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Some Notes Towards the Writing of a History of the Ukrainian Literary Institution in Canada

On 30 December 1898 an Alberta-Ukrainian farmer named Ivan Zbura composed a 111-line poem titled "Kanadiiski emigranty" (Canadian emigrants). Written in simple rhymes, it celebrated the superiority of life in the New World over that in the Old Country, where the peasant's lot was said to be 'as bitter as horse-radish.' When the poem subsequently appeared two months later in the Jersey City newspaper, *Svoboda* (Liberty), it simultaneously announced the birth of a Canadian poetry written in Ukrainian, and the sprouting of an overseas branch of Ukrainian belles-lettres.¹

Although Ivan Zbura never seriously pursued his literary inclinations, his lead was soon followed by other aspiring Ukrainian writers in Canada. In 1900 the short story "Z hlybyny propasty" (From the Depths of the Abyss), by Sava Chernetsky, became the inaugural work of immigrant prose-fiction, while a decade later the first indigenous plays were written for the Ukrainian Canadian stage by Jacob Maydannik and Ivan Bodrug. By that time, pioneer Ukrainian authors were well on the way to establishing one of Canada's most vigorous and enduring ethnic literatures, which is now, somewhat amazingly, entering its ninth consecutive decade as a New World cultural phenomenon.

- 1 See the fragment reproduced in Slavutych, Y. ed. *Antolohiia ukrains'koi poezii v Kanady*, 1898-1972. A partial translation can also be found in Yar Slavutych's essay, "Expectations and Reality in Ukrainian Pioneer Writing," *Identifications: Ethnicity and the Writer in Canada* ed. J. Balan, 15. It is suggested in the above article that Father Nestor Dmytriw's fictionalized sketches about the life of Ukrainian-Canadian pioneers — printed in the United States in 1897 under the title *Kanadiiska Rus'* (*Canadian Rus'*) — should be considered to have inaugurated Ukrainian writing in Canada. However, since the author was an American resident on a visit to this country, his prose narratives more properly belong to those works about Canada by Ukrainians.

Actually, the roots of Ukrainian-Canadian literature can be traced back to the villages of late nineteenth-century Western Ukraine. For the Galician and Bukovynian peasants who settled on the prairies in 1892 brought with them a vibrant oral culture, which they spontaneously adapted and enriched with Canadian themes to produce a hybrid folklore. This oral legacy — embracing anonymous songs, sayings, and anecdotes — provided much of the impetus behind the initial flowering of a written literature in the Ukrainian language. That the first anthology of creative writing by immigrant authors was a collection of folk lyrics entitled *Pisni pro Kanadu i Avstriiu* (Songs about Canada and Austria) — compiled in 1908 by Teodor Fedyk — bespeaks the fundamental debt that Ukrainian-Canadian literature owes to the oral tradition.

The impact of this landmark volume can be gauged from the fact that it eventually went through six editions, the final, expanded version (in 1927) running 139 pages and containing thirty songs by fifteen authors. In its various incarnations the book is said to have sold some 50,000 copies in all, having acquired in the course of its long publishing history the title *Pisni imigrantiv pro Staryi i Novyi Krai* (Immigrant songs about the Old and New Land).²

The oral tradition has continued to inform the works of successive generations of Ukrainian Canadian authors. It figures prominently, for instance, in Ilia Kiriak's epic novel, *Syny zemli* (Sons of the Soil), which appeared in three volumes during the Second World War. More recently, it has provided a fertile source of inspiration for the Saskatchewan poet, Andrew Suknaski, whose verse narratives incorporate the quirky speech and the colourful tales of the pioneers as well as their Canadian-born children.³

However, it is questionable how much longer Ukrainian writers will be able to go on tapping the native treasury of proverbs, folksongs, and stories — at least in their natural form. Since the social and linguistic basis of a living Ukrainian folk culture has virtually disappeared from the rural bloc settlements of Western Canada, books are rapidly becoming the only repository of the oral legacy in the New World. For a long time immigrant communities on the prairies, by virtue of their cohesiveness and relative isolation, were able to preserve many ancestral customs and values. But now

the Ukrainian-Canadian village has become part of the global village, with all of its social and cultural ramifications.

