

CANADIAN COSSACKS: FINDING UKRAINE IN FIFTY YEARS

OF UKRAINIAN-CANADIAN LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

by

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## **Abstract**

Canadian Cossacks: Finding Ukraine in Fifty Years of Ukrainian-Canadian

Literature in English

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Discourses of diaspora and transnationalism have begun to question previous traditional assumptions about the inevitability of ethnic assimilation by drawing attention to various kinds of hybrid identities, but I contend that, in contemporary Canadian literature, we cannot replace an outmoded model of eventual integration with an uncritical vision of ethnic persistence and hybridity. Much thinking about diasporic and ethnic identities suggests that, on the one hand, there are genuine marginalized identities worthy of inquiry and, on the other, there are symbolic ones undeserving of serious study. This dissertation focuses on the supposedly disingenuous or symbolic kinds of ethnic and diasporic identities, providing an analysis of Ukrainian-Canadian ethnic identity retention in a case study of second-, third-, and fourth-generation Canadians of Ukrainian descent who both read and write in English (not Ukrainian). Looking at Ukrainian-Canadian literature from 1954 to 2003, this dissertation argues: (1) ethnic identity affiliation does not necessarily dissipate with time; (2) ethnic identity in a hostland manifests itself as imagined ties to a homeland; and (3) lacking meaningful public and private recognition of ethnic group membership yields anxiety about subjectivity. I first argue that as multicultural policies drew attention to racial marginalization, Ukrainian-Canadian ethnic identity shifted from being an aspect of

socio-economic disenfranchisement to becoming a hyphenated identity with links to Ukraine. I then suggest that in order to make that connection to Ukraine viable, writers attempt to locate Ukraine on the Canadian prairie as a substitute home-country. Such attempts give rise to various images of Ukrainian-Canadian uneasiness and discomfort, primarily as authors struggle to account for First Nations' prior presences on the landscape that they want to write as their own. Further, I analyze attempts to locate ethnic authenticity in post-independence Ukraine that also prove unsatisfactory for Ukrainian-Canadian subject formation. The many failed attempts to affix Ukrainian-Canadianness as a meaningful public and private identity give rise to unsettled and ghostly images that signal significant ethnic unease not to be overlooked in analyses of ethnic and diasporic identities. In these ways, this dissertation contributes to ongoing debates and discussions about the place of contemporary literary ethnicity in Canada.

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On a personal note, I also owe a special thank-you to Kenneth and Gillian Bartlett for too many things to count. And I have appreciated the support of my family, especially my sister Lea, who, as always, has been a pillar for me to lean on. My father, as well, has provided me with important intellectual and financial aid throughout my academic career. A final thank you is owed to Rueban, quite simply for everything.

This dissertation is dedicated to my grandmother, Marjorie Dengis.

### **A Note on the Title**

The title of my dissertation, “Canadian Cossacks: Finding Ukraine in Fifty Years of Ukrainian-Canadian Literature in English,” alludes to the first collection of essays on Ukrainian-Canadians written in English by a Canadian of Ukrainian descent, William Paluk’s *Canadian Cossacks: Essays, Articles, and Stories on Ukrainian-Canadian Life*. Now long out of print and hard to find, it nonetheless provides an interesting starting-point for my own study. After initial immigration to Canada from Ukraine, Paluk writes, “the Canadian Cossack found that it wasn’t enough to just eat, work, and make money, though that was the reason primarily for his coming. Like a shadow, each newcomer brought with him his racial experiences, his language. And he found that he couldn’t deny this shadow, that it had followed him across the ocean, that it was part of him” (11). While the language and ideas are somewhat dated, the idea of a Ukrainian or ethnic shadow is, in part, what this dissertation seeks to explicate.

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## **Preface – Why Ukrainian-Canadian Literature in English?**

I was raised in Winnipeg, Manitoba, thinking of myself (rather unself-consciously) as Ukrainian-Canadian. Growing up, I made Ukrainian Easter eggs (pysanky), ate Ukrainian foods (perogies, cabbage rolls, borsch) on every holiday, heard Ukrainian spoken in the home by the older members of my extended family, and sometimes participated in orthodox church services for Ukrainian weddings and christenings. As a Ukrainian-Canadian, I began to wonder why as an English student I had never read anything that acknowledged a strong Ukrainian presence in Canadian literature. My life outside of university was infused with a sense of Ukrainian-Canadianness in both subtle and overpowering ways, but my literary studies seemed silent on the subject of this lived reality. There were many Canadians of Ukrainian descent in Winnipeg, and many things Ukrainian have been connected to a sense of Winnipeg's culture, even for non-Ukrainians. Tanis MacDonald's short story "Social Studies" makes this point as her protagonist grapples with a sense of displacement after leaving Winnipeg for Toronto. She laments:

I can't begin to tell [Toronto friends] that when I was six, those whirling girls with the hair ribbons in Dauphin were princesses to me. I can't fill their tongues with the tart sensation of *borshsh*. I can't forget growing up waspy and pale and middle-class, and then the sheer giddy joy of being embraced into a loud and aromatic society which demanded that I dance and eat and gossip passionately into the cold winter night. (108)

The Ukrainian-Canadian world that MacDonald feels "the sheer giddy joy" of being "embraced into" is the world into which I was born, the world in which I was raised.

And then I, too, found myself a displaced Winnipegger in Toronto, engaging with issues of ethnic and national identity, taking shape as academic interests.

During the first year of my Ph.D., as I began research for my dissertation on Ukrainian-Canadian literature, I came across Lisa Grekul's recent dissertation, "Re-Placing Ethnicity: Literature in English by Canada's Ukrainians." I was both elated and devastated to read her study. I was elated that someone had done the work that I had thought I would do, but I was devastated that she had beaten me to it. Reading her dissertation (and its published book version two years later) helped me, however, to articulate much more clearly what my interest in Ukrainian-Canadian literature really is. The thread that links her chronological analysis of Ukrainian-Canadian literature in English together is the idea that only through writing can ethnicity be confronted. She opens her book *Leaving Shadows: Literature in English by Canada's Ukrainians* with: "Write your stories down; make your voices heard" (xxiii, original emphasis). My own sense that writing will "solve" the "problem" of ethnic identification for Ukrainians in Canada is not the same as hers; nor am I motivated by a desire to preserve Ukrainian-Canadianness as she is. Nonetheless, hers is an influential voice in Ukrainian-Canadian literary studies, and I owe a debt of gratitude to her work, her insights, her support, and her friendship as I embarked on my own project.

By examining Ukrainian-Canadian literature in English, my dissertation attempts to answer some fundamental questions: What does ethnic identity in Canada look like if one's ethnicity does not manifest externally (through ethnic or religious dress, ethnic language usage, etc.)? How do members of ethnic minority groups (like Ukrainian-Canadians) conceive of their ethnicity? Is it a boon? Is it a burden? What role does an

ethnic home-country (like Ukraine) play in the literary imaginations of Canadian-born, ethnically identified authors? In answering some of these questions, I explore how Ukrainian-Canadian literature posits various conceptions of “home,” and in so doing, investigate some of the dynamics inherent in any discussion about literature and ethnicity in Canada through a Ukrainian-Canadian case study.

## **Chapter 1 – Introduction: “I’m wondering what it feels like to be Ukrainian”**

In the early days of settlement and immigration to North America, “traditional immigrants,” as William Safran refers to them, “left their homelands with the full intention to assimilate into the hostland culture” (11), and while “multiple identities are now more acceptable than they were before” (12), suggesting a lessening of this belief in assimilation, a version of this kind of assimilatory ideal persists. In fact, a widespread, popular belief still exists that eventually the descendents of immigrants from one country, who may keep certain cultural markers from elsewhere, will become absorbed into the economic and cultural body politic of their new country, particularly when the homeland culture does not exhibit itself externally as irreparably “other” to the hostland culture. This deeply held premise makes itself known periodically in the public domain. An example of a popular culture articulation of this widely held belief appeared on the front page of one of Canada’s national newspapers in the spring of 2007. *The Globe and Mail* ran a cover story on sociologists Jeffrey Reitz and Rupa Banerjee’s analysis of the 2002 Statistics Canada Ethnic Diversity Survey (EDS) that made evident the persistence of this ethnic absorption hypothesis in Canada. Reitz and Banerjee’s work focuses on the social divide between those they consider racial or visible minorities and those who are white; *The Globe and Mail* article highlights not just this white/non-white division, but also another aspect of the findings, namely that second-generation Canadians may feel “a more profound sense of exclusion than their parents” (Jiménez A1). The article suggests that the newsworthiness of Reitz and Banerjee’s study lies in its exposure of the idea that,

contrary to popular belief that over time as economic conditions of immigrants and their descendents improve in the new country they become less and less “other,” in fact “even as the economic circumstances of newcomers improve over time, the path to integration does not necessarily become smoother” (Jiménez A1). By pointing out that children may feel more excluded from Canadian society than their immigrant parents and that economic improvement does not banish this sense of exclusion, this article implicitly acknowledges that a commonly held opposite view understands integration as inevitable, or at the very least “smoother,” for successive generations. Canadians often believe that over time the children and grandchildren of immigrants will feel more integrated into Canadian society and believe that if these descendents of immigrants continue to feel excluded, such feelings must be related to economic factors, not social or cultural ones. Reitz and Banerjee’s analysis of the data suggests that “racial minority immigrants integrate into Canadian society relatively slowly, and that discriminatory inequalities are at least part of the reason” (3), implying that without such “discriminatory inequalities” other immigrants and their descendents will integrate into Canadian society with greater ease.

The article, therefore, highlights this frequently held popular belief in the unavoidable eventual assimilation of immigrant groups, but the mass media do not have a monopoly on articulating or holding such a belief, and the same premise informs much theoretical discourse on ethnicity. For instance, in writing about Armenian-American identity, Anny Bakalian charts a generational movement towards assimilation as involving a progression from “being” to “feeling” Armenian, with “being” including such ethnic markers as Armenian language, culture, and social structures and “feeling” as

something different, something diluted (5-6). The premise that the ethnic affinity of immigrants to Canada gradually lessens is not radically different from Bakalian's claims about Armenians in America.<sup>1</sup> In fact, most ethnic scholars assume (implicitly or explicitly) that given enough time, ethnicity will no longer be a concern for once marginalized immigrant communities, who, to borrow Daphne Winland's phrase, "either assimilate to the dominant way of life or selectively appropriate new patterns and symbols" (563). In the context of settlement and immigration, upon arriving in the new country those from the old one must, according to Stephen Turner, "forget the old country and become acclimatized, that is, discover a new-country identity" (21). Ethnic and immigration theorists often tend to think along these lines: given enough time, yesterday's immigrants will become fully assimilated tomorrow. Yet as Reitz and Banerjee, among others (see Boyd and Breico; Reitz and Somerville; Weinfeld), focus on Canadian-born children of immigrants, they give the lie to the popularly held belief and theoretically asserted premise that over time immigrants and their descendents become more and more integrated into Canadian society.

Why do we have this belief? Given Canada's pre-twentieth-century history of immigration – by French, British, Scottish, and Irish settlers – it would appear that integration is not only possible, but desirable. The EDS on which Reitz and Banerjee base their insights that caught the attention of a national newspaper combine those with British, French, and Canadian ancestry into one group (4). The various early immigrant

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<sup>1</sup> I must admit a heavy indebtedness at this point to the recent work of Sneja Gunew on comparative multiculturalisms. Her book, *Haunted Nations: The Colonial Dimensions of Multiculturalisms*, analyzes multicultural identity politics in Canada, Australia, the United States, and the United Kingdom. While she acknowledges that "multiculturalism" means different things in Canada and the US (15-16), she draws out the connections between the debates about identity politics in the two countries, especially through their racial focus (18-19), and refers to "North America" as a single entity (41), approaches that provide me with

groups who originally were very aware of their differences are now categorized within the same group for the purposes of data collection about ethno-cultural diversity in Canada. In discussing ethnic identity in Canada, Janice Kulyk Keefer defines it as demarcating those “belonging to a non-British ethnocultural group” (“From Mosaic to Kaleidoscope” 13), testifying to the existence of this commonly held view that all British ancestries can be considered as the same. Interestingly, an early English-language writer in Canada, Susanna Moodie (herself an English immigrant), was far less generous in her view of those who by the 2002 survey would be her fellow ethno-cultural group members. She describes the “crowd of many hundred Irish emigrants” with disdain:<sup>2</sup>

The confusion of Babel was among them. All talkers and no hearers – each shouting and yelling in his or her uncouth dialect, and all accompanying their vociferations with violent and extraordinary gestures, quite incomprehensible to the uninitiated. We were literally stunned by the strife of tongues. I shrank, with feelings almost akin to fear, from the hard-featured, sunburnt women as they elbowed rudely past me. [...] We turned in disgust from the revolting scene. (99-100)

These Irish are rude, uncouth, and disgusting, utterly incomprehensible to Moodie’s English sensibilities, but the 2002 survey understands the British element of the “British, French, and/or Canadian” category to include “those of English, Scottish, Irish, Welsh, and other British Isles origins” (Statistics Canada 4). It seems as though these early immigrants and their descendents followed the advice given by one of Moodie’s sister’s

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a kind of critical permission to apply ethnic theory from the United States to the Canadian context where and when appropriate.

characters in *The Backwoods of Canada*, “[h]aving come hither you would be wise to conform to circumstances” (Traill 90), and their differences are now insignificant. This advice “to conform” calls for assimilation and integration into Canadian society, which presumably will occur in one of two ways: either immigrants and their descendents will change and redefine the mainstream, thus carving out a place and space for their ethnic heritage, or they will be replaced by subsequent immigrants whose differences outweigh those of the earlier waves of immigrants, thus rendering the Irish “other” of Moodie’s day, for instance, part of the mainstream that makes up the largest ethno-cultural group included in the 2002 study (Statistics Canada 4).

Reitz and Banerjee took those numbers and decided to talk about the visible/invisible line that influences the life possibilities of visible minority Canadians, but the belief about ethnic identity eventually fading – either on its own as an example of “the inevitability of assimilation” (Rodriguez 10), or because older ethnic groups are replaced by newer ones – deserves further scrutiny. In looking at second-generation Canadians, the EDS points out that “[o]ne of the largest inflows of immigrants in the past 100 years occurred between 1901 and 1921, bringing 3.4 million immigrants to Canada from Britain and other European countries, such as the Ukraine and Germany,” and of those whose ancestors have been in Canada for a third or more generations less than 1% are of non-European origins (Statistics Canada 7). If, therefore, the immigrants to Canada from various countries in Europe before World War II<sup>3</sup> are now considered the “whites” against whom Reitz and Banerjee compare the experiences of discrimination of

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<sup>2</sup> In her analysis of the development of “Canadian English” for the *Literary History of Canada*, Volume 1, M. H. Scargill writes that Moodie thinks “of the inhabitants of Upper Canada as English (like herself), Yankees (anybody not born in England), and Irish” and is “not at all happy” with these neighbours (267).

visible minorities (8), can we or should we assume that the lower reporting of experiences of discrimination (Reitz and Banerjee 8; Statistics Canada 16-21) felt by white Canadians signals their successful integration? Can we or should we assume that if ethnic identity is not a “problem” that causes public discomfort for most people who are not considered visible minorities (Statistics Canada 16), then talking about ethnic identity is moot, passé even? Have we entered a “postethnic” era (Hollinger 5)?<sup>4</sup>

I think not. While the language of ethnicity has in some critical circles been replaced by that of race,<sup>5</sup> severing the two terms allows for a helpful separate analysis of each. Reitz and Banerjee identify the very real lived differences between being white and non-white in Canada, demonstrating the comparative nature of their focus. They are not interested in the specific features of visible minority experiences of ethno-cultural sentiment or in how white Canadians relate to their ethnic heritage. But, according to the EDS, half of the population (white and non-white) indicated that they have a strong sense of belonging to their ethnic or cultural group (Statistics Canada 8). Over half the population claims that at least one of their ethnic ancestries is important; 59% of second

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<sup>3</sup> “Immigrants arriving before 1970 were overwhelmingly from Europe [...]. Of those arriving in the 1960s or before, only 10.2 percent were racial or visible minorities” (Reitz and Banerjee 1).

<sup>4</sup> *The Invention of Ethnicity*, edited by Werner Sollors, concludes with a discussion amongst American authors, titled “Is Ethnicity Obsolete?” Ishmael Reed asserts that so long as “ethnic” can be understood as “Black,” it will never be obsolete in America (226-29), while Shawn Wong envisions the twenty-first century, when “ethnicity may become obsolete” (230). Andrew Hope sees the entire debate about ethnicity in America as a vehicle for allowing “more and more white people [to] qualify as one minority group or another,” as “[a]ll these non-entities jump on the bandwagon and take over the platform” (234). I have quoted these three positions because they characterize the main attitudes about contemporary ethnicity: when folded into discourses of race, ethnicity has value, but on its own it is either an empty construct or one used as leverage to further inscribe marginalization on other groups.

<sup>5</sup> Informed by race theory from the United States and influenced by postcolonial theories that often distinguish between European colonizers and non-European colonized, “racialization, the practice of applying racial categories to people or things has taken and is taking place in the realm of Canadian literary culture” (Coleman and Goellnicht, Introduction 1), where “the distinction between race and ethnicity is increasingly a blurred one,” and in some cases “multiculturalism has almost become a code word for racialized differences” (Gunew 21, 41). Chapter Three provides a more extended discussion of race and ethnicity under Canada’s multicultural policies.

generation Canadians and 60% of third generation Canadians who claim a connection to their ethnic or cultural group say that it is important to maintain the customs and traditions of their ethnic ancestry (Statistics Canada 9-10). These numbers suggest that ethnic baggage (even for white Canadians) is not merely put aside at some point, but rather that it may change shape and heft, but remains present nonetheless.

That baggage interests me. The language used both in the EDS and in Reitz and Banerjee's interpretation of it comprises a vocabulary of feelings and perceptions. For instance, in introducing the section of the study that analyzes respondents' sense of belonging to their ethnic group, the report points out that "some people may *feel* very close to their ethnic group and may have a strong *desire* to maintain the customs and traditions of their ancestors, while others may not *feel* this way" (Statistics Canada 8, emphasis added). In this discourse of sentiment we must part company with sociology. While the EDS can tell us that half of Canada's population feels that its ethnic background is important, the way in which those feelings become manifest is the province of the arts. In exploring whether or not we can take it for granted that non-racialized immigrant groups in Canada eventually will become assimilated (and replaced by newer arrivals), we can look at how ethnicity features in the realm of the imagination.

Benedict Anderson (via Walter Benjamin) identifies print media as a mechanism that constructs "imagined communities," pointing out the specific role of the novel in this nation-building endeavour (25). And while he focuses on nations, particularly postcolonial nations throwing off the shackles of empire to emerge anew, his insights can be applied to sub-national ethno-cultural groups of the kind that the EDS documents. Of course, observing the relationship between literary texts and the construction and

maintenance of a group identity is not new. Plato knew the danger stories posed to the very fabric of his republic, and writers have long used literature as a vehicle for creating or challenging a group identity. In Canada the rise and fall of thematic criticism, principally in the 1970s and 1980s (see Jones; Atwood, *Survival*; Moss, *Patterns and Sex*), followed by the canon debates of the 1990s (see Davey, “Surviving the Paraphrase”; *Reading Canadian Reading*; and “Canadian Canons”; and Lecker, “The Canonization of Canadian Literature” and *Canadian Canons*)<sup>6</sup> serve as testaments to the connections between literature and national identity. Of course, we must remember that the nation is but one category, within which there are many sub-categories, and the EDS focuses on “the ethnic and cultural backgrounds of people in Canada” as a sub-category worth studying to determine how “these backgrounds relate to their lives in Canada today” (1). Canadians sharing certain “ethnic and cultural backgrounds” can comprise an “imagined community” like Anderson’s nation. Anderson writes that “fiction seeps quietly and continuously into reality, creating that remarkable confidence of community” (36), and reading the fiction that seeps into reality and shapes a sense of community can provide us with insight into the feelings that the EDS alerts us to. Literature describes what the survey can only document.

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<sup>6</sup> Although thematic approaches can be seen in early Canadian criticism, the prominence of and debate about thematic approaches in the later twentieth century is attributable to the impact of Northrop Frye’s essays and particularly his identification of a “garrison mentality” (346) in his Conclusion to a *Literary History of Canada*. Debates about the Canadian canon also began early, but gained prominence in the second half of the twentieth century in Robert Lecker’s essays and in the response to one of these by Frank Davey. Put simply, the canon debates questioned the very values upon which a Canadian literary canon had been based (including the thematic ideals that informed the notion of a Canadian national literature that had a unified focus or approach). Davey (and others who share his view) put forth the main complaint that reading literature too closely through the lens of the nation breeds literary criticism that fails to “do what the criticism of other national literatures has done: explain and illuminate the work on its own terms, without any recourse to cultural rationalizations or apologies” (*Surviving* 1).

In writing about what ethnicity means to him in an American context (“memory, response, attitude, mood, coded into the soul, transmitted through generations”), Richard Rodriguez admits that “[d]efined this broadly [...] ethnicity is only a public metaphor, like sexuality or age, for a knowledge that bewilders us” (9). While I agree with his suggestion that ethnicity operates as a public metaphor – one constantly changing in relation to the other public metaphor of the nation – it appears that it represents not just a bewildering knowledge, but also a bewildering *feeling*.<sup>7</sup> How this feeling appears in Canadian ethnic literature and what this feeling indicates about ethnic identity over generations in Canada may shine a light on how nearly half the Canadian population relates to its ethno-cultural heritage that has roots elsewhere.

My study explores the features of ethnicity that nearly half of all Canadians whose first generation arrived before 1961, or whose ancestors have been in Canada for more than two or three generations, still feel a strong connection to (Statistics Canada, 9, fig. 2). In Morton Weinfeld’s analysis of ethnic assimilation and retention in Canada, he looks at multigenerational, “white” ethnic groups, because he believes “the questions of cultural survival and retention are posed most starkly [for these groups], given their distance from the immigrant generation” (238). I agree with his assessment and add to it the notion that *feelings* (to use Bakalian’s terminology) about the dynamics of survival and retention also pose stark questions about ethnic identities. I take my cue from Smaro Kamboureli’s introduction to *Making a Difference*:

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<sup>7</sup> This idea not only takes its lead from the language of the EDS and Reitz and Banerjee’s analysis of it, but is also based on the underlying premise that communities can be personified as political entities. Political theorists call this the “personificationist thesis,” which allows for an understanding of a political community as a collective identity (Joerges and Dehousse 290-291), often spoken of as a “demos” (political entity) or “ethnos” (ethno-national/cultural entity). Personifying a populace has its roots in classical political theory, with Jean-Jacques Rousseau, for instance, amending the Hobbesian idea of the

Since its beginnings, the making of Canadian literature has coincided, in many respects, with the making of the Canadian state. Far from being a Canadian phenomenon alone, this overlap shows how literature, like other cultural expressions, measures the pulse of a nation. What might be particularly Canadian, however, is the kind of anxiety that has continued to characterize both what Canadian literature is and what constitutes Canadian identity. (6)

Literature serves to define Canadian identity and its many constituent parts. The literatures of Canada's many different identities – racial, ethnic, gendered – work to define a small portion of any kind of national identity (or should I say identities?), and analyzing one of these components helps to paint a picture of the whole. Scholars like Kamboureli foreground just how shaky the ground of a Canadian national imaginary really is; due to its multiplicity, a Canadian national identity is constantly on the move and constantly in a state of “anxiety.” But Canada is not alone. In a Western critical climate dominated by postcolonial and diaspora theories that not only reiterate the very vexed notion of the nation as a category, but also evoke the language of plurality, hybridity, and multiplicity as vital critical terms, we must understand the nation, its parts, and group identities as things constantly in flux. If literature “measures the pulse of a nation” and shows a “kind of anxiety” about Canadian identity,<sup>8</sup> does ethnic or minority

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Commonwealth with the image of a populace as “the people” who can act with a will, or feel fear, cowardice, love, and any number of other human emotions.

<sup>8</sup> This “anxiety” about a lack of a coherent Canadian identity has received various treatments since the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences (1949-1951), known as the Massey Commission, famously decried the lack of a clear focus around which a coherent Canadian identity could be fixed. More recently Jonathan Kertzer's *Worrying the Nation* focuses on the problems with developing a national literary history and identity in Canada.

literature that measures the pulse of a smaller, sub-national group identities display similar definitional anxiety?

By looking at the literature of Ukrainian-Canadians as an ethnic group with a long history in Canada, I explore ethnic identity as it dialogues with the various literary discourses of cultural diversity that have arisen throughout the twentieth century. My case study of Ukrainian-Canadian literature, written in English by Canadian-born descendents of Ukrainian immigrants, gives insight into how these descendents (as both authors and characters) feel about ethnic identity in Canada. Often current cultural studies highlight the importance of localized and specific examples in contrast to general theories emerging from external contexts (see McClintock and N. Thomas; Gunew); for instance, Eva Mackey tells us that Canadian identity must be understood in its own context, without undue reference to British or American models of ethnic, postcolonial, or national identities (9), a point Enoch Padolsky agrees with (“Olga in Wonderland” 18). As I am not interested in a Canadian national identity per se, but rather in the smaller ethnic identities that constitute it, I have chosen a sample group to study, which is a small part operating within and in relation to an imagined larger Canadian entity. Robert Harney suggests that by using “the Ukrainians as models,” those advocating federal multiculturalism were able to present “the idea of ethnic persistence” in contrast to “inevitable Anglo conformism [...] as both a norm and an ethos to be pursued” (70). I also use “the Ukrainians as models,” not just to examine “the idea of ethnic persistence,” but also to show how feelings of Ukrainianness appear in literature in the hopes that this snapshot analysis opens avenues of inquiry for other ethnic groups as well. I ask whether

we can conceive of ethnic identities outside of a retention and loss paradigm suggested in the movement from “being” to “feeling” ethnic.

In setting up this study, it is important to note that not all Ukrainian-Canadian writers write about ethnic identity issues and some write about nothing else. For my analysis of Ukrainian-Canadian ethnic feelings, I survey texts written by Ukrainian-Canadians that do focus on articulating Ukrainian-Canadianness. Sneja Gunew has identified the problems with reading “minority writers” solely through “the issue of their ‘identity’” (72), a strategy which understands these authors to represent what Gayatri Spivak famously referred to as the “native informant,” he or she who writes from within a supposedly coherent group for an external audience eager for “authentic” representation. I am not unself-conscious that my use of Ukrainian-Canadian works may look as though I believe them to operate as “pure” ethnic testimonials, but I am interested in how their authors want to operate as “native informants,” both preserving and consolidating an ethnic identity that resolutely refuses to sit still. At times I bring other Canadian texts to the fore as counter-points, but I offer an analysis of what is commonly considered to be a particular group in order to explore how Ukrainian-Canadians feel about their ethnicity in the hopes that the threads I follow and unravel may be applied meaningfully to other sets of texts. Specifically, I intend for this study to demonstrate the elastic flexibility and durability of ethnicity as a construct, suggesting that anxiety will be the perpetual result of indulging in a utopian fantasy of belonging.

Some of the complexities of later generations “feeling” their ethnic heritage rather than “being” it are dramatized in Lisa Grekul’s recent coming-of-age novel, *Kalyna’s*

*Song*. Her Cold War era Ukrainian-Canadian protagonist is asked by her Polish schoolmate to explain her ethnic identity:

“Come on,” says Katja. “Explain it to us. Explain it to *me*. Please. I’m wondering what it feels like to be Ukrainian.”

“Well, it feels just like – well, I’m sure it doesn’t feel any different than –”

“Any different than *what?*” says Katja, interrupting me. “Come on. How does it feel? You said you were Ukrainian. How does it *feel?*” (268, original emphasis)

This idea of “what it feels like to be Ukrainian,” as a Canadian whose parents or grandparents immigrated, takes many forms, but one of the most dominant proves to be a search for a connection to “home.” Myrna Kostash writes: “There is the ethnicity one inherits and the ethnicity one acquires” (*All of Baba’s Children* xiv), and Ukrainian-Canadian literature variously posits this construction and articulation of an “acquired” ethnic identity. Colleen may have inherited her Ukrainianness, but the novel focuses on her struggle to acquire it. Acquiring a Ukrainian-Canadian identity involves the process of making Ukrainianness meaningful for the character (and frequently the author as well), often through articulating ethnicity as an entity that can be articulated in reference to “home.”

Mackey reminds us “identity *is* the self” (11), and literary endeavours to locate an ethnic identity attempt to articulate a kind of selfhood. Psychoanalysts have long claimed that selfhood and subjectivity develop out of a familial context. Some theorists follow Lacan’s formulation of the Name-of-the-Father as the head of the symbolic order

defining how one comes into an articulation of the self;<sup>9</sup> others, building on a Jungian conflation of one's self and one's home (253), have created a critical tradition that reads selfhood through images of "home."<sup>10</sup> Put simply, "home" can function as a symbol or metaphor for subject identities (George 23). Moving from this model of selfhood arising from the intimate and domestic sphere of the "home" as a familial domain, critics examining nationalism have traced its development to a sense of national fraternity and kinship.<sup>11</sup> Conceptually, this model suggests that people come into a sense and awareness of themselves in direct relationship to their position within a national family. If, however, one identifies more with a sub-national category as the primary locus of subject formation than with the political state, then it is the symbolic "home" that gives rise to selfhood. Ethnicity rather than nationality takes precedence in such a view. The EDS alerts us to the importance that group identity based on ethnicity (not nationalism) possesses in Canada, and using that data as my inspiration, I provide an overview of one group's relationship to the personal, political, and public dimensions of ethnicity. In

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<sup>9</sup> In 1955-56 seminar, *The Psychoses*, Jacques Lacan outlined his formulation of the father as the key to subjectivity that operates on three levels: the real, the imaginary, and the symbolic. The function of the father on these three levels is to allow one to enter into subjectivity – through a relational definition of the self in a familial order defined by the father.

<sup>10</sup> See Rosemary Marangoly George's summary of these theoretical positionings that principally situate one's subjectivity arising out of one's conception of "home" as a safe (and feminized domestic) space (20-23). J. Douglas Porteous' influential essay on the personal and public dimensions of "home" makes the connection between identity and home space explicit: "The personalization of space is an assertion of identity" (383), and offers an invaluable starting-point for discussions of home/identity linkages.

<sup>11</sup> Eric Hobsbawm's study of nationalism as a political and ideological construct constitutive of political nations traces nationalism to the eighteenth century (3), and John Hobson's study of imperialism, first published at the beginning of the twentieth century, offers a retrospective interpretation of nationalism in the nineteenth century focusing on community as its identifying feature (5). Using these historical analyses of nationalism, George Mosse's *Nationalism and Sexuality* charts the rise of nationalism beginning in eighteenth-century Europe and notes the concurrent rise of ideas of sexual propriety, thus linking attitudes about sexual behaviour with those of the nation. Critics have also viewed nations as large, extended families (see Geertz; Shils; and Van den Berghe), and developing out of that framework, Alexandra Schultheis' study, *Regenerative Fictions*, outlines the ways in which postcolonial subjects strive to write themselves into national families.

examining “what it feels like to be Ukrainian,” I really explore what it feels like to be an ethnic subject whose symbolic “home” constructs a “Ukrainian” subjectivity.

“Homes,” of course, as Rosemary Marangoly George and others rightly contend, are not givens – spaces “already marked out in symbolic and material dimensions for the occupant” (21) – but are often fractured, mutable, and multiple. Feminist theorists critique a traditional positioning of homes as stable, feminized spaces. Biddy Martin and Chandra Mohanty, for example, argue that envisioning stable homes presents a version of feminism that reproduces limiting binary constructions of knowledge that do not account for multiple perspectives within feminist discourse (165). Anthony Vidler also argues that the tendency to view homes as feminized spaces can express misogynistic fears of female bodies.<sup>12</sup> George discusses both Vidler’s interpretation of Freud and Freud’s now oft-quoted definition of the uncanny to begin her analysis of “home” within colonial discourse by identifying the symbolic connection between homes and wombs (22-23). But feminism has not been the only launching ground for critiques of the illusion of stability folded into the story-book image of a safe, happy home as “a major fixed reference point for the structuring of reality” (Porteous 386). Insights arising from poststructuralist, postmodernist, and globalized frameworks take it as axiomatic that a stable or unified “home” is a fantasy of collectivity, in the same way that the category of “nation” is, in the words of one critic, “fast becoming obsolete as a political and social category” (Schultheis 6).<sup>13</sup> Yet both homes and nations as metaphors continue to possess

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<sup>12</sup> J. Douglas Porteous’s analysis of public/private definitions of home also evokes certain fears of female bodies when he writes that “[l]ike an overattentive mother with her child, the home may smother an individual” (387).

<sup>13</sup> Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri’s *Empire* make the powerful argument that global capital is rapidly over-riding the nation-state as the dominant force of culture. In a similar way, Masao Miyoshi’s “A

power, offering an elusive suggestion of belonging that writers struggle within and against.

Critics who can be loosely gathered together under the heading of “Canadian Ethnic Studies” have long discussed “Canadian ethnic and racial diversity from a broad range of perspectives” (Padolsky, “Olga in Wonderland” 18), acknowledging “cultural change and cultural mixing” (21) as crucial to ethnic and minority writing in Canada, writing that disavows simple or “pure” concepts of a national “home.” Criticism often evokes images of non-belonging and displacement to articulate a contemporary fixation with experiences of what Cynthia Sugars calls “unhomely states.” Carolyn Redl, for example, questions whether Canadian fiction written from “any ethnic group” can avoid expressing “the gnawing sense of the pervasive dispossession and displacement encompassing the world of the *hyphenated-Canadian*” (28, original emphasis), and postcolonial theorists have pointed out that one of the over-riding experiences of postcolonial subjects includes a sense of non-belonging, of “various kinds of ‘in-betweenness’” (Sugars, Introduction xiii), a point often echoed by diaspora theorists who note that “[b]eing in a diaspora implies a tension between being in one place physically – the place where one lives and works – and thinking regularly of another place far away” (Safran 12). They reveal that “the old localizing strategies – by bounded *community*, by organic *culture*, by *region*, by *center* and *periphery* – may obscure as much as they reveal” (Clifford 303, original emphasis). These ethnic, postcolonial, and diaspora theorists evoke territorial metaphors and images to articulate a psychic sense of not belonging, of being somehow split. While my study foregrounds ethnic subjectivity, the

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Borderless World?” argues that large, American transnational corporations override traditional state functions.

line dividing the ethnic subject from a diasporic one blurs at a number of places, thus making this both a study in ethnic and diasporic identity construction.<sup>14</sup>

Critics, for instance, are not in full agreement about the extent to which Ukrainian-Canadians can be considered diasporic subjects,<sup>15</sup> and my study employs theories of diaspora in conjunction with ethnic theory (and some postcolonial insights) to understand how Ukrainian-Canadian literature posits its identity. Like ethnic theories that tend to dismiss third- and fourth-generation Canadian's claims to ethnic status as inferior to those who experience "being" ethnic, not merely "feeling" it, Safran articulates the general consensus amongst diasporic theorists about valid diasporic identities when he distinguishes between significant diasporic relationships to the home-country and inconsequential ones, with pseudo-diasporic hyphenated identities appearing "little more than an after-dinner self-labelling (the sort of hyphenated self-identification often made by a person to make her/himself look more interesting)." For him, this kind of ethnicity does not constitute "a genuine diaspora identity" (12). Reminiscent of ethnic theories that tend to see ethnicity as a straightforward movement towards "full and equal participation in Canadian society, without discrimination" (Weinfeld 239), throwing into question the idea that generations of descendents of Ukrainian immigrants to Canada who have been born here can even be thought of as ethnic, diasporic theory tends to

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<sup>14</sup> In her overview of the intersections among discourses of race, ethnicity, multiculturalism, postcolonialism, and diaspora, Gunew notes "the reconfiguration of the status and function of the so-called ethnic community in relation to diasporic histories and to differences within such notional groups" (6), providing a rationale for my consideration of the overlapping terrain of Ukrainian-Canadianness as both an ethnic identity and a diasporic one.

<sup>15</sup> Satzewich offers a clear analysis of the different kinds of diasporic experience the various waves of Ukrainian-Canadian immigrants have experienced, with first-wave immigrants as a "classic labor diaspora" (26) and the general sense that the many different Ukrainian-Canadians now comprise part of a larger diaspora (8). In contrast, Ihor Stebelsky considers first-wave immigrants "economic immigrants" and third-wave ones "post-war refugees" (143), highlighting the crucial differences between these two groups, even if they are considered part of the same diasporic community.

distinguish between genuine and disingenuous diasporic identities, with Ukrainian-Canadians falling on the side of the dismissed after-dinner self-labellers. Ukrainian-Canadians, therefore, may find themselves in a position similar to ethnic, postcolonial, and diasporic subjects, being caught in a sense of “in-betweenness” that “obscures” a sense of self that often results in literature with an “investment in the notion of ‘home’” (George 1). But their status as not-quite ethnic, not-quite settler or Aboriginal, or not-quite diasporic leaves them “in-between” theoretical discourses on ethnic, postcolonial, and diasporic identities. Their investment in “home” tells us much about the construction of a minority subjectivity that lies at the intersection of theoretical positionings about identity politics. In my reading, “home” begins to represent the imagined locus for oft-overlooked ethnic and diasporic subject positions; it serves to define both personal subjectivity and public identity.

In her analysis of the politics of home, George argues that the search for it, as a defining feature of the self, understands “home” as an exclusive metaphor; one is either “home” or “not-home,” and often “home” (and by extension, “home-country”) is defined in reference to being away from it (2), which is exactly the point that J. Douglas Porteous makes at the end of his important essay on “home,” when he writes that it “can be most fully appreciated only by leaving it” (390). George writes that “[t]he search for the location in which the self is ‘at home’ is one of the primary projects of twentieth-century fiction in English” (3). In the particular case of Ukrainian-Canadian literature, the “search for the location in which the self is ‘at home’” takes on interesting dynamics as the Ukrainian-Canadian subjects of the texts I study seek to define Ukraine as a kind of absent/present “home.” The importance of “myths/memories of the homeland” (Clifford

305), a kind of non-belonging or “homesickness” (George 3), and “experiences of displacement” (Ong 12) characterize the anxiety arising from this persistent connection to Ukraine as a kind of “home-country.” Given the centrality of “home” in cultural discourses pertaining to ethnicity and diaspora, it is not surprising that “home” emerges in this study as the dominant metaphor informing Ukrainian-Canadian identity.

No fewer than 170,000 ethnic Ukrainians immigrated to Canada between 1896 and 1914.<sup>16</sup> By 1900 approximately 16% of the total immigrants to Canada came from the Western Ukrainian province of Galicia.<sup>17</sup> This initial population created a distinct Ukrainian-Canadian culture that interacted with later immigrants from Ukraine, most notably the politicized intelligentsia who arrived after World War II. While the rate of immigration has slowed, currently over one million Canadians identify themselves as Ukrainian (according to the 2001 census). Ukrainians came to Canada in three distinct waves, and the post-Soviet opening of former Eastern Bloc countries (like Ukraine) has allowed for a fourth wave to begin.<sup>18</sup> After the first and most numerous wave of homesteading Ukrainians (1891-1914), approximately 68,000 Ukrainians immigrated between 1919 and 1939. In the five short years between 1947 and 1952 a further 32,000 arrived.<sup>19</sup> Given the size of this group and its long-standing history in Canada,

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<sup>16</sup> Vera Lysenko puts the number much higher and writes that “in fifteen years [Clifford Sifton’s immigration policy] had brought two million immigrants from Eastern Europe,” and she believes there were 200,000 Ukrainians in Canada by 1908 (*Men in Sheepskin Coats* 32, 64).

<sup>17</sup> Michael Marunchak gives these numbers, noting out of the 41,681 total new immigrants 6,618 were from Galicia (46).

<sup>18</sup> Some scholars date the beginning of this fourth wave earlier. Vic Satzewich, for example, writes that “the fourth wave began in the late 1980s and continues to this day” (23).

<sup>19</sup> I have used the generally accepted, more conservative figures in providing this background. For more information, there are a number of excellent studies outlining the history of Ukrainians in Canada (see Marunchak, *The Ukrainian Canadians: A History*; Lupul, *A Heritage in Transition*, especially chapter one, “The Background to Emigration: Ukrainians of Galicia and Bukovyna, 1848-1914”; Hlynka, *The Other Canadians*; Ewanchuk, *Pioneer Profiles: Ukrainian Settlers in Manitoba*; Balan, *Salt and Braided Bread: Ukrainian Life in Canada*; Martynowych, *Ukrainians in Canada: the Formative Years, 1891-1924*; Luciuk and Hryniuk *Canada’s Ukrainians: Negotiating an Identity*).

Ukrainian-Canadian literature can tell us much about Ukraine as the shadowy spectre of home that haunts Ukrainian-Canadians and informs their conception and construction of themselves as an ethnic and diasporic community within Canada. Constance Rooke defines “home” as “wherever it seems our spirits are meant to be,” and suggests that places – both “home” and “not home” – “are largely metaphors for that; and writing is the trip, the getting closer – and closer – through words” (x). This idea of “our spirits” and “home” and how the two are interconnected through the writing process lie at the core of my exploration of Ukrainian-Canadian literature in English.

For fifty years, descendents of Ukrainian immigrants in Canada have been writing in English, trying to negotiate their identities in relation to a distant, lost, absent Ukraine. We generally think of this same fifty-year period as bringing about in a variety of disciplines a postmodernist outlook that dismantles metanarratives,<sup>20</sup> including those about stable and identifiable selves. While some critics have posed a kind of “nomadism” (Deleuze and Guattari, via Kaplan 189), suggesting that the state of being un-homed allows for a productive sense of self, unmoored from traditional (and static) ways of understanding subjectivity (George 27-29; Pratt 196; Kaplan 189, 191-192; Brydon 700), it seems that Ukrainian-Canadian writers still strive to locate a stable “home,” and their failure to do so produces images of Ukraine that haunt Ukrainian-Canadian literature. Theorists have begun to question the celebratory notion of nomadic subjectivity on the basis of its failure to problematize how the forces of capital affect and inform mobility (Cheah 298; Ganguly 177); Ukrainian-Canadian literature contributes an

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<sup>20</sup> Jean-François Lyotard was an important figure in contemporary French philosophy who famously undermined “legitimizing metanarratives,” arguably first articulating postmodernist epistemologies that question totalizing narratives. His most influential works are *The Postmodern Condition* and *The Differend*, contributing to the growing discourses of postmodernity.

interesting insight to this debate by constantly preferring conventional images of ethnic subjectivity over images either of mobility or those that question transnational power imbalances. This literature appears strangely out of date and out of touch with other contemporary thought on the formation of identities, and if there was not such a substantial body of work presenting a similar outlook, we could dismiss this literature that quests for a stable Ukrainian-Canadian identity through the image of a stable “home” as anomalous. Yet, as this dissertation will show, the recurrence of analogous images and desires for some kind of recognizable ethnic subjectivity suggests that we must take seriously the ethnic struggles of Ukrainian-Canadian literature.

Early Ukrainian-Canadian writers, such as William Paluk, consider Ukraine as the “shadow” that immigrants to Canada find they cannot deny – “it had followed [them] across the ocean” (11) – and Vera Lysenko, Grekul, and Kulyk Keefer employ the language of the ghostly in their separate analyses of Ukrainian-Canadianness. Grekul speaks for Ukrainian-Canadians when she writes: “We have the chance to write ourselves out of existing shadows and leave new ones, we just need to take it” (*Leaving Shadows* 204). While shadows (both Paluk’s and Grekul’s) are not exactly ghosts, the two are not unrelated: both incorporeally announce the presence of something else. Lysenko makes this connection clear when she writes that “the shadow” of Ukrainian religion “haunted the Ukrainian settlements” in Canada (*Men in Sheepskin Coats* 63). Further, Avery Gordon argues that attending to “the ghostly haunt” may indicate what hides “in the shadows” (15). Ghosts and shadows both evoke secrets lurking in corners, which is where Kulyk Keefer takes us. In “longing for an evolving dialectic to replace the fossilized dichotomy between old world and new, tradition and history, past and

future” that she sees characterizing Ukrainian-Canadianness, she yearns for an “acknowledgement and exploration of dark ghosts – abandoned family, assassinated kobzars, grossly corrupt governments, selves painfully fractured along lines of guilt and relief, memory and amnesia” (*Dark Ghost in the Corner* 50, 51). These passing comments by scholars of Ukrainian-Canadian literature about the presence of ghosts suggest that the project of defining and locating “home” for Ukrainian-Canadians may be a haunted project; “home” may just be, in Freudian terms, “an *unheimlich* house,” or “a *haunted* house” (“The Uncanny” 634).<sup>21</sup>

If Canadian literature itself is “obsessed with ghosts and haunting” (645), as Marlene Goldman and Joanne Saul put it, and both “transnational haunting” (653) and haunting “bound up with Canada’s status as [a] settler-invader society” (648) present the ghostly in national terms, then it should not be surprising to see Ukraine rising as a ghost in literature by Ukrainian-Canadians. A country that only came into full independence recently and whose doors were largely closed to outsiders for most of the twentieth century, absent/present Ukraine serves as a vexed trope for ethnic identity formation as authors and characters struggle to define what being Ukrainian-Canadian means in terms of finding a “home,” not just in spatial terms, but in psychological and physical ones as well. Ukraine appears as a ghostly presence in the literature, haunting the protagonists as they try to account for their own discomfort at being caught in “the in-betweenness of the displaced” (Goldman and Saul 649), of not being quite Canadian enough, but not being

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<sup>21</sup> I rely on a number of different sources for thinking about haunting, primarily Jacques Derrida’s *Specters of Marx*, Avery Gordon’s *Ghostly Matters*, and Sneja Gunew’s *Haunted Nations*. These theories, in part, owe their genesis to Freud’s articulation of the uncanny as the recurring reappearance of something that has been repressed or alienated from the self. He articulates the relationship between *das Heimliche* (the homely or familiar) and *das Unheimliche* (the unhomely or uncanny) in terms that specifically invoke the crucial idea of “home” that my dissertation explores.

quite Ukrainian enough either, thus potentially turning themselves into spectres as well. For as Sugars warns us: “Ghosts give to the living texture, significance, legacy...culture. Without them, *we* are the ghosts” (“The Impossible Afterlife” 693). By the end of this study, we will see that Ukrainian-Canadian literature appears strangely haunted by Ukraine, and thinking about ethnic identity through ghostly metaphors allows us to see that “what it feels like to be Ukrainian” is not without anxiety; nor is it uncomplicated. For if haunting represents sites of theoretical or aesthetic fractures (Saul and Goldman 647), then the kinds of haunting that emerges in my analysis of Ukrainian-Canadian literature can be understood as representing the anxious and fractured feelings of Ukrainian-Canadian ethnicity.

