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Ukrainian Emigré Literature in Canada

In his pamphlet, *Ukrainian Literature in Canada* (Edmonton, 1966), Yar Slavutych provides the reader with the following summary, which offers a rough scheme of periodization of Ukrainian literature in Canada and at the same time reveals some of the major misconceptions prevalent in studies devoted to this literature:

Ukrainian literature in Canada is more than sixty-five years old. Sava Chernetskyj, who came to Winnipeg, Manitoba, in 1899 and stayed there for a year, should be credited as the first Ukrainian author in this country. His poems and a brief story, "Z hlybyny propasty," on a Canadian theme, appeared in *Svoboda* (Scranton, Pa.) in 1899 and in other periodicals later.

The first period of Ukrainian literature was permeated with a folkloristic trend. Teodor Fedyk (1873–1949) and many others wrote about hardships of the first settlers in Canada, expressing their love for the far-away Ukraina.

In the second period, which began with Ivan Danylchuk (1901–1944) and Onufrij Ivakh (1900–1964) around 1930, Ukrainian poetry in Canada was brought to a higher level. Contrary to the previous writings, this is original poetry in the proper sense. Illja Kyrijak (1888–1955) and Oleksander Luhovyj (1904–1962) contributed greatly during World War II with their novels on Ukrainian pioneer settlers in Western Canada.

The third period of Ukrainian literature in Canada commenced with the arrival of political emigrants after World War II. Ulas Samchuk (1905–), a typical realist, who makes his home in Toronto, is the foremost living Ukrainian writer in this country. Mykyta Mandryka (1886–) and Levko Romen (1891–) are also authors of distinction.

Ukrainian literature in Canada is rich and abundant. It can be easily assumed that the number of titles of Ukrainian books, excluding brochures, published here well exceeds one thousand. The great variety of themes and

styles of the works, which appeared here during the last three or four decades, their significant ideas and artistic accomplishments, place Ukrainian literature in Canada on a high level—equal to that in Ukraine.¹

There are several difficulties with the above approach. First, Slavutych, like the other two major contributors to this field of study, Mykyta Mandryka and Peter Krawchuk, fails to define exactly what he means by "Ukrainian literature in Canada." Does this category include only those works written in the Ukrainian language in Canada or does it also include writings by Ukrainians in English? There seems to be little difference in the eyes of the three critics mentioned. Moreover, they do not differentiate between émigré and non-émigré literature, and appear to be unconcerned as to whether a given author was published in Canada or not. It seems sufficient for a writer to have lived in Canada—if only for a short while—to be considered a Ukrainian Canadian writer.

Second, there seems to be little qualitative consideration given in the analyses provided by scholars like Slavutych. Nor is any serious attempt made to distinguish literature from scholarship, folklore or journalism. It seems that the sole requirement for inclusion in the ranks of "writers" is to have published something, be it only a single poem. Consequently, the major studies of Ukrainian literature to date consist of indiscriminate, chronological listings of writers, scholars and journalists. The result is an inflated history of Ukrainian literature in Canada which concentrates on quantity rather than quality and leads to such questionable statements as Ukrainian literature is "equal to that in Ukraine."

It is not surprising, given these very loose criteria, that Mandryka, in his *History of Ukrainian Literature in Canada* (Winnipeg, 1968), includes as many as 118 authors. The number is inflated because numerous authors who do not merit discussion are taken into account. One could devote an entire study to a criticism of Mandryka's *History*; suffice it to say, however, that its main virtue is that it lists in chronological order almost everyone who has ever written anything in Ukrainian while living in Canada.²

As for Peter Krawchuk's *Ukrainska literatura v Kanadi* (Ukrainian Literature in Canada), its chief defect is that it is incomplete. Although the author gives the impression that he is discussing the entire body of Ukrainian literature in Canada, he is restricted by ideological considerations to the works of those writers who share his socialist outlook. Nevertheless, he is the only one of the three major scholars of Ukrainian writing in Canada to suggest that there are aesthetic limitations to this body of literature:

If one looks closely at the poems of the Ukrainian worker-farmer poets . . . it is not difficult to notice that their artistic value is not high. (My translation).³

Though quite guarded, this observation nonetheless reveals that the author is aware of the inadequacy of the literature under discussion, which neither Slavutych nor Mandryka seem to recognize.