A not insignificant amount of research has been done on Ukrainian folklore in Canada, most notably by J.B. Rudnycky and Robert (Bohdan) Klymasz. Not surprisingly, much of the effort to date has been concentrated on the compilation of documentary materials, before they disappear along with the generation that still remembers the old ways. Although some collections of folk literature have been made available in various books and journals, there are many sources which have not been published or described even in summary fashion. Furthermore, no one has yet attempted to examine the long and close relationship between the oral tradition and Ukrainian-Canadian belles-lettres.⁴ This is but one of the many tasks still waiting to be performed by an ethnographer or qualified literary specialist.

Initially, the creative efforts of all New World authors had to be sent for publication to the United States, where *Svoboda* had successfully been launched as far back as 1893. Because Canadian presses lacked the necessary fonts they couldn't be employed for Cyrillic printing jobs, though at least one effort is said to have been made to use the Latin script for rendering Ukrainian.⁵ The founding of a Ukrainian printery in Winnipeg in the fall of 1903 removed this technical barrier to literary expression, making it possible to issue the newspaper *Kanadiiskyi farmer* (Canadian Farmer) the following year, and soon after, the first books and pamphlets.

A number of similar operations were subsequently established in Winnipeg and Edmonton in the course of the next decade, some of them succumbing to financial difficulties before they really got off the ground. However, with the help of patronage from political and religious groups interested in having a vehicle for their ideas, pioneer Ukrainian publishers were in time able to achieve a measure of economic stability. Newspapers, almanacs, and specialized journals then started coming out with increasing regularity, and as they proliferated it became desirable to fill them with something more than just journalist copy and advertising.

Thus, on the pages of the pioneer press there began to appear the poems and stories of immigrant authors, along with the classic works of Shevchenko and Franko, and popular works of nineteenth-century Ukrainian literature.

4 One extensive body of tapes that has not yet been transcribed for easy access is the research done during the early 1970's by field-workers for the Canadian Ukrainian Youth Association as part of Project S.U.C.H. (Save the Ukrainian Canadian Heritage). For a discussion of some of the problems in the handling of the folkloric materials see: Woycenko, Olha, *Bowdlerization of Ukrainian Letters*, Slavistica No. 86 (Toronto: Ukrainian Language Association 1969) 13-14.

5 This apparently occurred in 1902 in rural Alberta.

2 Since the total number of Ukrainians in Canada in 1927 was probably less than 200,000, a press run of fifty thousand copies seems rather inflated. It is cited in Mykyta Mandryka's *History of Ukrainian Writing in Canada*, which is not known for its accuracy or scholarly objectivity.

3 The three volumes of *Syny zemli* were published by Trident Press of Winnipeg between 1939 and 1945. A brutally abridged and clumsily translated version of it was published in English by Ryerson Press of Toronto in 1959, and has since been reprinted twice by Trident Press. For a discussion of the Ukrainian elements in Andrew Suknaski's poetry, see my essay "Voices from the Canadian steppe: the poetry of Andrew Suknaski," *Studium Ucrainica IV* (Ottawa: U of Ottawa P 1988).

In this manner both a platform and a forum was created for the talents of would-be writers, at the same time setting the stage for the related development of reviewing and the critical discussion of belles-lettres. It is impossible to underestimate the importance of the early periodicals for stimulating creative activity, since they provided an immediate and accessible outlet for people who wanted to write. Indeed, Ukrainian-Canadian newspapers and serials remain to this day major venues for new writing and criticism, having played a key role in the development of New World Ukrainian literature from the moment of its inception.

Although book publishing was for obvious reasons initially devoted to secular and religious texts of a practical nature, the issuing of *Songs about Canada and Austria* revealed that by 1908 there was a market for printed material that was not strictly utilitarian.⁶ The enthusiastic response to this anthology undoubtedly encouraged the publication of a similar collection the following year, when Paul Crath's (Pavlo Krat) equally successful *Sotsialistychni pisni* (Socialist Songs) came out in the first of its many editions. Other literary titles then started to roll off the increasingly active presses, including Canadian editions of Old World authors, and translations from various languages. Many of the books from this 'incunabula' phase are now difficult or impossible to find, having been modest efforts produced on cheap paper that are today falling apart.

Notwithstanding the multiple reprintings of the earliest collections of songs, and the relative success of individual works like *Sons of the Soil*, indigenous creative writing has always accounted for only a small percentage of the Ukrainian books ever put out in Canada. With the exception of Ulas Samchuk, who emigrated in 1948 and had begun his publishing career in Ukraine, no immigrant author has been able to survive on literary income alone. Indeed, the printing of most belletristic volumes has been paid for by the creators themselves, though some have managed to cover the cost of their collections through individual and institutional sponsorship.