This deployment of the politics of haunting as a lens to discuss Ukraine’s impact on Ukrainian-Canadian literature, and more broadly, on the ways in which Ukrainian-Canadian literature posits a sense of Ukrainianness in Canada, raises some key questions that this dissertation will explore. Does the “in-betweenness” of haunting refer to Ukraine as spectre, or to Ukrainian-Canadians as the “unhomed” occupying “a kind of liminal space traditionally associated with the ghost” (Goldman and Saul 648)? Do Ukrainian-Canadians transform Ukraine into a commodity, thus making it a spectre, able to haunt (Derrida 190)? Are Ukrainian-Canadian characters and authors haunted or merely obsessed (and is there a difference)? In showing how ethnicity is linked to a search for the place where the self can feel “at home,” my dissertation explores how the quest to engage with the ghostly presence of Ukraine dominates Ukrainian-Canadian literature, attesting to the unfinished business of ethnic identity formation and articulation.

Ukrainian-Canadian literature in English dramatizes the various kinds of psychic unease and discontent caused by the spectre of Ukraine looming large in the minds of Ukrainian-Canadian characters created by Ukrainian-Canadian authors. In their case, the feelings of Ukrainian-Canadianness that manifest themselves in ghostly images of the past and, to borrow from Salman Rushdie, an “imagined homeland” contradict the belief that through successive generations, Ukrainians will shed their ethnic allegiances and become full members of Canada, the new hostland. Manoly Lupul’s view that this trajectory from “more” to “less” ethnicity typifies a common opinion about Ukrainian experiences in Canada, where the movement from being a foreigner to becoming assimilated involves a short transition, “lasting no longer than the first immigrant generation and very seldom past the third. By the fourth generation only a handful are actual members of the ethnic or cultural group” (“The Tragedy” 4). Forgetting and eventual loss seem to be the order of the day.<sup>22</sup> Weinfeld concludes his study with the assertion that “[b]y most accepted definitions and measures, ethno-cultural assimilation is proceeding, notwithstanding the rhetoric of multiculturalism, and is more pronounced among the later generations in Canada” (261). It would appear, therefore, that third- and fourth-generation Ukrainian-Canadians should be largely assimilated, both willing and able to put aside their ethnic baggage and lay their ghosts to rest. Some, however, have never dropped that baggage and continue to be haunted by ghosts, experiencing “enduring feelings of otherness” (Grekul, *Leaving Shadows* xvi); while several “returned to claim that baggage” (Kulyk Keefer, “Coming Across Bones” 89) and work “at drawing

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<sup>22</sup> In his recent sociological survey of ethnic identity retention and loss, Weinfeld finds “continued ethnic salience” in North America an “unexpected” surprise to be analyzed “as part of an intellectual post hoc scramble” (240), testifying to the dominant view that immigrant groups will be digested eventually into the body politic.

[them]selves out of the shadows” (Grekul, *Leaving Shadows* xxiii) at various stages of their lives in a number of different ways.

Most of the authors I examine in this dissertation have written or spoken about their ethnic identities explicitly, not just in their creative works (see Balan, ed., *Identifications*; M. Bociurkiw, “Bordercrossings”; Grekul, Introduction to *Leaving Shadows* and Wawryshyn Interview; Kostash, Introduction to *All of Baba’s Children* and *All of Baba’s Great-Grandchildren*; Kulyk Keefer, “Coming Across Bones” and *Dark Ghost in the Corner*), expressing a wide range of feelings about the strange persistence of their ethnic identity – ranging from puzzlement to celebration to pain. In her comparative study of multiculturalisms, Gunew identifies a trend of what she calls “poet pedagogues” wherein “artists who are also teachers” often “become the focus for creating and maintaining an intellectual community informed by the diasporic histories of its constituent members and enmeshed in contradictory relations with the dominant cultural paradigms” (13). Many Ukrainian-Canadian creative writers also function as its literary critics and ethnic theorists, “poet pedagogues” invested in communicating their individual visions of how best to retain, or address the loss of, Ukrainian-Canadianness. While not all Ukrainian-Canadian writers focus their literary attentions on ethnicity issues (at least not all the time), I have purposely limited the scope of this dissertation to creative works that grapple with seeking to identify Ukrainian-Canadianness as an ethnic concept, “in all its hyphenation, its ambivalence, its confrontation, and its restless exploration of the possibility of belonging” (Kostash, *All of Baba’s Great-Grandchildren* 9).

After over fifty years in Canada, Ukrainians began writing in English and by now they have spent another fifty years doing just that. The Ukrainian-Canadians of my study choose to write in English, because they have lost (or never had) a great facility with Ukrainian as a written language. For them, “Ukrainian” is not synonymous with “Ukrainian language.” They, for the most part, are assimilated enough to have linguistic mastery of the dominant language(s) of Canada, but they lack the skill to communicate effectively in their ethnic language. Kostash describes the linguistic experience of the Ukrainian-Canadian very aptly:

The Ukrainian spoken by the parents of the first generation was, in the vast majority of cases, a dialect of some sort and full of grammatical and syntactical errors compared to the literary language. It was an aural, not literary, inheritance. [...] In short order, they also absorbed into their speech English words for which they knew no Ukrainian equivalent, gave them a Ukrainian pronunciation, added on the Ukrainian verb or adjective ending and used it as part of their own language. [...] The English language influenced the Ukrainian-Canadians’ vocabulary for everything from names of the months to medical terms to the names of plants. This was the Ukrainian language learned by the Canadian-born; it was learned in Canada and as such was not a “foreign” language. (*All of Baba’s Children* 199)

She makes the point that this “mother tongue” of later generations of Ukrainian-Canadians is not the same as that spoken in Ukraine and not taught as anything other than an oral language of the intimate and domestic familial sphere. The literary and scholarly

language of these Ukrainian-Canadians is English (and in some cases, French).<sup>23</sup> So, while their “mother tongue” may be a kind of pidgin Ukrainian, their “mother text” is Standard English.

Over the past twenty-five years, a critical tradition has developed that sees Ukrainian-Canadian literature written in English as a valid area of study in its own right, rather than seeing it merely as the poor cousin of true Ukrainian-Canadian literature written in Ukrainian (see Balan and Klynovy xviii; Mycak xi; Klymasz, Review 163; Grekul, *Leaving Shadows* xvii-xix). The reasons for studying these two literatures separately are many. Most importantly, while these literatures may grow out of similar or related experiences of ethnicity in Canada, their literary heritages are quite different. Sonia Mycak, in *Canuke Literature: Critical Essays on Canadian Ukrainian Writing*, the first collection of essays on Ukrainian-Canadian literature in English, clearly outlines the key distinctions between Ukrainian literature and literature in English by those identified as Ukrainian in Canada:

First, a fluency in the Ukrainian language appropriate for literary or artistic use was normally found in Ukrainian-born immigrants, whereas the following generations born in Canada wrote (and continue to write) primarily in their native English tongue. Second, stylistic differences mark the writing of the immigrants who were schooled in Ukrainian literary history and tradition, and familiar with the type of literature written or read in Ukraine

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<sup>23</sup> Fran Ponomarenko writes about Ukrainian-Canadians in Montreal. At times her characters switch from English to French and back again. For the most part, however, Ukrainian-Canadian literature is written either in Ukrainian or in English, and my study focuses solely on the English-language literature. There is a long-standing debate in Canada whether or not English- and French-literature should (or can be) separated for individual analyses of each; by convention and linguistic ability (if not by conviction), I fall on the side of monolingual English-language literary analysis.

during their educationally formative years. By contrast, Canadian-born writers have a completely different literary context, one marked not only by Canada's national literature but that of literary traditions, past and present, of all the English speaking world [...]. Third, themes and subject matter and their treatments differ markedly in the writing of immigrants and that of successive writers. (Mycak xi-xii)

In keeping with this focus, my dissertation examines texts written in English and understands the Ukrainian-Canadian ethnic identity that is variously defined, reified, and explored as distinct from one(s) informed by and developed through Ukrainian language channels. Except in quotations, I have translated phonetically transliterated Ukrainian words and used standard spellings for place-names throughout this study.

Given that the majority of first-wave Ukrainian immigrants to Canada “came under various names such as ‘Galician,’ ‘Bukovinians,’ ‘Ruthenians,’ ‘Austrians,’ etc. even as ‘Poles,’ and ‘Russians,’ depending on the region or province of Ukraine from which they emigrated” (Woycenko 15) and were not “*svidomi ukraintsi*, or nationally conscious Ukrainians,” because they “came from the illiterate and downtrodden masses which had been exploited in the Austrian-ruled crownlands of Galicia and Bukovyna” (Luciuk 11), their identification of themselves as Ukrainian in some manner developed after immigrating to Canada (Woycenko 15; Satzewich 27). Literature fostered this development of Ukrainian-Canadianness, and my dissertation, therefore, surveys a wide range of Ukrainian-Canadian literature in English to explore this construction of a definitional “home” and the various hauntings that inform it.

“Home” for the Ukrainian-Canadians of my study could easily be Canada, tout court, because questions of citizenship, as an indication of belonging and non-belonging to the Canadian state, had largely been resolved for these descendents of Ukrainian immigrants to Canada. In 1947 the Canadian Citizenship Act was passed. Under this act, those born in Canada became Canadian citizens, not just British subjects. Descendents of Ukrainian immigrants born in Canada before 1947 and those born on or after that date were granted Canadian citizenship along with everyone else. The first Canadian citizenship certificate was given to then Prime Minister, Mackenzie King, and the second was offered to Wasyl Eleniak, one of the first Ukrainian immigrants who encouraged Ukrainian settlement on the Canadian prairie.<sup>24</sup> Sonia Mycak and Barry Ferguson both note the symbolic significance for Ukrainian-Canadians of this act in recognizing Eleniak as a “founding father” of Canada (Mycak 52; Ferguson 324). By the time Ukrainian-Canadians were writing in English in the post-war period, their official citizenship and status as belonging in Canada had been long established (see Harasym). The questions of ethnic identity and belonging at the basis of this study, therefore, arise in the literature after real political gains had been made by early Ukrainian immigrants to Canada. By the 1920s, Ukrainians were active in a number of levels of government (Harasym 108), and those numbers have increased throughout the latter half of the twentieth century (Harasymiw 128-36), signalling Ukrainian-Canadian effective involvement in the public

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<sup>24</sup> The histories of both Wasyl Eleniak and Ivan Pillipiw, as the first two Ukrainian immigrants to Canada in 1891, as well as the efforts of Joseph Oleskiw who advocated settling the Canadian prairie with land-hungry Ukrainian peasants, are well documented (see Marunchak 23-73; Lysenko, *Men in Sheepskin Coats* 6-33; Kaye and Swyrypa 32, 36-41). Vladimir Kaye and Frances Swyrypa offer this apt, condensed insight: “Pillipiw and Eleniak undoubtedly stimulated the first sustained interest in Canada among the Ukrainian peasantry” and Oleskiw’s “writings and speeches gave wide publicity to the free lands in Canada” (38).

life of Canada.<sup>25</sup> To be clear, while the latter generations of Ukrainian-Canadians are no more homogeneous politically or culturally than any other group, their position, understood as a legitimate ethno-cultural group within Canada, seems to allow for full participation in Canadian life; so their fixation with constructing “home” appears more symbolic than actively political.<sup>26</sup>

This division between official citizenship and political activism, on the one hand, and symbolic ethnic identity, on the other, points to the distinction between public and private enactments of ethnic identity. In his analysis of ethnicity in North American society, Wsevolod Isajiw claims that “technological society” operates in the public domain, relegating ethnicity “to the private sphere” (“Olga in Wonderland” 83). However, he points out that “ethnicity is not simply a matter of individual choice,” and maintains that “it is a matter of ancestry, and of membership and belonging” (83). While these insights are now thirty years old, and discussions of ethnic, postcolonial, racialized, and diasporic identities have come to the fore since his articulation of how ethnicity operates, fracturing his simple binary between a technological public sphere and an ethnic private one, the fundamental question driving his analysis remains germane today. In what ways does ethnic identity operate as a private, personal construction of individual subjectivity, and how is a private individual identity linked to public group identities?

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<sup>25</sup> In her analysis of racial politics in the United States, Anne Anlin Cheng makes a powerful argument about a racialized group’s need to transition “from grief to grievance, from suffering injury to speaking out against that injury” (3). She sees “one traditional method of restitution” as “the conversion of the disenfranchised person from being subjected to grief to being a subject speaking grievance” as the typical process involved in moving from marginalized oppression to political activism and recognition, but, according to her, that transition is insufficient because it does not allow “for social, political, and subjective beings *to grieve*” (7). While the dynamics informing Ukrainian-Canadians are not necessarily those she discusses, this dissertation investigates feelings that lie somewhere in between (or beyond?) the distinction between political disenfranchisement and active political involvement.

Charles Taylor considers a private and public identity as inseparable and analyzes “the modern preoccupation with identity and recognition” (99), determining that “dialogical relations with others” constitute individual identities (103). Porteous’s analysis of home and identity agrees with that symbiotic view of personal identity construction and public identity recognition, asserting that “[i]dentity includes not only self-knowledge but also one’s persona as recognized by one’s fellows” (384). His insight lies at the core of my analysis, reminding us to read Ukrainian-Canadian literature’s preoccupation with “home,” as an important ethnic symbol, functioning along both public and personal axes of identity.

Therefore, as I have outlined it, Ukraine, its relation to “home,” and how these two concepts are fundamental to Ukrainian-Canadian ethnicity dominate this literature and my study of it. I highlight one ethnic group, most importantly how it has related to and constructed different (and sometimes conflicting) views of itself, as a way of examining ethnicity as a changing category of cultural identification in Canada, particularly in the latter decades of the twentieth century and the early years of the twenty-first one. I organize this dissertation into five primary chapters that look at what literature can tell us about “home” and ethnic identity as interrelated and mutable concepts. Methodologically, I survey a wide range of Ukrainian-Canadian texts (not distinguishing between “good” or “bad” literature and mainstream or ethnic presses) in order to describe and analyze the various unsuccessful attempts to locate definitively a Ukrainian-Canadian ethnic “home.” In this first chapter, I have introduced the ethnocentric focus of my study and my main question of the relationship between “home”

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<sup>26</sup> This observation positions this group in contrast to the position voiced in many discussions based on a citizen/non-citizen binary, a binary just as important as the white/non-white binary Reitz and Banerjee

and ethnicity. As well, I have introduced the lens of haunting as a model that will be explored at different times throughout this dissertation in relation to theorizing the presence/absence of Ukraine in the literature. In Chapter Two, “1980: The Rise of a Ukrainian-Canadian Identity,” I begin by outlining the positions of Vera Lysenko, as the first scholar of Ukrainian-Canadian English-language ethnic identity, and of Lisa Grekul, as the most recent. I argue that Lysenko views ethnicity as something inherent to be shared, while Grekul views it as something constructed to have resonance. The rest of this chapter offers a literary history of Ukrainian-Canadian literature in English, focusing specifically on the impact of federal multiculturalism and discourses of race on Ukrainian-Canadianness, demonstrating that Lysenko’s and Grekul’s views share with other Ukrainian-Canadian literature a drive to articulate “home.” I argue that Ukrainian-Canadian ethnic identity experienced a transition around 1980 from, first, evoking a socio-economic marginalization to, later, becoming a nation-specific identity, a Ukrainian-Canadian hyphenated identity. In Chapter Three, “Ukrainian-Canadian Pioneers,” I explore the intersection between ethnicity and regionalism by looking at literature that tries to replace a closed-off Cold War Ukraine as a geographical “home” with a Ukraine on the Canadian prairie by situating images of Ukraine within prairie mythologies. This chapter invokes theories of place and space to help illuminate Ukrainian-Canadian literature’s desire to affix ethnicity to an originating geographical locale. My analysis of the images of Ukraine in this regional literature is what gives rise to my theory that Ukraine haunts Ukrainian-Canadian texts; in particular, shadows and echoes of Ukrainian political structures are conjured on the Canadian prairie. As well,

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study, but not applicable to these subjects.

the Ukrainian grandma, or baba, figure becomes important in the yoking of ethnic identity to a regional place. In Chapter Four, “Ukrainian-Canadian Postcolonial Guilt and Loss,” I argue that the attempts to overlay a Ukrainian-Canadian ethnic identity with a prairie regional one give rise to angst not uncommon to postcolonial settler societies. In particular, Ukrainian-Canadian authors and characters of the prairies try to reconcile their complicity in displacing or marginalizing First Nations peoples in that region with their own homesteading heritage, producing three models to address the guilt associated with such complicity: “Absenting the Aboriginal,” “Claim-by-Identification,” or “Unsettling the Setter.” Andrew Suknaski’s poetry and Grekul’s novel, however, complicate these models and express a real desire to grapple with Aboriginal issues, not just facile symbols. Chapter Five, “Sexy Ukrainians: Ethnicity as Romantic Desire,” argues that especially after Ukraine’s independence from the Soviet Union and in the face of failures to create a “home” in Canada, Ukrainian-Canadians turn their attention to Ukraine as a “home-country,” which seemingly allies them with a larger Ukrainian diaspora that is highly invested in Ukraine as a homeland. I argue, however, that, through transgressive sexual desires, this longing for Ukraine by Ukrainian-Canadians produces Ukrainian spectres who challenge these attempts to locate “home,” suggesting an uncomfortable fit for English-language Ukrainian-Canadian literature within Ukrainian diasporic literature and consciousness. I advance this argument through a close reading of Kostash’s *The Doomed Bridegroom* and Kulyk Keefer’s *The Green Library*, with some final insights emerging from a brief glance at Larry Warwaruk’s *The Ukrainian Wedding*. In my conclusion, I examine the unsuccessful attempts at home-building in Ukrainian-Canadian

literature to ask about the implications for understanding ethnic identity beyond this case-study.

This dissertation, therefore, is both descriptive and exploratory: it describes Ukrainian-Canadian literature's relationship to an absent/present Ukraine as a "home," and it explores how that relationship exposes attitudes about Ukrainian-Canadian ethnicity in the last fifty years, suggesting that ethnic identity still matters long after the initial moment of immigration.

## Chapter 2 – 1980: The Rise of a Ukrainian-Canadian Identity

This dissertation could be subtitled “From Lysenko to Grekul” because it focuses on Ukrainian-Canadian ethnic identity issues beginning with Lysenko’s critical and fictional texts and ending with those of Grekul; they are the quintessential “poet pedagogues” of this field. Scholars generally agree that Lysenko is the first English-language writer of Ukrainian heritage,<sup>1</sup> and Grekul is the most recent member inaugurated into this group; thus they serve as the brackets that define the temporal limits of this project. Despite the fifty-year time gap between these two scholars and authors,<sup>2</sup> their writing shares many similar concerns about constructing, maintaining, and articulating a Ukrainian ethnic identity in Canada.

For instance, Lysenko’s main interest lies in explicating, historicizing, and describing Ukrainian-Canadian presences and experiences in Canada. She wants to demonstrate Ukrainian-Canadian importance and centrality to Canada. On the other hand, Grekul’s main interest lies in explicating, historicizing, and describing Ukrainian-Canadian literature. She wants to demonstrate Ukrainian-Canadian literature’s importance and centrality to Canadian literature. Lysenko’s non-fictional *Men in Sheepskin Coats* (1947)<sup>3</sup> offers a history of Ukrainians in Canada while Grekul’s *Leaving Shadows* (2005) offers a literary history of Ukrainian-Canadian writing. Nonetheless,

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<sup>1</sup> In fact, the first English-language literature written by a Ukrainian in Canada was short fiction by Anna Kuryla Bychinsky. Her two short stories, “Zonia’s Revolt” and “The Dowry,” were published by *Macleans* in 1924 and 1926, respectively, but Lysenko is the first novelist. As well, Bychinsky was a Ukrainian-American who only lived a few years in Canada, while Lysenko was born and raised in Canada.

<sup>2</sup> There exists a tradition of a small Ukrainian-Canadian intelligentsia shaping the attitudes and beliefs of the rank and file Ukrainian-Canadians (Stebelsky 148; Woycenko 15), and Lysenko and Grekul, who address identity issues in both their creative and critical works, fall into this tradition.

both share a desire to bring Ukrainian materials – be it experiences and history or literary contributions – from a perceived position of marginality to one of centrality. For each author, Canada (as a nation or national literature) functions as the imagined construct to which they append Ukrainianness.

To determine the tenor of English-language Ukrainian-Canadian studies, this chapter begins by analyzing the positions that Lysenko and Grekul set out, as the earliest and most recent articulations of what English-language Ukrainian-Canadianness is. Lysenko’s stated aim in writing *Men in Sheepskin Coats*<sup>4</sup> is “to show how the destiny of the Men in Sheepskin Coats [Ukrainians] was bound up with the destiny of Canada” (3); she wants to write Ukrainian-Canadians onto Canada’s centre stage. With a related goal, Grekul notes: “The Ukrainian Canadian literary tradition simply will not survive if it is not included in classroom syllabi and drawn into ongoing debates in Canadian literary studies [...]. The challenge for Ukrainian Canadian literary scholars – which mirrors that of early feminist and postcolonial scholars – is how to incorporate this ‘marginal’ body of literature into the mainstream” (*Leaving Shadows* 203); she wants to write (and teach) Ukrainian-Canadian literature onto Canadian literature’s centre stage. Both see proselytizing as key to their intellectual projects.

These authors, moreover, approach their related goals through analogous structures. Lysenko, for instance, provides a three-part ethnographic historical account of Ukrainian settlement and experiences in Canada, highlighting, as often as possible, where

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<sup>3</sup> Throughout this chapter I provide the first publication date for each primary text, because I seek to establish a meaningful chronology and literary history of Ukrainian-Canadian English-language writing.

<sup>4</sup> Her title, of course, alludes to Clifford Sifton, then Minister of the Interior, and his comments about the desirability of Eastern European immigrants. In 1922 he made his oft-quoted statement: “I think that a stalwart peasant in a sheepskin coat, born on the soil, whose forefathers have been farmers for ten

and when Ukrainian contributions have been crucial to Canada as a whole. Grekul's literary history also embodies a tripartite structure as she demonstrates Ukrainian-Canadian literature's intersection with the main critical traditions informing the development of a Canadian literary canon and responding to what she calls "three dominant models of nationhood": assimilationist, multicultural, and post- and transnational (xix). Lysenko and Grekul both conceive of the Canadian nation as the foundation upon which their analyses are built. Lysenko views Canada as a nation growing into greatness, and thus writes a book showing how Ukrainian-Canadians participate in this larger project. Grekul views Canadian literature as developing from a more homogeneous "former British colony" to a "post-national community increasingly defined by the diasporic consciousness of many members" (xix), and thus writes her book showing how Ukrainian-Canadian literature follows this development. If, as previously mentioned, Kamboureli is right in noting that "the kind of anxiety that has continued to characterize both what Canadian literature is and what constitutes Canadian identity" is "particularly Canadian" (6), then the fixation with and anxiety about Ukrainian-Canadian literature and what constitutes Ukrainian-Canadian identity are also "particularly Canadian," and this is exactly the point that both Lysenko and Grekul wish to make.

The histories of both authors' critical works share correspondences as well. First, both works were preceded by essay collections on the same topic. Paluk's *Canadian Cossacks* was published in 1942, five years prior to Lysenko's *Men in Sheepskin Coats*, but it does not offer the coherent, book-length analysis of Ukrainian-Canadian history and experience that the latter does. Recalling the relationship between Paluk's and

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generations, with a stout wife and a half-dozen children, is good quality." The sheepskin coat becomes a key symbol, alluded to by a number of Ukrainian-Canadian authors and critics.

Lysenko's works, Mycak's *Canuke Literature* was published in 2001, four years prior to Grekul's *Leaving Shadows*, but it is also a collection of essays on Ukrainian-Canadian fiction, not a complete, coherent account of Ukrainian-Canadian literature, like Grekul's text. So while neither Lysenko nor Grekul actually produced the first books on their topics, they are both generally accepted as having done so (see Mycak 1; Padolsky 363; Grekul 33-46; Balan and Klynovy xviii), with the book jacket of *Leaving Shadows* proudly announcing it as the first Canadian book-length monograph on English Ukrainian writing. Second, both texts also received negative reviews in the *University of Toronto Quarterly*. Alexandra Kryvoruchka's introduction to the 1992 edition of *Yellow Boots* provides a reception history of *Men in Sheepskin Coats* including Watson Kirkconnell's belief in its suspect leftist leanings (Kryvoruchka xv-xvi), which he makes clear in his review of the book, as he warns that the "appetizing dish" of *Men in Sheepskin Coats* "is laced with political arsenic" (428). Kulyk Keefer's *University of Toronto Quarterly* review of *Leaving Shadows*, fifty years after Kirkconnell's of Lysenko's book, while not accusing the author of communist tendencies, does assert that the book's overt biases limit its success, calling it "not so much a gallop through an important field of Canada's literary history as the riding of a blinkered hobbyhorse" (539). The contentious reception of both books by other writers who are themselves invested in Ukrainianness in Canada<sup>5</sup> indicates two key points worthy of note as underpinnings for the rest of this study: often people conceive of ethnic identity as

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<sup>5</sup> Both Watson Kirkconnell's annual review of literature in "other languages" in the *University of Toronto Quarterly* and his *Canadian Overtones* outline his knowledge of and investment in Ukrainian-Canadian literary culture. He makes his assimilationist bias (that Ukrainians will become good Canadians) clear in his own analysis of Ukrainian-Canadian literary contributions (*Canadian Overtones* 76). Kulyk Keefer has written numerous academic articles on Ukrainian-Canadianness, and her novels *The Green Library* and

intensely personal, making them hostile or resistant to any general theory of ethnicity;<sup>6</sup> and ethnic identity (including Ukrainian-Canadian ethnic identity) is multiple and contextual, making general insights and comments provisional, not essentialist or universal.

These various resemblances invite a comparison of these two “first ladies” of English-language Ukrainian-Canadian studies, but a crucial difference between Lysenko’s approach to Ukrainian-Canadian ethnicity and Grekul’s yields the greatest insight; this difference lies in their views about the expression of ethnic identity. Lysenko in *Men in Sheepskin Coats* and Lilli in *Yellow Boots* (1954) share the goal of expressing Ukrainian-Canadian ethnic identity to others. In contrast, Grekul in *Leaving Shadows* and Colleen in *Kalyna’s Song* (2003) see the expression of Ukrainian-Canadian ethnicity as constitutive of that identity. For Lysenko, Ukrainian-Canadianness exists as an entity to be shared, but for Grekul, that identity only comes into being through its articulation.

Lysenko makes explicit her twofold goal of preserving and presenting Ukrainian-Canadianness as legitimate components of Canadianness from the very opening pages of both her books. For Ukrainian-Canadians, she wants *Men in Sheepskin Coats* “to preserve something of their origins,” because “[e]ach year something of the old vanishes – pioneers’ houses crumble or are torn down; old-timers pass off the scene, old

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*The Ladies’ Lending Library*, as well as her travel memoir *Honey and Ashes*, all focus on Ukrainian ethnicity.

<sup>6</sup> Ironically, Kulyk Keefer makes exactly this point when she writes about her own, personal sense of Ukrainian-Canadian ethnicity; she writes: “In stressing what I see as the vital interconnections between ethnicity and history, and in downplaying the festive traditional features of ethnicity, I may be thought idiosyncratic, utterly unrepresentative of Ukrainian Canadians. [...] I know that in the eyes of the Ukrainian Canadian community, my emphasis on a history that cuts both ways, showing Ukrainians as both oppressed and oppressors, may be perceived as the attitude of someone so alienated from her ancestry that she has taken to fouling her own nest” (“Coming Across Bones” 98, 99).

documents are lost or destroyed” (4). This is sentiment echoed in the forward to *Yellow Boots*: “The old song-makers were dying, the hands that once wove tapestries now tended machines, the treasures of folk lore were forgotten. [...] [T]his story of a girl’s search for music is offered as a reminder of their lost inheritance, and to preserve for them something of the old beauty” (ix). From the beginning, cultural preservation motivates this tradition of English-language Ukrainian-Canadian writing. According to Redl, “most” early ethnic writers “preserve aspects of ethnicity”; she even cites Lysenko’s *Yellow Boots* as an example of this preservation and presentation mode of ethnic writing (23). Tamara Palmer Seiler characterizes this role as that of the “mediator or apologist,” pointing out that writers such as Lysenko often interpret and translate “their group’s experiences to the larger community” (“Multi-Vocality and National Literature” 157). Lysenko explicitly does this in *Men in Sheepskin Coats* and implicitly in *Yellow Boots* through her singer protagonist. “Just as Lilli Landash uses her vocal talents to communicate the important message that there can be ‘unity in diversity,’” according to Kryvoruchka, “Vera Lysenko employs her literary skills, and the English language, to preserve and promote her own Ukrainian heritage” (xvii-xix). Lilli fictionally represents Lysenko, and in her story we find Lysenko’s views about Ukrainian-Canadianness.

*Yellow Boots* tells Lilli’s story; as the daughter of Ukrainian immigrants, Lilli experiences a harsh life on a prairie farm, the victim of a tyrannical and patriarchal father, and ultimately she leaves her ethnic, rural surroundings and becomes a renowned singer. Lysenko sets her novel in 1929, more than twenty years prior to her writing, and paints a picture of a Ukrainian-Canadian peasantry whose culture includes rich musical traditions. At the book’s opening, the new schoolmaster transports a sickly Lilli home, and on their

journey they come upon Ukrainian-Canadians in the field who “without warning” all join together and “burst into song”:

The tenor, singing almost in a falsetto, initiated the melody, elaborated upon it, prolonged the piercing note until the whole countryside seemed to express the profound sorrow of a persecuted people. The chanting, in polyphonic harmony, swelled in a crescendo as the soaring voices poured forth their melody. The whole prairie had come to life. (11)

Lysenko highlights the communal and land-based nature of the Ukrainian-Canadian singers. They are not a people of cities or concert halls, but rather of the natural landscape. Theirs is a “spontaneous choral harmony,” the likes of which the schoolteacher has never heard, and it rouses the sick Lilli from her lethargy, because “she has music in her soul, like her people” (11, 12). Singing appears inherent in the rural Ukrainian-Canadians, and Lilli embodies both this link to the land and the music born of it. Lysenko tells us that Lilli feels “the spring, like a peasant, with her body,” as her “kinship with the earth [is] renewed” after her long illness (31). Her connection to Ukrainian-Canadianness through the land is presented as giving to her musical abilities, and as the other children approach “[d]ancing and singing” in order “to celebrate the rites of spring,” Lilli joins them until “[f]rom all directions, in musical diminuendo, the intermingled call of larks and children sounded and resounded in a multiplicity of echoes all over the prairie” (32-33). The clear link between the outside world and the music of the settlers presents their ethnicity as innate and natural; its expression is spontaneous and unpractised.<sup>7</sup> This vision of Ukrainian-Canadianness as folk culture

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<sup>7</sup> Mycak calls this “an isomorphism between characters and aspects of their prairie surroundings” (3) and correlates Lilli’s ethnic identity with primitivism (4, 5, 6).

typifies Lysenko's outlook. In *Men in Sheepskin Coats* she goes so far as to assert that "[s]ong came spontaneously to the lips of the Ukrainian immigrants; it was engendered by the life around them, by their closeness to nature, and their swift passionate response to moods" (85), exactly the sentiment that *Yellow Boots* offers in Lilli's narrative.

Singing becomes the key to Lilli's success, as she hones her talent as a folk-singer; in the words of Kulyk Keefer, "Lilli's decision not to sing *lieder* on the metropolitan concert stages, but to seek out the community halls of small, isolated towns, in order to perform the folksongs of all immigrant groups" makes her a folksong heroine worthy of respect (Review 539). She becomes materially and professionally successful as a Ukrainian-Canadian singer of folksongs. Ethnic authenticity for Lysenko, therefore, emerges from something innate and natural, to be shared with a larger audience. Mycak calls this the "shift from primitivism to expression through the medium of the human voice" (7). The core idea, for Lysenko, lies in taking a pre-discursive ethnic identity (Ukrainian-Canadianness, in this case) and constructing it discursively (through writing or singing).<sup>8</sup>

Grekul's young, female protagonist, Colleen,<sup>9</sup> also engages with her ethnic identity through singing, but very differently from Lilli. Like Lysenko, Grekul sets her

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<sup>8</sup> These ideas about the performative nature of ethnic identity share some similarities with Judith Butler's analysis of gender identity as performative. In *Gender Trouble*, Butler argues that instead of seeing sex as biologically determined and gender as socially constructed, both sex and gender can be seen as discursively constructed through repeated acts (performances). However, Lysenko's text seems closer to the early feminist distinctions that Butler rejects (with performed genders as the external manifestations of internal sexual identities, or in Lysenko's case with performed Ukrainian-Canadianness as the external manifestation of internal ethnicity); Grekul's views seem analogous to Butler's own, as we shall see.

<sup>9</sup> Like nearly all Ukrainian-Canadian literature, female protagonists in these books serve as the focus of Ukrainian-Canadian ethnic identity construction. Scholars have discussed this focus on female protagonists either as sage baba figures, who pass ethnic knowledge and information to their descendents, or as young women experiencing ethnicity through female rites, particularly of marriage (Mycak 2; Swyrupa, *Wedded to the Cause* 248; Seiler, "Including the Female Immigrant Story" 56; Rasporich 257; Isajiw, "Olga in Wonderland" 83).

narrative in the past, and if Lilli's natural singing talent marks her for success as a songstress at the novel's commencement, Colleen's singing talent appears just the opposite. Colleen's first song is quite different from Lilli's. Lysenko offers us a vision of Lilli singing at her grandmother's knee (*Yellow Boots* 28-29), while Grekul presents Colleen singing as part of a soloist competition (*Kalyna's Song* 33-34). As the book opens, Colleen prepares to compete in a Ukrainian singing contest at an ethnic festival in Dauphin.<sup>10</sup> Her costume has been researched and specially made, and her song carefully chosen and rehearsed; there is nothing here of the pastoral peasant whose song grows naturally from the landscape. While Lilli's singing constantly inspires admiration in her listeners, Colleen places last; her "pronunciation needs work," as she "sing[s] with a Canadian accent" (35). In *Yellow Boots*, Lilli tells a story of hearing a folksinger perform: "she had attended the recital of a so-called folk singer who had been highly praised in the local press. The woman had a high, light voice, not unpleasing, but with many artificial gestures and trills. Her arrangements violated the true spirit of folk song"; for Lilli, folksinging should provide the singer with a way to make external an internal ethnic "force" (311-12). When Lilli sings her folksongs, she sings "not [for] fame at all, but simply to sing" (345) from the depth of her "big, passionate voice" that makes people feel "as though they stood in the presence of the first folk poet who sang of human things" (353-54). Colleen sings like the professional folksinger, flawed and inauthentic, whereas Lilli's singing emerges from a "true spirit." Such a representation highlights the idea that for Lilli the "human things" exist prior to their articulation, but

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<sup>10</sup> Colleen, unable to compete with her Ukrainian dance troupe due to a sore knee, opts to enter the singing competition at the very real, non-fictional celebration of Ukrainian-Canadian folk culture, "Canada's National Ukrainian Festival," held annually in Dauphin, Manitoba. MacDonald alludes to this Ukrainian-Canadian festival in the quoted passage I cite in the preface.

Colleen's failure at singing Ukrainian-Canadian songs suggests a breakdown in the connection between taking an internal, pre-discursive ethnic identity and making it external. Colleen's performance is found wanting, because she lacks Lilli's internal ethnicity. This crucial difference in the way that these two protagonists approach singing begins to demonstrate their authors' varied views about ethnic identity, despite the apparent parallels in their work.

Lilli's and Colleen's dissimilar musical education refines the view of ethnicity as folk art for Lysenko and something quite other for Grekul. The man who teaches Lilli music believes that peasants and factory workers have inherent musical talents and that his job is merely to help them express their innate gifts. Lysenko describes him as having "faith in the capacity of the common man to respond to beauty and art, even to create art," because he asks rhetorically: "where did music originate, if not from the people?" (257). He works with Lilli, therefore, to facilitate the expression of her inborn musicality, her natural ethnicity. He believes that immigrants to Canada "don't want to lose their roots" (260), and by helping Lilli and others in his choir, he helps to preserve those roots. The image of "roots" is important here, because it suggests something fundamental and foundational to the person, whereas Colleen's relationship with things Ukrainian, despite her Ukrainian "roots," appears less straightforward. Her first musical training in Ukrainian folksongs moves painfully forward as the monolingual, English-speaking (with a "Canadian accent") Colleen phonetically learns Ukrainian songs from her mother who tries to remember them from her own childhood (*Kalyna's Song* 43). Colleen sings Ukrainian songs at all her family weddings, but then, during the transition from middle school to high school, from girlhood to womanhood, she attends her first

family wedding that does not conform to the expectations of a big, Ukrainian wedding. Colleen does not sing; there is “not one Ukrainian dish on the menu” (52); and the venue is “all wrong for a Ukrainian wedding” (59). This wedding serves as the moment that crystallizes Colleen’s realization that “[t]he rules have all changed” (64), and her uncomplicated conception of Ukrainian-Canadianness as unsophisticated folk culture needs reassessment, a reassessment that comes in the form of a tall, thin Ukrainian nun, Colleen’s new music teacher. This teacher helps Colleen begin to realize that her relationship to her ethnic identity does not consist of looking backwards to a peasant, pioneering ethos (like Lilli’s preserve-and-present model of ethnicity), but rather that if Colleen wants to be Ukrainian-Canadian, she has some hard work ahead of her to reconcile her sense of herself with Ukraine, both past and present.<sup>11</sup>

From Sister Maria, Colleen does not just learn music; she also learns Ukrainian musical history and begins to understand that there is more to Ukrainian culture than peasant folksongs. Like Lilli, however, Colleen leaves her family in order to connect with and make sense of her Ukrainian-Canadianness. While Lilli’s *Künstlerroman*<sup>12</sup> takes her from the family farm to the nearest city, Colleen’s takes her from Alberta to Swaziland. When attending an international school with students from varied national and ethnic backgrounds, Colleen must struggle to articulate “what it feels like to be Ukrainian.” Her experiences in Swaziland read almost as a catalogue of her failures to

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<sup>11</sup> Grekul makes this point explicit in talking about *Kalyna’s Song*: “I’m using Colleen as a vehicle for various messages about how Ukrainian myths can be kept alive and nurtured in various conventional and non-conventional ways. Classical music is serious cultural work and Colleen needs to do that. She’s not giving up the interest in folk music, which is a different kind of cultural expression” (qtd. in Wawryshyn 8).

<sup>12</sup> Gordon Philip Turner’s doctoral work discusses Lilli’s story as a *Bildungsroman* (154-165), but since her coming-of-age story focuses around her development as a singer, we can discuss it as a *Künstlerroman*, a reading hinted at by Mycak, who writes that we can interpret it “as a feminist *Bildungsroman*, [or] a portrait-of-the-artist” (1).

use folk culture – singing folksongs, creating pysanky<sup>13</sup> – to communicate to her colleagues (and to herself) what the Ukrainian part of her hyphenated ethnicity means, experiences which culminate in another disastrous singing performance that recalls the first one in Manitoba. Colleen must perform Ukrainian folksongs as a Ukrainian citizen, while wearing a Polish costume (because her Ukrainian one from Canada has not arrived in time) for a luncheon designed to increase her school’s musical endowment fund. This fraud is discovered; Colleen is not Ukrainian, despite her folksinging. Once again she “didn’t pronounce the words correctly” in the Ukrainian folksong (344), and a Ukrainian-speaking audience member calls her to account for the deceit, declaring that Colleen is “[n]ot much of a Ukrainian, but a fine singer!” (345). All Colleen’s struggles with how best to identify and articulate what “it feels like to be Ukrainian” culminate in this interaction, leaving her to reflect: “I might not speak Ukrainian, but I still feel Ukrainian” (345). Her ethnic identification appears nothing more than a feeling that she struggles to externalize. While Lilli’s singing externalizes her ethnic identity, to both preserve and present it, Colleen’s efforts to externalize hers fail because for her Ukrainian-Canadianness cannot be expressed through models of folk culture that presuppose a coherent ethnic identity: Colleen’s sense of her own ethnicity is anything but unified or coherent.

Ultimately Colleen comes to accept a changeable vision of Ukrainian-Canadian ethnicity. She realizes that “folk songs do change,” and “[p]ysanky have changed too”; they “are different each time you make them” (366). While this exposition shares the

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<sup>13</sup> Pysanky are coloured Easter eggs, made with a kistka, the stylus used to decorate the egg with melted wax. “Two types of Ukrainian eggs are well known,” Marguerite V. Burke writes, “the *pysanka* (pronounced *peh-san-ka*) is a decorated egg; the *krashanka* is an egg dipped in a solid colour. The *krashanka*, unlike the *pysanka*, is hard-boiled and can be eaten” (54).

kind of didactic tone of Lysenko's novel, Grekul believes her version of Ukrainian-Canadianness is different from Lysenko's. Grekul understands *Yellow Boots* as "reinforc[ing] discourses of assimilation" (*Leaving Shadows* xx), while for Colleen: "Music is going to be her creative outlet for her hybrid identity" (qtd. in Wawryshyn 8). Lilli does not question her Ukrainian identity, and sings to share it with others, while Colleen's identity is "hybrid." Grekul explicitly condemns Lilli's performance as "a superficial mimicry of the rich and complex Old World culture to which she once belonged," viewing Lysenko's novel's ethnic offerings of "folk songs and dancing boots" as unsatisfactory (*Leaving Shadows* 46). She writes Colleen's story as something of a corrective to Lilli's in order to challenge static and idealized versions of ethnicity (Grekul, "Re-Placing Ethnicity" 18). She offers to Lysenko's vision the idea that ethnic identification is hard work, one that demands Colleen struggle with Ukrainian folk culture, classical music, history, and language, finding each individual component insufficient to express her feeling of Ukrainian-Canadianness. As a result, the novel closes with Colleen's realization that she does not have to articulate or justify her sense of her own ethnic identity to anyone else: "It's what I think – what I feel – that matters" (376). Thus the singing that has emerged as her prime engagement with her ethnic identity serves not to preserve or present it to her audience, as in Lilli's case, but rather as part of a process necessary for her to recognize her own internal feeling of Ukrainian-Canadianness.

This introductory sketch of similarities and differences between Lysenko and Grekul as Ukrainian-Canadian scholars and writers limns out the terrain over which this dissertation traverses – highlighting the importance of gender, performance, regionalism,

folk versus high culture, and preservation versus construction to the developing articulation of Ukrainian-Canadian ethnic identity – and now we can turn to the substantial body of Ukrainian-Canadian literature that lies between these two authors. Canada’s various policies of multiculturalism lie between them as well. While Lysenko’s novel may be “an early envisioning of a multicultural Canada” (Seiler, “Multi-Vocality and National Literature” 156), Grekul’s is set specifically “in the multicultural heyday of the 1980s and early 1990s” (*Leaving Shadows* 202), and something changed in Ukrainian-Canadian literature between these two points. The earliest Ukrainian immigrants to Canada lived “being” Ukrainian and both wrote and spoke Ukrainian.<sup>14</sup> They certainly missed the country that they left behind, but felt that it continued to live in them in fundamental ways.<sup>15</sup> But their children and grandchildren are more rightly characterized by Colleen’s sentiments about “feeling Ukrainian,” even if it takes a whole book for her to figure out what that means.

Werner Sollors believes text can operate as “codes for a socialization into ethnic groups,” but writes that “the belief is widespread among critics who stress descent at the expense of consent that only biological insiders can understand and explicate the literature of race and ethnicity” (11). In refuting such a belief, his study stresses the idea of “consent” over “descent,” foregrounding a constructivist notion of ethnic identity.

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<sup>14</sup> Immediately upon immigrating from Ukrainian-speaking provinces of the Austro-Hungarian empire, immigrants “turned their attention to the only Ukrainian newspaper that was being published on the American continent, namely the weekly paper ‘Svoboda,’” which was first published in 1893 (Marunchak 238). Then during the first decades of the twentieth century a number of Ukrainian-language newspapers began servicing the needs of these early immigrants (see Marunchak 238-96). These newspapers printed much of the early Ukrainian-language literature written by these immigrants (see Marunchak 297-311).

<sup>15</sup> Michael Ewanchuk’s *Pioneer Profiles: Ukrainian Settlers in Manitoba* offers personal vignettes from Ukrainian immigrants and their descendents to Manitoba. He taped interviews with the settlers in Ukrainian and then translated and shaped their stories for inclusion in his book. That these interviews were conducted in Ukrainian gives evidence to the linguistic connection to the “Old Country,” and many of the

Ethnicity in this view is something that an ethnic subject actively constructs, acquires, and accepts, in contrast to the view that ethnicity is simply a category that one is born into (Schaefer 12-14; Cornell and Hartman 38). Sollors's view that Americans come to "consent" to an American identity (rather than being born into an American "descent") applies to Ukrainians in Canada learning how to construct their identities as well.<sup>16</sup> Homi Bhabha also makes this powerful argument about culture: cultures are historical, contextual, and constructed, and thus open to change and manipulation (*The Location of Culture* 38-41). Lysenko's model represents a more descent-based conception of ethnicity than Grekul's, and Ukrainian-Canadian scholars have begun to recognize the more constructed and processual nature of Ukrainian-Canadian ethnicity (Balan, "Echoes" 8; Kulyk Keefer, "Coming Across" 94; Kostash, *All of Baba's Grand-grandchildren* 37; Grekul, *Leaving Shadows* 201), very much like Colleen's realizations about her own ethnic identity.

The consent model of ethnic identification offers the ethnic subject a greater degree of agency and thus control over his or her own identity. Colleen, for instance, defines her feeling of Ukrainian-Canadianness against the models – folkloric and linguistic – offered to her. Rajagopalan Radhakrishnan sets out the following useful schema to articulate the process whereby a marginalized subject begins to construct identity in response to dominant discourses:

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speakers make reference to "our own people" (4) and to the fact that they took comfort in having Ukrainians as their neighbours, a fact which indicates a kind of lived Ukrainianness in Canada.

<sup>16</sup> Gayle Rubin notes: "It is impossible to think with any clarity about the politics of race or gender as long as these are thought of as biological entities rather than as social constructs," and she could add to "race or gender" ethnicity as well; she extrapolates this insight about identity politics to her analysis of sexual identities as similarly constructed (10). Much thinking about ethnic identities has followed a similar course as that about sexual identities.