Although a perusal of the three works mentioned above is indispensable for anyone interested in Ukrainian literature in Canada, the information they contain requires a thorough, critical sifting. For Ukrainian literature in Canada is still very young (despite its seventy-odd years), and like all literature which is torn off from the country of origin, it pales in comparison with the literature of the native land. Could it be otherwise?

To demonstrate what needs to be done, the writer will attempt to create a critical sieve from the parameters designated by the title of this paper: "Ukrainian Emigré Literature in Canada." Taking each item of the title separately, one can sift out those writers who do not qualify. Thus the "Ukrainian" criterion will exclude from discussion those who do not write in Ukrainian. The qualifier "émigré" will eliminate all writers who are Canadian-born and the specification "in Canada" will limit consideration to those who write and publish their works in Canada. This leaves the last and the most important factor, "literature," and it is here that one must begin to disqualify a great many writers.

Using the chronological periodization suggested by Slavutych, one finds that all the writers usually included in the so-called pioneer age of Ukrainian émigré literature in Canada have to be omitted because their works simply do not qualify as "literature." Most of the figures of this period presented what might be described at best as written folklore that is essentially ethnographic in nature and full of nostalgia for the forsaken homeland. The characteristic rhythm is that of a *kolomyika* folk song, with thematic concerns progressing from accounts of the departure from the native land through the hardships of pioneering to a generalized portrayal of life in Canada.

It is only in the second and third periods of Ukrainian literature in Canada (as identified by Slavutych) that writers appear who unquestionably meet all the criteria established in this paper. The first of these is Illia Kiriak (1888–1955), who emigrated to Canada in 1907. His fame rests mainly on his novel, *Syny zemli* (Sons of the Soil), a three-volume family chronicle originally published between 1939 and 1945.⁴ It presents the reminiscences of an old Ukrainian pioneer, Hrehory (Hryhorii) Workun, who relates the experiences of a Ukrainian family

through four decades of life in Canada. The novel gives a realistic depiction of the original homestead, the establishment of the pioneer community, the building of the church, the earliest encounter with a foreign teacher and the first intermarriage.

A sense of Kiriak's style, as well as an indication of his skill in handling a subject as sensitive as mixed marriage, can be obtained from the following excerpts. In the first we see the main characters, Hrehory and Helena Workun, deliberating the offer of marriage that their daughter has received from a non-Ukrainian named Bill Pickle:

It was an endless night for the Workuns and a memorable one, wondering as they did what answer to give Bill.

"The Lord only knows what answer to give Bill," muttered Workun. "Elizaveta caught us in a trap and now we don't know what to do about it."

"I told you to watch the girls; but all you did was to joke about it," Helena reminded him.

"Who would have expected that such an inexperienced youngster could attract a rich Englishman," said Workun in self-defense. "It never occurred to me anything serious would come of it."

"What you thought wasn't worth anything. Why do you suppose he paid us that visit last summer?"

"I thought he was looking over our property and that when he saw how little we possessed, he'd give Elizaveta up as a bad bargain."

"Oh, he's cunning," Helena sniffed. "He won't ask for any dowry now, but after the wedding he'll give you a list of things he thinks are coming to him, and he'll demand every cent of the money she earned and then gave you. Then you'll have something real to think about!"

"The Lord only knows . . ."

"Yes, the Lord only knows! That atheist without father or mother, living alone with his cattle and like his cattle! Misfortune had no other place to cast him but on our doorstep! So he gets out a paper for a wife!"

"Perhaps that's the way things are done in his class."

"What a fine class! Imagine taking out a license for a wife, then tearing it up and saying, 'I don't know you.' Who will be a witness that he was married? What priest married him? Why that would make her just a common-law wife, living in adultery with him. And what of the children. They would be born to eternal shame, without honour and respect among the people."