With books there came itinerant booksellers and then the first permanent bookstores, starting with Winnipeg's Rus'ka Knyharnia, founded in 1906. They in turn initiated some of their own publishing ventures to meet consumer demand, since imported texts were not always available or suited to the needs and tastes of immigrant readers. Winnipeg and Edmonton became the chief centres of the pioneer Ukrainian book trade, and the latter city still boasts having the best-stocked *knyharnia* outside the borders of Ukraine. Besides having provided local book-lovers with a place to shop and to socialize with kindred spirits, these institutions also reached rural readers

through the mail order services that were an essential part of their operations.⁷ Thus, along with the newspapers, they helped to create a web of intellectual community, particularly among the emerging New World intelligentsia of teachers, professionals, and clergymen.

Besides individual customers, booksellers also served an extensive network of reading societies and libraries, which sprang up in urban ghettos, rural communities, and even in remote company towns. These associations were frequently started by political or religious organizers as part of a recruitment strategy and to promote immigrant 'enlightenment.' Such bodies often sponsored concerts, plays, cultural and social activities, and thus library-based groupings often became the nucleus around which National Homes and Prosvita halls were later built.

In the early part of this century reading societies, or *chytalnia*'s, played an especially important role in the socialization of illiterate immigrants.⁸ The need for *chytalnia* was revealed in 1916; a study undertaken in several Ukrainian-Canadian settlements found that 48% of the men and 70% of the women were unable to read or write in any language. Furthermore, a large percentage of those who were trained in literacy skills had only the most rudimentary of educations, frequently acquired on an informal basis in the Austro-Hungarian army, or at the hands of a village cantor. Obviously, pioneer-era authors faced a major problem in trying to establish a viable literature under such conditions, and it is a tribute to their determination and resourcefulness that Ukrainian belles-lettres took root so quickly in the new land.

Somewhat ironically, the widespread lack of schooling among the immigrants was probably a key factor behind the incredible flowering of Ukrainian-language theatre in Canada during the first half of this century. And while plays brought over from the Old Country always remained the staple dramatic fare presented in most community halls, original scripts were also produced by local theatrical groups as soon as they became available in the teens and twenties.

Most of the indigenous works for the Ukrainian-Canadian stage were written between 1910 and 1942, when twenty-six playwrights authored over 100 new plays, more than a third of which were set in Canada. A few of

7 The first mail order bookstore was founded by Apolinary Novak at the beginning of 1909. Called Ukrain's'ka Knyharnia, it carried a selection of titles imported from the Ukraine.

8 At meetings of reading societies those who were literate would read aloud from books and newspapers for the benefit of non-readers. Such bodies also served as discussion groups and therefore as vehicles of socialization, often serving as the springboard of other political and cultural activities.

6 A Ukrainian-English dictionary and a prayer-book were among the first books to be published in Canada.

these even managed to find their way into the repertoires of companies in Western Ukraine, marking one of the rare occasions when immigrant literature reached an audience in the homeland. Among the more prominent playwrights active in the hey-day of Ukrainian amateur and semi-professional theatre in Canada were Dmytro Hunkevych, Semen Kowbel, Oleksander Luhovyi, and the ill-fated Communist militant, Myroslav Irchan. The latter made the mistake of moving to Soviet Ukraine in 1929 and was liquidated in the Stalinist purges; he has since come to be regarded as one of the most important minor writers of the Ukrainian cultural renaissance of the twenties.⁹

Just as the interwar immigrants energized and reshaped many of the institutions founded by their predecessors, the Ukrainian refugees who came after the Second World War altered many of the existing cultural and political structures. For instance, Ukrainian-language theatre was in serious decline when the 'Displaced Persons' (DPs) arrived from post-war Europe, but the newcomers succeeded in partially reviving it, at least in central Canada. There, experienced theatre people among the expatriates mounted traditional Ukrainian plays as well as translations from the modern European repertoire. A handful of original works was also produced after this immigration, primarily in the form of cabaret-style revues. Nevertheless, the emigres were unable to prevent the continued decline of the Ukrainian-Canadian stage, and by 1970 theatrical presentations had become sporadic events confined largely to Toronto and Winnipeg.