The program of naming and unnamings takes the following historically determinate steps (different phases of a developmental sequence): ethnic reality realizes that it has a “name,” but this name is forced on it by the oppressor, that is, it is the victim of representation; it achieves a revolution against both the oppressor and the discourse of the oppressor and proceeds to unname itself through a process of inverse displacement; it gives itself a name, that is, represents itself from within its own point of view; and it ponders how best to legitimate and empower this new name. (69)

Radhakrishnan suggests that at first a group suffers “naming” by a dominant discourse, and then it responds by “unnaming” and “renaming” itself. Bringing them all together, Bakalian, Sollors, and Radhakrishnan offer a model of ethnic identity construction that we see in Lysenko’s and Grekul’s writing and that we can apply to the descendents of Ukrainian immigrants to Canada. Bakalian’s idea of “being” Armenian (or Ukrainian for my purposes) is very much akin to Sollors’s idea of ethnicity as a product of “descent.” In each case, the ethnic subject just simply *is* ethnic. The status is defined by simply *being*, which suggests that one is merely born into a pre-existing category.

Radhakrishnan’s schema adds to this idea the recognition that specific contexts, particularly power imbalances that cause marginalization, inform the development of ethnic subjectivities. In this schema, therefore, the Ukrainian-Canadian is born into his or her category (as Lilli is born as a peasant Ukrainian), and that category is created by those in power; but over time, the Ukrainian-Canadian subject will accrue enough power to reclaim the terms under which he or she is defined, redefine him or herself, and “consent” to a new identity (like that which Colleen creates for herself). Does this model

actually prove accurate through an analysis of the literature? What forms of “renaming” have Ukrainian-Canadians taken?

In pre-multicultural days, Canadian culture and society were understood to be Anglo-normative (the “oppressor” in Radhakrishnan’s model). Immigrants were expected to assimilate in order to become Canadianized. “Foreign” communities during this era suffered tremendous pressure to assimilate into “an imperialist British-Canadian model of society, to abandon their language, social customs, and ethnic loyalties in favour of ‘mainstream’ Canadian values and attitudes derived from English-speaking Loyalist Ontario” (Katz and Lehr 77). Ralph Connor’s extremely popular novel, *The Foreigner: A Tale of Saskatchewan* (1909),<sup>17</sup> offers a prescription for such integration: the Slavic immigrant, Kalman Kalmar, becomes assimilated to mainstream culture and he, in turn, invigorates that mainstream.<sup>18</sup> Early Ukrainian immigrants to Canada learned this lesson very well and worked to follow in the model illustrated by people like Connor. Grekul puts this point succinctly: “In the postcolonial and pre-multicultural period of Canadian history, assimilation was the word of the day. Immigrants from non-Anglo-Celtic backgrounds were expected to shed their ethnic languages and cultures in order to fit into Canadian society” (*Leaving Shadows* 3). Grekul makes clear her view that “ethnic languages” and “cultures” can somehow be separated, a view that points toward her multicultural upbringing. Early twentieth-century Canada did not necessarily make that same distinction.

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<sup>17</sup> Ralph Connor was the pseudonym of the Presbyterian minister and missionary Charles W. Gordon. *The Foreigner* was ranked as the second English Canadian best-seller in 1909 and tenth in 1910 (Coleman 87; Lennox 137; Vipond 115, 116).

<sup>18</sup> In Elizabeth Profit’s words, “‘Canadianizing’ immigrants became part of the social gospel’s mission” (129), and as a proponent of Social Gospel doctrines, Connor, in his novel, illustrates this kind of Canadianizing.

Kirkconnell, one of the first champions of Ukrainian culture and literature in Canada, was an early voice calling for “a wider conception of [...] national literature” that would include the literature of what he and the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism<sup>19</sup> refer to as “other ethnic groups” (*Canadian Overtones* 5) into a Canadian national literature. Kirkconnell’s annual review in the *University of Toronto Quarterly*, while providing a venue for the critical discussion of Canadian literature “in other languages,” indicates the conception that early ethnic writing was not written in English or French; ethnicity was, by definition, linguistic. Ethnic writing not defined by the language in which a text was written really only came into its own when the criterion defining ethnicity shifted from the language in which a text was written to the author’s cultural background (Aponiuk 2). In the late 1970s, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari clarified this separation between the language literature is written in and its minority status. They wrote: “A minor literature doesn’t come from a minor language; it is rather that which a minority constructs within a major language” (30). With increased immigration from “non-Anglo-Celtic backgrounds” after the Second World War, Canadian society (and its literature) began to be shaped more and more by the presence of ethnics not defined by the language in which they wrote. Canadian literary scholars recognize and document this growing number of ethnic or minority literatures throughout the twentieth century (Padolsky 364; Kirtz, “Old World Traditions” 8), and the

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<sup>19</sup> In 1963 then Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson introduced the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism to develop a bilingual and bicultural legal framework for Canada at the federal level. In 1971 this dual framework was replaced by then Prime Minister Pierre Eliot Trudeau’s introduction of multiculturalism, a policy that would be enshrined as the Multiculturalism Act in 1988 under Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, which set the foundations for official bilingualism (French and English) and multiculturalism in Canada.

proliferation of so-called ethnic or minority anthologies evinces this increased awareness of marginalized identities as constitutive of literary categorization.<sup>20</sup>

More vital to this discussion than merely the proliferation of Ukrainian-Canadian writing in English as the twentieth century unfolded, is the way in which the texts posit Ukrainianness in Canada, how writers attempt to “unname” and “rename” the category into which they “consent” to fall. Padolsky identifies a straight line of Ukrainian-Canadian literary continuity from “Illia Kiriak and Vera Lysenko to Maara Haas, George Ryga, Andrew Suknaski, Ted Galay, and Janice Kulyk Keefer” (363).<sup>21</sup> This view, however, is too simplistic, based on the misconception that these writers participate or have participated in a straightforward Ukrainian-Canadian literary tradition; but, in fact, the development of this so-called tradition was not necessarily linearly progressive. It was and is shaped by the contexts that inform it. Grekul, for example, has argued that, after the increased production of ethnic writing in the 1980s, there was a dearth in Ukrainian-Canadian literary output until the late 1990s, beginning with the publication of memoirs like Kulyk Keefer’s *Honey and Ashes* (1998) and Kostash’s *Bloodlines* (1993) and *The Doomed Bridegroom* (1998). In the introduction to *Leaving Shadows*, she writes: “Most of the Ukrainian Canadian texts I stumbled on [...] were published in the

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<sup>20</sup> See, for example: Balan and Klynovy, eds. *Yarmarok: Ukrainian Writing in Canada Since the Second World War*; Black, ed. *Voices: Canadian Writers of African Descent*; DeFehr, ed. *Harvest: Anthology of Mennonite Writing in Canada 1874–1974*; DiGiovanni, ed. *Italian-Canadian Voices: An Anthology of Poetry and Prose (1946–1983)*; Elliot, ed. *Other Voices: Writings by Blacks in Canada*; Keon, ed. *Sweetgrass: An Anthology of Indian Poetry*; Nómez, ed. *Chilean Literature in Canada/Literatura Chilena en Canada*; Rostom, ed. *Arab-Canadian Writing: Stories, Memoirs, and Reminiscences*; and Ruger, ed. *Transplanted Lives: Dutch-Canadian Stories and Poems*.

<sup>21</sup> By including Illia Kiriak, whose Ukrainian-language *Syny Zernli* was published in installments from 1939-1945, in this tradition of English-language writers, assumedly Padolsky refers not to the original but to the translated and abridged version *Sons of the Soil* from 1959, thus situating Kiriak as a contemporary of Lysenko, whose two novels were published in 1954 and 1956. However, by not clarifying how and why he groups Kiriak (who wrote some 15 years prior to and in another language from her) with Lysenko, the link from early Ukrainian-Canadian writers to later ones becomes very tenuous.

1970s and 1980s. Relatively few have been published since,” and admits “I am not sure if anybody knows definitively why the ‘boom and bust’ of ethnic minority writing happened” (xv). She echoes these sentiments in a later interview: “In the heyday of multiculturalism, in the late 70s, early 80s, in Canada, that’s when we see the most activity among Ukrainian-Canadian writers. [...] Then it drops off in the early 90s” (qtd. in Wawryshyn 8). To be sure, she has identified something odd in the development of Ukrainian-Canadian literature, but I am not convinced “boom and bust” accurately characterizes what it is. What is important about her claim is that she recognizes that Ukrainian-Canadian literature has not simply developed along a smooth path from Lysenko and Kiriak onwards. It seems to me, however, that while Padolsky’s view is too simplistic, Grekul’s suffers from selective omissions. The existence of works such as Maara Haas’s *On Stage with Maara Haas* (1986), *Yarmarok* (1987), which was the first anthology of Ukrainian-Canadian writing, Yuri Kupchenko’s *The Horseman of Shandro Crossing* (1989), Fran Ponomarenko’s *The Parcel from Chicken Street and Other Stories* (1989), Helen Potrebenco’s *Hey Waitress and Other Stories* (1989), and Gloria Kupchenko Frolick’s *The Green Tomato Years* (1985) and *the Chicken Man* (1988), from the late 1980s, and the special issue of *Prairie Fire* magazine in 1992, commemorating 100 years of Ukrainian settlement in Canada, as well as Kupchenko Frolick’s *Anna Veryha* (1992), Marusya Bociurkiw’s *The Woman Who Loved Airports* (1994), Sophia Slobodian’s *Let the Soft Wind Blow* (1993), Danny Evanishen’s two collections of Vuiko Yurko stories (1994 and 1997), Larry Warwaruk’s *The Ukrainian Wedding* (1998), and Nancy Hawrelak’s *Breaking Ground* (1998), from the 1990s, undermine Grekul’s claims

about a Ukrainian-Canadian literary silence during these years prior to the appearance of Ukraine-centric travel memoirs.

In my view, this literary tradition was neither a straight line, nor an example of a literary “boom and bust”; rather its features change through the institution of federal multiculturalism in Canada. While early Ukrainian-Canadian literature in English shaped and presented Ukrainianness within a broad, undifferentiated ethnic milieu, by the end of the 1970s, an idea of Ukrainianness in Canada as a distinct ethnic category with specific Ukrainian-national features and reference points began to become the norm. These two types of Ukrainianness represent two separate kinds of “unnaming” and “renaming” in response to the socio-political context of the last fifty years of the twentieth century. I locate this particular shift in representation around 1980.

To chart this shift, we must return briefly to *Yellow Boots* as the more “Ukrainian” of Lysenko’s two fictional works; however, it ultimately suggests that Ukrainianness is not a unique or identifiable ethnic categorization unto itself. Instead, the latter portion of the novel strives to demonstrate how all ethnicities are, at the core, the same, suggesting that cultural distinctiveness and differentiation are only maintained at a superficial level, represented by folk arts (if at all). The opening sections of *Yellow Boots* do chart and illustrate certain Ukrainian folk customs, within the limited domestic sphere of the home. However, once Lilli leaves the farm, the most important aspect of her ethnicity does not arise from specific Ukrainian traditions, language or literature, but from her folk music, allowing Lilli, in the words of one enthusiastic critic, to bridge “the differences among diverse groups – creating a new song, a new voice, and thereby an

inclusive symbol of national identity” (Seiler, “Multi-Vocality and National Literature” 157).

When Lilli leaves the family farm, she finds herself employed as a domestic servant<sup>22</sup> in a home that fortuitously happens to be equipped with a piano, a patroness of music, and a pianist who recognizes Lilli’s singing talent. On hearing the piano playing, Lilli “recognized a passage. It is part of a song which her mother used to sing,” so she “caught at it and sang out in a loud voice which could be heard over the thumping of the piano” (250). As a result of this encounter, Lilli begins formal training as a singer, hones her talent, and finds material success in the dominant, mainstream culture by functioning as a pan-ethnic representative. She becomes a token ethnic folksinger, not a Ukrainian one. In a telling section of the novel, Lilli states her belief that “songs are wanderers,” and when her music teacher tells her of an old song, he says: “We have many versions of this story – German, Greek, Romanian, Bulgarian, Finnish – I don’t know how many. Much of the poetry produced by the people was scattered by itinerant minstrels. They changed details to suit the country; an orange tree in Spain appears as a cypress in Greece, or a briar in England” (313). His sweeping overview of Europe suggests the view that “the people,” namely peasants producing folk music, literally spring from the same root.<sup>23</sup> So Lilli’s innate singing talent arises from her connection to the land as a peasant, and her Ukrainianness seems almost incidental. For Lysenko, cultural differences are those shaped by class differences, and Lilli’s Ukrainian upbringing only matters because it gives her an instinctive ability to connect with other ethnic subjects of

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<sup>22</sup> Young daughters of Ukrainian immigrants sent into domestic service appear in many Ukrainian-Canadian stories and represent a verifiable trend within the early community (Lysenko, *Men in Sheepskin Coats* 238).

varied backgrounds who find themselves victims of similar social and economic marginalization. In this novel, ethnicity functions as a code for a kind of social underclass. Lilli believes that her audiences “come from the same countries as the people [she] knew at home on the farm” and believes “they’ll like the same music,” because, in her words, “[g]o back far enough and you’ll find that same peasant background” (346). As well, not only are the various cultural heritages of Europe blended together as a common peasantry, but an Asian identity is also folded into this schema that understands ethnicity as easily expressed through folk music. Lilli, for instance, sings a Japanese song and is told by Mitsui, her friend: “You even look Japanese when you sing [...] I think it’s your eyes” (293). In dressing alike, Mitsui says to Lilli: “people will think you’re my twin” (294), showing the fluid unspecificity of ethnicity in *Yellow Boots*. In this presentation, ethnicity is not bounded by lines demarcated by race, nationality, or language, but mainly by class. As a result of the apparent similarity across multiple cultures, the most important element of Lilli’s representing a cultural minority – her folksinging – is, in fact, not specific to her Ukrainian heritage, but shared with all ethnic groups.

In a rhetorical sleight of hand, the narrator moves explicitly into Lilli’s story, exclaiming: “How deeply she had touched those areas of nostalgia in the immigrant, for were not all of *us* in the long run, immigrants?” (344, emphasis added). We, as readers of the text, are included, suggesting that all Canadians are ethnic, which underscores one of Lysenko’s philosophical beliefs that in understanding, documenting, and preserving Ukrainianness she provides insight into qualities that are fundamentally Canadian.

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<sup>23</sup> This left-leaning sentiment is an adaptation of a common nineteenth-century view of Indo-European common mythological ancestry.

Furthermore, the novel culminates with Lilli's concert performances for "men and women of almost every European and Asiatic origin" (351), thus flattening out specificity of culture for a collective conception of it. This combining of all ethnic and immigrant experiences into one shared phenomenon across cultures ultimately implies that there is nothing individual or different enough to distinguish between various ethnic groups. As mentioned, according to Grekul, such a vision of ethnicity portrays the success of assimilationist pressures on ethnic groups. If so, then this assimilationist model seems typical of pre-1980s Ukrainian-Canadian literature in English. Lilli – as a representative ethnic – has been Canadianized in a way that Connor would approve.

Lysenko's other novel, *Westerly Wild* (1956), follows a teacher moving to a rural, ethnically mixed school. When Julie, the schoolteacher, arrives, she is told of her students: "You'll find them a mixed lot, almost every nationality you can imagine" (10). The ethnic make-up of the school catchment area is mixed and multiple, with the many individual ethnic and cultural backgrounds of the student body blended together. Thus, Ukrainianness in this novel emerges again as just one among many ethnicities. The students from varied backgrounds are united by their rural, peasant status. When one of the Ukrainian school children, Jenny Kapusta, comes to class dressed in her traditional clothing, the narrator tells us that the "costume is like a museum piece" (174). The manifestation of ethnicity is, again, through folk culture – clothing in this case. Ethnicity exists as a simple performance, like Lilli's singing. Such a view intimates that ethnicity can function as a point of connection for all members of an ethnic or social underclass marginalized by mainstream Canadian society, but it also puts forward the notion that ethnicity is only something superficial that is not damaged by pressures to assimilate.

This view of ethnicity as materializing through social conditions was not just a feature of Lysenko's novels. Other Ukrainian-Canadian writers envision the ethnic's position in Canada in a similar manner. George Ryga, for instance, dedicates much of his attention in earlier works to non-Ukrainian ethnic experiences. His plays are profoundly concerned with social inequalities; his most well-known play, *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe* (1971), outlines the tragic plight of an Aboriginal woman, expressing sensitivity to economic, gender, and racial discrimination, and his early novels, *Hungry Hills* (1974), *Ballad of a Stone Picker* (1976), and *Night Desk* (1976),<sup>24</sup> create polyethnic communities,<sup>25</sup> rather than identifiably Ukrainian-Canadian ones. In these novels, the cultural differences are those between urban and rural dwellers, not between members of different ethnic groups. Just as Lysenko unites ethnics as a folk, peasant underclass, Ryga presents characters as suffering under the experience of great poverty in the Depression-era prairie.

In *Ballad of a Stone Picker*, as an example, the speaker's rural community is ethnically mixed (like the rural area that Julie goes to serve as a teacher). In one of the vignettes, John Zaharchuk and Philip McQuire simultaneously court Helen Bayrack, the daughter of Ukrainian immigrants. What distinguishes McQuire as the more promising of her two potential suitors is not that he is not ethnically Ukrainian (like Zaharchuk who is), but rather that he is a skilled tradesman. The narrator says that McQuire "was a plumber, which meant he had money and so was a cut above farmers" (161). McQuire is, therefore, better than Zaharchuk (merely a "farmer") not because of his affiliation with

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<sup>24</sup> See Hoffman's *George Ryga: The Prairie Novels*, which collects the prairie texts in one volume, uniting them by region.

Canada's dominant cultural group, but rather because his employment allows him access to economic success and security denied the farmers. Even more important for his status as a husband-to-be than his relative wealth is the way in which he is able to perform ethnicity to blend easily into Helen's familial and cultural milieu. Because "Helen's folk were Ukrainian," McQuire learns "very soon to say 'dobra, dobra!' to anything they told him, and this went over very big" (161).<sup>26</sup> Like Jenny's antiquated "costume" that performs her ethnicity for Julie, a few choice words enable a non-Ukrainian to embrace the ethnic heritage of his bride-to-be. This kind of exogamy, foregrounding an easy blending of cultures, highlights a vision of ethnicity as intermingled in Ryga's fictional prairie setting. When Zaharchuk loses his romantic suit, he exclaims: "I want to kill the fat town-boy!" (164). The differences between the men are those separating rural farmer from urban tradesman ("town-boy"), or economic underclass from middle class. Of course, the complex socio-cultural reasons why ethnic minorities are allied with an economic underclass remain understood; however, the novel presents economic scarcity and farm folksiness as indicators of ethnic status, rather than envisioning ethnicity as something inherent in a particular national or cultural heritage as formed by an awareness of literature, arts, history, politics, or geography of the ethnic or cultural homeland.

While Maara Haas's novel *The Street Where I Live* (1976) does not present a rural/urban binary, by virtue of its setting in Winnipeg's north end, it does present a mix of multiple ethnicities and hybrids of combined ethnicities in keeping with the idea of ethnic identity as class solidarity presented by both Lysenko and Ryga. Haas's

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<sup>25</sup> In preferring the term "polyethnicity" to "multicultural," I am following both Fredrik Barth and Sollors who use "polyethnic" to define multiple ethnic groups as distinct from a framework of politicized multiculturalism.

<sup>26</sup> "Dobra" translates as "good."

experimental novel loosely connects scenes occurring in a poor, Winnipeg neighbourhood. In the book, Mrs. Weinstein, Mrs. Kolosky, and Mrs. Britannia, whose names paint them as specific ethnic caricatures, embody a community unto themselves, regardless of their varied backgrounds. They occupy the same ethnic space, and they are, Haas explains, “as close as lice: Mrs. Weinstein, Mrs. Kolosky and Mrs. Britannia sitting on Mrs. Kolosky’s verandah, spitting sunflower seeds in the friendly autumn of old comrades” (5). Mrs. Britannia is presumably Anglo-Canadian, but her identity as ethnic is determined by her lower social class that puts her on par with her friends; in her neighbourhood everyone is ethnic. “Every third house on the street is blue and yellow,” Haas writes, “the colours of the Ukrainian flag” (4). This designation of a third of the homes being Ukrainian clearly articulates Ukrainian ethnicity as being only one of many in a mixed environment. The stories collected typically show Ukrainian-Canadians interacting with people of other backgrounds, depicting a mingling of different ethnic cultures. For example, after fooling “the Spy from Relief,” who is a government employee investigating abuses of social services, the Scottish-Canadian Harry McDuff quotes from Robert Burns’s “To a Mouse” for the benefit of his wife and his guest, a Ukrainian-Canadian priest. McDuff, in highly accented dialect, says: “I backwarrd cast ma’ e’e on prrospects drrrearr, / An’ forrrwarrd tho’ I canna’ see, a’ guess an’ fearrr” (16), to which the priest responds, in equally accented dialect, “Hooray for da Pipple’s poet, Robert Boorns” (16). In this passage, both characters – Scottish and Ukrainian – speak in dialect. In this way, the mimetic representation of their speech shows equal marginalization.<sup>27</sup> If one component of ethnicity is language, then both of these

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<sup>27</sup> Like the English Mrs. Britannia, this Scottish character also appears ethnic. Coleman’s *White Civility* and the (as yet) unpublished doctoral work of Antonia Smith both analyze and critique the assumption of

characters have English linguistic eccentricities. Furthermore, the Ukrainian-Canadian priest identifies the quotation as being from a Burns poem; although his speech is accented, indicating a mother tongue that is not English, he finds commonality with an English-language literary tradition and “da Pipple’s poet.” This idea of “da Pipple” recalls “the people” of Lysenko’s novel who create folk music that unites all ethnic cultures. Haas’s novel, therefore, combines the left-leaning sentiments that Lysenko and Ryga present, offering a vision of ethnicity tied to social class with linguistic performance and shared social space.

Likewise, Andrew Suknaski’s collection *Wood Mountain Poems* (1976) evokes polyethnicity by highlighting the importance of shared space in allowing for the development of a collective identity. His return to his childhood home shapes the collection. He wants to claim it as “home” – a place where he can come to rest, cease searching – and calls it “my village” (“Philip Well” line 35). Suknaski’s *Wood Mountain, Saskatchewan* offers many ethnicities that make up the poet’s own multifaceted heritage. In Harvey Spak’s documentary film about this collection, Suknaski says: “I claim all these things as my ancestral past, by virtue of having grown up here, having lived here.” His ethnic identity is not just something he is born into, but something he constructs in relation to those around him. He peoples these poems with a varied cast of characters, all presented as minorities with the same literary techniques. For instance, Chinese-Canadians, like Jimmy Hoy in the poem “Jimmy Hoy’s Place,” speak in dialect – “*all time takkie to much / makkie trouble sunna bitch / wadda hell madder wid you?*” (lines 5-7) – in the same way that Aboriginal characters speak in a

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Canadian Anglo-normativity that collapses all British ethnic identities into one category, like that employed by the EDS. In the social sciences, studies of “whiteness” have recently begun to emerge (see

kind of pidgin English – “*better put mishmash on horse / when we come back... / time mishmash ride to nudder hunting ground*” (“Mishmish” 14-16) – and the Jewish merchant speaks in a similarly accented idiom – “*deez one is primary / deez one is ooordinary / and deez one iz jewst a fooking doog!*” (“Depression Hide Buyer” 15-17). The Ukrainian, Scandinavian, Métis, Chinese, Aboriginal, Jewish, and Anglo-Canadians populate these poems as they populated the Wood Mountain of Suknaski’s youth. Their collective diversity makes up the shared sense of ethnicity that Suknaski claims as his own.

“West Central Pub” offers another illustration of this concept of ethnic multiplicity in this collection. In it, the speaker gives us an anecdote about a man wearing patched pants who enters a bar. Suknaski’s speaker says: “then i talk about those pants / with patches seeming three layers deep - / wonder if we ever become something else / completely changed” (30-33). Michael Abraham notes that “the patchwork of the patron’s jeans is not unlike the multicultural patchwork of both the Wood Mountain community and Canada as a whole. While each patch seems to exist on its own, isolated on the jeans, together they compose the garment” (28). Abraham identifies an idea of ethnic connectivity typical of Suknaski’s approach to ethnicity in his *Wood Mountain Poems*. In fact, each of these writers – Lysenko, Ryga, Haas, and Suknaski – presents ethnicity as something shared by a certain class and certainly by those occupying the same geographical space. As a general rule, prior to the end of the 1970s, writers who had a Ukrainian-Canadian heritage, and who wrote about issues of ethnicity most often saw it as class-based and often linked to simple folk arts.

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Allen; Dyer; Frankenberg; Roediger) that challenge the illusion of white homogeneity.

Examining ethnicity and the experiences of ethnics allowed these writers to investigate marginalization and exclusion from full participation in mainstream Canadian society. For Lysenko, ethnics and immigrants shared similar experiences and were united not just as ethnics, but because by virtue of being ethnic, they were economically marginalized – working as domestic servants or in sweat shops. Thus group identity developed around a sense of class awareness of power dynamics, rather than around anything inherently cohesive within a shared ethnic or cultural background. This idea about power (particularly being excluded from it) arises in Ryga’s writing as well. *Hungry Hills*, for example, opens with a reference to “the welfare man” who “moved away” when the unnamed narrator’s knee brushes him, because the welfare man “wore a new brown suit which had such a press in the pants you could cut your finger on the crease. And [the speaker] was pretty dirty” (24), thus demonstrating the difference between the establishment (represented by the clean and neat “welfare man”) and the poverty-stricken, rural underclass (represented by the “dirty” speaker). Similarly, the economic situation of Haas’s north-end Winnipeg sees the Ukrainian-Canadian priest and his Scottish friend banding together against the Relief employee who may put a stop to social services, again expressing a sense of commonality based on feeling economically victimized by those in power (represented by “the Spy from Relief”). As well, Suknaski’s poems validate a poor, rural experience. Stephen Scobie argues that Suknaski’s “role as poet is to recreate on the printed page the vividness and variety of spoken narrative” (12), giving voice to an economically marginalized population in his hometown. The cover of the collection has a picture of Sitting Bull, and in one of the poems that evokes Sitting Bull as a character, he is pitted against “the government” who

warns the Chief not to “expect provisions / or food from canada” (“The Bitter Word” 4, 5-6). So when Sitting Bull and his tribe are faced with “the hunger to follow,” that hunger is, according to Suknaski, “exactly what the authorities hoped for / on both sides of the border” (35, 36-37). In each case, government agents possess power that they wield over a marginalized subject who can also be characterized as ethnic. Thus, for these early Ukrainian-Canadian writers, issues of ethnicity were more rightly considered within a broader concept of economic solidarity and victimization at the hands of an unyielding and unsympathetic establishment.

This equation of economic oppression with ethnic characteristics served as one of the main pressures to assimilate into the dominant Canadian culture. Vivian Hall makes this point when she notes that the “European immigrant’s language and culture became his or her ‘badge of inferiority’ – obstacles to full assimilation into Canadian culture” (421). John Lehr and Yossi Katz concur, writing that for “many involved in the bitter struggle to carve economic prosperity from an unyielding wilderness, anything that carried the memory of humble immigrant beginnings was and often still is, an unwelcome and all too visible reminder of arduous beginnings and a long-endured lowly social and economic status” (82-83). Even Grekul has her protagonist linking ethnic status and perceived poverty, recognizing that for her parents’ generation “[b]eing Ukrainian meant being poor and ignorant” (*Kalyna’s Song* 50). However, with the Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, ethnic groups began to push for federal recognition, thus allowing ethnic features to be validated rather than sacrificed in the pursuit of higher social status. In response to attempts to codify Canada’s culture as English and French, Ukrainian-Canadians were among the group of non Anglo- or

Franco-Canadians pushing for recognition as a “third force”<sup>28</sup> (Seiler, “Multi-Vocality and National Literature” 155; Burnett and Palmer 223-24), which, like the literature discussed so far, was characterized by its polyethnic make-up. The thinking was that by pushing for federal recognition, ethnic markers need not be a “badge of inferiority” anymore.

These demands by ethnics for full recognition of their important status at the federal level was not just a representation of what Radhakrishnan would recognize as a revolution against “the discourse of the oppressor” in an attempt to “unname” ethnicity as a socially inferior group and “rename” it a “third force,” but unfortunately, they also provided the rhetoric that allowed for a continued oppression of other groups. Harney identifies a strategic use of “third force” rhetoric by politicians advancing a multicultural agenda. “In their speechmaking,” he writes, “the politicians who have advocated multiculturalism have flexed the muscles of the third force as if they were their own,” with the clear intent to dilute Québec-French rights and demands by virtue of recognizing those of others (69), with adverse ramifications for Québec rights (Siemerling 12). Coleman also writes that “national discourses that recognize increased ethnic diversity can displace and ignore the oppressions of particular groups. For this reason,

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<sup>28</sup> Ukrainian-Canadians were one of the most vocal groups pushing for policies that recognized a “third force” in Canada. For example, Isydore Hlynka wrote and presented the Ukrainian Canadian Committee's submission to the Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism in Ottawa in 1962, arguing that Canada was multilingual and multicultural. In his weekly column in the *Ukrainian Voice* (from 1971-1983), he once wrote that “Canadians of Ukrainian language and culture have been in the forefront. They shared in the building of Western Canada from the very beginning. They shared in the sacrifices in two world wars. And they want to share in the future destiny of Canada” (*Other* 10). In a similar vein, in 1964, Senator Paul Yuzyk, a Ukrainian-Canadian from Saskatchewan (whose graduate work, both at the master's and doctoral level, looked at the history of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in Canada and who continued to write academic treatises on the place of Ukrainians in Canada), devoted his maiden speech in the senate to ideals of multiculturalism. He claimed that as Canada had always been multicultural, it was time for federal policy to reflect reality. For an overview of Ukrainian-Canadian contributions to this larger debate about Canada as bi- or multicultural, see Bohdan Bociukiw's “The Federal Policy of Multiculturalism and the Ukrainian Canadian Community.”

multiculturalism has been widely suspect in Quebec and among Natives because the claim that we may all be ‘ethnics’ waters down their particular claims for ‘distinct status’” (99). In recognizing their complicity in diluting the specific claims of other groups, Ukrainian-Canadians, who were at first largely supportive of multiculturalism, soon began to turn away from it.

The consolidation of a “third force” of ethnics allowed for and possibly even demanded the splintering of such a concept. Policies of multiculturalism supporting ethnic artistic expression saw writers move away from a pan-ethnic sensibility towards a sense of Ukrainian ethnicity in Canada that has clear Ukrainian features. One response Ukrainian-Canadian literature made to create a sense of equity among various ethnic groups, while respecting difference, was to develop a sense of ethnicity not characterized as a social underclass (thus making all ethnics the same), but rather as a national category. Anderson notes the privileging of national categories, recognizing that “nation-ness is the most universally legitimate value in the political life of our time” (3). This political emphasis on “nation-ness” as a “legitimate value” began to affect literary constructions of ethnicity in Canada by the latter part of the twentieth century by providing Ukrainian-Canadian writers with a lexicon of ethnicity rooted in concepts of nationalism as a response to the desire to differentiate amongst various racial and ethnic groups under federal multiculturalism.

In addition to these home-grown factors that contributed to the shift from seeing ethnicity as a component of a social class to seeing it as something defined by links to Ukraine itself, events in Ukraine at the start of the 1980s also contributed (especially Cold War protests and resistance to Soviet oppression, responses to the 1986 Chernobyl

disaster, and *glasnost* and *perestroika*, which gave rise to hopes of Ukrainian independence). As well, by this time, politically conscious Ukrainian-Canadian descendents of third-wave, post World War II immigrants (Displaced Persons or DPs) began to influence the descendents of first-wave homesteaders. According to Robert Klymasz, “were it not for the hypertrophic impact of thousands of Ukrainian war refugees,” Ukrainian-Canadians would have faced “a leisurely paced dissolution” into “a ‘dormant’ ethnocultural group” (“Culture Maintenance” 175), which represents the view shared by most scholars in the field (Grekul, *Leaving Shadows* 52-54; Harasymiw 126-127; Isajiw and Makuch 334; Harney 67; Woycenko 14-15). This transition in the way that Ukrainian-Canadian ethnicity was presented in the literature began to make itself felt by the end of the 1970s. The publication of Kostash’s *All of Baba’s Children* (1977) signals the early stages of this shift; it was the first widely read, well-received, concentrated look at the specific aspects of Ukrainian-Canadian ethnicity in the prairies.<sup>29</sup> It provides sociological insight into the experience of Ukrainian settlement in Alberta and begins to give evidence of the shift in attitudes about ethnicity that was developing. On the one hand, it offers scholarly and academic validation to a specifically Ukrainian-Canadian homesteading experience; but on the other, it problematizes equity issues relating to ethnic, social, and gender discrimination, refusing a purely celebratory look at Ukrainian-Canadianness. In it, Kostash writes: “Ethnic identity was recognition of the fact that there were stability and reliability enough in a consciousness dancing between cultural absolutes, as long as certain primary Canadian loyalties were served and certain

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<sup>29</sup> Potrebenko’s *No Streets of Gold* from the same year represents the same dynamic. It is left-leaning and concerned with gender inequality, but still represents a sustained, book-length analysis of Ukrainians in Canada. It was less-widely known than Kostash’s book, but offers the same kind of shift away from a purely socio-economic conception of ethnicity towards a nation-specific one.

Ukrainian ones were renounced” (393). This view suggests that as immigrants attempt to assimilate, they become identified as ethnic in a middle-ground between being “foreign” and “mainstream.” But she writes that this “ethnic compromise was a survival tactic employed while the environment was still hostile, suspicious, confused and mercurial” (395), and her book indicates that the time had come for a revival of Ukrainianness. Her study influenced succeeding generations of Ukrainian-Canadians by representing, validating, and reflecting their own experiences. For instance, Grekul’s novel is, in some ways, a fictional follow-up to Kostash’s work. Set in the same Two Hills area of Alberta, it presents a protagonist born around the time that Kostash’s book was first published who grapples with the ethnic legacy outlined in Kostash’s nonfiction work. In the book, Colleen has to describe how she feels Ukrainian-Canadian to European schoolmates. She says, “my grandparents immigrated to Canada from Ukraine,” and her schoolmate replies, “So you’re not Ukrainian, then [...]. Your *grandparents* are Ukrainian. *You* are Canadian.” Caught in this semantic minefield, she says: “I’m both. It’s hard to explain” (268). This experience of ethnically being “both” and “hard to explain” presents Colleen as a symbolic descendent of those quoted in Kostash’s study. Moreover, Grekul claims that the mere existence of Kostash’s study influenced her developmental years as “everyone in my family bought a copy of it” (*Leaving Shadows* ix). She also writes that her novel provides a response to *All of Baba’s Children* as she “set out to write the Great Ukrainian Canadian novel” (“Re-Placing Ethnicity” 5).<sup>30</sup> This novel’s heavy indebtedness to Kostash’s work offers a hint of the seminal place that *All of Baba’s*

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<sup>30</sup> She reiterates these sentiments in a later interview about the book’s genesis: “I was going to write the great Ukrainian-Canadian novel, convinced at that point that there was no Ukrainian-Canadian literature in English” (qtd. in Wawryshyn 8)

*Children* holds. It allowed authors to begin to explore Ukrainian-Canadianness in very specific ways by the end of the 1970s and beginning of the 1980s.

While Kostash's book represents early indications of a change occurring in attitudes about how to characterize a Ukrainian-Canadian identity, an influential conference on writing and ethnicity in Canada, held in 1979, represents the key moment when the two attitudes about ethnicity – as a socially marginalized underclass or a nationally articulated hyphenated identity – collide.<sup>31</sup> At this conference, writers and critics expressed their mixed feelings about ethnicity, but the panels were organized into defined ethnic categories. Even as the conference ascribed ethnic monikers to each of the writers (privileging a descent-model of ethnic identity), the authors expressed their problems with being identified as ethnic (privileging a consent-model of ethnic identity). Because of these contradictory impulses, this conference serves as an example of the process involved in the shift from thinking about Ukrainian-Canadianness as part of an ethnic underclass, offering no barrier to successful assimilation, to thinking about it as something with specific features linked to Ukraine and its cultural products.

The Ukrainian-Canadian writers present (including Ryga, Haas, and Suknaski) articulated discomfort with being identified as ethnic or Ukrainian. Ryga, for instance, said: "I find it difficult to see myself as a so-called hyphenated Canadian. In fact, in the past three days I have heard that term more than in the last forty-seven years of my life" (qtd. in Balan 140-41). His comment is important because it expresses his uneasiness with a codification of ethnicity around hyphenation, but it also illustrates that the conference (and by extension, general dialogues about ethnicity) used hyphenation as a

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<sup>31</sup> See the printed conference proceedings published as *Identifications: Ethnicity and the Writer in Canada*, edited by Jars Balan.

strategy to shape discussions of ethnicity. Echoing Ryga on both points, Haas said: “born of Ukrainian-Polish parents, this conference would have me believe that my actions, my outlook, my total behaviour must be disciplined by the genetic, historic, moral, social, religious, characteristic embracing Poland and Ukraine”; then she rejected such a descent-model of ethnicity by asserting that only “a fractured hyphenated Canadian could foster such an asinine premise” (qtd. in Balan 135). Suknaski also announced: “It was only at the age of six that I started to learn English, which was also a common experience for many native people and those from other ethnic groups” (qtd. in Balan 69). This “common experience” for all the groups of Suknaski’s Wood Mountain echoes the kind of multiplicity that his early poetry evokes. The writers expressed the tension between their own sense of ethnicity and the conference’s structure, organized around specific ethnic groupings, with papers on “Canadian Hungarian Literature,” “Ukrainian Influences in George Ryga’s Work,” “Icelandic Canadian Literature,” “Ukrainian Émigré Literature in Canada,” and “Canadian Yiddish Writers.” However, despite their assertions to the contrary, Ryga’s, Haas’s, and Suknaski’s creative writing suggests that their sense of what it means to be ethnic in Canada was being influenced by the very attitudes informing the organization and structure of the conference. Each of these writers expressed anxiety about the discourse of hyphenation, but, by the 1980s, they produced works contributing to a developing sense of Ukrainian-hyphen-Canadianness.

While Lysenko did not produce other novels, *Yellow Boots*, her Ukrainian-themed one, was posthumously republished by the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press in 1992. This recasting of a book that was first published by Ryerson Press, a mainstream publishing house, as a specifically Ukrainian-Canadian text gives evidence of

the alteration in attitudes about ethnicity. While Lysenko may not have adjusted her conception of ethnicity as an element impeding social mobility shared by all immigrants and their descendents, Ryga, Haas, and Suknaski's subsequent works all provide indications of this change.

Ryga's literary attention turns toward representing a Ukrainian heritage in his *A Letter to My Son* (1984). First performed in 1978, this autobiographical play outlines the struggles of an isolated Ukrainian-Canadian father trying to reach out both to his estranged son and to Canada, as a full citizen.<sup>32</sup> Unlike Ryga's prairie novels, this play has at its heart an ethnic dilemma that is specifically Ukrainian-Canadian in nature. The plot revolves around a government of Canada case worker trying to assist an aged Ukrainian-Canadian, identified as Old Lepa, to receive federal government pension cheques. Nancy, the case worker, stands in for Lepa's own son, Stefan, who is assimilated into Canadian culture and has cut his ties with his father. Lepa must be forced to acknowledge and accept his own, personal identity in order to be included in Canada's collective identity. The play opens with Lepa trying to compose a letter to his son; as Nancy enters, the stage directions read: "sad musical bridge – an old mournful Ukrainian folk melody which fades slowly away" (73). While we may recognize the connection between Ukrainianness and folk music, this time the music is specifically identified as Ukrainian (unlike Lilli's songs that encompass the music from all "the people"). As Lepa reflects on his past, he talks about his relatives, saying: "They bring it out of me – my sister, Marina...and her Dmitro. The ones who did good. The ones the

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<sup>32</sup> James Hoffman's critical and biographical work on George Ryga's life and career makes the point that this play represents the most autobiographical piece in Ryga's oeuvre. Like many of the other texts discussed throughout this dissertation, there are many points of connection between the characters' and authors' ethnic experiences.

Angliki call ‘them good Ukrainians’” (74). Not only are his sister and her husband explicitly identified as “good Ukrainians,” rather than merely “good ethnics,” or “good foreigners,” but the use of the Ukrainian idiom “Angliki” to refer to mainstream Anglo-Canadian culture further characterizes Lepa as especially Ukrainian. Later in the play, the Ukrainian music returns as the stage directions read: “Sounds of music – a sad, melodic old Ukrainian folksong in background over his dialogue” (79). Throughout, this music repeatedly returns, giving an ethnic specificity to Lepa through identifiably Ukrainian music.

While it may seem that this use of Ukrainian music is not that different from that which we have already seen, this play goes on to show Lepa’s rejection of ethnicity not moored in Ukraine. He dislikes the model of Ukrainian-Canadianness represented by his sister and brother-in-law who raise Stefan. For Lepa, their ethnicity is “sett[ing] for a tray of coloured eggs at Easter” (107) and a slavish devotion to “the shadows of a priest’s skirts” (108), both of which are unsatisfactory manifestations of ethnicity, because they do not account for the reality of Ukrainian subjugation in Eastern Europe. Lepa views their folksy and superficial ethnicity as inadequate and favours a sense Ukrainian-Canadianness that entails an awareness of the political realities in Ukraine. For instance, Lepa tells the story of his uncle killed by soldiers in the “Old Country.” As he ends the sad tale, he says that this uncle “coughed and slowly...his head drooping first, died on the street where he taught children to read poetry and be proud” (110). Part of Lepa’s idea of ethnicity lies in his awareness of identifiable pain in a specific politically repressive and oppressive national past, and an access to it through the writings of Taras Shevchenko

(103), a Ukrainian national poet.<sup>33</sup> The ethnic in Lepa is clearly Ukrainian, and his Ukrainianness is identified through a connection to the history, politics, and literature of Ukraine, not just Canadian demographics.

Similarly, Haas's *On Stage with Maara Haas* (1986) still includes a sense of polyethnicity characteristic of her earlier novel, but it provides a much longer, and much more sustained attention to articulating a sense of detailed Ukrainianness. This collection of poems, stories, scenes, and non-fiction prose pieces compiles a variety of previously published or aired works.<sup>34</sup> In one of the poems about women's writing, the speaker (a younger Haas) refers to herself as a "Cossack stallion" (20), evoking a typical (even stereotypical) Ukrainian image,<sup>35</sup> recalled again in a later section when the speaker says: "using a classic dictionary, I read Shevchenko and the history of the freedom loving Cossacks [...]. The Cossack influence, the freedom causes, colour my bloodstream and my writing at an early date" (27). Not only does the image of the Cossack recur, but Ukrainian influences become even more precise through the reference to Ukrainian literary icon Shevchenko. Thus, allusions to Ukrainian history (Cossacks) and literature (Shevchenko) evoke a specific ethnic identity. And the image of Ukrainianness in her bloodstream suggests a kind of descent-based Ukrainian ethnic identity, despite her explicit comments to the contrary. Further evoking Ukrainianness rather than collective

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<sup>33</sup> Taras Shevchenko (1814-1861) was born into serfdom and earned his freedom through his painting. He is considered the most influential Ukrainian poet, "Ukraine's greatest poet" (Subtelny 138), who "favoured using the Ukrainian vernacular in literature and lionized the heroes of the Ukrainian movement" (Himka 20).

<sup>34</sup> Some of the pieces were first aired on CBC as radio segments rather than as printed texts.

<sup>35</sup> While Slavic Cossacks first appeared in the fifteenth century, it was not until the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that their numbers increased. According to historian Orest Subtelny, "the Cossack became a key figure not only in the history of Ukraine but also in Ukrainian national consciousness. Today the image of the Cossack is to Ukrainians what the cowboy is to Americans or the Viking to the Scandinavians" (122). For a full discussion of the development of Cossackdom in Ukraine see "The Cossack Era," which is the third section in Subtelny's history of Ukraine, *Ukraine: A History*.

ethnicity, one of the stories recounts the speaker meeting her friend in 1980 and reminiscing about an imagined pre-multicultural era. In her musing she thinks:

In that other world, as I knew it, you could tell who was who by the clothes they wore. There were only three kinds of people: the unapproachable English in fictional Harris tweeds, the French in toques and snowshoes, and the conspicuously foreign Baba Podkovas in kerchiefs. (111)

At first it seems as though this ethnic characterization is similar to those seen earlier, given that clothing defines ethnicity and only three ethnic categories exist. However, the “third element” of the “conspicuously foreign” appears specifically Ukrainian in name (Podkova) and title (Baba). In this way, the third “kind of people” collapses into a Ukrainian image of foreignness. Similarly, in discussing her own sense of identity as an ethnic in Canada, the speaker says: “I was split in two,” caught between English and Ukrainian, with her parents “insist[ing] I speak ukrainian at mealtimes, to keep up the language, to acknowledge my identity” (111). Once again, Ukrainian language, rather than a vague sense of class solidarity rooted in economic marginalization, shapes the idea of ethnicity. These examples show the speaker grappling not with a sense of her own multiple and shared identity, but with an identity caught between ideas of Canadianness and ideas of Ukrainianness identified by Ukrainian language, history, and literature.

As well, Suknaski’s *In the Name of Narid* (1981) is both more personal in its attention to the Suknaski family, rather than to the larger community of Wood Mountain, and more focused in its representation of Ukrainian-Canadian ethnicity. Like Ryga’s play, the main conflict exists between a father and son trying to articulate a sense of identity. These poems use Cyrillic text and also include Ukrainian diction transliterated

for English readers, positing a sense of ethnicity rooted in the Ukrainian language. The very first poem in the collection, “After ‘A Prairie Boy’s Summer,’” is dedicated to the memory of William Kurelek, perhaps the most well-known Canadian visual artist of Ukrainian descent.<sup>36</sup> It creates a persona for the poet as “suknatskyj,” the original spelling of Suknaski’s last name that was simplified when his father immigrated to Canada. The use of Ukrainian words, the allusion to Kurelek, and the evocation of “suknatskyj” begin to create a sense of ethnicity precisely coded as Ukrainian, entrenched both linguistically and historically. The first section of the collection includes thematic elements from Ukraine evoking a political and historical sense of Ukrainian ethnicity in Canada related to the Ukrainian nation. The poem, “Kosmach,” named for a Ukrainian village, evokes the “*home of valentyn moroz*” (line 1); Moroz was a Ukrainian political prisoner under Soviet rule, and the poem offers a meditation on the historical Moroz’s hunger strike while imprisoned; suknatskyj’s Moroz emerges “thin faced / emaciated / and sunken / dark eyes” (24-27). These allusions to Moroz suggest that contemporary Ukraine’s politics must come to bear on an articulation of what it means to be Ukrainian in Canada. The third poem in the collection, “What Is Remembered,” is dedicated to the Ukrainian composer Volodymyr Ivasiuk who was found hanged; the official version was suicide despite continual rumours to the contrary. The poem, while musing on both history and myth, revisits this story:

you later found

hanging

from a tree

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<sup>36</sup> William Kurelek (1927-1977) was a renowned painter, representing his personal vision of Canadian society, often using images from his own Ukrainian-Canadian heritage (see Daly and Pettigrew; Dedora;

the official KGB

report

claiming

*death by suicide.*

[...]

but tell me

volodymyr

how does a suicide

cover his own body

in lacerations

and bruises? (269-275, 293-298)

The use of an identifiable Ukrainian's tragic story with sukynskyj apostrophizing the victim develops a sense of Ukrainian-Canadianness characterized by imagined links to Ukraine. This collection locates ethnic ties to iconic people identified with Ukrainian history, unlike the collective conception of ethnicity we see in *Wood Mountain Poems*.