"You sure have outdone yourself in crowing . . ."

"I'm crowing because my heart bleeds for my daughter."⁵

We are then provided with a description of an encounter between the anxious groom-to-be and the only other Anglo-Celt in the settlement, a

school teacher named Goodwin:

"But tell me sincerely, would you marry Elizaveta if you were in my place?"

"In your circumstances I'd do what you already have a mind to do."

"What would you do in your own circumstances?"

"I'd not get married."

"Why?" asked Bill, looking curiously at Goodwin.

"She wouldn't be accepted in my sphere of life."

"You mean that beyond her primitive surroundings she wouldn't fit?"

"It's as old as the hills, my friend," said Goodwin. "The only reason the French fur-traders married Indian women was that there were no white women around. To them their redskin wives were not companions in our sense of the word, but simply women If those mixed marriages resulted in a negation of racial and religious feelings, suppressed for the sake of peace in the family, both partners in the union will reside in a sort of traditionless no-man's land with nothing to look back or forward to. That is not a healthy atmosphere at any time."

"What you say is not very encouraging. If no happy compromise is possible perhaps I should look for a girl of my own race."

"I had no such thought in mind. Your marriage may turn out very well. The character of the Workun family is reason enough They are a sensible people, kind and considerate of others. I don't think for a moment that Elizaveta would disregard your opinions in the larger affairs of the household, so long as she is free to observe her own religious duties. The house and the children are their domain. They are quite content to leave all the rest to the men."

"That makes me feel better," Bill grinned sheepishly. "To be honest, my mind was made up anyway. If my friends won't accept my wife we shall do without them."⁶

Although a comparison of Kiriak to Tolstoy and Dumas *père* is hardly warranted,⁷ he can be acknowledged as the foremost Ukrainian novelist in Canada. Unfortunately, he is *homo unius libri*, his attempts at short stories and verse falling far short of the talent shown in his epic trilogy.

The second writer meriting consideration within the terms of this paper is Myroslav Irchan (1897–1937), who came to Canada in 1923. A tragic figure with strong pro-communist sympathies, he returned to Soviet Ukraine after six years residence in Canada only to perish in the purges of the thirties. Irchan wrote short stories and plays exposing the exploitation of the working class by the capitalists. He has the distinction of being the first Ukrainian writer in Canada to deal with non-Ukrainian themes. For instance, his short stories, "Vudzhenia ryba" (Smoked Fish) and "Smert

Asuara" (The Death of Asuar), are innovative in that they deal with Native Canadian subjects, the former with the Metis and the latter with the Inuit. His writings, however, tend to be tendentious and propagandistic. This, coupled with the fact that Irchan did not remain in Canada for long, relegates him to only a marginal place among Ukrainian émigré writers in Canada.

The first Ukrainian poet of note in Canada was Mykyta Mandryka (1886–1979), one of the literary historians mentioned earlier, who immigrated in 1928. Although he had begun writing as early as 1905, he did not publish his first collection, *Mii sad* (My Orchard), until 1941. In 1958 he published the first of four volumes of his collected poetry under the title *Zolota osin* (The Golden Autumn). This was soon followed by *Radist* (Happiness, 1959) and *Symfoniia vikiv* (Symphony of Centuries, 1961), with volume four, *Sontsetsvit* (Helianthus), appearing in 1965. Some 80 per cent of Mandryka's poems were written in Canada, but not all deal with Canadian themes. Those that do, however, often express praise for the new land:

*My fortunes, Canada, in yours be furled.
With you for ever be my spirit's pact.*

Another paean to the new world is to be found in the conclusion to Mandryka's epic poem "Mandrivnyk" (*The Wanderer*):

*I love you, Humane America,
Bursting with wealth and goodness.
Your cult of life without serfs or masters
Cannot be bought for gold or silver.
I love you, beloved America,
Your cult of freedom, friendship and candour.
If only you—clothed or unclothed—
Could enshrine your girlish beauty.
It is true that you have "snobs" and "matrons,"
And rich men wrapped in furs—
Never mind! They are a curable domestic disease,
And in the millions of your masses, cannot be seen.
Good health to you, rugged New York City,
The Magus of these modern times.
To wanderers like myself, a friend,
And an epilogue to my roaming.*

(*Helianthus*, p. 121. My translation.)