Of perhaps greater significance were two movie dramas, *Maria* and *Nikolyne zabudu* (I Shall Never Forget), ambitiously conceived and made in the 1960s by Canuck productions of Oshawa. Based on the wartime struggles of the highly-politicized DPs, these feature-length films reflected an effort to keep pace with changing times by utilizing a contemporary medium. While movies are obviously too expensive to have any real potential as an outlet for Ukrainian-language writing in Canada, this short-lived attempt to start an indigenous cinema is only slightly more quixotic than the New World literary endeavour as a whole.¹⁰

Interestingly, every wave of new arrivals has tried to modernize immigrant culture so as to keep it relevant, including a recent group of dynamic young Ukrainians who migrated from Poland in the late 1970s. They have been behind the establishment of an avant-garde theatrical troupe and a similarly

unconventional literary-artistic magazine, but as yet it is too early to speculate about the ultimate impact of these ventures.

Some of the features of the Ukrainian literary institution in Canada should by now be apparent from the above sketch of its development, which has been characterized by fairly consistent growth and a steady movement towards greater sophistication. Essentially, each generation of immigrants has made a distinctive contribution to the evolving literary culture and tradition and in the process transforming Ukrainian-Canadian belles-lettres from a cottage industry to a semi-professional activity.

Of course, to speak of a Ukrainian-Canadian literary 'tradition' implies the existence of a substantial body of writing, exhibiting a degree of continuity and aesthetic progression through several distinguishable phases. It also assumes the functioning of a historical and critical component within the broader creative process, whereby writers can consciously draw on or reject the achievements of both their peers and their literary antecedents. As yet, the sense of such a tradition is extremely vague when it comes to Ukrainian-Canadian literature, but an awareness of it has now been propagated for almost fifty years.

Indigenous literary criticism seems to have originated in the teens and twenties, evolving from the occasional reporting on plays to more formal discussions of Ukrainian authors and their works. The pioneering critic as such is said to have been Zygmunt Bychynsky, who edited *Kanadiiskyi farmer* in 1908, before teaching in Alberta for a year. Although he subsequently moved to the United States he retained his literary connections with Canada and thus continued to nurture immigrant writing from the other side of the border. Besides editing the first Ukrainian-Canadian calendar, *Poselentsi* (The settler), and translating the novel *Ben Hur*, he assisted the early writers Teodor Fedyk and Dmytro Rarakhovsky in their publishing endeavours.

When other, better-educated immigrants arrived after the First World War, they perceptibly raised editorial standards and the overall level of literary culture. By means of lectures and popular articles people, like the writer Mykyta Mandryka and the teacher Volodymyr Kupchenko, elevated the public appreciation and knowledge of mainstream Ukrainian literature. However, these amateur 'scholars' and 'critics' can most accurately be described as enthusiasts or *'knyholuby'*, whose primary role was popularizers of Ukrainian books and authors. Their essays served a useful purpose because they were not beyond the reach of ordinary readers, but by the same token were not distinguished by their originality or grasp of theory.

Critical activity again took a giant leap forward in the wake of the Second World War when a cadre of academics, editors, and professional writers suddenly appeared on the scene. With their educational polish and

9 Irchan was then rehabilitated by the Soviet literary establishment during the Khrushchev thaw of the late fifties.

10 Two feature-length Ukrainian "talkies" were also shot in North America during the 1930's but these were film versions of the classic operettas, *Natalka Poltavka* and *Zaporozhets' za Dunaiem*.

sophistication the emigres soon emerged in the forefront of Ukrainian-Canadian society, filling the vacuum that was opening up with the demise of the now aging pioneers. Not surprisingly, literary life took on a new complexion under the influence of the refugees, with Toronto coming to rival Winnipeg as the most important centre of Ukrainian-language publishing in Canada.

As products of modern European culture and survivors of an era marked by depression, famine, war, and totalitarianism, the newcomers were a very different breed from the 'old Canadians,' whom they sometimes viewed with patronizing disdain. Still, a handful of emigre intellectuals began to take an interest in the achievements of those who had preceded them, intrigued by the 'hyphenated' Ukrainian identity that had begun to coalesce between 1939 and 1945. For community involvement in the Canadian war effort had fostered a sense of self-awareness and ethnic pride, as had the commemorations around the fiftieth anniversary of Ukrainian settlement in Canada.