Even as some of the poems move inward into the private Sukynski family, the desire to define the personal experience of identity exists in relation to the public configurations of Ukrainian ethnicity. For instance, the pair of poems "Pysanky" and "Kistka" present ruminations on the speaker's mother performing characteristic Ukrainian folk arts. In "Pysanky," however, the speaker says that his mother's decorated Easter eggs are "graced by / white / green / and yellow / runes / sukynskyj / cannot / decipher" (22-29). The opaque nature of the "runes" evokes a sense of a culture and its

symbolism deeply connected to the figure of the mother, but the son cannot fully access a connection to his mother and his ethnicity because of a linguistic barrier that the poems try to navigate. Similarly, “Kistka” presents the act of creating the pysanky – “suknatskyj trying / to imagine / his mother / parsnipthick / fingers / delicately / crafting it / to colour / those *pysanky*” (21-29). The image of the pysanky, like the Cossack that Haas evokes, is particular to Ukrainian culture. These two poems are, therefore, examples of the kind of development in Suknaski’s thinking about ethnicity as something emerging from Ukrainian history and culture.

While Ryga’s *Letter to My Son*, Haas’s *On Stage with Maara Haas*, and Suknaski’s *In the Name of Narid* are not solely concerned with Ukrainian-Canadian ethnicity and identity, when each of these works turns its attention towards ideas of ethnicity, its representation is more specific in its Ukrainian references than in each author’s earlier work. The ethnic treatment we see in these texts is typical of a general shift that appears by the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s in the way that Ukrainian-Canadianness appears in literature in English. It went from being part of an undifferentiated ethnic mass to being located within nationally-coded images of Ukrainian language, politics, history, and literature. An ethnic “home” became less tied to a community of equally socially and economically marginalized others and more tied to particular images of and from Ukraine.

The notion that Ukrainianness in Canada could be expressed by infusing a text with culturally specific, Ukrainian elements is borne out by an examination of more than just Ryga’s, Haas’s, and Suknaski’s literary works. For example, Ted Galay’s plays present Ukrainian themes and raise identity issues. His *After Baba’s Funeral* (1981) and

*Sweet and Sour Pickles* (1981) were performed in Winnipeg in the early 1980s and present conflicts growing out of individualised Ukrainian-Canadian dynamics. Newer Ukrainian-Canadian writers such as Sophia Slobodian, Gloria Kupchenko Frolick, Yuri Kupchenko, and Fran Ponomarenko also published works on specifically Ukrainian-Canadian themes in the post-1980 climate. Slobodian's *The Glistening Furrow* (1983) imagines a Ukrainian homesteading experience and follows the main Zhoda family through succeeding generations in Canada, emphasizing their development from being stereotypical "immigrants" with "sheepskin coats" to being "Ukrainian Canadian [...] born in a free country" (43). The sequel, *Let the Soft Wind Blow* (1993), turns its attention to a third-generation Ukrainian-Canadian (the granddaughter of one of the original immigrants from *The Glistening Furrow*), presenting her coming-of-age story. In the conclusion the protagonist exclaims: "I do want a big Ukrainian wedding with all the trimmings" (172). In addition to evoking the cliché of a Ukrainian wedding, this book is replete with "Ukrainian music," "a Cossack dance," "Ukrainian outfit[s]" (142), countless italicized Ukrainian words, and many descriptions of Ukrainian traditions linking ethnicity to Ukraine-specific cultural artifacts. In a similar way, Kupchenko Frolick's collection of short stories, *The Green Tomato Years* (1985), evokes Ukrainianness through particularised cultural references. Marvi Ricker writes that the book focuses on immigrants "who came to this country and faced a strange and sometimes hostile environment" (8), and in addition to references to "the politics of Canada and Ukraine [...] and Ukrainian poetry and literature" the characters meet together to quote "passages from Kotlarevsky [sic], Franko, and of course, Taras

Shevchenko” (11).<sup>37</sup> Likewise, *The Horseman of Shandro Crossing* (1989), by Kupchenko, takes a nostalgic look at Ukrainian immigration to Canada in the early years of the twentieth century, and paints a picture of a very Ukrainian community, with the protagonist saying at one point that it “was a good feeling to ride all this way and hear nothing but your own mother tongue, Ukrainian, spoken” (25). Fran Ponomarenko, writing out of a Québec-based sense of post-World War II settlement of third-wave Ukrainian immigrants to urban environments, in contrast to others writing out of an agrarian, homesteading experience of Ukrainianness in Canada, published *The Parcel from Chicken Street and Other Stories* (1989) as if it were a volume of stories edited by the fictional character Ludmilla Bereshko. This structure stylistically alludes to Nikolai Gogol’s<sup>38</sup> early stories that employed this nineteenth-century Slavic literary device wherein the author masquerades as a compiler of someone else’s stories.<sup>39</sup> As well, each story not only provides historical and political connections to Soviet Ukraine, but the opening story offers references and quotations from Ukrainian writers Gogol and Skovoroda.<sup>40</sup> Orysia Tracz offers the insight as well that the humorous names of the characters provide Ukrainian jokes for the initiated reader: “Kryvonizhka (crooked foot), Zhovtonizhka (yellow foot), Styranka (gnocchi, Ukrainian-style), Kipybida (boiling

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<sup>37</sup> Ivan Kotliarevsky (1769-1838) is often considered the father of modern Ukrainian literature; his *Eneida* (a satire on the *Aeneid*) was “the first work ever written in the language of the Ukrainian peasants and townsmen. Its appearance in 1798 marked the advent of Ukrainian as a literary language and of modern Ukrainian literature as well” (Subtelny 230). Ivan Franko (1856-1916) is considered the first writer of Ukraine’s realist period, and is often touted as the greatest post-Shevchenko writer. He is, for Subtelny, “the incomparable Ivan Franko” (305).

<sup>38</sup> Nikolai Gogol (1809-1952) is the most famous Russian-language writer of Ukrainian ancestry. He “believed that if talented Ukrainians wished to attain literary fame and fortune they could do so only within the context of Russian literature” (Subtelny 234). Writing in Russian, Gogol wrote for a Russian, urban readership.

<sup>39</sup> The Russian term for telling a story in a voice is “skaz,” which Ponomarenko evokes. Her collection operates as an homage to Gogol’s collection of stories *Evenings on a Farm Near Dikanka*, which is fictionally compiled by Rudy Panko (like Ludmilla Bereshko).

trouble), Stukalo (knocker, noisemaker), Solonyna (bacon), Kvas (acid, sourness), Kawun (watermelon), Syrovatka (whey),” and there are many more of these linguistic puns (200). All these works share a common conception of ethnicity embodied in specific Ukrainian symbols, allusions to Ukrainian literature or history, and Ukrainian words.

In addition to individual texts focusing recognisable cultural artefacts and linguistic markers that situate Ukrainianness within a Canadian context, anthologies dedicated to collecting Ukrainian-Canadian English-language works began to emerge in the 1980s. For instance *Yarmarok: Ukrainian Writing in Canada Since the Second World War* (1987) brings together a wide range of writing by descendents of Ukrainians and Ukrainian émigrés from the latter portion of the twentieth century.<sup>41</sup> This trend of constructing Ukrainian-Canadian ethnicity as linked to Ukrainian language, history, and literature has continued past the 1980s. In 1992, as mentioned, *Prairie Fire* magazine produced a companion edition to *Yarmarok*, publishing Ukrainian-Canadian pieces as a way of celebrating 100 years of Ukrainian settlement in Canada; its focus is completely Ukrainian. Danny Evanishen’s semi-autobiographical volumes of comical Ukrainian-Canadian pioneering stories, focused on the garrulous character of Vuiko Yurko, or Uncle George, *Vuiko Yurko: The First Generation* (1994) and *Vuiko Yurko: Second-Hand Stories* (1997), include glossaries for Ukrainian diction in the otherwise English-language texts, which is a device that many of these books employ. Larry Warwaruk’s *The Ukrainian Wedding* (1998) uses the title’s event as the narrative focus and also

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<sup>40</sup> Hryhorii Skovoroda (1722-1794) was both a poet and philosopher whose philosophical purpose was to show the way to happiness.

provides a glossary. Further, the ethnicity that he evokes involves Ukrainian words, folk traditions, and links to the works of nineteenth-century Ukrainian nationalist writer Mykhailo Kotsiubynsky.<sup>42</sup> As well, Kulyk Keefer and Solomea Pavlychko teamed up to produce an anthology, *Two Lands: New Visions* (1999), with Ukrainian-Canadian stories collected alongside stories from Ukraine. Furthermore, Kulyk Keefer's *The Green Library* (1996) locates ethnicity in Ukraine's history, particularly the more troubling aspects of it such as its anti-Semitism, the massacre at Babi Yar,<sup>43</sup> and the Chernobyl explosion.<sup>44</sup> She considers the "appalling calamities that define even just twentieth-century Ukrainian history – the Great Famine-Terror or *Holodomor*, World War II and Chornobyl" (*Dark Ghost* 15)<sup>45</sup> as vital elements involved in writing ethnicity, for, in her opinion, "part of the aesthetics of writing ethnicity is the writer's ethical need to confront and struggle with the history" ("Coming Across Bones" 101). As well, both Kulyk Keefer's and Grekul's protagonists read Orest Subtelny's Ukrainian history book in order to learn how to claim the Ukrainian part of their Ukrainian-Canadian heritage. While Kulyk Keefer vaguely disguises Subtelny's *Ukraine: A History* as "an enormous textbook published in Toronto, a *History of Ukraine*" (*Green Library* 181), she lists the

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<sup>41</sup> Among others, this collection includes excerpts from Lysenko, Haas, Ryga, and Suknaski, thus emphasizing their links to the Ukrainian-Canadian literary community (despite their protestations to the contrary).

<sup>42</sup> Mykhailo Kosiubynsky (1864-1913) is considered one of the finest writers of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Ukraine.

<sup>43</sup> Anatoly Kuznetsov's *Babi Yar* is perhaps the best known description of the Nazi massacre of Jews at Babi Yar in Kiev in 1941. Of the massacre, Subtelny writes: "In Kiev about 33,000 Jews were executed in Babyn Iar (Babi Yar) in two days alone" (468).

<sup>44</sup> On April 26, 1986 a nuclear reactor at Chernobyl (about 130 km north of Kiev) exploded (see Subtelny 534-35). The explosion has been considered to mark the demise of the Soviet Union itself (Ignatieff 115; Satzewich 208).

<sup>45</sup> *Holodomor* (the Ukrainian word for famine-genocide) refers to the Soviet man-made famine that saw the deaths of millions of Ukrainians between 1932 and 1933 (see Chamberlain 60-61; Kolasky 20; Manning, *The Story of the Ukraine* 282 and *Twentieth-Century Ukraine* 93; Subtelny 413-16, 529).

actual text in her acknowledgements.<sup>46</sup> In contrast, Grekul does not disguise the reference book in her novel, and Colleen admits: “There is more information in *Ukraine: A History* than I ever dreamed I’d find” (*Kalyna’s Song* 271). Both Kulyk Keefer’s Eva and Grekul’s Colleen struggle with a Toronto-based, English-language history of Ukraine as a way to connect to an imagined “home-country” that represents their ethnic identities. The reliance on Canadian materials to research Ukraine indicates the gulf between the character (and by extension the author who shares a similar biography) and the country she tries to know. Yet despite the many gaps between the Ukrainian-Canadian texts and the Ukrainian ethnic “home” they evoke, the specific Ukrainian characteristics of ethnicity are markedly different from those offered by pre-1980 texts.<sup>47</sup>

Writing in the 1980s about ethnicity in America, Sollors identified a key point borne out by the Ukrainian-Canadian literature introduced so far: “scholars now regard ethnicity as much more than an uncomplicated way station toward, or simple camouflage of, class” (21). In Canada, at the same time that this shift from ethnicity as an economic underclass-cum-social minority to ethnicity as a particular national sub-category was occurring, debates growing out of multiculturalism’s shortfalls began to call for a division between ethnicity and race. Daniel Coleman and Donald Goellnicht tell us:

the fact is that racialization, the practice of applying racial categories to people or things, has taken and is taking place in the realm of Canadian literary culture. Witness that the essays gathered here refer commonly to

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<sup>46</sup> Paul Magocsi’s *A History of Ukraine* was published the same year as *The Green Library*, and by virtue of its title and Torontonion place of publication, it could be the text Eva discovers in Kiev, but as it is unmentioned in the novel’s acknowledgements, it is unlikely the book Kulyk Keefer alludes to.

<sup>47</sup> It is worth noting that this emphasis on specific Ukrainian elements as the keystones of creative writing about Ukrainian-Canadian ethnicity has not changed with the turn of the new century. Grekul’s *Kalyna’s*

categories such as “African Canadian,” “Asian Canadian,” and “Native Canadian” literatures. These categories have become institutions, and the traditions that they define have emerged as disciplinary objects of knowledge in Canadian literary culture, particularly during the last decade of the twentieth century. (1-2)

As mentioned earlier, some of the criticism of multiculturalism charges that it irons out the differences between various groups, which can be problematic if blanket multicultural designations have the power to undermine special claims made by certain groups or communities. Instead of subscribing to this kind of homogenizing within the embrace of multiculturalism that erases certain claims (not just limited to those made by Aboriginal and Québécois activists), writers can acknowledge what Kamboureli refers to as the “many nuances of difference” (3). While there are a number of critical studies analyzing what Winfried Siemerling calls “the ethnic revival or re-‘ethnicization’ in both Canada and the United States” (“Writing Ethnicity” 3), they share one basic premise: amongst larger discourses of identity politics, racial and ethnic identities have gained cultural cachet in recent years. Some critics highlight not just increased attention to issues of race and ethnicity, but also a separation of the terms into two categories.<sup>48</sup> As Siemerling points out, in response to the diluting occurring under multiculturalism the very real racism experienced by writers of colour could not be addressed under a rubric that saw racialized and ethnic subjects as cognate. He writes that folding the two together “might

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*Song* (2003), Bociurkiw’s *The Children of Mary* (2006), and Kulyk Keefer’s *The Ladies’ Lending Library* (2007) all demonstrate similar preoccupations.

<sup>48</sup> For a survey of the specific terms of the debate among scholars about whether “race” should be studied separately from ethnicity, see Banton; van den Berghe; and Eriksen.

depoliticize issues by conflating them, for instance those concerning minorities in general with those concerning visible minorities” (11). The idea in Canada that “race” and ethnicity” did not necessarily refer to the same concept began to take shape in the 1980s.<sup>49</sup>

“Nobody here but us ethnics,” Linda Kerber reminds us, “has been a parochial slogan used to mask real issues of race and power” (423). Just as some of the backlash against “third force” support of multiculturalism recognized that by opening up the symbolic playing field the important concerns of Francophone Québec could be sidelined, the folding of race into ethnicity can likewise undermine the very real concerns informing a racialized experience. Recognizing that the concerns of white and non-white subjects may be related but are not identical throws into question the degree to which Ukrainian-Canadians can be understood as marginalized. This issue of who can ethically write as a minority came to a head in the late 1980s and early 1990s in the split that arose between white feminists and feminists of colour on the editorial board of the Women’s Press. One way of reading the public disagreement between June Callwood and M. Nourbese Philip was that “women of colour and First Nations women sought to make the point that, even in cultural movements and institutions devoted to political activism, their voices were not being heard and that the white majority was, despite its multiculturalist rhetoric, reluctant to share power with writers and artists deemed Other” (Coleman and Goellnicht 12). Caught in the midst of this split, Kostash reflects on her own evolution, talking about the excitement of emerging as a “kind of spokesperson in western Canada for the idea of ethnicity” after the publication of *All of Baba’s Children*, a position which

gave way to the “articulation of race and colour,” in the face of which, she realized: “I was white. I was a member of a privileged *majority*. I was part of the problem, not the solution” (“The Shock” 4). Grekul echoes this idea in an interview and says: “race comes to the forefront and ‘racialized’ writers are saying ‘we have suffered,’ ‘we have stories to tell,’ and everybody who is white gets stuck in the same category” (qtd. in Wawryshyn 8). While neither writer would disagree with the idea that writing from positions of “race and colour” are crucial to explicate the power imbalances arising out of racialized discourses, they articulate the awkward position that such binaries create for them as neither majority nor racialized. This shift, from being obviously ethnic and marginal to being obviously European and mainstream, is significant because simultaneous to it Ukrainian-Canadian authors began to conceive of and write about an ethnicity located in another nation-state, Ukraine’s history, politics, language, and literature.

The growing distinction in Canada between race as a referent of visible minority status, and ethnicity as the term for whites of non-British descent<sup>50</sup> has been seen as a causal factor informing the shift in representation of Ukrainian-Canadian ethnicity as something with features that can be outlined in relation to an imagined Ukraine, rather than folding it within a broad minority or marginalized otherness. Pre-1980s Canada took it for granted that Ukrainian-Canadians were ethnic *and* racial minorities. For instance, Charles Young’s early study of Ukrainians in Canada opens with the

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<sup>49</sup> In Canada, the 1981 census was the first to collect data on the basis of “visible minority status,” and the 1995 Employment Equity Act specifically defines visible minorities as “persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour.”

<sup>50</sup> Originally “ethnicity” was understood as one’s cultural background, but critics began to use it as a term to refer to non-racialized minority groups (Kulyk Keefer, “From Mosaic” 13). As early as 1971 Michael

declaration: “We have in Canada between two and three hundred thousand Ukrainians. *Racially*, they are third in numbers in the Prairie Provinces where the great majority of them are to be found [...]. That is to say, our Ukrainian-Canadians represent the fourth largest *racial* group in the country” (3, emphasis added). As well, Potrebenko reminds us: “Not until the 1950s were Ukrainians and other Slavs in Canada regarded as white people” (*No Streets of Gold* 26). From the 1980s onwards, however, the distinction between ethnic minority status and racial or visible minority status problematized the simple idea that Ukrainian-Canadians were anything other than white Canadians. In the face of this off-shoot of multiculturalism – “racialization, the practice of applying racial categories to people or things” – Ukrainian-Canadian writers and the critics writing about them became more concerned with constructing, reflecting, and representing specific Ukrainianness rather than attending to a kind of general ethnic marginalization surfacing through an analysis of social inequalities.

As a consequence of these ideological developments about minority subjectivities, Ukrainian-Canadianness became by the 1980s an uninteresting topic of popular study or inquiry. Kostash writes that “compared to the stories of, say, Louis Riel or Gabriel Dumont, of American blacks and chicanos, of the expelled Acadians, Ukrainian-Canadians were un compelling as the subject of a book” (*All of Baba’s* 1), even though Ukrainian-Canadians “are not Anglos. Not mainstream Canadians, not the ‘us’ at the summit of the vertical mosaic” (*All of Baba’s* 2). Much of her writing contradicts such a

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Novak began to examine the ethnic consciousness of what he calls “white ethnics,” a term that Lupul employs in his 1982 analysis of ethnic identity loss.

summary dismissal by focusing on Ukrainian-Canadianness,<sup>51</sup> but her statements indicate the kind of popular attitudes that dismiss Ukrainian-Canadian ethnicity as unworthy of study. Grekul shared a similar anecdote about how her interest in Ukrainian-Canadian ethnicity was dismissed: “When I was looking for a publisher for *Kalyna’s Song*, the message that I got from one literary agent was, ‘it’s a fine manuscript, but the Ukrainian thing is not sexy, so next time, be Japanese’” (qtd. in Wawryshyn 8). Similarly, Kulyk Keefer has acknowledged the awkwardness of “writing ethnicity” as a white woman:

I am aware, of course, how different the experience of otherness is for me than for a Native- or Asian- or black Canadian. I know that however much I may see my ethnicity as a scar rather than as a scarf to be tied on or discarded at will, the colour of my skin is not going to adversely affect how people treat me on the subway or in a store, whereas for persons of colour, it is often only the fact of their race that is seen at all, and acknowledged in the most insulting and aggressive ways. (“Coming Across Bones” 99)

So if Ukrainian-Canadian writers began to feel that their whiteness had the potential to silence them on the topic of marginalization, perhaps identifying with Ukrainian victimization would allow them the opportunity to participate in discussions of oppression. While writers like Kostash, Grekul, and Kulyk Keefer have written about their discomfort with being white but still “feeling” a sense of Ukrainian-Canadianness, there is more to this discomfort than being faced with other (superior?) claims of marginalization. Certainly one reading of this post-1980 Ukrainian-Canadian literature sees the fixation on Ukraine as a kind of misdirection or avoidance strategy to sidestep

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<sup>51</sup> As we have seen, since making those comments in 1987 she produced two travel memoirs that address Ukrainian-Canadianness, *Bloodlines* and *The Doomed Bridegroom*, as well as producing a non-fictional

discussing the real issues of race that lie at the core of Reitz and Banerjee's analysis of how life in Canada is markedly different for visible minorities by giving the illusion of connection between racialized groups and Ukrainian-Canadians,<sup>52</sup> but we can also identify other elements informing the construction of this nationally-specific ethnicity.

The increasing Ukrainian references in addition to the more sustained attention to Ukrainian literature and history are at least in part due to the very real loss of and disconnection from Ukraine. "With each new rendition of pyrogies, pysanky and prairie-homesteads," Mycak writes, "the lived experience of being Canadian-Ukrainian recedes further and further into the signifiable distance" (45), because Ukraine itself was closed to the West for much of the twentieth century. So if Kostash, Grekul, and Kulyk Keefer are right, then Ukrainian-Canadian writers' sense of themselves as ethnic shifted by the 1980s in recognition of the claims made by other minority groups, and if Mycak is right and Ukraine itself became more and more distant, then these writers lost a sense of "being" Ukrainian as signified by a knowledge of Ukrainian language and literature, simultaneous to losing a sense of themselves as minorities in Canada. Their group identity no longer seemed to exist within a brotherhood of those working to access economic and political power, and in the face of this loss coupled with the loss of Ukraine (linguistically lost and geographically locked behind the "iron curtain"), it appears as if these writers reach out to Ukraine as an imagined fixed point around which to define a sense of "home." Since they cannot be "at home" in a pan-ethnic social class

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follow-up to *All of Baba's Children, All of Baba's Great-Grandchildren*.

<sup>52</sup> Both Grekul and Kulyk Keefer understand their engagement with ethnicity as motivated (in no small part) by a desire to make connections among varied minority experiences. In Grekul's view, "[t]here is ample room for voices from across the spectrum of minority experience. And those voices should be able to speak to each other about the ways in which their experiences diverge and connect" (*Leaving Shadows*

where their ethnic identity can be preserved and presented by someone like Lilli, nor “at home” in their problematized white skin, they try to construct “living in the hyphen” (Wah 53) of Ukrainian-Canadianness like Colleen, through “serious cultural work” (Grekul, qtd. in Wawryshyn 8).

Between Lysenko’s past and Grekul’s present, Ukrainian-Canadians changed from appearing culturally “other” to being indistinguishable from so-called mainstream Canadian society. The seemingly assimilated descendents of Ukrainian immigrants, who “have been given the simultaneous gift and curse of passing” and are “not ‘read’ as different” still “*feel different*” (Grekul, *Leaving Shadows* xxii-xxiii), and this ethnic feeling engenders literature as a way of managing sentiment. Ukrainian-Canadian literature specifically dealing with “what it feels like to be Ukrainian” suggests that so-called assimilated subjects, the Canadian-Canadians (Mackey 3) at the pinnacle of what John Porter calls Canada’s “vertical mosaic,” continue to grapple with their ethnic identities. Much Ukrainian-Canadian literature written between Lysenko and Grekul engages in the project of taking this internal feeling of ethnic identity and making it external by identifying certain visible markers of Ukrainian-Canadian ethnicity that constitute an ethnic “home” site. Through this active construction of hyphenation, these authors exhume an imaginary Ukraine, one which we will see becomes both absent and present.

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xviii). Similarly, Kulyk Keefer “want[s] there to be points of connection between us all the same” (“Coming Across” 99). For them, the idea of dialoguing amongst minority groups is an imperative.

### Chapter 3 – Ukrainian-Canadian Pioneers: Little “Home” on the Prairie

“Ethnic patterns,” according to Isajiw, “even if completely torn out of their original social and cultural context, become symbols of one’s roots,” so that “through [an] ancestral time dimension one can, at least symbolically, experience belonging” (“Olga in Wonderland” 82). His idea that belonging can be located in ethnic symbolism of the past only tells half the story; the other half belongs to space. Porteous’s short but definitional piece on “home” refers to it as “the most significant of the many space-group-time complexes” (386), a reference to Kevin Lynch’s work on temporal dimensions of geography, particularly his premise that time-place operates as a continuum of the mind, not dissimilar to a space-time continuum. Conceptualizing space and one’s place within it comprises a whole field of study that I cannot hope to reproduce here except in its barest skeleton. The small portion of place/space theory that is important to my study relates to what Gunew refers to as “spatial entitlement” (*Haunted Nation* 97), or a sense of belonging to a particular place. Ethnic identity (or the experience of belonging) arising from a “home” precisely coded as Ukrainian-hyphen-Canadian often couples symbolic references to perogies, babas, folksongs, and big, Ukrainian weddings<sup>1</sup> with a prairie landscape as a place of ethnic belonging. Because Cold War Ukraine was a closed locale, one difficult, if not impossible, to visit,<sup>2</sup> Ukrainian-Canadian writers began to take their images of Ukraine’s history, language, literature, and politics and write them

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<sup>1</sup> See the postscript to Grekul’s *Leaving Shadows* in which she questions the many stock, folkloric symbols used to represent Ukrainian-Canadianness; and Klymasz’s review of the Ukrainian-Canadian issue of *Prairie Fire* in which he notes the emphasis on folkloric symbols such as the baba figure, Ukrainian dumplings (perogies), and Easter eggs (pysanky) (163).

on the Canadian prairie as a substitute for the absent/present “home-country.” Porteous reminds us that “although a psychic space, home is usually identified with a particular physical space” (385), and for many Ukrainian-Canadians, a prairie landscape offers a place onto which they can project the “psychic space” of their ethnic “home.” Both Lysenko and Grekul situate their protagonists’ journeys in relation to a prairie home; both girls leave and return to the site of their Ukrainian-Canadian farms, and both base their ethnic identities on ties to first-wave homesteading Ukrainian immigrants. These authors are not alone in constructing the prairie landscape as crucial to the development of a kind of profoundly regional Ukrainian-Canadianness. George tells us that “twentieth-century literature in English is not so concerned with drawing allegories of nation as with the search for viable homes for viable selves” (5), and twentieth-century Ukrainian-Canadian literature may appear concerned with the Ukrainian nation, but it actually searches for ways of making the Canadian prairie operate as a viable replacement “home” for Ukraine itself. The literature signals a desire for a return to traditional concepts of “home” located in a specific place, rooted in land and matrilineal families. This chapter analyzes how Ukrainian-Canadian literature writes “home” on the prairie.

In her introduction to the 1987 reprinting of *All of Baba’s Children*, on the tenth anniversary of its first publication, Kostash writes:

I had been insisting that ethnicity was one thing, having to do with this time and this Canadian place, nationalism another having to do with Europe and history, and that the latter were not my affair. I was willing, even eager, to

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<sup>2</sup> Vic Satzewich offers the clarification that “some leftists within the diaspora had direct contact with Ukraine and Ukrainians,” but maintains that “the vast majority of diaspora Ukrainians did not have the

engage in the construction of neo-Galician prairie identity, but I was emphatically not prepared to take up the baggage of the Ukrainian nation.

(xv-xvi)

She explicitly states that her ethnicity arises not just from “this Canadian place,” but specifically the Canadian prairie place, and her comments are typical of Ukrainian-Canadian writing post-1980. In articulating such a widely held belief in the prairie-ness of Ukrainian-Canadianness, Kostash invites us to read this literature in dialogue with larger discourses of prairie regionalism.

If, as the previous chapter suggests, Kostash’s *All of Baba’s Children* can be seen as the harbinger of focused Ukrainian studies in Canada, we cannot forget that she was not alone among Ukrainian-Canadian Alberta intellectuals turning attention to Ukrainian issues in Canada. Frances Swyripa,<sup>3</sup> another Albertan, was one of the first scholars to publish histories of Ukrainian experiences in Canada. As well, Alberta-based Jars Balan, who co-edited the previously mentioned *Yarmarok* and guest-edited the Ukrainian-themed volume of *Prairie Fire*, has been instrumental in developing a canon of Ukrainian-Canadian literature and criticism.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the insights and contributions of scholars like Kostash, Swyripa, and Balan were made possible by the pioneering work on

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option of returning to Ukraine, even for holidays or short family visits” (201).

<sup>3</sup> Her historical survey, *Ukrainian Canadians: A Survey of Their Portrayal in English-Language Works*, followed by *Loyalties in Conflict: Ukrainians in Canada During the Great War*, and then by *Wedded to the Cause: Ukrainian-Canadian Women and Ethnic Identity, 1891-1991*, form a research basis underlying any exploration into Ukrainian Canadianness in a variety of disciplines.

<sup>4</sup> In addition to his editorial work on *Yarmarok* and *Prairie Fire*, he has published countless articles on Ukrainian-Canadian topics, and produced an illustrated history of Ukrainians in Canada, *Salt and Braided Bread*. Not only has he contributed to Ukrainian-Canadian scholarship as an editor, creative-writer, and critic, but perhaps he has had the greatest influence through the support and encouragement that he has offered other scholars in the field (myself included). Nearly all the articles and books written about Ukrainian-Canadian literature acknowledge his support. While he grew up in Ontario, studying at the University of Toronto at Scarborough, he currently works out of the Alberta office of the Canadian Institute for Ukrainian Studies.

Ukrainian-Canadians by Alberta-born Lupul,<sup>5</sup> who was the first director of the Canadian Institute for Ukrainian Studies (CIUS). Funding from and scholarship at the University of Alberta informs, at least in part, this dovetailing of Ukrainian and prairie experiences.<sup>6</sup> Given the Albertan critical mass of both Ukrainian immigrants and their descendents and researchers interested in examining Ukrainianness in Canada, specifically on the prairie, we should not be surprised to find Ukrainian-Canadianness looking very regional at times.<sup>7</sup>

But what, exactly, does prairie regionalism look like? Canadian regionalism operates as a complicated intersection of ideas located in concepts of geography and topography in addition to social and economic ones (see Fiamengo 241-242; Wyile 152-54), and despite the dominant role prairie literature has played on the Canadian literary stage (Fiamengo 243; Ricou, "Region" 952), it functions as a place where ideas of identity intersect in interesting and complicated ways. Traditional interpretation of prairie literature reads it as deeply influenced by the stark, flat, and overwhelming

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<sup>5</sup> Raised in one of the Ukrainian bloc settlements in rural Alberta, Manoly Lupul then studied at the universities of Alberta (B.A., 1950, and B. Ed., 1951), Minnesota (M.A., 1955), and Harvard (Ph.D., 1963). He worked at the University of Alberta from the late 1950s onwards, retiring in 1990. He was the first director of the Canadian Institute for Ukrainian Studies (CIUS). Lupul was also named to the Order of Canada in 2003 for his lifetime of work relating to Ukrainian-Canadian Studies (see "Manoly Lupul, Former Director of CIUS, named to the Order of Canada"). His scholarship on Ukrainian-Canadian issues is wide-ranging; for instance, his edited books include: *Ukrainian Canadians, Multiculturalism, and Separatism: An Assessment*; *A Heritage in Transition: Essays in the History of Ukrainians in Canada*; *Visible Symbols: Cultural Expression Among Canada's Ukrainians*; *Osvita: Ukrainian Bilingual Education*; and *Continuity and Change: The Cultural Life of Alberta's First Ukrainians*. As well, he authored *The Politics of Multiculturalism: A Ukrainian-Canadian Memoir*.

<sup>6</sup> The CIUS was founded in 1976, and with the development of the Ukrainian Canadian Program in 1991, it has been and continues to be a significant body for funding, research, publication, and dissemination of information and topics pertaining to being Ukrainian in Canada or being of Ukrainian descent in Canada. It is one of the major publishers of critical and creative work in this area. As well, the Ukrainian Folklore Centre (UFC) and the Canadian Centre for Ukrainian Culture and Ethnography (CCUCE), now both administered by the Peter and Doris Kule Centre for Ukrainian and Canadian Folklore, are located at University of Alberta and offer funding for and scholarship into folkloric elements of Ukrainian culture in Canada.

landscape (see Kreisel; Ricou, *Vertical Man/Horizontal World*; Harrison). Recent criticism has challenged this geographically-based reading of prairie literature (see Calder, “Reassessing Prairie Realism”; Keahey; Calder and Wardaugh, Introduction), but man’s battle on a harsh landscape has long been a common theme in literature from the prairies. Early twentieth-century literature from the Canadian prairie, considered prairie realism, often portrays the immigrants and settlers to the prairie as alienated from the landscape (Harrison 101). In many cases, prairie realism produces stories that focus on the harshness of early pioneering days.

In recent years, scholars of Ukrainian-Canadian literature have identified “an entire genre of Ukrainian-Canadian pioneer stories” (Mycak 68) that are “historical narratives that sentimentalize or romanticize the bygone days of early immigration and settlement” (Grekul 116). There are some simple features of this pioneering myth that critics have agreed upon:<sup>8</sup> (1) “a realisation of the undeniable hardship that these pioneers endured”; (2) “an emphasis on hard work”; (3) “the specific characterization” of the “Ukrainian farmer [as] imbued with a certain nobility of character”; (4) characters who “are sanctified as forefathers engaged in a noble pursuit”; the (5) “reliance upon biographical material and alleged socio-historical truth”; and (6) “the overwhelming use of first person narration” (Mycak 51-52; 81). I add to this list a seventh feature: a focus on Ukraine and things Ukrainian in an attempt to graft a lost “home-country” on the Canadian prairie. Each individual text that contributes to this genre may be interesting in its own right, but I contend that the sheer volume of texts, offering very slight variations

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<sup>7</sup> In his review of the 1992 Ukrainian-Canadian-themed edition of *Prairie Fire*, Klymasz writes that the “regional bias that favours the prairies as a perennial spawning-ground for Ukrainian dumplings” and “Easter eggs” is predictable (163).

on the prairie motif, suggests a persistent Ukrainian-Canadian investment in traditional models of place-based belonging.

Slobodian's two novels, *The Glistening Furrow* and its sequel *Let the Soft Wind Blow*, exemplify this pioneer genre.<sup>9</sup> *The Glistening Furrow* presents an intergenerational epic story about immigration and assimilation as three generations of the Zhoda family settle into Canadian life on the prairie. Marusia Zhoda – like the young, female Lilli or Colleen – functions as the protagonist and narrative focus, and the novel ends with her becoming a grandmother. In embodying the main criteria that characterize this genre, the story is replete with descriptions of the “undeniable hardship that these pioneers endured” and images of the “homesteaders’ first Canadian winter” as “very harsh. The heavy snow came early, and the howling north winds kept an icy and relentless hold on the poor settlers” (43). These settlers are described as “hardworking men and women,” who begin “to make their mark” so that “by the sweat of their brows and grim perseverance, the virgin soil [is] turned into productive fields” (61), a detail that is typical of what critics identify as the hardworking “forefather” element of this genre. The use of verifiable dates, references to historical events, and simple declarative sentences give the book a didactic tone, exhibiting a pseudo-documentary style reminiscent of Lysenko’s model of cultural preservation. The nostalgic characterization of the humble Ukrainian homesteaders emerges right from the start of the novel as the “immigrants pulled up the collars of their sheepskin coats” (2). Yet Slobodian’s story,

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<sup>8</sup> These were first identified by Mycak (51-53). Grekul adopts them in her analysis of Ukrainian Canadianness moving from “multicultural” to “transcultural” contexts (*Leaving* 116-117).

<sup>9</sup> Even though Kiriak’s *Syny Zernli* was published in the 1930s and its translation, as *Sons of the Soil*, appeared in 1959, many of the post-1980 prairie pioneer stories that this chapter discusses follow patterns set out in his text. I do not include it in my analysis, because I am interested in English-language texts, not texts in translation, but in many ways it is the prototype for this entire genre.

like the many other texts that constitute this genre,<sup>10</sup> evokes a similar aesthetic as much early non-Ukrainian writing from the prairies.

Critics argue that this nostalgic focus on the lost, and somehow more simple and satisfying, days of early immigration are typical (Mycak 47; Swyripa 225), because Ukrainian-Canadian works that “revisit the pioneer past [do so] with an underlying, but unmistakable, sense of nostalgia for what they see as a simpler time and place, a nobler way of life” (Grekul, *Leaving Shadows* 116). However, Ukrainian-Canadian authors who write stories that turn back to early days of immigration and settlement across the Canadian prairie, days of taming and civilizing the landscape, are not alone in doing so. Dick Harrison, for example, identifies what he calls the “prairie-as-Garden” motif (75), which focuses on the cultivation and ordering of the landscape, in early prairie literature and argues that in R. J. C. Stead’s *The Homesteaders*, for instance, the pioneering characters note that life involves “hard, persistent work” (58), one of the obvious traits that Mycak argues characterizes the specifically Ukrainian-Canadian pioneering genre.<sup>11</sup> In fact, it seems more likely that many novels focusing on immigration and settlement of the Canadian west (not just Ukrainian-Canadian ones) share the first four criteria she identifies. Prairie stories written with “the type of realism which characterizes the fiction

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<sup>10</sup> In addition to the list Mycak offers (55-57), for examples in novel form, see: Hawrelak’s *Breaking Ground*, Kupchenko’s *The Horseman of Shandro Crossing*, Kupchenko Frolick’s *The Chicken Man*, Slobodian’s *The Glistening Furrow* and its sequel *Let the Soft Wind Blow*, Warwaruk’s *Ukrainian Wedding*, and Grekul’s *Kalyna’s Song*. Some young-adult novels include: Kupchenko Frolick’s *Anna Veryha* and Langston’s *Lesia’s Dream*. Short stories based on this pioneering motif include: Evanishen’s *Vuiko Yurko: The First Generation* and its sequel *Second-Hand Stories*, Kupchenko Frolick’s *The Green Tomato Years*, and Brenda Meier’s “Lialka.” Playwrights have also used a past pioneering homestead setting and ethos. See Galay’s *After Baba’s Funeral*, *Sweet and Sour Pickles*, and *Tsymbaly!*, Ryga’s *A Letter to My Son*, and Woywitka and Mueller’s *Kyla’s Christmas Concert*. The poetry collected in Suknaski’s *In the Name of Narid* and *Wood Mountain Poems* as well as Slavutych’s bilingual poetry in *The Conquerors of the Prairies* also show the persistence of the pioneering motif across genres.

<sup>11</sup> For an example of this dynamic in other immigrant and ethnic writing see Franca Iacovetta’s *Such Hardworking People: Italian Immigrants in Postwar Toronto*.

from 1925 onward” (Harrison 98) provide images of man’s harsh “[c]onquest of that [prairie] landscape” (Grove 44) and appear to be only marginally different from the Ukrainian-Canadian genre’s treatment of immigration and settlement.

Kiriak and Lysenko have been considered contemporaries of other prairie realists such as Frederick Philip Grove, Martha Ostenso, and Robert Stead,<sup>12</sup> in part because they set their stories in the same pre-World War II prairie setting as the earlier authors. It is interesting, however, to note the Ukrainian-Canadian pioneering stories constituting the so-called genre that Mycak and Grekul discuss share certain features with non-ethnic texts focusing on prairie settlement, thus throwing into question the idea that this genre can be understood solely or even significantly as Ukrainian-Canadian. The juxtaposition of Ukrainian-Canadian pioneering stories with the kinds of prairie stories that Harrison discusses generates the observation that the Ukrainian-Canadian stories appear in print decades after the others. They may look similar to other prairie tales, but are radically out-of-date, which raises an interesting question: why is Ukrainian-Canadian literature, particularly post-1980, dominated by pioneering stories set in an earlier era?

This obsession with constructing Ukrainian-Canadian characters as hard-working prairie pioneers seems all the more pronounced when compared with the representation of Ukrainian-Canadians by other authors. In early Canadian fiction, Lysenko laments the presentation of Ukrainian-Canadian characters in the limited role of “an illiterate, a clown, a villain or a domestic servant” (*Men in Sheepskin* 293), and Grekul provides an analysis of how other Canadian authors present Ukrainian-Canadian characters as the

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<sup>12</sup> Even though Lysenko’s novels were published nearly a generation later, they are set in the same time frame as the earlier novels, and have been considered to embody some of the Modernist traits exhibited by the other writers.

“other” against which Canadian Anglo-normativity emerges (*Leaving Shadows* 11-32).<sup>13</sup> Yet another glance at this literature suggests a more generous reading: Ukrainian-Canadian characters created by non-Ukrainian-Canadian writers possess a greater professional range than their obsessively homesteading counterparts created by Ukrainian-Canadian “native informants.” From Kalman Kalmar’s appearance as the son of a Russian nihilist, raised by a Ukrainian step-mother, in Connor’s *The Foreigner*, who, even when farming, never homesteads, to Lesje, the daughter of Jewish and Ukrainian immigrants in Atwood’s *Life Before Man*, who works as a paleontologist at the Royal Ontario Museum, to Dave Martyniuk, who wields an axe and is one of the few surviving characters in Guy Gavriel Kay’s speculative fiction Fionavar books, Ukrainian-Canadian characters in texts by Canadian authors appear in a wider range of genres, offering a broader scope in terms of professions than those invented by Ukrainian-Canadian authors.<sup>14</sup> In fact, according to one critic, non-Ukrainian-Canadian writers may even create more rounded and interesting Ukrainian-Canadians than those written about from within the ethnic community. For instance, Natalia Aponiuk believes that Margaret Laurence’s Nick Kazlik is “the best literary depiction of a young man’s search for

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<sup>13</sup> Swyripa provides the most comprehensive survey of the appearance of Ukrainian-Canadians in English-language texts (see *Ukrainian Canadians: A Survey of their Portrayal in English-language Works*), charting a progression from their representation as subjects to be assimilated to subjects engaged in active self-articulation.

<sup>14</sup> For instance, Morley Callaghan’s *They Shall Inherit the Earth* also features a key Ukrainian character, Anna Prychoda, whose ethnicity, critics acknowledge, is unimportant (Lysenko, *Men in Sheepskin* 293; Grekul, *Leaving Shadows* 19). Mavis Gallant’s Vera in “Virus X” is a Ukrainian-Canadian from Winnipeg, who has scandalized her family with an unwanted and unplanned pregnancy, and so lives abroad (204, 225), but neither her own nor her family’s ethnic identity emerges out of a prairie locale. Even prairie authors do not present Ukrainian-Canadian characters as pioneers. They are railway workers like Steve and his father in Sinclair Ross’s *As for Me and My House* (48, 66-67), or shop owners and house-cleaners like Nick’s step-father and mother in Ross’s *Sawbones Memorial* (30, 134), or a doctor like Nick himself (15, 48). Margaret Laurence also peoples her fictional Manawaka books with Ukrainian-Canadians, who work on the railways and live in the bad part of town (*The Diviners* 36). As well, she presents the Kazlik family – a dairy-farming father and his son a teacher (76, 69) – as town-dwellers, not isolated homesteaders.

identity, as he attempts to integrate his Ukrainian background and the dominant culture in Canada” (4); she does not find Ukrainian-Canadian authors invested with enough literary skill to treat ethnicity issues as competently as Laurence does. It seems, therefore, that contemporary Ukrainian-Canadian literature does not need to function as an important corrective to flat Ukrainian-Canadian characterization written by a biased (and possibly mean-spirited) mainstream authorship; nor must it write Ukrainian-Canadians into the pages of Canadian literature as a supplement to fill a glaring void. In the face of this more balanced (and arguably aesthetically superior) representation of Ukrainian-Canadians by other Canadian authors, the repeated motif of the prairie pioneer setting appears as a strange obsession. As well, critics have even grown tired of the persistence of this pioneering genre and have begun to voice their annoyance with it (Grekul, *Leaving Shadows* 118; Kulyk Keefer, *Dark Ghost* 19, 22-23), and even Potrebenco’s short story “A Different Story,” which Mycak reads “as a parody of the myth of the glorified pioneer” (57), and her study *No Streets of Gold* seek to show darker sides of the pioneering experience to undercut its dominance in the literature. Despite these criticisms, the perseverance of this genre signals that this particular image of Ukrainian-Canadianness possesses value for many Ukrainian-Canadians. Even in the face of trends or attitudes that denigrate or question such a stock image of folksy, prairie Ukrainian-Canadianness, the persistence of this genre attests to the continued importance of such a regionally based ethnic identity, and it is this that makes it worth investigating.

Both literary critics and historians have provided reasons for the proliferation of this prairie pioneer myth as a particular articulation of a Ukrainian-Canadian identity. Some simply point to the verifiable facts behind Ukrainian immigration to Canada at the

turn of the last century. Given the significant numbers of Ukrainian immigrants who came seeking \$10 homesteads, Mycak writes “that farming life and such communities were initially and in the early years the focal point of cultural imagining” should be “understandable” (50). As many minority groups write in order to give voice to their stories, the Ukrainian-Canadian pioneer story expresses, in this view, a yearning to validate a very real historical experience. Mycak believes that “Canadian-Ukrainian identity has historically been silenced to a large degree and is now surfacing with a determination to be heard” (93) and sees this pioneer genre as helping to articulate and document a marginalized history.

A second reason has been suggested for the adoption of such an image of this community. Kostash claims that “Ukrainian-Canadians still generally go along with the popular view of themselves as colourful, dancing, *horilka*-tipping hunkies recently arrived from a wheat farm in Saskatchewan” (*All of Baba’s Great-Grandchildren* 30), because this masks the “psychological *insecurity* of a community that has periodically lived under a cloud in Canada as ‘enemy aliens’ in the Great War, ‘Reds’ in the 1930s, anti-Communist extremists in the 1950s, and aging, anti-Semitic alleged pro-Nazi collaborators in the 1980s and 1990s. Compared to these stigmatizations, the fun-loving bumpkin is almost lovable” (32). She suggests that rather than engaging with the problematic elements in a Ukrainian-Canadian identity, writers have preferred to hide beneath the pleasing veneer of the hard-working homesteader.