Fortunately, the banality of poems like the one above is offset by works that exhibit the kind of imaginative imagery that is displayed in the lyric, "The New Year":

*They say the New Year is padding on the roofs,
And he—the sly old grandfather—
Has strung his beard up in the grey trees
And is coughing windily in the windows;

In the windmills of the clouds he grinds down snow
In the smithy of frozen rivers he forges frost
With wind-storms he sweeps
The old snow into frozen sheafs.
I tell him: "Old man, go away! Go!"
And he laughs loudly in my ears:
Just wait a little while longer!
I'll drink some spring rain water,
And bask in the warmth of the spring spirit;
Then return fair-haired and youthful!*

(*Helianthus*, p. 4. My translation.)

Most of Mandryka's poems are very neatly structured in cross rhymes, and one rarely encounters a poem which does not contain a sing-song lyrical quality. But one good example of a less lyrical poem is his "Sestry" (Sisters):

*"I deserve revenge, and will get it!"
As if God were speaking . . .
Not true!
That's the beast within the dark corners of our soul,
The poisonous reek from the scum of the crowd.
Anna Karenina is going to the block . . .
She doesn't even have an executioner . . . she walks
unaccompanied,
alone.
And the guillotine—
Like Antoinette—lost in the abyss of thoughts . . .*

They drove Antoinnette on a farm wagon—
 Rejoicing in her humiliation, jeering ...
 The rabble cried out ...
 She kept silent.
 Her queenly brow, high above the crowd
 Anna is alone, and approaches the guillotine alone ...
 Antoinnette is led ... they put her under the knife,
 the proffered neck of a young swan ...
 Her Madonna-like figure only flinched
 when the cleaving blade dropped down ...
 And the head fell off,
 The mob roared, as if at a wedding.
 There is no one with Anna ...
 Ruffled and tattered,
 she's scattered on the rails
 Anna and Antoinnette—two distant sisters,
 Purer than Margaret,
 Whom the archangels are supposed to take the
heaven ...
 They repose in dust through the ages,
 Cut to pieces, weak ...
 Anna ... Antoinnette ...

(*Helianthus*, p. 35. Translated by Jars Balan.)

Neither the rather gruesome theme nor the lack of a definite rhyme scheme is typical of Mandryka, but they do reveal his versatility as a poet. In the majority of his poems, however, he adheres to a set rhyme scheme—usually *abab*—and an iambic or anapestic metre, sometimes mixing the two. Many of his poems are love lyrics, full of longing and sadness, the following being a good sample of his work in this genre:

You come to me, and kiss me gently
 Embracing me, and cuddling close ...
 Why is the sadness in my heart lingering?
 Why is something inconsolable crying out in my soul?
 O, I long to lose myself in your embraces,
 And drink forgetfulness from your lips;

*May your laughter dissipate my dark grief,
That my heart not fill with tears!*

(Radist, p. 60. Translated by Jars Balan.)

Generally, it may be said that Mandryka's moods are typical of an émigré poet. In addition to the numerous love poems, one finds poems full of nostalgia and patriotism for the homeland; others that are characterized by their search for heroism or by their philosophical dissertations on man; and the usual poetic expressions of gratitude toward and appreciation for the adopted country.