In fact, it was the latter occasion which seems to have prompted research into the history of Ukrainian-Canadian writing, the landmark work in this regard being the 1941 collection, *Antol'ogija ukrains'koho pys'menstva v Kanadi* (Anthology of The [sic] Ukrainian Literature in Canada). Compiled under the editorship of Mykyta Mandryka and containing extensive biographic and bibliographic information, it was identified as "Volume One" but unfortunately no other installments ever followed it into print. The next gathering together of immigrant writing only occurred seventeen years later, when Peter Krawchuk's *Poety Kanady* (The Poets of Canada) was issued in the Soviet Ukraine under the aegis of the Khrushchev thaw.

Krawchuk subsequently edited a second anthology in 1971 and is also the author of three monographs on various aspects of Ukrainian Canadian literature.¹¹ A member of the interwar generation and a leading figure in the pro-Soviet wing of the Ukrainian community, his otherwise interesting books are severely undermined by their blatant Communist bias. In 1968, Mykyta Mandryka (who belonged to the nationalist camp) attempted to produce a more comprehensive history of Ukrainian writing in Canada, but it, too, is seriously flawed by its political partisanship, inaccuracies, and lack of objectivity.¹²

It was during the 1960s that Michael Marunchak and Yar Slavutych of the postwar immigration began the more systematic and intensive study of the Ukrainian literary institution in Canada. While they have significantly

expanded the scope and depth of investigation with their on-going efforts in this field, much basic research remains to be done before it will be possible to obtain a detailed understanding of Ukrainian-Canadian literature.

For example, to date no one has examined the development of Ukrainian literary scholarship and criticism in Canada. The above account is only a sketch based on my superficial knowledge in the area and sources that do not inspire a great deal of confidence. One suspects that it, along with other extant summaries of the history of Ukrainian-Canadian literature, will eventually have to undergo substantial revision after more primary research has been completed.¹³

Notwithstanding the short-comings of the available articles and books on Ukrainian writing in Canada, they have succeeded in establishing Ukrainian-Canadian literature as a subject worthy of further exploration. And while the quantity of works in the area (mostly in Ukrainian) may, at a glance, seem to be impressive, they barely scratch the surface in terms of defining and describing this particular literature 'of lesser diffusion.' To that end, the assembling of anthologies must be regarded as an essential first step in the critical process, since such compilations not only help to promote the cataloguing of works and writers, but provide a first glimpse of the larger picture.

Fortunately, the anthologizing of Ukrainian writing in Canada has been continued by Yar Slavutych and more recently by Oleksa Hay Holowka, and consequently a better sense of the totality of Ukrainian-Canadian literature is slowly beginning to emerge. But so far, access to Ukrainian-language texts has been largely restricted to native speakers and Slavonic specialists, since only a small number of works have appeared in translation, and these almost exclusively in English.¹⁴ Watson Kirkconnell deserves credit for being the first to address this problem, albeit in a token way, having produced English versions of a few poems by Ukrainian immigrant authors in the course of his work on ethnic literatures.¹⁵ Michael Luchkovich also deserves mention for

13 A case in point is my entry on Ukrainian writing in Canada in *The Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature*, which is still largely based on the work of the older generation.

Having gradually assembled a fairly respectable library in the field, and begun some of my own investigations of different topics, I am evermore aware of the inadequacies of the sources cited in the bibliography included with this paper.

14 I am unaware of there being any French renderings of Ukrainian-Canadian works.

However, a small number of immigrant authors have had some of their writings translated into other languages.

15 The first work of Ukrainian-Canadian literature to appear in English was a long poem by Michael Gowda, "To Canada." It was translated by E. W. Thompson (undoubtedly with the help of the author, who was frequently employed as an interpreter) and published in 1905 in a Boston newspaper. This, however, seems to have been an isolated incident.

11 This includes a book on Myroslav Irchan which is not cited in the accompanying bibliography.

12 See, for instance, his curt dismissal of Myroslav Irchan.

his rendering of *Sons of the Soil*, which Ryerson Press published in an abridged form in 1959.

The first English-language anthology of Ukrainian writing in Canada finally appeared in 1987, when the post-1945 era was covered in *Yarnarok*, co-edited by myself and the late Yuri Klynovy (Stefanyk). As such, it marks the beginning of an attempt to integrate Ukrainian-language writing into the body of Canadian literature, the pioneer and interwar periods remaining to be dealt with in subsequent compilations. It is, of course, crucial that non-Ukrainian critics and historians gain entry into the Ukrainian-Canadian literary subculture, as they have an important contribution to make in terms of its elucidation and assessment.