Third, as similar pioneer myths are at the heart of many settler-invader identities, we should not be surprised to see Ukrainian-Canadian writers claiming their place through manual labour on the land. Think here of the last two lines of Margaret

Atwood's poem "Death of a Young Son by Drowning": "I planted him in this country / like a flag" (28-29). Ukrainian-Canadian pioneer stories present just this kind of claiming of a place through death and sacrifice on the land. Thus these stories fit into a general trend of asserting legitimacy by claiming a kind of baptism through suffering on the land. Related to this general claim is a more specific one about the timing of this kind of national assertion. As mentioned, by the 1970s and 1980s, debates arose in response to the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism that contributed to its evolution from a document codifying the bilingual and bicultural nature of Canada into one articulating a formal recognition of federal multiculturalism. Using the pioneer story, Ukrainian-Canadians could write themselves into Canadian history as a "third force" to counter the two founding nations model that dominated those early discussions, as we have already seen. Swyripa makes this point explicit when she writes that Ukrainian-Canadian

myth makers were driven by the desire for a tidy and satisfying picture of the past that promoted the goal of recognition for their group as a legitimate and valuable actor on the Canadian stage. The result was a founding fathers myth erected on the peasant pioneers: in their backbreaking toil and sacrifice to introduce the prairie and parkland to the plough and to exploit mining and forest frontiers so that Canada could be great, lay Ukrainians' right to full partnership in Confederation. (*Wedded to the Cause* 221)

Thus there were very real political gains to be made by casting Ukrainian-Canadianness in a pioneering mould, creating a legitimate space for Ukrainian-Canadians within the larger Canadian polity.

These views only go part of the way to explaining the proliferation of Ukrainian-Canadian pioneer stories, especially appearing after 1980. Why do these writers appear unable to move away from literature focusing on pioneering “peasants in sheepskin coats” that could be written much earlier by Kiriak or Lysenko? Mycak’s, Kostash’s, and Swyripa’s arguments share the premise that this construction gives evidence of a Ukrainian-Canadian desire to consolidate a sense of itself around certain images. That desire may be motivated by a complicated combination of the compulsion to express historical truths, to evade uncomfortable characterizations, and to mobilize political claims. I also read its expression as part of a larger ethnic project to define and visualize a sense of “home” for Ukrainian-Canadians. In this case, these authors attempt to fix a certain kind of prairie experience as the “home” from which they desire their ethnic subjectivity to emerge.

Explicit narratives that highlight struggles to retain an ethnic identity represent one way that this genre makes the ethnic “home-country” a rural, prairie homestead. While many diasporic groups develop symbolic spaces as substitutes for various “home-countries,” while in their new “host-country” (Safran 17), and Ukrainian-Canadian bloc settlements throughout the prairie, like ethnic ghettos, no doubt served such a function in the early days of first-wave immigration and settlement, by the 1980s this pioneer genre replaced physical spaces, constructing a Ukrainian-Canadian “home-country” in literature. Stories that fall into this category typically dramatize a conflict between an older, “more ethnic” generation and a younger, “less ethnic” one. For instance, in Slobodian’s book, Marusia is just a child when her parents settle in Canada. Raised on the farm, she has ambitions to be a painter. During the war years, as she comes of age,

she leaves the farm to work as a housemaid in Edmonton to help support her family, and this is where the seeds of an intergenerational conflict are sown. The handsome, non-Ukrainian son of the family for whom Marusia works professes his undying love for her: “Marusia looked up into his smouldering blue eyes and saw the love shining there” (116). The two lovers marry in a small, Canadian ceremony far from Marusia’s family on the homestead, and the erstwhile groom is then whisked away to fight and die in World War I. A pregnant Marusia returns to the family farm, causing “a rumour” to “spread throughout the settlement, that the oldest Zhoda girl had come home in shame” (129). Her marriage outside the Ukrainian community, aspirations to be an artist, and unexpected (and suspect) pregnancy put Marusia at odds with traditional Ukrainian values. After returning to live with her parents in order to help them on the farm after the birth of her child, Marusia is “glad that her parents seemed happy, but she was far from content herself”; “she wanted desperately to escape from this hard life and start afresh with her son” (163). Her explicit sentiments express the continued sense of longing Marusia feels, because she dreams of a life off the farm where she can pursue painting. After the death of her first husband during the war, she marries again in the hopes that she can break free from the farm and study art, but her new husband provides even less of an escape than her first one. He becomes ill and the newlyweds move back to the homestead. Her desires continue to be at odds with the homesteading ethos of her parents’ generation. The novel’s resolution is an uncomfortable compromise. The story comes to its close with the death of the older generation; Marusia lives out her life on the homestead, painting in her spare time. Once she herself is a grandmother, her painting, aptly titled “The Glistening Furrow” (which is the title of the book that Slobodian herself

waited until moving from the farm to Edmonton to write), wins “first prize in an international painting competition” (233). The prize is a trip. Marusia makes her escape (and only a temporary one at that) after the death of her parents and after she has lived most of her life on the homestead.

The sequel, *Let the Soft Wind Blow*, resumes with Marusia’s return from the journey that exists outside of the pages of either novel, but this book focuses on Marusia’s granddaughter, Rachel, who comes to spend time on the farm with her grandmother and learn about her Ukrainian-Canadian heritage. In this book, Marusia plays the role of the typical pioneer, residing on the farm and personifying the virtues of hard work. For example, she sets her granddaughter to make “a meal that required some work: bringing in beets, potatoes, carrots, cabbage and onions from the garden, cleaning, dicing and cooking them” as the first task on the farm, to teach the girl “that nothing comes easily” (59). Marusia also shows Rachel photographs from the early days of immigration from Ukraine to Canada, and when the girl scoffs at the traditional garb, “Marusia reminded her that it was the perseverance and hard work of the men wearing those funny looking coats which had helped build this great country, Canada” (61), thus reiterating the sentiment set forth in the first novel and illustrating a typical attitude of this pioneer genre. Though Slobodian’s first book presents Marusia as the younger generation, who chafes against the pioneering experience, her second book portrays Marusia as the traditional figure against whose power her granddaughter chafes, which suggests that even with the passage of time, a link to a prairie homestead can serve to preserve ties to a Ukrainian identity. Marusia becomes what Klymasz notes as “the overriding spectre of a Ukrainian grandma figure, the saintly ‘baba’” (163) who

dominates Ukrainian-Canadian literature. These homesteads that begin to function as ethnic sites are not just rural and traditional, they also often include baba as the embodiment of Ukrainianness with whom the younger generation must engage.

Rachel's journey mirrors her grandmother's earlier one. The details are updated to reflect a different social context, but the core struggles that Rachel faces – a desire to leave the farm and put aside Ukrainian-Canadianness and an ultimate reversal of such resistance in an embrace of rural Ukrainian-Canadianness – remain consistent. Rachel represents the counter-culture movement of the 1960s, and, through interacting with her grandmother, she learns to embrace traditional values, choosing marriage and an education over a “foolish” life “with a flower child” (165). This book, as well, ends with an uneasy compromise between the generations. As the story closes, Rachel, as a hippie musician, is offered a chance to travel “to eastern Canada, then on to New York” and even “to travel to Europe,” with a “true Activist” (166), but she chooses to marry locally and “major in psychology and sociology at the U of A” in Edmonton (171). While her grandmother returns to the actual site of the homestead, Rachel settles in the closest urban centre. Even though the particulars differ, both novels present younger generations struggling against the traditions of the older ones and only offer resolution for the younger generation by forcing a sacrifice of individual goals in order to maintain a link to the homestead and the older, “more ethnic,” generation. In discussing *Yellow Boots*, Mycak argues that “[i]nter-generational confrontation shows the role played by maternity in the maintenance of culture and identity” (16), and those comments are apropos for Slobodian's works as well, as the grandmother figure becomes metonymically linked to the homestead.

Swyripa offers important observations about the dominance of women in Ukrainian-Canadian literature, categorizing them into two groups: Nasha Meri and Katie, on the one hand, and baba, on the other. In Swyripa's words: "Nasha Meri and Katie – together they symbolized the Ukrainian immigrant girl in young womanhood and her Canadian-born sister testing the freedoms and attractions of the new country" (*Wedded to the Cause* 64).<sup>15</sup> Nasha Meri and Katie are "[g]uilty of rejecting traditional restraints and values, and of succumbing to the vulgar and superficial in the Canadian lifestyle" (64), not unlike a young Marusia and Rachel until they return to the homestead, embodied in baba, "the revered pioneer grandmother" (Swyripa, *Wedded to the Cause* 240). As a historian, Swyripa's interest lies in explicating the political and community activities of Ukrainian-Canadians and charts the movement from more politicized cultural symbols to the baba "as a repository of Ukrainian culture" who can "transcend ideological and religious cleavages and act as a common group symbol" (240), but these primary female symbols encapsulating Ukrainian-Canadian culture dominate the literature as well. Lilli, Colleen, Marusia, and Rachel are all versions of Nasha Meri and Katie, and their intergenerational conflicts with baba figures provide typical examples of the narrative structure of this Ukrainian-Canadian pioneer genre.

Ukrainian-Canadians, however, do not hold a monopoly on family dramas or intergenerational strife. Interestingly, the particular way in which the intergenerational friction appears in these books, by trapping and luring Marusia and Rachel back to a more rural and ethnic experience, illustrates Atwood's comments about Canadian literature in general: "If in England the family is a mansion you live in, and if in America

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<sup>15</sup> These caricatures first appeared in the cartoons of Jacob Maydanyk, but Swyripa extends them beyond their original context as archetypal figures.

it's a skin you shed, then in Canada it's a trap in which you're caught" (*Survival* 131). While her thematic reading of Canadian literature now sounds essentialist and outmoded to contemporary ears,<sup>16</sup> her insight that the family-as-trap motif appears in much Canadian literature certainly suggests that its appearance in these pioneering stories by and about Ukrainian-Canadians is not particular to this ethnic group. Atwood also argues that these intergenerational struggles are common not only to Canadian literature, but specifically to Canadian immigrant stories. Her insights suggest that much of what Mycak notes about this genre of Ukrainian-Canadian pioneering stories actually applies to other texts as well. Prairie critics, such as Harrison, would see these Ukrainian-Canadian stories as being very similar to early prairie realism, and thematic critics, such as Atwood, would see them as embodying elements of family and intergenerational struggles typical to Canadian literature writ large. These stories, therefore, seem to embody predictable Canadian thematic patterns, dovetailing with regional and immigrant narrative aesthetics, throwing into question their ethnic specificity as Ukrainian-Canadian, despite their ethnic and cultural markers of and from Ukraine.

However, this so-called genre of Ukrainian-Canadian stories and the more general patterns that prairie or Canadian thematic critics note differ at the level of tone. Mycak may, in fact, have been astute in identifying this particular genre, even if her definition itself is limited by not accounting for this genre's similarities with other Canadian (especially prairie) literature. An optimistic tone differentiates this genre from prairie realism or the immigrant narratives that Harrison or Atwood discuss; thematic readings of prairie or immigrant narratives highlight a kind of negativity absent in the Ukrainian-

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<sup>16</sup> Critics have noted the end of thematic criticism in Canada (Murray 75; Moss, "Bushed in the Sacred Wood" 13).

Canadian materials. Harrison writes that prairie realist texts are “so consistently darkened by futility that they suggest a large-scale failure of the collective imagination in its work of humanizing the new environment” (131). He sees the body of fiction he focuses on as unrelentingly dark and pessimistic in outlook. While his reading strives to make sense only of prairie fiction, Atwood’s broader analysis agrees with his findings. She argues that in intergenerational immigrant narratives, while the younger generation “has sacrificed his past and tried for success, he is much more likely to find only failure” (*Survival* 150). While Marusia and Rachel seem to embody this kind of failure in their very limited escapes from the trap of their ethnic family, the tone of both books is celebratory. At the close of *Let the Soft Wind Blow*, for instance, Rachel exclaims: “I now know who I am and I’m proud to be Ukrainian” (172). This overt (and somewhat trite) statement makes clear the larger message of Slobodian’s works: these characters may be trapped in their ethnic families, but they will only find happiness and fulfilment when they accept their Ukrainianness (as defined by a link to the landscape, a “home” on the prairie, embodied in baba). The homesteads in these stories generally become profitable farms, and characters find peace when they reconcile themselves to their ethnic identity on the farm. These stories construct immigration to the Canadian prairie as the site of genesis for a Ukrainian-Canadian identity, and characters find fulfilment in connecting with the originating site.<sup>17</sup>

The stories that fall within this genre that show a character who has successfully broken free from the farm and traditional Ukrainian and rural values portray such an escape in very painful terms. While we are invited to celebrate with Marusia’s and

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<sup>17</sup> I thank Maxim Tarnawsky for the insight that these pioneering tales comprise a genre of genesis stories unlike the exodus tales more common to American writers of the Ukrainian diaspora.

Rachel's decisions to embrace Ukrainianness in Alberta, Ryga's play *A Letter to My Son* encourages us to condemn the son who moves away from his father and the farm. Slobodian focuses on the children of immigrants who struggle to put aside their Ukrainian pasts but ultimately embrace them, but Ryga's play concentrates on the older, immigrant generation, securing our sympathies for it. Lepa's attempts to write a letter to his estranged son, the "educated man" (*Letter 72*), who has nothing to do with his father, shape the dramatic action of the play. Unlike Marusia and then Rachel, Stefan has escaped the family homestead. In his absence, his father, who remains on the farm, wants to explain the significance of the pioneering experience and the landscape to his son. He repeatedly employs a metaphor equating the fields with fire (73, 79, 85, 96, 106) to explain the profundity of his experience on the prairie landscape. He thinks out loud: "I should tell him maybe how the fields look in the setting sun...black trees holding up the sky, and between them and me, all them fields of yellow wheat glowing in a holy fire!" (73). However, Stefan is much more like his aunt and uncle,<sup>18</sup> unable to appreciate the sacredness implied in the fire his father sees on the prairie. In one of the play's memory sequences, Stefan works with his father for a summer on the farm. Lepa describes "the field and stubble red with the setting sun" (105). Once again the red field in the sunset evokes fire, and Lepa turns from the vision of the land to look at his son, "a silky beard glowing on his cheeks, as if his face had also caught fire" (105). It is a moment of great potential, when the boy and the land are united in a vision of fire and power. This image, full of the promise of a sacred union between the boy and the natural landscape through a "holy fire," is spoiled when the boy reiterates his desire to be a

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<sup>18</sup> Note that in describing his sister, Lepa says that she "stands like she was made of ice" (*Letter 102*), in contrast to the fire imagery of the homestead.

temporary visitor on the farm. With such news, Lepa says that he feels “the taste of ashes in [his] mouth and a coldness” in his flesh (108). The “ashes” are the remnants of an ethnic identity rooted on a rural, prairie landscape that has no future in a son that rejects it.

The lack of connection between Lepa as the figure of Ukrainian-Canadianness on the farm and Stefan as the younger generation invites a critique of Stefan’s mode of assimilation.<sup>19</sup> In another of the memory sequences, the son repeatedly fails to recognize his own father. He politely asks: “And may I ask who are you? Have you children in my school?” (89). The education system integrates and assimilates marginalized subjects into the mainstream, and Stefan represents and embodies this very process. He is “an educated and refined man” and tells his father: “I have no time for animal grunts from the ignorant!” (89). He rejects his father and his father’s peasant ways, yet feels that his integration and acceptance of mainstream values of education and success weigh on him “like two big suitcases on a hot day” or “a carton of textbooks [he has] stupidly agreed to carry, but cannot find a place to put down” (89). Marusia’s and Rachel’s temporary or partial escapes from the farm only serve to strengthen the positive aspects of reconciling themselves to Ukrainian-Canadianness envisioned as rural peasantry. In contrast, Stefan makes a complete physical and professional break from his father’s past that leaves him carrying heavy ethnic baggage. Slobodian’s and Ryga’s works represent the two models that this Ukrainian-Canadian pioneering genre offers. This genre as a whole, as we have seen, equates Ukrainian-Canadianness with the Canadian prairie, specifically farms and

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<sup>19</sup> Stefan appears comparable to the similarly named Stephen in Joy Kogawa’s *Obasan*. Both boys grow into men who embrace mainstream values (including internalized racism against their own heritage) and, despite achieving professional success within that mainstream, still embody discomfort at not being able to integrate their ethnic and familial heritage into their adult lives.

homesteads, and it presents intergenerational conflicts in which the younger generations seem trapped in an ethnic family and milieu that they long to escape. The resolution of these stories offers a realization that escape is, in fact, not desirable. Slobodian offers a reconciliation with the farm and Ukrainian-Canadianness located therein, and Ryga presents the fact that escape comes with a heavy emotional price.

This trend of presenting the desirability of locating Ukrainian-Canadianness on a prairie homestead (often in conjunction with a presiding baba) echoes Lysenko's ideal of preserving a rural, peasant ethnic identity. While the process of expressing these themes in writing may confirm Grekul's view that only through active articulation can Ukrainian-Canadianness come into being for the authors,<sup>20</sup> the characters' experiences are not about a dialogue with different versions of Ukrainian-Canadianness and struggling to voice a personal version of it, but rather about embracing a regionally rooted ethnic identity.

However, the imaginary prairie landscape constantly shifts and realigns itself in relation to broader contexts. For instance, scholarship analyzing more contemporary prairie literature highlights its tendency to dismantle powerful pre-existing tropes and structures, suggesting that the stories of Grove, Ostenso, Stead, and the similarly-minded Ukrainian-Canadian authors do not have the final word on what prairie literature looks like.<sup>21</sup> Instead, we can understand the pessimistic outlook of prairie realists to

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<sup>20</sup> This suggestion seems plausible, especially when we consider that most of these texts are published by small presses with limited print-runs. The goal of publication seems less commercial and more personal.

<sup>21</sup> See, for example, Eli Mandel's "Writing West," which outlines a prairie aesthetic in colloquial, oral story-telling strategies. Also, both Ann Munton's "The Structural Horizons of Prairie Poetics" and Russell Brown's "Robert Kroetsch, Marshall McLuhan, and Canada's Prairie Postmodernism" root Canadian postmodernism in the prairies. In addition, Simona Bertacco's doctoral research, published as *Out of Place*, explores the way that prairie authors (especially Kroetsch) explode mythic conventions. Kroetsch, as well, has written extensively on prairie literature, the act of "naming," and the intersection between regionalism and literary experimentation; see his essays in *The Lovely Treachery of Words*.

foreshadow a literary transition from modernism to postmodernism. Linda Hutcheon's *A Poetics of Postmodernism* asserts: "the 'marginal' and what I call the 'ex-centric' (be it in class, race, gender, sexual orientation, or ethnicity) take on new significance" (12). This idea of the "ex-centric" appears even more important in the context of Canadian postmodernism. In discussing it, Hutcheon writes that not only is Canada as a whole "ex-centric," defining itself against the "dominant traditions" of "British/American" literature; but it is also "a country whose articulation of its *national* identity has sprung from *regionalist* impulses" (*Canadian Postmodern* 5, 4, original emphasis). Her closing chapter about Robert Kroetsch as a regional "ex-centric" offers a different view of prairie regionalism than that discussed so far. The fact that Kroetsch's "work is rooted very firmly in the geographical, historical, and cultural world of Alberta" (Hutcheon 175) is a point taken up by many critics, such as Russell Brown who argues that "Canadian postmodernism seems to have a prairie flavour about it" (103). This idea that the regional "ex-centric" has given rise to a particular postmodern aesthetic on the prairies encodes a kind of narrative and structural resistance into prairie literature after the realists. In conversation with Margaret Laurence, Kroetsch said "because we are western Canadians, [we] are involved in making a new literature out of a new experience" ("A Conversation" 19). This claim for literary "newness" implies a reaction against preceding and dominant literary modes. While this idea of writing into a space considered "new" or "unnamed" does not radically vary from Harrison's writings about prairie literature involving the need to develop a "new" vocabulary (x),<sup>22</sup> Kroetsch's ideas about how to go about this process of writing literature out of a "new" prairie locale

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<sup>22</sup> Kroetsch's extremely influential essay, "Unhiding the Hidden," appeared in print in the mid 1970s. Harrison's book is in many ways an expansion of Kroetsch's basic premise.

do differ. Harrison identifies the earlier literature's relationship with a stark and unforgiving landscape, portrayed in realistic terms (x-xi), but in writing about Kroetsch's fiction, especially his *The Studhorse Man*, critics have identified poststructuralist resistance to many common metanarratives, including a feminist resistance to phallogentrism (Hutcheon, *Canadian Postmodern* 161; Neuman 192-93; Rudy Dorscht 79), a prairie resistance to the cowboy myth (Arnason, "Robert Kroetsch"; Wylie 156), and a fractured regionalist resistance to nationalist metaphors of unity (Bertacco 59-60; Creelman 63; Munton 70). Using Kroetsch as an exemplar of this kind of prairie writing, we can see how Ukrainian-Canadian literature engages with an early kind of prairie aesthetic, and then largely ignores a poststructural reaction to that earlier aesthetic in favour of more static and controlled images.

In discussing the regional elements of postcolonialism, Donna Bennett points out that those "who see themselves as grounded in the Canadian West (that is, the three Prairie provinces) object to what they feel is equivalent to an external domination of such things as their literary and publishing culture" by central Canada. She notes that "the anxieties we associate with English Canada as a postcolonial nation separating from England are repeated internally" and identifies regional "objections conform[ing] to the typical pattern of postcolonial chafing against domination by foreign centres" (177). Her analysis attests to the complexities inherent in discussing Canada as a postcolonial entity, and her attention to "the regionalism of Prairie writing" as something that resists "centralizing tendencies" (182) illustrates this shift in perceptions about prairie literature. Herb Wylie makes the connection between regionalism as a kind of postcolonialism and Kroetsch's place as a postcolonial writer by seeing him "writing back to the Old World"

and “adopting postcolonial strategies” of oppositional decentering (156). These postmodern and postcolonial readings of Kroetsch, and prairie writers like him, began an identification of the prairie as an imaginative space for contestation, privileging mobility rather than stasis. Not so for Ukrainian-Canadian writers focusing on prairie stories. They appear less invested in deconstructing metanarratives than in inscribing themselves within them.

Where Kroetsch’s *The Studhorse Man* playfully explodes masculinist traditions and the mythology of the West, Kupchenko’s *The Horseman of Shandro Crossing*, set in the same Alberta locale, focuses on a horse-breeder who is the antithesis of Hazard Lepage. While Kroetsch’s Lepage and his biographer, Demeter, dismantle ideologies and expose contradictions, Kupechenko’s protagonist, John Konopale, tries desperately to write Ukrainian-Canadians onto the prairie landscape. The pervasive sense of helplessness in the face of an unyielding prairie environment that characterizes the early prairie realism gives way to a prairie aesthetic invested in deconstructing myths of progress that can lead to such failures: the tone of hopefulness that Ukrainian-Canadian prairie authors use when writing about the prairies foreshadows their unwillingness to dismantle prairie mythologies and their desire, instead, to locate themselves within them. Put another way, if we can see in prairie realism’s tone of failure and hopelessness the preconditions for the emergence of postmodernism, we should not be surprised to see in Ukrainian-Canadian literature’s celebratory tone a refusal or rejection of fracturing postmodernity. We see this dynamic play out in a comparison of *The Studhorse Man* with *The Horseman of Shandro Crossing*.

*The Studhorse Man*, as an example (even a canonical one [Rudy Dorscht 78]) of prairie literature, offers a playful romp through sexist and phallogentric metanarratives personified in a cowboy myth of the west. In general, the cowboy of the American West offers an image of masculinist individualism (Atherton 241-62). While the Canadian prairie differs from the American Great Plains region, the two often share the same imaginative space.<sup>23</sup> Ted Stone's anthology that collects works from "North America's last old-West" conflates these spaces as "The Northern Range," which he defines as "Montana, the Dakotas, the Canadian prairies, and parts of British Columbia" (7). He recognizes the end "of the old-time cowboy," but sees "the influence of those early years persist[ing]" (8). In his view, this region "has a common Western heritage despite the international border that divides it" (10). Hutcheon dubbed Kroetsch "Mr. Canadian Postmodern" (*Canadian Postmodern* 160) some two decades after the first publication of *The Studhorse Man*, and in the novel, Hazard Lepage, the last studhorse man, leads his stallion on a mock-odyssey. Looking for mares to mate with his prized horse, the cowboy has many adventures. However, ultimately he is killed by his own horse; the final image of this postmodern cowboy is anything but the virile stereotype. At the end, Hazard is reduced to a "crushed and flayed and formless face," a "formless head" (188), and his stallion does not roam freely over the open range, but rather is "the busiest creature in all of Alberta" by impregnating mares for the ironic purpose of providing the necessary hormones for oral contraceptives (189-90). Thus the horseman dies under the hooves of his own horse, and the horse himself becomes the means for female

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<sup>23</sup> Robert Thacker focuses on geography, not on the cowboy ethos, but he too sees the Canadian and American prairie as consonant. Alison Calder and Robert Wardhaugh's *History, Literature, and the Writing of the Canadian Prairies* defines the "Canadian prairies" as a sub-category of the American-Canadian "Great Plains" region.

reproductive control. Such a narrative parodies<sup>24</sup> the stereotype of the masculinist “old-time cowboy.”

While Kroetsch actively pops the pretensions of the cowboy myth of the west, Kupchenko engages in myth-making activities by constructing a protagonist who is closely allied to the wild and virile stallions of the west. At a time when discourses of postmodernism were at their height (see Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism* and *The Canadian Postmodern*; Jameson; Eagleton; Newman; Caramello), Kupchenko’s book is anything but engaged in the kind of parody as “a privileged mode of postmodern formal self-reflexivity” (*Poetics* 35) that Hutcheon sees as crucial to defining a postmodern aesthetic. In discussing another aspect of Ukrainian-Canadian literature, Mycak has argued that this literature ignores general poststructural aesthetic trends (82) in favour of its own desires for group identity articulation (93). Ukrainian-Canadian literature, obsessed with a prairie setting, certainly appears uninterested in the kind of play evoked by Kroetsch as a representative Canadian postmodernist author. Once again, this so-called genre of prairie stories seems both out of date and out of touch with larger critical discourses and aesthetic trends.

The following discussion of Konopale’s novel examines the idea of the “ex-centric” that is crucial to Hutcheon’s formulation of postmodern aesthetics. Can one be external to the “ex-centric”? If the “ex-centric” tries to dismantle the very structures that define centre-margin discourses (which Hutcheon argues is what Canadian postmodernism displays), then the “ex-ex-centric” may try to maintain those structures

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<sup>24</sup> Hutcheon reminds us: “Postmodernist parody, be it in architecture, literature, painting, film, or music, uses its historical memory, its aesthetic introversion, to signal that this kind of self-reflexive discourse is always inextricably bound to social discourse” (*Poetics* 35). Thus, Kroetsch’s construction of Hazard

and write oneself into them (which is what Ukrainian-Canadian writers do in relation to prairie literature).

John Konopale, Kupchenko's protagonist, emigrates from Ukraine to the Canadian prairie along with the mass of first-wave homesteaders. His claim to a legitimate place on the Canadian prairie develops out of a marriage between a western cowboy ethos with a Ukrainian Cossack mythology. A Cossack fighter in Ukraine before immigrating as a homesteader to the Canadian prairie, where his skill with horses is quickly recognized by the authorities, the protagonist is put in charge of horse trading and breeding in his particular part of the prairie region. The novel then presents a number of pioneering vignettes that roughly follow Konopale's life-story, ending with the birth of his first son. The plot shares the main features of the other texts that fall within this genre, but this text focuses on a cowboy rather than a young, female protagonist. Where Kroetsch offers an anti-cowboy, Kupchenko offers a Ukrainian cowboy. Lepage suffers from a "pain in his back" (10), but Konopale appears, in contrast, as "a thoroughbred" (13). The former's physicality invites mockery, as he is just a "weasling bastard" (17), but the latter's is formidable, as a "tall man [who] had character; he had guts" (23). While Lepage engages in multiple and exaggerated sexual exploits parodying the image of the virile, yet chivalric, cowboy, Konopale could be the very cowboy being parodied in the earlier work. He is tempted by many women, but remains true to his wife (61, 86-87). While Lepage offers a parody of Odysseus, and, in fact, much of the book plays with myths, combining and exploding them (see P. Thomas), Konopale is a "tall man with the blue eyes [who appears] the image of Christ" (91). Kupchenko offers no Kroetsch-like

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parodies a typical cowboy ethos of male individualism while simultaneously critiquing such attitudes in the face of growing feminist movements.

parody. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, Christ calls Peter to follow him, and in *The Horseman of Shandro Crossing*, the protagonist literally invites fellow-immigrant Petro (Peter) to “[f]ollow [him] to the house,” and Petro prays that Konopale will be his “saviour” (91). Putting aside the issue of bad writing and too overt allegory, we see that Kupchenko shows no interest in exploding metanarratives, including Judeo-Christian ones. Sollors identifies Christian typology as central to American literature – “John the Baptist, Exodus, and Christ were constructed as ‘types’ for America” (42) – and Canadian and Canadian prairie literature as “ex-centric” to this American typology might reject such constructions (as Kroetsch’s novel does), but Kupchenko proceeds by writing his Konopale into precisely such a typology. In many small ways (and some not-so-small ones), this novel employs clichés and hackneyed images that work to present Konopale and all Ukrainians on the prairie as intrinsic elements of metanarratives located within the prairie and upon which prairie regionalism is based.

In Kupchenko’s chapter, “Lost in Paradise,” an Ontarian travels through the Ukrainian bloc settlement in Alberta and believes himself to be in “a foreign country” (139). The images Kupchenko evokes to overlay Ukraine on the Canadian prairie are stereotypical echoes of Ukraine. For instance, he describes sheepskin coats, long, drooping mustaches, Ukrainian foods, and an entire population that does not speak English. As a result, the lost traveller thinks to himself that “he was either losing his mind, or he had a case of amnesia,” because he cannot understand “how he had made this transition from a labourer on an Ontario farm to a foreign country,” and figures that he is “either in Ukraine or Russia” (139). Yet this foreignness does not last for the Ontarian, as it is counter balanced by the cowboy ethos that the Cossack evokes. Konopale

becomes not just an image or echo of a Ukrainian fighting hero, but also a cowboy taken from the pages of a western. The lost Ontarian finds himself treated to the hospitality of the Ukrainian-Canadian farmers, and in five days realizes he is “putting on weight” (140) as a result of the kind care he receives while “lost in paradise,” this Ukraine-on-the-prairie. Ultimately the settlers deliver him to his destination, and he reflects to himself: “These Ukrainian people are kind people [...]. They eat well and they sure love good horses” (141). The obvious endeavour to have the Ontarian traveller (who represents mainstream Canadian-Canadian culture) validate the presence of Ukrainians on the prairie landscape blends with the construction of these Ukrainian-Canadians as lovers of horses, just like cowboys.

Konopale, in charge of breeding horses throughout the Ukrainian settlement, wakes one morning to the sound of horses approaching. “The hoof beats were drumming in unison,” he tells us, and claims that “it was truly the sound of Cossack horses – light horses, riding horses, fast horses” that arrive “[l]ike gray ghost shadows” (153). These fighting men appear on Konopale’s farm riding their fathers’ stallions and wearing their fathers’ Cossack uniforms. Kupchenko characterizes all these Ukrainian settlers as descendents of Cossacks, horsemen of Europe deftly becoming cowboys of the west. These young riders embody shadows of an imagined Ukrainian past transposed onto the mundane prairie landscape. By constantly placing images of a Ukrainian Cossack mythology onto the Canadian prairie, Kupchenko grafts an Eastern European tradition of horsemanship onto a typical Western one. Thus the prairie begins to operate as a surrogate “home-country.” Simply put: if Cossacks represent Ukraine, then placing them on the Canadian prairie brings Ukraine to Canada.

The substitution of the Canadian prairie for Ukraine becomes obvious in the scene that involves the death of a pioneer's son in the dead of winter. The entire chapter is eerie in tone and setting. It opens with a cold December in which the "cold wind had been howling outside the door for two weeks," and echoing the howling wind, "the two farm dogs started to howl incessantly at the front door"; we are told that the "superstitious often said that dogs could smell the death of a human being, sometimes miles away" (103). The death that hangs in the cold air and sets both dogs and wind howling in the darkness is the death of an infant. His deranged father walks out in the blizzard, and on being challenged by Konopale says that he is "on [his] way to Ukraine to bury" the dead baby (104). To calm the grieving father, Konopale lies: "You are in Ukraine. The graveyard is behind my house," and leads the man into the warmth of the house (104). As Konopale quiets the father and begins to plan a funeral for the dead child, Ukrainian men from all over the prairie arrive to provide aid. In looking at a group of farmers, who are collected together to help bury a dead baby and knowing "none of them," Konopale sees them as "Ukrainians. These were the men who kept the Mongol hordes out of Europe for centuries" and who are now "fighting another battle – breaking this God-forsaken, frozen land" (105). By evoking an image of the fighting Ukrainian Cossack in Europe (xenophobically antagonistic to the Asian "other") and then swiftly linking him to the Ukrainian pioneer "fighting another battle" on the land, Kupchenko creates a connection between romanticized Ukrainian experiences in Eastern Europe and those of Ukrainian-Canadian pioneers. He offers no real depth in the description of the Cossacks or of Ukrainian experiences in Ukraine, but merely alludes to mounted fighting men in order to create the symbolic link between physical fighting and battling to create

“home” on the Canadian prairie; the prairie stands in for Ukraine as the place of burial for the dead child, and the pioneer men stand in for Ukrainian Cossack fighters.

Slobodian’s and Kupchenko’s texts provide insights into the core issue informing this pioneering genre, the seventh category that I added to Mycak’s original schema, namely the noted attempt to identify the Canadian prairie as a Ukrainian geographical place that represents an ethnic psychic space. Geographer Jeff Malpas’s analysis of place and space situates them within a larger continuum of time and human subjectivity, and his clarification that at least one sense of the word “place” includes “a particular locale or environment that has a character of its own” (22) helps us to recognize the significance attributed to understanding “place” based on its defining character. Using this definition of place – an area bounded by shared characteristics – we see Ukrainian-Canadian writers wanting to add to the “character” of the prairie locale their own ethnic identity, and conversely they also want the prairie to be a part of their ethnic identity. In Malpas’s view, “one does not first have a subject that apprehends certain features of the world in terms of the idea of place; instead the structure of subjectivity is given in and through the structure of place” (35). Some Ukrainian-Canadian literature seems clearly invested in presenting this kind of symbiotic relationship between place and identity. Slobodian’s narratives echo early prairie aesthetics, stressing the connection between the settler and the landscape; she emphasizes the importance of staying connected to the prairie landscape as the place that serves as the well-spring of ethnicity. And Kupchenko’s narrative echoes pre-existing Western metanarratives, showing how Ukrainian settlers are Cossacks *and* cowboys; he focuses on drawing connections between local cowboy mythology and Ukrainian Cossack mythology. Both models – the settler and the cowboy

– share the desire to claim the prairie landscape, either through metaphors of rootedness or expansionist conquest. Images and shadows of Ukraine function as key tools in this attempt to claim the prairie as Ukrainian. Ukraine lurks in every text, supporting my claim that Ukrainian-Canadian ethnic identities began to be more about imagined ties to Ukraine and less about socio-economic marginalization.

Several authors, however, do more than just attempt to write Ukrainian-Canadianness into existing images of the prairie, creating a genre of pioneering stories literally haunted by Ukrainian images. Some also conjure ghostly presences on the prairie landscape that recall an absent Ukraine. The next section of this chapter explores the ways in which Ukraine seems to haunt these texts. Gunew believes that histories “haunt and structure current debates around immigration and diaspora” (9), and that understanding present critical contexts demands an analysis of these haunting histories. While her focus turns on racial and linguistic hauntings, the following analysis suggests that cultural or political structures of the past can haunt just as effectively as spectres of race and language. “Ghosts,” Sugars writes, “like good ancestors, affirm the continuity between our selves and the past” (“The Impossible Afterlife” 693) and may also signal “a desire for legitimate ancestors” (Goldman and Saul 651). Ghosts in these readings can thus offer a subject both continuity and legitimacy in a particular place. As Ukrainian-Canadian writers begin to conjure ghosts from Ukraine on the Canadian prairie, they seem to desire a continuity with Ukraine and a legitimacy on the Canadian prairie. Redl believes that these writers of the “multicultural generation” are “neither ‘here nor there’”; she believes they “are trapped on the cusp of two worlds, a fact symbolized by the hyphen in their hyphenated ethnic labels” (24). Kulyk Keefer, who began her career not

wanting to be considered ethnic, changed her attitude and says that for her the hyphen represents the “connecting of elements or beings that possess as many differences between them as similarities” (*Dark Ghost* 21). These views about the function of the hyphen designating the ethnic subject’s split identity suggest two mutually exclusive options – a division for Redl and a connectivity for Kulyk Keefer. Ukrainian-Canadian literature, however, seems unable to choose decisively, thus giving rise to metaphors and images of haunting that suggest the “in-betweenness” of these two positions. Yet I will show that these attempts to haunt the prairie landscape do not provide Ukrainian-Canadians with comfortable continuity or legitimacy encapsulated in a stable “home,” despite the longing for just that.

In writing about race politics in the United States (particularly in the writing of both Ralph Ellison and Toni Morrison), Gordon tells us “that which appears absent can indeed be a seething presence” (17). Absent Ukraine becomes profoundly present in post-1980 Ukrainian-Canadian literature, and begins to occupy a similar space as that traditionally linked to the ghost. In order to claim a kind of legitimate place on the Canadian landscape (particularly a prairie one) and to give historical texture to their ethnic heritage, Ukrainian-Canadian authors superimpose ghostly images of Ukraine on the prairie. We can read Kupchenko’s construction of shadowy Cossacks (“gray ghost shadows”) as ghost-like evocations of Ukraine in a very specifically western, prairie context.

Kupchenko is not alone in beginning to conjure Ukraine as an absent presence on the prairie landscape. Often Ukrainian-Canadian authors evoke echoes of Ukrainian political configurations as ghostly shadows informing Canadian political structures.

Padolsky reminds us that “many minority writers in Canada” can “trace their origins to other previously colonized lands, bringing with them their own multiple ‘post-colonial’ comparative frameworks” (“Olga in Wonderland” 27). These “minority writers in Canada” (or the characters they write about) sometimes bring along aspects of previous empires or experiences of colonization as ghostly vestiges that haunt their experience of the new host-country.

Ryga’s Lepa brings such a history of Ukraine as a colonized space with him, informing his understanding of Canadian governmental structures. He says that he “came to Canada so” that he “would never bend [his] knee to another man” (100). He rejected a colonial framework that included serfdom and subordination by choosing to immigrate to Canada. Lepa finds it hard, however, to leave the impact of that earlier experience of colonization in Eastern Europe behind. The central plot point around which the conflict of the play is structured is the fact that Lepa was incorrectly reported as having died in a mining accident, and, therefore, he is ineligible for a Canadian pension. The dramatic irony of Nancy’s first lines in the play – “Mister Lepa – you’ve died” (73), spoken to the living man – illustrates this conflict. However, Lepa chooses to understand this bureaucratic error in terms that evoke geographies and political allegiances in Eastern Europe rather than in Canada. For example, when he talks about coming to Canada, he says:

A floating Polish tub brought me here. I never had vermin and I was not Polish. But I was deloused and my head was shaved...and I came on a Polish passport. I had to have a health certificate...from the village doctor, who was drunk and stank of vomit. He said I had an ear infection. His

open, trembling hand moved across the clinic table as he told me this. I put five zlotys in it, and the ear infection healed just like that. Twenty zlotys would have cured a cancer. He stamped my passport with good health, and all the time I stared at him as I stare at her [Nancy]. (83)

He tells the audience this story as Nancy tries to trace the dates of his immigration and homesteading. The tale reveals his belief in the corrupt nature of governments and their officials and his understanding of Nancy as yet another in a long line of exploitative political agents. Just as the doctor represents a corrupt and illogical bureaucracy in Eastern Europe, he sees Nancy standing in for a government that is distant, alien, and illogical. He cannot believe the presence of “the government in my house” (91), given his antipathy to ruling elites. His mistrust of government institutions and his tendency to interpret the Canadian government (in the person of Nancy) through the lens of Eastern European configurations demonstrate how the imperial modalities that have shaped his consciousness travelled with him from Europe to Canada. As Paluk warns, “he couldn’t deny this shadow,” because “it had followed him across the ocean” (11).

Lepa makes apparent the effects of such shadowing of his Ukrainian past in his Canadian present when he ironically describes to Nancy the kind of commemorative sculpture he envisages for Halifax, the landing point for immigrants and the place where their names were changed upon entry “with the stroke of a pen.” He says: “Maybe one day we make a big monument of stone...of a man standing looking into the country...he’s got hands, feet – everything. But no face. And we put that up in Halifax

to remind us how we got a fresh start, no?” (86).<sup>25</sup> He and Nancy laugh at the absurdity, “the irony of Lepa’s suggestion” (Grekul, *Leaving Shadows* 87), but he admits: “We laugh, but we are sad. There is much to forget before Halifax and all that business” (86). Lepa laments the illusory nature of the “fresh start” Canada offers and wishes he could forget much that came before, but Ukraine shadows him in Canada. Unlike the gruesome statue he envisions, he has a face; it was not wiped out upon entry. Ukraine lurks beneath changed names – Suknaski for Suknatskyj, for instance – making the idea of a blank face where something new can be written a sad, laughable image, not a true representation of the immigrant’s status in the new world.

Other stories, like Ryga’s play, overlay the Canadian prairie with imagined echoes of distant Eastern European governmental and class structures in a way that seems less tortured than Lepa’s, less unconscious. Nancy Hawrelak’s *Breaking Ground* tells a tale of immigration and settlement on the Canadian prairie that does not radically diverge from the other stories discussed so far. She, like Ryga, superimposes the immigrant’s prairie experience with an Eastern European past, but the shadows of Ukraine seem specifically conjured. While Lepa seems unable to leave Ukraine behind, Hawrelak’s narrative appears intent on drawing out definite Ukrainian connections. One of Hawrelak’s immigrant characters (a young Nasha Meri archetype) tells a friend about the dangers of relying on the government for aid. At the end of her anecdote about the Ukrainian-Canadian worker who was exploited and whose complaints found no recourse through governmental channels, the girl concludes with a rhetorical question: “So what was so different in this country, from what he left behind?” (47), suggesting that one

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<sup>25</sup> In 1991 a faceless bronze statue was erected in Halifax to commemorate the centenary of Ukrainian immigration to Canada. The abstract statue holds the traditional Ukrainian offering of bread and salt over a

isolated story serves to condemn Canada as just another exploiting power. As Hawrelak turns her narrative to focusing on questions about how best to educate these new Ukrainian-Canadian immigrants, the characters opposed to paying taxes for schools erupt in opposition: “Taxes, more taxes! Didn’t we escape from the Old Country foreigners that taxed us into the poorhouse!” (104). This view equates paying taxes with subordination by a foreign and imperial power in Ukraine. When the opponents of opening a school for the Ukrainian-Canadian community, which is at the heart of this section of the story, are defeated, the settlers decide to build their own school, and Hawrelak editorializes: “Their culture and language had been suppressed in the Old Country, and there was no question as to what kind of an education the taxpayers desired for their children. They hired a Ukrainian teacher from Manitoba to educate their children in English and Ukrainian” (105). This description adroitly shifts the description of the Ukrainian-Canadians from being ethnic subjects or immigrant settlers towards being “taxpayers.” Consequently, the resulting closure of the bilingual school in favour of an English-only institution and the following court case resulting from the settlers’ refusal to pay taxes to support the monolingual one are constructed as worse than old-world travesties of justice, because the exploited Ukrainian-Canadians are “taxpayers,” not mere serfs.

When the story turns to the historical internment of Ukrainian-Canadians during the First World War, it completely conflates what happens in Eastern Europe with events in Canada. As the young Ukrainian-Canadian men in the story find themselves incarcerated during the war because “[t]he government won’t admit we’re not Austrians”

(170), due to the fact that Ukraine fell within the Austrian empire at the time, the narrator explains how the situation in Canada mirrors that in Ukraine. The Ukrainian-Canadians who find themselves “jailed” suffer mistreatment, according to the narrator, who writes that “the interned were prodded with bayonets, physically and mentally abused, and fed a diet of bread and water” (171); this suffering precedes the description of conditions in Ukraine where “[t]here were beatings, bloodshed, persecutions, murders, incarceration and banishment to Siberian work camps, and forced famines of whole cities” (172). The juxtaposition of these two scenarios demands a comparison between Canadian incarceration and Ukrainian victimization, but the Ukrainian synopsis folds together various moments in its history – the “Great Purge” or “Great Terror,” the man-made famine or Holodomor of 1932-33, and Stalinist repression<sup>26</sup> – all of which cannot rightly be compared to the experience of Ukrainian-Canadians during World War I.

Marunchak’s history describes the conditions during this period in the following way:

Large internment camps were located in Kapuskasing, Brandon, Lethbridge, Vernon. Those who registered as Austrian subjects remained under police surveillance and were obliged to report periodically at the nearest police station. Usually there was no work for these people. (326)

Under the War Measures Act of 1914,<sup>27</sup> approximately 5,000 Canadians of Ukrainian descent were interned in various concentration camps throughout Canada.<sup>28</sup> While such

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<sup>26</sup> After World War I, Ukraine was embroiled in Civil War, which eventually saw the Bolshevik forces victorious in the entire country by 1921 (Subtelny 376-77). In a Ukrainian context, the “Great Purge” or “Great Terror” generally refers to the repression of Ukrainian intelligentsia that began in the 1920s and the liquidation of the kulak class (independent farmers) that is dated 1938-39 (Subtelny 417-18). The Holodomor, as already mentioned, refers specifically to the famine of 1932-33.

<sup>27</sup> The War Measures Act was enacted in 1914 and replaced in 1988 with the Emergencies Act, and gives the Canadian government extra powers during times of crisis.

<sup>28</sup> In 2005 the Federal Government of Canada passed Bill C331 to recognize this internment of Ukrainian-Canadians. The text of the bill given royal assent reads: “An Act to acknowledge that persons of

incarceration no doubt deserves attention, merging it with an account of experiences in Ukraine that are of a greater magnitude fails to portray the Canadian experience accurately. Hawrelak's example of viewing imprisonment in Canada as comparable to violent repression, suppression, and even state-planned genocide,<sup>29</sup> provides only an extreme form of the kind of transposition of Ukrainian structures onto a Canadian (particularly prairie) experience that the rest of these texts display. Kupchenko distorts when he compares Cossack border fighting with homesteading; Ryga's Lepa distorts when he sees in Nancy a corrupt government official (when in reality she tries hard to help him gain his pension); and Hawrelak likewise distorts when she compares tax burdens and incarceration to experiences of Ukrainian subordination.

