. Retrieved from <https://journals.library.ualberta.ca/pandp/index.php/pandp/article/view/15141/11962>
- Schutz, A. (1945). The stranger: An essay in social psychology. *Collected papers II: Studies in Social Theory* (pp. 91–105). The Hague: Nijhoff.
- Suárez-Orozco, C., Gaytán, F. X., Bang, H. J., Pakes, J., O'Connor, E., & Rhodes, J. (2010). Academic trajectories of newcomer immigrant youth. *Developmental Psychology*, 46(3), 602–618.
- Van den Berg, J. H. (1972). *A different existence: Principles of phenomenological psychopathology*. Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press.
- Van Lennep, D. J. (1987). The hotel room. In J. J. Kockelmans (Ed.), *Phenomenological Psychology* (pp. 209–215). Dordrecht: Springer. doi:10.1007/978-94-009-3589-1_10
- Van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. Albany, NY: State University of New York.
- Van Manen, M. (2007). Phenomenology of practice. *Phenomenology & Practice*, 1(1), 11–30. Retrieved from <https://journals.library.ualberta.ca/pandpr/index.php/pandpr/article/view/19803/15314>
- Van Manen, M. (2014). *Phenomenology of practice. Meaning-Giving Methods in Phenomenological Research and Writing*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.
- Waters, W. (2015). No return address. In *No Return Address: A Collection of Poems*. Kuwait: Pluma Migrant Writers Guild.
- Welsh, T. (2013). *The child as natural phenomenologist: primal and primary experience in Merleau-Ponty's psychology*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.
- Winning, A. (1990). Homesickness. *Phenomenology + Pedagogy*, 8, 245–258. Retrieved from <https://journals.library.ualberta.ca/pandp/index.php/pandp/article/view/15139/11960>
- Winning, A. (1991). The speaking of home. *Phenomenology + Pedagogy*, 9, 172–181. Retrieved from <https://journals.library.ualberta.ca/pandp/index.php/pandp/article/view/15157/11978>

Cite this article as:

Batuchina, A., & Straksiene, G. (2019). Phenomenological Perspective in Researching Immigrant Children's Experience. *International Journal of Science Annals*, 2(1-2), 26–32. doi:10.26697/ijsa.2019.1-2.04

The electronic version of this article is the complete one and can be found online at: <http://ijsa.culturehealth.org/en/archive>
This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/deed.en>).