The fact that Ukrainians have lagged behind other groups in issuing collections of immigrant writing in translation gives them a certain advantage because they have the benefit of the experience of earlier 'ethnic' anthologies. In fact, it would be very useful to develop a co-ordinated strategy in the editing of such books, since the acceptance of some common principles now would greatly facilitate the eventual comparative analysis of minority language literatures in Canada. With this in mind, I would like to make the following suggestions, which specifically apply to New World belles-lettres produced in the non-official languages.

First, it should be recognized that immigrant writing, like colonial literature in general, often has extra-literary value. It may be of historical, ethnographic, or sociological interest, even if it is of dubious aesthetic quality. Thus, while it may enhance a community's self-image to publish only the 'best' of its literary achievements, such an approach does not necessarily serve the interests of either literary or ethnic scholarship. Besides putting the cart before the horse, it could ultimately discourage the translation of less-polished work which is nevertheless of use to specialists. For this reason, inaugural anthologies should attempt to offer a broad cross-section rather than an exclusive slice — especially since editors can present a distorted picture by virtue of their prejudices and loyalties.

Next, I would argue that some priorities should be established to aid in the selection of works for anthologization, as it is both impractical and unnecessary to make absolutely everything available in translation. This is particularly the case with authors who are obviously minor figures in a literary subculture, yet deserve to be represented because they provide a context by which to judge and situate the more outstanding talents.

For example, undistinguished pieces that register a response to a writer's Canadian experience, or express an attitude to the homeland, should be translated sooner than mediocre works on the more general themes of literature (i.e., love, death, truth, etc.). Poems and stories that deal with the New World environment should also be given precedence, to help determine

if there are any cultural peculiarities among immigrant groups in their feelings towards Canadian nature. Of course, the purpose of focusing on the latter would be to test the paradigms developed by Atwood, Frye, and Jones, as not all newcomers may share what seems to be the European view of the Canadian landscape.

Literature exploring inter-ethnic relations would likewise be of greater use than insipid meditations on the meaning of life, as would poems and stories that say something about gender politics, since they may be of value for feminist research. Of course, not every writer will have written on these subjects, and works that are striking for other reasons should not be ignored in the selection process. It's just that with the lesser literary lights of a community, even doggerel on certain topics can be of some worth to critics and historians.

Similarly, it would be helpful to standardize the contributors' notes included in ethnic anthologies, so that it will be possible to develop a profile of each minority group's writers, and where they settled in Canada.¹⁶ Besides a complete bibliography of published works, relevant biographical details should be provided, such as occupation, level of education, and immigration history, as well as a list of known pseudonyms. Ideally, critical writings — by or about the author — and any translating activity should also be recorded, along with other information that might assist critics working on a particular individual.

Finally, anthologies should contain somewhere the source and original title of every work reproduced in translation in order to facilitate the location and comparison of texts in the case of unilingual compilations. If these criteria were met by all collections of ethnic literature they would be of great benefit to scholars working in the field, and would hasten the time when it will be possible to prepare a general account of immigrant writing in the non-official languages.

In the case of smaller immigrant communities with a compact or finite literature in the native language, summary anthologies, if well-prepared, could serve as a primary reference for all subsequent critical endeavours. However, because of the sheer bulk and the sustained nature of Ukrainian-Canadian belles-lettres, a comprehensive bibliography is an essential undertaking in the documentation of Ukrainian-language publishing. While Yar Slavutych has made a useful start on assembling such a catalogue, his compendium is deficient in ways that will need to be addressed by further research.

16 Information on the latter will undoubtedly yield some interesting results in terms of the regional characteristics of ethnic literature.

To begin with, his list is unfortunately restricted to books published in Canada, giving an incomplete picture of the output of immigrant authors who have had works issued in the Ukraine and elsewhere. He also fails to include information that would shed light on the broader literary culture, such as details about edition size and features of graphic design.¹⁷ The latter, for instance, would be invaluable for a study of the evolution of the Ukrainian-Canadian book trade, while the former would assist in gauging the audience that immigrant writers have been able to reach with their creative efforts.