These hyperbolic analogies linking Canada and Ukraine in texts that portray themselves as "socio-historical fact" (Mycak 85) undermine the pretense of objective recounting of historical events. Instead, they demonstrate various desires to see Canada as a kind of Ukraine. Overlaying shadows and echoes of Ukrainian structures on a Canadian setting has the tendency to create a prairie "home," haunted by Ukraine. The Canadian prairie, this literature suggests, seems to exist simultaneously with another (ghostly) place. I use the lexicon common to theories of haunting here to emphasize that the Ukraine these authors evoke lacks texture and substance. While Ukrainian-Canadian ethnicity can appear profoundly regional at times as writers cheerfully inscribe pioneers and Cossacks as prairie homesteaders and cowboys on the literary landscape, this

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Ukrainian origin were interned in Canada during the First World War and to provide for recognition of this event." For more information on Ukrainian internment during World War I, see "Registration, Internment and Censorship" (Martynowych 323-334).

<sup>29</sup> In December 2003 the Ukrainian government tabled a bill recognizing the Holodomor as a genocide, and by 2007 more than two dozen foreign governments recognized it as such. While there is some

construction of the prairie as a kind of stand-in “home” for Ukraine itself produces strange bedfellows. In trying to be regional, and therefore very Canadian (in keeping with Lysenko’s and Grekul’s projects), but not eschew Ukrainianness, post-1980 Ukrainian-Canadian writers evoke superficial images of Ukraine and stretch analogies. To put it bluntly, they present simplified images of Ukraine-in-Canada: vague allusions to historical figures and events, incorrect information about Ukrainian history and politics, generalized insights about corrupt and illegitimate regimes, and catalogues of Ukrainian victimization. Kupchenko, Ryga, and Hawrelak exemplify this trend, but they are not alone.<sup>30</sup> These inaccuracies provide a window into the politics of constructing an imagined “home” that operates in conjunction with real historical and geographical ones.

The first and most common reading of this kind of Ukrainian-Canadian writing, which engages with Ukraine in very superficial ways, dismisses it outright. If the standard for judging the quality of ethnic presentation in literature views “being” ethnic as superior to “feeling” ethnic, or “more” ethnicity as superior to “less,” then these stories that seem to present Ukrainianness as a superficial veneer are simply inferior texts written by biased authors who substitute analogy for research. In defining what constitutes a diaspora, Safran asks a question that applies in this instance: “What if an immigrant community’s orientation toward the home country – in terms of culture, religion, psychological orientation, or homeland support – has been so weakened that there is little left except a vague memory, either of gross injustice or a glorious past: is it

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disagreement about the use of the term “genocide” to describe this man-made famine, conservative estimates put the death toll at approximately 5.5 to 6.5 million (Davies and Wheatcroft 401).

<sup>30</sup> As previously mentioned, critics often note the presence of stock Ukrainian symbols that represent Ukrainian-Canadianness in Canada (Klymasz, “Cultural Maintenance” 176; Grekul, *Leaving Shadows* 54-55; Swyripa, “From Sheepskin Coats to Blue Jeans” 26; Mycak 40; Kulyk Keefer, “Coming Across Bones” 98 ), and the other texts that fall within this pioneering genre share this feature.

still a diaspora?” (15). These Ukrainian-Canadian stories that deal in stereotypes of “gross injustice” at the level of governmental oppression and “a glorious past” through the Cossack myths represent just this kind of “vague memory” that Safran wonders about. For him, the answer to his question is a resounding no. Vague memories like the kinds grafted onto a Canadian prairie do not give this group diasporic status and rather show its failed connection to Ukraine as a “genuine” homeland (Safran 12). His insights represent much of the thinking about diasporic identities: on the one hand, there are real or “genuine” diasporic identities, and on the other, there are disingenuous varieties such as those expressed in the Ukrainian-Canadian literature that I have surveyed so far in this chapter. Most scholars eschew studying the latter in favour of the former, dismissing “after-dinner self-labelling” outright (Safran 12).<sup>31</sup>

While some critics seek to rescue Ukrainian-Canadian literature from such critique (Mycak 85), others suggest that with Ukrainian independence and a reduction in travel restrictions to Ukraine, these attempts to place vague images of Ukraine on a prairie setting have begun to fade (Grekul, *Leaving Shadows* 118; Kulyk Keefer, “From Mosaic” 16), as Ukraine itself has begun to come to the fore. As the “home-country,” its openness to the West in the latter decade of the twentieth century provided the potential for Ukraine to serve the symbolic function of “home” that the Canadian prairie had hitherto stood for, thus allowing a recasting of Ukrainian-Canadianness as part of a larger Ukrainian diaspora with ties to Ukraine as “*the* major element that distinguishes a

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<sup>31</sup> In the introduction to her study of Ukrainian-Canadian literature, Grekul offers an anecdote about the kinds of questions she was asked as she embarked on her doctoral work on this topic that summarize the main critiques inherent in studying ethnicity through Ukrainian-Canadian literature. The following excerpt almost exactly describes my own experiences as well: “Again and again I encountered professors and peers who questioned the existence of Ukrainian Canadian literature (‘do you have enough material for a

diaspora from ordinary immigrant expatriate communities” (Safran 16). Grekul contends, for instance, that travel memoirs by Ukrainian-Canadian authors journeying “back” to Ukraine locate ethnicity in Ukraine, rather than on the Canadian prairie. I question, however, whether the construction of Ukraine as “home” is really any different from what we have seen so far in the construction of the Canadian prairie as “home” for Ukrainian-Canadians. Another way of reading these texts that Grekul interprets as challenging the prairie pioneer myth suggests that they may just be an alternative form of it. Kostash’s *Bloodlines: A Journey into Eastern Europe*, for instance, constructs its narrative of travelling to Ukraine as a journey into a past that evokes intergenerational conflicts and tries to make sense of Ukrainian-Canadian identity through the lens of nineteenth-century peasantry, which looks very much like some of the Canadian-based pioneering stories. Exemplifying the typical journey Ukrainian-Canadians make to Ukraine to meet distant relatives and capture something of a lost ancestral connection (Satzewich 211; Costantino and Egan 96-97), both Kostash’s and Kulyk Keefer’s travel memoirs locate ethnic identity in a rural, ancestral place that looks remarkably like the Canadian prairie. Even though Kostash travels to Ukraine during the 1980s when it is under Soviet control, and many of her observations are thus politically based, she also recognizes that “for a Ukrainian Canadian Ukraine is not a country like other countries. Everything about it is ‘loaded,’ freighted with meaning” (168); the “meaning” to which she refers is the emotional meaning of making sense of her own identity through the images she finds in this other country, especially the illicit visit she makes to her

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whole thesis?); who questioned the literariness, or the aesthetic quality, of this literature (‘but is it any *good?*’)” (xiii).

grandmother's home village.<sup>32</sup> She preserves this rural image in photographs and receives the traditional "offering to the guest of bread and salt" from "real Ukrainians" to her, the "granddaughter of the beloved young woman who left and never came back" (186). Kostash connects to her ethnicity by travelling to Ukraine in the place of her grandmother. The grandmother-granddaughter relationship becomes paramount in her experience of the village, once again in keeping with the kind of intergenerational dynamic at work in the Canadian-based pioneering stories. Just as Rachel travels to her grandmother's Canadian farm to embrace her Ukrainianness, so Kostash travels to her grandmother's Ukrainian village to embrace hers.

Kostash not only constructs the "home" in Ukraine in ways that are similar to the prairie "homes" we see in other texts, but if the echoes and shadows of Ukraine that Ukrainian-Canadians conjure upon a prairie landscape can be read as a kind of national ghost, then Kostash's visit to Ukraine further preserves a sense of "home" as an absent presence that characterizes the spectral realm. Gordon discusses photographic images as representing a kind of haunting where photographs can provide evidence of absence (32-35), and when Kostash first visits Ukraine to locate the site of her grandmother's village, she captures the experience visually:

An abandoned blue cottage, over-whelmed by its ancient thatched roof and sinking somnolently into a yard gone wild with grasses and yellow daisies. Click. The field behind Katrusia's house – the celebrated, fecund private plot of Soviet agriculture – scrupulously clean of weeds and bordered by fruit trees. Click. A neighbour, stout, baggy-bosomed and kerchiefed,

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<sup>32</sup> I call it an "illicit" visit, because it was not officially sanctioned by the communist authorities; Kostash writes that "the oblast in which the village is located is closed to foreigners" (185).

knee-deep in red and yellow tulips. Click. The church where Baba used to go, still in good shape, white-walled and tin-roofed with a single, squat, hexagonal dome. Click. The very pathway along which she used to drive the sheep out of the village and into the upland meadow. Click.

*(Bloodlines 185)*

These photographs affix this vision of Ukraine for her. She can bring these photographs of Ukraine with her to Canada, making Ukraine present in its absence in Canada. These photographs make visible the cottage, field, neighbour, church, and pathway that circumscribed her grandmother's life. Like the photograph that Gordon analyzes that does not include the missing Sabina Spielrien who was supposed to be present, providing "photographic evidence of her absence" (32, 33, 35), these photographs that Kostash takes provide photographic evidence of her baba's absence.<sup>33</sup> This image of Ukraine, fixed in the past and embodied in the grandmother figure, repeats the Ukraine-on-the-prairie motif. This time, however, the haunting images of Ukraine's absence stabilize as a visible absence in a series of photographs, rather than merely appearing superimposed upon a prairie landscape.

If Kostash's journey to Ukraine does not really provide an alternative vision to a kind of Ukrainianness on the prairie, still affixing Ukrainianness in ghostly images of what is missing, then we find this dynamic even more pronounced in Kulyk Keefer's *Honey and Ashes*, because she journeys to Ukraine in a literal quest for "a village named Staromischna, or 'the Old Place'" (12-13). Naming her family's ancestral village in temporal terms allies it with the many stories that recall a homesteading experience

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<sup>33</sup> As mentioned, Swyripa contends that the figure of the Ukrainian baba represents Ukrainian-Canadianness most often, both in literature and popular culture (*Wedded to the Cause* 240-56).

located in the past. Just because Kulyk Keefer frames her quest for roots in Ukraine rather than Canada does not mean that she has entirely jettisoned the form of the backward- looking pioneer tale. She journeys to a past place, a place that is lost, and the images of her ancestors are “handed down to [her] – bright, clear as the pictures on an Easter egg” (17). Like the prairie stories that constitute this genre, this memoir focuses on the past and conceives of Kulyk Keefer’s heritage through a typical (even stereotypical) image, the pysanky. Just as the Ukrainian-Canadian characters in the prairie stories leave or want to leave rural, peasant settings, but ultimately return to embrace their ethnic identity (or risk carrying the painful baggage that Lepa’s son Stefan is burdened with), Kulyk Keefer follows a similar path, even though the “home” to which she refers lies in rural Ukraine rather than rural Canada. In writing about her ethnic heritage, Kulyk Keefer says that as an adult she reclaimed her ethnic identity (“Coming Across” 89; *Dark Ghost* 16) out of the compelling “need to translate, transmit” (“Coming Across” 89) her ethnic knowledge to her “less” ethnic children. Like Marusia whose rebellion is short-lived and who stays on the family farm to become the site of Ukrainianness for Rachel, Kulyk Keefer’s journey to the Old Place positions her as both a recipient of ethnicity from her ancestors and a disseminator of ethnicity for her descendents.

She does not find the actual house that her ancestors left behind, but rather, she finds her connection to the past through a museum; she says: “at the next turn on the leafy road, I find what I’ve been searching for ever since we crossed into Ukraine: a small house with whitewashed walls, its thatch crowned with a row of crossed sticks. [...]. I’ve found my grandmother’s house, the very room where my mother was born.

What I've always longed for, a desire like the small stones we pick up on a beach and carry in our pockets till their weight comes to feel part of our bones" (255). In many ways, this is the climax of the memoir. This small house, not unlike the pioneer homes constructed in the prairie stories, represents a sense of ethnicity that Kulyk Keefer claims. Once again, a granddaughter seeks and finds a connection with her grandmother who represents her ethnic identity. Like the prairie pioneer stories that are concerned with images and suggestions of Ukraine, the preserved museum-piece suffices for Kulyk Keefer, and like Kostash's photos that preserve her grandmother's absence, the museum preserves Kulyk Keefer's grandmother's absence.

This literature that designs a conceptual map of Ukrainian-Canadianness with echoes of Ukraine demonstrates "the centrality of the pioneer era in the Ukrainian Canadian imaginary" (Grekul, *Leaving Shadows* 118) in the absence of a genuine engagement with the "home-country" that most scholars see as a defining feature of a diasporic identity (see Clifford 305; Anthias 557-581; Safran 16). It suggests, however, that imagining "home" in visual or stable terms still matters to the so-called "after-dinner self-labellers," the third- and fourth-generation Ukrainian-Canadians whom Grekul (*Leaving Shadows* 202-03), Mycak (47), and the EDS consider connected to their ethnic heritage. This literary construction of a hybrid "home" that is both/neither Ukraine or the Canadian prairie relies on images that present "home" not solely as a place on a Canadian or Ukrainian map or literary tradition, but as a spectre to be conjured. George writes that "home" operates as "the imagined location that can be more readily fixed in a mental landscape than in actual geography" (11), and the "imagined location" of one version of a

Ukrainian-Canadian “home” looks haunted. Kulyk Keefer’s comments about her journey to Ukraine make this point clear:

I make this journey, first into a world of stories and then to the very place where those stories start, a place that belongs not only to my family but to those who hover ghostlike at the edge of storytelling, who materialize in the differences between Staromichyna as it is now and the Old Place as memory fashions it. (17)

She suggests that ghosts occupy the space between her present experience of Ukraine, and the imagined “home” that she creates. She often uses this kind of vocabulary to suggest that she is “haunted by the stories [her] family told of a country that didn’t exist any more” (“From Mosaic” 14), intimating that Ukrainian-Canadians concern themselves with “a place that is no longer home, but continues, nevertheless, to haunt them” (16). Beginning to understand the images of Ukraine that writers superimpose on the Canadian prairie (or alternatively, the prairie images that dominate descriptions of Ukraine) as metaphoric ghosts enriches our understanding of this so-called prairie pioneering genre.

Derrida makes much of the appearance of Hamlet’s father’s ghost, fully dressed in armour, because “his apparition makes him appear still invisible beneath his armor” (6). While Derrida theorizes this invisible spectre made visible in terms of capital and exchange-value, the “visibility of the invisible” and “tangible intangibility of a proper body without flesh” (6) offer crucial insights to help us understand how Ukrainian-Canadian writers try to locate a spectral Ukraine on the Canadian prairie. Hamlet’s ghostly father would otherwise be invisible if it were not for the familiar armour, which follows its own logic; ghosts must appear in recognizable forms – wearing armour,

rattling their chains – in order to evoke the absent/present person who has died. A ghost who bears no resemblance to himself as a living being becomes something entirely new and does not evoke the “in-between” (Derrida 29) that links a past presence with a present absence. Derrida writes:

For there is no ghost, there is never any becoming-specter of the spirit without at least an appearance of flesh, in a space of invisible visibility, like the dis-appearing of an apparition. For there to be a ghost, there must be a return to the body, but to a body that is more abstract than ever. (157)

Yet this appearance of similitude is just that, merely an appearance. The armour provides a superficial signal alerting the Danish guards to the identity of the ghost as the dead king. In a similar manner, Slobodian, Kupchenko, Ryga, Hawrelak, Kostash, Kulyk Keefer, and other Ukrainian-Canadian writers who seek to use Ukraine-specific images to locate a Ukraine-on-the-prairie do so with ghostly images that signal and evoke the substance of Ukraine, but are nothing more than superficial signs. The ghost of King Hamlet, who is otherwise intangible and incorporeal, imitates his previously living self through appearing similar, but the living king is undeniably dead, his throne usurped and his wife remarried. Similarly, the images of Ukraine on the prairie are not those of substance, but signs that recall the “home-country” that is, in reality, undeniably lost.

While both Derrida and Gordon highlight the agency of the ghosts they theorize, ghosts can also be manipulated by the living. Not all ghosts appear on the ramparts, asking for sons to avenge their murders. Some ghosts are quiet, seemingly at rest, until called upon by those with the power to conjure. These Ukrainian-Canadian writers seem interested in conjuring Ukraine – its traces, shadows, echoes – as ghostly presences on

the Canadian prairie in order to create an imagined “home” that exists “[o]ut of time, out of place” (Kulyk Keefer, *Honey and Ashes* 255). As the next chapter suggests, however, the desire to create a ghostly “home” on top of a very real place – namely the Canadian prairie (and Canada more broadly) – become complicated for Ukrainian-Canadians, as their ghostly “home” colonizes a place that was once a pre-colonial “home” to Canada’s First Nations.

## Chapter 4 – Ukrainian-Canadian Postcolonial Guilt and Loss

These attempts to situate a Ukrainian “home” on the Canadian prairie landscape fail to produce a sense of ease for Ukrainian-Canadians, as they remain unable to construct a stable ethnic identity, despite the longing for one. The Canadian prairie is not an empty signifier that Ukrainian-Canadians can write their ghosts into/onto, but rather a place already populated. Ukrainian-Canadian authors and characters get caught between wanting to feel “at home” on the Canadian prairie and recognizing that such a “home” belonged to someone else first; thus, understanding home in geographical terms evokes the politics informing the real geography itself. The physical place and imagined space of the Canadian prairie do not, in fact, exist “out of time, out of place,” and despite Ukrainian-Canadian authors’ desires to craft the prairie as such, most of them recognize the dilemma of desiring a blank home place that they can claim as their own, while recognizing that such blankness is illusory. Warren Cariou identifies this sentiment in prairie literature, claiming that settlers suffer “a widespread and perhaps growing anxiety” about “the legitimacy of their claims to belonging on what they call ‘their’ land” (727). Ukrainian-Canadian immigrants to the prairie are neither the imperial settler, nor the colonized Aboriginal. Their literature recognizes and grapples with their identification with Aboriginal claims to the landscape and their involvement with colonization. This chapter explores what I identify as the three models employed by Ukrainian-Canadian authors to address the prior presence of First Nations peoples on land that the literature actively tries to construct as the imagined “home” place of Ukrainian-Canadian ethnic identity. The first model is the most basic: authors

acknowledge an Aboriginal presence, but largely ignore the contentious issue of early European (including Ukrainian) contact with First Nations. The second model is perhaps the most common and shares features with much Canadian literature: authors construct a “claim-by-identification” (Fee 17) with Aboriginal characters, thus legitimizing their position on the landscape. In the third model, authors express their own divided feelings about their complicity in the colonial project by turning themselves into spectral presences, fleeing the landscape rather than colonizing it. Consoling fantasies and wish-fulfilment characterize these three models, but as some authors shift between them within the same literary text, they reject these kinds of illusions, expressing discomfort and conflict arising between their desire to be “at home” and their sympathies for those whose “home” they have usurped. Two authors, Suknaski and Grekul, try not only to address the symbolic significance of their positions vis-à-vis First Nations, but also to compensate for and redress real wrongs.

To begin, the regional correlation between Ukrainian settlers to the Canadian prairie and First Nations plays an important role in how later generations of Ukrainian-Canadians would write about their ethnic identity. There have long been points of connection between both groups of prairie dwellers. Historically speaking, for example, Harney’s retrospective look on early Canadian culture claims that the “colorfulness of the colonies” was performed by “countless onslaughts by Cree, Blackfoot, and Ukrainians in full ethnic battle dress, herded by red-tunicked guardians of ‘the Canadian way’” (66). This statement suggests that early Ukrainian homesteaders were considered by the colonial seat of power to be just as “other” as the Aboriginals who predate them. Laurence’s *Manawaka* books also equate the Ukrainian-Canadian Kazlik family with the

Métis Tonnerre family. The Tonnerres, according to Leslie Monkman, become “the focus of suffering and death, acceptance and endurance that are integrally related to the experience of each of Laurence’s heroines” (57), but he should qualify that statement to clarify that Rachel Cameron’s narrative unfolds against the foil of a Kazlik not a Tonnerre. Nick Kazlik has “slightly slanted eyes” and appears “hawkish” (*A Jest of God* 92); with a similar description, Skinner (Jules) Tonnerre has “dark slanted eyes” and “hawkish features” (*The Diviners* 79, 284). Laurence uses orientalist imagery – “slightly slanted eyes” – and the suggestion of predatory danger – “hawkish features” – to construct these men as similarly “other.” In discussing socio-economic disparity between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginal ethnic groups in Canada, historian George Melnyk writes that “the comparison between native and ethnic makes sense when one is aware of their historical affinity as outcast minorities” (*Radical Regionalism* 52). While he goes on to discuss the ways in which those histories have diverged, the very real historical similarity between the disenfranchised and disadvantaged early immigrants to the Canadian prairies and the First Nations they encountered upon arrival should be noted. Grekul offers just such a reading, writing that just as an Aboriginal “way of life has ended,” the “pioneer way of life ended for the immigrant settlers who displaced the First Nations people from their land” (*Leaving Shadows* 94). However, despite some of these resemblances with Aboriginal peoples – being similarly marked as “other” or experiencing the passing of a way of life on the prairies – Ukrainian-Canadians created a literature of the prairies that presents a much more complex vision of this dynamic, as some authors acknowledge their own involvement in perpetrating Aboriginal displacement and economic, linguistic, and cultural marginalization. In Coleman’s

words: “the claim that we may all be ‘ethnics’ waters down [Aboriginal] particular claims for ‘distinct status’” (“Immigration, Nation” 99). Just as Ukrainian-Canadian writers respond to the need to recognize a difference between their own and racialized subject-positions by attempting to create a “home” emerging from imagined connections to Ukraine, they also respond to First Nations’ claims through trying to envision alternatives.

I christen the most basic model through which Ukrainian-Canadian authors endeavour to respond to First Nations’ presence on the prairie “Absenting the Aboriginal.” Minimal and cursory descriptions of Aboriginals that recall Rayna Green’s “Vanishing American” characterize this model. Green’s article on the white performance of Indianness in America is particularly helpful here. In it she discusses increased attention to what she calls “playing Indian” as real American Aboriginals were being destroyed at an alarming rate. “The cult of the vanishing American, the vanishing noble savage,” she writes, “is emblematically transformed forever as a named, tragic figure” (36). Thomas King takes this idea further, commenting that the image of the vanishing Indian common in much early North American literature that romanticized Aboriginal figures recurs in contemporary literature through characters doomed through drug or alcohol abuse (34, 45). By transforming real Aboriginals into tragic figures, some Ukrainian-Canadian writers engaged in “Absenting the Aboriginal” elide their own culpability in the colonial project.

Slobodian’s novels provide a typical example of this model of (dis)engagement with the prior claim of Aboriginal Canadians. Slobodian’s works exemplify the main

characteristics of the prairie pioneering genre and the main ones of the “Absenting the Aboriginal” model. As her Ukrainian-Canadian settlers arrive on the prairie she writes:

a group of Indians dressed in buckskin and soft moccasins, their long black hair in braids, lounged against the wall. Their sombre, granitelike features were inscrutable. Their numbers in the region had diminished drastically in recent years, as the smallpox epidemic of 1870 had killed them off in the thousands. (*The Glistening Furrow* 10)

She romanticizes First Nations, even as her narrator glosses over the death of thousands of people in a nonchalant tone that is at best insulting and at worst chilling. Moreover, her description of Aboriginal diminishing numbers and deaths due to illness suggests that no one – neither the First Nations themselves, nor the European colonizers – have any agency in this fated scenario. These people are not really present for Slobodian’s narrator and merely form part of the scenic backdrop of her narrative. Their “granitelike features” resemble a blank wall; the narrator strips them of their humanity. She then writes that the “wind carried [...] the occasional bark of a dog and the voices of the Indian children romping happily in the tall grass” (14). Slobodian equates the children’s voices with the bark of a dog, both simply carried on the wind. The wind suggests a kind of transience; the children are not really present, but mere sounds carried on the wind. As well, the idea that the children romp in a romantic idyll while others die by the thousands denies them any depth. Texts like Slobodian’s may provide glimpses of Aboriginal characters, but they appear as landscape, unfeeling and detached from any moral scheme that might govern human interaction.

Hawrelak evacuates the Aboriginal presence even further from her prairie tale of immigration and settlement. When one of the Ukrainian immigrants arrives on her homestead another one exclaims: “how dark and rough her complexion has become! If I didn’t know her before, I would have guessed she was a native,” and then thinks of “the ruddy complexions of the Indians she saw in Halifax” (24). Aboriginals are not only “dark and rough” in comparison to the unstated, but clearly understood, ideal of white softness, but they are also only found in Halifax, the port of entry for Ukrainian immigrants, rather than on the prairie, their place of settlement. In this way, Hawrelak constructs any marginalization or displacement as taking place long before Ukrainians arrived on the seemingly empty prairie. When she does turn her attention to the prairie locale, her approach differs slightly from Slobodian’s vacuous presentation of First Nations, but equally elides addressing even the possibility of Ukrainian-Canadian contributions to Aboriginal displacement and death. She writes:

Those natural pockets of grasslands were where great herds of wild plains bison commonly called buffalo had once roamed freely. That was at an earlier time when the bison were used by the natives for their food, clothing and shelters. When the white man with their traders arrived in the mid-nineteenth century, there had been a great demand for buffalo hides. The animals were slaughtered indiscriminately, almost to extinction, except for a few herds who escaped north of these territories. (77)

We cannot ignore her conflation of Aboriginal populations and the bison they hunt.

While she tells of the bison’s near extinction and migration, she is silent on the fate of

“the natives” who relied on them; we presume their fate was the same, near extinction or

escape to the fantasy of the unsettled north. As well, the “white man” is the antecedent of the third-person pronoun, further distancing Ukrainian settlers from any involvement with the scheme of settlement and capital that overturned the previous freedom enjoyed by both bison and Aboriginal. When she cannot escape recognizing that at times settlers and Aboriginals did, in fact, occupy the same space, she turns the Aboriginal into a ghost. Nineteenth-century romances commonly constructed Aboriginal figures as marginalized, vanishing, or ghostly (King 33; Cariou 727; Goldie, *Fear and Temptation* 3), and Cariou argues that contemporary prairie literature has begun to evoke Aboriginal ghosts that display the fears and anxieties the non-Aboriginal settlers feel. He situates his discussion in a comparison of the ghostly in literature by non-Aboriginals alongside that of Aboriginal writers, suggesting that Aboriginal writers are not afraid of the ghosts that populate the prairies, but see them as signs of present Aboriginal culture (733).

Hawrelak, however, either absents Aboriginals altogether as mentioned, or sees them as frightening ghosts. For instance, her early Ukrainian-Canadian settlers build their first homes in the ground, and as one of the characters works in her garden, she hears sounds in her home in the hill; she rushes inside and finds “the place was empty and nothing was out of order” and “became very frightened”; a neighbour advises the family to “move to another hill, because [...] that first hill was where someone was buried, probably an Indian, and we had disturbed his spirit” (28). Hawrelak presents her solution to avoiding the avenging ghost of Canada’s First Nations as simply moving to another location. She sees simple mobility as the key to conflict resolution, thus ignoring the very real territory settled by one group to the detriment of another. Her characters skirt and avoid real

Aboriginal presences, and such sidestepping suggests a kind of unease with the prior claims of Aboriginals.

Borrowing Margery Fee's language, I refer to the second way in which Ukrainian-Canadian authors struggle to deal with the prior, and arguably more legitimate, claims of Aboriginals as a "Claim-by-Identification." Since settlement on the Canadian prairie fits within the larger settlement of Canada, Ukrainian-Canadians who present a "claim-by-identification" with First Nations are not limited only to the prairies, because they express their response to this colonial legacy in ways similar to other writers variously categorized within discourses of postcolonialism.<sup>1</sup> Often the literature of postcolonial settlers presents connections between the groups – non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal populations – as a way of creating a symbolic legitimacy for the immigrant settler who participated in exploitation and colonization, often to assuage a kind of "white-settler guilt" (Sugars, "The Impossible Afterlife" 697). In Canadian literature this trend takes the form of peopling non-Aboriginal texts with Aboriginal characters and themes to show imagined connections between the two groups to actively construct the settler as somehow indigenous to the colonized space. Fee describes this phenomenon, noting: "Those who do not wish to identify with 'mainstream' anglo-Canadian culture, or who are prevented from doing so, can find a prior and superior Canadian culture with which to identify" (17). Daniel Francis clarifies this point by explaining that this identification appears in the literature as a kind of transformation from non-Aboriginal to

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<sup>1</sup> *The Empire Writes Back*, one of the foundational texts for postcolonial literary studies, situates Canada as a postcolonial country (2) and specifically identifies its literature as representing "the white cultures of settler colonies" (133). While there is some significant debate over the extent to which "settler colonies," such as Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, can be considered as part of larger postcolonial critical discourse, many critics continue to situate Canadian literature within larger discourses of postcolonialism

Aboriginal; he writes that “Canadians need to transform themselves into Indians” (123). This pattern of indigenizing in Canadian literature is particularly common among what are often referred to as non-charter groups, where one “variant of mainstream nationalism uses the First Peoples’ position as marginal, yet aboriginal, to make a similar claim-by-identification for other marginal groups” (Fee 17). In this, Ukrainian-Canadian authors seem very similar to other Canadian authors.

Kulyk Keefer’s *The Green Library* offers a good example of this kind of “claim-by-identification” that Ukrainian-Canadian literature shares with Canadian (and other postcolonial) literatures. The novel concentrates on Torontonion Eva Chown who discovers that her biological father was, in fact, a Ukrainian DP who immigrated to Canada. The narrative operates as her quest to connect with her Ukrainian father and the Ukrainianness within herself. The Aboriginal character, Phonsine Kingfisher, provides a crucial role in Eva’s journey of self-discovery, and, as a result, Eva’s work to articulate herself as Ukrainian also involves appropriating a pseudo-Aboriginal status as well. For instance, Phonsine describes Eva’s Ukrainian father, saying that he and the other DPs had “faces a little like [hers] – they had these wide, wide cheekbones, and black eyes” (48-49). Unlike Laurence’s novels where external narrators ascribe a similarity to Ukrainian-Canadian and Aboriginal characters, Kulyk Keefer puts this assertion of similitude into the mouth of an Aboriginal character. From her position as “marginal, yet aboriginal,” Phonsine adopts Eva’s Ukrainian father by aligning his physicality with her own. However, Phonsine not only aligns herself with Eva’s unknown Ukrainian father, but also she “births” Eva. She provides Eva with the background information of her mother’s

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in relation to both/either British and/or American culture (Wylie 141; Sugars, Introduction xiii; Lee 46; Seiler 150).

illicit affair (and thus the information about her paternity) and of her own role as the birthing midwife. She tells Eva: “I yanked you out and showed you off” (45-46). She functions both as Eva’s symbolic midwife, by helping her come to knowledge about her origins, and also as a literal one. The implication that Eva was Phonsine’s to be displayed suggests a kind of possession: Phonsine claims Eva. By allying Phonsine with Eva’s father and constructing her as a pseudo-mother figure, Kulyk Keefer constructs Eva’s inquiry into her ethnic identity as a Ukrainian-Canadian as intimately linked with Aboriginal legitimacy. Eva’s real mother appears absent, distant, and cold throughout much of the novel, languishing in dementia, and her adopted father is dead. Her real parental figures are the Ukrainian man she seeks (and eventually finds) and Phonsine. Her ethnic identity, therefore, depends upon a “claim-by-identification” with Canadian First Nations.

Fran Ponomarenko, writing as Ludmilla Bereshko, sets her short story collection *The Parcel from Chicken Street and Other Stories* in the streets of Montreal. Ponomarenko’s urban, Montreal setting, like Kulyk Keefer’s Toronto, is unlike the many prairie settings invested in Ukrainianness as a Western Canadian phenomenon. Instead of a rural Alberta Ukrainian bloc settlement, her Ukrainian ethnic ghetto appears more like Haas’s North End Winnipeg, although more homogeneous in its post-World War II Ukrainianness. While many of the prairie texts are celebratory in tone, constructing ethnicity as something to be preserved, maintained, and even constructed, Ponomarenko shows the many cracks and fissures from within this ethnic community. One such breach lies in how Ukrainian-Canadians respond to Aboriginal presences, with a “claim-by-identification” offering a kind of sympathetic alternative to racism. For instance, in the

titular opening story, a young Ukrainian-Canadian girl, Anna, not unlike Lilli, Colleen, Marusia, Rachel, or Eva, struggles with bridging the two sides of her hyphenated identity. Like Lilli and Marusia, she finds a position as a domestic servant; but unlike the other girls, she works in a Montreal home in order to save money for a skiing trip rather than to contribute to the family's finances. When the desired excursion arrives, the adolescent Anna meets a boy and they begin corresponding to each other, one writing from his reserve and the other from her ethnic ghetto. The relationship causes Anna to lose her best friend who verbally attacks her after the ski outing:

“I thought you went up there to learn how to ski?” Vera's voice was shrill.

“An Indian! God Almighty! I always knew you were stupid, Anna. But I didn't know you were *that* stupid.” (48)

Vera represents the element within the Ukrainian-Canadian community that has internalized racist colonial attitudes. Her disapproval of her friend's choice of an Aboriginal boyfriend severs the friendship. Conversely, Anna's relationship with and affection for the Aboriginal boy construct her as a sympathetic character.

Mid-way through the story, Anna begins to set aside items to send to her boyfriend's family on the reserve. The story itself is framed by sending letters and packages to Ukraine, which illustrates the main way in which members of the Ukrainian diaspora engaged with Ukraine prior to its independence (Satzewich 201), and Anna's parcel mirrors the family parcels sent overseas. In recognizing the neediness of the Aboriginal family as similar to the neediness of her own extended Ukrainian family in Europe, Anna sees a connection between First Nations and Ukrainians that Vera, and those who share her views, cannot see. When Anna's mother discovers the epistolary

romance and Anna's intentions to send used clothing as aid to the reserve after the death of her boyfriend's father, she emphasizes that their poverty and suffering is analogous to that suffered by her own family.

“*Dytyno, shcho zh ty robysh?*”<sup>2</sup> she cried.

“This is all too small for me,” Anna mumbled.

“What in the world do you mean?”

[.....]

“*Oi, Anna!*” said Mrs. Bahiry, tears suddenly springing to her eyes. “But I have a sister in Poland. One in Germany and two in Siberia. They have small children too, and live in such misery.” (52)

Anna's mother explicitly compares the plight of the Aboriginal family suffering hardship and poverty on a Canadian reserve to her own family's suffering under Cold War Eastern European repression. Both Ukrainians overseas and Aboriginals in Canada are in need of aid that Ukrainian-Canadian Anna is in a position to offer; her Ukrainian relatives, therefore, are just as disenfranchised and impoverished as the First Nations family on the reserve. This “claim-by-identification” arises not necessarily out of empty symbolic connections as in *The Green Library*, but rather out of a vision of socio-economic similarity. As well, the slight difference in how Anna and her mother understand the related positions of Ukrainians overseas and Aboriginals in Canada suggests a generational variant within Ukrainian-Canadian communities. Anna's mother views both groups – Aboriginals in Canada and Ukrainians in Eastern Europe – as economically and politically disenfranchised, subjected to the vagaries of external colonial powers. Tetiana

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<sup>2</sup> My translation (with help from Jars Balan) of this transliterated phrase is: “Child, what are you doing?”

Bahriy, the mother, feels closer to the lived experiences of suffering in Eastern Europe than her daughter, and thus sees the position of Canadian Aboriginals as victims equal to those she left behind, but Anna, the daughter, distinguishes between the plight of her relatives overseas and that of her friend on the reserve. She makes her comparison based on a simple analysis of need – “We’ll survive without this. [...] Let them have it” (53) – and determines that the needs of her friend’s family are greater than those of her own. Further, as a typical Canadian teen – interested in ski trips and boys – Anna feels more connected to her Aboriginal boyfriend than to her extended family in Eastern Europe. Moved by maternal love, Anna’s mother sides with her daughter, and the two of them send their “Indian parcel” (53) to the reserve, suggesting a resolution of their generational difference. Their unity (especially when frowned upon by the rest of their ethnic ghetto) suggests a kind of hope that connections between First Nations and Ukrainian-Canadians can breed, foregrounding economic links, not just empty symbolic ones. As the narrator tells us: “a parcel is no ordinary thing. It’s not just a collection of used clothing. And the sooner people realize that the better. Why, with the humblest of contents goes the grandest spirit of unselfishness you’re ever likely to see” (54).

In an inversion of the first model, “Absenting the Aboriginal,” the third model tries to absent the Ukrainian-Canadians. I call this model “Unsettling the Settler.” Essentially it suggests the fantasy that Ukrainian-Canadian presence on the landscape is transient, and at some point in the future First Nations will have their land cleared of Europeans and returned to them in a pre-colonial state. Warwaruk’s *The Ukrainian Wedding* offers the most pronounced version of this model. In his coming-of-age story of

the young protagonist Lena, which echoes *Yellow Boots* at many points,<sup>3</sup> he constructs his prairie Ukrainian-Canadian settlers as temporarily occupying the land. At first one of the women tells a story about an original Ukrainian-Canadian settler to the area of northern Manitoba where the story takes place:

Panko's father Onufrey lost his feet on this lake. He was with an Indian in the winter time going for work to a fish camp further up the lake from here. In the afternoon a blizzard had mixed them up on their directions. For three days in the cold they walked on the ice. The Indian's feet stayed warm with moccasins, but Onufrey's feet froze and had to be amputated. [...] The rest of his life Onufrey walked on his stumps wrapped with potato bags. He was no longer able to farm. (5)

Like the texts that construct a kind of similitude between Ukrainian-Canadian settlers and First Nations, this vignette presents both men – Onufrey and “the Indian” – as occupying the same economic and geographical space. However, “the Indian” appears clearly well-equipped for the natural environment, even as it maims the Ukrainian-Canadian settler. As a foreign element on the land, Onufrey becomes incapacitated and impotent, undermining any thought of him as a permanent settler threatening to displace the clearly superior Aboriginal figure. Warwaruk pushes this idea of Ukrainian-Canadian transience even further when he suggests that “the wind howls across the lake just the same, and over the fields, and it whispers through the trees telling the Indians that someday the

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<sup>3</sup> The setting and narrative structure of Warwaruk's story echoes the earlier sections of Lysenko's. Just as Lilli's early life is shaped by the preparations for her sister Fialka's wedding, Lena's early years are shaped by the preparations for her brother's wedding. In her review of the novel, Grekul makes the point about the similarities between Lysenko's and Warwaruk's novels clear: “For readers who are familiar with Ukrainian Canadian literature, the similarities between *The Ukrainian Wedding* and both Illia Kiriak's *Sons of the Soil* (1939-45) and Vera Lysenko's *Yellow Boots* (1954) are striking” (Review 122).

Ukrainians will be gone” (240). His Aboriginals occupy the same liminal and marginal place commonly seen in romantic fiction, as they live amongst the trees and communicate with the wind, and while this presentation seems to suggest the transience or passing nature of Aboriginal culture similar to what we have seen before,<sup>4</sup> in Warwaruk’s vision the transients are Ukrainians. They are the ones who “will be gone,” a prophesy which is pure illusion, what Deena Rymhs would consider “false promises of ‘reconciliation’” (109). Her article, “Appropriating Guilt: Reconciliation in an Aboriginal Canadian Context,” focuses on what she considers a trend of forgiveness and reconciliation that draws attention to the idea that “the process of reconciliation overlooks the logic that asking for forgiveness does not imply the granting of it” (108). The Ukrainian-Canadian texts I have discussed in this context do not even go so far as to ask for forgiveness and, instead, just express guilt and discomfort.

These three models – “Absenting the Aboriginal,” “Claim-by-Identification,” and “Unsettling the Settler” – share a similar construction of Aboriginal characters as objects to be acted upon by others. In the context of debates about Aboriginal voice appropriation (Van Toorn 24; Griffith 237; Williams 18; Goldie, “Fresh Canons” 383), Terry Goldie points out that “no matter how much the object of a writing subject approximates the self, the object cannot be turned into the subject”; the Aboriginal remains “a semiotic pawn on a chess board under the control of the white signmaker” (*Fear and Temptation* 217, 10). Whether those white chess players move the pawns off the board entirely, or console themselves with the fantasy that the pawns invite the game, or even pretend that one day they will stop playing, as we have seen in Ukrainian-

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<sup>4</sup> For example, the evocation of wind recalls Slobodian’s previously mentioned characterization of the wind carrying the voices of Aboriginal children and the barking of dogs.

Canadian literature struggling with Aboriginal claims thus far, control rests in the hands of the Ukrainian-Canadian authors and characters. They possess subjectivity and agency, while the Aboriginal characters merely serve their ends.

Some authors, however, express their “white settler guilt” not only through instrumental use of Aboriginal characters, but also by trying to engage directly with First Nations. Suknaski’s poetry and Grekul’s novel demonstrate their bifurcated desire – to assuage their guilt through the kinds of fantasies we have seen thus far and also to redress wrongs. In his own words, Suknaski admits that his *Wood Mountain Poems* address “a vaguely divided guilt; guilt for what happened to the Indian (his land taken) imprisoned on his reserve; and guilt because to feel this guilt is a betrayal of what you ethnically are – the son of a homesteader and his wife who must be rightfully honoured in one’s mythology” (124). This “vaguely divided guilt” pulls his poetic vision in these poems in two ways. He wants to speak for an Aboriginal experience, recognizing the superior entitlements of indigenous peoples,<sup>5</sup> but he knows that while he may “want to *be* them” (Fee 24), he cannot. The poetry expresses this discomfort through a number of important thematics. The poet undercuts the idea of inheriting ethnicity and identity solely through a family; he expresses, therefore, a deep discomfort with identity-construction that does not move beyond the filial. His poems also play with time, suggesting temporal shiftiness and unease that he also evokes through multivocality, disallowing a stable sense of either time or voice. Furthermore, the entire collection is framed through metaphors of mobility – especially mobility through the landscape. The deep tensions in

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<sup>5</sup> The kind of speaking for Aboriginal presences by non-Aboriginal writers that Suknaski employs became a highly contested practice, as critics began to debate the ethical implications of “voice appropriation” in the 1990s; but during the 1970s, according to Melnyk, “It would seem that ethnic writers were go-betweens in the 1970s between Aboriginal voices and the Anglo establishment” (“E-mail Interview” n.p.).

Suknaski's poems express his discomfort with the doubled position of the Ukrainian-Canadian subject who is both at home (as a homesteader) and not at home (as non-Aboriginal) in Canada.

As mentioned in Chapter Two, these poems are deeply invested in polyethnicity, but we can now note the special attention given to both Aboriginal and Ukrainian presences. For instance, while many of the poems position speakers using various ethnic dialects, only Ukrainian and Dakota are reproduced as foreign languages within the text. The difference between imitating the Chinese café owner, Jimmy Hoy's accented English – "*gee clyz / all time slem ting*" ("Jimmy Hoy's Place" lines 1-2) – and the grandmother's Ukrainian curses – "*ah tehbee sracku tom geedo!*" ("Johnny Nicholson [1925-1974]" 19) – or the Dakota rabbit's question – "*whali dootecktoo okashnee hew?*" ("Mashteeshka" 8) – is clear; in the first instance the poet is constructed as an outside listener to accented speech, while in the second two he is an insider of the linguistic community, even providing footnotes indicating the English translation of Ukrainian or Dakota words. Mandel writes that these poems embody "identity, change, process, the poet" (50), and in reading them in this spirit, the process of identity construction that the poet engages in is vexed as he tries to make sense of a Ukrainian and Aboriginal heritage, all the while wanting to claim and honour both, but never being able to do so entirely.

This unease plays out again and again in the poems; one of the best examples appears in the opening one. In it, the speaker (a thinly veiled Suknaski) details interactions with his mother and father and imaginatively recreates their initial immigration to Canada. The father is a sturdy homesteader who can "carve out with a blunted knife / a cellar / in which to endure the first few years" ("Homestead" 101-103),

and the mother survives the First World War in Poland to experience “the currency changing as the war ends / her money and several years’ work suddenly worthless one spring day / all these things drift away from the ship carrying / her to the unknown / new land” (64-69). They are thus characterized as members of a hardworking underclass often overlooked in official histories; they are the ones to pay for decisions made by distant seats of power. Yet Suknaski does not construct them as ethically superior, hard-working pioneers to be celebrated and lauded. Instead, we learn that the father is abusive, beating his pregnant wife with a rolling pin, holding an axe above her head, and attempting to strangle his son with a scarf (227, 229-30, and 240), and despite separating, at the funeral of one of their children, mother and father “begin to run toward each other / they embrace / and she lifts him off the ground / he is 79 at the time” (182-85). It seems that the poem expresses the son’s desire to reconcile his feelings towards his abusive father in order to honour the immigrant experience of both parents. This insight is borne out by the apostrophe to the absent father: “father / i must accept you and that other dark man within you / must accept you along with your sad admission / that you never loved anyone in your life / (you must be loved / father[...])” (241-46). And while these lines come close to the end of the poem, Suknaski does not let us rest easy with the belief that his identity can be resolved through forgiving his father and documenting/honouring that experience, harsh as it seems. In fact, the poem closes with a “suicide note”: “silence / and a prayer to you shugmanitou / for something / to believe in” (250-53). The fact that this closing prayer appeals to an Aboriginal deity as a “suicide note,” suggests a rejection of understanding the self (including ethnic identity) through familial, principally paternal, relations. Rejecting an identity shaped out of a stereotypical reconciliation with the

father demonstrates Suknaski's identity as more than a private, filial matter. Instead, such a belief in European, patrilineal structures results in "suicide" and a call to an Aboriginal god for help. This drive towards articulating identity through ethnic or familial lines, only to be undercut by an Aboriginal presence, recurs throughout the collection. It is one structural way that Suknaski expresses his strange sense of being split between wanting to honour two groups that equally contributed to the past legacy that shapes his present, but have earlier roots in conflict with each other.

His attempts to understand "home" through ethnic and familial lines becomes even more complicated because those constructs are interrelated with the landscape.

Suknaski writes:

father once showed me a picture  
 nine black horses pulling a gang plough  
 [...] (breaking  
 the homestead to make a home). ("Philip Well" 29-32)

For Suknaski this collection portrays "father," the "homestead," and "home" as intertwined. Like Lepa who functions as the rural ethnic whom his son rejects, Suknaski grapples with his father as a potential source of ethnic identity. Suknaski carries his birth certificate, with the coordinates for the family homestead as the only identifying markers of place, across his heart: "as father carried / the worn \$10. bill across his heart for the landtitle" ("Homestead" 176-77). The official signs of the homestead – a birth certificate and money for the land title – connect both men to each other and to a kind of "home" on the landscape. They both carry "home" close to their hearts. Yet this "home" occupies a contested space that the collection recognizes.