Although Mandryka arrived in Canada during the second period of Ukrainian literary development, he only began publishing at the start of the third period. The post-Second World War era brought a large influx of new immigrants, including a significant number of writers. Many had already established literary careers in Ukraine and most suffered from the shock of the uprooting. But of their number, only four seem to satisfy all the criteria of this paper: Ulas Samchuk (1905–), Yar Slavutych (1918–), Borys Oleksandriv (1921–1979), and Volodymyr Skorupsky (1912–). Omitted from this group is Oleh Zujewskyj (1920–) because both collections of his poetry, "Zoloti vorota" (Golden Gates, 1947) and "Pid znakom Feniksa" (Under the Sign of the Phoenix, 1958), were written and published outside Canada (in Munich). Moreover, as Zujewskyj only emigrated to Canada in the late sixties, his output here has not been large, consisting mainly of poems and a few translations which have appeared in the periodical *Suchasnist*.

Notwithstanding these technically disqualifying factors, Zujewsky is worth mentioning because he is a talented writer and translator who is now a naturalized Canadian citizen. His preference for classical stanzas and a calmness almost devoid of emotionalism, makes him a rather dry, cerebral and characteristically "intellectual" poet. One example, entitled "Ars Poetica," illustrates well the ability of this disciplined neo-classicist:⁸

*Narrow roads lead to words,
Because in them lies your only opportunity,
And that enticing road,
That you would like to avoid.*

*Because of the labours of the old masters,
Who long laid siege to it,
Broad expanses were opened up*

*For all from every corner of the earth;
But if this concern—
Is only unavoidable virtue
Because of the wise world around us,
Then thought's pathway (its edifice)
To pass through on one's own wings,
Is like a needle's eye for a camel.*

(Translated by Jars Balan)

The sonnet has a typical Italian rhyme scheme with but one variation: a four-foot iambic line instead of the anticipated five, a hypercatalexis being introduced in the alternate lines in order to produce the masculine/feminine closure pattern.

Ulas Samchuk, the "Great White Father" of Ukrainian émigré writers, earned his reputation as a novelist with a book entitled *Mariia* and the trilogies *Volyn* and *Ost*—all published before he migrated to Canada. He had great difficulty in adjusting to being an émigré writer, and lapsed into literary inactivity for a long period after his arrival in Canada. His first attempt at a "Canadian Ukrainian" novel, *Na tverdii zemli* (On the Hard Earth, 1967), failed to measure up to his previous works.

Yar Slavutych, on the other hand, seems to have adjusted to Canada very well. He arrived in 1960, having lived in the United States for several years after the Second World War. In 1963 he published a massive volume of poetry in Canada, *Trofeii* (Trophies), in which he included Canadian subject matter in a section called "Northern Lights." Like other émigré poets he is much concerned with the homeland but consciously tries to synthesize his Ukrainian past with his Canadian present, as is evident in his collection entitled *Zavoioivnyky prerii* (Conquerors of the Prairies, 1968). He is a poet of classical precision, which at times mars the sincerity of his expression. His uprootedness is especially strong in *Mudroshchi mandriv* (Wisdom of Travels, 1972), a selection of poems documenting impressions from various parts of the globe.

Other collections by Slavutych are *Oaza* (Oasis, 1960) and *Maiestat* (Majesty, 1962), both of which were included in his *Trofeii*. A good example of Slavutych's neoclassical style is the sonnet below, in which the classical stanza, the elevated vocabulary and the serene philosophical theme are all united in a well-worked out poem:

*World's craving which slumbered in dreams
Burst forth with war in a sudden blaze
And the old griefs with a shadowy echo
Died in silvery wormwood.*

*Fortunate is he, whose thoughts
Domestic thought does not lure with imperishable boredom
Whose brain strives indefatigably to unravel
The mystery of evolution on the paths of discovery.*

*O universe! Your alluring distances
Ring for me through my relinquished days
Like uproars, sceptres and maces;
Take me in your ponderous embraces
Allow me to solve the riddle of your primordial expanses
And cast the lot of happiness, as my destiny.*

(Trofeii, p. 172. Translated by Jars Balan.)