Besides original poetry, essays, plays, short and long fiction, a definitive bibliography should also cover other types of writing, including literary memoirs, biographies, critical studies, and translations produced by Ukrainian writers in Canada. Travelogues, immigrant autobiographies, and non-fictional works aimed at the general reader similarly fall within the legitimate interest of those studying Ukrainian-Canadian letters. Finally, in addition to reference books such as dictionaries, grammars, and collections of anecdotes and proverbs, there should be separate sections on Old Country literature and translations that appeared in Canadian editions. These form an integral part of the intellectual context in which immigrant authors worked and provide an indication of public tastes and needs, if only as perceived by the publishers.

How-to books, technical manuals, scholarly texts, polemical tracts, political and theological literature could then be dealt with in a companion volume devoted to other books written or published in Canada. A complete bibliography, if properly done, could serve as the basis for a history of Ukrainian-Canadian printing which in turn would comprise a key chapter in any overview of immigrant literary development. A detailed bibliography of New World belles-lettres would further make it possible to quantify the literature to be studied, as well as permit some statistical breakdowns according to genre and publishing patterns.

The final major task which needs to be performed as a preliminary step in documenting the Ukrainian literary institution in Canada concerns the identification of all the creative and relevant writing scattered throughout a host of periodical publications. This would not only involve noting the poems and stories produced by immigrant authors but would require the listing of critical articles, reviews, obituaries of writers, and reprinted works

from the Ukrainian literary tradition. While a tedious and rather daunting chore, such a survey is absolutely crucial, since much New World writing has never appeared anywhere else but on the pages of the press. Moreover, there is much to be learned from a careful sifting of newspapers, calendars, and journals, which in many cases record what little information is still available about a particular work or author.

Thus, three 'mega-projects' await the attention of anyone interested in contributing towards the writing of a serious history of Ukrainian literature in Canada. And although some useful work has already been done on each of these endeavours, the documentation, study, and integration of Ukrainian immigrant belles-lettres is still in the early stages. Since the ground that needs to be covered is quite substantial, many more hands need to be recruited to this field of study. Presently only a small number of people are engaged in research in the area, none of them on a full-time basis. Lecturers on both Canadian and Ukrainian literature could be of great assistance in this regard by encouraging gifted students with a grasp of the language to consider working on any aspect of New World writing.

There are many fundamental questions that need to be answered in connection with Ukrainian-Canadian literature. First and foremost is its relationship with the mainstream Ukrainian literary tradition, especially as the latter has evolved in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. To what extent has immigrant writing mirrored intellectual and cultural developments in the homeland and manifested independent features in the course of its ninety-year Canadian history? Similarly, have Ukrainian-Canadian authors contributed any works that are unique or of lasting quality to the ancestral tradition, or is their legacy a mere footnote that is chiefly of interest for what it records about life in the diaspora?

It would be very useful to have some linguistic investigations into the literary Ukrainian language in Canada, looking at such things as orthography, dialectal characteristics, and the influence of English. This is an area where Soviet-Ukrainian scholars could play a most helpful role, since their ears will be better tuned to the peculiarities of New World Ukrainian. Indeed, literary critics from Ukraine have an important contribution to make to the entire study of Ukrainian-Canadian letters, especially if they are able to shake off some of the ideological dogmatism that has plagued much of Soviet scholarship until now.

It could also be revealing to compare Ukrainian writing in Canada with that of kindred communities in the United States and South America, both of which have produced a fairly extensive literature over roughly the same period in time. However, of more immediate concern are the contrasts and similarities between Ukrainian and other minority-language literatures in Canada. This is why the preparation of translations must proceed as quickly

17 Whether or not the book is illustrated, contains a photo of the author, credits the designer or cover artist—these are examples of the kind of data a bibliography should contain, as well as dimensions and technical features. Other things that should be noted are as follows: advertisements, biographical sketches, quotes from reviews, dedications, cover price, prefaces, and appeals to the reader.

as possible, for any understanding of Ukrainian-Canadian literature will have to be in part determined within the context of Canadian writing as a whole.

Of related interest is the interaction between ethnic authors and the mainstream literary culture of Canada, which in the Ukrainian case seems to have begun when Paul Crath (Pavlo Krat) and Florence Randall Livesay collaborated on the landmark volume, *Songs of Ukraina* (1915). Similarly, several immigrant authors have now rendered a variety of works by both better and lesser known Canadian writers, Borys Oleksandriv's 1972 anthology, *Poeziia/Kvebek: Vid Sen-Deni-Garneau do nashykh zhiv (Poetry/Quebec: From Saint Denys-Garneau to our times)*, being a remarkable achievement in this regard.