His attempts to try to work through the trap of his own identity arise in the repeated motif of death, particularly death of First Nations' characters and groups, which shares many similarities with other texts that never move beyond the "Absenting the Aboriginal" model we have already seen. In being "poet as historian," to use Grekul's phrase (*Leaving Shadows* 100), he elegizes the betrayal and destruction of the Nez Percés ("Nez Percés at Wood Mountain" 55-58). In the nineteenth century, the American government attempted to force the Nez Percé to move from their ancestral lands to a reserve; they resisted by walking the long distance towards Canada and were defeated in battle just before reaching the border, but a few refugees found their way to safety at Wood Mountain.<sup>6</sup> He characterizes their chief as "steeped in abandoned hope" who will "later die of a broken heart" (59-60), while his people are "death ambling clothed in rags"; they "are nothing / but a walking graveyard" (85, 89-90). The "poet as historian" constructs an entire group of people as condemned to destruction. Even in making them live in the lines of the poem he dooms them to extinction. When the last Nez Percé chief admits in the close of the poem, "*i have no country / i have no home and i feel / i have no people*" (100-3), we feel the sadness and the tragedy of the loss. We do not, however, feel any responsibility for that loss. In this poem, Suknaski blames "gold seekers and politicians" and "*bloodthirsty bluecoats*" (36, 44) for the death and destruction of the Nez Percé tribe. The poem documents and recognizes the obliteration of an Aboriginal culture, but does not include settlers as part of the power structures that contributed to that loss.

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<sup>6</sup> For more information on Nez Percé history of this period, see Baird's *In Nez Perce Country: Accounts of the Bitterroots and the Clearwater after Lewis and Clark*.

Other poems in the collection also present the construction of the contemporary Aboriginal as doomed in the way that Green and King identify, but do not let the homesteading presence evade the role it played in displacing earlier peoples, demonstrating a more nuanced relationship between Ukrainian-Canadians and First Nations that disallows a sustained elision of one group's culpability in the destruction or marginalization of the other. In "Poem to Sitting Bull and His Son Crowfoot," not only are the historical figures doomed because "*white man has grown powerful / and defies the gods*" ("Poem to Sitting Bull and His Son Crowfoot" 55-56), but also Suknaski's contemporary, James Wounded Horse, who taught him how to play pool (20), is both a tragic figure and one expressly linked to the fate of the earlier First Nations. It is by visiting the Sioux cemetery and looking at the gravestone of Wounded Horse that the speaker moves back in time to ruminate about Sitting Bull. Suknaski writes that in looking at the grave marker of his friend, he remembers someone throwing a tenpin ball at the living Wounded Horse who "leapt like a struck rabbit" with "fear cross[ing] his eyes" (22, 26), an experience that leads the speaker to admit that "his metal marker now mirroring the sun / casts my thoughts to sitting bull" (28-29). Suknaski poetically links Wounded Horse's victimization at the hands of "some jester who wouldn't wait for the pins to be up" (25) to the death of Sitting Bull: "men dragged him feet-first from the tepee / while he rose to / crumple to the ground with his son" (39-41). In this way, the poem links both past and present Aboriginal peoples with an overwhelming sense of doom that evokes guilt as Suknaski tries to comprehend his own place amidst the geography and topography laced with the deaths he memorializes. For instance, as he stands in the cemetery thinking of Wounded Horse, his friend, and the historical figures

of Sitting Bull and his son, he thinks that the place where he stands is not just that “where the lives of these people begin,” but also “where something in my life seems rooted” (30, 31). The poem says that “homesteaders broke / the land” (67-68), and it is this feeling of rootedness through inheriting the land broken by the homesteaders that the poems engage. He struggles with trying to determine the cost of setting down roots in somebody else’s home.

Repeatedly the poems suggest that there is no clear sense that can be made of the double-bind in which Suknaski finds himself. Just as he paints Aboriginal figures doomed to death, he also seems to paint himself doomed to wandering in the space between groups; he is doomed to suffer what psychologists would call survivor’s guilt. This is expressed most poignantly in “The First Communion,” where Suknaski constructs himself as expressly outside Aboriginal communities: “we played softball with the indian and halfbreed kids” (“The First Communion” 7). The use of the first-person plural pronoun constructs the speaker as separate from “the indian and halfbreed kids.” This otherness is emphasized in the main event of the poem: “that night the young indian boy playing left field for us / was struck by lightning while going home” (13-14). So while this unnamed boy will never make it home, the closing of the poem sadly announces that the car “carried some of us back home / to wood mountain” (20-21). The guilt lies in the statement that the “young indian boy” will never make it “home,” but Suknaski will. It is this very dynamic, in both the past and the present, that each poem cannot reconcile: how can one be “at home” in a “home” denied someone else?

One strategy that the poems employ to begin to answer such a question is to show the mobility of Aboriginal groups coming to Wood Mountain, thus casting them as

immigrants not unlike Suknaski's homesteading forefathers. Sitting Bull, a recurring presence throughout the collection, and, in fact, the figure on the book's cover, is characterized as seeking refuge in Wood Mountain, rather than being indigenous to it ("The Teton Sioux and the 1879 Prairie Fire" 20-21). Similarly, in "Sandia Man" the poem moves back in time to imagine the migration across the Bering Strait from Asia to North America. These early peoples "move on some autumn day / to arrive somewhere else still" (21-22) and are the "silent ancestor of a people who traveled over / northern trails beaten by mammoths and later buffalo" (50-51). Therefore, the idea of rootedness is juxtaposed with metaphors and images of mobility. Such a contradiction makes both Wood Mountain's settlers and Aboriginals at home and not at home simultaneously. The land becomes something which groups pass through, leaving their signs like the "three circles where the tepees once stood" on a prairie landscape ("Indian Site on the Edge of Tonita Pasture" 59). Throughout the collection, the prairie becomes an "ancestral space to move through and beyond" ("Indian Site" 17) for both groups. First Nations' presence is prior, but transient, due to images of both mobility and death; but it does not preclude the homesteader's place on the land in the mythology that Suknaski's poetry develops as a way of coming to terms with his own split identity.

In "Chaapunka" this sense of prior but equal is expressed through a humorous anecdote. The poem focuses on a man who in attempting to relieve himself must run "for the tall grass and cattails to hide" ("Chaapunka" 13) from the attacks of a voracious chaapunka or mosquito. Being foiled, the mosquito asks: "*whichashasah li dookteh yah?* / meaning: / *where did this fulla go?*" (17-19). While the listeners of the tale laugh, Suknaski asks the storyteller: "*who was this fulla gus? a homesteader?*" (22), to which

the speaker responds: “*no – fulla musta bin sioux / chaapunka spoke dakota and the fulla understood him*” (23-24). The “fulla” of the story can be presumed either a homesteader or Sioux; both are equally likely to be found on the landscape. However, the shared language between the Sioux and the mosquito, who represents the natural environment, indicates the prior claim of the Sioux. Thus it seems that Suknaski employs images of transience through the prairie place as one way of imagining the two groups existing together without condemning one for its role in the displacement of the other.

Importantly, however, in this reading is what Derrideans would recognize as the trace left behind by the mobile populations. Suknaski as the speaking voice of the poems must continually account for the sense that even if Aboriginal populations have passed through the landscape (as transient or tragic figures), they are not wholly gone. As he looks on the remnants of the circle of ancient tepees found on a farm he says: “i try to imagine those who passed here so long ago / possibly becoming this dust / i breathe” (“Indian Site” 35-37). Written on the landscape, breathed in as dust, ghosts haunt him – the double ghosts of the original homesteaders and the original First Nations. The ghosts that haunt Suknaski throughout this collection emphasize the futility in his quest to accept and embrace a “home” and personal identity in Wood Mountain. Through telling stories of homesteaders and stories of First Nations, the poems evoke Suknaski’s “childhood ghosts” who “move in the tall grass / taking over the half-abandoned village” of Wood Mountain (“In Memory of Alfred A. Lecaine” 3-4). Chief among the “ghosts of [his] youth” are Sitting Bull (“The Teton Sioux and 1879 Prairie Fire” 5-6), and he says he will “try to imagine him / the lines around his eyes reminiscent / of shadowed prairie trails in the late afternoon sun” (7-9). This haunting by a prior presence highlights

the unease that Suknaski feels in trying to claim Wood Mountain as the site of “home.” Despite trying to construct Aboriginal presences as mobile and transient, immigrants themselves, the images of haunting suggest that he cannot so easily efface his guilt at wanting to be “at home” on land haunted by others. His sympathy and allegiance with an Aboriginal presence that are at odds with his own inherited history play out as he evokes the “pale bowlegged ghost of James Wounded Horse / floating high over Wood Mountain” (“Melvin Greene/Oneida Indian Fighting for a Place to Die” 1-2). Suknaski summons his dead friend to bear witness as a white court tries to determine the citizenship of Aboriginal Melvin Greene who wants to grow old on his mother’s Ontario reserve, but who may be deported to his father’s home of New York. Suknaski wants the ghost of his Aboriginal friend to side with him in declaring: “MELVIN GREENE MUST BE FREE TO DIE / WHEREVER HE WISHES” (70-71). However, this poem creates binaries between “Indian law” and “white man’s law” (62, 63) with Suknaski’s sympathies clearly allied with “Indian law,” despite his European lineage. But in an attempt to borrow legitimacy, he needs Wounded Horse, the Aboriginal, to bolster his suit. Otherwise, he cannot escape his own corporeality, his own whiteness: no matter how strenuously he announces his verdict in capital letters, he is still caught in the “vaguely divided guilt” that plagues the collection as a whole with the poems fluctuating between a desire to be allied with two perspectives simultaneously. Poems like this one express a yearning to speak in favour of “Indian law,” despite speaking from “white man’s” position, thus giving the collection as a whole an unstable and uneven feel.

This uneasiness arises because Suknaski is haunted not just by Sitting Bull or James Wounded Horse, but also by homesteaders. He writes that “old settlers’ ghosts

loom up from the shadows / in the poplar forest” (“Lee Soparlo” 22-23). They, like the Aboriginal spectres that haunt him, feature largely as he tries to define and articulate “home.” When he sits, drinking at the bar, he says “we leave unfinished beer for the ghosts” (“Gus Lecaine Speaking of Grandfather Okute” 41), and the poem leaves it open which ghosts; it suggests that all the ghosts of Wood Mountain – Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal – haunt Suknaski. Ultimately this haunting proves too much for him, and he leaves the poetic site of Wood Mountain. He writes that “merely one week later / i have had enough of childhood ghosts / and stories” (“Ode to the Oldest Brother” 9-11). This collection resists resolution and ends with Suknaski leaving Wood Mountain, unsuccessful in his quest to reconcile the two parts of his inherited past. Like Warwaruk who can see a resolution to this dilemma only by imagining a time when Ukrainian-Canadians no longer occupy the same “home” space as First Nations, Suknaski departs Wood Mountain. In the poem “Leaving Home” he writes:

leaving home having arrived  
 at the last of all follies  
 believing something here was mine  
 believing i could return  
 and build a home  
 within the dying. (26-31)

The futility in his quest for a “home” and with it a stable identity in these lines is clear. The very idea of reconciling the two sides of his “vaguely divided guilt” has proven impossible. As the collection comes to its close, the speaker leaves his boyhood home and (hopefully) the ghosts that haunt him there. However, he finds that he takes the

ghosts with him. As he falls asleep in Vancouver, “the laughing face of the prairie madman / looms beyond flames rising on the edge of [his] bed” (“Nightbus to Vancouver” (51-52)). The identity of “the prairie madman” is left oblique; here we do not know if this madman is a shaman of Aboriginal mythology, masked and threatening, or the madman of his homesteading father’s wrath, rearing his ugly head. It seems that in the end what haunts him is the madness of trying to reconcile the “vaguely divided guilt” which cannot be made sense of. He is stuck in the mid-place between the two groups, and what it “feels like to be Ukrainian” in the specific location of the Canadian prairie is profoundly conflicted.

Just as many of the issues Lysenko raised in *Yellow Boots* remained relevant fifty years later for Grekul; the sense of deep conflict emerging from Suknaski’s poems dealing with “home” emerge thirty years later for Grekul as well. Her novel, like Suknaski’s poems, does not address concerns about how to claim a “home” place in the face of Aboriginal prior claims through any of the models suggested thus far, but rather it oscillates between models. At one point Colleen seems to want to become Aboriginal by a “claim-by-identification” strategy that recalls Eva in *The Green Library*, and at others, she seems to want to erase either the presence of First Nations or Ukrainian-Canadians.

*Kalyna’s Song* follows Colleen through late adolescence as she travels from her small Ukrainian-Canadian Alberta town to Africa and back again. As the book opens, Grekul describes Colleen’s Alberta town, St. Paul. Within it, we find “drunk Indians staggering out of the doors” of the local bar, which Colleen describes as “sad, and scary” (*Kalyna’s Song* 46). This initial description here allies the portrayal of the Aboriginal presence with the first model, “Absenting the Aboriginal,” in which First Nations are

summarily dismissed as tragic background figures. However, as Colleen begins to come of age, her attitudes shift, and she becomes aware of the greater complexities informing not just her Ukrainian-Canadian identity, but the identities of those around her. At the opening of the book, she and her friends compete at the previously mentioned Ukrainian-Canadian festival in Dauphin. When she returns to school after the summer vacation, she realizes that she and her Ukrainian-Canadian friends keep their Ukrainian extracurricular activities private. She then transfers this realization about her own experience to her Aboriginal schoolmates:

Glancing over at the Native students in our class, eating their lunch at the other side of the classroom, I wonder if they feel the same way. They must. It must be even worse for them. I've never heard them talk about what it's like to be Native, what it's like living on the reserve. Do they go to powwows in the summer? Do any of them speak Cree at home? There are five Indian reserves around St. Paul – Saddle Lake, Frog Lake, Kehewin, Good Fish, and Fishing Lake – and we have students in our school from almost all of them. It's never occurred to me before but – why isn't there a Cree teacher at our school? (48)

In this passage Colleen first constructs a “claim-by-identification” in assuming that the Aboriginal students at her school must feel similarly about their ethnic heritage as she and her Ukrainian-Canadian friends feel about theirs,<sup>7</sup> but then, like Ponomarenko's Anna, she adjusts her assessment to recognize the greater marginalization that they

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<sup>7</sup> There are a number of other parts of the book that construct a “claim-by-identification” between her and First Nations, such as her description of herself and her siblings at the Ukrainian wedding as “little brown Indian kids [...] Looking in, from the outside” (62), or her interview to attend school in Swaziland when

experience. Colleen's mother is the school's Ukrainian language teacher, but there is no Cree teacher at the school. This observation develops into her burgeoning realization of the very real difference between herself as Ukrainian-Canadian and her Aboriginal schoolmates. This realization comes to the fore when she finds herself in Africa, discussing politics with her international friends. She thinks to herself:

If my family were Native then I could talk about self-government, land claims, racism. Reserves. Or if we were Metis. The Metis don't even have reserves. [...] I can't talk about Ukrainians in Canada [...]. About how my parents had to stop speaking Ukrainian. It would sound silly. They didn't disappear, or die. They weren't killed. I have nothing to say. Nothing at all to contribute to the conversation. (265)

The very real difference between her own more privileged status as Ukrainian-Canadian in comparison to that of Aboriginals or Metis silences her. Like Kostash's admission that in the discourses of race and colour, she was silenced, Colleen similarly admits that in the face of discourses of postcolonialism, especially as they pertain to First Nations claims, she too is silenced. Kostash's whiteness allows her access to power denied visible minorities, and similarly, Colleen's affiliation with European colonialism allows her access to power denied Aboriginals. Her response to this realization, like Suknaski's, appears divided and conflicted.

Unlike Suknaski who returns "home" to Wood Mountain and then flees in the face of ghosts, Colleen returns "home" to face her ghosts. Just before leaving for Africa, her music teacher, the Ukrainian DP Sister Maria, dies. The death of her cousin, Kalyna,

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she discusses Aboriginal issues as a version of a Canadian apartheid and Ukrainian-Canadian ones as a kind of cultural genocide (158, 165-168).

brings her back from Africa. Grekul frames Colleen's journey, therefore, by the deaths of these two. As Colleen sits on Kalyna's grave honouring and remembering the dead women, she thinks that those who have died have "never really left us. Or they've left us, but they aren't really gone," and it is worth "sitting, and talking, and eating with them" (377). When he departs the bar, Suknaski leaves beer for the ghosts to consume; in contrast, Colleen sits on the grave of her cousin, eating and communicating with her dead loved ones. Derrida insists that we must "speak to the specter" (11), and Colleen begins to speak to the spectres of Ukrainian-Canadians. But does she speak to Aboriginal ghosts? Gordon suggests that only when we speak to the ghosts of the past can we begin to account for past injustices (18), but for Colleen, the Aboriginal presences she encounters are more real than the Ukrainian-Canadian ones. For her, First Nations are corporeal, existing in the present, not "seething absences, and muted presences" (Gordon 21), like her Ukrainian-Canadian ethnicity that she chases throughout the novel. While Suknaski feels haunted by all prior presences at Wood Mountain and leaves in the face of failing to make sense of his place, Colleen only feels haunted by dead Ukrainian women; the Aboriginal people she encounters are very real. She tries to focus her attention on social activism to redress not ghostly wrongs, but present injustices. She begins work at a Youth Drop-In Centre to teach Aboriginal youth who are at risk (375), but recognizes that "deep down," despite her best intentions "some things haven't changed," and Aboriginal hitchhikers do not even bother attempting to ride with Colleen and her family (379). Her closing thought about First Nations expresses her guilt: "I lived in Swaziland for one year, and I know how to say 'hello' in SiSwati. I lived in St. Paul for eighteen years. What is the Cree word for 'hello'?" (379). She acknowledges

not just the past injustices that plague Suknaski, but also her own present hypocrisy. She makes her status as a Ukrainian-Canadian vis-à-vis First Nations an immediate and present issue (one not resolved), not locked in a past moment in time. While some Ukrainian-Canadian authors may console themselves with the fantasy of a “claim-by-identification” or remove Ukrainian-Canadians and Aboriginals from the same space in order to avoid questioning Ukrainian-Canadian legitimacy on a prairie or Canadian “home” space, both Suknaski and Grekul express their “vaguely divided guilt” in a way that does not allow for consoling fantasies or outright elision; but neither do they offer any resolution.

Gordon admits: “It has always baffled me why those most interested in understanding and changing the barbaric domination that characterizes our modernity often – not always – withhold from the very people they are most concerned with the right to complex personhood” (4). She makes her comment in the context of race and gender in the United States, but she could be speaking about First Nations in Canadian literature. Suknaski and Grekul at least seem able to recognize Aboriginal rights “to complex personhood,” but they appear unable to provide a consistent vision of how best to construct their own Ukrainian-Canadian personhood while simultaneously accounting for that of the Aboriginal subjects they encounter. Suknaski leaves in the face of such uncertainty; Colleen offers a simple vision of personal social activism to address a very complex dynamic. Clifford asks: “How long does it take to become ‘indigenous’?” (309), and this literature suggests that no amount of time can create unproblematic indigeneity. Suknaski’s and Grekul’s attempts to address real-world conflicts at least

speaking to a desire to acknowledge competing “spatial entitlements,” but neither are able to resolve the tensions they see.

## Chapter 5 – Sexy Ukrainians: Ethnicity as Romantic Desire

If attempts to locate a Ukrainian-Canadian “home” within a Canadian physical or literary landscape fail, in part, because Ukrainian-Canadian authors struggle to recognize the prior and more legitimate claims of Aboriginal presences, then what happens when Ukraine itself – not just its shadows or ghosts – can begin to function as “home”? With Ukraine’s independence in 1991, it was no longer a closed place that Ukrainian-Canadians and other members of the Ukrainian diaspora could not visit.<sup>1</sup> As Vic Satzewich puts it: “The fall of the Iron Curtain and the rise of independent states committed to freedom of movement has created new opportunities for members of the diaspora to interact with Ukraine and Ukrainians. Return to an ancestral homeland is no longer an unrealizable longing, but rather a practical possibility that members of the diaspora have taken advantage of” (202). Ukrainian-Canadian literature from the last decade of the twentieth century often reflects that actual movement from hostland to homeland.

Grekul argues that Ukrainian-Canadian literature from the 1990s took a transnational turn with authors travelling to Ukraine, and sees this as a positive development for the Ukrainian-Canadian literary canon (*Leaving Shadows* 118). For her, travel stories and links to Ukraine itself fulfil her admitted “fervent desire to see fresher, ‘sexier,’ and more innovative images” of Ukrainian-Canadian culture (*Leaving Shadows* 197). If, for Grekul, like Colleen, folk culture offers a static and superficial expression of

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<sup>1</sup> With the end of the USSR’s stronghold over Eastern Europe, beginning with the dramatic destruction of the Berlin Wall, former Soviet Bloc countries began their varied paths to independence and autonomy. Ukraine declared its independence on August 24, 1991.

Ukrainian-Canadianness to be discarded in favour of engaging in the “serious cultural work” of ethnic construction and confrontation, then Ukrainian-Canadian literature that pries open Ukrainian ethnic identity through Ukraine itself, in contrast to its shadowy other on the Canadian prairie, would appeal to her. This chapter, however, explores how Ukraine, in fact, fails to function as a “home” able to provide an unproblematic ethnic subject-formation, suggesting that the turn towards Ukraine does not necessarily offer a different or more successful model of ethnic identity construction than the others discussed so far. Just as Ukrainian-Canadian ethnicity as a marginalized economic class became untenable in the face of discourses of colour and as an intrinsic element of prairie regionalism in the face of Aboriginal rights and entitlements, Ukrainian-Canadian literature engaging with a return “home” to Ukraine presents such a connection as unsatisfactory. Texts attempting to connect contemporary Ukrainian experiences to those of Ukrainian-Canadians still result in resounding disconnections between the two groups, with the Ukrainian-Canadians longing for Ukraine, while Canada seems irrelevant to Ukrainians.

A clear example of the kind of unsatisfied longing for Ukraine by Ukrainian-Canadians becomes evident in *Two Lands, New Visions: Stories from Canada and Ukraine*. Edited by Kulyk Keefer and Solomea Pavlychko, the anthology collects Ukrainian stories (translated into English) and Ukrainian-Canadian stories (originally written in English) in the same volume for the first time. Pavlychko’s introduction to the Ukrainian section situates the works within a post-Soviet, post-independence context, as the stories are “rereading and rethinking the past” in a “re-examination of history and its mythologemes” (iii). She positions the writing in a European socio-political context and

in an international literary one, with no reference to Canada. She understands the audience for the anthology to be “the English-language reader” (viii), not just a Canadian or even North American one. In contrast, Kulyk Keefer’s introduction to the Ukrainian-Canadian section situates these stories in a specifically Ukrainian-Canadian tradition that wants to connect to the “home-country,” and recognizes that while Ukrainians in Canada have desired a connection to their ancestors’ country, the differences between the Ukrainian section of the anthology and the Ukrainian-Canadian one are more striking than their similarities. The reviews of the book bear out this miscommunication. Melnyk’s review of it in *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, for instance, points out that “*Two Lands, New Visions* only highlights the tension and differences between the two cultures that it seeks to bring together” (160). Another review is more harsh, rightly observing that the “Canadian-Ukrainian authors, technically and thematically, are no match for their Ukrainian counterparts,” and sees the interest in these stories only arising “from the perspective of Canada’s multiculturalism” (Fizer 345-46). Therefore, the connection between Ukrainian-Canadians and Ukrainians that this anthology tries to provide is illusory. Simply collecting two sets of literary examples in one anthology does not ensure that these literatures will speak meaningfully to each other. In this case, the anthology is noteworthy for the lack of connection between contemporary Ukrainian and Ukrainian-Canadian literatures that it displays.

Furthermore, actual travel to Ukraine by Ukrainian-Canadians bears out these feelings of alienation. Satzewich conducted interviews with members of the Ukrainian diaspora who had “returned” to Ukraine. His anthropological study of diasporic Ukrainian subjects who travelled to Ukraine for work or pleasure suggests that

Ukrainians raised outside of Ukraine are more different from, then they are similar to, those raised within; he writes:

For the Ukrainian Canadians, one consequence of “return” is that their sense of difference with Ukrainians in Ukraine became accentuated. Before returning, most had a general sense that they were part of the same imagined community as Ukrainians in Ukraine. After living and working in Ukraine, many came to the realization that because they had been raised in dramatically different societies, their understanding of what it meant to be Ukrainian was quite different from that of Ukrainians in Ukraine. (204)

The reviews of Kulyk Keefer and Pavlychko’s anthology demonstrate that the stories collected therein present such a difference. The anthology and Satzewich’s insights about diasporic Ukrainians share in the expression of the one-sided desire of Ukrainian-Canadians to connect in some way with Ukraine.<sup>2</sup> For Kulyk Keefer, Ukrainians in Ukraine and Ukrainian-Canadians in this country are “in the paradoxical situation of being both strangers and intimates” (*Two Lands* xiv). Ukrainian-Canadian literature that addresses Ukraine, however, does not necessarily support her view, and suggests, rather that the two groups are strangers, with Ukrainian-Canadians demonstrating a one-sided longing for intimacy. This desire to stop being strangers and become intimates, however, proves unsatisfactory for Ukrainian-Canadians.

This discourse of diasporic desire and unfulfilled longing begins to look remarkably sexual in the literature centring on Ukraine. In a number of texts, a yearning

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<sup>2</sup> In writing about being part of the Indian diaspora, Rushdie writes that “if we look back, we must also do so in the knowledge – which gives rise to profound uncertainties – that our physical alienation from India almost inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost” (10).

for Ukrainian lovers becomes a metaphor for the feelings that diasporic subjects direct towards their “home-country.” Texts that fall within this category generally present Ukrainian-Canadian protagonists who project their diasporic desires for “home” onto a sexualized target. Importantly, these desires are transgressive – often adulterous – and unfulfilling in some way. The two examples on which this chapter focuses, Kostash’s *The Doomed Bridegroom* and Kulyk Keefer’s *The Green Library*, present Ukrainian-Canadian women who turn to Ukraine to articulate a sense of “home” associated with a Ukrainian identity arising not just out of a link to a past grandmother’s homestead, but also out of a romantic liaison. In each case, the protagonist desires and longs for a connection to Ukraine as symbolized through an erotic and romantic encounter with a man who metonymically stands-in for the “home-country,” and in each case, the woman remains unsatisfied in her desires. The final section of this chapter turns briefly to Warwaruk’s *The Ukrainian Wedding* to illustrate the dangers of such one-sided longing.<sup>3</sup>

In examining a Ukrainian-Canadian drive to articulate a coherent ethnic subject-position, we have begun to view Ukraine operating in a liminal space, neither “here” nor “there,” but rather as a haunting absence/presence for Ukrainian-Canadians. Theoretical figurations of revenants – in the form of Freud’s uncanny, Derrida’s spectres, Gordon’s

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The context of his insights is not the same as the one informing Ukrainian-Canadian ethnic identity formation, but the idea of being alienated from a “home” and thus being unable to reclaim it apply here.

<sup>3</sup> In addition to the two primary texts discussed here, the close of the chapter mentions Warwaruk’s *The Ukrainian Wedding* that constructs an illicit (and ultimately murderous) affair between Yuri and Marusia. The former is drawn to the latter as the embodiment of a Ukrainian folk creature, a rusalka, and the latter is drawn to the former as an embodiment of Ukraine, the “home” she longs for. Similarly, the scene at the opening of Grekul’s *Kalyna’s Song* that involves Colleen’s adolescent crush on the Ukrainian tymbaly player, Corey, fits within the scheme of casting a desire for Ukraine onto a sexualized object. As well, Marusya Bociurkiw’s recent novel, *The Children of Mary*, interweaves ethnic, familial, and sexual identities, as the protagonist makes sense of the incest (and possible death) of her sister at the hands of their father. Many of Ponomarenko’s short stories, especially “And with Two Such Husbands” and “Ghosts,” show the adverse effects of romantic involvements based on the illusion that the beloved embodies Ukraine.

ghosts, or Gunew's haunting – share the sense that at a symbolic level subjectivity emerges out of more than just a binary distinction between the real and the unreal. Much theory on sexuality shares this similar rejection of a binary conception of self-definition,<sup>4</sup> viewing so-called deviant or transgressive sexual acts as sites that indicate ruptures in meaning-making structures (see Sedgwick; Rubin; Berlant). Post-Foucauldian analysis of sexual identities understands those that can be variously categorized as multiple or hybrid as providing interesting sites for examination, paralleling constructivist thinking about ethnic identities. For theories of identity – be they focused on sexual or ethnic definitions – the seemingly atypical or hard-to-categorize provide fruitful avenues for analysis. States of “in-betweenness” give rise to important insights about how identity and community are structured. This “in-betweenness” can be understood as the realm of the ghostly: “a reminder that the space of the in-between is palpable; it represents a neither-nor-ness that can break down the symmetry and duality of self/other, inside/outside” (Goldman and Saul 654). This disruption in binary thinking signalled by transnational haunting is similar to that signalled by transgressive sex acts. Therefore, when Kostash and Kulyk Keefer turn their attention to transgressive sexual encounters with Ukrainian men, we begin to see structures of both ethnic and sexual identity formation evoking certain kinds of ghosts. Foucault alerts us to the power structures informing and impacting sexual behaviours,<sup>5</sup> and similar power structures inform

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<sup>4</sup> In the words of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, in her now famous construction of sexual behaviours in/out of the closet, “the relations of the known and the unknown, the explicit and the inexplicit around homo/heterosexual definition – have the potential for being peculiarly revealing, in fact, about speech acts more generally” (3). In her analysis, the “supposedly central” heterosexuality depends upon the “supposedly marginal” homosexuality for its definition (10).

<sup>5</sup> Foucault's *The History of Sexuality* directs his general interest in the intersection between power and knowledge towards the sexual realm, arguing that the line dividing normal/abnormal sexual behaviours illuminates how society constructs and enacts power.

Kostash's and Kulyk Keefer's attentions to Ukraine.<sup>6</sup> While Satzewich's work and Kulyk Keefer and Pavlychko's anthology suggest that Ukrainian-Canadians' "return" to Ukraine does not automatically produce a union of the "fractured hyphenated Canadian" self and that there are a number of real-world, material factors informing this disconnect, this chapter explores Kostash's and Kulyk Keefer's attempts to locate Ukraine as "home" through transgressive sexual longings that raise ghosts as signs of rupture.

*The Doomed Bridegroom*, in Kostash's words, is "a series of 'auto-fictions' [in which] I am exploring the eroticism associated with suffering and martyrdom, particularly as they were lived out in the political dramas of the Cold War and New Left" (v). The book follows Kostash as she begins her erotic adventures with a counter-culture Vietnam war protester in the 1960s through her journeys to Central and Eastern Europe, intertwining sexual desire and intellectual engagement with political upheavals in the regions through which she travels. She constructs a sense of herself as Ukrainian-Canadian within a larger system of "-ist" adjectives – feminist, leftist, communist, socialist.<sup>7</sup> Primarily, the book provides her dramatization of the intersection between feminist and leftist politics; she catalogues her desires for and relationships with a number of men who represent for her "long histories played out at the overlapping territories of East and West" (vi). Her attraction, as a woman raised in the West, is to men who represent for her leftist ideals she sees in the East. Like an orientalist gaze turned towards the "other," defining and desiring what it sees, Kostash, inspired by "the

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<sup>6</sup> Theorists have cautioned against an uncritical celebration of interactions between subjects from the West and newly independent, but economically inferior, ones from Eastern Europe (Miyoshi 79, 92; Mitchell 220; Grekul, *Leaving Shadows* 125-26), and, according to Grekul, both Kostash and Kulyk Keefer are aware "of [their] relative privilege as a middle-class Canadian" (*Leaving Shadows* 126).

western New Left” (vi), sees “an embrace of excited camaraderie” (vii) with these men of the East.<sup>8</sup> This dialectic of desire also functions in two directions. Kostash desires her exoticized Southern and Eastern European lovers, but also wants to be desired by them. With the fall of communism, Slavoj Žižek asked: “Why was the West so fascinated by the disintegration of Communism in Eastern Europe?” (200). In answering his own question, he claims that the lure lies in “the *gaze*, namely the supposedly naïve gaze by means of which Eastern Europe stares back at the West,” allowing the West to see “itself in a likable, idealized form, as worthy of love” (200, original emphasis). Žižek alerts us to the fact that the kind of desire Kostash admits to is not just a yearning for an exoticized, leftist “other,” but also a yearning to be desired by that “other.” Kostash is not unself-conscious about both her romanticized construction of “the other Europe” (and its men), where the language is “one outside the Latin alphabet” (vi), nor of her self-serving desires. She actively constructs a conceit of memory and dreams, in contrast to a measured, objective recounting, to shape the world she describes of longing, arousal, and desire. She writes “I want to go back there into my dreams and continue the kisses” (vii), which is just what the book offers, a dream-like remembrance of moments where political and sexual desires come together in the figure of the “rebel hero,” the “transgressive par excellence” (iv). She announces herself as a “Ukrainian-Canadian

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<sup>7</sup> Fee, Gunew, and Grekul play with these “-ist” adjectives in the title of their interview with Kostash, “Myrna Kostash: Ukrainian Canadian Non-Fiction Prairie New Leftist Feminist Canadian Nationalist” (emphasis added), where Kostash talks about the formation of her own ethnic and political identities.

<sup>8</sup> In his well-known articulation of “The Orient” as a European construction of “otherness,” Edward Said writes that it “had been since antiquity a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences” (1), and Kostash’s construction of it as a romantic socialist haven plays off this definition.

daughter of schoolteachers” (1) as her starting position and uses that Ukrainianness as a link with her phantom lovers.<sup>9</sup>

With her Greek lover, she uses her Ukrainianness to evoke a connection. Like the prairie writers who exaggerate analogies to construct a kind of similitude between Ukrainian experiences in Canada and those in Ukraine, when faced with her Greek lover’s political and cultural repression she writes: “Two could play this game” and apostrophizes: “You talk of Turks and Ottomans, bandits and guerillas, wars of liberation and those betrayed. Well, I have heard these stories too, of Huns and Mongols and Cossacks, wars of genocide and treachery. Can you sort your story out from mine?” (26). She wields her Ukrainianness – even its vague Cossack shadows – as a strategic tool to equate her ethnic identity to that of the man she finds so compelling in his communist agitations. Like the prairie writers who want to claim a place on a prairie landscape by overlaying it with Ukrainian spectres, she wants to claim a space within a discourse of resistance by using those very same images. If these images construct a kind of shadow or ghost Ukraine, then Kostash, like the prairie authors, appears like a necromancer able to conjure this spectre at will. But when she turns her amorous attentions to Ukraine, she cannot employ echoes of Ukraine as her own in order to connect. Instead, the chapter that focuses on Ukraine highlights her Ukrainian-Canadianness in the face of her lover’s Ukrainian-Ukrainianness.<sup>10</sup>

Strikingly, while all the other sections of the book outline Kostash’s romantic affairs with actual men – a draft dodger in the 1960s, a con-man Greek communist, a

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<sup>9</sup> Kostash calls them her demon lovers, alluding to Robin Morgan’s *The Demon Lover* that she quotes from in her preface as the starting-point for thinking about the intersection between sexual desire and political activism.

Polish dissident, a prairie Mennonite, a Serbian student – her romantic liaison with a Ukrainian is textual not sexual. She is “enchanted” (38) by martyred Ukrainian poet, Vasyl Stus. He is long dead by the time she discovers him, but she figuratively exhumes him, and writes: “*Thousands of miles away from your grave I will find you in my books, and I will drag you into my language, my purposes, and my memory. There in my memory is a Pantheon of lost loves, men who were heroes I wooed and lost. And you are going to be there with them*” (35). She inserts a dead man she never meets into a book about real-life lovers. Freud tells us that the uncanny most often makes itself known in the presence of dead bodies, corpses, spirits, and ghosts (634), and there is something uncanny about Kostash dragging Stus from his grave into her book. She says, “*I sit squinting in the noon hour sun*” while “[y]ou haunt the shade” (35). She juxtaposes her startling corporeality in the bright sun with his haunting presence in the shadows. This section of her book focuses on the movement of Kostash into Stus’s shadow, and the attempt to pull him into her sunshine.

Moreover, she introduces Stus through admiring a photograph of him. She posts the picture up above her desk like a matinee idol, “like a Ukrainian Marlon Brando” (34), she says, and claims that she is guilty of “hallowing the singer not the song” (35). Here there is no missing Spielrien (who “haunts the institution of psychoanalysis” [Gordon 36]), nor an absent baba, but instead the visible presence of an absent dead man. He becomes the metonym for an absent/present Ukraine; the photographic representation of Stus, the poet dissident who dies in prison in 1985, captures her attention: “He stares at me, I stare at him” (34). She fantasizes that he/Ukraine sees her, but hers are the only

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<sup>10</sup> If we follow the logic of hyphenated identities, we find references to Canadian-Canadians (Mackey 3) and Ukrainian-Ukrainians (Grekul, *Kalyna's Song* 268; Satzewich 205).

eyes that see. She imagines the spectre sees her, and soon she begins to imagine talking to him. Derrida says that while “scholars believe that looking is sufficient,” it is, in fact, imperative to “speak to the specter” (11), a point that Gordon reiterates (18), and their point is that we must “reckon with ghosts” (Gordon 23) in order to redress the kinds of historical and political ruptures they represent. To begin to address the rupture in her own hyphenated identity that has kept her alienated from Ukraine, its history and politics, Kostash tries to reckon with the ghost of Stus. Soon after she kisses her fingers and lays them on the photograph of Stus (35), an image that stresses her corporeality and his intangibility, Kostash begins to speak to him, and by extension the absent/present Ukraine he represents.

In her attempts to reach through the photograph of the dead man and make contact with Stus, she finds a memoir written by Mykhailyna Kotsiubynska, a friend of his. It serves as the catalyst for her to speak to the ghostly Stus – and by extension – to Ukraine. After she “set myself to learn the language of my grandparents” (36), she writes about Stus:

I am enchanted. I haul out my Ukrainian-English dictionary. I look for words, following with my finger the elaborate syntax as the tender remembrance of this woman rises from the paper, a photographic image emerging from its developing bath. (38)

Once again she describes him in visual terms – a developing photograph – but this time the picture is not merely one she passively receives, but one that she labours to develop. Through her struggles with the language, as one aspect of ethnicity, she begins to see Stus in a new way. Kostash herself once asked: “How is ethnicity inherited without the

language or the literature?” (qtd. in Balan 137). In reaching out to the dead Stus, she tries to reclaim a lost language as a way of reclaiming part of her lost heritage. However, reclamation is not her only goal. Instead, she yearns for unity with Stus and with Ukraine, and facility with the Ukrainian language functions as a tool in the service of this larger aim.

In reading Kotsiubynska’s memoir, Kostash presents the importance of Ukrainian-language skills to develop a picture of Stus, of Ukraine, while simultaneously highlighting the distance between herself and him/it, hinting at the kind of disconnect between Ukrainian-Canadian “strangers” who long to be “intimate” with Ukraine. Structurally, she reads a memoir describing Stus, and we, as her readers, are a further step removed, reading her memoir. This layering of experience through textual mediation evokes a sense of remoteness. Both Stus and Ukraine are out of reach. Kostash strives to touch them by inserting herself into the text. She says that Kotsiubynska’s initials are the same as hers, and “[t]he temptation is huge: to enter her words here and join her voice contrapuntally as the woman who did not know Stus. But *she* did, and there I am, she is, beside Vasyl Stus” (38). She slides herself into Kotsiubynska’s skin. She becomes one with the Ukrainian woman, the friend of Stus. As well, her very memoir allows her as a character to exist in the same textual plane as Stus. We perceive them both as textual subjects, mere characters in a book. She wants us to read them as existing simultaneously in the realm of the imagined, the only space where they can coexist.

Kostash writes herself into the story of Stus and Kotsiubynska; she attaches herself to Kotsiubynska and narrates most of this section as an ambiguous “MK,” a

hybrid identity of the two women: the Ukrainian-Ukrainian who knew Stus personally and the Ukrainian-Canadian who can only know him through his words and the words of others. In so doing, she presents both historical details about Stus alongside her own developing erotic sentiments. As the chapter progresses, kissing the photograph of the man does not satisfy her longing for connection. The photographic evidence of his absence does not satisfy her, and she tries to move herself into the shadowy realm he occupies: she begins to insert herself imaginatively as a romantic partner for him. For instance, when she imagines Stus's wedding, she cannot envision his bride. She writes: "Nothing. There is no bride here at all. She has a name [...] but no figure, no face" (41). By absenting Stus's biographical bride, she clears a space for herself as a symbolic bride. Such a union would represent a consummation between the Ukrainian-Canadian and her Ukrainian "home-country," something she desires. In addition to constructing the wife as a blank space in the wedding photo, she looks at a picture taken in Stus's student days and writes:

Where is the wife? No one mentions her. She is not there when, later, the surviving friends conjure up those celebratory feasts of their youth. Vasyl writes to her from the Zone, but the letters are so crabbed by the sour censorship that I cannot read anything there of his love, and I have found none of her letters to him. (67)

Kostash renders Stus's wife both silent and invisible. She actively clears a space by his side so that she can begin to insert herself in the void.

To do so, she intersperses descriptions of Stus's imprisonment and suffering with erotic remembrances of other men and other times, folding him into her life as an erotic

reality. She writes: *“I dream instead of the heat of the Peloponnese and stretching you naked on the rocks of Sparta. You swoon in the buzz of the honey bees and the speeches you would make dissolve in the back of your throat as my breast falls in your mouth. You cannot move”* (46). Is she speaking of her Greek lover from an earlier chapter or of Stus? The openness of the apostrophe invites us to believe that just as she has become fused with Kotsiubynska, so have her lovers become fused into one erotic image. She describes a tender moment with yet another lover: *“I am lonely for you. Outside I know the tiny white honey-sweet blossoms of the saskatoon are changing slowly into berry fruit. If you were here, I would lay some on the pillow by your head so you would fall asleep with honey in your mouth”* (48). Once again the lover is indeterminate. By juxtaposing these kinds of erotic and intimate memories with the descriptions of Stus, we cannot help but think of him in these romantic terms.

One crucial similarity in these two ruminations is their evocation of the sweetness of honey. In the first case, the buzz of the honey bees is connected to the lover’s speeches and in the second she wants the lover to taste honey in his mouth. By linking honey with the lovers’ mouths she not only conjures the sweetness of their kisses, but also importantly, the tantalizing seduction of their words. It is the sweetness of their speech that further links them to Stus, the poet. Words and language are the sweet honey of her desire for him that is heightened when she reads her dead lover’s poetry. Yet when she does so, the honey of his words does not comfort her but fills her with jealousy. She finds that she has not been able to efface the wife entirely. Kostash writes: *“Jealous that, while I and all the other women dance attendance on him, offering our sighs and loyalty, he has cleaved to his wife and taken her to bed”* (68). Even in the efforts to erase

Stus's wife, Kostash has not been able to supplant her. Despite her attempts to pull Stus from his grave and into her text as a lover, she remains outside the intimate sphere evoked by the marriage. Like Kulyk Keefer and Pavlychko's anthology that demonstrates more disconnection than connection, intimate knowledge and consummation – suggested in the image of marriage – are denied Kostash.

Kostash does not, however, give up her yearning and longing with ease. She may not be able to replace Stus's wife, but she still seeks to insert herself into the shadowy realm her lover occupies. Once again, a picture of Stus ("photographic evidence of his absence") provides her with the opportunity to move from her world of the living into his shaded world of haunting. She describes a photo of Stus in his early student days:

They are lined up on a couch, grinning, except for Vasyly [Stus] whose head is bent down in contemplation of something on his lap. Thick dark hair tumbling onto his forehead. The sculptured cheeks and proud nose. The mouth slightly open. The shutter has just clicked. I have slid onto the couch beside him. I push my hand into his hair, groping along his skull, and pull his head back. He shuts his eyes. His mouth falls open and he utters a little cry. I do not let go. (67)

Kostash transcends her own corporeal being to enter the photographic realm with Stus, and this image evokes both sensuality and death. His head is a "skull" and his mouth falls slack (like poor "chap-fallen" Yorick [Shakespeare, *Hamlet* V, i, l. 186]). She possesses all the agency and acts upon the body of Stus: she slides on the couch, pushes her hand into his hair, pulls his head, and does not let go. If Stus can be read as Ukraine, then he is a ghost of Ukraine that Kostash conjures for her own purposes. She denies

him active participation, sliding onto the couch of her imagination with him whether he desires her or not. What are the implications of this necrophiliac longing for Stus?

Precisely in desiring a dead man (in a book about living lovers) and constructing him in a way that prevents her union and consummation with him as a wife, which would then envision them both as subjects, Kostash presents her longing for Stus, as an absent presence personifying Ukraine, in ways that reinforce their separation. Near the close of the chapter, she describes him as “the dying man, his flesh melting away from him as he drifts off” (69). He has been transformed from a matinee idol, a photograph on her wall, into a decaying body.<sup>11</sup> Kostash has been haunted by the land of her grandmother and seemingly seeks to redress that haunting by learning her grandmother’s language, but she presents a much more complicated relationship with Ukraine than a simple “return” to the “home-country” would imply. Such a “return,” for her, becomes fraught with both death and desire intermingled in the image of Stus.

Even in the closing image of Stus as an exoticized, eroticized, and reified object, Kostash cannot escape the shadow of death. The final vision we have of him is as follows:

I insist on that broad back, the elegant line of the narrow hip in black trousers, the sinews under the hairy skin of his arm. I imagine the clenched musculature of his buttocks, the long shaft of his thighs, the dark, soft curl of his sex laid against his belly. He is lying on the grass. His bony fingers hold a plum, its blue skin split open, the flesh’s golden liquor smearing his thumb. He shades his eyes against the sun. A small, pale butterfly lifts off

from the cabbage plant and lights on his lip and he keeps her there, while she drags her soft powdery limbs into the corner of his mouth. (69-70)

This incredibly sensual image of the poet is rich with Kostash's longing and desire, and she possesses all the agency. She "insists" and "imagines"; she paints this visual picture for us, but she is absent from it. As well, his "sinews," "bony finger," and the description of the split fruit – its blue skin and flesh – evoke the kind of uncanny space that Stus seems to occupy for Kostash. The chapter has turned like a wheel on itself and the closing image presents a visual picture of Stus that recalls the photograph that generated Kostash's infatuation. Stus remains just an image, a body, with which Kostash cannot connect. In the end, she does not speak to the spectre. She uses and manipulates him, bringing him to light as a corpse.

This section of Kostash's memoir, therefore, evokes some of the ways she as a kind of representative Ukrainian-Canadian has tried to understand her ethnic identity through a connection to Ukraine – its language, its history, and its politics – to suggest that ultimately it is only longing and desire that can be found. Kostash's "auto-fiction" does not reconcile her to the country of her forbearers. Instead, she seems to suggest that such a longing serves her own purposes of subjectivity. Stus – the shadowy corpse – who represents Ukraine functions as that which the living Kostash can define her own ethnic identity against.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> The Ukrainian artist figured as a dead body recalls the poems from Suknaski's *In the Name of Narid* discussed in Chapter Two. Suknaski reduces and memorializes both Valentin Moroz and Volodymyr Ivasiuk as martyred bodies.