Another untitled sonnet by Slavutych illustrates his ability to synthesize Ukrainian dreams with Canadian reality. The following translation is by R. M. Morrison:

*Primeval forest, like totemic bird
Cries somewhere, and here firs and pines reply,
Over dunes, intolerable storm-winds fly,
And ardent lips give out a frozen word.*

*The skyline's purple circle that conferred
Its languid present on the cloudy sky
Goes out. What dreary fields! By furrows lie
Tents set in steep nooks where the wind has stirred.*

*When branches of a forked palm are designed
And etched by hard frost on the window's blue,
A house filled with magnolias springs to mind!*

*And such joy and such sadness pierce me through
That eyes so long on snowy visions fed
Imagine there Crimea's shores instead.*

(Zavoioynyky prerii, p. 61)

But this union of Ukrainian and Canadian images and themes is less successful when Slavutych abandons his classical stance and forays into eulogies or paeans of praise either to Ukraine and its heroes, to Canada or to individuals and groups. This is apparent in "The Conquerors of Prairies," dedicated to the Ukrainian pioneers:

*Not Corteses from some long-bygone day,
Not empires' minions grabbing without leave,
But conquerors of prairies in their way,
Came Pylypiwsky, Yelyniak, Leskiw.*

*The humble plough with home-made steel for share
Grubbed up the burnt-out poplars from their bed
To let the famed Podillian wheat lie there
In the black lap of porous earth instead.*

*And borne on golden wings the harvest came,
Drawn to their destination as by thirst.
To our Ukrainian ploughs, honour and fame:
Canada's lands you opened from the first!*

*Conquerors with a peaceful aspect and,
From one dawn to the next, tillers of soil—
Both Vilna and Myrnam well understand
The nature of your brisk and dexterous toil.*

*It's you the meadows and the groves recall:
Mundare remembers you, and Vegreville . . .
Rest well where you repose in down-soft pall,
Among the sweat-dewed fields you came to till.*

*Your arms drove roads through wooded land as they
Worked tirelessly for Canada's renown.
Grant that no plough shall now stand in your way,
And may the earth lie on you light as down!*

(Zavoioznyky prerii, p. 7. Translated by R. M. Morrison.)

Next among the noteworthy postwar writers is the lyrical poet and humorist, Borys Oleksandriv. He wrote two humorous books under the pen

name Svyryd Lomachka—*Svyryd Lomachka v Kanadi* (Svyryd Lomachka in Canada) (1951) and *Liubov do blyzhnoho* (Love of a Neighbour) (1961). In 1965 his collection of poetry, *Tuha za sontsem* (Longing for the Sun), appeared, followed by *Kolokruh* in 1972. Oleksandriv's prose is permeated with satire aimed at the very heart of an émigré's life, while his poetry intertwines lyrical reminiscences with notes of satire and sarcasm:

*I didn't await either joy, or escape,
 Didn't expect smiles or misfortune.
 I only wanted to say "Good evening,"
 But she glanced at me—and fled . . .*

*Alone and wandering outside of the city,
 I brooded over the details: was it in jest, or to offend me?
 And somehow it all became remarkably simple,
 Everything that was hurting and burning inside of me.*

*I watched how the mountains grew dim
 A warm wind touched my temples with its wings.
 O, my dear friend! In her eyes—cubes of ice
 But you, fool, thought there were fires.*

(*Tuha za sontsem*, p. 33. Translated by Jars Balan.)

Oleksandriv's verse, which is very conventional in structure yet quite polished in technique, is characterized by his light melodious touch and his strong predilection toward aestheticism. One feels in his poetry a sincere withdrawal into the beauty of art and a lyrical bitterness at having to confront the coarse reality of life. The following two poems illustrate Oleksandriv both in mood and form:

*In layer upon layer the gloom
 Unfolds in the quiet of the gentle valleys.
 You can hear the midnight murmuring
 Of white firs.*

*Rustling—and far-off cries,
 The voices of strange alpine hollows:
 Why, queer fellow, are you walking
 Alone in the night?—*

*The sight gleams with despair
—Here . . . my betrothed walked by.
Did someone call me outdoors?
Silence. Mist . . .*

*Snow, snow relentlessly sown
In the quiet, pondering valleys.
You can hear the midnight laughter
Of the white firs.*

(**Tuha za sontsem**, p. 25. Translated by Jars Balan)

*And so it is done. I burnt all of your letters,
And was saddened, as if overcome by fatigue.
As if not smoke, like a wisp, but
You melted into the unknown distances . . .*

*Burn mine . . . And once again we will be
Like wanderers who met on a bridge.
Let our two wisps rise and dissipate
And, perhaps, they will mingle together somewhere on high.*

(**Tuha za sontsem**, p. 43. Translated by Jars Balan.)