Of course, a whole new dimension has also opened up in terms of the Canadian-born writers who work in English but are of Ukrainian descent.¹⁸ Vera Lysenko was the first to succeed in crossing the linguistic Rubicon with *Men in Sheepskin Coats* (1947), though at the time she was attacked by many Ukrainians for what were considered to be her Communist views. Since then, a small army of Ukrainian Canadians have made their mark on the literary mainstream, among them George Ryga, Myrna Kostash, Ted Galay, Andrew Suknaski, and most recently, Janice Kulyk Keefer. This development deserves consideration in the larger history of Ukrainian letters in Canada, but falls outside the scope of the present discussion, which is focused on writing in the ancestral language.

It is noteworthy that not a single immigrant author from Ukraine has been successfully able to make the transition to writing in English or French, as is the case with such well-known figures as Frederick Philip Grove, Henry Kreisel, and Robert Zend. Nor has any Ukrainian-language writer born in Canada made a notable contribution working in their mother tongue, and while this may yet change, any such individuals are bound to be the exception to the rule. Writing in Ukrainian seems to have been almost entirely an immigrant phenomenon, though attempts are still being made to extend the tradition into the next generation.

There are ominous signs that the creation of an indigenous Ukrainian-language literature may be slowly coming to an end, due to the relentless statistical decline of fluent speakers and active readers. Some eighty percent of ethnic Ukrainians are now born in Canada, and while a sense of community is still fairly strong, a working knowledge of the ancestral language is rapidly becoming the preserve of a small and highly-educated elite.

The influx of young Ukrainian refugees from Poland has injected some new blood into the literary milieu, but the newcomers (approximately 1200)

are not sufficiently numerous to reverse the overall trend toward the eventual disappearance of a Canadian literature in Ukrainian. The bilingual school system, while perhaps increasing the size of a potential audience for Ukrainian writing, does not seem likely to contribute significantly to its continued development in Canada. With the dramatic changes currently taking place in Soviet Ukraine it is still possible that Ukrainian-language literature in the New World may yet get a new lease on life. This could result from either a large wave of immigration, or as a side-effect of the national and linguistic revival presently under way in Ukraine. Meanwhile, there is much work to be done on what has already been accomplished in the realm of Ukrainian-Canadian belles-lettres, and much to be gained by taking on the challenges that this labour entails.

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Art of Intrusion: Macaronicism in Ukrainian-Canadian Literature

The primary and most crucial aspect of any literary tradition is its use of language as a form of artistic expression. The encounter of two literatures sometimes marks the triumph of one literary language but never without some degree of impact, penetration or influence on the part of the losing party. In practice, languages and literatures in contact situations always set the scene for mutual exchange, divergence and innovation.¹ This process is clearly characteristic of Ukrainian-Canadian literature in English² where macaronic features serve to bridge the old and the new in ways that are fresh and extraordinary.

Due to a host of acculturative factors³, most writers of Ukrainian descent who are born in Canada tend to write in English. Like George Ryga, they prefer to use their Ukrainian entity as "merely the mood or coloration through which I will view things. It is certainly not linguistic."⁴ Vera Lysenko, Canada's first major writer of Ukrainian descent to work in English, betrayed strong ties to her mother tongue in both her novels. In *Yellow Boots* (1954) Lysenko digresses into an etymological excursus on the

1 In this regard, see, for example, George G. Grabowicz, *Toward a History of Ukrainian Literature* (Cambridge: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute 1981) 98-100.

Macaronicism, as one of the literary dynamics of contact situations, was also noted by Roman Jakobson in his study of a "Medieval Mock Mystery (The Old Czech Unguentarius)" published in *Studia Philologica et Literaria in Honorem L. Spitzer*, ed. A.G. Hatcher and K.L. Selig (Bern: Francke Verlag 1958) 255.

2 The major branches of Ukrainian-Canadian literature are noted in Danylo Struk, "Ukrainian Emigré Literature in Canada," *Identifications: Ethnicity and the Writer in Canada*, ed. Jars Balan (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, University of Alberta 1982) 88-103.

3 For a recent survey, see W. Roman Petryshyn, ed. *Changing Realities: Social Trends among Ukrainian Canadians* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, University of Alberta 1980).

4 George Ryga, as quoted in Jars Balan, 153.