<sup>12</sup> Julia Kristeva tells us that abjection forces the subject to constitute new boundaries in order to exist, and a dead Stus seems to serve such a function for Kostash. I will not summarize Kristeva's well-known formulation of the subject, object, and abject here, except to point out that for my purposes her construction of the abject as "the jettisoned object" (1), envisioned as "refuse and corpses" (3), like Derrida's and Gordon's ghosts, describes bodies that have been "othered," rendered uncanny.

In a related way, Kulyk Keefer's novel engages the process of ethnic identity construction and disconnect from Ukraine through transgressive sexual longing, but instead of trying to drag a Ukrainian corpse into her bed, her protagonist tries to drag a Ukrainian father into hers. By transposing her desire for her father(land) onto a sexualized recipient, Eva's longing for the Ukrainian side of her Ukrainian-Canadian identity emerges through the suggestion of incest.<sup>13</sup>

Eva Chown believes herself to be a Canadian, unhyphenated and uncomplicated, until a mysterious figure leaves her with a photograph of a mother and son. The son looks remarkably like Eva's own, and thus, she begins to uncover the identity of the child in the photograph. He is her own Ukrainian father, a DP who immigrated after World War II under an assumed name, and, as discussed in the previous chapter, has an affair with Eva's mother witnessed by Phonsine. Even though Eva is unaware at the novel's opening of her Ukrainian heritage, her life appears both empty and unfulfilled. She may be uncomplicated in her Canadianness, but the novel wants us to understand that she is also incomplete. She has "[n]o self, no life of her own," and has "grown so empty" (16). She is "unreachable" to the man she lives with and has a "hole where her heart should be" (21). These sorts of descriptions highlight Eva's sense of emptiness, and we understand that only by engaging in the process of ethnic identity construction can she become complete. The disjointed structure of the novel as a whole mirrors Eva's fractured identity. The narrative shifts in time, space, and voice, offering a collage of

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<sup>13</sup> While theorists, such as Sophie Levy (in "'This Dark Echo Calls Him Home': Writing Father-Daughter Incest Narratives in Canadian Immigrant Fiction"), focus on trauma theory, my emphasis is not on how real people respond to real incest, but how symbolic incest functions. So while Levy writes about "the experience of incest and the experience of immigration" (865), which is similar to my focus, her texts are explicitly autobiographical, unlike *The Green Library* that constructs purely fictional incest.

perspectives. Each segment contributes to the over-arching construction of Eva's Ukrainian-Canadian identity.

Kulyk Keefer insists that in writing about Ukrainian-Canadian ethnicity she cannot divorce a sense of Ukrainianness in Canada from Ukraine itself ("Coming Across Bones" 98; *Dark Ghost* 20, 24, 35-40; "From Mosaic" 15-16), and in talking specifically about *The Green Library*, she says that it is her project to tackle "writing ethnicity, literally" ("Coming Across Bones" 84). This ethnicity that she so consciously constructs in the novel grows out of familial and national connections. Homes and nations "are built on select inclusions" that "are grounded in a learned (or taught) sense of kinship" (George 9), and this novel constructs kinship metaphors of blood and belonging that become images of death and dismemberment. The novel's fractured and dysfunctional families, evoked through the blood imagery, become dramatized in Eva's incestuous longings. On the opening page of the novel we read that "*the dead travel in our blood*" (1), combining the key metaphors that the book will develop: blood as an image of death and blood as an image of kinship.

Like *The Doomed Bridegroom*, the instigation to investigate and interrogate a personal ethnic identity in reference to Ukraine (and a Ukrainian lover) lies in the contemplation of a photograph. While Kostash fixates on the photograph of the dead Stus, Eva contemplates a number of photographs of lost or dead people and considers these photographs as ghosts (33). The photograph she mysteriously receives at the book's opening is

a section of a larger one, gesturing only gradually to what's been cut away.

For what first appeared to be bows or roses on the woman's shoulders are

really a pair of hands, the hands of a man who's been cut out of the photograph. (20)

After figuring out that the mother and child in the photograph are her own grandmother and father, she dreams of the only family she has known:

a half-grown Eva struggling to free herself from Holly; Garth holding tight to Holly's shoulders, while a pair of scissors cuts him away. Leaving a space for another man to step in, to take his place. A man who never materializes, who remains an absence, a transparent shadow. (25)

Kulyk Keefer deploys the absent "transparent shadow" of Eva's biological Ukrainian father as the first kind of haunting the book engages with. The painful scissoring done to the photographs of families represents the violence done to Eva's own sense of herself, her own identity, which is made clear when she first feels herself watched by the man she will learn is her father: "she feels his eyes cutting along the edges of her body, cutting her out from everything and everyone she knows" (10). The photograph suggests the haunting absence of her father, while also foreshadowing the cutting violence that characterizes Eva's inquiries into her own familial and national past. As she studies the photographs of those she learns are her ancestors, she envisions the link in graphic, bloody terms: "There's a bloodline, not just ink on paper, but a thin, tough line of blood linking her [...] with these doomed people [...]. Suddenly, the impossible distance between this young, scowling boy in the photograph and her own son has been bridged, and by nothing more than a line of blood" (99). Again she tries to make the decorporealized "ghosts" of the photographs real through blood imagery. The

photographs provide her an avenue not just into a shadowy realm of dead and lost people, but also precisely into the pool of blood that is her own family.

Like the ghostly images of Ukraine written across the prairie, Eva thinks of her father as a ghostly Ukraine haunting her. The narrator tells us “whoever sent [the photograph] has been watching her, shadowing her. This photograph is proof, black and white. As anonymous, as insistent as any shadow” (21). If the picture of Stus suggested an enticing figure of national and political ideals for Kostash, the one of Eva’s father soon begins to recall her adolescent longings for the only other Ukrainian people she has known. Eva soon merges her attempts to find her father(land) with an attempt to find the Ukrainian son of the woman who cleaned her house when Eva was just a child. Desire – both erotic and filial – blends together in Ukraine as “home.” Until Eva visits the site of her own conception (aided by Phonsine), she does not even remember the adolescent Alex Moroz who soon becomes the object of her quest. After visiting Phonsine, she finds the shore of the lake where her mother and Ukrainian father met; led by “some kind of magic that’s brought her to this place where everything began” (56), and then digs in her attic to find a picture – “the image that’s been at the back of Eva’s eyes ever since she put her hand into the water of a northern lake” (59) – of the young Alex. She puts her hand in the water “where everything began” in a clear image of birth and origins, and instead of finding an originating father, she finds a young lover. Kulyk Keefer evokes both birthing and sexual climax when Eva finds the island where she was conceived:

Dizziness shakes her, everything inside her leaping, dancing, like light on the water, countless lights, a dance of small explosions. Becoming that smash of light on the water as it beats against her skin. Until her whole

body's burning, her hair and her eyelashes, her breasts and the soles of her feet. Until she has to shut her eyes, the dark behind them crowding with a man and woman, naked, nameless, crying out. (56)

As she has her epiphany about the desire between her own parents, imagining it as her own, she dismembers her own body into its parts – hair and eyelashes, breasts and feet. Pieces of bodies and blood function as metaphors for a larger ethnic or national body. At this stage, her own body is fractured, dismembered.

From this point of the novel on, Eva's desire to find her father and learn about Ukraine as a way of understanding her own ethnic identity becomes directed towards Alex as a sexualized, Ukrainian target; in the words of Peter Roman Babiak, "she has all but thrown off the search for her family history and replaced it with intoxicating recollections of the small moments and erotic experiences which constitute her memory of Alex" (106). As the novel folds back in time to Eva and Alex's youth, we learn of their erotic "watching game" that gives Eva a feeling "as though a thousand matches have been struck inside her, and her whole body crackles with light," an image of power and sensuality, so she "can feel her blood fizzing inside her" (65). Her body alighting and blood boiling once again alerts us to the internal ruptures that her ethnic longing evokes. The two teens stare at each other, never speaking, only watching each other. She comes into a sense of herself as a girl through being an object of a Ukrainian sexual gaze. Recalling Žižek's insights, Eva wants to be "worthy of love" through constructing herself as an object of Alex's scopophilia.<sup>14</sup> In a reversal of the kind of feminist critique Simone de Beauvoir offers that identifies a male tradition of objectifying women, projecting onto

them male desires, Eva seems to want to be objectified by a male gaze.<sup>15</sup> Importantly, however, the gaze she longs for to define her is not just a male one, but a paternal Ukrainian one. Both Alex and her father occupy the same imaginative space: “she knows her mother’s lover was Ukrainian [...]. Because of Alex, because of the way they’ve mixed in her head, the man watching her in the park, and that boy with whom she once played the watching game” (77). As Kostash wants more from Stus than just his photograph and thus creates a fantasy in which they can coexist, Eva wants more than a shadowy watching game with lost men. In Derrida’s words, “[t]his spectral *someone other looks at us*” (6, original emphasis), but both Kostash and Eva want more than just looking; they want connection.

Eva travels to Ukraine to find that. More precisely, she travels to find Alex; he stands as a substitute for her absent/present father. When listing all that she brings into Ukraine, Eva includes: “risk, memory, desire” (132). These three items are about her longing for Alex rather than a dispassionate understanding of the history and politics of her “home-country,” or a curiosity about her unknown father. Her journey to find her father and fatherland becomes a quest for sex (by analogy, incestuous sex). If incest, at the symbolic level, represents a fracture in the subject’s ability to come into an articulation of the self, and the various images of bodies and blood provide physical fractures, then Eva’s sexual odyssey suggests the impossibility of union or wholeness.

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<sup>14</sup> In *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, Freud links scopophilia to voyeuristic desires, identifying sexual longing in watching another (particularly transgressive viewing such as watching another without permission).

<sup>15</sup> *The Second Sex* provides an early articulation of feminist critiques of men writing about women, and her main claim has been adapted and advanced by other feminist theorists whose focus lies in how men see women (see Ellman; Millett).

Despite Kulyk Keefer's statements that this novel focuses on Ukrainian history as integral to Ukrainian-Canadian ethnicity, the treatment of history in this book is secondary to the treatment of Eva's sexual dramas. When arriving in Kiev, even though "[t]he guide has a great deal more to tell," all "Eva can focus on" is "one thing – getting to the hotel, finding a telephone, and making contact with Dr. Oleksandr Moroz," the Alex of her childhood (127). Everything else becomes incidental to the pursuit of her sexual desires for Alex, particularly the construction of herself as an object of his desire. For instance, when she first meets Alex in Kiev, she says that his words possess "nothing awkward and nothing in the least erotic" (138). In response, Eva merely "*thinks* she is grateful for this" (138, emphasis added), stressing the fact that, of course, she is not grateful for his un-erotic response to her. She says: "he seems somehow absent, distracted" (139), like the ghostly space he has occupied in her imagination since remembering him; even when with him, he still seems an absent presence.

Only once she metaphorically descends into his shadowy underworld will they seem to relate. Like a modern day Persephone turning the tables and pursuing a Ukrainian Hades, she follows him through the subway into a symbolic death, and only then do they emerge on the other side. "The escalator plunges them underground" (143), and they ride into its depth and must emerge to take an elevator to Alex's apartment. "The elevator is a snug, black coffin. The door shuts and the blackness stays and they are not moving anywhere" (145). Kulyk Keefer puts Eva and Alex in a tight, black coffin and only then do they kiss, "[a]s the elevator, right on cue, begins to moan its way up" (145). Now that Eva transcends the boundary between herself and a shadowy Alex by joining him in "a snug, black coffin," they spend the rest of her time in Kiev in bed, a

point Maxim Tarnawsky makes when he sardonically notes that their relationship occurs “mostly in the loins” (107). While the novel’s narrator tells us that “the lovers push themselves inside each other’s skin” (146), this kind of merging made possible through sexual consummation is anything but complete. Despite their sexual union, Eva does not successfully amalgamate with the Ukrainian side of herself. In fact, it is because of this sexual union that any Ukrainian consummation becomes complicated. Much has been written about sexual and colonial desire, analyzing the kinds of orientalist yearnings that an imperial subject feels for his colonized object (see R. Young; Lane; and Holden and Ruppel), and diasporic longing, analyzing the kinds of expectations a diasporic subject feels for his lost home (Clifford 311; Stoler 7, 29; Satzewich 201-213). In the specific context of *The Green Library*, Peter Roman Babiak identifies the “Cold War Oedipal web” (114) linking Kulyk Keefer’s characters, and while this novel creates Eva as a child born into a new knowledge of herself, that birthing and knowledge are contaminated by the taint of incest. Eva feels that she is like “a newborn baby in this place – as clueless, as helpless as a baby wet from the womb. [...] Alex is her eyes and ears, her guide, interpreter, bodyguard” (158). Eva’s first desires for Alex were desires for knowledge about and connection to her father(land), and once connecting with Alex, moving beyond the photograph and the absence he represents, she views him as a father-figure. After spending most of her days in Alex’s apartment (even under lock and key, like a child in need of protection during his absences), she asks to be taken to Babi Yar. “She knows she sounds like a child saying this: a spoiled and stubborn child” (183), and once again their romance appears in incestuous terms. Not only does Alex deftly stand-in for Eva’s father, but she, too, becomes a child. Eventually he takes her to the massacre site of Babi

Yar, and as they stand staring into the ravine where thousands were killed during the Second World War, with Alex telling Eva about the gruesome deaths, Eva picks up a leaf flecked with red, which “reminds her of cinnamon candy hearts, the kind she loved as a child. She remembers how she’d take the candy from her mouth and paint her lips with it” (185). Even though she goes on to feel ashamed for having such childish thoughts, she is nonetheless childish. The incestuous link connecting her to Alex as a pseudo-father(land) allows her to retreat into childishness, insulated from the history that Kulyk Keefer thinks is so important to ethnic identity.

Through her character’s regression into childishness, Kulyk Keefer presents the fantasy of familial and ethnic connectedness through Eva’s Ukrainian family line. Through images of bones and death, Eva begins to see the same line of blood that earlier linked her ancestors to her son. In Kiev, standing by Babi Yar, she “feels she ought to make some gesture, not to [Alex], but to the bones piled under her, and the minute fraction of those bones that belong to her. For they do belong. She feels it tugging at her now: that line between herself and the woman she calls at last, with no awkwardness or forcing, her grandmother” (186). The incestuous connection to Alex strangely turns inwards on itself, allowing Eva access not to her absent/present father, but rather to her dead grandmother. Once again, the figure of the grandmother operates as the metaphor for ethnic identity. But Lesia Levkovych does not function as a simple baba figure, donning a babushka and dominating a rural farm. Eva learns that she was a Ukrainian nationalist poet, shot and thrown into the ravine at Babi Yar, which, Alex tells Eva, “means the Old Women’s Ravine” (184).<sup>16</sup> If Stus operates as the “transgressive par

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<sup>16</sup> Lesia Levkovych is loosely based on Olena Teliha (1906-1942), a Russian-born Ukrainian poetess who was killed at Babi Yar for her political activism as a member of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists

excellence,” who lures Kostash into a fantasy of ethnic and socialist solidarity, Lesia becomes a “grandmother par excellence,” who offers Eva a fantasy of Ukrainian belonging.

In particular, she offers Eva a fantasy of solidarity with persecuted and massacred Ukrainian poet dissidents and Jews at Babi Yar. Babi Yar functioned as a site for the execution of Jews within a larger Nazi program of extermination (Subtelny 468; Aronson 63; Scholes 534; Gerlach 797) and has been considered the “largest single massacre by Germans in World War II” (Weinberg 373). Alex describes it to Eva: “Seventy thousand Jews were murdered here. The poor Jews from Podol, the ones who couldn’t leave the city when the government cleared out. Men and women; the very old; small children. And after them, some hundred thousand other ‘enemies of the people’” (185). Kulyk Keefer co-opts the trauma of the persecution of both Ukrainian intellectuals and Ukrainian Jews to lend legitimacy to Eva’s struggles to embrace an ethnicity that Kulyk Keefer is at pains to portray as “problematic or even traumatic for its possessor” (“Coming Across” 93). Instead of dramatizing the traumatic nature of Ukrainian immigration and settlement that some critics attend to (Motyl 15; Mycak 35; Swyripa, *Ukrainian Canadians* 21), Kulyk Keefer emphasizes Ukrainian traumas, and through the figure of Lesia, the murdered grandmother-poet, even connects them to the larger trauma of the Holocaust. It seems as though part of Eva’s desire for legitimacy as a Ukrainian

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(see Subtelny 444, 465). In name and ideology, however, Kulyk Keefer’s Lesia also clearly alludes to the earlier poet, Lesia Ukrainka (1871-1913), who is one of Ukraine’s best known poets. “Laryssa Kosach-Kvitka, whose pen name was Lesia Ukrainka,” writes Subtelny, “was born into one of Ukraine’s most cultured families. Her mother was the noted author Olena Pchilka; her uncle was the famous Drahomanov; and she was related to the composer Mykola Lysenko and the playwright Mykhailo Starytsky. [...] [H]er deep, finely wrought poetry exudes inspiring strength, vigor, and optimism” (304).

includes a desire to understand Ukrainianness as a troubled identity, one with claims to public sympathy.

In the end, this link to her grandmother becomes what Eva travels to Ukraine to find. The sliced photograph that instigates her journey presents both Lesia and her son as absent presences in Eva's life, and after visiting Babi Yar on her last day in Kiev, Eva goes to the Ukrainian art museum and finds a painting, she is convinced, of her grandmother: "It's a portrait of Lesia Levkovych; Eva knows this though the guidebook makes no mention of the name. It's a painting of the woman Eva has seen in a photograph, over whose bones she walked at Babi Yar" (209-10). She stares at the painting feeling comforted by the visible presence of her grandmother, and when she leaves, she thinks: "Absence, presence, like a body and its shadow" (210). This image could not only function as a metaphor for this novel alone, but it could exemplify the driving concern of much Ukrainian-Canadian literature. Ukraine, often figured as a grandma, occupies this strange absent/present space in the literature, and in this, *The Green Library* is no different; it is different, however, in trying to envision a grandmother identified with a Ukrainian-language literary tradition and the horrors of war in Ukraine itself. Like Stus, Lesia was a martyred poet, but unlike Kostash wanting Stus's desire, Eva wants Lesia's legacy.

We see Eva's father's significance fading from her once she identifies her grandmother as the real target of her ethnic longing. Continuing the incest dynamic established amongst Eva, Alex, and her father, upon returning from Kiev, Eva finally meets her Ukrainian father, who turns out not only to have been the lover of Eva's mother, but also to have been the lover of Oksanna Moroz, Alex's sister – a kind of

double for Eva herself. Kulyk Keefer describes Oksanna as having dark hair compared to Eva's blond; one is given the epithet the "fair-haired girl" and the other the "dark-haired girl" (63), showing their shadowed connection. Eva even imagines being part of Oksanna, with the other girl's tongue in her mouth turning into her own (85), blending the identities of the two girls. Meeting as adult women reinforces this shadowed connection from their youth. Eva says to Oksanna: "You've cut your hair," and the only response she gets is: "So have you" (92). Just as Alex can be a substitute, standing in for the absent father, so Oksanna can be another substitute lover, standing in for Eva. When Oksanna makes the revelation of her sexual relationship with Ivan (Eva's father) clear, she says: "He was old enough to be my *father*" (259, emphasis added). Yet this relationship between Oksanna/Eva and Ivan has less to do with father-daughter incest and more to do with providing a grandchild with a link to a grandparent, in this case, Eva's son to Eva's father. Because of Oksanna's link to Ivan, she serves as an intermediary between the grandfather and grandson, allowing them an opportunity to meet by the lake where Eva was conceived. These almost-incestuous couplings close the narrative of Eva's journey of ethnic self-discovery on itself, ending where it began.

For Eva, Lesia becomes the end-point of this incestuous circling. If Eva's only value for her father lies in her being "not a daughter but the woman who has given him his grandson" (252), then she recognizes that his only value lies in the link he offers her to her grandmother. If Lesia lost her son, Ivan, and Eva will lose hers, Ben, then these sons serve an instrumental purpose in drawing the mothers together. As Eva sits by the lake where her conception took place she

has a sudden sensation of sliding through a chute, a blood-warm, blood-dark chute that is her mother's body, the flesh shiny and fast like the walls of a playground slide. Tipping from uterus down birth canal and through those wide, astonished lips that push her into air and light. Yet the womb which tipped her out is linked to that other womb, the one that harboured the man who is her father. A series of connecting rings: her mother, her grandmother, herself. (261)

Her ethnicity becomes an image of birth and maternity, written not on but within women's bodies. The circle of incest turns inwards to the circle of the womb that transforms into a series of "connecting rings": women become interconnected wombs. Eva's fantasy turns out not to be about uniting with a Ukrainian lover, but rather about the dynamics of desire that lead her to the fantasy of fusion with her murdered grandmother.

Kulyk Keefer makes clear this fantasy of connectivity, not through sex but through motherhood, when Eva "conjur[es] Lesia Levkovych" (230) to demand answers of her: "*My son's pulling away from me; my lover's only a shadow, a shadow cut off from my body. Tell me how to live with this*" (229). She merges with the identity of her dead grandmother, inscribing herself imaginatively in the roles dictated by the mutilated photograph. But like Stus who does not respond to Kostash's desire, "Lesia's face is turned away" from Eva (230). Through all Eva's evasion and misdirection, desiring both a father and a lover, and finally finding a grandmother as an originating site of ethnic identity, Lesia remains aloof. She refuses to be anything other than a ghost haunting her granddaughter's imagination.

With the novel's focus on blood connections, Kulyk Keefer suggests that Eva's inherited ethnicity constitutes her acquired one. For her, there appears to be no division between descent- and consent-based ethnic identities. While traditional Ukrainian-Canadian literature's focus on baba presents her as a stable figure to ground an ethnic identity in a prairie place, the main twist Kulyk Keefer offers to this motif lies in her positioning of Lesia in Ukraine, intimately linked with one of its worst war-time atrocities.

Both Kostash and Kulyk Keefer seem to suggest in these works that a dead and spectral Ukraine – embodied in Stus and Lesia – possesses ethnic value; the dead poets offer the lure of connectivity between Ukraine and Canada, but ultimately both remain beyond the grasp of the women who long so desperately to have and hold them. A shadow Ukraine, whether evoked across a prairie landscape or in the imaginations of transgressive lovers, appears the sum-total of Ukrainian-Canadians' desires to affix their ethnic identities to a set of external symbols to replace a lost language and lost homeland. Kostash tries to offer a consummation between lovers, but she never becomes Stus's, and Kulyk Keefer seems to begin by offering a similar motif of lovers, but the lovers in her novel twist inwards on themselves in incestuous structures that lead Eva back to images of ethnic inheritance. Even in that most traditional envisioning of ethnic connection – from one womb through the generations – Lesia never claims Eva, and the one-sidedness of longing echoes that which played out in the pages of the anthology Kulyk Keefer co-edits. The chasm that lies between both Stus and Kostash and Lesia and Eva, expressed through the disinterestedness of the dead Ukrainians for the living Ukrainian-Canadians,

and the disembodied descriptions of the dead signal a fracture in ethnic coherence: the Ukrainian-Canadian cannot be united with his or her Ukrainian shadow.

If this is so for Kostash and Eva in these books, surveying Ukrainian-Canadian literature in general also begins to illuminate dead Ukrainian bodies and ghostly revenants. We begin to see that echoes and shadows of Ukraine do not just haunt this oeuvre, but also that dead Ukrainian bodies pile up in this literature. Behind the multiple variations of Nasha Meri and Katie figures embarking on quests to articulate their Ukrainian-Canadianness in many ways – like Lilli, Colleen, Marusia, Rachel, Kostash, and Eva – lie not only shadows, but bodies; Stus and Lesia are not the only corpses. Consider the following examples: Lilli’s story of material success as a pan-ethnic folksinging representative builds on the dead bodies of Tamara, the local Ukrainian-Canadian outcast (who Mycak argues shares features with Lilli [19-20]) and Granny Yefrosynia (who Lilli had hoped could be a “timeless” baba figure, “meant to go on and on” [194]); the deaths of Sister Maria and Kalyna frame Colleen’s journey from Alberta to Swaziland; the pain at the heart of Lepa’s story comes from his guilt over his wife Hanya’s death (“She died. It was my fault that I had broken her spirit when she was so young and beautiful...that I had turned against her...betrayed the love I felt for her. I am an old man, soon I will die. I ask for your understanding...and forgiveness” [90]); and there are more.<sup>17</sup> Warwaruk’s *The Ukrainian Wedding* provides one of the most graphic examples of these recurring ghosts and bodies.

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<sup>17</sup> For instance, Bociurkiw’s *The Children of Mary* focuses on the narrator Sonya’s quest to uncover the details about her father’s role in her sister’s death: “*the story is, he was the cause of the accident. Pissed drunk like he was, head-on collision soon as he got onto the highway. And wouldn’tcha know it, he was the one who survived*” (136). Kulyk Keefer’s *The Ladies Lending Library* offers the section “Keepers of Secrets” filled with dead girls. The first section is haunted by the memory of a dead sister, left behind in Ukraine; but, the novel tells us, she is dead: “You can’t make people up out of nothing. The dead are

His novel focuses on Lena Melnyk, a young girl (like the others) living on her family's Manitoba homestead and longing for an escape to the city. The plot focuses on Lena's brother's upcoming Ukrainian wedding and its aftermath. At the wedding, Lena's brother-in-law, Yuri, himself a figure of Ukrainianness as both a Ukrainian scholar and political sympathizer, runs away with Marusia Budka, who he can only see as a Ukrainian rusalka figure.<sup>18</sup> Warwaruk describes Ukrainian rusalkas like sirens of Classical mythology: "long-haired maidens [rising] between the waves, water maidens singing, Rusalkas beckoning for sailors to join them in the deep green waters" (3). In the inverse of Kostash's desires to exhume a dead Stus or Eva's longing to connect with her dead grandmother, Warwaruk's Yuri transposes his understanding of the seductive and dangerous rusalka onto the living Marusia with disastrous results.

Yuri and Marusia leave the wedding party "[a]s if by magic" (97) and run away together, and days later when Yuri returns to his wife and the town, his excuse is "I was enchanted. Taken to the shadows of forgotten ancestors" (114). Both Kostash and Kulyk Keefer use the vocabulary of enchantment to describe the dream-like world of stories and ghosts that draw their desires (Kostash, *The Doomed Bridegroom* 38; Kulyk Keefer, *The Green Library* 65, 125). Seeing in Marusia a rusalka from Ukrainian mythology similarly enchants Yuri; he strips Marusia of her humanity and perceives in her the folk

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dead, and they'll stay dead no matter how much you call them to come back" (143); and the second section offers the children's discovery that the ample-bosomed variety store owner was once "a small woman, needle-thin, hollow-cheeked, her chest caved in," the mother of a "dead baby whose skeleton shape no amount of embroidery and flowers can disguise" (169). Dead Baba Laryssa also lurks in the background as one of the children, Katie, reflects that "she wants to hurt something as badly as she herself is hurting now with missing her baba" (227).

<sup>18</sup> The rusalka is a water nymph from Slavic folklore, and in Ukrainian oral folk tales she is both frightful and seductive. Young and naked, she is generally a girl-child who died unbaptised or by violence (Korovytsky n.p.). Sonya, in *The Children of Mary*, after learning about her sister's abuse and death at the hands of their father, thinks to herself: "I got to thinking about the *rusalky*, the drowned women of Slavic

creature of his desires. His murder of Marusia, therefore, serves as a warning of the very real dangers inherent in only comprehending Ukraine as a shadowy lens colouring a Ukrainian-Canadian perception of reality. The night he kills Marusia, they meet in the swamp outside of town and Yuri forgets “where he was, as if he were being drawn through forest streams in Carpathia, as if they were figures of haunted tales,” blinding him to his actual situation: sitting in a small boat in Northern Manitoba with someone else’s wife. Yuri turns into “a monster ready to devour Marusia” when she announces to him: “You don’t own me, Yuri” (234). The mere idea of her own autonomy as a woman, not a figure of Ukrainian folklore haunting the Canadian prairie locale, leads to her violent death. The coroner’s description of her body provides one sharp image, almost as a distillation of the kinds of corpses and haunting that seem endemic to this literature:

I found a body, female, in an advanced state of decomposition, lying out by a clump of willow bushes. The clothes had been removed from the body when I got there and there were millions and millions of maggots crawling over it. The scalp, face, and eyes were completely eaten away. (280-81)

Reading Marusia through the lens of a longed-for Ukraine leads Yuri to turn her into a rotting corpse. One of the characters then interprets this transmogrification: “Flowers will grow in the swamp nourished with Marusia’s blood. The flesh of Marusia remains in the soil. This is the Ukrainian presence” (241). Warwaruk’s novel about a woman murdered by a man who cannot see her as anything but an embodiment of Ukrainian shadows graphically depicts the fixation with Ukraine informing many Ukrainian-

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folklore. I read somewhere that the only way to undo a *rusalka*’s fate was to avenge her death. Only then would she rest easy” (138).

Canadian texts. He makes explicit the link between Ukrainian death and suffering and the Canadian place by planting Marusia in the soil. As mentioned in Chapter Three, Moodie, via Atwood, may plant her dead son in the Canadian ground as a way of staking her claim in Canada, and this dynamic seems similar to the planting of Marusia in the ground; but, in fact, Marusia is not a baby who dies in childbirth, sad no doubt, but not unheard of. Instead, she is a woman murdered by a man who cannot recognize her humanity. Therefore, this murder and its subsequent planting of the dead body in the ground highlight a dysfunctional and dangerous dynamic. As well, Ukrainian-Canadian prairie authors preoccupied with constructing a shadow of Ukraine on the prairie place may not be so overt in planting their dead as Warwaruk, but the dynamic is very similar. Put simply, these deaths and plantings do not just stake a claim by planting one's hopes and futures, as symbolized by Moodie's dead son, in a Canadian place; they also signal something uncanny at the level of ethnic identity for these Ukrainian-Canadians. Furthermore, if Kostash's tale and Eva's narrative suggest that Ukraine is dead and cannot be exhumed effectively, Warwaruk's implies that very real dangers lie in confusing reality with the ghostly.

As Kulyk Keefer's Eva flips through a photograph book while in Kiev, she describes two contrasting images that encapsulate the key symbols emerging from a survey of Ukrainian-Canadian literature: "Plump, smiling peasant women; corpses on city sidewalks" (181). The superficiality of the first and the ghastriness of the second suggest that articulating "what it feels like to be Ukrainian" unsettles the subject. Rather than envisioning the movement from "being" Ukrainian to "feeling" Ukrainian as implying a simple slide from "more" to "less" ethnic, the literature suggests that "feeling"

Ukrainian-Canadian involves a multivalent negotiation through a number of complex emotions – guilt, loss, confusion, desire – none of which allow for a stable, comfortable feeling of finally being “at home.”

## **Conclusion – “Not belonging, but longing”**

In his now famous formulation, Sigmund Freud defines the uncanny as “undoubtedly related to what is frightening – to what arouses dread and horror” (“The Uncanny” 619), and he clarifies that this horror arises from “something which is familiar and old-established in the mind and which has become alienated from it,” most often “in relation to death and dead bodies, to the return of the dead, and to spirits and ghosts” (634). Given this formulation, the uncanny has long been evoked by theorists exploring elements of gothic literature (see Dolan 5-7; Spencer 197-200; Clemens 3-4). Not only does it offer a way of theorizing ghosts and haunting, we must also remember that “home,” or more specifically the unhomely (“das unheimliche”), constitutes the uncanny. This articulation of the uncanny provides a metaphor for Ukrainian-Canadian literature, obsessed with constructing a kind of Ukrainian “home” (“heimlich”) that Ukrainian-Canadians have repressed or been alienated from. Ukraine appears as a shadowy presence haunting the literature, and at times takes the form of actual ghosts or dead bodies, all of which signal the continued importance of Ukrainian ethnicity for these English-speaking, white Canadians, generations removed from the moment of immigration.

Derrida uses the language of borders and homes, immigrants and aliens, to evoke a sense of Marx haunted by ghosts, feeling not only caught in time that is “out of joint,” but also place that is “out of joint” (219), giving rise to theories of transnational haunting. The politics of haunting, therefore, seems to take into account not just the potential of being haunted by one’s own country, as Jonathan Kertzer suggests by arguing that “the nation is inescapable and continues to haunt us” (26), but also the idea of being haunted

by other nations. Goldman and Saul point out that in Canada “the supposedly unified nation is haunted from within by other nations”; they expressly refer to “the spectral presences of North America’s Indigenous peoples and the Québécois,” but they also acknowledge that “the forces of globalism and diasporic experience [...] ensure that the nation is also haunted and fractured at the transnational level” (648). Ukrainian-Canadian literature appears haunted by Ukrainian tropes and symbols that signal a desire to locate a Ukrainian-Canadian “home.” The uncanny echoes of Ukraine dispersed across the Canadian prairie and the ghostly presence of the grandmother figure signal Ukrainian-Canadian “unfinished business with the past” (Gelder and Jacobs 181), the business of locating and identifying what Ukrainian ethnicity means and how it operates in Canada. Further, the fixation with ghosts and corpses draws attention to the unsettled nature of Ukrainian-Canadianness. Ukrainian-Canadian literature and identity are often dismissed as irrelevant by both popular and critical discourse, and, I argue, that they respond by trying to locate a stable identity and are thwarted by their own strange sense of uneasiness. Therefore, the presence of ghosts and the various kinds of haunting I have identified in Ukrainian-Canadian literature reveal that there is a gap in the way we conceptualize ethnic subjectivities as embodying either “more” or “less” ethnicity, or a genuine or symbolic diasporic identity. The Ukrainian-Canadian authors and characters of my study exist in-between these positions, longing for some kind of definitional certainty; and the uncanny images evoked by such longing suggests the futility of Ukrainian-Canadian desires for a stable “home” as an originating site of ethnic identity construction.

My work indicates that some Ukrainian-Canadians struggle with an unequal double-sidedness inherent in the hyphen linking the Ukrainian and Canadian elements of their ethnic identity. They live in Canada, speak the majority language of Canada, possess Canadian citizenship, and appear Canadian-Canadian (as Reitz and Banerjee; Grekul and others suggest), but still feel that Ukraine lurks in the shadowy corner of their ethnic identity's "home." In one manifestation of the desire to bring these pieces together, Ukrainianness as an ethnic identity functions as an image of the Canadian ideals of pluralism and multiculturalism. By presenting Ukrainian-Canadianness as providing pan-ethnic opportunities for connection among various groups, Lysenko, for instance, sees Ukrainian experiences, and the experiences of all immigrants, as vital to the very fabric of Canada. For her, "assimilation is not uniformity" and "by association, all groups influence each other, and imperceptibly, all are changed," which, in her reading, indicates "the touchstone of Canada's nationhood" (*Men in Sheepskin Coats* 4). In this view, if Canada is a land of immigrants, then Ukrainian-Canadian experiences are quintessentially Canadian. Grekul's study of Ukrainian-Canadian literature provides the corollary to this view: if Canadian literature is characterized by its plurality and hybridity, then Ukrainian-Canadian literature is quintessentially Canadian. These authors, and those who share their vision of Ukrainian-Canadianness, see ethnicity in terms of marginalization. For them, once Ukrainian-Canadian experiences and literature can be repositioned into the centre of discourses on Canadian history, nationality, and literature, their work will be done. Another way that authors attempt to articulate what that small corner of Ukrainianness means is to try to affix it to a specific place. Whether that place is the Canadian prairie or Ukraine itself, both attempts produce unhomely

echoes that disturb the protagonists or alert the readers that the psychic space cannot be so easily written across a physical place.

Lysenko views the most important aspect of Ukrainian-Canadianness as socioeconomic; Grekul understands it as literary; prairie writers position it as regional; other authors see it as related to the postcolonial; and Kostash, Kulyk Keefer, and Warwaruk view it as a link to a diasporic “home-country.” However, all these perspectives (and the variations therein) suggest that the off- or de-centred position as Ukrainian-Canadian can provide points of connection with other marginalized groups. But when faced with the very real experiences of visible minorities that Reitz and Banerjee identify as statistically more difficult than those of white Canadians, the more legitimate claims of various Aboriginal groups who resist territorial and literary colonization, or the unbridgeable gap separating Ukrainian-Canadians from Ukrainian-Ukrainians, many of these writers find that “what it feels like to be Ukrainian” raises various anxieties about the self, belonging, and legitimacy. Their writing exposes their various feelings of guilt, loss, and confusion about how best to identify a Ukrainian “home” that would allow a clear (and simple) articulation of Ukrainian-Canadianness. They may try to hide in fantasies of prairie rootedness or Aboriginal sympathy or diasporic legitimacy and Ukrainian reciprocal desire, but the many failed literary attempts to fix a stable Ukrainian-Canadian “home” prevent a clear articulation of contemporary Ukrainian-Canadian subjectivity.<sup>1</sup> It is as elusive as the Ukraine that haunts the literature in its many ghostly guises.

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<sup>1</sup> As mentioned, even though current diaspora and postcolonial discourse privileges what Diana Brydon calls “mobility and deterritorialization” (700), Ukrainian-Canadian writers seem driven by a desire to locate “home” as something more stable than such discourse envisions.

As early Ukrainian-Canadian literature attests, ethnic identity was first perceived as a “badge of inferiority” to be discarded through material success. In that era, being ethnic was synonymous with being poor and ignorant. However, in the years since the implementation of Canadian multiculturalism as federal policy, contemporary critical discourse now views “ethnicity as an asset” (Siemerling, “Writing Ethnicity” 15), which has given rise to nationally and racially defined categories of hyphenation. In this view, the “genuine diaspora identity” that Safran evokes in contrast to the disingenuous “after-dinner self-labellers” provides a recognized subject-position from which a diasporic subject can speak or write about his or her homeland. With no linguistic or racial barriers to accessing power and no lived trauma of immigration or displacement, Ukrainian-Canadians are, as Kostash put it, “part of the problem, not the solution,” despite feeling Ukrainian. However, the literature suggests that perceiving ethnic identity as either an asset or a liability appears to be too limited, producing the kinds of unease about identity and unsatisfying fantasies about “home” that characterizes Ukrainian-Canadian literature. Conceiving of ethnicity as either asset or liability reproduces the kind of binary thinking that has given rise to the unhomey position of Ukrainian-Canadianness. The writers seem to flounder in their attempts to articulate a meaningful sense of ethnicity as a public construct that would grant them legitimacy as a meaningful sub-national group worthy of study and expression and as a private sentiment that would provide them with reassurance about their sense of self.

In the end, perhaps this metaphor of haunting is most apt not just because it captures an “in-betweenness” and presence/absence, but also because it evokes the uncanny and unsettled. Ghosts are, by definition, disturbing, and leave us feeling strange.

I argue that Ukrainian-Canadian literature suggests that the feelings arising out of identities that are multiple and conflicting (ethnic *and* empowered, Ukrainian *and* Canadian, rooted *and* diasporic, unified *and* split) are uncomfortable, characterized by both guilt and loss. We can choose to read this discomfort at the heart of “what it feels like to be Ukrainian,” as an indication of the various attempts Ukrainian-Canadian literature makes to construct and represent ethnicity as safe – available to the ethnic subject without undermining the more legitimate claims of other groups. From its inception in the writings of Lysenko, Ukrainian-Canadianness has struggled with how best to articulate itself, attempting to both preserve (inherit) and construct (acquire) an ethnic identity identifiable as both Ukrainian and Canadian in some manner. But these attempts only provide evidence of fracturing and unease, not comfortable simultaneity.

Perhaps, therefore, the hyphenated moniker misleads. It suggests a balancing of two equal sides of a self – split like the Janus-faced diasporic subject Kulyk Keefer often evokes who is caught between two nations, with a face directed at each (“From Mosaic” 15; “Coming Across” 93; *The Green Library* 12). Janus’s two faces, however, are balanced, both the same size, looking in opposite directions. English-language Ukrainian-Canadian literature does not, in fact, allow for such an equitable sense of ethnic “in-betweenness,” and, rather, suggests that Ukrainianness functions as the shadow of Canadianness for Ukrainian-Canadians. Subordinate to the subject’s public, national identity, his or her ghostly ethnic identity suggests something that has been repressed or alienated. Kostash warns that “[t]he repressed will always return. Because, half-knowingly perhaps, we have passed it on” (*All of Baba’s Great-Grandchildren* 43). Whether or not we can extend these insights ad infinitum, as she does, I will leave for

future generations to decide; for the present, we can say that the “repressed” Ukrainianness of early immigrants has indeed “returned”; Ukrainian-Canadian literature has struggled with the desire to acknowledge it personally and construct it publicly, unearthing uncomfortable feelings and solving nothing.

I suggest, only half in earnest, that possibly the ethnic identity that this literature constructs could more rightly be considered as “Uke-Canadianness,” a name that recognizes the truncation of Ukrainianness into symbols, echoes, and shadows that haunt protagonists, engendering in the characters strange feelings towards their ethno-cultural heritage that drive them to struggle with its articulation. Mycak has chosen “Canuke” as her term for this literature and the identity it represents “as a way of denoting the synthesis of Canadian and Uke elements, alluding to the combination of Canadian and Ukrainian identities, themes, styles,” while also alluding “to the popular term ‘Canuck’ as meaning ‘Canadian’” (xi). For her, the combination of the two colloquial terms, “Uke” and “Canuck,” challenges concepts of both Ukrainianness and Canadianness. “Canuke,” however, tends to suggest a “synthesis” and balancing of the two entities, an equal connectivity that this dissertation unsteadies somewhat. Grekul’s book, in contrast, refers to “Canada’s Ukrainians,” a label that recognizes the potential subordination of Ukrainianness to Canadianness that I am beginning to see as meaningful; but it also implies possession that closes off a negotiation between two sides. The hyphen, therefore, seems crucial. It suggests both the joining together of two disparate terms, but also their perpetual distance. That little hyphen between the two words keeps them forever apart, allowing ghosts to haunt.

In the end, my point is a straightforward one: ethnic group identities still matter for the construction of individual subjectivity for people whose ethnic group no longer occupies a marginalized public space. In the case of Ukrainian-Canadians, their attempts to express and locate a meaningful group identity rooted in Ukraine as “home” produce unease and discomfort, ghosts and corpses.

From this vantage point, at the end of the dissertation, it should also be clear that another motivation at the heart of this study is my desire to bring to light a number of under- or never-theorized texts. In part, the content of this study helps to advance my point that Ukrainian-Canadian literature presents a significantly sized body of writing still obsessed with ethnic identity issues. I understand the existence of this literature as evidence that these “after-dinner self-labellers” still care to grapple with “what it feels like to be Ukrainian.” As well, in writing about “ethnicity as a critical category in literary theory” (“Writing Ethnicity” 8), Siemerling identifies two ways in which the politics of reading texts as ethnic apply to my study. He first suggests that viewing ethnicity as a legitimate category of literary criticism allows some authors to be viewed as “ethnic” retroactively; he also identifies that this kind of reading allows critical attention to be directed towards “the ‘retrieval’ of texts and authors” ignored by the mechanisms of cultural production (7-8). My broad survey of texts and authors – both well-known and unknown – communicates my desire to explore ethnicity in literature, bringing to light various feelings of Ukrainian-Canadianness. Methodologically, it should be clear that I have employed what Gunew calls “academic nomadism” (3), to borrow insights from a wide range of theoretical paradigms in order to gesture towards the broader implications of this very focused snapshot.

A case study only ever raises more questions than it can answer, and this exploration of Ukrainian-Canadian literature raises more questions about contemporary ethnic identities in Canada than it can answer. It asks that we re-examine precepts of ethnic theory constructed along a linear metaphor, with ethnic subjects becoming less and less ethnic over time. It also suggests that despite metaphors of mobility, postmodern play with multiplicity, and discourses of instability, at least one ethnic group longs for a traditional model of a stable self. Yet there is more work to be done to examine contemporary literary ethnic identities. For instance, while I have at times indicated the generic instability of some of the texts that often blend fiction and biography, more work can be done with what Kulyk Keefer terms “historiographic ethnofiction,” alluding, of course, to Hutcheon’s “historiographic metafiction” (“Coming Across Bones” 90). Kulyk Keefer only vaguely defines this term in reference to her novel, *The Green Library*; by combining what Hutcheon defines as a particular postmodern genre, “historiographic metafiction” with Kulyk Keefer’s own project of “writing ethnicity.” Further inquiry can be done into the generic instability arising from blending “historiographic metafiction,” as “novels which are both intensely self-reflexive and yet paradoxically also lay claim to historical events and personages” (*Poetics* 5), with “historiographic ethnofiction,” as a tendency to write about ethnic identity in a way that involves pseudo-autobiography, historical (re)creation, and a didactic tone. Such work into outlining a generic hybrid of Ukrainian-Canadian “historiographic ethno-metafiction” would shine further light onto ways in which authors think and write about Ukrainian-Canadian hybridity.

And, surely, comparative analyses can be done. Ukrainian-Canadianness operates as one sub-national ethno-cultural group within Canada. Further work juxtaposing the ethnic identity discomfort found in Ukrainian-Canadian literature with that unearthed in other ethnic literature can tell us much about ethnic identities in Canada, while simultaneously painting a clearer picture of the theoretical categories deployed to understand identity politics. Furthermore, Ukrainian-Canadian literature can be analyzed in comparison to Ukrainian-American literature as both national literatures of the same North American Ukrainian diasporic community speak meaningfully to each other about their similarities and differences.

In the context of Ukrainian-Canadian literature, my identification of ghosts and corpses also leads to an interesting area for further study. A more focused analysis on the dead female bodies that pile up in Ukrainian-Canadian literature will yield supplementary insights to those that I raise. If this literature presents Ukraine personified as dead, dying, and decaying bodies, then there is room for further exploration into the implications of turning a diasporic homeland into the abject, a “jettisoned object” (Kristeva 1). These dead bodies, moreover, often emerge from familial violence – sons executing mothers, husbands killing wives, fathers murdering daughters – and studying the intersections between familial, national, and ethnic identities that produce literature invested in these images will elicit information about the continued angst that ethnic and diasporic subjects experience. Therefore, this study offers a starting point into elucidating “what it feels like to be Ukrainian.”

To conclude, this study has shown that the problematized ideas of “home” and ethnicity still matter to many hyphenated Canadians, long after their ancestors

immigrated to Canadian soil. I will close with final words about “home” borrowed from the end of Kulyk Keefer’s *Honey and Ashes*: “Perhaps home is only this: inhabiting uncertainty, the arguments fear picks with desire. Not belonging, but longing – that we may live in the present, without craving the past or forcing the future” (328).

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