The fourth and final writer to make a significant contribution to Ukrainian émigré literature in Canada is the prolific Volodymyr Skorupsky. He has several collections dating from his arrival in Canada after the Second World War: *Moia oselia* (My Home, 1954), *Bez ridnoho poroha* (Without a Native Threshold, 1958), *Iz dzherela* (From the Source, 1961), *Nad mohyloi* (At the Grave, 1963), *Aistry nevidtsvili* (Asters Still Blooming, 1972) and *Spokonvichni Luny* (Eternal Echoes, 1977). As the titles of his first collections indicate, Skorupsky is full of nostalgia for his lost home and country. His later poetry, however, is more personal and introspective. Lyrical in tone and classical in form, it often consists of philosophical meditations.

Skorupsky seems to be at his best in the *Aistry* collection, where the anger of his first books has subsided considerably, and a certain serenity of outlook and form pervades his work. The following is a good example:

*Hurry into the orchard that like an album
 Nurtures reminiscences about places and dreams.
 Where with a kiss stronger than wine
 Intoxicated, we weaved a distance out of hopes.
 We freed the quietness from silences
 About passion which grew of youthfulness and love
 We did not hide into the shadows our excitement
 Even if the meeting were to be our last.
 And we awaited the guelder rose berries
 Filled with unpricked blood
 And a wreath, even out of thorns,
 Did not wound our happiness nor love.*

(Aistry nevidtsvili, p. 21. Translated by Jars Balan)

Having briefly sketched the dimensions of Ukrainian émigré literature in Canada, I would like now to return to Slavutych's *Ukrainian Literature in Canada*.

Slavutych, in concluding his pamphlet, asserts that "Ukrainian literature . . . is an integral part of Canadian culture as a whole. It proves that various national groups represent a potential source of culture; they have better than average accomplishments because of the boundless opportunities this country offers everyone who is eager to retain and develop a cultural heritage brought here from Europe" (p. 15). Unfortunately, this statement is more indicative of Slavutych's own feelings of gratitude to Canada than anything based on fact. One can name only eight authors who have managed to *create literature* as émigrés, despite the impressive lists compiled by Mandryka and others. Moreover, all suffer the plight of émigrés in their persistent longing for the lost homeland and their inability to fully enter into the new culture. Emigré literature is always a dying literature, dying with the very people who produce it. The hope, of course, remains that the upcoming generation will manage to take root without losing its identity, and that perhaps a new, vibrant literature—a distinctly Ukrainian Canadian literature—will eventually emerge. Time will tell. In the meantime, the better émigré writers might usefully serve as that indispensable link between the heritage of the past and the expectations of the future—the basis of a new and distinctive art.

Notes

1. Y. Slavutych, "Ukrainian Literature in Canada" (Edmonton: Slavuta Publishers, 1966), 3.
2. M. I. Mandryka, *History of Ukrainian Literature in Canada* (Winnipeg: Ukrainian Free Academy of Sciences, 1968).
3. P. Krawchuk, *Ukrainska literatura v Kanadi* (Kiev: Dnipro, 1964), 37.
4. An abridged version was published in English: I. Kiriak, *Sons of the Soil* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1959).
5. Kiriak, *Sons of the Soil*, 253–4.
6. *Ibid.*, 256–8.
7. Mandryka, *History of Ukrainian Literature*, 76–7.
8. *Suchasnist*, no. 5 (May 1979): 13.